

Do you think that Goldilocks is a criminal?

## Goldilocks and the Three Bears

*Retold by Ardith Davis Cole*

There was once a little girl whose curls sparkled like gold. For that reason, everyone called her Goldilocks. This adventuresome, energetic child lived with her mother and father near a large, dense forest.

Now, Goldilocks's mother was a fearful sort and was forever cautioning her only child to be careful. She especially worried about the nearby forest, where she was certain all sorts of wild animals lurked, waiting to gobble up her sweet little girl. However, that very same woods appeared inviting to the young child, beckoning her to visit, explore, and play along its paths.

Therefore, one day when her mother was consumed with housework, Goldilocks scampered off to investigate the world outside her yard. Before long, she found herself amidst the birds and branches, the bugs and bushes—an interesting place, indeed. As she scurried along, noticing this and that, her attention was drawn to a small cottage in a clearing.

In that cottage lived three bears: Mama, Papa, and Baby. That same morning, as the bears were waiting for their porridge to cool, Baby Bear began to beg, "Walk? Walk? Walk?" So, Mama and Papa decided to let their breakfasts cool and grant Baby Bear her request.

So it was that when Goldilocks stood on tippy-toes to look in the cottage windows, there was no one to be seen. She next went to the entryway, and when she touched the door to knock, it opened a little. Considering this an invitation, she peeked inside. "Hello," she called out, but received no response.

"Hello-o-o-o!" she sang, this time a bit louder. But, still no one answered. So, she pushed the door ajar and walked into the cottage's cheerful kitchen.

When the little girl spotted the three bowls of porridge on the table, she realized how very hungry she was after her long walk. At first, she just sniffed, taking in the rich warmth of the cereal. But, when she could no longer resist, she tasted of the biggest bowl. "Oh! Too hot!" she cried to no one.

Having learned from Papa Bear's very hot bowl, she immediately noticed the steam rising from Mama Bear's bowl and thus circumvented it, as well. However, the third tiny bowl had no steam, and once she tried it, Goldilocks consumed the entire bowl in just a few minutes.

With the cavity in her belly now filled, the little girl ventured into the next room. There sat three chairs—one very large one, one midsized, and, in the far corner, a cute baby's rocking chair decorated with colorful flowers. Goldilocks decided to test the little one, but became so zealous in her rocking that she soon found herself on the floor with the chair around her in pieces. Disappointed, she tried to reconstruct the pieces—alas, to no avail.

By this time, she was becoming very tired, for the walk had been a long one. Yet, when she noticed the stairs, her adventuresome spirit rekindled her energy and up she went. At the top she found one huge room with three beds. There was an enormous bed that looked so inviting that she tried to pull herself up onto it, but it was far too high. Next she tried the somewhat large bed, which was covered with a beautiful quilt and many plump pillows; however, pull as she might, it too was much too high for her to summit. However, on the opposite side of the room she discovered a small cot covered with the most wonderful, pink blanket one could ever imagine. As she ran her hand across its inviting softness, she decided to just lie down for a minute or two. Alas, she fell sound asleep.

It was then that the three bears came home from their walk. They took one look at the kitchen table and knew they'd had a visitor. "Who's been eating our porridge?" they all shouted.

"And, Baby's porridge is all gone!" exclaimed Baby Bear.

Father Bear ran into the living room with Mama and Baby at his heels. "Oh, my!" cried Mama Bear.

"Someone's been sitting in my chair," they each shouted, echoing each other.

Then, between her tears, Baby Bear sobbed, "Baby's chair. All gone." She continued to cry, so to console her, Papa Bear picked her up. Then, he hugged her and said in a comforting manner, "It's all right. Papa will fix it. Don't cry."

However, considering how his home had been invaded, her father was growing ever so angry. He hurriedly turned to Mama and suggested, "Let's check upstairs." So, the three bears headed for the bedroom.

They dashed into the large room, anxious to discover what was going on. Papa immediately noticed his bed and gruffly grumped, "Someone's been in my bed."

About the same time, Mama also noticed the disheveled quilt and responded, "Someone's been in my bed, too."

Then, a very excited baby bear squealed, "Someone in my bed! Here he is!" All the commotion startled Goldilocks, who jumped up, took one look at those three incredulous bears, and ran from the house as fast as she could. She ran and ran and eventually ran right into the arms of her mother and father, who had decided to search the forest when they could not find their little girl.

The family hugged and kissed and kissed and hugged, they were so happy to see each other. Finally, when the excitement of their reunion began to wane, Goldilocks looked at her parents, and grateful to be rescued, vowed, "I will never, ever go into the forest alone again." And, they believed her.