



## **Before You Read the Story:**

This little story was written while I was in the United States on sabbatical at a training program in Bethel, Maine. It follows on from *The Wandoo Court Detective Agency* and features the same villain getting into lots of trouble again - this time in Cairns. It is short but has a real climax. Again, we have good dogs, bad boys and a sense of cosmic justice at work. The story was also offered to encourage the girls to cook - hence the full recipe for the apple pies. It was written as a gift for the girls and is offered without chapter headings.

The girls loved this story and it was called for again and again when the girls were little. They particularly loved the way justice was meted out to Dudley and the way they were rewarded. It's the first of many upgrades to Business Class - most adults, of course, will see this immediately as a happy ending.

There's a neat historical anticipation here. The journalists from the Cairns Post reappear many years later in *Old Riley and the Lost Gold of Itapa*. They have a much greater role in that story but they are unmistakably the same people then as they are here.

Finally, Cairns itself is a character in this little story. The garden of our home there truly was a magical place - although at ten kilometres from Dudley's city hotel, it is rather an artistic stretch to imagine him walking there and back.

# The Mystery of the Disappearing Apple Pie



Another Baffling Mystery  
solved by  
The Wandoo Court Girls Detective Agency

July 2005

by Grandad

Bethel, Maine

After all the excitement of the *Mystery of the Missing Puppies*, Katie and Emily were very pleased to be going on holidays. They had an invitation from Nanny and Grandad in Cairns to come for a visit and the girls were very happy to be packing their clothes to take to Cairns. "Being a detective can be very hard work," Emily said to her sister as they found their hats and their swimming togs.

It was true. Both of the girls were looking forward to lots of fun at Nanny and Grandad's house. There would be time to play on the beach and walk in the bush. And if they were lucky, they might even see their old friends, Mother Cassowary and her chicks.

They enjoyed the long plane flight because the flight attendant kept remembering them and bringing them lots of nice things to eat or play with. From the windows of the plane, the girls could see the beautiful blue ocean and the green mountains. After a long flight - just when the girls were getting tired - they were heading down to the airport. Nanny and Grandad were there to meet them and the girls were soon at home in their sweet little room looking over the orchard with its comfortable beds and books to read. They could hear the chooks next door and the lively rooster who woke them up every morning.

What fun those girls had over the next week. They went to Muddie's Playground and the beach. The girls just loved the hot days and the fun of running into the cool water of the lagoon. In the bush they went for long walks with Grandad and saw all the rain forest animals that they loved. More than anything the girls loved playing in the big garden. There were great spots for hiding and Nanny and Grandad had built the girls their own secret garden that was like a big cubby made from living plants. It was the best place to sit with a sandwich and a cold drink at lunch time and just listen to the wind in the bamboo and the noisy boys next door playing cricket.

One morning the girls woke up and instead of the bright sunshine that they loved, it was raining steadily. They were a little disappointed at first but Nanny told them that it was going to be a very special day. Grandad had to go into work, you see, so Nanny and the girls were going to bake apple pies. "We're going to have some special visitors for afternoon tea," said Nanny, and we want to give them something nice.

Do you like apple pies? Katie and Emily just loved them and they were sure that Nanny would show them how to make the best apple pies you can imagine.

"First of all," said Nanny, "we have to make sure we have all the things we need. Let's find the recipe and make sure."



Nanny found her recipe book and she stood at the pantry while the girls read the recipe and called out all the things that they would need. Here is the recipe:

### Nanny's Apple Pie

For the pastry you will need:

- 2 cups of flour.
- A little salt
- Two spoonfuls of butter.
- Two spoons of cold water.
- Half a cup of sugar.

For the filling you will need:

Four lovely green apples.

Some lemon juice.

A cup of sugar.

Ten or twelve nice cloves.

1. First make the pastry. Rub the butter into the flour and add the salt, sugar and last of all the water. Mix it up very quickly and then put it aside to rest.
2. Next, make the filling. Wash the apples and peel off the green skin. Cut the apples into big chunks about the same size. Discard the core. Put the apple into a dish with the sugar and the lemon juice and put into the microwave for a few minutes until the apple is a little soft. Now add the cloves and mix through.
3. Now assemble the pie. Divide the pastry into four equal pieces. Roll out the pastry and make it nice and thin. Butter two pie dishes and put one piece of pastry on the bottom. Now add the apples and put the other half on the top. Mark the pastry with a fork to make it look pretty.
4. Bake in the oven for half an hour. Take the pies from the oven and let them cool. Serve with ice cream, custard or whipped cream - or all three!

