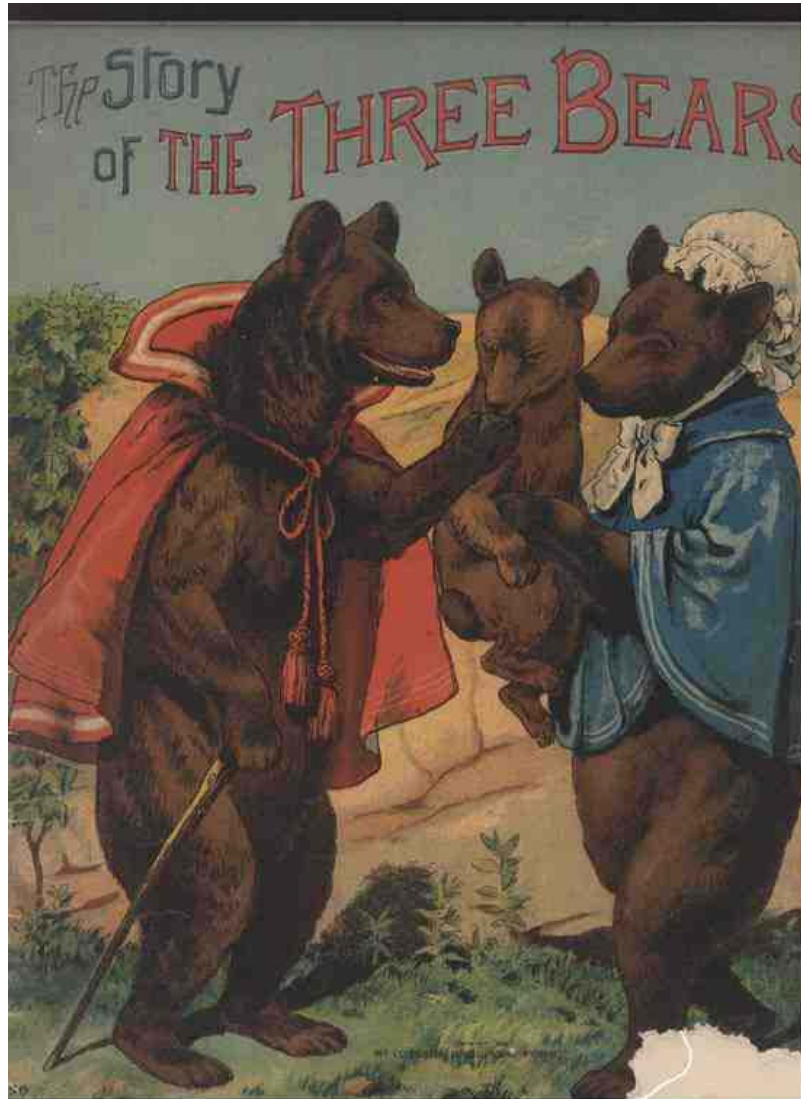


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# THE THREE BEARS



ONCE upon a time, in a thick forest, there lived three bears. One was a great big father bear, with a big head, and large paws, and a great voice.

The next was a mother bear, of middle-size, with a middle-sized head, and a middle-sized body, and a voice quite low for a bear.

The third bear was a funny little baby-bear, with a strange little head, a queer little body, wee bits of paws, and an odd little voice, between a whine and a squeak.

Now these three bears had a nice home of their own, and in it was everything that they needed. There was a great big chair for the big bear to sit in, a large porridge-pot from which he could eat his meals, and a great bed on which he laid himself to sleep at night.

The middle-sized bear had a middle-sized porridge-pot, and a bed and a chair to match. The wee little bear had a cunning little chair, a neat little bed, and a porridge-pot that held just enough to fill his little stomach.

There lived near the home of these bears a little child named Goldilocks. She was a pretty child, with bright yellow hair that shone and glittered in the sun like gold, and that is how she came to be called Goldilocks.



One day she ran off into the woods to gather flowers, and spent hours in making pretty wreaths and garlands of the blossoms and leaves she found there.

All at once she came to a queer sort of house, and she fell to wondering who lived in it. She peeped in first at one



window and then at another, but could see nobody.

Then she thought she would knock at the door; but as the knocker was beyond her reach, she had to break a twig from a bush to raise it. She knocked once—twice—thrice.

There was no reply, so Goldilocks, after a while, pushed open the door softly and timidly, and popped right into the bear's house. But the bears were not at home. After they had made the porridge for their breakfast, and poured it into their porridge-pots, they walked out into the woods, while the porridge was cooling, that they might not burn their mouths by beginning to eat it too soon.

Goldilocks was very much surprised when she came into the bears' room to see a great porridge-pot, a middle-sized porridge-pot, and a wee little porridge-pot standing in a row.

