

With windblown hair and flushed cheeks, Sarah walked swiftly to the birdfeeder behind her house. She pulled off the metal cover and tipped it over until all the black sunflower seeds spilled into the storage bin, which was on the almost green grass. . Sarah snapped the plastic white lid into place.

When Sarah pulled opened the glass sliding door, with bird feeder in hand, her mom looked up from the book she was reading. She said, “Did you have a good day at school? Wait. What is that you have in your hand? An empty bird feeder? The birds couldn’t have eaten all that seed since I filled it 10 minutes ago.

Sarah said, “I emptied the bird feeder because it could kill a bear.”

Sarah’s mom went to look closer at the birdfeeder and spilled her coffee.”

Boots, Sarah’s cat, picked her head up from her food bowl.

“What are you talking about?”

“I said that you shouldn’t give any food to birds when the bears are awake. So, we have to keep our bird feeder down until December.”

Sarah’s mom looked at the birdfeeder and then at Sarah. “But, I’ve been doing this forever. Why didn’t you talk to me before you emptied out the bird feeder? I would have really appreciated it.”

Crossing her arms around her skinny body Sara said, “This lady came to school and said she was from... what was the name? Oh, the Audubon Society and she said that bears are awake, and they might come to eat from any bird feeder. She told us of a story of when a bear climbed the house of a wall to get to the birdfeeder. On the way ,she tore apart the patio, while the people in the house stared.

“That does sound horrible, but when did you start caring about bears so much, or are you just afraid of them?”

“Don’t you remember when I was in the woods with Jasmine last winter? We walked by a bear’s den and heard baby bears nursing. Right next to us, were cubs cuddling with their mom.

Sarah walked over to Boots, and stroked him as he rubbed her leg.

“I do remember that. You were so excited.”

“Yes. I do not want those bears to get hurt!”

“But, those bears are far away.” Sarah’s mom picked up the wet sponge to wipe off her skirt.

“There has to be bears that live in those woods,” Sara said, pointing to the trees beyond the brook.

Anyway, that lady said, “The game warden might have to come and kill the bear.”

“You’re being silly. I don’t see that we have a problem,” Sarah’s mom said. “I love to watch the birds from this window.” She pointed to the binoculars on the stool. “Sometimes, you do, too.” “Look there’s a chickadee in that pine tree just waiting for its food.”

The chickadee called out, “Chick a deee dee dee.”

“I don’t want the birds to go hungry. Sarah’s mom said, “If we don’t feed them.”

“The lady said that birds don’t need food this time of year. I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have taken down the bird feeder without talking to you. But don’t you care about the bears?”

“I do. But what you said sounds so far-fetched.”S

Sarah gave her mom one of those looks.

Sarah’s mom said, “Please stop staring at me like that. I’m going to get the newspaper!”

When she returned, she said, “I’m wondering what’s going on this weekend.”

She joined Sarah on the leather couch and started to read.

A moment later, she pulled her head up from the paper, and sat straight up. "Sarah, you're not going to believe this. Right here, on the front page it says, "Bears are Awake." Then they quoted this game warden who said, "It's time to take down your birdfeeder."

Sarah said, "Now do you believe me?"

"It's going to take time for me to digest all of this."

"Don't take too long."