

GENRE

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

By **Wade Bradford**

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GENRE

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SYNOPSIS: Written in the style of Wade Bradford's earlier play, *Conflict*, this new comedy explores the many different storytelling styles. *Genre* begins as a simple and familiar fairy tale told to an obnoxiously spoiled Prince. Then, when the royal majesty becomes bored, the narrator is forced to constantly change the genre of the story. It's all fun and games until the Prince becomes stuck in the story!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(THREE MEN, TWO WOMEN, ONE EITHER)

NARRATOR (m/f)A professional storyteller. (79 lines) A professional storyteller.

PRINCE (m).....Spoiled and impatient. (69 lines)

MAMA BEAR (f)(35 lines)

PAPA BEAR (m).....(39 lines)

BABY BEAR (m).....(34 lines)

GOLDILOCKS (f).....(43 lines)

NOTE: The personalities of Goldilocks and the Bears change depending on which “genre” is being performed.

SET

The set can be very simple. We need some chairs, a table, and bowls for the Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Other than that, little is needed.

AT RISE:

A spoiled brat of a PRINCE sits in a throne-like chair. His feet dangle above the floor.

PRINCE: Narrator!

NARRATOR: *(The NARRATOR approaches respectfully.)* Yes, sire?

PRINCE: Is the story about to begin?

NARRATOR: If you wish it.

PRINCE: I do wish it.

NARRATOR: Then it is about to begin.

PRINCE: If the story is to begin, shouldn't the lights be dimmed?

NARRATOR: Yes, sire. *(The lights dim.)*

PRINCE: And shouldn't I be clapping?

NARRATOR: Shall I clap for you, sire?

PRINCE: *(Raises his hands in the air.)* Immediately. *(The NARRATOR steps next to the PRINCE or behind and claps the PRINCE's hands together several times.)*

PRINCE: Enough! Why isn't the audience clapping?

NARRATOR: *(To the AUDIENCE.)* Before the story begins, his royal highness summons your applause. *(Hopefully the AUDIENCE claps a little.)*

PRINCE: Tell them they must be more enthusiastic than that. *(The NARRATOR turns back to the AUDIENCE and politely signals for more applause.)*

PRINCE: Now, that's too much! This audience better be on good behavior or I shall make direct eye contact with them.

NARRATOR: I am sure they understand, sire.

PRINCE: They had better. *(Turns up his nose. If anyone in the AUDIENCE chuckles or makes a noise, he will suddenly give the AUDIENCE the "evil eye," a glare that intends to be intimidating but will really look quite hysterical.)*

PRINCE: Narrator! What is the name of this story?

NARRATOR: The title is being place as we speak, sire.

GENRE

Two PLAYERS enter. They carry an easel that holds all of the title cards which will be used in the following scene. Each title card should be large enough for the AUDIENCE to clearly see and each word on the card should be written in large, clear letters. The first title card reads: "GENRE."

PRINCE: Oh, you expect me to read? I want to be entertained; I don't want to think. (*Looks at title, struggles to pronounce.*) "Guh-in-ree?" "Ginre?" "Juh-Nair?" "Jenner?"

NARRATOR: Genre.

PRINCE: What an idiotic title! I don't like it. I don't like it at all! Narrator, I shall destroy this title! (*He takes off the title card and tries to rip it in two. It's too difficult for him.*)

NARRATOR: Shall I help you, sire?

PRINCE: I can do it all by myself. (*The PRINCE struggles and the NARRATOR steps behind him. The NARRATOR gently holds the PRINCE's wrists and pulls the card apart. The title card underneath appears blank.*)

PRINCE: See, I told you. Now, oh dear, there's no title. (*The PRINCE points to the blank title card on the easel.*)

NARRATOR: Allow me. (*The NARRATOR flips the blank card to reveal a new title. The NARRATOR reads aloud:*)

NARRATOR: "Goldilocks and the Three Bears." (*Four PLAYERS enter, ready to begin the performance.*)

PRINCE: What sort of a story is that? (*The NARRATOR removes the "Goldilocks" title card to reveal a new one. This one reads:*)

NARRATOR: "A Fairy Tale."

PRINCE: Oh. You may proceed. (*As the NARRATOR speaks, the four PLAYERS, GOLDILOCKS, PAPA BEAR, MAMA BEAR, and BABY BEAR, act out the story.*)

NARRATOR: Once upon a time, there was a curious little girl named Goldilocks.

