

Father Bear

FATHER BEAR. So, what've you got for us today?

NICK. It's... *(Nick opens up the handbag and whips out the box. He thrusts it right up into Father Bear's face.)*

NICK. Porridge! *(Father Bear reacts like a vampire that's just had a cross held up before him.)*

FATHER BEAR. Aaaahhhhh! *(Father Bear quickly moves away from Nick.)*

MOTHER BEAR. Oh, dear! I love porridge and so does Jr., but Father absolutely hates it. Can't stand the sight nor smell of it. And every time we have it, the oddest thing happens: We go for a walk to let it cool off and when we come back, our house has been broken into.

NICK. *(Crossing to Father Bear, brandishing the porridge.)* Oh, how can that be? Somebody who doesn't like porridge? I've never heard of such a thing.

FATHER BEAR. Take it away, take it away!

NICK. But it's sooooo yummy! *(Nick opens the box and threatens to throw some on Father Bear.)*

FATHER BEAR. You couldn't! You wouldn't!

MOTHER BEAR. You shouldn't tease him like that. We used to have porridge all the time but just the other day, my box was stolen. *(Enter Baby Bear.)*

BABY BEAR. Mama, I want lunch. *(He looks at Nick.)* Who's the strange-looking man?

MOTHER BEAR. That's not a man, dear, that's a sales woman with a bad dye job.

NICK. *(Still threatening Father Bear.)* Are you sure you don't want some porridge?!

FATHER BEAR. No, no! I mean, yes, yes!

BABY BEAR. You big meanie, you leave my Daddy alone! *(Baby Bear runs at Nick and grabs him, pulling off the wig and/or dress.)*

MOTHER BEAR. Oh, my goodness, you are a man!
FATHER BEAR. What are you doing here? What do you

want?

NICK. A few answers and you're going to give them to me.

FATHER BEAR. Or else what?

NICK. Or else... porridge! Have you and Witch Thornberry been stealing things from other people's stories?

FATHER BEAR. I'm ain't saying nothin'! *(Nick chases Father Bear around, possibly through the audience. Baby Bear runs after them. Nick is throwing porridge, or confetti, at Father Bear.)*

MOTHER BEAR. Stop that! Stop that this instant! The two of you! I'm warning you! Leave the nice confused man alone! She's only trying to make a living! *(Exit.)*

BABY BEAR. I'll get him, Daddy! I'll stop him! *(Exit.)*

FATHER BEAR. You keep away from me with that stuff! *(Exit.)*

NICK. You come back here and tell me what I want to know! *(Exit. Finally, Nick corners Father Bear back on the stage.)*

FATHER BEAR. All right, all right, I've had enough! I'll talk!

MOTHER BEAR. Frank, what is all this about?

BABY BEAR. I've got him, Daddy, I've got him! *(Baby Bear is wrapped around Nick's leg.)*

FATHER BEAR. *(To mother.)* It was just a joke. We didn't mean any harm.

NICK. Spill it!

BABY BEAR. I won't let him get away! Bash him, Daddy, bash him good!

MOTHER BEAR. Play nice, dear, don't be too rough with the strange man.

FATHER BEAR. Last week, we had another incident with that Goldilocks breaking in. I got so upset, I went out for a walk and I found a tree stump with some honey in it.

What a treat! Much better than that dreadful porridge. I took a few handfuls and kept going until I happened by the candy house. Witch Thornberry was outside and she asked about using the honey to caulk up some cracks in her frosting gutters, they've been leaking something terrible, so we got to talking. She asked what was wrong and I told her I was tired of missing my dinner and having to replace broken chairs over and over again. She told me she had the same problem, children bothering her night and day so I said, "You know, if we could only get rid of the porridge and the bread crumbs, we wouldn't have this problem. We'd have a little peace in our lives." And she laughed and said she wouldn't even have to use any magic powers to do something like that, it would be simple enough to just take them. So she sent some house pixies out to steal the crumbs from Hansel's pockets and the next day when Mother made porridge and we went for our walk, Thornberry came by and took it all. Of course, I had to explain it somehow so I told the police our house had been broken into and the porridge stolen. Finally, we didn't have to worry about any nasty children interrupting us. It was wonderful, just like a lovely vacation!

NICK. But what about the other things — the glass slipper, the spindle, the spinning wheel?

FATHER BEAR. Oh, it just got out of hand. Once we started, we thought of all the other stuff we could take. Things just snowballed. We didn't hurt anybody, we didn't mean any harm.

MOTHER BEAR. Frank! That's terrible! *(Nick takes out the cryonoid note and shows the paw print on the back to Father Bear.)*

NICK. And I suppose it was you who wrote this and sent it to Miss Locks?

FATHER BEAR. *(Matching his hand the paw print.)*



Oops! Must be some honey stuck on my paw. Somebody had to take the fall and who better than the person responsible? It was a perfect plan. How'd you catch on to us?

BABY BEAR. Do ya want me to bite him, Dad? Do ya?

MOTHER BEAR. Oh, Frank, I'm so disappointed. Now you'll have a police record and I'll have to hang my head in shame at the PTA and J's friends will taunt him and we'll have to move and change our name. From now on, we'll be known as the Pandas or the Teddys or something horrible like that.

NICK. I'm sure the police will let him off with a warning if he gives everything back. And he'll have to tell them about Witch Thornberry, of course.

FATHER BEAR. We were going to return it all eventually.

NICK. So, where'd you stash the goods?

FATHER BEAR. In this old tree stump. *(Father Bear reaches inside or lifts up the stump but there's nothing there.)*

FATHER BEAR. Oops.

NICK. What'd you mean, oops?

FATHER BEAR. There's nothing here! Everything's gone! Someone must have stolen it all!

NICK. Again? Oh, swell. No sooner do I think I've got this case closed than it opens back up again.

FATHER BEAR. I feel terrible. Who could have taken it?

MOTHER BEAR. Squirrels, maybe. *(Everyone looks at Mother Bear.)*

MOTHER BEAR. Well, they hide nuts everywhere. Maybe they thought these were some strange kind of... oh, never mind.

BABY BEAR. Mama, I want lunch.

MOTHER BEAR. Of course you do, dear. Go in and get washed up. *(Baby Bear exits. To Nick.)* Well, miss, uh, mister...