

Bogart the Bumbling Bear

a very beary tale

Bumbling Bogart

Humph! It's Bogart!

The Beary Tale

Prologue

Bogart bumbled down the Grouse Mountain Grind, loosening pebbles that scattered ahead of him. Bogart didn't mind. He had the whiff of salmon in his big black nose and he was hungry. Hikers scattered like the pebbles, but the only notice he gave was a disgusted, "Humph!"

He headed towards some houses at the base of the trail. Another fishy whiff brought a gleam to his black "beary" eyes and he padded faster through backyards to find his dinner.

CHAPTER 1

Papa Lockes hated being late to anything, especially to the Chamber of Commerce's annual benefit.

"Go get dressed," he told Mama Lockes after dinner. "You take forever to choose the right dress and we have to be early for good seats!" Looking indignant, Mama started gathering the dishes. "The children and I will tidy up." Papa said.

Mama glanced doubtfully at her daughter, Gilda, named after her favorite actress, and then at her son, Shamus, who was daydreaming.

"You look wonderful in pink!" hinted Papa. Mama sighed and went upstairs. Papa said, "Shamus, stack the dishes! Goldie, put the food away! I'll load the dishwasher after I find my black shoes." Papa left, too.

CHAPTER 2

Still in a daydream starring himself as Sherlock Holmes, Shamus automatically cleared the table. "Goldie", Gilda's nickname from school, tidied the blue napkins and abruptly realized she hadn't painted her toes to match her blue sandals.

"Eeek!" she squeaked. "What if Justin Timberlake is at the benefit? I gotta look cool!" She took her polish onto the deck and concentrated on creating blue toes. She was

unaware that a black shadow was watching her with beady, black eyes from behind the Rhododendron bush.

Meanwhile, Shamus noticed the leftover strawberries. He grabbed the honey bottle, squirted some on the berries and polished them off.

Papa's call roused the two from their tasks. "C'mon, Shamus! Goldie, close the back door! Hurry-up! We're late!"

Goldie recapped her polish and grabbed her blue sandals. Walking on her heels, toes spread, sandals in one hand and polish in the other; she tried to close the sliding door. Hands and feet occupied, she "bummed" it closed with a bang! She flicked the latch down with her elbow. Satisfied, she hobbled towards the front door unaware that the deck door had bounced ajar and was still open a crack.

Shamus fetched his detective kit. He might solve a crime at the benefit.

Papa called, "Lock the front door!" Shamus locked it with his Sherlock skeleton key! Finally the car rumbled down the street complete with black shoes, pink dress, blue toes and skeleton key.

Sharp eyes watched from the bushes as the car drove away. "Humph!" said Bogart.

CHAPTER 3

Bogart waited to make sure the car did not return. Bogart padded to the kitchen deck and sniffed. Yep! Salmon! He peeked through the glass door, drooling. Bogart prepared to smash the door, but much to his surprise the door was open. Only an inch, mind you, but that was enough invitation to a bear with hunger on his mind and the smell of salmon tickling his nose.

Bogart curled his nails into the crack and pushed. It wasn't just salmon on the menu tonight! "Humph!" said Bogart happily and went in. At the counter, Bogart sniffed. The green beans didn't interest him. He shoved the bowl to the floor. The scalloped potatoes were cheesy and creamy! He tried a taste. They were too rich. He pushed and 'CRASH!' went the dish. He tried the next bowl. Salad! It was too sour and it joined the other veggies.

Half of the salmon was left. "Humph!" said Bogart. "Slurp! Sputter! GULP!" The platter skidded around as he gobbled the salmon. Eventually the empty plate landed on the floor, too. "BURP!" He happily leaned against the cupboard. Bogart smelled honey. Ahh dessert! He found the honey in a squeeze bottle.

He licked the sticky lid, but his tongue was too big to get inside. Frustrated, he whacked the honey bottle and it toppled over, but no honey came out. 'Why did humans put honey

in bottles where you couldn't get it?' he thought. He pushed again and the bottle fell off the counter and rolled across the floor to the fridge. Bogart chased it. The rolling bottle reminded him of garbage day, but opening a garbage can was easier, he thought. Cuff a can on the side and the lid popped off. He tried. "SQUIRT!" The honey splattered on the fridge and left a goopy trail to the floor. Bogart licked the honey off the fridge. "LICK! LICK! Humph!" Bogart's sweet-tooth was satisfied. He wondered if there were other curious things in the house. He had to peek! He padded off, leaving behind long black hairs stuck to the floor around the fridge.

CHAPTER 4

Licking his muzzle, Bogart rambled into the family room. He bumped into the rocking chair and shrank back in alarm as it moved back and forth. He watched it settle. Actually, it looked like fun. Bogart cuffed aside the knitting, and with great difficulty, he climbed into the rocking chair. "CREAK!" It objected under his weight. He rocked and rocked. Faster and faster! He gave another big push on the floor with both paws and fell over. "HUMPH!" Bogart groaned. That was too tipsy.

The next chair faced the family computer. This chair appeared safe, so Bogart climbed up. To balance himself on the small seat he braced with his forepaws on the keyboard, but he accidentally kicked the power button. The computer came to life with a growl. As he lifted his forepaws, he leaned on the side of the chair and hit a lever. "SSSST!" The chair raised into the air and spun him around. That was too scary! Bogart jumped down. Then he found a big stuffed chair that looked just right!

