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Dramatic Publishing

THE TRIAL OF GOLDILOCKS

by

Joseph Robinette



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(THE TRIAL OF GOLDBLOCKS)

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THE TRIAL OF GOLDBLOCKS

A One-Act Play in Verse
For 14 (or more) Actors*

CHARACTERS

THREE VENDORS**

COURT CLERK

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

DEFENSE LAWYER

GOLDBLOCKS

MAMA BEAR

PAPA BEAR

BABY BEAR

JUDGE

JURORS (six or more)

POLICEMAN (optional)

*All roles except for Mama Bear, Papa Bear and Goldilocks may be played by males or females.

**May double as jurors.

THE SETTING: A courtroom.

THE TIME: Today...or Once Upon a Time.

THE TRIAL OF GOLDBLOCKS is also available as an operetta with music by Robert Chauls and libretto by Joseph Robinette.

A Note to the Director and Actors

While *THE TRIAL OF GOLDBLOCKS* is written in verse, care should be given to avoid delivering the lines in a “sing-song” rhythmic pattern and punctuating the rhyming words. Insofar as possible, the lines should be delivered in normal “dialogue” fashion. The audience will be—and should be—aware that this is a verse play, but the rhythm should be underplayed, just as a good drum-beat sets the cadence—but doesn’t “take over”—in a band or orchestra. Similarly, the rhyming words should fall gently on the ears, as feathers—not hammers.

THE TRIAL OF GOLDILOCKS

SETTING: *A courtroom. At C is the JUDGE's bench. At L is the JURY box. At R is the CLERK's station. UL and UR respectively are the PROSECUTOR's and LAWYER's tables. THREE VENDORS enter from various locations in the theatre house and begin to hawk their wares to the AUDIENCE.*

FIRST VENDOR *(carrying a tray of items).*

Souvenirs, Souvenirs!
Get your souvenir here!
A miniature bowl
Like the one Goldilocks stole
The porridge from
Just put a penny in my palm!

SECOND VENDOR *(holding up pieces of wood from a crate).* Mementos, mementos!

Much better than those souvenirs.
I have pieces of the actual chair
That belonged to Baby Bear –
The chair that Goldilocks crushed to bits.
The price is nice – it's just two bits!

THIRD VENDOR *(pulling cloth goods from a basket).*

I have keepsakes to enthrall.
The best collectibles of all –
Quilts and linens from the beds
Where the Bears lay down their heads.

You can get 'em while they're hot –
Just a dollar takes the lot!

ALL VENDORS (*alternating lines as they vie for “customers”*). Souvenirs, Souvenirs!

Mementos, Mementos!
Keepsakes, Collections!

Forget the rest –
I've got the best selections!

Buy from me!

I guarantee!

What you get is what you see!

Take mine!

No, Mine!

Get mine!

(They begin to argue and scuffle as the CLERK, harried and upset, enters the courtroom.)

CLERK (*to the VENDORS*). Clear the court!

Please clear the court

Or I'll report you to the authorities!

Our priorities here are much more important than
a cheap keepsake or souvenir.

So would all of you please quickly disappear?

(The VENDORS exit grumbling as the CLERK addresses the AUDIENCE.)

Now if I may kindly have your attention!

As the clerk of this court it is my duty to mention

That we have a trial today –

A trial of grave concern

In which we all shall learn

The fate of a young girl.

It seems she took a whirl in the wood
And before long, in all likelihood,
She wandered alone
Into a home not of her own.

Now we shall soon see
If she will go free
Or directly to prison be sent.

(DEFENSE LAWYER is entering.)

DEFENSE LAWYER. She is innocent!

I say innocent!
She did not do the deed.
“Not guilty,” we shall plead.
There’ll be no punishment.

CLERK. This is the lawyer who’ll defend the young girl.

Every argument he’ll unfurl
Will be met with great elocution
By the attorney for the prosecution.

(PROSECUTING ATTORNEY is entering.)

PROSECUTOR. She is guilty!

I say guilty!
I shall prove that this child,
So willful and wild,
Deliberately did it—you’ll see.

CLERK. Next are the people who’ll decided

The winner when the case has been tried.
With wisdom and vision
They’ll hand their decision
To the judge who will preside.

(JURY is entering.)

JURY. Good citizens are we,
Doing our duty.
We've departed from our journeys
Just to hear these smart attorneys,
And that makes us a good jury!

CLERK. And now, may we all rise
And welcome the most wise
Member of the court —
A man of great import —
Free of malice, greed or grudge,
I now present the judge! *(A pause.)*
I now present the judge!

(ALL look in various directions for the JUDGE.)

Oh, fudge.
I forgot...his honor is a little hard of hearing.
He responds best to loud noises like cheering.
Let's all yell together as one.
We'll do it in perfect unison.

ALL *(cheering loudly, then chanting).*
Here comes the judge.
Here comes the judge.
Maybe this will make him budge —
Here comes the judge!

(The JUDGE, robed and wigged, enters. Hard-of-hearing, he carries an ear-trumpet which he frequently uses.)

