

N.T. CANON

Ridiculous Cake

Be kind,
stand still.



THE TERROR ON THE SCREEN

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1

Lightning and thunder echoed through the trees, as rain pounded against the shingles of a modest Florida home. The summer rains never seemed to stop, even in the middle of October.

Piper Buchanan watched from her bedroom, wincing at the constant lightning strikes. “If I was smart” she thought, “I’d just shut off my computer now, and save myself the trouble.” She sighed, fussing with her PC, just as a bolt of lightning struck outside, and plunged the entire neighborhood into darkness.

Too late.

“NOOO!” A scream came from the living room, but Piper was not at all alarmed. She adjusted her orange hoodie and leggings, and calmly went to investigate. She knew exactly what had happened.

“I was so close! gah!” A girl in the living room cried. A very sharp voice-crack cut the sentence in two.

“Alright, how close *were* you?” Piper chimed in, looking at her sister, Citry Buchanan. She was sat, legs-crossed, in front of an outdated television with a surprisingly modern game console plugged into it.

“There was just *one* guy left! And I HAD him! The map was shrinking, and he was stuck! But the... UGH!” She swung her arm to the side, causing her big buns of curly black hair to bob about as she sulked.

Piper knew better than to be concerned. Her little sister was notoriously over-dramatic, even by modern standards.

“Look, you got all weekend to win a game. I know you’ll top-score the next time you play!”

“It’s called getting a ‘victory royal’, Jeeze.”

Piper could only roll her eyes. She sauntered to the kitchen, searching for a flashlight. It was supposed to rain like this all afternoon. Just as she found the flashlight, the power flickered back on.

“Ah, sweet!” Citry beamed, booting up the console and attempting to join a fresh match. “What the... Ah dang. Piper?”

“What?”

“The internet is down, can you reset the router?”

Piper huffed, and went to the router. It wasn’t a massive pain to babysit her younger sibling, but she did often feel that Citry should lend her a hand. It seemed like they never did *anything* together anymore, not even sharing minor chores, never mind any interests. Piper did play and stream video games regularly, but even so, their tastes did not overlap.

“Did you do it?” Citry called

“Yeah?”

“It’s still busted”

Piper grumbled, pulling out her phone to look for a fix, but she couldn’t get any signal.

“I think it’s down-down, dude.” Piper lamented, walking back to the living room. Citry was already putting on the theatrics; lying on her back and sighing loudly. She had her own phone out, her black, freckled face buried in the screen.

“Well what the heck are we supposed to do all day?”

“I mean, read a book? Do a puzzle? Do I gotta think for you now too?” Piper tried to be playful, but she was genuinely disappointed in her sister’s lack of interests outside of playing Nintendo games. She wasn’t even that good at it.

“What about a movie?” Citry turned to Piper.

“Sorry sis, the DVD player is still broken.” *Someone* had gotten the ‘princess and the frog’ disk stuck inside a few years ago.

“*That’s* not broken” Citry pointed towards a dusty VHS player stacked bellow the television.

Piper looked to the ancient, grey monolith. Its red power light flashing on and off, winking at the two siblings.

“I mean, yeah but ...”

“But what?” Citry asked.

“All the tapes are... in the attic.”

2

The two sisters stared up at the attic door, centered in the bedroom hallway. Piper had already set up a ladder, but she was still deliberating on what exactly to do.

“So, is there any way I could convince you to go up there and get the tapes?” Piper asked, turning to Citry.

“What? I don’t even know what a VHS tape looks like.”

Piper grumbled, knowing that was a lie. She wasn't *that* old, and Citry was not *that* young.

"I'm just worried I won't fit. I mean, it's not a huge opening..."

Citry held her tongue. Piper wasn't exactly thin. She was pear shaped, with a well-endowed chest. It wasn't a stretch to say she could actually get stuck.

The older sister eventually broke the awkward pause, and stepped onto the ladder. "I'll hand the box down to you, so don't go anywhere."

The attic hatch swung open with a loud snapping creak. It had been so long since it had been opened that the paint had nearly glued it shut. Piper pulled out her flashlight and peered into the dark, humid space. Dust shimmered in the light, and the pink insulation gave the attic an eerie red glow.

She swept the cone of light across the walls, squinting to make out the scribbles written on dozens of boxes strewn about the space.

