

The Silver Lining

I am old, quite ancient I think in bear years. I had better not say how many human years as I am just a little younger than my keeper.

For the last few years I have been sitting on a shelf on what I believe is called the landing; I am not sure what lands there as nothing has ever passed by except for my keeper and two other humans, one of whom is quite noisy when he goes into the room next to where I sit. I've got used to the sounds at the beginning and end of each day; in the middle of the day it is quiet, but I don't mind that.

Let me describe myself to you: my species is known as a Teddy Bear; I am quite small in stature as I have on occasion been placed in the company of much larger teddy bears. Some of these could actually produce quite alarming sounds when their stomachs are pressed. I have no such instrument and am glad that I am not pushed and prodded in that manner. I am light brown in colour and my coat is, or was, fur. Unfortunately, over the years I have lost much of my fur and now only have a light coating over my arms and legs – yes teddy bears, unlike other bears, do have arms. I think my look is described as 'well loved'.

I was well loved – once. Not that I have been mistreated over the years – no, in fact, I have always stayed with my keeper and lived in many different places.

Let me go back to the beginning. The first recollection is being placed in what I now know is called a pram, next to a small human form. This is called a baby and this particular one was what they call a girl. I don't think it matters whether the human is a girl or a boy, but I believe girls make kinder keepers. I spent a lot of time being carried around by the girl – her name was Christine and she has been my keeper all this time.

Various memories come back to me. Once I had what is known as a scarf which came loose one day when we were in a place called Woolworths. My keeper was very upset and cried as we never found it; I was upset too but I don't show my feelings.

Another time my keeper was at home unwell in her bedroom where I also lived. Some other small humans called up to the window and I was brought out to be viewed. What happened next was terrible – I was dropped from that great height but luckily fell into the arms of one of the small humans and was eventually reunited with my keeper.

Lots of other things have taken place over the years. I lost both my eyes and some of my nose; my keeper's mother sewed me some new eyes with black thread, don't worry it didn't hurt but it gave me a slightly beady look. My keeper did not like my appearance at all and told her mother so, but she hasn't changed my features, so I think she likes me as I am.

When my keeper had babies of her own I sometimes found myself thrown in among a cluster of other bears and various other species – rabbits, dogs, cats and lambs come to mind. These new companions were often brightly coloured and wore items of clothing. I have never seen the need for clothing and prefer a natural look, though I have occasionally sported a ribbon tied round my neck which I put up with as I didn't really have a choice.

When these babies grew larger, I was returned to the sanctity of my keeper's bedroom and allowed to have my peaceful days once more.

Now something unusual has happened to me - I was taken from my shelf and placed in the window downstairs. I can see humans walking by and the smaller ones sometimes point and wave at me. It is very nice to suddenly be interacting with humans again.

I hear it is for what they are calling a bear hunt and the small humans are seeing how many bears they can spot on their daily walks. I don't think there will be many bears as old as me, but I have heard my keeper say, 'every cloud has a silver lining' and right now I am inclined to agree with her.

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