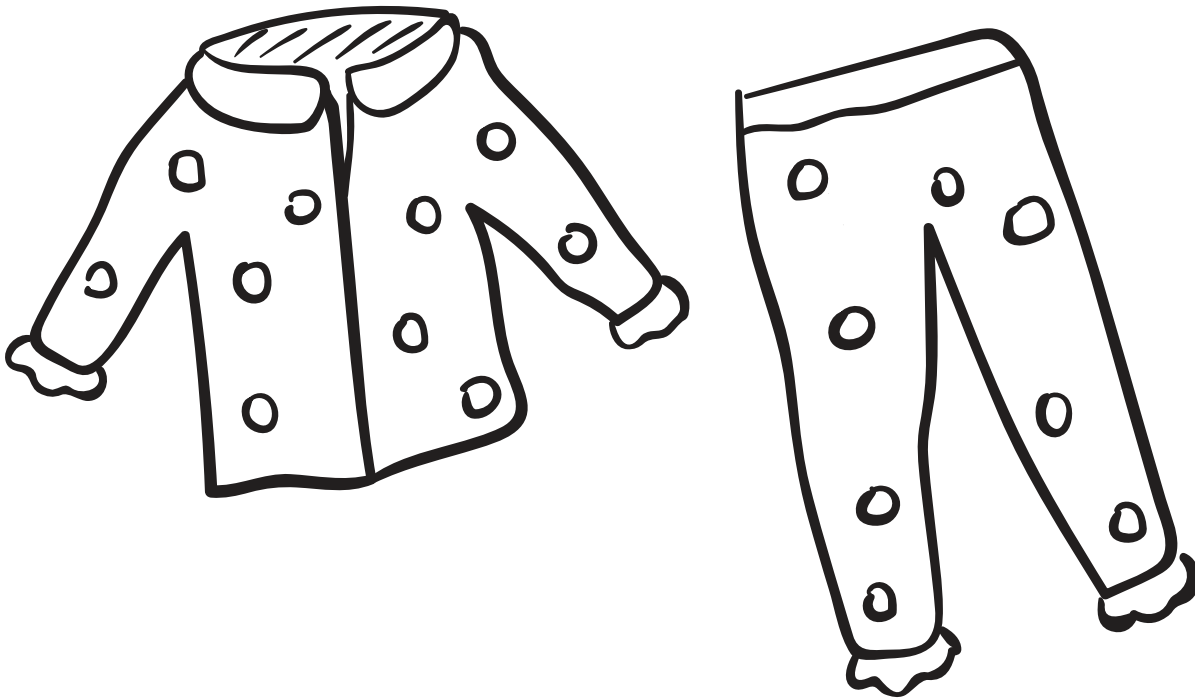


Bedtime for Ben and Bella

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Once upon a time there was a brother and sister called Ben and Bella. As a matter of fact, they were twins, which means they were born at almost the same time, and they were both five years old. Bella and Ben never got lonely, because they always had each other to play with. They also had someone to argue with, and they did that quite a lot too.

Sometimes they argued with their Mummy too, which wasn't very nice of them. They were particularly naughty when their Mummy wanted them to go to bed.

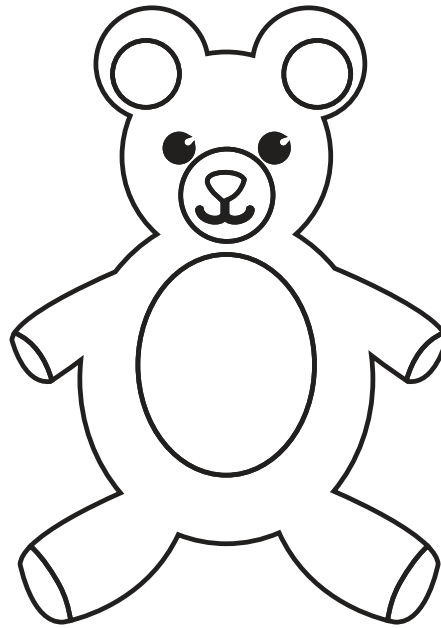
One night, their Mummy said to them, 'Ben and Bella, it's time for bed, so let's go upstairs. I've bought you both some new pyjamas. The orange ones are for Bella, and the green ones for Ben.'

Bella and Ben followed their Mummy upstairs, and she took out the new pyjamas.

But Ben said, 'I don't want to get into my pyjamas. I don't like green pyjamas.' And Bella said, 'I don't want to get into these pyjamas, either. I don't like orange pyjamas.'

Their Mummy said, 'All right, Bella. You can have the green pyjamas and Ben, you can have the orange pyjamas.'

Ben and Bella both sat on their beds and looked at each other, and then Bella said, 'I don't want plain pyjamas, so I don't want to wear them.' And Ben said, 'I don't like plain pyjamas either, so I don't want to wear them.'



Their Mummy said, 'As a matter of fact, Ben and Bella, these are not plain pyjamas. They have teddy bears all over them.' So Bella and Ben looked carefully at the pyjamas, and Mummy was right. There were lots of teddy bears jumping and dancing and running all over the pyjamas.

Then Ben said, 'I don't want to get into my pyjamas, because I am the oldest, so I can stay up later than Bella.' And Bella said, 'But I am the tallest, so I should stay up later than Ben.'

