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### The Girl who Married the Bear

“The Girl who Married the Bear”, written by Catherine McClellan, Maria Johns and Dora Austin Wedge, is a story that had a strange turn of events. A confusing story to say the least. A story about a group of women going out for their scheduled berry picking turned into a girl who strayed away from the group because of a good looking man who was really just a bear. Who lured the girl to follow him and manipulated her into thinking he was there for her, when really it was for his own benefit. This man, who was really a bear in human form, ended up convincing this girl that she was truly a bear as well, by smacking the top of her head and circulating it towards the sun, which slowly made her forget her past memories. Later on, the bear had suspicions that the girl's brothers were close to finding them, and he was right. His final words to the girl were to cut off his head and his tail, and to light them on fire and sing a song that said, “I went through every one of those young people, and the last brother - I know he did the right thing.” This to me appeared to be some sort of ritual, and of course, I believe I was correct. Shortly after the bear was slaughtered, the girl was saved by her family but she ended up turning into a full on bear, and slaughtered her family. However, just as the song stated, the last brother was not slaughtered.

After going back and skimming the story from the beginning, I noticed how before all the women went out to pick berries, they were told to never walk over bear droppings, if they were to encounter it. Instead, they were to walk around. As for the men, they were specifically told to walk over the bear droppings. I believe this is because if you walk over the bear droppings, this attracts the bear, which is good for the men to hunt down and slaughter the bear. However, although the women walked around as they were told to do so, the girl in this story did the complete opposite. Therefore, my point most likely is correct, because as she would jump over the bear droppings, the “good looking man” appeared and caused this mayhem.

A question I have asked myself during this reading is why did the bear not murder and eat the girl for dinner? What were the bear's true motives? According to the outcome, the bear did not appear to have malicious intentions with the girl. Towards the final part, they both appeared to have developed a relationship together. Therefore, what happened in the village that had them generate the idea that these bears are pure evil and that everyone must stay away from them?

After careful analysis of the text, I came to the conclusion that all of the bear's true intentions are to lure women in their trap in order for them to reproduce. I am not sure if bears were endangered at the time or if the female bears were specifically hunted, but I believe that these were the bears true intentions. To add on, the way the girl viewed the bear as a handsome good looking man might have been a hallucination. This may have something to do with stepping over the bear droppings that may have instantly activated a spell and caused women to hallucinate and see these bears as

humans for luring purposes. Due to this story being fictional, there are many possibilities on why these events took place.

What happened in the village that may have been traumatizing, in order for them to maintain a strict policy of not coming into contact with the bears? Now this may have many different outcomes, but overall, the village may have experienced a scarring event. Now the girl did confirm that her husband (the bear) was a shapeshifter, there may have been shapeshifters that pretended to be a part of the village. From there, women may have begun to go missing and that is when the hunt for bears became a cultural necessity for the men in the village. However, ever since whatever event happened, there was a strict rule for all women to stay toe to toe once they left the village to go berry picking. Therefore, because this was a strict rule that the girl broke and caused her to turn into a bear and fall in love with her husband and have children. I believe the author's true intentions for this tale was to show the reader the importance of cultural traditions, and the consequences of failing to listen to rules. She even broke the rule that was to specifically walk around the bear droppings, and she chose to jump over them.

In conclusion, the tale of "The Girl Who Married a Bear" is a powerful metaphor for the importance of cultural traditions and the consequences of straying from them. It also explores themes of acceptance, love, and identity. The story teaches that while it is important to follow one's heart, it is equally important to consider the impact of one's actions on others and to respect cultural norms and values.