

A BAD CASE OF THE STRIPES
By David Shannon

Parts (18): Camilla, Narrator 1, Narrator 2, Narrator 3, Narrator 4, Mr. Harms, Mother, Father, Dr. Bumble, Old Woman, Environmental Therapist, Dr. Grop, Dr. Gourd, Dr. Sponge, Mr. Mellon, Dr. Cricket, Dr. Young

Narrator 1: A BAD CASE OF THE STRIPES By David Shannon

Narrator 2: Camilla Cream loved lima beans. But she never ate them.

Narrator 3: All of her friends hated lima beans, and she wanted to fit in. Camilla always worried about what other people thought of her.

Narrator 4: Today she was fretting even more than usual. It was the very first day of school, and she couldn't decide what to wear. There were so many people to impress!

Narrator 1: She tried on forty-two outfits, but none seemed quite right. She put on a pretty red dress and looked in the mirror. Then she screamed.

Narrator 2: Her mother ran into the room, and she screamed, too.

Mother: “Oh my heavens! You’re completely covered with stripes!”

Narrator 3: she cried. This was certainly true. Camilla was striped from head to toe. She looked like a rainbow.

Narrator 4: Mrs. Cream felt Camilla’s forehead.

Mother: “Do you feel all right?”

Narrator 1: she asked.

Camilla: “I feel fine, but just look at me!”

Narrator 2: Camilla answered.

Mother: “You get back in bed this instant. You’re not going to school today.”

Narrator 3: her mother ordered. Camilla was relieved. She didn’t want to miss the first day of school, but she was afraid of what the other kids would say. And she had no idea what to wear with those crazy stripes.

Narrator 4: That afternoon, Dr. Bumble came to examine Camilla.

Dr. Bumble: “Most extraordinary! I’ve never seen anything like it! Are you having any coughing, sneezing, runny nose, aches, pains, chills, hot flashes, dizziness, drowsiness, shortness of breath, or uncomfortable twitching?”

Narrator 1: he asked.

Camilla: “No, I feel fine.”

Narrator 2: Camilla told him.

Dr. Bumble: “Well then, I don’t see any reason why she shouldn’t go to school tomorrow. Here’s some ointment that should help clear up those stripes in a few days. If it doesn’t, you know where to reach me.”

Narrator 3: Dr. Bumble said turning to Mrs. Cream. And off he went.

Narrator 4: The next day was a disaster. Everyone at school laughed at Camilla. They called her

“Camilla Crayon” and “Night of the Living Lollipop.”

Narrator 1: She tried her best to act as if everything were normal, but when the class said the Pledge of Allegiance, her stripes turned red, white, and blue, and she broke out in stars!

Narrator 2: The other kids thought this was great. One yelled out,

Narrator 3: “Let’s see some purple polka dots!”

Narrator 4: Sure enough, Camilla turned all purple polka-dotty. Someone else shouted,

Narrator 1: “Checkerboard!”

Narrator 4: and a pattern of squares covered her skin. Soon everyone was calling out different shapes and colors, and poor Camilla was changing faster than you can change channels on a T.V.

Narrator 2: That night, Mr. Harms, the school principal, called.

Mr. Harms: “I’m sorry, Mrs. Cream, I’m going to have to ask you to keep Camilla home from school. She’s just too much of a distraction, and I’ve been getting phone calls from the other parents. They’re afraid those stripes may be contagious.”

Narrator 3: he said. Camilla was so embarrassed. She couldn’t believe that two days ago everyone liked her. Now, nobody wanted to be in the same room with her.

Narrator 1: Her father tried to make her feel better.

Father: “Is there anything I can get you, sweetheart?”

Narrator 2: he asked.

Camilla: “No, thank you,”

Narrator 3: sighed Camilla. What she really wanted was a nice plate of lima beans, but she had been laughed at enough for one day.

Dr. Bumble: “Hmm, well, yes, I see. I think I’d better bring in the Specialists. We’ll be right over.”

Narrator 4: said Dr. Bumble to Mr. Cream on the phone. About an hour later, Dr. Bumble arrived with four people in long white coats. He introduced them to the Creams.

Dr. Bumble: “This is Dr. Grop, Dr. Sponge, Dr. Cricket, and Dr. Young.”

Narrator 1: Then the Specialists went to work on Camilla. They squeezed and jabbed, tapped and tested. It was very uncomfortable.

Dr. Grop: “Well, it’s not the mumps.”

Dr. Sponge: “Or the measles.”

Dr. Cricket: “Definitely not the chicken pox.”

Dr. Young: “Or sunburn.”

Narrator 2: replied the Specialists.

Specialists: “Try these. Take one of each before bed.”

Narrator 4: said the Specialists. They each handed her a bottle filled with different colored

pills. Then they filed out the front door followed by Dr. Bumble.

