

# I Have To Go To A Party

## The Grandfather Chronicles 3:

By Donato (Danny) Pietrodangelo



Tickles and hugs and butterflies and puppies. Come on, no one is that hopeless naive about the joys grandparenting. Take today. We went to the Irish Festival so the female grandchild could see the dancers. She was mesmerized, Her four year old brother was tortured.

I consoled him with something called a shepherd's pie, grilled cheese sandwich. Fascinated by a sandwich with peas, he pulled one out, looked it over, popped it in his mouth, approved, then ate half the sandwich - amused with the mashed potatoes oozing out the sides.

He is happy.

But then, he looks up at me with those smiling hazel eyes and said one of the most dreaded things a kid can say at an outdoor event:

I need to go potty. No. Please no. Tell me he said party. Tell me he said I need to go to a party.

So we walked a bit, and there they were - the line of fiberglass boxes - this row of evil

clowns, doors opening and closing like slow, creepy winks.

For me, few places are grosser than these sweltering, rank smelling, phone booth sized hovels, with wet plastic seats (why can't these guys aim) and a nightmarish, dark hole, filled with phosphorescent bright blue slime - and then some.

But, a grandfather's gotta do what the little guy's gotta do. So we pick one, go in, and it's no surprise when he scoots over to the mysterious hole, looks over the rim into the dark, dank abyss, looks back at me, smiles

and screams, "Blue poop!" With a heart stopping vision of him tumbling forward, I scream, "Get away," while slamming the lid closed with my elbow - avoiding an indelible scar.

Door locked, we rotate left facing the wall-mounted bowl, then look at each other and I hear, in that special, unspoken language shared by grandfather and grandkids, "You're kidding me right, Popi? That thing is higher than my head."

True, but standing over that hole is a no go.

I man-up, pick him up - in a bear hug - negotiate an angle, hang him in the air -close but not touching anything. And wait. No sound. And wait. Okay, sometimes it happens. Then he whispers in my ear, "Popi, can't get my pants." Well, yes, that would be because at four you haven't mastered zipper mechanics, and you can't loosen your shorts, especially with your arms pinned to your side by a moron hugging the life out of you.

So, I derive plan "B."

I put him down, feet in top of mine, half lower his shorts and Paw Patrol skivvies, lift him back up, balance his feet on the bowels, slippery, angled rim, one arm around his thighs I pushing his bottom forward, my other arm pulling his chest back, and position his head so he can look down. (Guys' worst nightmare: peeing on your shorts or shoes.)

Having created an S-shaped boy, I point him in the right direction, wait, then hear that pleasant sound of water rippling over a hard surface, like a stream in a Japanese Tea garden.

It stops, I shake him up and down a couple of times, pull up his clothes and escape to the the hand washing station - where you vigorously pump your foot for a squirt of soap and a teaspoon of water.

Finished, he looks around with wet hands, then looks up at me, then I look down at my tee shirt; which he knows - from our special, silent psychic connection - means wipe them on me.

Now, that's grand parenting.

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