The girls were so excited by the time they got to the end of the recipe - to the part where it said to serve the apple pie with ice cream, custard and whipped cream. That sounded just wonderful.



Granny Smith Apples - the best apples for pies!

"Well," said Nanny. "if we are going to have apple pie for dinner, we better start now."

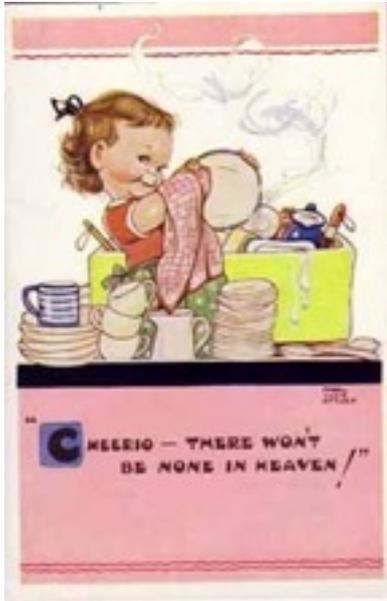
The girls went to the bathroom to wash their hands while Nanny found the apple pie plates and put the oven on to warm up. Katie and Emily were ready to help but Nanny expected the girls to make all the pie themselves. This was going to be very hard - even for big girls like Katie and Emily.

Nanny found two stools for the girls to stand on so that they were tall enough to work at the bench. Each girl had a nice clean apron and although they checked everything with Nanny, she made sure that they did all the hard work. Katie got the difficult job of rubbing in the butter and mixing up the pastry; Emily had to peel the apples so that they could be chopped and cooked in the microwave. When it came time to assemble the pies, each girl made her own pie look simply smashing.

Nanny put the pies into the oven and very kindly helped with all the messy washing up. "After all," she said, "you girls have done all the hard work making the pies."

If those apple pies looked good going into the oven, you simply should have seen them when they came out of the oven! They were golden brown and smelled heavenly. Katie and Emily were so proud of what they had done and they posed proudly beside their pies so Nanny could take their photographs.

"And what's more," said Nanny, "while you were doing the cooking, the showery weather is over and the sun has come out."



Katie helping with the washing up.

"We can play in the garden," said Emily. The girls left the pies to cool on the window sill while they ran out into the garden -only to find that it was too wet to play. The drive was all muddy and their secret garden was dripping with wet. Nanny called them back in and the girls settled down in their room to read some books until Grandad came home for dinner.

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Now I have to tell you about what happened to the girls' apple pies. They had left them to cool on the bench in the kitchen but the smell of those wonderful pies carried out into the garden and down the street. The postman delivering letters smelled those pies and knew what a nice dinner everyone in that house was going to have. The rooster bird and the chooks next door could smell the pies and wished they could have some. They raised such a tremendous noisy song about the pies that their owner came out thinking that a carpet snake must be in the hen house. That wonderful smell reached one particular person, however, who was walking up the street, kicking a stone and feeling very nasty. It was a boy - older than the girls with awful red hair, a fat face and small piggy eyes. This person even knew the girls because he was a cousin of the girls' good friend Harry Potter. Yes, it was the horrible Dudley Dursley.



The horrible Dudley Dursley

Dudley was in Cairns on a holiday with his Auntie Marg. Because the day was wet, Auntie Marg had wanted to go shopping but Dudley said he had a headache and he would wait quietly at home. He hated shopping. He wanted, he told his aunt, to write a letter to his mother and father. This was a terrible whopper: Dudley had no intention of writing to anyone. Auntie Marg believed him, of course, and had given Dudley some money to spend on buying a postcard and stamps. Sure enough, as soon as Auntie Marg was out the door, Dudley grabbed the money and went up town. First he spent all the money on ice creams. If his mother and father wanted to hear from him, he said, they could call him on his mobile phone. After he had eaten the ice cream, he walked up and down the streets looking for some little children to tease or some puppies or cats to hurt. [Dudley loved doing mean things to people and animals smaller than he.]