Narrator 1: That night, Camilla took her medicine. It was awful.

Narrator 2: When she woke up the next morning, she did feel different, but when she got dressed, her clothes didn't fit right. She looked in the mirror, and there, staring back at her, was a giant, multi-colored pill with a face on it.

Narrator 3: Dr. Bumble rushed over as soon as Mrs. Cream called. But this time, instead of the Specialists, he brought the Experts.

Narrator 4: Dr. Gourd and Mr. Mellon were the finest scientific minds in the land. Once again, Camilla was poked and prodded, looked at and listened to.

Narrator 1: The Experts wrote down lots of numbers. Then they huddled together and whispered. Dr. Gourd finally spoke.

Dr. Gourd: “It might be a virus,”

Narrator 2: he announced with authority. Suddenly, fuzzy little virus balls appeared all over Camilla.

Mr. Mellon: “Or possibly some form of bacteria,”

Narrator 3: said Mr. Mellon. Out popped squiggly little bacteria tails.

Dr. Gourd: “Or it could be a fungus,”

Narrator 4: added Dr. Gourd. Instantly, Camilla was covered with different colored fungus blotches. The Experts looked at Camilla, then each other.

Experts: “We need to go over these numbers again back at the lab. “We’ll call you when we know something,”

Narrator 1: said the Experts. But the Experts didn’t have a clue, much less a cure.

Narrator 2: By now, the T.V. news had found out about Camilla. Reporters from every channel were outside her house, telling the story of

“The Bizarre Case of the Incredible Changing Kid.”

Narrator 3: Soon a huge crowd was camped out on the front lawn.

Narrator 4: The Creams were swamped with all kinds of remedies from psychologists, allergists, herbalists, nutritionists, psychics, an old medicine man, a guru, and even a veterinarian.

Narrator 1: Each so-called cure only added to poor Camilla’s strange appearance until it was hard to even recognize her. She sprouted roots and berries and crystals and feathers and a long furry tail. But nothing worked.

Narrator 2: One day, a woman who called herself an Environmental Therapist claimed she could cure Camilla. She said,

Environmental Thereapist: “Close your eyes, breathe deeply, and become one with your room.”

Camilla: "I wish you hadn't said that,"

Narrator 3: Camilla groaned. Slowly she started to melt into the walls of her room. Her bed became her mouth, her nose was her dresser, and two paintings were her eyes. The therapist screamed and ran from the house.

Mother: "What are we going to do? It just keeps getting worse and worse!"

Narrator 4: At that moment, Mr. Cream heard a quiet little knock at the front door. He opened it, and there stood an old woman who was just as plump and sweet as a strawberry.

Old Woman: "Excuse me, but I think I can help."

Narrator 2: she said brightly.

Narrator 3: She went into Camilla's room and looked around.

Old Woman: "My goodness, what we have here is a bad case of the stripes. One of the worst I've ever seen!"

Narrator 4: she said with a shake of her head. She pulled a container of small green beans from her bag. She said,

Old Woman: “Here. These might do the trick.”

Mother: “Are those magic beans?”

Narrator 1: asked Mrs. Cream. The old woman replied,

Old Woman: “Oh my, no, there’s no such thing. These are just plain old lima beans. I’ll bet you’d like some, wouldn’t you?”

Narrator 2: she asked Camilla. Camilla wanted a big, heaping plateful of lima beans more than just about anything, but she was still afraid to admit it. She said,

Camilla: “Yuck! No one likes lima beans, especially me!”

Old Woman: “Oh, dear, I guess I was wrong about you.”

Narrator 3: said the old woman sadly. She put the beans back in her bag and started toward the door.

Narrator 4: Camilla watched the old woman walk away. Those beans would taste so good. And being laughed at for eating them was nothing, compared to what she'd been going through. She finally couldn't stand it.

Camilla: "Wait! The truth is...I really love lima beans."

Narrator 1: she cried. The old woman smiled, popping a handful of beans into Camilla's mouth, and said,

Old Woman: "I thought so."

Camilla: "Mmmmm,"

Narrator 2: said Camilla. Suddenly the branches, feathers, and squiggly tails began to disappear. Then the whole room swirled around. When it stopped, there stood Camilla, and everything was back to normal.

Camilla: "I'm cured!"

Narrator 3: she shouted. The old woman said,

Old Woman: “Yes, I knew the real you was in there somewhere.”

Narrator 4: She patted Camilla on the head and went outside and vanished into the crowd.

Narrator 1: Afterward, Camilla wasn't quite the same.

Narrator 2: Some of the kids at school said she was weird, but she didn't care a bit.

Narrator 3: She ate all the lima beans she wanted, and she never had even a touch of stripes again.

Scripted by Jill Jauquet