

In Toys Go Out, three toys find themselves in an unusual place. Read the selection from Toys Go Out and answer the questions that follow.

Toy Characters

StingRay—A stuffed sea creature

Plastic—A plastic bouncy ball

Lumphy—A stuffed buffalo

from **TOYS GO OUT**

by Emily Jenkins

- 1 Woosh. Woosh. The backpack begins to swing. Back and forth. Back and forth. Or maybe round and round. “I hope we’re not going to the zoo,” moans StingRay. “They’ll put us in cages with no one to talk to. Each one in a separate cage, and we’ll have to woosh back and forth all day, and do tricks on giant swings, with people throwing quarters at our faces, and teasing.”
- 2 “I don’t think we’re big enough for the zoo,” Plastic says hopefully. “I’m pretty sure they’re only interested in very large animals over there.”
- 3 “I’m large,” says Lumphy.
- 4 “She means really, really, very large,” says StingRay. “At the zoo they have stingrays the size of choo-choo trains; and plastics the size of swimming pools. Zoo buffaloes would never fit in a backpack. They eat backpacks for lunch, those buffaloes.”
- 5 “Is that true?” asks Lumphy, but nobody answers him.
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- 6 Plunk! The backpack is thrown onto the ground.
- 7 Or maybe into a trash can.
- 8 Or onto a garbage truck.

9 “We might be going to the dump!” cries StingRay. “We’ll be tossed in a pile of old green beans, and sour milk cartons, because the Little Girl doesn’t love us anymore, and it will be icy cold all the time, and full of garbage-eating sharks, and it will smell like throw-up.”

10 “I don’t think so,” soothes Plastic.

11 “I’ll be forced to sleep on a slimy bit of used paper baggie, instead of on the big high bed with the fluffy pillows!” continues StingRay.

12 There is a noise outside the backpack. Not a big noise, but a rumble one. “Did you hear that?” asks StingRay. “I think it is the X-ray machine. The vet is going to X-ray us one by one and look into our insides with an enormous magnifying glass, and then poke us with the giant carrot!”

13 “I’m sure it’s not an X-ray,” says Plastic calmly, although she isn’t sure at all. “An X-ray would be squeakier.”

14 “Then I think it is a lion,” cries StingRay. “A lion at the zoo who does not want to be on display with any small creatures like you and me. A lion who doesn’t like sharing her swing set, and wants all the quarters for herself. She is roaring because she hasn’t had any lunch yet, and her favorite food is stingrays.”

15 “A lion would be fiercer,” says Plastic, a bit uncertainly. “It would sound hungrier, I bet.”

16 “Maybe it is a giant buffalo,” suggests Lumphy.

17 “Maybe it is a dump truck!” squeals StingRay. “A big orange dump truck tipping out piles of rotten groceries on top of us, and trapping us with the garbage-eating sharks and the throw-up smell!”

18 “Wouldn’t a dump truck be louder?” asks Plastic, though she is starting to think StingRay might have a point. “I’m sure it’s not a dump truck.”



19 The backpack thumps down again with a bang. “I would like to be warned,” moans Lumphy. “Sudden bumps make everything worse than it already is.”

20 “The Girl doesn’t love us and she’s trying to get rid of us!” cries StingRay in a panic.

21 The backpack opens. The rumble noise gets louder, and the light is very bright—so bright that StingRay, Plastic, and Lumphy have to squinch up their eyes and take deep breaths before they can see where they are. A pair of warm arms takes them all out of the dark, wet-bathing-suit smell together.

22 The three toys look around. There are small chairs, a sunny window, and a circle of fidgety faces.

23 It is not the vet.

24 It is not the zoo.

25 It is not the dump. (They are pretty sure.)

26 But where is it?

27 The rumble noise surges up. A grown-up asks everyone to Please Be Quiet Now. And then comes a familiar voice.

28 “These are my best friends,” says the Little Girl who owns the backpack and sleeps in the high bed with the fluffy pillows. “My best friends in the world. That’s why I brought them to show-and-tell.”

29 “Welcome,” says the teacher.

30 Sticky, unfamiliar fingers pat Lumphy’s head and StingRay’s plush tail.

31 Plastic is held up for all to admire. “We are here to be shown and told,” she whispers to StingRay and Lumphy, feeling quite bouncy as she looks around at the schoolroom. “Not to be thrown away or put under the X-ray machine!”

32 The teacher says Lumphy looks a lot like a real buffalo. (Lumphy wonders what the teacher means by “real,” but he is too happy to worry much about it.)

33 “We’re special!” whispers StingRay. “We’re her best friends!”

34 “I knew it would be something nice,” says Plastic.

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35 Funny, but the ride home is not so uncomfortable. The smell is still there, but the backpack seems rather cozy. Plastic has herself a nap.

36 StingRay isn't worried about vets and zoos and garbage dumps anymore; she curls herself into a ball by Lumphy's buffalo stomach. "The Little Girl loves us," she tells him. "I knew it all along, really. I just didn't want to say."

37 Lumphy licks StingRay's head once, and settles down to wait. When he knows where he is going, traveling isn't so bad. And right now, he is going home.