

# THE HEADLESS DUCK

In the middle of the night, Alexander Bopp heard a strange clicking sound.

He sat up in bed.  
**CLICKETY-CLICK.**

*There it is again!* he thought.  
He held his breath.  
Something was moving underneath his bed.

**WHIRRR...CLICKETY-CLICK!**

Alexander did what most kids would do in this situation: He ducked under his blanket.



But unlike most kids, Alexander wasn't hiding. He was setting a trap.

Alexander was the leader of the Super Secret Monster Patrol, a group of kids sworn to protect Stermont from monsters. Recently, a whole slew of monsters had been unleashed on the town. The S.S.M.P. was going to be busier than ever.

**WHIRRRR...GLICKETY-CLICK!**

Alexander waited for the thing-under-the-bed to come out.

"GOTCHA!" he shouted. He dove to the floor, slamming his blanket down over the clicky thing.



The thing shook. It clicked. And then it quacked.

Alexander blinked.

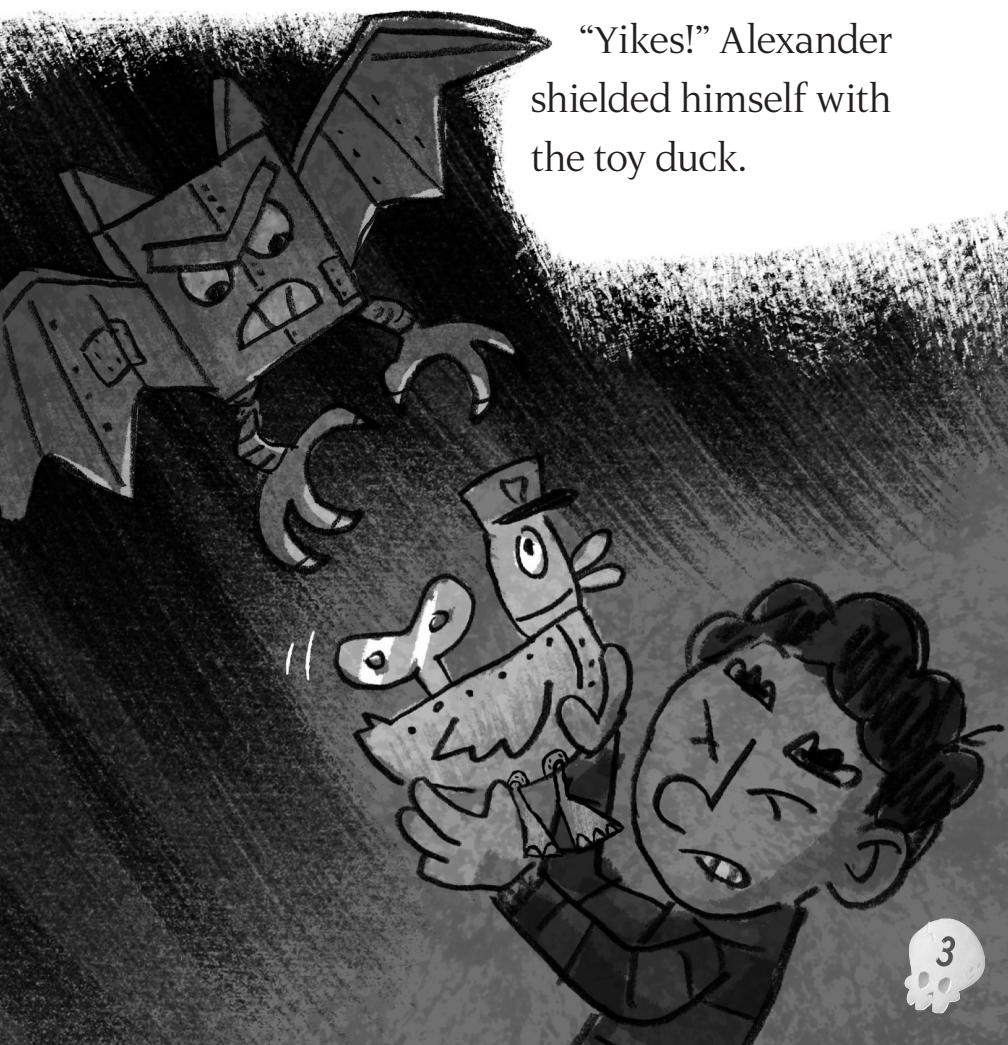


He yanked off the blanket. He'd captured a windup toy duck. It was waddling in circles.

“Captain Duck!” said Alexander. “Who wound you up?”

**SCREEE!** A flapping bat-like creature swooped down from Alexander’s bookshelf. Its claws were long. And pointy. And headed straight for Alexander’s face.

“Yikes!” Alexander shielded himself with the toy duck.





**VRRRRT!** The creature's claws spun like a drill, unscrewing the large, yellow windup key from Captain Duck's back.

**PLOP!** The duck fell apart. Alexander gasped.

The bat-creature flapped out the window and disappeared into the night.

Alexander closed his window, locked it, and climbed back into bed.

The last thing he saw before falling asleep was Captain Duck's head looking up at him from the floor.