"Christmas lights, hurricane shutters, camping gear... Ah, there!" A white file box with 'tapes' scrawled on the side resided less than a yard from the opening. Piper pulled it towards her, and shined the flashlight inside.

A set of flapping wings crashed against her face. She shrieked and batted them away, back-handing a large moth, which fluttered away to a shadowy corner.

"Did you die?" Citry asked, holding the ladder.

"Ugh, yeah, and I don't even have a will..." Piper joked, though her heart was racing. She remembered a few years back when a family of raccoons had moved into the attic. Not fun.

Shining the light into the box, Piper groaned. The lid to the box was missing, and the tapes were caked in cobwebs, dirt, and what looked like sawdust. Only one tape was actually stored in a case, the rest were entirely sleeve-less. Piper picked up the case, and shoved the box aside.

“This one will have to do.” She sighed, closing up the attic and handing the blue VHS case to her sister.

Citry opened it up. A black tape was inside. ‘Cartoons’ was written in marker on the white label.

“Sure, this works.” She didn’t sound all that impressed, but Piper did not want to hear it right now.

Piper took a moment to brush her hair and dust off her hoodie. She kept picking out bits of debris from her Afro, even finding some under her orange snap-back. “At least there weren’t any rats...”

When Piper returned, Citry was fumbling with the VCR, trying to put the tape in upside-down. Piper didn’t say a word, and sat on the couch, relaxing until her sister learned what directional arrow etched into the tape was for.

“Ah there, stupid thing...” Citry huffed, brushing her hands off on her yellow T shirt. Even kept in the plastic case, the tape had gotten dirty.

The two girls settled down on the sofa together. Piper was pleased, all things considered. It was nice being able to watch something with her sister. It’d been forever since they’d seen a movie together.

“Ready?” Piper smiled

“Ready.”

With a clunking noise and a distinct hum, the screen came to life.

3

Piper's heart sank. All of the energy in the room seemed to evaporate. She didn't even need to look over at Citry to see her expression.

"Noooo, UGH..." Citry groaned, slumping on the sofa, limp and lifeless. "It's in *black and white!*?"

Piper could only wince and take a deep breath. On the screen flashed the credits for a cartoon that looked nearly a hundred years old. "*Smiler Studios presents: Pawglee the Clown.*" Piper didn't dare say a word. She wasn't exactly fond of older films herself, but she could name at least a few she really liked.

On screen, a cartoon clown bounded across an empty carnival. She had on a tall pointy hat, white gloves, a large neck ruff, and a traditional looking clown outfit, split down the middle in black and white. Big comical zig-zag pigtails jutted out from her head, and stars adorned her hat and outfit like lumps of coal on a snowman.

'Pawglee' preformed a looping walk cycle, making her way to the hot dog stand. The booth was empty, so she turned to the camera and gave a big shrug, before turning to walk off again. She came to the circus, also empty, and shrugged just as before.

"Alright, I'm good." Citry put up her hands and stepped away from the couch. "I'll just play some games on my phone."

Piper pursed her lips and rose up her eyebrows. "Fine, I guess I'll just watch the tape by myself. Have fun."

"Cool." Citry replied, already half way to her bedroom.

Piper grumbled. Just when they had the opportunity to actually do something together, she draws the short straw; this cartoon really stunk. The clown was just standing there, staring at the camera.

“This has to be like, a public domain thing. I’ve never even heard of this guy before.”

Pawglee waved to the audience, and stepped towards the camera.

“Hello there! Do *you* know where everybody went?... Hee Hee. It’s a secret! But I can tell you right? We’re friends!”

“Huh,” Piper mused. “This is kinda like Blue’s Clues, I guess... Maybe this is where they got the idea.”

The clown laughed and put a hand beside her mouth, as if to whisper. “I used to have a *lot* of friends, just like you! But I went through all of them. It’s been so long since I’ve met a new one! So tell me; were friends, right?”

Piper watched, waiting for the ‘audience’ to respond, but there was nothing but the crackle of film grain. Pawglee was entirely still.

“... Did it freeze?”

“We’re friends, right?” Pawglee repeated, her tiny drawn-in pupils staring right at the camera.

More silence followed. Piper realized she was holding her breath.

Thirty seconds passed.

“... Right?” Pawglee repeated.

Piper swallowed a lump in her throat and waited for another ten seconds, before responding.

“Yeah?”

