

by **LYND WARD**

the **BIGGEST BEAR**





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biggest
bear

BY LYND WARD

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Johnny Orchard lived on the farm farthest up the valley and closest to the woods.

On the hill behind the barn Johnny's grandfather had planted a few apple trees. These were the only apple trees in the valley, and they were known as Orchard's orchard.



Whenever Johnny went down the road to the store for a piece of maple sugar or something, he always felt humiliated. The other barns in the valley usually had a bearskin nailed up to dry. But never Johnny's barn.



Every fall for three years Mr. McLean had come in with a bear.



And one evening Mr. Pennell had just stepped out to the edge of his nearest field and shot three in a row as they came heading for the tall timber.



It is true that Johnny's grandfather had met a bear once when he was on the way back from picking apples. But he had gone in one direction while the bear had gone in another. When Johnny had asked him why, his grandfather had said, "Better a bear in the orchard than an Orchard in the bear." It was very humiliating.



Johnny said, "If I ever see a bear I'll shoot him so fast he won't know what hit him. And we'll have the biggest bearskin in the whole valley."



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