

The Worst Day of My Life by Lesley Atwick

“Today’s going to be a great day”, I decided when I woke up. I had the best stretch ever; front legs first bottom in the air, followed by back legs and a nice neck stretch. I had noticed my human doing this too but she didn’t like me helping her for some strange reason. The sun was shining and I was looking forward to going walkies. There would be wonderful smells to sniff, birds to chase and friends to play with. Of course, if we were going with my bestie Holly there would be no time for important stuff like sniffing. We would be playing all the time because that’s what she likes to do.

The air smelt good early that morning as I attended to my importances in the garden. It was cold and crisp so I ran around three times (I usually only run twice but as was such a nice day I ran another lap for good measure). It was time for me to look as appealing as I possibly could in an effort to get my human to take me out. It worked and off we went. I was so looking forward to a peaceful walk where I could investigate all the new sights and smells. I had just found an irresistible cologne to rub on my neck when... thud! Before I knew it a solid lump of shining black fur with even shinier black eyes landed on top of me. Over and over we rolled. “Hold on there Holly!” I shouted. “Can’t we just say hello in a civilised manner? You know the sort of thing – You sniff my bottom then I sniff yours – proper doggy stuff.”

“No time, been dying to see you, let’s run. No, let’s roll and I’ll bite your nose. Ooh you are adorable!” was her response. She was always doing this. Over and over we rolled until – Splash! I wondered what was happening. The water was freezing. Would I get pneumonia? It was bad enough getting bathed at home in the warm but this was far worse. What if I couldn’t get out? I would have to live with the ducks and learn to quack and things. I was understandably in a terrible panic but then realised the water wasn’t too deep. I swam to the side of the canal and climbed out shivering and feeling miserable. “Oh Benjie, you do look funny,” laughed Holly. At this I shook myself hard spraying water all over her and told her she was a very silly dog. I must admit to having a little sulk but this didn’t last long. How could it with Holly dancing around chasing flies and jumping in and out of the water just for fun. It wasn’t long before she had me laughing again and racing up and down the towpath with her. My fur soon dried in the autumn sunshine and I decided life was pretty good. Holly was jolly good fun too (most of the time anyway) but my day wasn’t over yet.

“Be a good boy, I won’t be long.” Click. The front door closed behind my human. I sat and listened to her footsteps dying away and the car starting up.

She always said she wouldn’t be long but she often was very long. Why couldn’t she take me with her? Maybe it’s because I once found a bag of toffees in the car. What a treat that was. Even the wrappers were delicious. The memory of the toffees made me peckish so I wandered into the kitchen. That Cat usually had something tasty left in her dish. She always left a tit-bit for later, but the dish was empty. I thought maybe a nap on the bed would take my mind off things and I was very sleepy after almost drowning

and freezing to death in the canal. I trotted into the bedroom and came to an abrupt halt. That Cat was there again. She opened one sleepy eye, stretched and yawned.

“Come on up. It’s lovely and soft and warm up here” she purred sweetly. But I knew better. I’d been caught like that before. That Cat had some very sharp claws and could be awfully spiteful when she felt like it, which was most of the time.

I was feeling more fed up by the minute. I headed for the lounge, and had a sniff of the fruit bowl. Nothing was tempting in there. By now I was getting bored and wondered what to do next so I chased my tail around until I was dizzy and fell on my back with my legs in the air. Life looks very different from upside down. Everyone should try it. The warm sun shone through the window onto my tummy which felt so lovely and made me sleepy. My eyes were closing when I spotted something interesting. It was difficult to make out from upside down but I wasn’t sure if I was curious enough to roll over and go and investigate. As I watched, a stream of sunlight hit the object and I could smell a delicious smell, like bread and biscuits all rolled in one. I jumped up and went to see what it was.

Ah, a little bear with a red scarf – I remembered him coming out of the oven. My human had been muttering away as she always did and I heard something about salt dough modelling. I decided she must have baked him especially for me to make me feel better about being left behind. I carefully carried him back to my spot in the sun.

“You’ll be for it!” That Cat made me nearly jump out of my skin as she crept up behind me. She was very good at creeping about. I decided to ignore her. She didn’t know anything, she just slept all day. As I sunk my teeth into the bear I could taste something bitter and quite nasty but then I tasted the dough underneath. I couldn’t help but eat it all. It was so yummy. Then my tummy started to mumble and grumble and I began to feel quite sick. I realised it had been very, very salty.

That Cat was watching. “Silly dog,” she said. “Now you’re going to be...” Before she could finish I was sick on the carpet. “Told you,” she said looking very smug. I was in no mood for her now. I felt ill and oh so thirsty. I ran to the kitchen and drank a whole bowl full of beautiful cool water. That felt much better but I soon remembered that I was locked in for the afternoon. If dogs could cross their legs I would have but all I could cross were my eyes.

I think That Cat may actually have begun to feel sorry for me by now as she suggested I use her cat flap. I did try but couldn’t even get my head through. It was no good, too small. I couldn’t hold on any longer. I closed my eyes and did the biggest wee of my life.

“Uh-oh – you’re definitely for it now” said That Cat just as the front door opened.