

= Goldilocks and the Three Bears =

" Goldilocks and the Three Bears " and the older " The Story of the Three Bears " are two variations of an old fairy tale . The original tale tells of an ugly , old woman who enters the forest home of three bachelor bears whilst they are away . She sits in their chairs , eats some of their porridge , and falls asleep in one of their beds . When the bears return and discover her , she starts up , jumps from the window , and is never seen again . The other major version brings Goldilocks to the tale ( replacing the old woman ) , and an even later version retained Goldilocks , but has the three bachelor bears transformed into Papa , Mama , and Baby Bear .

What was originally a fearsome oral tale became a cosy family story with only a hint of menace . The story has elicited various interpretations and has been adapted to film , opera , and other media . " The Story of the Three Bears " is one of the most popular fairy tales in the English language .

= = Plot = =

In Southey 's tale , three anthropomorphic bears ? " a Little , Small , Wee Bear , a Middle @-@ sized Bear , and a Great , Huge Bear " ? live together in a house in the woods . Southey describes them as very good @-@ natured , trusting , harmless , tidy , and hospitable . Each of these " bachelor " bears has his own porridge bowl , chair , and bed . One day they take a walk in the woods while their porridge cools . A woman approaches the bears ' house . As she has been sent out by her family , since she is a disgrace to them . She is described at various points in the story as impudent , bad , foul @-@ mouthed , ugly , dirty , and a vagrant deserving of a stint in the House of Correction . She looks through a window , peeps through the keyhole , and lifts the latch . Assured that no one is home , she walks in . The old woman eats the Wee Bear 's porridge , then settles into his chair and breaks it . Prowling about , she finds the bears ' beds and falls asleep in Wee Bear 's bed . The climax of the tale is reached when the bears return . Wee Bear finds the old woman in his bed and cries , " Somebody has been lying in my bed , ? and here she is ! " The old woman starts up , jumps from the window , and runs away never to be seen again .

= = Origins = =

The story was first recorded in narrative form by British writer and poet Robert Southey , and first published anonymously in 1837 in a volume of his writings called The Doctor . The same year , British writer George Nicol published a version in rhyme based upon Southey 's prose tale , with Southey approving Nicol 's attempt to give the story more exposure . In 1849 , Joseph Cundall introduced a pretty little girl to the story and dispensed with the old woman . Cundall believed there were already too many tales with old women playing roles in the narrative .

The story of the three bears was in circulation before the publication of Southey 's tale . In 1813 , for example , Southey was telling the story to friends , and in 1831 Eleanor Mure fashioned a handmade booklet about the three bears and the old woman for her nephew 's birthday , In 1894 , " Scrapefoot " , a tale with a fox as antagonist that bears striking similarities to Southey 's story , was uncovered by the folklorist Joseph Jacobs and may predate Southey 's version in the oral tradition . Southey possibly heard " Scrapefoot " , and confused its " vixen " with a synonym for an unpleasant malicious old woman . Some maintain however that the story as well as the old woman originated with Southey .

" The Story of the Three Bears " experienced two significant changes during its early publication history . The intrusive little girl was given various names referring to her hair until Goldilocks was settled upon once and for all in the early 20th century . Southey 's three bachelor bears evolved into Papa , Mama , and Baby Bear over several years .

In 1837 , Robert Southey published " The Story of the Three Bears " in his collection of essays and miscellanea entitled The Doctor . The tale was not an original creation by Southey , but was a retelling of a story that had long been in circulation . Southey had been telling the story to others as early as September 1813 , and in 1831 Eleanor Mure versified the tale as a birthday gift for her

nephew Horace Broke .

Southey and Mure differ in details . Southey 's bears have porridge , but Mure 's have milk ; Southey 's old woman has no motive for entering the house , but Mure 's old woman is piqued when her courtesy visit is rebuffed ; Southey 's old woman runs away when discovered , but Mure 's old woman is impaled on the steeple of St Paul 's Cathedral .

Southey most likely learned the tale as a child from his uncle William Tyler . Tyler may have told a version with a vixen ( she @-@ fox ) as intruder , and Southey later confused vixen with a common appellation for a crafty old woman . P.M. Zall writes in " The Gothic Voice of Father Bear " ( 1974 ) that " It was no trick for Southey , a consummate technician , to recreate the improvisational tone of an Uncle William through rhythmical reiteration , artful alliteration ( ' they walked into the woods , while ' ) , even bardic interpolation ( ' She could not have been a good , honest Old Woman ' ) " . Ultimately , it is uncertain where Southey or his uncle learned the tale .