"Well," thought she, "some of the people who live here must eat a good deal more than the others. I'm just as hungry as I can be, and I guess I'll eat some of the porridge in this great big pot." She took a taste, but the porridge was so hot that she screamed, and made a spring that upset the pot, and it rolled on to the floor.

Then she took some of the porridge from the middle-sized pot, but found it so cold that









she pushed it from her with disgust, wondering how any one could eat such stuff.

There was only the little porridge-pot left, and Goldilocks tried that. It was just right; and she liked it so well that she ate up every bit there was, and wished for more.

In the meantime she had been looking around for a nice seat on which to sit down and finish eating the little bear's porridge. She came first to the great big chair, but that was much too hard.

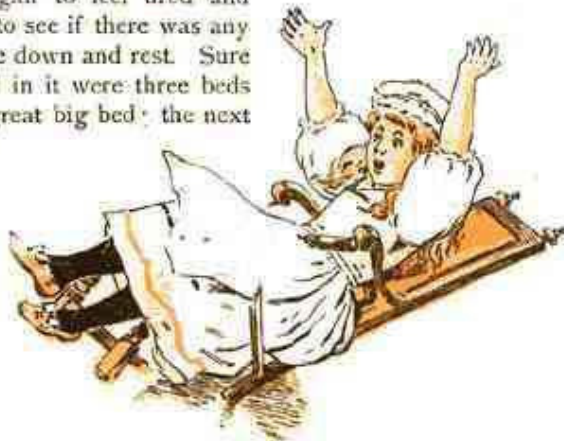
She next tried the middle-sized chair, which didn't suit any better; it was much too soft.

Then she cast her eyes around the room, and caught sight of a cunning little chair that looked as if it had been made expressly for some one about her own size. So she sat down in that, and liked it so well that she would have sat much longer than she did if the chair hadn't gone to pieces under her. She was more scared than

hurt when she picked herself up, and tried her best to put the chair together again; but it was of no use.

Presently Goldilocks began to feel tired and sleepy, and looked around to see if there was any room in which she might lie down and rest. Sure enough she found one, and in it were three beds side by side. One was a great big bed; the next a middle-sized bed; and the third a wee little bed; and they made her think of the three porridge-pots standing in a row.

First she lay down on the great big bed. There was plenty of room in it; but oh! it was as hard as a rock, and the pillow was much too high. So she





soon crawled out of that and went and lay down on the middle-sized bed. But, dear me! that was as much too soft as the other was too hard; and Goldilocks was buried so deep in it that she had hard work getting out again.

There was only the wee little bed left, and Goldilocks tried that. It just suited her in every way; so she covered herself up comfortably, and lay there 'till she fell fast asleep.

By this time the three bears thought their porridge would be cool enough, so they came home to breakfast. When the great big bear saw his porridge-pot lying on the floor, he roared out in his great rough, gruff voice:

“SOMEBODY HAS BEEN AT MY PORRIDGE!”

And he swung his great big cane around as if it were a club, and brought it down on the floor with a heavy thump, and with oh! such a fierce look in his eyes.

Then the middle-sized bear saw that her porridge-pot had been moved from its place, so she threw up her paws, and cried out, in a voice not quite so loud as the great bear's:

“SOMEBODY HAS BEEN AT MY PORRIDGE!”

Then the little bear went to his porridge-pot in a great flurry, and on finding it empty, cried out with a squeaking voice:

*“Somebody has been at my porridge, and has eaten it all up!”*







Then he stuffed his fore-paws into his eyes, and cried as hard as he could, for he thought it was a mean trick to serve him, just because he happened to be such a tiny little bear.

His papa and mamma were just as angry, and declared that they would punish severely the one who had played the trick, if they could ever catch him.

Presently the big bear went to sit down in his great big arm-chair, and found it was not as he had left it.

Goldilocks had neglected to put the cushion back in its place, and there it was all awry. So the great big bear growled out:

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN SITTING IN MY CHAIR!"

The middle-sized bear then went to her chair,

and found a great hollow in it where Goldilocks had sat down. So she scowled and growled, though not so loudly as the big bear:

