

## Arthur goes to a party

I only went for the food. They knew that. They only invited me 'cos they had to. I knew that. They thought I was a dork. I knew that too. The food looked good, what I could see of it. I sat by the table, looking after it. But first, Mrs Simpson said, we had to do party stuff.

Craig, whose party it was put everyone into teams. Soon as he did that I knew I would be left out. Fifteen boys in our class, divided by two, makes seven in each team and one left over. That was me. I went and played with Craig's new puppy. He was really cute. He was licking me all over. In my ears, on my neck, in my nose.

"Ohhh, yuk, Arthur. Don't let him eat your snot. That's horrible. Use a tissue," said Mrs Simpson.

I didn't have a tissue. We ran out of toilet paper at home and you can't use newspaper to blow your nose, can you? It wasn't my fault I had a cold. Mrs Simpson got me a tissue. One wipe and it was full. I went in to the toilet and got the roll off the holder and took it with me back to the party.

The other boys were playing a game and they were REALLY noisy. I wish I could have played. It looked like fun but there would have been uneven teams and that wouldn't be fair. I went looking for the puppy to play with him again. His name was Hero. Silly name I thought.

"Hero, here Hero. Come on boy." He didn't seem to be anywhere inside, so I took the toilet roll and went outside around the back of the house to look, blowing my nose as I went. I called and called, but there was no sign of him.

I could hear Mrs Simpson shouting. She was calling for Craig. He couldn't hear her because of all the noise they were making. She seemed to be in the toilet. I don't know why she didn't just go and get him, instead of yelling like that. I went on round to the front of the house, and that's when I heard the little crying sound that a puppy makes when it's scared. Kind of "Oww oww oww."

Under a bush by the front steps was a tiny space that he must have crawled through to go under the house. Now he couldn't get back out.

"Come on boy. You can do it. Come on squeeze through. Good boy Hero."

He wagged his tail and woofed at me but he still wouldn't come through the hole. I tried digging the hole bigger with a thing I found by the front door, but it broke. Then I saw that there was concrete in the way. No wonder I couldn't dig it!

I ran back around the house to the back door and called out,

"Hey, you guys, the puppy is under the house."

No one listened to me. I went in to the kitchen and put my head round the lounge door.

"Hey, you guys. Hey. Are you listening to me? Hey."

"Go away, Arthur."

"But your puppy is trapped. Under the house. He can't get out."

"We're busy. Go and tell my Mum."

"I can't. She's trapped too. She's in the toilet yelling for you."

"GO AWAY, Arthur. Don't be so stupid."

I went down the hall to the toilet.

"Mrs Simpson, Hero is stuck under the house and he won't come out."

There was a little kind of a sound like a hiccup.

"Arthur. Will you go into the bathroom and get me a roll of toilet paper from the cupboard under the sink?"

"Oh! That's what you want? Here, use mine."

I opened the door and gave her the roll I'd been using. It had a bit of mud on it, from where I put it on the ground, but I didn't think she'd mind.

"Oh. My. God" she said. "Never again."

"What?" I asked.

"Never mind. Leave me alone."

"But what about the puppy? He's stuck."

"Go away. DO YOU HEAR ME? GO AWAY!"

No one was going to help me, so I went back outside. The puppy was still crying, and the other boys were making a HEAP of noise in the lounge, banging and crashing. I think the puppy was scared from all the noise too.

"It's alright, puppy. It's okay Hero. I'll get you out."

I looked around and saw a little door kind of gate thing in the side of the house. I tried to pull it open but it had a padlock on it. Then I had a really good idea. I went round the back of the house. There was a shed and inside I found a big crowbar. I went back to the little door and banged it with the crowbar. Nothing happened. Then I remembered watching my Uncle Joe fixing his house with a crowbar. So I stuck it under one of the pieces of wood, and HEAVED on it. It creaked a little bit. So I did it again and HEAVED on it again. This time it opened up a little bit. So I stuck the crowbar in further and HEAVED again. This time the piece of wood made a big CRACK noise and it came away from the side of the house.

The noise upstairs stopped.

I called to Hero, but he still couldn't get out the hole I made.

"Don't worry, nearly got you," I said to him.

I grabbed hold of the piece of wood with both hands, put one foot against the side of the house and pulled as hard as I could. Slowly, slowly I felt it coming off the house. It was making a really loud kind of SCREECH noise. Suddenly it popped off and I fell over backwards, still holding on to it. Just then all the boys came running outside. And Mrs Simpson.

The puppy came running out from under the house, and jumped on me. He licked me all over my face, and in my ears and in my nose again.

"Hey, Arthur, was the puppy really stuck?" asked Chris.

"Yes, and I saved him. I'm a hero too, just like the puppy."

Everyone started smiling at me. But not Mrs Simpson.

We all went inside to eat the party food. They kept giving me more and more and more food. I kept eating it. Then I got sick. After that, they stopped giving me food.

Chris and I walked home.

"Wasn't that a great party?" I said to Chris. "I'm a hero!"

"Yes, Arthur, you are. You're a hero."