The same year Southey 's tale was published , the story was versified by George Nicol who acknowledged the anonymous author of The Doctor as " the great , original concocter " of the tale . Southey was delighted with Nicol 's effort to bring more exposure to the tale , concerned children might overlook it in The Doctor . Nicol 's version was illustrated with engravings by B. Hart ( after " C.J. " ) , and was reissued in 1848 with Southey identified as the story 's author .

Folklorists Iona and Peter Opie point out in The Classic Fairy Tales ( 1999 ) that the tale has a " partial analogue " in " Snow White " : the lost princess enters the dwarfs ' house , tastes their food , and falls asleep in one of their beds . In a manner similar to the three bears , the dwarfs cry , " Someone 's been sitting in my chair ! " , " Someone 's been eating off my plate ! " , and " Someone 's been sleeping in my bed ! " The Opies also point to similarities in a Norwegian tale about a princess who takes refuge in a cave inhabited by three Russian princes dressed in bearskins . She eats their food and hides under a bed .

In 1865 , Charles Dickens referenced a similar tale in Our Mutual Friend , but in Our Mutual Friend , the house belongs to hobgoblins rather than bears . Dickens ' reference however suggests a yet to be discovered analogue or source . Hunting rituals and ceremonies have been suggested and dismissed as possible origins .

In 1894 , the illustrator John D. Batten reported a variant of the tale at least 40 years old . In this version , the three bears live in a castle in the woods and are visited by a fox called Scrapefoot who drinks their milk , sits in their chairs , and rests in their beds . This version belongs to the early Fox and Bear tale @-@ cycle .

= = Later variations : Goldilocks = =

Twelve years after the publication of Southey 's tale , Joseph Cundall transformed the antagonist from an ugly old woman to a pretty little girl in his Treasury of Pleasure Books for Young Children . He explained his reasons for doing so in a dedicatory letter to his children , dated November 1849 , which was inserted at the beginning of the book :

The " Story of the Three Bears " is a very old Nursery Tale , but it was never so well told as by the great poet Southey , whose version I have ( with permission ) given you , only I have made the intruder a little girl instead of an old woman . This I did because I found that the tale is better known with Silver @-@ Hair , and because there are so many other stories of old women .

Once the little girl entered the tale , she remained ? suggesting children prefer an attractive child in the story rather than an ugly old woman . The juvenile antagonist saw a succession of names : Silver Hair in the pantomime Harlequin and The Three Bears ; or , Little Silver Hair and the Fairies by J.B. Buckstone ( 1853 ) ; Silver @-@ Locks in Aunt Mavor 's Nursery Tales ( 1858 ) ; Silverhair in George MacDonald 's " The Golden Key " ( 1867 ) ; Golden Hair in Aunt Friendly 's Nursery Book ( ca . 1868 ) ; Silver @-@ Hair and Goldenlocks at various times ; Little Golden @-@ Hair ( 1889 ) ; and finally Goldilocks in Old Nursery Stories and Rhymes ( 1904 ) . Tatar credits Flora Annie Steel with naming the child ( 1918 ) .

Goldilocks 's fate varies in the many retellings : in some versions , she runs into the forest , in some she is almost eaten by the bears but her mother rescues her , in some she vows to be a good child ,

and in some she returns home . Whatever her fate , Goldilocks fares better than Southey 's vagrant old woman who , in his opinion , deserved a stint in the House of Correction , and far better than Miss Mure 's old woman who is impaled upon a steeple in St Paul 's church @-@ yard .

Southey 's all @-@ male ursine trio has not been left untouched over the years . The group was re @-@ cast as Papa , Mama , and Baby Bear , but the date of this change is disputed . Tatar indicates it occurred by 1852 , while Katherine Briggs suggests the event occurred in 1878 with Mother Goose 's Fairy Tales published by Routledge . With the publication of the tale by " Aunt Fanny " in 1852 , the bears became a family in the illustrations to the tale but remained three bachelor bears in the text .

In Dulcken 's version of 1858 , the two larger bears are brother and sister , and friends to the little bear . This arrangement represents the evolution of the ursine trio from the traditional three male bears to a family of father , mother , and child . In a publication ca . 1860 , the bears have become a family at last in both text and illustrations : " the old papa bear , the mama bear , and the little boy bear " . In a Routledge publication c 1867 , Papa Bear is called Rough Bruin , Mama Bear is Mammy Muff , and Baby Bear is called Tiny . Inexplicably , the illustrations depict the three as male bears .

