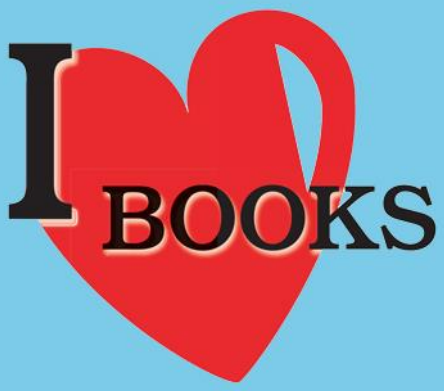


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Me and Mister P

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For Philip and Chiecco MF
For Florence DR

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CHAPTER 7
KNOTS

On Saturday morning Arthur woke up earlier than usual. He needed Mister P looking his best for the tournament. He picked up soap and toothpaste from the bathroom and the scrubbing brush they used to clean the shower. Then he grabbed a couple of towels and carried the whole lot into the garden.

He put his head round the garage door.

‘Wake up,
Mister P!
It’s time
to get ready.’

Mister P yawned and stretched and followed Arthur outside. Dad’s garden hose was coiled up next to the shed. Arthur turned on the tap and waited for the water to make its way through the pipe. ‘It might be a bit cold,’ he said, ‘so watch out.’

Mister P stared at the end of the hosepipe and suddenly freezing water gushed straight into his face. Mister P spluttered and gasped and then grinned. He didn't seem to mind the cold at all. He wriggled and jiggled as Arthur sprayed him all over with water and massaged soap into his fur. He watched as rainbow soapy bubbles floated past his nose.



'Nearly done,' said Arthur, rinsing the last of the soap from Mister P's coat.

Arthur turned off the tap and re-coiled the hosepipe. Mister P crouched down, winding himself up for an **enormous** shake.



'Noooo!' shouted Arthur, but it was too late. Mister P flung his

fur left and right, sending great fountains of water across the garden.

By the time Mister P had finished, he looked as though he'd plugged his paw into an electric socket, and Arthur was soaked.

'What did you have to go and do that for?' Arthur tried to smooth the mass of fur back into place with the towels. Mister P grinned happily which made Arthur's next task easier. He smeared a whole tube of toothpaste over the scrubbing brush and set to work on Mister P's teeth. As the minty toothpaste tingled on his blue tongue, Mister P shook his head violently and went slightly cross-eyed, panting loudly and chattering his teeth together.

'Come on, it's not that bad. Don't be such a baby.'

Arthur tried again, but Mister P wrinkled up his nose and turned his head away.

'You don't want Elsa complaining that you've got bad breath, do you?'

One mention of Elsa and Mister P opened wide and let Arthur brush.



'OK, rinse and spit,' said Arthur, popping the hose into the side of Mister P's mouth.

Mister P dribbled toothpastey water onto the ground— spit, spit, spitting until every last bit of minty flavour was gone.

'DONE!' said Arthur, as he dried Mister P's muzzle and polished his nose with a towel.

Mister P flashed him a bright smile.

At one o'clock, Rosie and Jonno arrived in the pick-up truck. It had a cab at the front and a flat back, with low sides and

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written on the side.

'See, it's perfect for transporting polar bears,' said Rosie, undoing the tailgate of the truck.

Arthur opened the double doors of the garage and Mister P emerged into the sunlight.

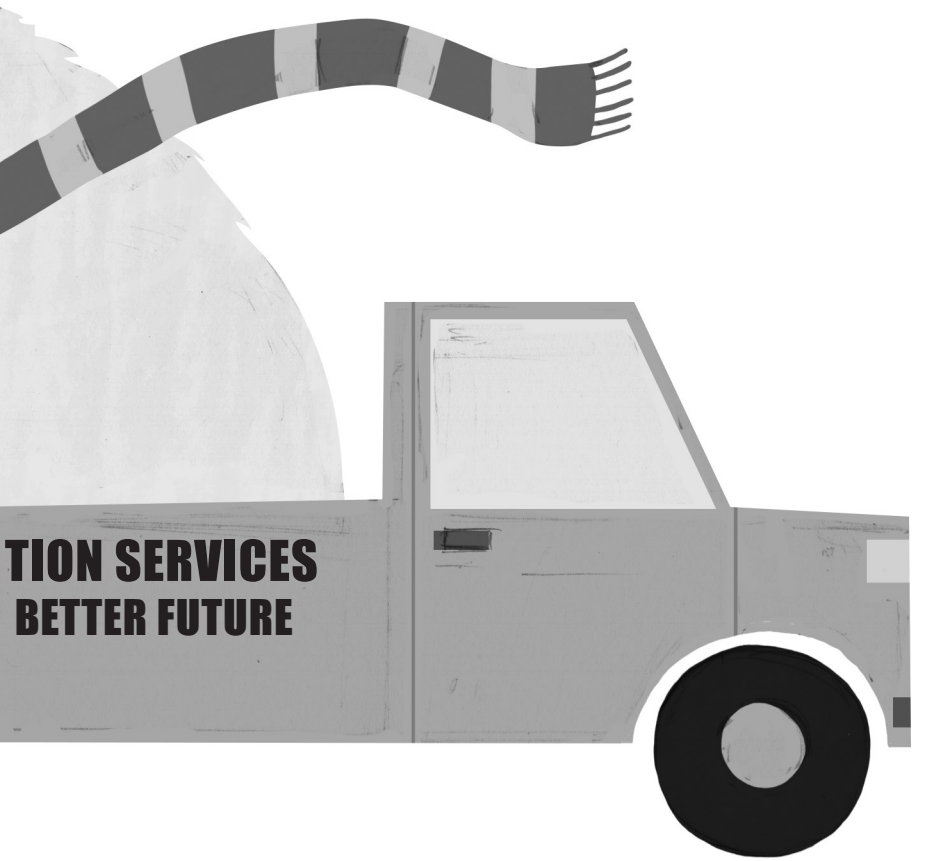
'Wow!' exclaimed Rosie. 'He looks amazing.'

Arthur hopped onto the back of the truck and Mister P clambered up behind him. Rosie passed Arthur her headphones and a pair of Jonno's protective eye goggles. 'For the wind,' she said. Arthur fitted the headphones over Mister P's ears and the goggles over his eyes and

wrapped a green and white Hawks scarf round his neck. He gave Mister P a final check and climbed down. Jonno fixed the tailgate and gave Mister P the thumbs up.

As the truck accelerated away, Mister P raised his nose to the wind and his scarf streamed out behind him.


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