

EXCERPT FROM “COOL CATS AND CHOCOLATE MICE”

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ACT 1, Scene 3

Setting: Monday, 3:25 at the school courtyard. There are two trees and one green bench.

(MALCOM and LUCIDIA walk over to the school courtyard, which appears empty. MALCOM puts a cream puff on one of the benches.)

LUCIDIA

Malcom, are you sure this is going to work? I mean, Melinda does like the fillings of desserts, but you're asking for an awful lot for this plan to work.

MALCOM

Don't worry, Lucidia. I know my suspects just as well as you know your chocolates.

(Suddenly, MELINDA sneaks onstage, hides behind one of the trees, waits for a few seconds, and pounces on the cream puff! A slurping noise is heard as Melinda hunches over, cream puff in mouth. She then tosses aside the cream less puff. Malcom and Lucidia come out from hiding.)

MALCOM

I hope you enjoyed the treat, Melinda.

MELINDA

So, this was just a trick to bring me out of hiding, huh? Using my own vices against me.

MALCOM

A detective's gotta do what a detective's gotta do.

MELINDA

Whaddaya want?

MALCOM

Where were you yesterday at 12:23 P.M.?

MELINDA

I WOULD'VE been at the Candy Competition, but sadly, I had to go to the dentist's office then. The worst part is I was on a fluoride treatment, so I couldn't eat, drink, or suck the fillings out of anything for an hour.

MALCOM

Were you at the Candy Competition at any time other than that?

MELINDA

No. My mother didn't want me eating any sweets ever since my dentist discovered I had a cavity.

(Sighs)

Twelve years of perfect teeth down the drain.

LUCIDIA

Except for the fangs.

MELINDA

I heard that!

MALCOM

Exactly, which dentist's office did you go to Melinda?

MELINDA

I went to the one on Parker Drive and Gateau Boulevard. You know, the really tempting one that's next to the candy shop.

MALCOM

Okay

(Scribbles in notebook, and turns to Lucidia)

My uncle just happens to work at that office, so I'll call him to see if he has any records of Melinda coming there for an appointment.

MELINDA

Exactly why are you asking me all of these things?

LUCIDIA

My chocolate mice were stolen, and Malcom said that you might be one of the suspects.

MELINDA

Fair enough.

LUCIDIA

I just hope all of my chocolates aren't eaten by now.

MELINDA

Don't worry about it. Not even the craziest kid in school would eat all of your chocolates

in one day. I mean, have you seen a kid eat two dozen chocolate bars all at once? It is not a pretty sight.

(Puts a hand on Lucidia's shoulder)

LUCIDIA

Umm, thanks.

(Freaked out, she takes Melinda's hand off her shoulder)

MELINDA

Well, I'd better go. Mom's gonna wonder if I'm stuffing my face with chocolates, so I'd better get home quick.

(Glides out stage left)

MALCOM

Well, I can't eliminate Melinda yet. After all, the dentist thing could be a lie.

LUCIDIA

You know, when she told me not to worry about my chocolates getting eaten, she said it the exact same way you said it.

MALCOM

Good ear, Lucidia. I'm going to interview the final suspect tomorrow, and I should know whether Melinda's guilty or not.

LUCIDIA

I hope so. Well, seeya later Malcom.

(Malcom and Lucidia are about to exit stage left, when ALLEN comes running in.)

ALLEN

WAIT! WAIT UP! WAIIIIIIT UUUUUUP!

MALCOM

What is it? What the-? What are you want Allen?

(Malcom expresses great surprise as he notices Allen running up to him)

ALLEN

(Runs up to MALCOM, panting heavily)

I went into my emergency stash of candy, and it was entirely empty!

(Shakes MALCOM frantically)

Not even one little chocolate covered peanut was left! You hear me!? NOT ONE!

MALCOM

Could it be, perhaps, because you spent it all on gambling?

ALLEN

I only did that once!

(Releases Malcom)

Besides, if I had blown it all on bets, I wouldn't leave myself a ransom note.

(Allen hands Malcom a sheet of paper with things pasted onto it. Malcom studies it carefully)

MALCOM

Hmmm, magazine clippings. Whoever did that must really mean business. So now, I would have two cases on my-no wait! Lucidia, you should read this!

(Lucidia takes paper from Malcom.)

LUCIDIA

“Dear Lucidia Van Zoet, I have your chocolate mice. If you want them back, stop this case and leave twenty dollars in small bills in the blue bucket in the abandoned supply room tomorrow at third period. If you refuse to meet these demands, your mice will end up trying to find their way out of my digestive system!”

(Lucidia starts sobbing)

Oh no! This is exactly like that song where someone left a cake out in the rain, and it took so long for them to bake it and they wouldn't have the recipe again! I put so much work into making them, I couldn't bear to have them go so fast!

MALCOM

(Puts an arm around Lucidia)

Don't worry Lucidia. We'll just go to that abandoned supply room, and catch the thief when he or she comes by. You'll get your chocolate mice back. Probably with bite marks in them, but you'll get them back.

LUCIDIA

Bite marks?

(Starts sobbing again.)

ALLEN

Yo, Aaronovich, I'd like a word with you in private.

(Malcom and Allen go off stage, and start whispering. Lucidia looks at them, suspicious of their behavior.)

LUCIDIA

Why are they whispering to each other? What are they whispering about? Is Malcom involved with stealing these mice? Why does Melinda suck the fillings out of candies?

(Malcom walks back to Lucidia, with Allen following him.)

MALCOM

So, we'll meet tomorrow at the abandoned supply room at third period sharp. Got it?

LUCIDIA

And don't forget to check with your uncle about whether Melinda was there or not.

MALCOM

Consider it remembered. Seeya Lucidia.

LUCIDIA

Seeya Malcom.

ALLEN

Seeya Allen?

(Malcom and Lucidia give him a weird look)

MALCOM AND LUCIDIA

Huh?

ALLEN

What? I just wanted to be included!

(Scene Ends)