

The Case of the Tickling Dolls



By Sir Lenny Henry

It had been said that Benedict Cucumberpatch the Third was not only the best detective in the world, but also- the entire universe! Unfortunately, he'd said *this himself*.

So where did he get this idea? Well, hold your horses, cowboy! Slow your roll dagnabbit! And read:

The Case of the Tickling Dolls.

One morning, Cucumberpatch was playing his violin. It had been said that he was the best violinist in the universe! Unfortunately, he'd said this himself.

The phone interrupted his scrapings. It was his friend: Chief Inspector Bustamente, "Cucumberpatch! There's a new case. It's right up your street."

The detective was pleased "Oh, good. I'll nip out, solve it and then nip back in time for The Chase!"

Bustamente snapped "*it's not right up your street* literally! I *mean*, even *you* should be able to solve this. A Mrs. Ryder and her boy Victor are being scared witless by some Tickling Clown Dolls! Apparently, when the clock strikes **Midnight**, they come to life and TICKLE everyone in their path. Brrr! Horrible. Now get moving!"

Within 3 changes of bus, Cucumberpatch arrived with a **whoosh!** His violin slung across his back – his faithful cat, Watson jogged alongside.

The door sprang open and there, Mrs. Ryder stood; with fearful eyes, sporting a wig and shakily applied lipstick. Her son, Victor, pale and exhausted cowered nearby.

Mrs. Ryder invited Cucumberpatch in and explained that she'd purchased the dolls year ago from an ancient market trader, with pale green skin, one eye and 4 ears. She thought it was odd as, when she enquired about his ears, he kept saying: "Eh? Eh?"

Eh? Eh?" Frustrated, she gave up on the conversation and left.

She added, "When the dolls tickled us maniacally, we screeched and screamed in terror and the dolls retreated."

Cucumberpatch put his thinking cap on, "Hmmm" he thought, "The Chase is on! "

Later-in Victor's Bedroom, Cucumberpatch, Mrs. Ryder and Victor waited as the clock struck midnight. Suddenly, there was a **whoosh!** And they were soon surrounded

by one eyed, four eared **tickling** Dolls! They were mega creepy! BRRRR!

Cucumberpatch played the worst violin piece he had, one he'd tried to learn all year...but with no improvement. It was loud, terrible and *unending*.

The violin caterwauled. Watson joined in. In fact, every cat in the area **howled** outside; standing on their claws, backs arched. The noise was deafening.

The dolls reacted to the awful violin and revealed themselves. They were four eared, 1 eyed alien!! They screamed, then exploded in a puff of yellow smoke.

Mrs. Ryder and Victor hugged Cucumber Patch gratefully.

3 buses later, Cucumber Patch was home, with Watson. watching their favourite detective investigating a giant dog menacing Dartmoor. He whispered to his loyal cat,

"I wonder if that dog's an alien?"

Watson purred, blinked his single eye, rubbed all four ears, and thought:

'He's a worse detective than he is a violin player.' and went to sleep.

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