In publications subsequent to Aunt Fanny 's of 1852 , Victorian nicety required editors to routinely and silently alter Southey 's " [ T ] here she sate till the bottom of the chair came out , and down came her 's , plump upon the ground " to read " and down she came " , omitting any reference to the human bottom . The cumulative effect of the several changes to the tale since its original publication was to transform a fearsome oral tale into a cozy family story with an unrealized hint of menace .

= = Interpretations = =

Maria Tatar in *The Annotated Classic Fairy Tales* ( 2002 ) notes that Southey 's tale is sometimes viewed as a cautionary tale that imparts a lesson about the hazards of wandering off and exploring unknown territory . Like " The Tale of the Three Little Pigs " , the story uses repetitive formulas to engage the child 's attention and to reinforce the point about safety and shelter . Tatar points out that the tale is typically framed today as a discovery of what is " just right " , but for earlier generations , it was a tale about an intruder who could not control herself when encountering the possessions of others .

In *The Uses of Enchantment* ( 1976 ) , the child psychologist Bruno Bettelheim describes Goldilocks as " poor , beautiful , and charming " , and notes that the story does not describe her positively except for her hair . Bettelheim mainly discussed the tale in terms of Goldilock 's struggle to move past Oedipal issues to confront adolescent identity problems .

In Bettelheim 's view , the tale fails to encourage children " to pursue the hard labor of solving , one at a time , the problems which growing up presents " , and does not end as fairy tales should with the " promise of future happiness awaiting those who have mastered their Oedipal situation as a child " . He believes the tale is an escapist one that thwarts the child reading it from gaining emotional maturity .

Tatar criticizes Bettelheim 's views : " [ His ] reading is perhaps too invested in instrumentalizing fairy tales , that is , in turning them into vehicles that convey messages and set forth behavioral models for the child . While the story may not solve oedipal issues or sibling rivalry as Bettelheim believes " Cinderella " does , it suggests the importance of respecting property and the consequences of just ' trying out ' things that do not belong to you . "

Elms suggests Bettelheim may have missed the anal aspect of the tale that would make it helpful to the child 's personality development . In *Handbook of Psychobiography* Elms describes Southey 's tale not as one of Bettelheimian post @-@ Oedipal ego development but as one of Freudian pre @-@ Oedipal anality . He believes the story appeals chiefly to preschoolers who are engaged in " cleanliness training , maintaining environmental and behavioral order , and distress about disruption of order " . His own experience and his observation of others lead him to believe children align themselves with the tidy , organized ursine protagonists rather than the unruly , delinquent human antagonist . In Elms 's view , the anality of " The Story of the Three Bears " can be traced directly to

Robert Southey 's fastidious , dirt @-@ obsessed aunt who raised him and passed her obsession to him in a milder form .

= = Literary elements = =

The story makes extensive use of the literary rule of three , featuring three chairs , three bowls of porridge , three beds , and the three title characters who live in the house . There are also three sequences of the bears discovering in turn that someone has been eating from their porridge , sitting in their chairs , and finally , lying in their beds , at which point is the climax of Goldilocks being discovered . This follows three earlier sequences of Goldilocks trying the bowls of porridge , chairs , and beds successively , each time finding the third " just right " . Author Christopher Booker characterizes this as the " dialectical three " , where " the first is wrong in one way , the second in another or opposite way , and only the third , in the middle , is just right . " Booker continues " This idea that the way forward lies in finding an exact middle path between opposites is of extraordinary importance in storytelling " . This concept has spread across many other disciplines , particularly developmental psychology , biology , economics and engineering where it is called the " Goldilocks Principle " .

= = Adaptations = =

Kurt Schwertsik 's 35 @-@ minute opera Roald Dahl 's Goldilocks premiered in 1997 at the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall . The opera 's setting is the Forest Assizes where Baby Bear stands accused of assaulting Miss Goldie Locks . The tables are turned when the defense limns the trauma suffered by the bears at the hands of that " brazen little crook " , Goldilocks .

In Rooster Teeth Productions RWBY , Yang Xiao Long is a carefree , reckless yellow @-@ haired girl . She is a " rule @-@ breaker " who likes teddy bears . She is an allusion to Goldilocks which is reflected in her name , translated from Chinese as " sun " , referring to the color yellow . Also , in her trailer , Yang confronts Hei " Junior " Xiong , whose name is Chinese for " black bear . " Combining this with his nickname , he alludes to the Baby Bear .

" Goldilocks Eats Grits " has the bears living in a cave in Georgia in the United States .  
in 2016 Bray Wyatt reads a dark version to Edge and Christian