

## **The Best Worst Birthday**

Sam woke up to the sound of his alarm clock beeping at 6am. He rubbed the sleep out of his eyes and jumped out of bed with excitement. It was his birthday, and it was going to be the best day ever! His uncle was coming to visit, and they had a perfect day planned. When Sam went into the living room, his parents told him that his uncle's flight was delayed. They suggested that he could open his gifts while he waited. All his gifts were misshapen lumps except for one that was shaped like a big box. When Sam opened the lumpy gifts, they turned out to be very itchy sweaters. Then he opened the box shaped gift and inside was a Z-Box video game console. It was the gift that he really wanted, but when he hooked it up to the tv, he realized to his utter dismay that no games came with it.

Just then Sam's uncle Ferdinand arrived with his luggage. His uncle asked if Sam was ready to celebrate and Sam nodded with excitement. They left to go the amusement park. The car ride, which was only supposed to take five minutes, took over an hour because a truck full of bouncy balls got into an accident and the balls had spilled all over the road. The bouncy balls went everywhere, even into people's open car windows. Sam quickly rolled down his window as a ball came bouncing his way. Sam's uncle fumed with frustration at the traffic. On the plus side, Sam got a brand-new neon bouncy ball.

Sam and his uncle finally arrived at the Santa Maria Pier amusement park after the long car ride. Sam looked around happily and said "this is going to be so much fun; I want to go on every ride. Well, except for the roller coaster." When they entered the park, they noticed 'closed' and 'out of order' signs on all the rides and games except for the scariest roller coaster. His uncle looked fearfully at the ride, it was called The Haunted Mansion of Doom, and asked Sam what he wanted to do. Sam said, "I really don't like roller coasters, but it's my birthday and

it's the only ride open so I think I'll try it." When it was their turn, Sam and his uncle nervously hopped into the car. "It's your lucky day," said the park employee, "you get the front row seats." Sam and his uncle both nodded with a look of terror in their eyes. The ride began and to Sam's surprise he loved it. He screamed with pure joy as the car plummeted to the ground and then climbed back up again.

When the ride was done, they stumbled out both dizzy and grinning. "What should we do next?" asked his uncle. "It's time for ice cream" Sam said. They headed to his favorite ice cream store, Sour Rose Creamery. When Sam entered, he quickly realized that something was terribly wrong. The ice cream store's freezer was broken and the only flavor available was grapefruit. Sam did not like grapefruit, but he decided to give it a try. It was his birthday after all, and he had his heart set on ice cream. He got a scoop of grapefruit ice cream with his favorite marshmallow and sprinkles topping and took a nibble. He took another nibble and then a huge bite. To his astonishment, he loved it! He quickly devoured the entire scoop and ordered another.

After Sam and his uncle ate their ice cream, they decided it was time to go to the beach. When they got to Paliglades Beach, they took their surfboards out of the car and started walking on the sand. Suddenly, Sam noticed a plastic bottle on the sand, and then another and another. He looked up and saw trash everywhere all over the beach. "What happened here?" asked his uncle. "It looks like someone had a party and didn't clean up after themselves," said Sam. "Should we go back home?" his uncle asked. "No, I have a better idea," said Sam. They went back to the car and got bags and gloves and started cleaning up all the litter. Slowly, other people on the beach joined them. Before they knew it, the beach was clean again. Sam was sweaty and hot, but as he finished picking up the last of the litter, he looked up and saw a clean

beach and a pod of dolphins in the ocean. His uncle brought over a picnic basket, and they enjoyed lunch on the beach with their new friends.

After the beach, Sam and his uncle decided to cool off at a movie theater. When they entered, they realized that the only thing playing was an action movie in Japanese with subtitles! Sam's uncle asked if he still wanted to watch the movie. Sam decided to try it, so they got tickets along with slushies and popcorn and went into the theater. Sam did not know what to expect, but to his surprise, he loved everything about the movie. "Maybe I'll learn Japanese" he thought. When the movie ended, Sam and his uncle went out to dinner.

When they got to the restaurant, they ordered pizza. While they were waiting for their food, his uncle apologized to Sam for everything that went wrong that day. "Sam, I'm so sorry this day was so terrible. My flight was late, the accident on the road took forever, you didn't get to go on your favorite rides at the amusement park, you had to eat grapefruit ice cream, the beach was so dirty, and the movie wasn't even in English!" Sam told his uncle, "Actually, it wasn't a bad day at all. This was the best day. I had time to open my presents in the morning, I got a free bouncy ball, I enjoyed the roller coaster, and I discovered a new favorite ice cream flavor. I know the beach was dirty, but I made new friends and we worked together to clean it. Also, I loved the movie and now I want to learn Japanese. Best of all, I got to spend the day with you." Sam's uncle smiled and gave him a hug. "Oh, I forgot to give this to you earlier," his uncle said handing him a present. Sam unwrapped it and saw the Z-box game he had wanted. Sam smiled; this was definitely the best day ever.