He was not disappointed. Some little boys were playing cricket and the ball they were using came flying over the fence. Dudley grabbed it and even though the boys asked for it back nicely, Dudley sneered and put it in his pocket and walked away. A lovely puppy came running up to the fence to look at Dudley as he walked by. The puppy wagged his tail - but Dudley found a stone and threw it hard at the little puppy who ran away crying. All of these things made Dudley very pleased and proud of himself.



Little boys playing cricket

He was just about to turn and walk back to the hotel where he was staying with Auntie Marg when he smelled the most wonderful smell. Even though he had eaten a big ice cream and a big lunch, he still felt hungry and the smell that came to him as he walked down the street made him stop and lick his fat lips.

It was the smell of the apple pies that the girls had made. In all his life, Dudley didn't think that he had smelled such a grand smell. He looked up the street: no one was watching him. With more care than you might think a big fat boy could manage, Dudley slipped down the muddy drive and followed his nose until he found the two beautiful pies sitting on the kitchen bench near the back door.

Nanny was in the bathroom: Dudley could hear the shower running. He could also hear voices coming from the flat where Katie and Emily were reading their books. Now Dudley did a very naughty thing. He knew it was very naughty but all he could think about was the taste of those scrumptious apple pies. While it had been fun to spoil the little boys' game

of cricket and make the puppy cry, it would be even more fun to pinch those pies. Dudley took both of the apple pies as quickly and as quietly as he could and snuck out into the front garden with them. They were warm and fragrant and Dudley couldn't think of anything other than eating them up as quickly as he could. He found a quiet spot to think - it was the girls' hidden garden where there was a stone bench to sit and the trees and plants grew up to shelter him from everyone. The girls loved to bring their morning tea there - it was their special place. Now it was Dudley's cubby.

You see, Dudley was greedy and mean but he wasn't stupid. He knew that whoever cooked these pies would miss them as soon as they returned to the kitchen so Dudley decided to play a very mean trick. Before he ate the pies, he carefully peeled back the golden pastry top on both pies and put it aside. Then, using only his hands, he scooped out the luscious, hot apple filling and scooped it down. He ate every bit of the filling and then he ate the pastry base and then he licked his fingers. All that was left was the golden pastry tops.



Instead of an apple pie, Dudley left a mud pie!

Dudley would have eaten them as well but he was determined to make the adventure of eating the pies as exciting as he could. He remembered the look of sadness on one little boy's face when his cricket ball was stolen. That's exactly how these silly people would look when they realised their apple pies had been stolen!

Dudley slipped back to the muddy path. There were puddles there and Dudley scooped up handfuls of the mud and pressed it into the pie plates. When he had filled the pie plates, Dudley carefully placed the pastry

cover. It looked as if the pies were still full of delicious apple. He wiped off the mud that had slopped out of the pie plates with his handkerchief. Then he slipped back to the kitchen bench and replaced the pies. He would have loved to have waited and watched while the people in the house found that their beautiful apple pies had been stolen but the afternoon was getting late. Feeling full of pie and very pleased with himself, Dudley skulked back to his hotel. He had had the very best day!

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The next morning, Dudley and his Aunt Marg were going to go to Kuranda to see the Cassowaries. Aunt Marg was reading the newspaper at breakfast and she showed Dudley the front page. "Cairns is a terrible place," she said. "Look what is happening here! If they catch this thief, they should smack his bottom!"

This is what the headline read:

**BOLD THIEF BREAKS GIRLS' HEARTS!**

There was a picture of a tearful looking Katie and Emily, each holding a muddy pie plate. This is what the story said:

Cairns Police are investigating the mysterious theft of two apple pies from the home of a well known Cairns couple, Nanny and Grandad Bland. The pies, made by the Bland's beautiful grand daughters, Katie and Emily Bland, were taken from a kitchen bench. In the place of the fragrant apple pies, the wicked thief left two mud pies.

"We made these pies for dinner," said Katie Bland.

"If we catch the thief, we're going to bash him up!" said Emily Bland.

The girls have promised to make more pies today. Police are also investigating the theft of a cricket ball from some little boys and a stone throwing incident involving a small dog. Both offences happened in the same street as the pie theft and police believe the crimes may be related.

