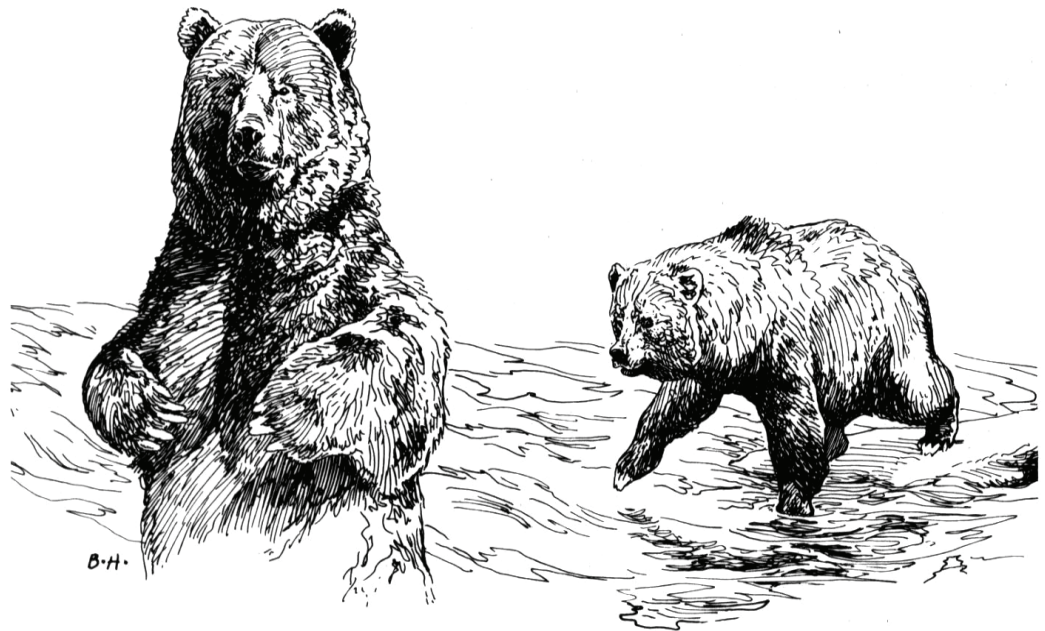


# Nature Study and More

*Gentle Ben*

by  
Walt Morley



## Chapter 4

1. Using a field guide to find the correct size, draw the outline of a bear footprint on a piece of craft paper or even a piece of newspaper. Then, draw the outline of a rabbit footprint inside the bear footprint. Then, draw the outline of a mouse footprint inside the rabbit footprint. This will enable you to see the size differences between these animals.
2. Define sedge and add to your Vocabulary and Facts list..
3. The author describes Ben's face, as seen from Karl Andersen's eyes. The paragraph begins with, "Ben's eyes opened." Using the description the author gives, draw a picture of Ben's face and label it Gentle Ben. Use a field guide or other resource for reference, if needed.
4. Why do you think Mark's father changed his mind about buying Ben?

## Chapter 5

1. While Mark's father is sitting at the boulder field, a mother duck and ducklings walk nearby. The Common Eider and the Harlequin Duck are common ducks in this area. Using a field guide or other resource, research one of these ducks. Then, draw a picture of it, and include on the page its common name, biological name and where it lives.
2. Do you ever sit outside and just observe the world around you? Do that this week! Take a comfortable chair or a blanket outside and find a place to relax and observe. Stay for a while and become part of the environment. What animals did you see and hear? What insects? Write a paragraph about it in your notebook.
3. Add gray fox and duck to your Animal list.

## Chapter 6

1. What is a scythe? Sketch a picture of one. Also, add scythe to your Vocabulary and Facts list.
2. Who is Clearwater? Is he older or younger than Mark's dad? How do you know?
3. When Ben and Clearwater have their first up close encounter, Clearwater is frightened but keeps a cool head and decides his only chance to survive is to lie perfectly still. How would lying perfectly still protect Clearwater? Do some research, if necessary.
4. Using a field guide or other resource, gather information about salmon – biological name, appearance, size, life cycle, where located, diet and any interesting facts. Use this information to write a report, make a mini poster or create a mini book. Don't forget to sketch a picture of a salmon, too. A form for this report can be found in the back of this study guide. Don't forget about the unlabeled ruled page for reports more than one page in length!
5. What is a sou'wester hat? Add this information to your Vocabulary and Facts list.

