



# The Nail-Maker and the Bear

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In the heart of the Notranjska forests lies the charming village of Dobec, where small houses with thatched roofs line narrow, winding paths. Here, a hardworking blacksmith named Anton once lived, his hammer ringing through the quiet air as he shaped glowing iron into nails.



The villagers grew worried as bright sparks from Anton's anvil flew toward their dry straw roofs like tiny fireflies. To keep the village safe, they reached an agreement with the smith to move his forge to a deep limestone cave in the nearby hills of Gabrovca.



Anton moved his heavy tools into the cool cave, where he could strike the iron as hard as he liked without frightening anyone. He built a new hearth and a comfortable bed, and soon the cave echoed with the steady, rhythmic clanging of his creative work.



Every week, Anton traveled far and wide, carrying heavy bags of handmade nails to markets in Postojna and even as far as the busy port of Trieste. He was a man of great skill, and his nails were known for their exceptional strength throughout the countryside.



One dark evening, after a long and tiring journey home, Anton entered his cave and froze in surprise to find a massive brown bear resting near his hearth. The bear looked just as startled as the blacksmith, its golden eyes reflecting the dying embers of the forge fire.



With a trembling voice and a gentle hand, Anton reached into his pack and offered the bear a bowl of sweet dried pears and a bottle of delicious juice. He spoke softly to the beast, inviting his unexpected guest to share a simple meal instead of acting out of fear.



The bear, sensing Anton's kindness, approached slowly and began to eat the sweet treats with great delight. By the warmth of the fire, a strange and beautiful friendship was born between the lonely blacksmith and the powerful king of the forest.



The two became inseparable partners, with the bear learning to help in the forge by pumping the heavy leather bellows with its strong paws. The bear even learned to swing the great hammer, helping Anton craft the finest nails the village had ever seen.



While Anton traveled to distant towns to sell their hardware, the loyal bear stayed behind to guard the cave and all their belongings. The villagers often marveled at the sight of the gentle giant watching over the blacksmith's home with such quiet devotion.



Though many years have passed and Anton is long gone, the legend of the nail-maker and his bear lives on in the village of Dobec. To this day, the cave is still known as the Cvekar Cave, a lasting monument to a friendship that defied the laws of nature.