

THE BEARS AND THE STRANGE BED

“Not a-GAIN! Chubby! Tubby!” Big Momma’s voice thundered across the yard.

Tubby knew he and Chubby were in trouble. This would be the third time that day Big Momma had to clean them up. This time, he and Chubby had been flapping their arms and legs [pretending to be a couple of mudfish.

Tubby Bear was five years old. So was Chubby Bear. They were identical twins. They looked alike, they dressed alike, and they behaved alike. It was very difficult to tell one from the other. Only Big Momma Bear and Big Daddy Bear could tell the difference. Not only did they look and act alike, they also thought alike. Sometimes, Tubby could finish Chubby’s sentence and sometimes Chubby could finish Tubby’s sentence. Besides thoughts, they also shared the same smell. They were sooooo stinky that they didn’t have any friends but each other. Nobody else could bear the smell of them.

One day, when they were out climbing trees, they saw something very strange in Pearly Rabbit’s house. They saw an interesting room. It was a pretty room. In the room, just below the window, was an unusual bed; and it was covered with what looked like.....bubbles! And nestled in the bubbles were a colourful yacht, a fish and yellow duck. What an interesting bed! What a wonderful collection of toys! They had to investigate.

Chubby quickly climbed over the window and fell kerplop into the strange bed. Water and bubbles splashed everywhere, as did the toys that were amongst the bubbles.

“Ughh no! It’s water! It’s a *bed* of water!” Tubby cried. He quickly grabbed onto the windowpane so he wouldn’t fall into the bed of water and suffer the same fate as Chubby. One foot wobbled dangerously on the chair next to the strange bed.

“No sil-ly! This *must* be the bathtub Pearly’s always bragging about. I didn’t know water would be this much fun. C’mon, Tubby, jump in. This is really better than standing under the shower.”

“I don’t think so,” Tubby said; and after some maneuvering, he managed to get himself off of Pearly Rabbit’s windowpane and jumped onto the solid ground.

“I’m going home,” Tubby announced.

“Well, suit yourself.”

Two hours later, Chubby came home. He smelled very nice now, like flowers in the meadow. But he did not come home alone. With him were Pearly Rabbit, Rambo Rooster and Jeremiah Duck. They liked him better now that he smelled better. Pearly Rabbit hadn’t minded at all that he found Chubby playing in his bathtub. So thankful he was that it wasn’t a monster.

Chubby did not call Tubby to join them. Tubby was very sad. He turned away from the window. He didn’t need Pearly Rabbit. He didn’t need Rambo Rooster or Jeremiah Duck; and most of all, he didn’t need Chubby – especially

not a nice, sickly-sweet flower smelling Chubby! This new Chubby would be no fun now. Now that Chubby was nice and clean, certainly, he wouldn't want to roll around in the mud with Tubby anymore!

"What's wrong, Tubby?" Big Momma Bear asked.

"Nothing."

"This doesn't have anything to do with Chubby's new friends?"

"No! Maybe? Yeess...." said Tubby, as he looked down at his feet.

He looked so downcast, she did not have the heart to scold him.

"Well, Tubby, Chubby smells nice now. I'm sure if *you* smelled nice, you would have as many friends as Chubby.."

"But if I'm clean, I can't play in the mud anymore!"

"Is this what this is all about?"

"I can't, right?"

"There's no rule that says you can't. You can. You simply need to take more baths," Big Momma said laughingly

"Oh."

"Why don't you take a quick shower now? I'm sure once you're nice and clean, you can join Chubby and his friends over there."

"But Big Momma, Pearly Rabbit has a...a...ba..bath..."

"A bathtub?"

"Yes, with bubbles, loads of bubbles, and all sorts of fun toys."

"Is that what you want, Tubby?"

Tubby nodded his head.

“Well, we can’t get a bathtub now. But if you can prove to us that you can be clean, maybe, just maybe, we’ll get you one. Is that okay?”

Tubby nodded his head again. And he kept his promise. For one whole month he and his brother showered each time they got dirty without kicking up a fuss. He and Chubby even took turns to help Big Momma mark the calendar.

Exactly after one month, Big Momma and Big Daddy went to get Chubby and Tubby a bathtub, some bubble bath, and a grand collection of bath toys. Chubby and Tubby were never stinky again and they now had many friends.

The End