

Small Number and the Big Tree

Story Transcript: English

Small Number is a young boy who gets into a lot of mischief. With his sister Perfect Number he visits their Grandma who lives in a small village on their Nation's traditional territory.

Small Number likes to wander around grandma's house because whenever he visits he discovers something new and exciting there. This time he finds an old woven basket. "Look how beautiful these patterns are," says Small Number while touching the smooth surface of the basket. "It was made by my great aunt," Small Number hears Grandma's gentle voice. "Do you know that this basket was made from cedar roots?"

Grandma looks at Small Number's puzzled face, and says, "You and Perfect Number will go with me tomorrow to help me gather cedar roots. Now let us eat and I'll tell you why cedar is a sacred plant for our people and how it can be used in many different ways."

"I try to gather my roots in the fall after the rains and before the frost. That way I make sure that I have enough supply for the winter to make my baskets," says Grandma to Small Number and Perfect Number when they entered the forest.

It is a misty morning and Small Number can smell the sweet scent of the forest. He hears how the birds sing to each other somewhere high in the trees. "What is behind those big trunks?" thinks Small Number and starts walking over the coarse woody debris on the forest floor. He moves between fallen dead trees and the remains of large branches until he reaches the group of trees standing by a creek bank. Small Number gets close to one of the trees and looks up, "How straight this trunk is! This tree must be at least 50 meters tall!" Then he looks down at the creek. Small Number's eyes widen and the beating of his heart fastens when he realizes that the creek is full of spawning salmon. "There must be thousands of fish here."

Small Number lifts his head and quickly steps back behind the tree. After a few moments, gathering all his courage, he peeks out at the other bank of the creek. There he sees a huge cedar tree and a black bear with her three cubs just under it. "So it is true that bears eat salmon," whispers Small Number. "This is the most exciting day of my life!"

"I told you to stay with me all the time, Small Number!" Small Number hears his grandma's quiet voice, coming just from behind him. He turns around and hugs grandma very tightly. "I love you

so much, grandma!" "I love you very much too, but please don't scare me like this again!" replies grandma.

During dinner back at grandma's house, Small Number cannot stop telling grandma and Perfect Number about his adventure. "I saw bears eating salmon under the biggest tree ever. The trunk of the tree was so big that I would need at least eight of my friends to hold their hands to get around it. I'll call it the Bear Tree!"

"Just don't tell Mom that I wandered through the forest on my own."

Question: How wide was the Bear Tree?