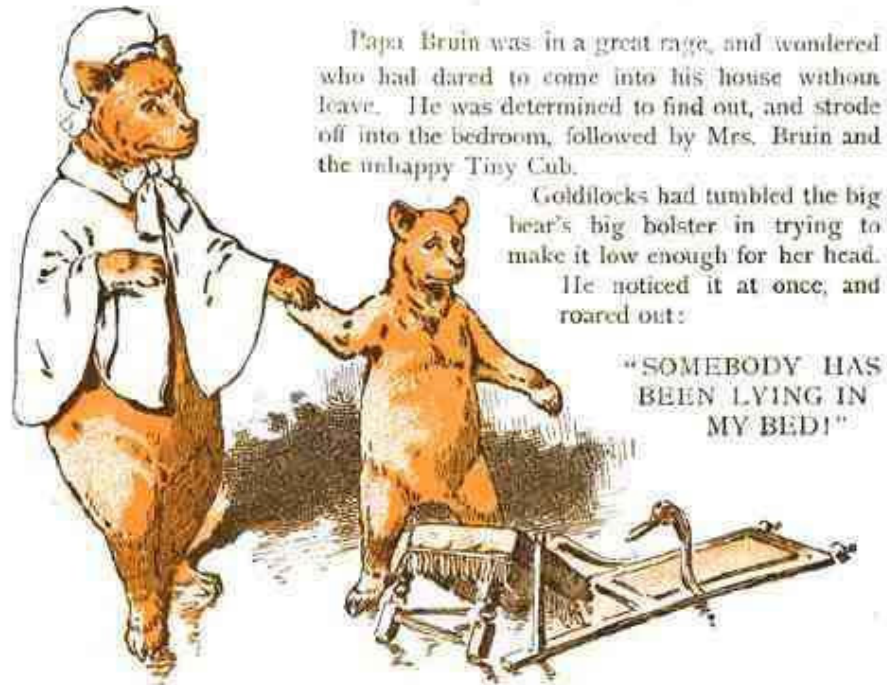
"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN SITTING IN MY CHAIR!"

This put the little bear in a fidget, for he knew what to expect. If this strange visitor, he thought, has done so much harm to the other chairs, he has probably broken mine all to pieces, for he seems to treat me worse than the rest, because I am so little.

So up jumped the little bear, and saw at a glance what had been done to the dear little chair of which he was so fond.

*"Somebody has been sitting in my chair, and has sat the bottom out of it!"*

he squeaked with a doleful wail, and then sat plump down on the floor to have his cry out.



Papa Bruin was in a great rage, and wondered who had dared to come into his house without leave. He was determined to find out, and strode off into the bedroom, followed by Mrs. Bruin and the unhappy Tiny Cub.

Goldilocks had tumbled the big bear's big bolster in trying to make it low enough for her head. He noticed it at once, and roared out:

**"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN LYING IN MY BED!"**

Then they went to the middle-sized bed, and that was full of humps and hollows, and looked so untidy that the mother bear scowled and growled—though not so loudly as the big bear:

**-SOMEBODY HAS BEEN LYING IN MY BED!"**

Then they passed on to the third bed. The coverlet was in its place, the pillow was there, and on the pillow lay the fair head of little Goldilocks. And she was sound asleep.

*"Somebody has been lying in my bed—and here she is!"*

shrieked the little bear in his shrillest tones.

The big bear, the middle-sized bear and the little bear stood with their mouths wide open, staring with surprise at the pretty child they found there.

The big bear had a tender heart, and felt quite ashamed of himself for having threatened to punish the one who had dared to enter his house.

Mrs. Bruin said: "Poor child! I'd like to give her a hug and a kiss, she







looks so sweet and good." And she regretted having made such a fuss over the porridge that had been touched, and the chair that had been sat in.

The little bear, however, was in great distress at the way in which he had been treated, and gave a most doleful whine.

Little Goldilocks had heard in her sleep the great rough, gruff voice of the big bear, but she was so fast asleep that it was no more to her than the roaring of wind, or the rumbling of thunder. And she had heard the middle voice of the middle-sized bear, but it was only as if she had heard some one speaking in a dream. But when she heard the little, squeaking whine of the little bear, it was so sharp, and so shrill, that it awakened her at once.

Up she started, and when she saw the big bear, the middle-sized bear, and the little bear peering at her in a strange way, she was scared nearly out of her wits. She understood at last who owned the three porridge-pots, the three chairs, and the three beds.

Now the window was open, because the bears, like good tidy bears, as they were, always opened their bed-chamber window when they got up in the morning, and with a

One, two, three, out goes she!

away went Goldilocks out through it, leaving a piece of her dress in the paw of the great big bear, who tried his best to catch her.

She fell plump on the ground, and had to sit still a few moments to find out where she was. But it seemed as if the woods were full of bears, and so she kept on running as hard as ever she could until she was well out of the forest, and in sight of her own home.

O what joy it was to be safe inside her own



home! And Goldilocks made up her mind never again to enter any one's house without being invited, and never to make herself quite so much at home as she did in the bears' house.

The three bears stared for some time out of the window from whence Goldilocks took her flight; and though at first they were quite angry with the little girl and ready to eat her up, they soon got over these bad feelings, remembering that it is wise to

#### BEAR AND FORBEAR.

And if you'll believe me, that little bear, who had made the biggest fuss, was just as proud as he could be to think that such a pretty girl had eaten his porridge—sat in his chair—and slept in his bed! Why, he actually hugged himself with delight! But as this feeling might not last long, I should advise you not to pry into other people's affairs; and if you go in the woods keep away from the house of

#### THE THREE BEARS



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