

After hours of hard climbing, they reached a fork. Babou stopped and pointed toward the north.

“Coco, this trail will take you even higher.” Then, he pointed to the opposite direction. “That one will lead you to an area of streams and low plateaus.” He added softly, “You have to choose your own route.”

A feeling of panic went through Coco. She kept looking at both paths. Then she took a deep breath. “I’ll take the trail that leads to the streams.”

Babou bent over toward her. She snuggled her muzzle under his chin, then glanced at his eyes with assurance and went off.

As fast as she could, she ran. Out of breath she stopped. She looked up at the mountain. She could make out Babou’s mighty stature. He had not moved. He did not need to worry. She had become a real bear. She could face the wilderness on her own.