

Read the story to see what the narrator finds when he comes home from school. Then answer the questions that follow.

What Happened on Wednesday

by Johanna Hurwitz

1 **W**ednesday started out as a usual day. As soon as I woke, I had to jump out of bed and get dressed quickly so I could take Sammy for his early-morning walk. When we came back, I poured out Sammy’s bowl of puppy food and gave him some fresh water to drink. Then I had to swallow my orange juice and gobble up some toast really fast, grab my backpack, and rush off to catch the bus to school.

2 Mom and Mitch left a few minutes later. Mom drops Mitch off at the day-care center, and then she goes on to work.

3 Like most days, on Wednesday I got home first.

4 As I walked up the stairs leading to our apartment, Mrs. Hoffman, who lives below us, stopped me on the landing. “I’ve been out all day,” she told me. “And when I came in, I heard a strange banging noise. It’s coming from your apartment.”

5 I stood on the landing and listened. “I don’t hear anything,” I told her.

6 “It comes and goes. I can’t figure out what it is,” she said. “I don’t think it’s the water pipes. I also seemed to be the only person in the building, so I couldn’t ask the Hendersons to check it out.”

7 Midge and Alfred Henderson are the friends of my mother’s who own the building.

8 As she spoke, there was a banging sound.

9 “There it goes again,” said our neighbor. “Maybe I should go upstairs with you.”

10 I looked at Mrs. Hoffman. She’s about twice my mom’s age and twice her weight too. I wondered what help she’d be if the pipes were acting up or if there was another sort of problem.

11 “That’s all right,” I said. “I’ll figure out what’s going on.”

12 The banging got louder as I reached our door. It was as if someone were inside the apartment and trying to get out. But I knew no one was home. No one but Sammy.

13 I admit I was a little bit scared as I turned the key in the lock and opened the door. In front of my eyes was a sight that made me start laughing. It was like something out of a TV comedy. The hind legs of my dog were moving around, but his head was stuck inside an antique metal milk can that my mother kept in the entranceway.



14 For some dumb reason Sammy had put his head inside. Now he couldn’t get out. It looked awfully funny, but I realized it wasn’t something to laugh about.

15 I threw down my backpack and went to his rescue. “Hold still, Sammy,” I told him as I grabbed hold of his back legs. I tried to brace the milk can with my feet as I pulled on Sammy.

16 I heard a muffled bark from the dog, but he was still stuck inside.

17 While I was trying to figure out what to do next, the doorbell rang. “It’s me, Mrs. Hoffman,” a breathless voice called out. “Is everything all right?”

18 I let go of Sammy’s hindquarters and went to open the door.

19 “Oh, my heavens!” my neighbor exclaimed.

20 “I’m not sure how he got in. And I’m not sure how he’s going to get out,” I said as we both stared at the part of poor Sammy that wasn’t inside the milk can.

21 “Dial nine-one-one,” said Mrs. Hoffman.

22 “The police?” Why would you call the police? It was pretty awful, but it wasn’t a crime.

23 “No, wait,” said Mrs. Hoffman, hurrying over to our phone. “We should call the fire department. You know how people call them if a cat gets stuck up a tree.”

24 She began punching in the numbers for the fire department. I was glad she was doing it because I felt sure if I did it, I’d get in trouble for making a false alarm. Besides, didn’t people call the fire department when cats were up in trees because there were tall ladders at the firehouse? For sure, one thing we didn’t need here was a tall ladder.

25 I listened as Mrs. Hoffman tried to explain to the person on the line just what the problem was. “It’s not a big emergency. Just a small one,” she said.

26 It *was* a big emergency if you were Sammy, I thought. Poor Sammy kept banging the milk can on the floor. I wondered if he’d be stuck inside forever. I felt so helpless, but I kept patting his rear, just so he’d know I was there.

27 Believe it or not, the fire department actually sent a truck to our building. It arrived just as Mom and Mitch did. Mitch was thrilled to see a big fire engine at our front door. Worried that the house was on fire, Mom came rushing up the stairs with him. I don’t know if she was relieved or not when she saw what the problem was.

28 In the end it took three firefighters and four-foot-long bolt cutters to free poor Sammy from that metal milk can.

29 When the can was cut away, we discovered that it had been the storage place for every piece of food that Mitch hadn’t wanted to

eat during recent weeks—half sandwiches, a chunk of banana, even a couple of cookies. No wonder my poor, always-hungry dog had stuck his head inside the milk can.

30 “Sorry we had to destroy this can,” the firefighter who cut it open apologized to Mom.

31 “It was either that or have an awfully noisy dog on our hands,” she said, shaking her head.