Dudley read the story through and sniggered. It was delicious. He hadn't known that he had stolen the pies from Katie and Emily - that made it even better! The girls were friends of his poor cousin, Harry Potter,

whom Dudley loved to hurt and punish. Anything that hurt the girls would also trouble his cousin - which was good.

The best part of the article in the paper, however, was the sentence that said that the girls were going to be baking more pies today. If Dudley went back to the girls' house this afternoon, he could steal a second lot of pies. If he could do this, he would be brilliant! The girls were really stupid - and he was so bold and handsome and clever. Of course he could steal the second batch of pies. That would be so cool.

Dudley enjoyed his morning at Kuranda. He had hoped to be able to torment the cassowary by poking it with a stick but the birds were safely behind a high fence. Dudley had to content himself with eating a very large plate of cakes for morning tea and a big lunch of hot chips and hamburgers. "I love to see a boy with a good appetite," said Aunt Marg, as she shovelled the chips from her plate on to Dudley's. They were back at the hotel soon after lunch and Dudley explained that he wanted to go out and post his post card. Marg was happy for him to do that provided that she could have a little snooze.



Dudley ate this plate of cakes for morning tea!

It was all Dudley needed. He was out of the hotel and down the street as fast as he could go, headed towards Nanny and Grandad's house. It was a warm afternoon and he was beginning to perspire; he just hoped that the newspaper was right about the second batch of pies. It would be the bravest thing to do - to steal a second lot of pies from Katie and Emily. This time he wouldn't bother to substitute a mud pie. It would be enough

just to make off with the stolen pies. It would be his best ever trick on Harry Potter and his friends.

Dudley passed the yard where the boys were playing cricket. The little boys saw him and called off their game immediately. Dudley noticed that instead of the fine red cricket ball from yesterday, this time they had an old green tennis ball.[Dudley had kept the cricket ball and had put it in his suit case. He would show it to his bullying friends at home and boast about what he had done.] The little dog who had wagged his tail at Dudley was also at the fence; when he saw Dudley, the puppy cried at once and stood back, barking. Dudley wished he had a second stone to throw and was just looking about to find one when he was stopped in his tracks by the most wonderful smell.

The fragrance of those lovely apple pies was calling him all the way up the street and he put everything else out of his mind. Perhaps he could come back this way after he had eaten the pies and do something really terrible to the puppy. Right now he had other business to attend to.

Dudley followed his nose down the drive and saw the apple pies resting on the kitchen bench. He looked around but couldn't see or hear anyone. It would only take a moment for him to be up the back steps and away with the pies. He took a big breath, and moved as quickly as he could.



The policeman who caught Dudley Dursley.

He had only just touched the pies when there was a mighty shout.

"What do you think you're doing?" said a big deep voice.

"Take your dirty paws off our pies!" shouted two angry little girls.

Out from behind the doorway stepped Katie and Emily, Nanny, an angry policeman and a journalist and photographer from the Cairns Post who took lots of photographs of what happened over the next few moments. The reporter's name was Miss Slant and the photographer's name was Mr Flash. Dudley didn't try to explain; he could see that he had been trapped and his only thought now was to get away as quickly as he could.

He left the pies and dashed down the steps and down the driveway, back into the road. There were five people after him [Mr Flash taking photographs all the way down the driveway] but Dudley was very fast for a fat boy and I think he would have got away - if he hadn't been tackled and knocked to the ground by a group of big boys waiting for him in the road.

You see, these were the big brothers of all the little boys who had been playing cricket the day before. When they heard from their little brothers about what had happened, they were very angry and determined to find the fat boy who had spoiled their happy game by stealing the ball. While Dudley was struggling on the ground with the big brothers, a fierce little puppy ran up and bit him on his fat bottom. The owner of the puppy had heard his frightened barking as Dudley came up the street and the puppy barked and clamoured to be let out of the yard so he could chase the boy who had thrown the stone at him. By the time the policeman and the girls and Nanny reached Dudley, they were able to rescue him from the big boys and the angry dog. Dudley was blubbering like a baby, crying for his Auntie Marg and calling on everyone to rescue him from the cruel bullies and the savage dog.



These are the big brothers who caught Dudley Dursley.

