

THE SOCIETY OF THE BLACK CAT AND THE CASE OF THE CURIOUS CARTOON

By Emmett Engarde

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

A normal school day, Iris walks through the hallway.

SUPER: "SIX MONTHS LATER"

Walking next to Iris is JILLIAN (17), an overly peppy girl.

IRIS

And then, he was all like "You can't do this to me! I only did this to pay for my daughter's stupid art school!"

JILLIAN

Nice, a variation on the classic motive!

IRIS

Yeah, when will they learn, right? Everybody steals money to pay for something, why else would you steal money?

JILLIAN

How many pictures?

IRIS

Only three last night. Oh, did I ever tell you about that time I gave an autograph?

JILLIAN

You have! A few times, actually! But it's still cool to hear!

IRIS

Well, you know, that's something you don't get to do as much around here.

JILLIAN

Oh, that reminds me, we still need to interview you guys for the yearbook! Graduation's only a couple weeks away now!

IRIS

Oh. Yeah, um, sure. I'll see if we can find a day to do that.

JILLIAN

I can see the headline now! "Daring
Detectives Declare Diplomas most
Difficult Deduction!"

IRIS

You know I'm a sucker for
alliteration!

Suddenly, Tucker runs up and hugs Iris from behind.

TUCKER

Surprise attack!

Tucker lets go, laughing to himself. Mari follows closely
behind him, joining the rest of the group.

MARI

Just for the record, I told him not
to do that.

IRIS

Oh, hey guys! How was theater
class?

MARI

Fine.

TUCKER

It was weird without Fern there.

JILLIAN

Oh no, is he okay?

MARI

He's not sick, he just does this to
get out of coming to class.

TUCKER

He could be sick.

MARI

We saw him last night!

IRIS

Anyways, how was Mr. Rousseau
doing?

MARI

Better, it looks like. He still
seems a little shaken up over the
investigation last night.

JILLIAN

"The Case of the Phantom of the Middle School Auditorium!"

IRIS

Well, hopefully he remembers to lock the costume closet from now on.

MARI

I wouldn't count on it.

TUCKER

Cut him some slack! He's getting ready for the big drama club performance tonight!

MARI

Oh, that reminds me...

Mari pulls Iris aside.

MARI (CONT'D)

Would your mom be okay with me staying at your place tonight?

INT. IRIS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Iris and Mari, now both in their pajamas, are kneeled down on the floor watching a cheap RC robot slowly chase after Agatha. Mari holds the remote control. Behind them, the TV is on in the background.

IRIS

(fake intense)

Cat versus robot! The fight of the century!

MARI

My money's on robot.

Agatha paws at the robot.

IRIS

Get 'em, Aggie!

Agatha flops over.

IRIS (CONT'D)

Nope. Can't. Too tired.

MARI

That means robot wins!

Mari makes the robot spin in a circle.

MARI (CONT'D)
Just another piece of evidence
confirming that robots are superior
to cats in every way.

IRIS
But can robots do this?

Iris tries to pick up Agatha, but she scrambles out of Iris' hands. Mari laughs.

MARI
You got me there.

IRIS
Shut up.

Suddenly a loud voice from the TV interrupts them. Iris and Mari swiftly turn to face the screen.

TV VOICE
Later tonight, the premiere of the
true-to-life tales of the Society
of the Black Cat!

A pause. Confused, Iris and Mari look back at each other.

INT. IRIS' KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mari and Iris are sitting at the kitchen table, both watching as Mari searches on her laptop.

MARI
Okay, here it is, look-

Mari points to her screen. On it is a website with a crude "Society of the Black Cat" logo.

MARI (CONT'D)
It's just the name of some cartoon.

IRIS
That can't be legal, right?

MARI
(sarcastic)
Oh yeah, and I'd know that because
of all the law classes I'm taking
at Eastern Central High School.

IRIS
Shut up, shut up. That's our name!
Why would they be using our name?

MARI
I mean, it's not like we had it
trademarked.

IRIS
Can you try taking this seriously?

MARI
I'm taking this about as seriously
as I can!

Agatha jumps up on top of the kitchen table. She turns to Iris and MEOWS.

IRIS
See, Agatha agrees! This is crazy!

MARI
Look, it's probably just a weird
coincidence.

IRIS
But there's only one way to find
out.

INT. IRIS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Iris and Mari sit on the couch, staring at the TV. Iris is leaned forward while Mari is relaxed, petting a sleeping Agatha beside her.

MARI
(sarcastic)
What a great time to air a cute
kid's cartoon. Eight thirty at
night.

IRIS
Shh, it's starting!

They look back to the TV, and see...

EXT. CARTOON SPOOKY MANSION - NIGHT

A full view of the cartoon's opening sequence. CARTOON IRIS, an overexaggerated caricature of the real Iris, pops into view, essentially superimposed over the background of the mansion.