“Hee hee hee hee hee hee hee... Perfect.” The clown replied.

Piper jumped off of the sofa and scrambled for the power button on the VCR. The tube television cut out, and Piper was left in complete, deafening silence.

She was breathing heavily, staring down at the carpet, her mind racing. There was no way, no way...

Citry *had* to come see this.

4

“Hey, let go, I know where the TV is!” Citry chided, as Piper dragged her by the hand, fussing the whole way.

“You don’t understand, you gotta see this, it’s crazy! That clown girl talked right at me. I thought I was going nuts!”

Citry was not convinced, for a whole host of reasons. She broke out of Piper’s grip, and clasped her hands together, as if in prayer.

“Let me get this straight. You think you have a haunted VHS tape, with a creepy clown living inside it?”

“Yeah, YEAH, right?!”

“And your response to this, is *not* to burn the tape, or throw it in the microwave, but to have me watch it *with* you?”

Piper fell silent for a moment, this whole thing was kind of dumb, but there was no way she would destroy or bury the tape before sharing her experience with her little sister.

“Look, I’m not endangering you-“

“Oh, I don’t doubt that at all, but I’m not falling for a prank either.”

“It’s not a prank, just, watch okay?”

“Okay, but I don’t want you acting like I ‘fell for this’ just because I let you show me your tape.”

Piper could not care less what Citry said. She’d see for herself in just a moment. She turned on the VCR, and pressed ‘play’.

A burst of static faded to reveal Pawglee. She was teetering on a unicycle, juggling three pies and one potted plant. The two girls watched as she lost her balance, and the items went flying, crashing into empty stadium seating, and the ringmaster podium. Canned laughter played.

“Ahem... Uh, hey there, friend?” Piper spoke to the TV.

A light bulb went off above the clown’s head, and she started juggling unicycles, while balancing on a pie.

Citry was growing impatient, staring at her sibling, looking for any signs that she was holding back a smile. “Alright, Piper, I watched it. If this tape is so haunted, you should throw it in the dishwasher, okay?”

“No, it... Nothing’s happened yet. Just sit with me for a bit?”

Citry squinted and turned to leave. “Look, it stopped raining and I really want to just go outside. We could go on a bike ride...?”

Piper just stared at the TV screen, fixated on the black and white clown. She swore it was hiding a smirk. “Maybe later, you go ahead.”

With an overdramatic sigh, Citry made her way to the front door, grabbing the keys to the garage.

As soon as the door shut, Pawglee froze, and looked through the screen at the older sister.

“Piper,” she said. “Hee hee... That’s a fun name.”

Piper’s blood ran cold. She had half a mind to pull out her phone and record, but she didn’t want to take her eyes off of the clown.

“What was all that about? My sister... She’s nice! We could uh, all be friends, right?”

Pawglee just snickered and stepped towards the camera. Piper could see her face more clearly. Her eyes were an incredibly strong blue, somehow.

“Burn the tape, throw it in the microwave.” Pawglee repeated. It was exactly Citry’s voice, as if recorded on a wax cylinder. “Hee hee... You can only have that kind of fun *once*.”

Piper was growing annoyed and even more unsettled. Citry was being smart. Piper just didn’t want to do anything... rash, is all.

“Look, I don’t want to do that, just tell me what you want. What you need. I’m fine with just, putting the tape back in the attic or whatever works for you.

Pawglee laughed a broken record laugh, nearly doubling over and losing her balance. “I’m a cartoon! I only need fun! I need balloons! Coconut pie! The circus! Jokes! Gags! Games, and *friends!*”

She took a step towards the screen, the shadow of it casting her face in darkness.

“And I’ve already got all of that. We’re friends now! You said so. All I need is to wait for you to let me out...”

Piper had goosebumps. Her face was only a few inches from Pawglee’s. She looked so real up close. She could see every pen stroke of her icy blue eyes, her wide creepy smile, her ruffled costume, and

her messy, jagged hair.

She was not going to entertain even one more second of curiosity.

Piper reached over, and pressed 'eject'.

5

Piper breathed a sigh of relief as the picture cut out. The TV now showed only a bright blue screen, with 'pause' hovering in the top left corner. The VCR clunked and whirred, as it brought the tape to a halt.

But it didn't eject the tape.

A pregnant pause filled the living room. The hum coming from the old television was oppressive.

