

The tuna desaster

DCI Barnaby woke up with a jolt! What was wrong? What had happened? He looked around and found himself in his favourite cardboard box. 'It must have been a nightmare', he thought. 'Somebody stole all my tins of tuna, what a terrible idea!' Only a good breakfast could help him now. He stretched and started to roam the house. His people were still asleep, those lazybones. But he couldn't open a tin on his own. So he decided to make some noise to wake them up.

But everything remained silent. It was a strange silence, Barnaby thought. Where was Baxter? He didn't miss him, oh my dog, no! But he suddenly realized that he hadn't seen him for a while. And that was definitely unusual as the little pain in the neck always tried to tease him and play tricks on him.

Barnaby tried to stay calm and inspected the tuna stock. Perhaps he could select his favourite flavour and with a bit of luck his people would then take exactly this tin. But what a shock! The box with all the wonderful, delicious snacks was empty! He knew it had been full yesterday, so that was impossible! Not a trace of all the colourful, promising tins!



"Helga!" he yelled into the phone. "This is an emergency! I have been robbed! All my tuna is gone! Come here, this is definitely a theft of the worst kind! Or attempted murder! I will starve, if I don't get my tuna tins back!" Helga sighed. Not again! But Barnaby was the boss, so she answered politely, "Sir, I am awfully sorry. Are you sure you haven't eaten..." "Helga!", Barnaby interrupted her. "How can you even think of that? Impossible! So what are you waiting for? Hurry up and come here to help me!" Helga didn't know what to say. Had he forgotten again? Lockdown? Quarantine? "Sir, again, I am really sorry, but you know I cannot come to help you. It's still quarantine. But I am sure you will solve the case without me." "Of course, I will", Barnaby replied, "but I am so hungry, I can't even think properly. But what else can I do? Bye, DS."

Barnaby tried to ignore his collywobbles and sorted out his thoughts. No tuna tins, no Baxter..... now that was the connection! He knew he was on the right track. Although he was already getting weak (no breakfast, no second breakfast...) he started to make a plan.

“Come on, Barney, use your brilliant brain“, he said to himself. Where had he seen Baxter last? When had this nasty piece of work last crossed his ways? When had he last seen his beloved tuna snacks?



Then it began to dawn on him. The basket. THE basket that had once been his own, but had long since been occupied by his detested flatmate. The basket where Baxter had tried to hide the missing report about Mr Squeek’s death.

Cautiously and slowly Barnaby approached the room where he hoped to find Baxter’s haul. Meanwhile his legs were already shaking because he was so terribly hungry and weak. But he couldn’t give up.

He hid behind the door for some minutes, waiting for some telltale sound or movement. But when he heard or saw nothing he started the attack and stormed into the room. “Paws up! You are found guilty! Resistance is pointless!”



But Baxter didn't even bat an eyelash. He just looked at Barnaby with his silly face, got out of the basket and toddled off. Barnaby was speechless. He had only eyes for his precious tins and didn't even have the power to follow Baxter. The only clear thought that crossed his mind was that at least half of the tins were missing. "He can't have eaten them all! He doesn't even like tuna! And how did he open them? Where is the tin opener?"

But deep down he knew that Baxter had destroyed his beloved food. Just for fun! Just for scullduggery!

At the end of his tether he went back to his people's bedroom and tried to wake them up. This time he was successful. But nobody recognized what he had been through this morning. And then there was another problem, the tin opener was gone. After what seemed like ages to Barnaby, his people found an old spare opener. At last somebody opened a tin of tuna for him.

When he smelled the delicious aroma his animal spirits came back, slowly but surely. After the meal (and a second meal) he phoned Helga and told her everything. "Sir, I am so happy you were saved from starvation! We have to do something about this Baxter once and for all." "Wait, Helga! I have already started the next case. He also stole the tin opener. He won't get away with this. But first let me have another snack, I am still recovering...."