

Just No.

Taking Down the Wildebeest

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Puppies and playful dogs love to be surrounded by all kinds of toys.

I have a toybox in my living room full of various and assorted toys. Almost every one of the dogs I have had has chosen one particular toy as a favorite. Annie loved her plush bunny, Oliver loved his ball on a rope, while William prefers his outdoor Jolly Ball.

From the start, Masie delighted in ripping apart the plush toys. Some of them have had multiple amputations as I have repeatedly sewn them up. The plush goose, which started out at about 18 inches, complete with a long neck, flashy tail, and two broad wings, has been reduced to the approximate size and shape of a flattened tennis ball. Oddly, she never wanted to play with any of these plush toys. Or any of the other toys for that matter.

Of course, Maisie delights in three toys of her own selection; namely, my gloves when I forget to zip up my coat pockets; my socks when I am too slow to put them away while changing; and, most of all, her beloved toilet paper.





Thankfully, we no longer suffer from the prologued toilet paper shortage we lived through in my area. While toilet paper may no longer be scarce, it certainly is expensive.

Most eight-week-old puppies roll a house at least once or twice. Very few two-year-old puppies are still rolling the house.

It is hard to solve the toilet paper situation because my toilet paper is on a stand as opposed to locked into the wall. All she has to do is gently bat the roll and off she goes, with the toilet paper roll in her mouth. I admit that I am partly to blame in that I gave her the empty cardboard roll as a toy in the first place, the same as I've always done for my puppies. Plus, and I know better, I laugh at her antics, which only encourages her. You will never get a dog to stop a behavior while laughing at them.

At first, Maisie waited until the roll was almost done before stealthily stealing the toilet paper roll. Gradually over time, she has increased her stolen prize to practically new rolls of toilet paper. On occasion, she will even come into the bathroom, which is where I keep the water bowls, and stare at me as if demanding that I immediately leave so that she can steal the almost-new roll. Not only that, she has even boldly taken to play bowing in front of me, dangling the roll out of her mouth.

She always tells on herself. I hear clumping as she jumps up and down with her favorite toy. Sometimes when she is especially delighted with her thievery she even snorts as if laughing at the entire situation.

I store a package of toilet paper in the bathroom. Oddly, she has never even glanced at the packet of new rolls. For her, the game is knocking the toilet paper roll off the stand and dancing around the house, dragging toilet paper in her wake. She is incredibly fast and can roll the entire first floor in under two seconds. After, she loves to slowly chew on the cardboard roll while almost in a trance, as if she is contemplating the unified theory of physics.

I understand others with puppies, and I mean two-year-old puppies, are experiencing the same. In one such house of a dear friend, they call the game "Taking Down the Wildebeest." They have yet to solve their toilet paper situation either.

Just so.

Elizabeth M. Jarrell of Bon Ami Australian Shepherds has won three Maxwells from the Dog Writers Association of America (DWAA), including three for her "Just So" column, one for books, one for editorial, and one for online feature, plus a Certificate of Excellence from the Cat Writers Association. Liz won the AKC Family Dog Award from the DWAA 2018 Annual Writing Competition. This award is for the best writing (including books, articles, and blog posts) about any or all of the good manners programs under the AKC Family Dog umbrella, including AKC Therapy Dog, AKC Trick Dog, AKC Canine Good Citizen, AKC Community Canine, Urban CGC and AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy. Previously, she had also won DWAA's 2016 AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy and Canine Good Citizen Special Award.