GOLDILOCKS: (*Curtsies and waves girlishly to the AUDIENCE.*) Hello, everyone!

NARRATOR: Her parents were much too busy with their household chores around the cabin, so she decided to go skipping through the woods.

GOLDILOCKS: (*Cheerfully skipping.*) Skippity, skippity, skippity, skip.

NARRATOR: Meanwhile, deep in the heart of the forest lived three bears. Papa Bear, (*PAPA BEAR yawns and stretches in a manly sort of way.*) Mama Bear, (*MAMA BEAR yawns and stretches in a motherly sort of way.*) and Baby Bear. (*BABY BEAR yawns and stretches in an adorable sort of way.*)

NARRATOR: They awoke and prepared for breakfast.

PAPA: What's for breakfast, Mama Bear?

MAMA: Delicious porridge, Papa Bear.

BABY: (*Sweetly.*) May we eat, now, Mama? My tummy is growling. (*PAPA and BABY BEAR sit down. MAMA BEAR brings them each a bowl.*)

MAMA: Here we are, my family. (*Tests the porridge.*) Oh dearie me. I'm afraid the porridge is too hot.

PAPA: I think you are right, Mama Bear. Let us go for a walk and when we return the porridge will be just right.

NARRATOR: And so, they went marching into the woods, waiting for their breakfast to cool down. And just as they were gone, Goldilocks arrived at their door.

GOLDILOCKS: Yoo-hoo. Is anyone home? What an adorable little cottage. I wonder who lives here. Mmm...I smell porridge!

NARRATOR: Goldilocks couldn't resist trying the porridge. First, she tasted from Papa Bear's bowl.

GOLDILOCKS: Oh dear, it's much too hot.

NARRATOR: Then she tried the porridge from Mama Bear's bowl.

GOLDILOCKS: Brr! It's much too cold!

NARRATOR: And then she tasted the porridge from Baby Bear's bowl.

GOLDILOCKS: Mmm! It's just right!

PRINCE: (*Interrupting.*) Wait a moment, wait a moment. (*GOLDILOCKS freezes just as she was about to take another bite.*)

PRINCE: This fairy tale is ridiculously unrealistic.

NARRATOR: Because it has talking bears?

PRINCE: No, the temperature of the porridge! How could the father bear's porridge be scalding hot and the mother's porridge is insufferably cold? It was cooked in the same pot! I shall not tolerate such nonsense.

NARRATOR: Would you prefer a different story?

PRINCE: It's not so much the story as it is the style. I want more realism.

NARRATOR: Ah, then you don't want a fairy tale. *(The NARRATOR removes the "Fairy Tale" title card, revealing the new one underneath. The new card reads: "Drama.")*

NARRATOR: You want a drama.

PRINCE: Yes... *(Struggling to read.)* A Dram-Ah...

NARRATOR: Once upon a time! *(Stops himself.)* Forgive me, force of habit. *(Starts again.)* Yesterday, there was a serious young woman named Goldilocks.

GOLDILOCKS: *(Very serious.)* Hello, everyone.

NARRATOR: Her parents didn't pay very much attention to her because they were too busy arguing over child custody. So she decided to skip school.

GOLDILOCKS: *(Very serious.)* Skippity, skippity, skippity, skip. *(Exits.)*

NARRATOR: Elsewhere, a family of bears woke up.

PAPA: What's for breakfast?

MAMA: Make it yourself!

PAPA: I work twelve hours a day, and I can't even wake up to a bowl of warm porridge?!

MAMA: You call that so-called job of yours work? You wander around looking for honey and stealing picnic baskets!

PAPA: Oh, so now I'm a thief? I provide for this family. What do you do? That's what I want to know!

MAMA: I cry myself to sleep every night! There, are you happy?! *(BABY BEAR walks onto the stage.)*

BABY: What's for breakfast?

MAMA AND PAPA: Make it yourself!

BABY: Fine! I will! *(Sits down with bowl.)* I wish I could hibernate for the rest of my life.

PAPA: (*PAPA and MAMA sit down with their own bowls.*) What are you muttering about?

BABY: None of your business.