Piper's heart was racing. A cold sweat was forming on the back of her neck. She couldn't take her eyes off of the VCR, waiting in desperation for the tape to appear.

A white gloved hand emerged from the sea of blue, slipping through the glass of the television as if it was cellophane.

Blue cathode rays dripped from the screen, glowing and pulsating, spilling over the TV stand and oozing onto the carpet. A ruffled, monochrome sleeve grasped from the blue depths, and pulled itself out, bringing the shoulders and smiling face of Pawglee with it.

"Thanks a million!"

The clown writhed, gripping the sides of the TV with both hands, pulling herself out of the blue chasm of scan-lines and static. She planted a curled-toe shoe on the floor of the living room, and flashed a large toothy grin right through Piper. She loomed over her ‘friend’, who was trembling on the floor, unable to look away.

It only took one phrase for Pawglee to bring Piper to her senses.

“Time to have some *fun!*”

6

Panic was coursing through Piper’s veins. She scrambled to her feet and darted out to the hallway. Pawglee cackled, and covered her eyes.

“Hide and seek huh? Hee hee, alrighty! One, two, three...”

“This is insane,” Piper thought. “I’m just gonna run, just run, you’ll be okay.”

She raced for the back door, but stopped herself. Her car keys were in her bedroom, if she could just get to them...

“Five, six...” Pawglee counted. Piper turned on a dime and nearly broke down her bedroom door. She clambered to her bedside table and grabbed her keys so hard she squeezed the panic button.

“Eight, nine...”

Piper bolted for the doorway, and turned into the hallway, right into Pawglee.

“Ten!... Ready or not, here I come!”

The clown took off her pointed hat, reached inside, and pulled out a large wooden cartoon mallet. The head was the size of a propane tank.

Piper turned around and dashed for her bedroom window, but half way across her room, a gloved hand grabbed her hair, and pulled her to the ground. Piper’s ears were ringing, and when she opened her eyes, she saw the black and white character staring down at her with that horrible, giddy grin of hers.

Her body was flickering with static and film grain. A constant buzz seemed to radiate from her, and her stark cartoon outlines seemed to cut into the world around her. She couldn’t be real, this had to be a nightmare...

“Please, wait, I’m sorry!” Piper squirmed, trying to roll over, but her head was still spinning from the fall.

“Sorry for what, friend? You let me out! Hee hee hee... I just want to play with you!” Pawglee smiled, passing her mallet from one hand to the other.

“S-so... You won’t hurt me?” Piper stammered, letting her muscles loosen a bit.

“Well, I dunno. Does this hurt?”

Pawglee raised her hammer, and slammed it right onto Piper’s head. A cartoonish ‘splat’ sound echoed through the hallway.

“I’m dead.” Piper thought, her life flashing before her eyes, but to her surprise, the hammer rose up, and she could see again. Her head had been flattened like a pancake, left round and only a half inch thick. It

was comical looking, to say the least.

“W-what...?” She sputtered out. Pawglee snickered.

“Ah see, you’re fine! ... Now then...”

She readied the mallet again. Piper let out a short shriek before Pawglee pummeled her with blows from the hammer. Every part of her body was soon flattened and spread thin. Her chest and rear were the most affected, growing wide, like sheets of chocolate cookie dough, spilling out of her tight orange outfit.

Piper could only blink and mumble when the clown was done. She attempted to flex her fingers and toes, but could just barely wiggle them. Pawglee chortled and stood on the flattened girl’s stomach, planting one foot on her navel, and the other between her legs.

“There! I think that’s a pretty good warm up, friend! You’re quite the fun looking flap-jack! Hee hee hee!”

“M-mmph...” Piper ‘responded’, her eyes jumping from her flattened form, to the figure responsible for it.

“You just sit tight, and I’ll be right back for round two! I forgot something I need for your big finale!”

Piper’s heart skipped a beat at the implication. She watched as Pawglee skipped out of the bedroom and out the back door of the house. As soon as it was clear, she used all of her strength to peel herself off the ground. The sound of duct tape came from her body as she wrestled her new dimensions away from the floor.

“I-I gotta go, screw the car! Oh god...” She struggled to step forward. Her flattened feet flopped and slapped against the faux-wood floor of the bedroom. The hallway carpet wasn’t any better.

She steadied herself against the sofa of the living room, only to hear the back door opening.

