

Son of a Hero

I swallowed. It was dead hard to swallow when you were upside down, but I managed it. A buzz roared in my ears. My head was hot. Red lights flashed no matter how tight I squeezed my eyes. My head hurt. All of me hurt.

My ankle was sore and all, but that was a very good sore. Buster was very big and dead strong. His hands were enormous. I didn't need to worry. He could hold me forever and ever and not get tired.

It was Dennis the Menace's fault, all this. If I ever got back in that window again, I'd never, ever, ever read them stupid comics again. I'd tear them to bits, I would. But first I'd throw stones at these horrible crows. Couldn't they shut up? Flapping and going on. How was I supposed to hear Mam's high heels on the path below with that din going on around my head?

It could still be all right. Mam could still come back and save me. She'd be sure to see my bright carrot top of hair. She couldn't miss that.

She definitely would come: any second now.

'Are you going to take all day?' Buster asked. His hand squeezed tighter than ever and pain shot down from my ankle to my head. I felt around for a bit of wet inside my mouth. If I could gather enough, I'd be able to speak. In case Mam didn't come. Only she would.

I opened my eyes. Big mistake. The garden was a long, long way below me. I shut them again before I puked.

I dropped suddenly, very fast, then Buster jerked me back up to where I'd been. The crows went bonkers, cawing and flapping. I didn't look.

'Sorry.' I heard the word croak out loud. I hadn't meant to say it. Not yet.

Not before Mam came back and saw what he does when she's not here.