PAPA: (*Tasting the porridge.*) Ow! It's too hot! What are you trying to do, burn my tongue off?

MAMA: I'm just glad I can feel something.

PAPA: It's like molten lava. We won't be able to eat this for hours. What do we do now, stare at the walls?

BABY: Better than staring at you.

PAPA: What did you say to me?!

MAMA: Let's get out of this miserable place for a while. It's almost time for Junior's appointment.

PAPA: Fine, let's go.

NARRATOR: So the family left for Baby Bear's therapy session with Mr. Owl. And as soon as they were gone, Goldilocks—

PRINCE: Wait, wait. This is depressing! Can't we liven things up a bit? You know, put in some laughs.

NARRATOR: Ah, sire, then what you want is a comedy. (*The NARRATOR removes the "Drama" title card to reveal "Comedy."*)

NARRATOR: Goldilocks walked into the cabin. (*GOLDILOCKS enters wearing a funny wig, silly tie, and a tutu or anything thing else silly that is easy to take on and off.*)

GOLDILOCKS: Yuck, yuck, yuck, it's me: Goldiluck! (*She looks around the area.*) These bears didn't touch their breakfast. This porridge must be unbearable! Ha, ha! Smells good. (*Sneezes.*) Achoo! Oops, I forgot, I'm allergic to porridge. You may think it's funny, but it's snot. Hey, what do you get when a bear catches swine flu? Furry bacon. Hey, what did Elvis say to the porridge? (*Singing, Elvis impersonation.*) "Don't be gruel." (*Sung like "Don't Be Cruel."*)

PRINCE: Narrator! Make her stop!

NARRATOR: The sign says comedy. But it doesn't say a good comedy.

PRINCE: Well, there must be a better sort of comedy than this. (*The PRINCE takes away the title card to reveal a new one: "Romantic Comedy."*)

GENRE

NARRATOR: Romantic comedy. (*PAPA enters, being careful not to touch anything. His back is to GOLDBLOCKS.*)

MAMA: (*From offstage or outside the imaginary door.*) Darling, don't touch the furniture with those sticky paws.

PAPA: Just let me wash off this honey, and I'll return to our romantic picnic. (*PAPA BEAR turns. GOLDBLOCKS and PAPA BEAR gasp at each other.*)

PAPA: A beautiful woman!

GOLDBLOCKS: A handsome bear! (*PAPA BEAR tries to push her out of the room, worried that MAMA BEAR will discover her in their house.*)

PAPA: Miss, I don't know who you are, but you can't be here. If my wife sees you, she'll think—

GOLDBLOCKS: Get your paws off of me!

PAPA: Please, you must get out of my cabin!

GOLDBLOCKS: (*Now his paws are stuck on her.*) I can't! I'm stuck! (*Now they are stuck together in a compromising position.*)

PAPA: Oh no! The honey!

MAMA: (*Entering.*) Yes, sweetheart? (*She is shocked by what she sees.*)

PAPA: This isn't what it looks like. (*He tries to push GOLDBLOCKS away, but they wind up sticking closer together.*)

MAMA: Oh, Papa Bear! How could you?

PAPA: Mama Bear! You're the only one I love!

MAMA: Then what's she doing here? (*BABY BEAR enters. He wears sunglasses and looks hip and cool.*)

PAPA: Hi, Mom. Hey, Pops. Whoa! What's happening here?

MAMA: Junior!

PAPA: What are you doing home?

MAMA: You're supposed to be away at college.

BABY: They expelled me for being too cool. Hey Pops, who's your golden-haired friend?

GOLDBLOCKS: (*Flirty.*) Hello.

BABY: (*Equally flirty.*) Hello.

MAMA: She's a homewrecker!

BABY: Don't mind them. You know how parents are. It's a pleasure to meet you. (*BABY BEAR kisses her hand slowly. His lips get stuck on her hand.*)

MAMA: Get this woman out of our house!

PAPA: I can't!

MAMA: Why not?

PAPA: Honey!

MAMA: Don't you honey me! (*When the PRINCE speaks, the players freeze in their positions.*)

PRINCE: Oh, I like this romantic comedy. I feel like clapping. (*He feebly claps. The NARRATOR assists him with clapping.*)

PRINCE: Tell me, narrator, is it about to get violent?

NARRATOR: That would be a different sort of comedy, sire.

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