The Three Bears

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The Costume Box
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Chapter 1

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When Jamie became a world-famous actor, he knew he would never tell anyone that his first big role was as Little Bear in Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Maybe he could mention being in it as a sort of ‘from humble beginnings' thing, but the actual role would go unmentioned. It had taken a lot to convince everyone that Little Bear was just as good a name as Baby Bear and even then, he wasn't thrilled to be Little Bear.

“I auditioned for Papa Bear.”

“Yes.” Mrs. DeMarco the director agreed. “But that's part of acting. You don't always get the role you want.” She chuckled. “Can't have two Papa Bears with one Mama Bear, now can we?”

“I thought you were… y'know, casting a kindergartener.”

“I thought so too, but I think it'll be better with one of my older actors as Baby Bear.”

At first, Jamie tried to make the most of it. After all, Little Bear and Papa Bear had a lot of the same lines, just said at different times. But though he scored the win with getting the role's name changed, he found that Little Bear was still very little.

“Let's open with Little Bear sitting on Papa's lap.” Mrs. DeMarco suggested.

“Why?” Jamie asked, but Mike slid his hands under Jamie's arms and pulled him into his lap.

“How's this?” Mike asked. Mrs. DeMarco gave the thumbs up.

“Alright, opening music plays,,, and action!”

“How did you sleep, my Little Bear?” Mike said gruffly.

“Good, Papa.” Jamie replied.

“Cut!” Mrs. DeMarco came onto stage. “Jamie, don't try and copy Mike's voice. You're Little Bear, so make sure it's a little voice.”

“Uh, so…” He cleared his throat and tried for a falsetto. “Good, Papa.”

“No, not quite. We don't want it cartoony. Just use your regular, speaking voice.” Mike snorted and gave Jamie in his lap a little bounce.

“At least that's easier than trying to do a bear voice the whole time.” He whispered. Jamie was not so sure.

“From the top!”

“How did you sleep, my Little Bear?”

“Good, Papa.”

“Why don't you go see what Mama's doing?” Jamie slid out of Mike's lap and hurried over to the kitchenette where

Rachel, who was playing Momma Bear, stood, miming dishing up porridge.

“Which one's mine, Mama?”

“Good morning, Little Bear.” She said, also doing a growling voice. “We have a big bowl for Papa, a medium bowl for Mama, and an itty bitty bowl for Little Bear.”

It would take quite a few rehearsals before Mrs. DeMarco made her final changes. By the time she was done, Jamie sat in Mike's lap, had his face wiped by Rachel, and even Bethany, their Goldilocks, got to apologize for upsetting such a cute little cub. Zack the stage manager even suggested that Jamie suck his thumb, but thankfully, Mrs. DeMarco shot that down. Despite that, Jamie could not help but feel that he was the littlest Little Bear possible.

Finally, the day of dress rehearsal arrived. Jamie and Mike went into one dressing room with the girls going into another.

“Nervous?” Jamie asked Mike.

“It's just dress rehearsal.” Mike shrugged. “Hey, we're the same age, right?”

“Yeah.”

“So we wouldn't want anyone to confuse us, right?”

“Like that'll happen.” Jamie said with a snort. Mike was so much taller than him. He'd been the tallest one in their class since elementary school.

“Well, just in case, I thought we'd make some changes to the Baby Bear costume.”

“We changed it to Little-” Jamie's voice trailed off as Mike pulled a white rectangle out of his backpack. “No. No way.” Mike stared down at him, then burst out laughing.

“God, wish you could see your face. Dude, I was just joking Let's get changed before Mrs. DeMarco sends that Zack kid in here to check on us.”

“Yeah.” Jamie said, turning his back to get undressed and into the furry brown jumpsuit. He did not even notice Mike coming up behind him until it was too late.

“Hold still!” Mike said as if Jamie was the one being unreasonable. He flipped him over onto his stomach and tugged down his underwear.

“Stop! What are you doing?” Mike's only answer was three firm slaps to Jamie's naked butt. ”Ow! What the fu-”

“You've got two choices.” Mike said. “Either you wear the diaper or I take you out there naked.”

“But-” he thought over his options. The diaper would be under his costume, right? No one would know. “Fine. I'll wear it.”

“Good.” Mike released his pressure and unfolded the diaper. “I'm gonna diaper you, then I'll get dressed. You're gonna stay right here like a good Baby Bear and then I'll help you with the rest.”

“It's-”

“It's Baby Bear. I don't care what old version you found. You're Baby Bear.” He blasted Jamie's crotch with powder and then taped the diaper around his waist. “Stay or else you'll be Naked Bear.”