Bogart crawled into the chair. He settled back and rested his paws on the wide arms. One paw hit the television's remote. The television clicked on. It was already tuned to the nature channel. Bogart saw a beautiful lady bear staring at him! "Humph!" Bogart greeted and waved a paw. He watched her with fascination as she turned her back on him and walked into the forest. She must be shy, he thought. He decided to follow her. As he got out of the cozy chair, he accidentally hit the remote again. "ZAP!" The lady bear and the forest disappeared. "HUMPH!" said Bogart.

Disappointed, Bogart decided to explore the rest of the house. Maybe the lady bear went upstairs. He went up, entering the first room. It was a big mess. In fact, it was as bad as the mess in the kitchen. Bogart padded into the room and accidentally stuck his paw in a hockey helmet laying on the floor. It wouldn't come off! It cramped his paw! He backed into the bureau and shook his paw. A model rocket toppled over and poked him in the back. Startled, he staggered and fell onto the bed. "CRASH!" Bogart fled. That room was too messy. With the helmet still cramping his paw, he hobbled on three legs into the next room.

This room smelled of sweet flowers! He saw flowers on the bedspread. "SNIFF! SNIFF! Humph!" They didn't smell. There were flowers on the drapes, but they didn't smell either. Bogart decided to find the real flowers with his keen nose instead of his beary

eyes. He closed his eyes, took a big breath and relaxed. The helmet popped off his paw. “Humph!” said Bogart.

The smell was coming from a bottle on the bureau. He gave the bottle a nudge, but nothing happened. He cuffed it on its top. It had worked for the honey!

“SQUIRT!” The liquid stung his eye. “Humph-Grrrrrr!” This room was too stinky! With one eye closed, Bogart went into the next room. Fresh air came in an open window that made Bogart’s eye feel better. Now he was sleepy. He crawled onto the big soft bed. “Humph!” said Bogart softly and fell asleep to dream of his lady bear.

CHAPTER 5

It was dark when the Lockes returned home from the benefit. Papa was satisfied that he had made good business contacts. Mama was happy that a friend had admired her dress. Goldie forgot Justin Timberlake because Brandon from school had admired her blue toes and she had long admired Brandon. Shamus had used his skeleton key on a mysterious door and discovered a treasure in the janitor’s closet. After such a successful evening, the Lockes were shocked when they saw the kitchen.

Mama was horrified. “Is this how you cleaned up?” she accused.

As he entered, Papa said guiltily, “I’ll load the dishwasher now, Dear,” and stopped and stared at the mess.

Goldie saw the open deck door. “We’ve been VANDALIZED! VANDALIZED! VANDALIZED!” Goldie loved drama and loved that word. It sounded like scandalized – so ‘Hollywood’! She couldn’t wait to call Brandon. She ran to the phone.

Shamus donned his Sherlock hat and said, “The vandal likes honey and salmon, but not vinaigrette or cheese or beans. HMMMMM!”

Papa ran to check his computer. “I hope he didn’t put a bug in my hard drive. My chair is cranked to the top. He must be a short vandal.” Papa shrugged and checked his stocks online.

Mama set her rocker upright and picked up her knitting. The yarn was sticky with honey. “Maybe it was a cat-burglar,” she said.

Shamus sat in the easy chair and turned on the television. While it warmed up, he found a black hair on the chair. “He has black hair and likes the nature channel,” he announced. Shamus saw a possibility. “Maybe he’s still here!” he cried, and ran to search the upstairs.

“You think he’s still here?” asked his mother.

“Be careful!” called his father.

Shamus went into his bedroom. “My helmet’s gone! My rocket’s cracked! My bed’s broken. He’s one heavy dude! Hmmm!”

Shamus went into his sister’s room. He found his helmet. “What a stink!” he cried. “He must smell really bad!”

Shamus followed the sticky carpet and stinky smell to his parent’s room. His mother came upstairs to help. “Did you leave your fur coat on the bed?” he whispered to her.

Mama replied, “You know I don’t have a fur coat!”

“Well, there’s something hairy on the bed and it’s snoring!” Shamus led his mother back downstairs to meet Papa. “Call the police, Papa!” said Shamus. “I found our vandal. A BIG BLACK BEAR!”

“A BEAR!” shrieked Mama.

“A BEAR!” shouted Papa and grabbed the phone from Goldie. Their shouts stirred Bogart who snorted, but went back to sleep to dream of the lady bear.

Papa rang 911 and they waited in the messy kitchen.

The police arrived and “tip-toed” upstairs so they wouldn’t wake the bear. They entered the bedroom and turned on the light. Bogart sat up. “Humph!” said Bogart to thank them for his supper.

The policeman pointed his gun at Bogart. “Nnnnooooo!” shrieked Mama. “You’ll mess up my ‘Armani’ sheets!” She grabbed the policeman’s arm as he fired. The shot flew out the window. The loud noise shocked Bogart. He jumped off the bed, ran down the stairs and out the deck door. He was long gone by the time the Lockes and the policemen followed him to the backyard.

The Lockes spent most of the weekend cleaning up after Bogart and installing new safety locks on their doors. They didn’t eat salmon for the rest of the summer.

In the forest, Bogart found the lady bear of his dreams and told her of his salmon dinner at the Lockes home.

“Humph! Bogart!” said his lady bear. “What a fairytale!”