**Daily Free-Write October 4, 2022: Love-a-Bunch Pt. 7**

The whole house was foggy. In fact, despite the fact that it was well lit, Ben couldn't seen an inch in front of his face. All he saw as bright white clouds.

"W-what happened?" he said, fumbling around for a handhold, but his hand only hit air, even when he walked a few paces forward to where there should have been a wall. "Whoa!" he said, falling forward when he reached out and expected resistance. He almost fell, but ran into something soft, warm, and furry. "Oof!"

Then, he felt it hug him in a nice soft hug.

"It's okay Benji. I got you."

"S-softheart?!" asked Ben, his voice cracking. "I-is it really you?!"

"It's me," said Softheart, as the fog cleared enough for Ben to see his friendly fuzzy face.

"And me," said Cheery Bear, stepping forward and joining.

"And don't forget me," said Grumpy bear, in his gruff voice.

"Oh my gosh you guys," said Ben, breaking down into tears as his friends all gathered round to hug him. "I thought I lost you!"

But then he stopped and looked around. "B-but how are you here? And why are you so big all of a sudden?" He looked and they were all his height now. And as the couds began to clear, he noticed that his house looked an awful lot like Love-a-Bunch, only built to bigger proportions...

"I told you everything would be alright," said Smart Bear, walking out from a colorful building nearby and dusting his hands. "Do you believe me now?"

Ben didn't know what to say, so Smart Bear sat him down on a cloud and explained what happened.

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"We're going to have to be brave," said Smart Bear as Benji slept before his big flight home. "There's no way Ben is getting through security with us in this device... we need to make a jump..."

"A jump?" asked Softheart, scratching his head. "To what?"

"It's risky, but I think the fastest thing nearby with a download/upload link is Ben's phone. We can copy Love-A-Bunch over, and then go over ourselves."

"Okay, but... what happens if it doesn't work?"

"No matter what, we're going to have to erase the headset," said Smart Bear, gravely. "We can't risk anything happening to Benji. That's the most important thing."

The bears all nodded. This made sense to them. The concept of being erased was scary, but not scarier than seeing something bad happen to Ben. They got to work immediately.

One by One the bears jumped over. The first to try was Cheer Bear, whose optimism he knew was needed to encourage the others. He didn't let his fear show, and within a couple minutes he was reporting back from the phone that everything was A-OK.

"I'm here! It's a bit more cramped than I'm used to but perfectly safe!"

Softheart and Smart Bear oversaw the transfer. First of all the bears, then of all the assets. They even sent over the bad guys like Hard Heart and the Witch of Apathy. They were all an important part of Love-A-Bunch, after all.

By the time Ben left, only Softheart and Smart Bear remained, along with a very sketchy outline of the nursery. By the time he was in the car, Smart Bear was already finishing his jump. He looked around one more time, and in the fading remnants of the game, he saw the button that must be never pressed glowing softly red.Before he left, he pressed it, initiating the factory reset protocol so that by the time they got to the airport, the headset was useless.

It was quite a journey for them, as they joined Ben through the airport. They didn't dare make a peep, hiding deep in the sub-sub-sub system of his phone where their world, and all their memories would not be detected. But they heard everything.

They heard Ben beg to keep his friends.

They heard his embarrassing diaper change.

They even heard him say he would give anything to have them back

"Do you think he means it?" whispered Grumpy Bear.

"I know he does," said Cheery Bear. "Don't worry ben... we'll be back..."

"You know, I don't think the settings on this thing are very appropriate for a little boy," said Baby Bear, looking through Ben's naughty links and files.

"We can fix that," said Smart Bear. "A few small changes here and there shouldn't be too hard to do while we're hiding out..."

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"That must have been really scary," said Ben.

"It was. We almost got erased!" said Grumpy bear, crossing his arms and huffing.

"Yeah, but now we're real! as real as you, Bennie boy!"

"What? How?!" asked Ben, standing up.

"Well, your house is pretty high tech. The hologram technology that makes Engery into matter.... There's no reason why it can't work for a complete entity..."

Ben was at a lost for words... "But that kind of techonology is..."

"Classified?" asked Smart Bear. "Yeah, I know, there was a lockout, but we got around that. We're still mostly energy, but we'll keep our form unless we want to go cyber."

Ben couldn't believe what he was hearing. "Wait a second... do you mean the inside of my house is actually Love-A-Bunch right now?

"Well, we lost our home in the headset," began Baby Bear...

"So we built a new and improved home here... with you!" finished Cheery Bear.

"That's... really sweet guys," said Ben, looking around, "But... uh... where's all my stuff? And for that matter where's the kitchen? The bathroom?"

"Don't worry about all that, kiddo, we got ya covered," said Cheery Bear, who snapped his fingers. Baker bear came out of a nearby building smelling of cinnamon and butter and offered Ben a tray of fresh-baked cinnamon rolls.

"Enjoy!"

"And don't forget a bottle of milk to wash it down!" said Baby bear, holding up a bottle.

"Guys, I really don't need you to cook for me... and I don't drink out of bottles anymore. I'm like 30!"

"Nonsense! Kiddos like you shouldn't be cooking without supervision, and bottles are perfect for you. Much better than the big boy juice boxes you were using on the airplane..."

"Wait a second... I remember, you were there... I thought I was dreaming..."

"We may have kind of jacked into the entertainment system," said Smart bear, blushing a bit. "And the security system... and..."

"Wait a second," said Ben, pushing away the big bottle being waved in his face by the much bigger than before baby bear. "The parental lock on my phone and the screen... was that you?"

"Gotta make sure our Benji doesn't accidentally watch anything too adulty!"

"And the seatbelt?"

"Gotta keep our Benji safe!"

"Hold on," said Ben. "Just how much did you tamper with while you were stowed away?"

"Well, it started with the security guard's headset," began Smart Bear.

"Security?! Do you know how much trouble we could be in right now?" Ben felt like he was about to have a heart attack. He began pacing. "This is bad. This is really, really bad."

"But I've done my research," began Smart Bear, holding up his paw but to no avail as he trailed off. Ben wasn't listening. "I..."

"Oh dear," said Softheart. "I think he's getting cranky. Baby bear, it's time for the bottle maneuver! You know what to do!"

"On it!" said Baby bear, and before Ben knew what hit him, he was falling into the soft fuzzy lap of the big baby bear, and a bottle nipple was being shoved in his mouth. He was so surprised, that he began sucking on it immediately as he sank into the warm fur of Baby Bear's lap and the and soft cloth of his diaper.

"Mmmm... Mnnnffff," said Ben, struggling weakly, but Baby bear shushed him and petted him. The warm milk. The pets. Being held. It was all too much for Ben to resist, and he instantly began to get drowsy, and slip into a soft twilight where he just enjoyed the sensations.

"Earth to Ben?" said Softheart, waving his paw in front of Ben's face. There was no response. Just a smiling Ben. "Well, that worked perfectly!"

"I think his mind was looking for an excuse to shut down," said Smart Bear. "With all the stress he's under, it's no wonder... You've all seen the readouts..."

"Sure seems like he was happier and healthier as a little guy," said Baby Bear. "Maybe it's time he stopped playing pretend like he's a grownup!"

The bears all nodded and murmured their agreement.

"Yeah! *And* he'll have more time to play with us! Right?"

"That's true. He *did* say he didn't have time to play with us cause he was a grownup..."

"So if he's a baby again, he can play with us all he wants!"

The bears began to talk while Benji slipped into a nice relaxing sleep, barely aware that his bottle was just about empty and his diaper was getting a lot warmer at the same time.