“I found it! You’re a lucky, *lucky* girl! I’d have to go out to Gimbels to pick this up, if you didn’t already own one. You’d have to wait *so long* for the fun to continue!”

Piper stifled a scream, and staggered to the window, ducking behind the curtains. Her flattened heart was in her throat. She could *hear* Pawglee investigating her bedroom.

“Hmm... Another round of hide and seek huh? Alrighty! I’ll find you, don’t worry! Hee hee!” The clown skipped away, counting to ten.

Piper peeked out from behind the curtains. The back door was still open. She could make it. She had to.

Just then, the doorbell rang.

“Citry!”

Piper made sure the coast was clear, and wobbled her flattened body over to the front of the house. She could explain everything later, but for now, she and her sister needed to run as far away from the house as they could.

Piper wrapped her crushed fingers around the door knob, and threw the front door open.

Pawglee was on the other side.

“Gotcha!”

7

The terrifying clown grabbed Piper's flattened chest, as if she were seizing the scruff of a cat's neck. She pushed the pancaked young woman to the floor, and stomped a foot on her stomach, pinning her in place.

"There's no hiding from the fun, friend! We're so close to the big finale too!"

Piper wriggled and thrashed about, but her body was weak. Her flattened arms slapped against Pawglee's legs like pool noodles. She could do nothing but scream for help, as the monochrome figure revealed a bike pump behind her back.

"You don't mind if I borrow this, do you?" She grinned, leaning down to fasten the pump's hose between piper's plump lips.

"Don't! Please!?" The doomed girl was cut off. She stared, cross-eyed, at the nozzle in her mouth, before looking to Pawglee with terrified, pleading eyes.

"Hee hee hee hee... Relax, Piper! Why don't you *pipe down*, and enjoy the ride?"

For some reason, the use of a pun made the flattened female more scared, and far more annoyed.

Pawglee lifted up the plunger of the bike pump, and sent a large gust of air into Piper, causing her squashed stomach to distend slightly. Another burst of air inflated her chest somewhat, and even more began to return Piper to her normal shape. The only issue was that she still felt

weak. She could hardly wiggle, and as Pawglee continued to fill her with air, her body grew round and inflated, as if she were a big orange-clad brown balloon.

“N-nmmph!” Piper mumbled, trying to scream into the hose. Her body was becoming round, her large features and curves expanding to comical proportions. Her leggings cut into her ballooning thighs. Her orange hoodie was lifted up by her swelling belly, and her limbs were becoming round and entirely vestigial. The once admirable older sister was becoming nothing more than a giant, rubbery blimp.

“Golly! You’re really growing huh? I’ve never seen a girl inflate this big before! I’d say you got a talent for it! Hee hee!”

Pawglee was clearly enjoying herself. Pumping faster and faster, encouraged by Piper’s strained clothing. Threads were severing, and big holes where the girl’s brown skin shown through were appearing on her leggings. If Piper wasn’t so terrified, she’d be embarrassed by her increasingly exposed body.

“Looking good! We’re almost ready for the *showstopper!*”
Pawglee squealed with delight.

Soon, Piper was so large she was brushing up against the furniture of the dining room. Her stomach was rubbing against the kitchen counter, and her butt was threatening to knock over the china cabinet in the living room. She must have been ten feet wide, and seven feet tall. Her clothes were hanging on only due to divine intervention.

She felt her limbs and head sinking into her overburdened balloon body. Her puffy air-filled cheeks obscured her vision, and she could do nothing but look out past the horizon of her own expanded chest.

Piper did notice *something*. Pawglee was happy, incredibly happy. She had never seen a girl as happy as Pawglee was at this moment. It was almost infectious. For just a moment, Piper considered that this wasn't all that bad. She wasn't in pain, after all. Maybe, if she just spoke up, she could strike a deal with the cartoon clown. Why not have 'fun' with her again and again? In exchange for the safety of her, and her sister? That wouldn't be *terrible*.

Just as Piper considered speaking up to make her case, she was cut off by the cheery clown,

“Almost there! Hee hee hee!... *One!*”

Pawglee gave her prize balloon a *huge* pump, then another.

“*Two!*”

Piper's eyes went wide. Realization struck her. She flapped her hands and wiggled her feet desperately. Her calls for mercy coming out as mumbles, echoing around in the indentation her head occupied on her own spherical body. She had to say something! Anything!