Mike got dressed quickly, but then tied and re-tied the necktie for Papa Bear three times. He grinned at the waiting Jamie.

“Your turn.” The furry brown jumpsuit stayed where it was on the floor as Mike outfitted Jamie in the bear paw slippers, a pair of brown gloves just like his, and then a bib and baby bonnet. Jamie fought back tears as it sunk in that this was all he would be wearing. Mike put a spot of black greasepaint on his nose and then pushed a pacifier into his mouth.

Knock! Knock!

“Coming” Mike called, pleased by the impeccable timing. He picked up Jamie, chuckling as he squirmed and fought. “They're gonna love you.”

The pair came out of the dressing room with Jamie still trying to get out of Mike's arms. Rachel and Bethany waited for them.

“Oh, my god.” Bethany said. “He's… he's”

“Adorable!” Rachel cooed. Mike proudly pulled Jamie away from his chest so they could better see him.

“I think he really does look like Baby Bear.” Bethany said.

“It was a really good idea, Jamie.” Rachel said. Jamie stared at her. She thought this was his idea?

“Did you roll up your boxers?” Bethany asked, eyeing the diaper closely.

“He's in just a diaper.” Mike said with a chuckle. “But more importantly, we couldn't decide. Baby bonnet or naw?” Rachel looked him over, still unable to get over how adorable he looked. She had not realized he had a soft little belly, just like a baby.

“It's tough.” She said. “Maybe we let Mrs. DeMarco decide?”

“What? She can't see me like this!”

“She's going to have to. We're doing costume checks, remember?” Bethany said.

“And besides, I feel pretty silly in this get-up.” Rachel said, giving her apron a flick.

“But you don't have to wear a diaper.”

“I'm not playing Baby Bear.” She said with a wink.

“Can we get Goldilocks and the Three-” Zack's voice trailed off as he saw Jamie in Mike's arms.

“We're on our way.” Mike said. Jamie squirmed, but it was no use. He was about to debut his humiliating costume.

Mrs. DeMarco, the consummate professional, examined Jamie's costume thoroughly, even making him turn in a circle as if to see every angle of his diaper.

“Hmm… the bonnet.” Jamie felt a surge of relief. “I'm worried it'll hide his face.” He reached up to undo the strings under his chin. “So, what we'll do is he'll start with it off and then Papa, you'll put it on him for the walk. Then we'll take it off once we're back home.”

“Sounds good to me.” Mike said.

“Though those little chestnut curls coming out the top are adorable. We'll have to get a photo with the bonnet for the program.” She quickly scribbled a note on her memo pad. “Now, the pacifier.” She looked down at Jamie. “Can you enunciate with it?”

“Good, Papa.” It was his first line, but he realized he had sealed his fate as Mrs. DeMarco nodded.

“Alright, pacifier can stay in.” She tapped her pencil on the pad. “But maybe you could spit it out in shock when you first see your porridge is gone?” Jamie nodded. That seemed reasonable. “All in all, great costumes, all around.” She looked over the four of them. “Goldilocks, just be sure to fix your wig for the show.” Bethany blushed and nodded. “Alright, let's run the show!”

As they took their places, Mike pulled out the back of Jamie's diaper.

“Don't you poop while you're on my lap.” Jamie tried to glare at him, though the thick lace of the bonnet made it impossible to see him. Weren't they supposed to take it off until the walk? The opening music began and Mike began to bounce

Jamie on his lap in time with the music. These were not the subtle bounces of rehearsal. As the lights came up, Jamie was a bouncing Baby Bear.

“How did you sleep, Baby Bear?”

“Good, Papa.”

“Why don't we go see what Mama's doing?” Jamie did not catch the subtle line change, so he was surprised when Mike stood up and carried him over to Rachel.

“Which one's mine, Mama?” Jamie asked around the pacifier as Mike held him out toward Rachel.

“Good morning, Baby Bear.” She said, blowing an improvised kiss at him “We have a big bowl for Papa, a medium bowl for Mama, and an itty bitty bowl for Baby Bear.” She swung at Papa Bear's paw with her spoon. “But we need to wait for it to cool. We're good, civilized bears.”

They went for their walk, Goldilocks came, and then the bears returned. Jamie was relieved that Rachel took the bonnet off.

“Someone's been eating my porridge.”

“Someone's been eating my porridge.” Jamie had a stroke of genius. He could spit out his pacifier here and just leave it!”

“Someone's been eating my porridge.” He declared, pacifier tumbling to the table. “And it's all gone.” He gave an exaggerated pout toward the audience, same as any of the previous rehearsals. This time, however, Rachel grabbed the

pacifier and pushed it lovingly into his pouting lips.

