



Soggy Scaredy Cat

KIDS / STORY

by Heather Voight October 2012

“Want to try out my new water slide?” asked Carlos as he walked home from school with Dillon. “My whole family thinks it’s great, except the cat. She’s terrified of water.”

“No, thanks,” said Dillon. The minute Carlos went inside his house Dillon shuddered. The last time he’d been on a water slide, he made it to the top step and climbed down with tears in his eyes. He was afraid he would drown. His dad’s partner, Aaron, had offered to take him back to the park a couple of times, but Dillon always said no.

Dillon grabbed the pile of mail out of the mailbox and searched for anything addressed to him. One envelope had the return address of his best friend, Caleb, on it. Dillon tore open the envelope. It was a party invitation! Then he read it:

You're invited to Caleb's birthday party at Pirate's Cove. Please RSVP by October 4th.

There were tons of water slides at Pirate's Cove—and not much else. Dillon went inside the house and plopped on the couch with the card in his hand. Maybe he would just tell Caleb he couldn't go to the party. But Caleb was moving to Iowa before Thanksgiving. Dillon might not ever go to another birthday party for his best friend again. He didn't want to miss the last one.

"What's the matter, Dillon?" asked his little sister, Kim.

Startled, Dillon realized he must have been staring at the invitation for at least ten minutes.

"Nothing," he said. "Hey, I need to use your slide and your kiddie pool."

"O.K., but I'm going to watch and make sure you don't break my slide putting all that extra weight on it."

"Very funny," Dillon said on the way to his room. He grabbed his swimming trunks and slammed the sliding door behind his sister. Aaron was painting the side of the house. He smiled at Dillon and Kim. "What are you rascals up to?"

"Nothing," said Dillon. "Just a little experiment."

"Let me know if I can help," said Aaron.

Dillon shook his head. He needed to do this by himself. Dillon dragged the hose to the other side of the porch where Kim's kiddie pool stood. He turned the nozzle to fill the pool with water. Then he picked up his sister's plastic slide and placed it in the pool.

"Why is my slide getting all wet?" asked Kim.

"I'm making my own water slide if it's any of your business."

"It is if you're going to wreck my stuff. If you do I'll tell Aaron and Daddy."

Dillon ignored her. He tried to climb up the steps, but the tiny slide couldn't support the weight of a nine-year-old. His body somersaulted into the pool and hit the plastic.

"Ow," he yelped. Kim giggled.

"Knock it off," he told her. Dillon pulled himself out of the water. He dumped the water from the pool into the grass and kicked the pool.

Then Dillon heard water splashing in the neighbor's yard. He peeked over the fence. Carlos was floating on an alligator water toy. Carlos' mom lounged on the deck stroking their cat.

"Hey, Carlos. Would it still be okay if I tried your water slide?" shouted Dillon over the fence.

"Come on over, Dillon. Your sister can come, too, and play with our cat," said Carlos' mom.

Aaron and Daddy walked over to the fence to chat with Carlos' mom, while Carlos let Dillon into the yard. They walked off to the other side of the pool where they could talk without being overheard.

"I have to tell you something that's embarrassing, something I'm afraid of," said Dillon.

“When you finish telling me what you’re afraid of, I’ll tell you something that scares me. Deal?” asked Carlos.

“Sure,” said Dillon. He told Carlos how afraid he was of water slides. He told Carlos about Caleb’s birthday party at Pirate’s Cove, and that Caleb was moving. “I don’t want to miss the party, but I’m too scared to go to the water park,” he finished miserably.

“Pirate’s Cove has lots of different kinds of water slides. My mom built ours medium size. If you can handle that, you should be fine. Just climb up,” said Carlos.

Slowly Dillon climbed the steps of the slide. His heart raced so fast he thought he would faint. He sat down at the top of the slide to catch his breath.

“That’s good. Now try scooting down,” said Carlos. “Don’t worry; I’ll hold this alligator toy at the bottom to catch you.”

Dillon hung on to the sides of the slide with his hands and inched down. Finally he plopped onto the inflatable alligator. Everyone in the yard clapped when he landed.

“That was great, Dillon!” said Carlos. “Do you want to try again?”

Dillon climbed up and inched down twice more. The third time, he actually slid down the slide and splashed into the pool at the bottom. That time, everyone cheered.

Carlos laughed. “You should do fine at Pirate’s Cove.”

“Thanks. I forgot—what was it that you were afraid of?” asked Dillon.

Carlos splashed Dillon before he answered. “Bugs,” he said.

“If you want to come over to my house, there’s this giant spider behind our shed ...” Dillon paused when he noticed that his friend’s face looked a bit green.

“Um, thanks, Dillon,” said Carlos. “Maybe later!”

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