“*Three!*”

Too late.

8

“Piper, I’m home!” Citry called out, unbuckling her bike helmet. She shook her head about, her puffy black hair settling in its usual spot.

The young girl stepped inside the house. It was incredibly quiet for a change.

She checked her cellphone, still no signal.

“That’s so lame. Ugh...” She grumbled, walking to the living room. As she turned the corner, she almost slipped on something.

“What the...”

The carpet was covered in little pieces of orange and brown confetti. The brown bits were rubbery and soft, like hole-punched pieces of latex. Citry stood still for a second, trying to wrap her head around the odd, and familiar mess.

“... Oh well,” the younger sibling shrugged.

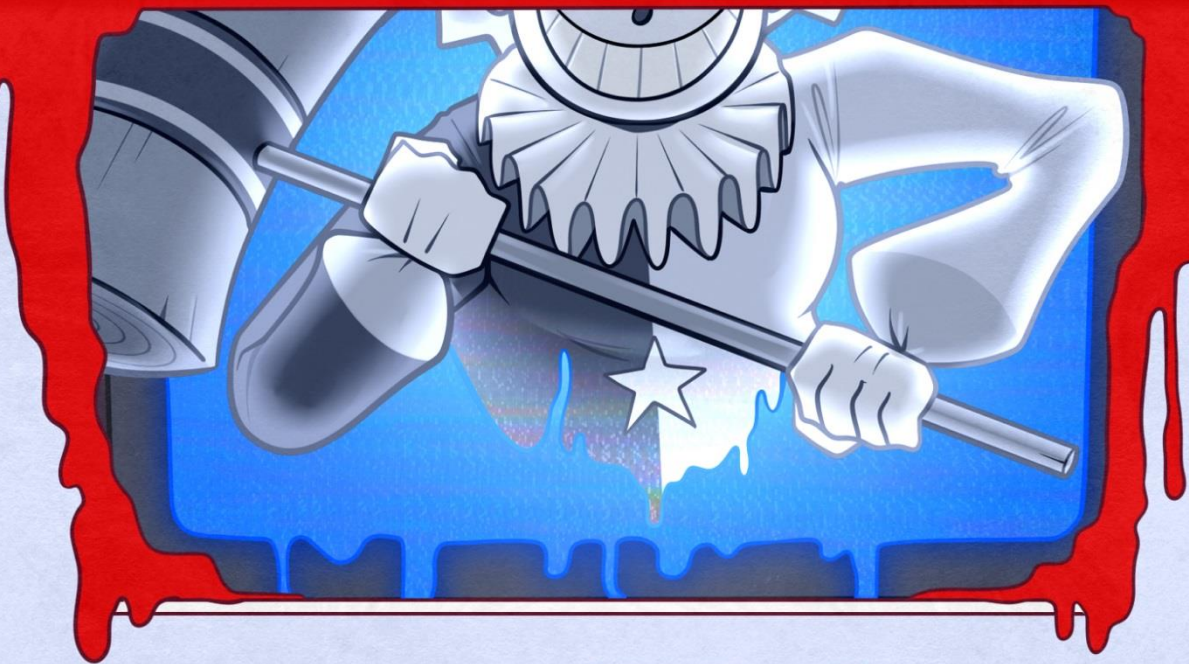
She flopped down on the sofa, grabbing the remote for the VCR.

No service, no internet.

“I guess this will have to do.”

END

Written by RidiculousCake, Cover art by RidiculousCake, 2021



DID YOU SEE THAT?

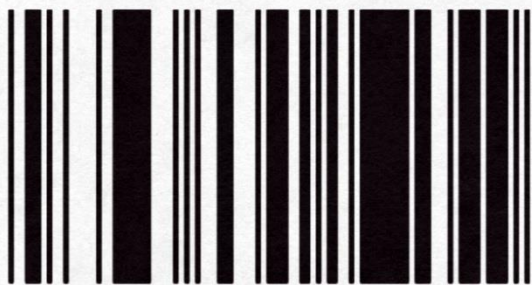
What do you do when the internet goes down, and you have to entertain your little sister?

Piper thought she could put on some old VHS tapes, and have a movie night with Citry. But these old cartoons are just too lame for her little sis. There's only one character! Some creepy cartoon clown girl.

And she keeps looking right through the screen...

Hold on tight – you're in for a fright! **RidiculousCake**

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