TV VOICE (V.O.)

Iris!

CARTOON IRIS

When you eliminate everything else
that can't be possible, then all
that you have left is what is
possible!

INT. IRIS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Back to Iris and Mari watching from the couch. Mari laughs.

MARI

Ha! They nailed your personality.

IRIS

What the heck!? When I quote
Sherlock Holmes, it's way less
clunky than that!

INT. CARTOON SPOOKY MANSION - NIGHT

Continuing the sequence, now CARTOON MARI stands in the
center.

TV VOICE (V.O.)

Mari!

CARTOON MARI

(snooty)

I've already solved this mystery.
Everyone else is an idiot for
taking this long.

INT. IRIS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Back to the couch. Iris snickers.

MARI

(gradually more intense)

Shut up. Shut up. Shut up. Shut up!

IRIS

Doesn't feel so good, does it?

MARI

Is this a joke? How could this have
even happened?

INT. CARTOON SPOOKY MANSION - NIGHT

The opening sequence continues, now CARTOON TUCKER stands front and center.

TV VOICE (V.O.)

Tucker!

CARTOON TUCKER

It's fun to... Uh... What's it called? No, don't tell me.

INT. IRIS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Back to the couch. There is a brief pause.

MARI

Okay, that's actually a pretty good Tucker.

IRIS

But how did they know that?

MARI

I could ask you the same thing! This isn't some weird prank you're doing, right? I told you before, those don't work on me.

IRIS

Do you seriously think I would throw together some weird crappy cartoon just to prank you?

MARI

I don't know, maybe? It's tough to tell with you.

IRIS

Do you think the others know about this?

EXT. FERN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A sharp KNOCK on the door. Fern opens it to find Iris and Mari standing at his doorstep.

FERN

Hey guys, what's- Wait, uh...
(fake coughing)
Oh no... I'm sick...

MARI

Shut up, we know you're fine.

FERN

It's crazy, right? I just got
unsick as soon as you guys showed
up. Nuts.

IRIS

Fern, this is a matter of life and
death.

Agatha LEAPS from Iris's backpack and MEOWS loudly. Fern
stares back, deeply confused.

INT. FERN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Fern opens the door to his room, leading Iris, Mari, and
Agatha in. The walls are over decorated with crystals,
dreamcatchers, and old vinyl records.

FERN

And this is where the magic
happens!

IRIS

Great, now we have something-

FERN

And by "magic," I mean this is
where I make my mixtapes.

MARI

Fern, we don't care, there's-

FERN

Have I shown you guys my new song
yet?

IRIS

Please, we can listen later, but-

FERN

Wait, wait, hold all your comments
until after you've heard it!

Fern presses play on an old school boombox. Incredibly LOUD
DUBSTEP blasts out for two seconds, then is abruptly cut off.

FERN (CONT'D)

So, what do you think?

IRIS
(quietly)
Fern.

FERN
Too long, right? I'm worried people
will get bored if I-

MARI
Just shut up and look at this!

Mari SLAMS her laptop down onto Fern's desk, with a video of the cartoon playing out on it.

INT. CARTOON SPOOKY MANSION - NIGHT

A clear view of the cartoon. Cartoon Iris is standing front and center, looking through a magnifying glass at nothing. The animation is very stiff.

CARTOON IRIS
I can see it very clearly now! It's
time for another famous deduction
from the Society of the Black Cat!

INT. FERN'S ROOM - NIGHT

The three continue watching on the laptop. Fern's jaw drops.

FERN
What...?

MARI
Keep watching.

INT. CARTOON SPOOKY MANSION - NIGHT

Cartoon Iris paces back and forth, waving around a pipe. Behind her stands Cartoon Mari and Cartoon Tucker.

CARTOON TUCKER
This one's easy! The gym teacher's
gotta be the one behind it, right?

CARTOON MARI
That's exactly what an idiot like
you would say. That's too obvious
of an answer.

CARTOON IRIS

Fair point, but as great detective
Hercules Poirot once stated:
"Occam's Razor! The simplest
solution is always true!"

CARTOON AGATHA, a bipedal, sunglasses wearing adaption of the
black cat, jumps into frame.

CARTOON AGATHA

Sounds like a purr-fect deduction!
(imitating record scratch)
Wicky-word!

INT. FERN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Fern watches back, even more confused than before.

FERN

The cat's a rapper...?

MARI

Yeah, she raps. Shut up, look,
you're about to talk!

INT. CARTOON SPOOKY MANSION - NIGHT

CARTOON FERN, an exaggerated version of the regular Fern, now
stands next to the rest of the group.

CARTOON FERN

I dunno man, my money's on the
librarian. I spoke to the ghost of
the victim and he told me!

INT. FERN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Back to reality.

FERN

Wait, was this a murder!?

MARI

That's not important. This is,
like, slander, right!?

FERN

It feels like it... Did you guys
get paid for this?