

The Barney Party

The dinosaur era ends with a bang for one family

by KATE DAVIS



It was my daughter Madison's fourth birthday and, of course, we had to invite the entire class. Madison had been invited to their parties, after all. Let's see, one rock-climbing party, two pottery parties, one where they rented out an Olympic-sized pool, three cooking parties and one bouncy castle. I wanted to do something equally extravagant.

Madison was in love with a purple dinosaur — everything was about Barney and Baby Bop. She could sing all the songs in her favourite Barney video, and it held her attention so completely that nothing could pull her away. My husband and I nicknamed it the “Barney helps Mommy get laid” video. Forty-five minutes from start to finish. *Hubbada, hubbada!*

So, when I found a company that sent someone to your home to do a Barney performance, it sounded perfect. Sure, it would cost 250 bucks an hour, but it would be worth every

penny. Madison would never forget this birthday!

When the day was upon us, the kids arrived at 1 p.m., an hour before Barney was due to perform. At 1:45, there was a knock at the door and a tall, skinny boy of about 21 stood there with a big duffle bag and a tape player, looking as if he had lost a bet. After he went upstairs to change, my husband leaned over and asked, “Will we have our usual 45 minutes?” As I elbowed him, we heard a muffled voice from the top of the stairs.

We went up to find Barney asking for help — he couldn't see through the costume and was afraid he'd tumble down the stairs. I took his arm and guided him outside, where the kids screamed with anticipation — except for my daughter. As Barney swayed back and forth with his 1980s tape recorder playing *I love you, you love me*, everything looked great, though all

you heard were mumbles through the unmoving mouth in the costume. When Barney leaned in to give the birthday girl a kiss, she screamed in terror. Then she ran like I had hired a hit man to kill her. I chased her to her bedroom where she hid under the covers, quivering. Not even bribes of chocolate could get her to rejoin the party.

The party went on without her, including games, loot bags and cake; her brother blew out her candles and none of the kids seemed to care that Madison wasn't there. Barney apologized, but gladly took his \$250.

That was the end of her watching Barney: She cried every time we put it on after that. I cried too: Goodbye, Mommy's favourite video. ♥

Kate Davis is a speaker, writer, comedian, actress and five-time nominee at the Canadian Comedy Awards. Visit her at funnymommy.com.