JUDGE. I declare...I felt a nudge inside.
It must be time for the judge to preside.

CLERK. Good thinking, your lordship.

JUDGE *(alarmed)*. I'm sinking aboard a ship?

CLERK. No, your honor.

JUDGE. I'm a goner? On a sinking ship?

I've got to get a grip!

I can't swim—or even float.

Somebody fetch a big lifeboat!

CLERK. No, no, your honor, it's nothing of the sort.

JUDGE. You say you've got a wart?

CLERK (*exasperated*). We're not sinking...we're in court!

JUDGE. Oh...now that I've heard *that* report,

I can safely say—"Order in the court!"

(*He slams down the gavel as ALL sit.*)

Order in the court!

PROSECUTOR. Two hamburgers, please, a shake and a

fry—

Some cookies sound good, some cake and some pie.

(*The JURORS shush him.*)

Oh, sorry, I just had a hunch

That maybe it was time to eat lunch.

LAWYER. Is that so?

Well, forget it, fatso.

PROSECUTOR (*advancing toward the DEFENSE LAW-*

YER). Why, you skinny wimp!

LAWYER. Stay away, you chinny blimp!

CLERK (*separating them*). Please!

At ease.

Kindly stop this stalling,

And refrain from rude name-calling.

(*The LAWYER and PROSECUTOR return to their posts.*)

At last we have order in the court.

We must proceed, for time is short.

The lawyers are at their stations

To begin their assertions.

The jury is settled in its box.
The judge is poised as justice knocks

At the long-awaited, long-debated, celebrated
Trial of Goldilocks!

*(GOLDBLOCKS enters in chains, perhaps accompanied
by a POLICEMAN.)*

GOLDBLOCKS. Oh, woe is me!

Oh, woe is me!

JURY *(sympathetic)*. Oh, woe is she!

Oh, woe is she!

LAWYER *(rushing to GOLDBLOCKS's side)*.

A victim of great notoriety,
Unfairly condemned by society!

PROSECUTOR *(to the LAWYER)*.

You'll never, no never, annul
The deeds of this vile criminal.
The real victims of this sad affair
Are poor Mama and Papa and wee Baby Bear.

(The BEARS enter.)

BEARS. Oh, woe are we!

Oh, woe are we!

JURY *(suddenly sympathetic to the BEARS)*.

Oh, woe those three,

Oh, woe those three.

*(The JURY, GOLDBLOCKS and BEARS continue to re-
peat, "Woe is me (we), etc.," as the PROSECUTOR and
LAWYER argue.)*

PROSECUTOR and LAWYER (*alternating lines*).

Guilty is she!

Guilty those three!

She didn't do it!

When we've been through it, you'll see!

It wasn't her fault!

She's guilty of assault and battery!

No, no, no!

You know it's so!

JUDGE. Whoa, Whoa!

I'll run this show.

(*ALL quickly sit. The BEARS and GOLDBLOCKS join the PROSECUTOR and LAWYER respectively.*)

CLERK. The trial's begun.

Hear what the judge has to say.

JUDGE. Thank you, son.

Who are you anyway?

CLERK. I'm the Clerk.

JUDGE. You're a jerk? (*The JURY laughs.*)

CLERK (*exasperated*). A clerk!

JUDGE. Oh, that's a good sport.

Now let's see – did I report

That we shall have order in the court?

(*He slams the gavel down.*)

PROSECUTOR. A ham on rye, please

And maybe add a slice of cheese.

To drink, a great big glass of punch.

(*Again, the JURY shushes him.*)

Oh...still not time for lunch?

JUDGE. Now I'll ask the jerk – uh, the clerk –

To pass out copies of the case

So we will know exactly what we face.

(The CLERK hands copies of the “case” to the JUDGE, JURY, LAWYER and PROSECUTOR.)

CLERK. Just as you say, sir.

To this brief we will refer.

The first page tells the story we’ve all heard.

Page two – the Bears’ tale word-for-word.

And the girl’s defense is on the third.

So follow along and read with me

These stories of Goldilocks and the Bears three.

Listen to each tale carefully

To see with which you agree.

The first one we surely all know by heart,

But still let’s review it to give us a start.

JURY *(reading in unison, or the narrative lines may be assigned individually).*

The Bears made some porridge, but it was too hot.

So into the woods they went for a trot.

(In an open area of the courtroom, MAMA BEAR mimes setting bowls of porridge on an imaginary table as PAPA BEAR and BABY BEAR look on.)

BABY BEAR. Mmm. This porridge makes me drool.

MAMA BEAR. But first I think it needs to cool.

PAPA BEAR. Then let’s go for a walk, we three.

BABY BEAR. I’d rather watch T.V.

MAMA BEAR. Sorry to disappoint you, my pet,

But T.V. hasn’t been invented yet.

BABY BEAR. Then maybe I could watch a *pre-run*.

MAMA BEAR. A *pre-run*...isn’t he fun.

PAPA BEAR. Let’s go, Son. *(They exit.)*