6. Clearwater says, "There they are. Th' vanguard of th' run." Define vanguard and add it to your Vocabulary and Facts list.
7. In the last paragraph of the chapter, Marks feels empty inside. Why do you think he feels this way?

### Chapter 7

1. A dolphin is a sea animal but dolphin is also a nautical term. Define dolphin in nautical terms and add it to your Vocabulary and Facts list.
2. Define skiff and add it to your Vocabulary and Facts list.
3. The author writes that after arriving in Butteville, Mark's father said he was going to the cannery office. He went somewhere else, too. Where did he go? How do you know?
4. The author uses porpoise and dolphin interchangeably but they are really two different animals. Complete the Venn diagram located at the back of this study guide, comparing porpoises and dolphins. Look at these characteristics: size, appearance, life span, and human interaction for your comparison. Use other characteristics, also, if desired.
5. Describe Mike Kelly.
6. At first, Mike wouldn't help store the bread and pastries for Ben but then he changed his mind. Why do you think he changed his mind?
7. Add whale, porpoise, dolphin and night bird to your Animal list.

### Chapter 8

1. Using your available resources, research hibernation. Find out what hibernation is and why it happens. Add this information to your Vocabulary and Facts list.
2. According to recent studies, bears are not "true" hibernators. Bears actually go into a deep temporary sleep called torpor. Research torpor and add this information to your Vocabulary and Facts list.
3. What is a mackinaw? Add this to your Vocabulary and Facts list.
4. Locate and label the following places on your Prince William Sound map: Chenega, Latouche, Valdez, Constantine Harbor and Bligh Island. You will not be labeling Butteville and Windy Point, because they are names of fictional locations.
5. Why do leaves change color in autumn?
6. Add silver salmon, ants, geese, swans, snowshoe rabbits, ptarmigans, arctic foxes and weasels to your Animal list.
7. Add blueberry and willow to your Plant list.

## Answers to Comprehension Questions

### Chapter 1

1. The setting is Alaska.
9. Ben is 5 years old. No, he isn't full grown.
13. The author wrote that Mark's mother was not in the yard or in the kitchen window and that she had not waved to him on his way home from school for several weeks. He had a vague feeling that somehow this fact was important and he worried about it for a moment. This is a foreshadowing – a hint – that Mark's mother knew about Ben.
14. For the teacher's knowledge, Jamie is Mark's brother. Your students may or may not have concluded this yet.

### Chapter 2

6. Mark's father is feeling several different emotions. He is angry that Mark's mother allowed Mark to be so close to Ben and because she didn't tell him about what was going on with Mark and Ben. He is scared about the prospect of losing Mark to tuberculosis. He is sad because he is reminded of Jamie, who has only been gone for two years.
7. Mark: lonely, thin, brown hair, brown eyes, 13 years old, pale, caring, kind.  
Mark's mother: shining black hair, pretty, small-boned, lightly-tanned, thoughtful, strong-willed, determined. Mark's father: blue eyes, blond hair, tall, wind-tanned, heavy boned, weather-browned face, quick-tempered, protective. Fog Benson: dirty, quarrelsome, loud, a suspected thief, mean.

### Chapter 3

5. Ben didn't go off into the mountains because he was a tame bear. He had lived most of his life in a shed and hadn't been taught by his mother about living in the wild.

### Chapter 4

4. Mark's dad changed his mind because he wanted to keep Mark from getting sick, too, and was willing to take the chance that owning Ben might save Mark's life. Your students may have other reasons. If they do, discuss them and ask your students to explain their reasons.

### Chapter 6

2. Clearwater is a man who works on *Far North*. But he is more than that. He is also like a member of the family. He is older than Mark's dad. He had been on the crew of Mark's grandfather's boat, which is how Mark's dad knew him. Clearwater was the best man at the Andersens' wedding. The author wrote that Clearwater had been in the North for sixty years.



# Venn Diagram—Dolphins and Porpoises

Write details that tell how dolphins and porpoises are different in the outer circles.

Write details of how dolphins and porpoises are alike where the circles overlap.