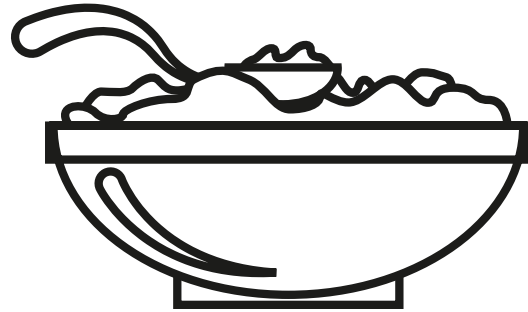
And their Mummy said, 'As you are the oldest, Ben, and you are the tallest, Bella, you must both go to bed at the same time.'

Then Ben said, 'I don't want to get into my pyjamas and go to bed, because going to bed is boring.' And Bella said, 'I don't want to get into my pyjamas either, because I think going to sleep is boring.'

And their Mummy said, 'Now listen, Bella and Ben. Going to bed will not be boring because as soon as you put your new pyjamas on and get into bed, I will tell you a story. And going to sleep will not be boring either, because these pyjamas are like magic and when you put them on, you'll go to sleep and dream lovely things. After you've put them on, and after I've told you a story, I will go downstairs. I will come back up in a little while, and see if you're asleep, but I'm really, really sure that by then, you will be dreaming of a wonderful, magic place.'

Ben and Bella liked their Mummy's stories, which she told them nearly every night. And when their Mummy was busy, their Daddy told them a story. So it was naughty of them to make a fuss about going to bed. But when they heard that their pyjamas were like magic and they would make them have lovely dreams, they thought that after all, they would put them on. So Bella put on the green pyjamas and Ben put on the orange pyjamas, and they each got into their beds, and listened while their Mummy told them a story.

Then their Mummy went out of the room, and turned out the light, and almost immediately, Ben and Bella found they were in a lovely garden with big white daisies with yellow centres growing up on either side of the garden path. And at the end of the path was a house. It was not a very big house, because it was not as big as the house they lived in. But it was not a very small house, because it was much bigger than the doll's house they sometimes played with. So, as a matter of fact, it was just right.



Now I wonder if you can guess what house Bella and Ben had discovered. Have you heard the story of The Three Bears? If you have, you won't be surprised to hear that the house at the end of the garden path that Ben and Bella had found was the house that the Three Bears lived in. And when Bella and Ben walked down the path with daisies growing up on either side of it, they saw a little girl with very yellow hair, sitting by the front door, crying.

Ben and Bella, who were very kind children, really, went up to the little girl, and asked, 'What is your name, little girl?'

And the little girl with the yellow hair, said, 'My name is Goldilocks.'

And Ben and Bella, told the little girl their names, and asked her, 'Why are you crying, Goldilocks?'

And the little girl said to them, 'I'm crying because I ran away from my Mummy and Daddy, and I wanted to find another house to live in, and then I found this lovely house, with three plates of porridge on the table, and one plate was just right, so I ate it all up.'

'Then what happened?' asked Bella, and the little girl said, 'I tried out all the chairs, but only one was comfortable, and when I sat down on it, it broke, and I fell on the floor.'

'Then what happened?' asked Ben, and the little girl said, 'I felt very tired, so I tried out all the beds, and only one felt comfortable, so I climbed into it and fell asleep.'

'And what happened next?' asked Bella and Ben, together.

The little girl, whose name was Goldilocks told them, 'The Three Bears came home and I heard them shouting downstairs, and then they came upstairs, and found me in bed, and they were very cross with me. Even the Littlest Bear, looked very big and angry, and they growled at me, and told me to go away. So I came out here, to get away from them, and now I have nowhere to go.'

Bella said to the little girl, 'Why can't you go home to your Mummy and Daddy?'

And little Goldilocks replied, 'My Mummy grumbled at me because I wouldn't go to bed, even though she'd told me a story. And my Daddy grumbled at me because I was cheeky to my Mummy, when she told me to go to bed. So now I can't go back home. I wouldn't do what my Mummy told me to do, and I was cheeky to my Daddy. So I don't think my Mummy and Daddy like me any more.'



And Ben and Bella, who were very sensible children, really, told Goldilocks that they were sure her Mummy and Daddy still liked her very much indeed, and would like her to come home.

But little Goldilocks didn't want to go home, because she thought her Mummy and Daddy would grumble at her. So Ben and Bella, who were very kind children really, said they would go with Goldilocks to her house.

Off they went with little Goldilocks and very soon they came to a lovely garden with big red daisies with yellow middles growing up on either side of the garden path. And at the end of the path was a house. And Bella and Ben followed Goldilocks up the path, and her Mummy and Daddy were waiting for her. When they saw her, they were very happy, and they were very pleased that Ben and Bella had come home with her.

They asked Bella and Ben to come in and they made tea for everyone. But first they telephoned Ben and Bella's Mummy to tell them where they were. Ben and Bella and Goldilocks each had orange juice, and egg and cress sandwiches and a banana and a piece of cake.

But do you know what? Just when their plates were empty, Ben and Bella found themselves in their own bedroom, and it was time to get up. They hadn't been to meet Goldilocks and they hadn't had tea in her house, and Goldilocks' Mummy and Daddy hadn't phoned their Mummy and Daddy either, because, all the time, Bella and Ben were in their own beds.

'That was exciting,' said Bella to Ben. 'I think I'm going to like wearing these pyjamas and going to visit Goldilocks every night.'

But there was one more surprise.

Ben looked at the magic pyjamas and said, 'I don't think there are teddy bears on our pyjamas, after all.' And Bella looked at the pyjamas and said, 'I think there are sheep on our pyjamas.' And Ben said, 'I wonder where our magic pyjamas will take us tonight.' And Bella said, 'I can't wait to put them on, and see where they take us.'

And after that, Ben and Bella were always very good at going to bed, because they never knew what adventures they would have when they put on their magic pyjamas.

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