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I Can Read!

BEGINNING
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READING

The Berenstain Bears'

New Kitten



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Star & Jan Berenstain
with Mike Berenstain

One day Brother Bear
was hunting bullfrogs.
He was about to catch a big one.
He heard a tiny "*Mew! Mew!*"
It was a kitten.

The kitten was trying to climb
the muddy bank of the pond.
The kitten was so covered with mud
that you couldn't tell
what color it was.



Someone else was hunting bullfrogs.
“Whatcha got there?” asked Too-Tall
from the bushes.
Too-Tall worried Brother.
He was head of a schoolyard gang.



“Never mind what I’ve got,” said Brother.





“Hey!” said Too-Tall.
“A kitten! A poor little shivering kitten.”
How about that? thought Brother.
*Even Too-Tall has a soft spot
in his heart for kittens.*



“You’d better take it home to your mother,”
said Too-Tall.
“Here. Take it home in this!”
With that he gave Brother his hat.
Brother was surprised.



Brother ran home with the kitten
in Too-Tall's hat.



"Hmm," said Mama Bear.

"You go looking for bullfrogs
and you bring home this little kitten."

“May we keep it, Mama?” asked Sister Bear.

“May we please?”

“Never mind about that,” said Mama.

“This kitten needs cleaning up.”

She turned to

Papa Bear for help.

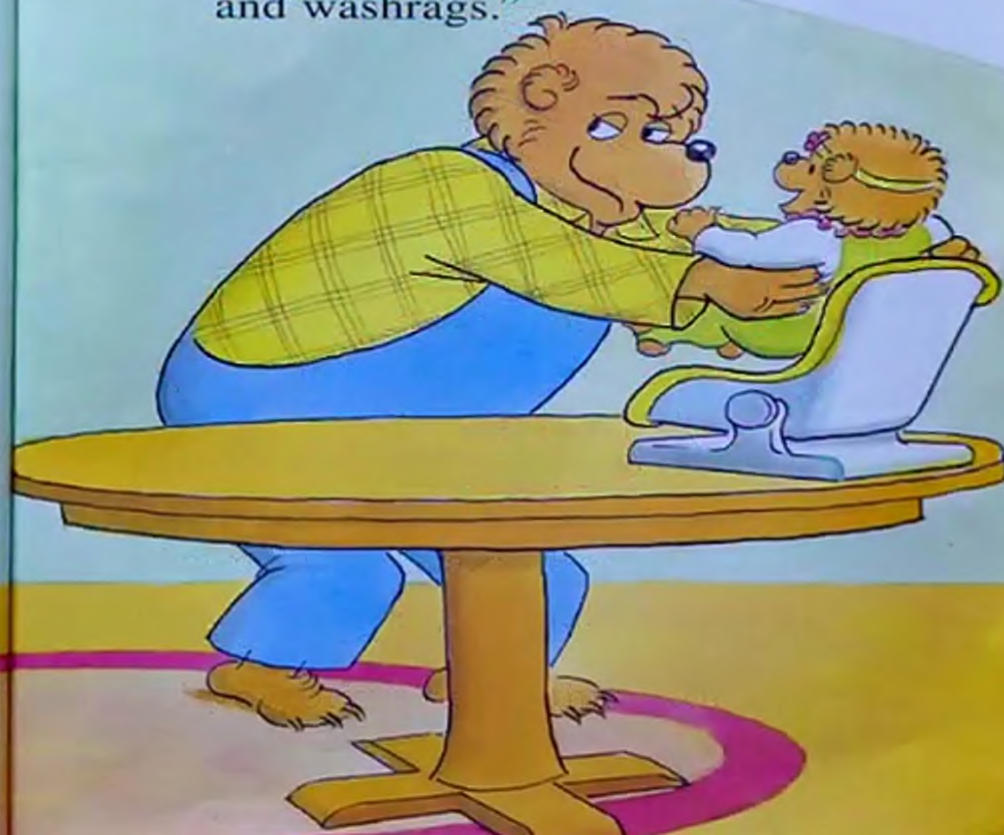


“Papa,” she said, “we need

some warm water,

some cotton balls,

and washrags.”



Mama went to work.
She washed the mud off.



She cleaned the
kitten's eyes.



She cleaned its
paws.



Pretty soon it began
to look like a kitten,
not a muddy ball of
fur.



Little Lady, the family's dog,
came sniffing around.

"Papa," said Mama,
"would you please take Little Lady?"



"Yes, my dear," said Papa.

"I think the kitten needs a name."

He took a quick look at the kitten's bottom.

"She's a she," he said.

"So I guess we'd better
give her a girl's name."



That made the cubs' ears perk up.
You don't name a kitten
if you're not going to keep her.
"Well," said Sister, "she's gray."



Now that she was clean and dried
and combed, she was a beautiful gray.
Gray, thought Sister.
"Let's name her Gracie!"



“Fine with me,” said Mama.
“Now about keeping her.
Have you forgotten that we have a dog?
Though she’s a kitten now,
she’ll soon be a cat.
Dogs and cats don’t always get along.”



