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I AM SLAPPY’S EVIL TWIN

R.L. STINE

SCHOLASTIC INC.
Welcome to My World.

Yes, it’s SlappyWorld—you’re only screaming in it! Hahaha.

Feeling lucky, slave? I’m lucky because I’m ME! Haha. I mean, what if I was YOU? I don’t even want to think about it!

I’m so good-looking, the mirror begs me not to leave every time I gaze into it. Ha. The only reason I’m not on a postage stamp is because no one can lick me! Hahaha.

Know what’s almost as awesome-looking as me? I don’t, either! Hahahaha.

I’m so awesome, I give myself goosebumps! Ha. And guess what? Today is your lucky day. Today you get two of me for the price of one.

Poor Luke. Before the story is over, Luke is *living* in a horror movie! He’s not only screaming for help—he’s seeing *double*! That’s because he has *two* living dummies in his house. Hahaha.

Guess what? I may not be a good houseguest—but I tell a good, creepy story.

I call this one *I Am Slappy’s Evil Twin*!

It’s just one more terrifying tale from *SlappyWorld*. 
PROLOGUE

1920
Franz Mahar strokes his white beard and gazes down at the face of the puppet he is making. The glassy olive-green eyes stare up at him. The doll’s wooden face is still unpainted. The smooth lips are frozen in a pale grin.

From the open window of his workshop, Mahar hears the bleating of sheep. The farmers of the small village herd their flocks to the high pasture every morning. Then they bring the animals down as the afternoon sun begins to lower itself over the sloping hills.

The village stands eighty miles from the nearest large town. Nothing has changed in a hundred years. Cows and goats and pigs roam free. Mahar awakes to the sound of clucking chickens every morning.

Mahar raises a long needle and leans over the worktable. He begins sewing cuffs on the puppet’s stiff white shirt. His fingers tremble.

He is an old man now, with failing eyesight
and unsteady hands. Once he had been a star of the London stage. He had created a ventriloquist dummy so lifelike, audiences were amazed. They filled theaters to see his act. He had fame and enough money to enjoy it.

But then, there had been trouble. He shared the stage with the magician Kanduu. With his swirling scarlet cape and his ability to make anything appear or disappear, Kanduu was also a star.

They became friends. Mahar trusted Kanduu. He didn’t realize—until too late—that Kanduu’s magic came from a dark place. Kanduu was a sorcerer.

He could cast spells, and his spells were always evil. He could control people. He could make them say and do things they didn’t want to do.

Mahar learned a lot of magic from Kanduu. He didn’t realize that Kanduu had an evil side. Until one day backstage when Mahar was about to begin his act.

He opened the long black case in which he kept Mr. Wood, his dummy. He bent down and began to lift the dummy from the case.

“Oww!” Mahar cried out as the dummy’s wooden hand swung up and punched him hard in the chin.

“Keep your hands off me!” Mr. Wood shouted. Mahar stood there, staring in shock at him, rubbing the pain from his jaw.
“I’m pulling the strings from now on!” the dummy declared. He swung his wooden fist again and caught Mahar on the shoulder.

Backing away, Mahar realized what had happened. Kanduu had enchanted the dummy. Kanduu had poured his evil magic into Mahar’s creation. Mr. Wood was alive.

Terrified, Mahar slammed the case shut. He left it on the stage. He never wanted to see that dummy again. He packed a bag and sailed for the United States.

Mahar was desperate to flee, to leave the evil dummy behind. He hid away in this tiny farm village and built a small cottage and a workshop. He lived quietly, alone. He made no friends.

He built his only friends. The puppets and dolls he created in his workshop were works of art. His hands gently carved their wooden heads and hands. He painted their faces. He sewed their costumes.

He gave them personalities. He did puppet shows and ventriloquist acts for himself. And once in a while, he used the magic he had learned from Kanduu. Some nights, he brought his puppets and dummies to life. He did it out of loneliness. He needed someone to talk to.

So today—while the sheep bleat and the chickens cluck outside his window—Mahar puts the final touches on his latest creation.
He finishes coloring the dummy’s cheeks with gentle strokes of a small brush.

“You are made from the finest hardwood,” he tells the dummy. “And I have used the powers I learned to give you life.”

On its back on the worktable, the dummy blinks its glassy eyes.

“You will obey me at all times,” Mahar says, pulling it up to a sitting position. He ties the dummy’s polished brown shoes.

“The magic I have poured into you can be dangerous. You must stay under my control. You must not follow any angry or cruel thoughts.”

The dummy blinks again. Does it understand Mahar’s words?

Mahar has more instructions for his creation. But he is interrupted by a knocking on the wooden cottage door.

He jumps in surprise. “Who is pounding on my door so violently?”

It sounds like more than one fist beating at the door, hard enough to break it open.

“I’m coming. I’m coming,” Mahar murmurs. He sets the dummy onto its back on the worktable.

Then he wipes his aged hands on the sides of his overalls and limps to the door. He pulls it open slowly—and utters a loud gasp.

*The entire village?*

Mahar’s eyes blur as he sweeps his gaze over
the grim-faced men and women. At least two
dozens of them. His legs begin to tremble. He
tries to focus. Some of them carry torches. The
men standing at the front of the group carry
pistols.
Mahar feels his throat tighten. He begins to
choke.
Finally, he finds his voice. “What do you want?
Why are you here? What are you going to do?”