The Porridge Trauma Incident

In the fable of Goldilocks, a family of three bears live in a house in the woods, which they leave unlocked when they go out for a walk. Goldilocks enters the house and meddles with the bears' belongings, sampling their porridge (eating all of the baby's), sitting on their chairs (breaking the baby's), and then trying out their beds (falling asleep in the baby's). Goldilocks is still asleep in the baby's bed when the bears return home. They wake her up and scare her away.

The fable might have ended differently these days. Mother or Father BEAR is sitting on a deckchair on the upper deck of a cruise liner, talking to another passenger.

BEAR: So I said to her: “Listen, you can’t come breaking into someone’s house, eating their porridge, smashing up their furniture and squatting in their beds and expect to get away with it.”

She didn’t have much colour before, but she went very pale at that.

“She’s been breaking into someone’s house, eating their porridge, smashing up their furniture and squatting in their beds and expect to get away with it.”

She was beginning to cry now and to tell you the truth I was feeling a bit sorry for her, but I stuck to my guns. “Do you realise what this has done to my son, how traumatised Baby Bear is?” I said. “I’m thinking of calling my solicitor and getting him to sue for compensation for mental anguish to a small bear. It could take him years to recover. That was his favourite chair and he’s scared to go upstairs now. How would you feel if you found someone sleeping in your bed? And he can’t bring himself to eat porridge any more. Too many memories. The claim could run into millions. Your Dad would soon be selling his golf clubs and his convertible.”

Well, to cut a long story short, we didn’t have to get a solicitor. And we’re really enjoying this cruise. All around the Greek islands we’ve been. I could get used to a life of luxury.

by Eleanor McLeod

“And a convertible!”

“And a convertible and a gardener and a nanny.”

She nodded.

“So what’s a wealthy young lady like you doing stealing other people’s porridge?” I asked her. “Doesn’t your mother make you any?”

“No. She can’t cook. I’m sorry, I was just hungry and it smelt so good.”

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