“Don't cry, sweetheart.” She cooed.

Mrs. DeMarco made them run through their performance twice more. On run two, Rachel forgot to take the bonnet off of him, so he threw it on the floor in outrage when he found out someone had been sitting in his chair. To his relief, it stayed on until Mike put it on him for their morning walk in run three. Finally it was time to turn to the Three Little Pigs. Jamie was relieved he got to walk until he had to crinkle past the kindergarteners in their rubber pig snouts.

“What do you think, Jamie?” Rachel asked, pulling him out of his thoughts. “You'd be the one in it.”

“What?”

“He wasn't listening.” Mike teased. “Rachel was thinking we should find a baby carriage for you for the walk.”

“He probably likes being held.” Bethany said with a smirk.

“I definitely do not.” He declared, marching to the dressing room to take the diaper off.

Opening night came and Jamie bashfully acquiesced to his diapering. He could not decide if it was more or less humiliating to put the bib and bonnet on himself, but he started with the paws.

“Oh, not those gloves.” MIke said. “I got you these.” He patted a pair of thick bear paws. “You might need help.” In fact, Jamie definitely needed help, both getting them on and

doing anything once they were on. He could barely even move his fingers!

“I don't need the bonnet right away!” He protested, swinging his giant mitts around.

“This is just so we don't lose it.” Mike said.

“You really expect me to believe that?” Mike snorted.

“Such a clever Baby Bear.” He said, but the bonnet remained on as they found Rachel and Bethany.

Backstage was abuzz with opening night jitters, but Jamie could only dangle from either Mike or Rachel's arms. They seemed to pass him back and forth as if they really were his parents. Even during the huddle before showtime, Jamie was in Mike's arms, grumbling as Zack pointed to everyone.

“Alright, we've got Jesse and Carrie, Aaron, Emily, Bethany, Rachel, Mike, Baby Bear, Dylan…”

“We're about to go on.” Mike whispered to Rachel. “Pass me the baby.” Jamie groaned as Mike took him and pulled out the back of his diaper again. “Rachel! He's soggy!”

“You are?” Bethany asked with wide eyes.

“I'm just kidding, Beth.” Mike rolled his eyes. “He's not really a baby.” For the next few minutes, Jamie doubted that as he was once again bounced and carried before a full house. The baby carriage never materialized, but the bonnet did not come off after the walk. Before long, however, they were all gathered in the bedroom for Goldilocks to apologize.

“I really am sorry. You all seem like such nice bears and I never meant to hurt such a sweet little baby.” Jamie glared daggers at her, for once grateful that his bonnet hid the not so babylike expression on his face.

“What are we gonna do for bows?” Rachel asked once they got backstage and through the kindergarteners snickering at Jamie's babyish appearance. Mike shrugged.

“We gotta do something fun!” Bethany insisted.

“Maybe we all bow and Jamie blows kisses?” Rachel said. “he's kinda the breakout star, isn't he?”

“Maybe we just do normal bows?” Jamie suggested, stung by the realization he wouldn't be able to change until after the curtain call and then meeting the audience out in the lobby.

“I guess.” Mike said with a shrug. Rachel and he exchanged a look.unted

“What does that mean?” Jamie asked irritably.

“Nothing.” They said innocently.

The end of the show came and they were about to run out when Rachel grabbed Jamie and carried him with her. She held him in one arm, no small feat, and curtsied with her apron with the other. Jamie, unsure of what to do, brought his plush mitt to his pacifier and mimed kisses.

“Good baby.” Rachel cooed.

Jamie's feet didn't touch the floor again until they were out in

the lobby for meet and greets. Rachel had been right; Jamie was the star as every little kid seemed to want to meet him. Other members of the cast began to wander backstage as he had to answer question after question, his bonnet flopping as he nodded again and again. Finally, he was able to make it backstage.

“There you are!” Mike said, already totally changed. “The perils of fame, huh?” Jamie only grunted. “Come on, you enjoyed it. You blew kisses.”

“I didn't know what else to do.”

“Well, only a week of shows left.”

“Don't remind me.”

“Hey, it's not so bad.” Mike said. “Aren't you glad I told Mrs. DeMarco you would be the perfect Baby Bear?”

“You what?”

“Oh, yeah. She was all set for you as Papa Bear and some kindergartener – Billy or someone? The kid who played the Baker in Rub-A-Dub-Dub, as Baby Bear. Anyway, I told her you thought I did well as Papa Bear and you'd be willing to be Baby Bear.”

“You what?” Jamie repeated. Mike smirked.

“Not everyone can pull off a diaper.” He said as he walked out the door, leaving Jamie to wonder just what that meant.