

Shopping Day  
Carolann Purcell

My name is Harry.

I'm a sandy red setter, the resident canine at 50 Plum Street, Lexington, Mass. My pedigreed father and mother are Dick and Tomie, and I try to live up to their standards with only an occasional foray into forbidden lairs. My humans are Dad Rick and Mom Leslie. Their boys I grew up with aren't home much anymore because Ryan graduated last year, and Eric is at Northeastern.

One day I was helping Mom Leslie to put away the groceries. She had so many before the holiday baking, that she put the extra bags on the kitchen floor where she knows I like to peek.

This one sack offered an intriguing crackle as I nosed into it while Leslie was attending the fridge. I saw lots of small to medium boxes, the kind that Royal packs Jell-O in. Well, you know I have a litch for cardboard, and I sampled one. Usually I just bite them for the satisfying crunch in my mouth. But this time I tasted a bonus. Later I heard it was tapioca powder, Ryan's favorite. It was sweet and slightly spicy to boot. Yup, I snarfed the whole box, and it was GOOD.

About then, Leslie turned and saw what I had been down to. She was sort of excited, but cool.

She grabbed some oil for lubrication, and a can of beer to mix in. Yeah, she knows I like beer, sort of manly, ya know?

I didn't really mind her pouring that combo down my throat, because she was making such encouraging noises. But next, I didn't feel so good, after all. I slunk out of the kitchen looking for a soft place to curl up, but Mom Leslie kept following me.

Surprise! Leslie grabbed me tight around the middle, a special hug like the boys used to, and the whole mass came out at once.

It was Dr. Heimlich to the rescue, said the vet.

*A true tale, courtesy of Muriel Sherman, our grandmother.*