

# The Barking Dog by Caryl Hart



BARK BARK BARK!  
BARK BARK BARK!



Next door's dog was yapping noisily as Connie Wilkinson heaved her shopping bags up the front steps. As she fished in her rucksack for her keys, her fingers sank into something cold and sticky.

"Euwww.. what the...?!" Martha's lunch box had fallen open and she had plunged her fingers into a half-eaten jam sandwich!

"Mummy?" Martha tugged at her mother's coat.

"Wait a minute love," Connie said.

BARK BARK BARK! went the dog next door.

Sighing heavily, Connie plonked the bulging carrier bags on the wet ground. She wiped the jam from her fingers, then tried again to find her keys.

"Mummy, Mummy MUMMY!!" Martha tugged annoyingly at Connie's rucksack.

"Just a minute!" her mother snapped.

Martha's bottom lip wobbled.

The wind whipped Connie's hair into her eyes and cold rain ran down the back of her neck. When, at last, they got inside, Martha rushed past, stepping clumsily on the bag containing Min's birthday cake.

"Martha!" she cried. "Now look what you've done!"

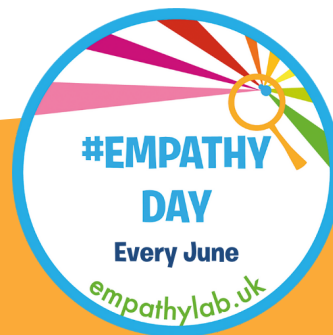
Martha started to wail.

BARK BARK BARK! went the dog next door.

Connie plonked the shopping bags in the kitchen then poured Martha a cup of milk.

"I want the unicorn cup!" Martha thrust the cup back towards Connie, splattering milk all over the kitchen.

## #ReadForEmpathy



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BARK BARK BARK went the dog next door.

Suddenly Connie had had enough! She marched out of the house and banged on next door's window. "Can't you shut that blooming dog up for one minute?!!" she yelled.

Back inside, Connie was wearily putting the shopping away when Min arrived home. "What's for dinner, I'm starving!" she grinned.

"How should I know?!" Connie snapped. Then she burst into tears.

"Hey, hey," said Min kindly. "It's okay. I'll cook tonight, you look exhausted!"

"Mummy was cross!" said Martha.

Min picked Martha up and gave her a cuddle. "Poor Mummy," she said. "You know, we all get cross sometimes, especially if we're tired and fed up!"

"It's that blasted dog!" Connie sniffed. "It's been barking it's head off since we got home and now I've got a headache."

Min looked worried. "I'll just nip next door to check Mr MacKenzie's okay," she said. A minute later she was back. Grabbing the phone, she dialled 999. "Ambulance please," she said. "Our next door neighbour has had a fall."

Connie felt terrible. "If only I'd asked myself why his dog was barking instead of getting cross!"

Min put her arm around Connie. "It's not your fault," she said, kindly. "You've had enough mishaps of your own to deal with!"

A few days later, someone pushed a note through the door.

Dear Min and Connie

Thank you for calling the ambulance for my dad the other day. He's still in hospital but thanks to you, he's on the mend. It's a good job Bouncer was barking or Dad might have been laying there alone for days!

He's very lucky to have kind neighbours like you!

Best wishes

Nora McKenzie.

Connie gathered Min and Martha into her arms. "And I'm very lucky to have you!" she smiled



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