“Your mama’s right,” said Papa.
“Let’s introduce them right now
and find out.”

Little Lady was underfoot again,
sniffing around.

Papa picked her up.

He held her close to Gracie.

Little Lady snarled.

*Uh-oh, thought Brother,
they're not
going to get along.*

Little Lady bared her teeth.

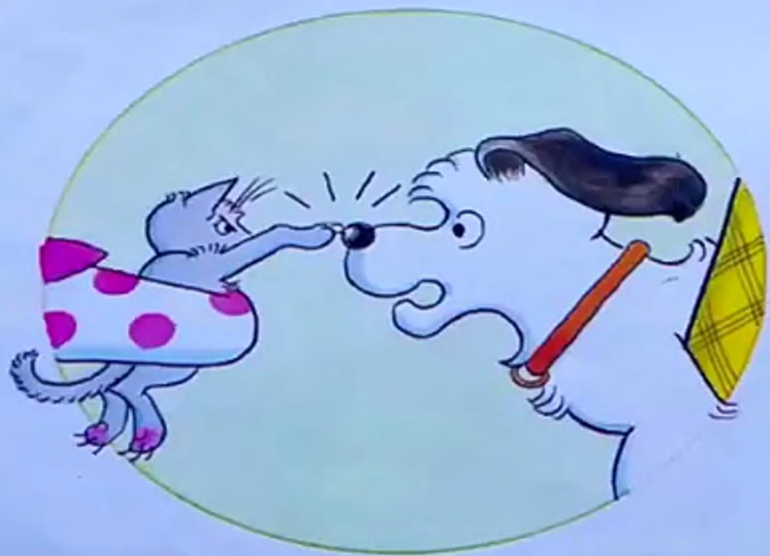
But Gracie was not frightened.



She reached out and popped Little Lady on the nose with her tiny sharp claws. Little Lady ran away.

“Hmm,” said Papa.

“I think they are going to get along fine.”



“What about Gracie and Goldie, our goldfish?” asked Brother.

“I wouldn’t worry,” said Papa.

“Little Lady loves Goldie. She’ll protect Goldie.”



Gracie was now all clean, dry,
and combed.

Her fur was soft and fluffy.

She was very beautiful.

“So I guess we’ve got a new kitten,”
said Mama.

“Yippee!” cried Brother and Sister.



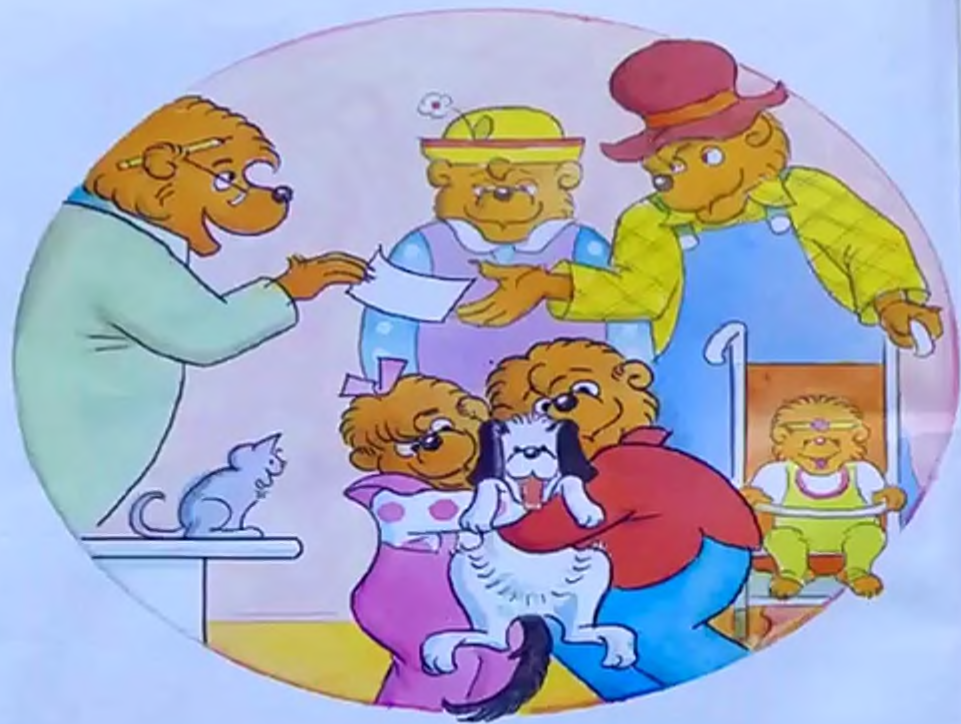


They took Gracie to the vet
to be checked.
Little Lady went with them.
Her tail was between her legs.
She looked unhappy.
The vet checked Gracie from head to toe.
“She’s a fine, healthy kitten,” said the vet.
“But I do have a prescription
for Little Lady.”



He wrote something on a piece of paper.
Here is what it said:
Prescription—Little Lady might be jealous
for a few days.
So give her at least twenty
extra hugs a day.





Right then and there
Little Lady got her first big hug of the day.
“Mew! Mew!” said Gracie.

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