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The Two Bears

MY FIRST TEACHING JOB after graduation was in a city called Halifax in Yorkshire. As Halifax is more than two hundred miles from my home in Newcastle, I had to find a place to live as I could only go home on holidays.

I was fortunate in finding a young couple in the church I attended who were looking for a paying guest in their home only a bus ride from my school. The husband, Jack, had a poorly-paid job in an insurance company, so his wife, Lilian, took paying guests into their home to supplement his salary. They had two small children, a boy and a girl. At that time many families had financial problems, as there was a great deal of unemployment.

I noticed that this poor couple were very happy, so one day I asked them how they maintained their happy home life. Jack explained that it was the “secret of the Two Bears”. Jack then told me that we all have faults and in married life spouses often argue about each other’s faults. So we should *bear* (be patient with each other’s faults) because we too have faults. “The second Bear,” he continued, “is *forbear*” (holding back from expressing anger). I often think about Jack’s advice and have tried to carry it out.

Of course we occasionally fail, but when we do so, we should sit down quietly and consider whether it is worthwhile to

argue about trivial matters, making ourselves, our spouses and our children unhappy. Of course it is not worthwhile to do so. Yet very often small arguments lead to big arguments and a couple may even get divorced and the whole family is damaged. Hong Kong sees too many divorces now, and many children are left unhappy with only one parent.

Often the effects of divorce or separation are very serious. Children like to enjoy the love and care of two parents, but when the parents quarrel the children do not know which parent to support. Even worse, some parents become so angry when they divorce that they take revenge on the helpless children and beat them for the smallest mistake. Did you read about a husband, after his wife deserted their home, put their baby into a refrigerator to die? How terrible!

One day most of you will be married and have children. For the sake of your family happiness, for the benefit of your children, I hope you will learn the lesson of the Two Bears, Bear and Forbear. May you have a happy future.