

As he painted on the final touches, a glint to an eye and some rosy red cheeks – Charlie leant back in his chair and admired his handy work, “Looking Christmas ready!” he chuckled.

Carefully placing his miniature elf among the hundreds of others, he got up and turned to make his way back up the basement stairs.

As he took one last look at his elf collection, he noticed what he thought was a leg swinging on one of the elves. Out of the corner of his eye he saw another twitch its hand. **“I’m seeing shit..”**.

Taking a closer look he tentatively scanned his way across the shelf. Soon he realised each elf was moving individually.

One on the left was winking, to the right one was arming himself with a paintbrush, another was jumping up and down with glee, and further along one more was dangling from his hands ready to drop.

Charlie muttered to himself in panicked breaths, **“What’s going on? Am I dreaming?! This can’t be real!”**

The elves moved quickly, like tiny scuttling beetles, soon Charlie’s body was covered in miniature wooden elves. They eagerly grabbed cable ties from the walls and quickly secured his hands to the stair post.

He began bargaining with the miniature elves, shouting in desperation;

**“WHAT DO YOU WANT?! I-I-I’ve got money!”**

The elves do not respond to his pleas.

They climbed down his body and formed an orderly line, from his chest to his feet.

The eerie silence is filled only with the slight ‘clack’ of a wooden limb. The first elf pulls itself up onto Charlie’s chin, and with a beaming smile it begins to force his mouth open and hold it in place.

Within seconds one by one, the elves are jumping, twirling, back flipping and diving into Charlie’s open mouth as he tries to struggle free.

The last elf waves, and proceeds to slide down his throat.

He sits in shock and panic looking at his belly moving up and down as a swarm of tiny toes kick him from the inside. Then he sees it, his legs feel numb. They’re beginning to change.

Two green wooden boots appear where his feet once were, as he watches, he’s unable to stop what’s unfolding.

Green boots turn to red striped wooden legs.

His legs turn to a green jacketed wooden body.

Then he feels something dark and troubling.

He feels the warmth begin to leave his neck and face.