**Should Goldilocks go to prison?**

Recently, the case of a young girl called Goldilocks (approximately 9 years old) was brought to court on charges of theft, vandalism and trespassing. These crimes are rarely associated with a child of this age as usually they are accompanied by an adult. However, on that fateful day, 7th May 2018, this was not the case as Goldilocks wandered unaccompanied into the deep, dark forest, unaware of the multiple dangers lurking within. Unfortunately, despite her crimes, it is still not clear whether she should or should not be sent to jail as a consequence.

There are multiple reasons why it could be argued that a jail-sentence is the most appropriate consequence for these heinous acts. Firstly, Goldilocks trespassed onto the Three Bears’ property; despite her young age, she is old enough to realise that you cannot go into people’s house uninvited. Thus, it could be argued that, if she knew exactly what she was doing, she was knowingly breaking the law. Furthermore, whilst trespassing inside, Goldilocks also carelessly vandalised a one-of-a-kind, priceless antique, that had been in the Bear family for many generations. Mummy Bear said in a statement ‘My…my…chair! That chair was lovingly made for my family by my great-great-great-great Grandaddy Bear, and that that girl ruined it!” Lastly, on top of these two already atrocious crimes, Goldilocks is also accused of theft as she helped herself to not one, not two, but three bowls of perfectly-made porridge, that the bears had left cooling on the side. Clearly, it could be argued that (due to the nature of these events) a jail sentence must be passed down, as otherwise what is to stop others following in her footsteps and carrying out crimes of their own?

However, on the other hand, several reasons have been put forward by the defence, as to why Goldilocks should be spared jail. Firstly, witnesses report that the Three Bears had in fact left their front door wide open. Some might say, an open door could be seen as an invitation, and if they did not want somebody invading their house, then they should have ensured their property was secure. Furthermore, it was said that poor Goldilocks was caught out in the turbulent storm, and was merely looking for a safe place to shelter – what else was she expected to do given the circumstances? Next, many people argue that it was not Goldilocks’ fault for eating the porridge because she hadn’t eaten for several days, and it could be said that if she had not consumed that vital porridge, she may not be here today. Lastly, given the age of Baby Bear’s chair, it could be argued that it was close to breaking point anyway, and in fact, Goldilocks’ actions actually benefited the Bears as it prevented Baby Bear from having a potentially fatal accident. Based on these reasons, whilst it is agreeable that Goldilocks could do with further education about the laws of the forest, given that there was no malicious intent behind her actions, surely jail is not a fitting punishment?

In conclusion, it is clear (from the evidence presented above) that there are compelling arguments for both sides of this controversial case. Theft, vandalism and breaking and entering are inexcusable crimes which deserve a jail sentence. However, as we have heard, Goldilocks had a valid explanation for each of these accusations. For this reason, it has been decided that on this occasion, she has been excused of the crimes she committed. However, she is being required to repair the chair and apologise to the bears for the inconvenience she caused them.