The police man was a wonderfully kind and gentle man named Constable Plod. He was up the driveway and after Dudley as quickly as he could move, the girls and Nanny and the reporters with him. Emily and Katie wondered then why if Constable Plod was so quick that he was so slow to move when the gang of six big brothers knocked Dudley to the ground and began to bash him. After Dudley had collected two or three good whacks from each of the boys, Constable Plod waded in and chased them off.

"Now then, young man," said Constable Plod, " I must insist that you stop mucking about with these fellows and accompany me back to the house and explain what you know about these missing apple pies. And, sir" he said to the owner of the puppy, "can you please take your pet inside or put a muzzle on him? This fat fellow has excited him, I think."

The puppy [who had managed to get in two or three good nips on Dudley's fat bottom] was happy to be lifted off his heaving victim and taken back inside his own yard. He wagged his tail so happily that his owner was sure that there was no real harm done to his darling pet. Dudley, with his pants ripped and his face all smeared with tears and dirt, was taken back up the path and sat on the verandah of Nanny's home while the policeman sharpened his pencil and prepared to take a statement. Katie and Emily and the journalists listened while Dudley told then everything he had done. What was worse for Dudley was that the girls and Nanny had made a double batch of apple pies and while the policeman and the journalists worked, Nanny made them a nice cup of tea and Emily cut each of them a big slice of pie. Katie spooned on the cream and ice cream and custard. Dudley, of course, didn't get any.

Poor Auntie Marg had to come to the police station and collect the wailing Dudley. Constable Plod took them back to the hotel unit and searched Dudley's luggage. There he found the stolen cricket ball and the handkerchief all smeared with mud.

"We consider pie stealing and cricket ball stealing very serious crimes here in Cairns," Constable Plod said at last. "Dudley, what do you have to say for yourself?"

All that Dudley wanted to say was that he wanted a slice of pie too but even though he was a mean bully he realised that this was probably not a good thing to say. "I am sorry," said Dudley weakly. "I promise I'll never do it again."

In the end, Constable Plod accepted that as Dudley was only twelve years old and was leaving town the next day with his Aunt and that he was truly sorry for what he had done there was nothing more to say. Dudley was sent back to the hotel with Auntie Marg in disgrace and she put him to bed without any pudding that night.

The worst punishment was the newspaper the next morning. Auntie Marg almost died when she saw the front page:

### BRAVE GIRLS CATCH FAT BOY STEALING PIES

By our special reporter, Ms Nasty Slant.

The mystery of the disappearing apple pies in Cairns has been solved by two detectives, Katie and Emily, who surprised well known thief and bully, Dudley Dursley, in the act of pinching a second batch of pies yesterday at the home of their grandparents, Nanny and Grandad Bland. The girls were assisted in the arrest by six boys, the big brothers of some little boys whose cricket ball Dudley Dursley had stolen moments before he pinched the first batch of pies. The ball was later recovered from Dursley's room at the Shangrila Hotel where he was staying with his poor Auntie Marg. Constable Plod who made the arrest said that this was the worst case of pie and ball stealing he had seen in his twenty years in Cairns. He paid tribute to Katie and Emily who set a trap for Dudley Dursley and said they were the best detectives he'd met.

There were lots of photographs in the newspaper including a dirty faced, blubbing Dudley, one of the brave puppy, all the big and little brothers with their cricket gear, lots of pictures of the girls with their pies and even one of Grandad showing Constable Plod his orchids. [It turned out that Constable Plod had a nice garden too.] The television crews arrived later in the morning and that night it was all on the television news. There was even some footage of Dudley arriving at the airport with Auntie Marg and Dudley complaining about police brutality and showing off the marks on his big bottom where he said he had been attacked by a police dog.

Nanny and Grandad were so sorry when the girls had to go home to Noosa. They just loved having them visit and Nanny said that the next time that they came back, the girls would learn to make meat pies.

"You know", said Katie, "there were many great moments in the holiday, but the best one was seeing the big brothers sort things out with Dudley on the footpath outside Nanny's house."

"I think it was seeing the puppy bite Dudley on the bottom," laughed Emily.



The girls flew back Business Class!

On the plane, the flight attendants had all seen the television coverage and the girls were upgraded to Business Class and given every attention on the flight - including a large slice each of apple pie!