

The Blue Dog

Zealous work was taking place in the garage of Wriggle Town's waste yard. Waldemar, the street sweeper was busy at a humongous table.

"What are you doing?" Wili, the tractor rolled in through the gates.

"I am making a poster," the large street sweeper answered carelessly. "Don't you know that in two days the house clearance begins? Everyone can put their unwanted or broken down things to the street. We are going to collect everything and bring them here to Waste Works Yard."

"And why are you making the posters only now?" Wili asked in shock. "Isn't this a little bit late?"

"Don't you worry!" the street sweeper answered off-hand. "People have known for a long time when this is going to happen, I am only making posters about what they can put out in the street and what they cannot. Remember how many problems we had last year, when people brought to the street things they weren't supposed to? We found light bulbs, fluorescent lights, all kind of batteries, medicine bottles, chipped porcelain dishes, tin cans and plastic toys. We could barely manage to sort through them."

"That's nothing!" Wera, the old water truck joined the conversation. "They also put out a lot of hazardous waste, everything from used oil, pesticides and paint to construction debris. It is awful to even think about what could have happened, had the children started playing with them!"

"Now I understand," Wili nodded. "Let's not waste any more time. Waldy, let me know when you are ready. I will help put out the posters!"

Three days later, in the afternoon, Walter, the recycling waste collection truck rolled into the Great Assembly Hall with excitement.

"Come quickly! Look what I have found!" He lifted a gigantic television set from one of the containers. The others surrounded him immediately.

"Somebody dumped it next to the recycling bin in Catfish Street. Do you think it still works?"

"We will find out soon enough!" Waldemar plugged the cable of the television into the wall and started pressing its buttons.



“See? This is what I was talking about! This is also considered to be hazardous waste, and someone still left it in the street!” Wera, the wise old water truck said indignantly.

And at that moment the device started crackling, and then colourful lines appeared on the screen. Waldemar kept tinkering with it, and soon colourful images were flashing across it.

“Conjure up some sound too!” Wili shouted enthusiastically, who arrived from work right at that moment. “This used to be my favourite cartoon! Superdogs!”

The jack-of-all-trades street sweeper managed to get some sound out of the contraption, and soon all the residents of Waste Works Yard were staring at the screen.

“I like the little pink dog best! She is so cute with that pretty white ribbon around her neck!” Wanda was daydreaming.

“Oh, come on! The green one is much nicer!” Wilma bantered. “His fur is bigger too!”

“I think this whole thing is really silly!” Goliath, the lanky crane truck, growled at them. “What are you talking about, purple and pink dogs? Who has ever heard of such a thing? You don’t really believe all this tomfoolery, do you?”

“You are right!” Samson was trying to calm his friend. “These strange-coloured dogs don’t really exist. This is why a tale is a tale, so you can have things in it that don’t exist in reality. But if you want to see real animals, switch over to another channel. Watch a nature show instead!”

“I don’t think so!” Wilma butted in. “These dogs really do exist. You won’t even believe what I saw this morning! I was sweeping Hawthorn Street when I noticed something strange at the corner. First I thought I was imagining things, so I followed it to Blueberry Street. But I was not mistaken!”

“Tell us already what it is you saw!” Clara interrupted, who couldn’t wait long enough until the little street sweeper finally got to the point.

“A blue-coloured dog!” Wilma burst out triumphantly. “To be absolutely exact, a Smurf-blue little doggy.”

“Ha-ha,” Goliath groaned, “you are very funny Wilma. But everyone knows blue dogs don’t exist.”

“But I did indeed see one!” the little street sweeper persevered, and for the sake of emphasis she even tapped one with her brooms.

Goliath and Samson looked at each other and started laughing out loud. Clara asked



her jokingly:

“Tell us Wilma, did you by chance see any extra-terrestrials? You know, those are little green things.”

Malvina couldn't help herself either not to tease the little street sweeper.

“Was it a stuffed dog a plastic one? I hope it didn't bite anybody!”

Wilma was getting very angry.

“You can laugh as much as you want! But she laughs best who laughs last! And I did indeed saw a real, Smurf-blue little dog! And I am going to prove to you that I am right!” And with a great slap-bang she rolled out of the room, slamming the garage door behind her.

Waldemar shook his cabin with a smile.

“You shouldn't have hurt Wilma!” he turned to the others. “We all work a lot, and we all get really tired. And when we are tired, we make mistakes more easily. Wilma didn't mean any harm.”

“It will be the best if I go after her,” Goliath sighed a big one. “I will try to make peace with her.”

“And just to be on the safe side, I will call the Animal Shelter and ask them if they have received any notifications about strange dogs recently,” Wera was reaching for the telephone.

Little Wilma was not the kind to hold grudges, so she quickly returned to the garage with Goliath. They were just catching the last sentences of Wera's telephone call.

“We will be sure to let you know if we see it! Yes, we will notify you right away.”

“What dog? What does it look like? Whose dog? How long has it been missing?” The others bombarded Wera with questions.

“I will tell you just as soon as you let me get a word in edgewise!” the old water truck raised her voice. “Mrs. Taylor's little Weensy got lost this morning. He must have run away when they carried out their waste into the street. The residents of the building together with the neighbours have looked high and low; they have checked all the streets in the area, but they haven't found him. Mrs. Taylor is very upset about her loss.”

“Weensy, that little rascal!” Clara was fretting. “He has always been a big mischief-maker. No matter how many times I have rolled past their gate, he has always tried to get through the lattice and follow me. I knew that all his curiosity would once end badly!”



The following morning the trucks of Waste Works headed out one more time to collect the unwanted belongings. In the evening they rolled into the garage exhausted and weary again.

“I feel as if my tires were made out of lead,” sighed Wanda, the pretty little garbage truck, “I can barely feel my lever either.”

“This will never end!” Malvina was nodding. “I cannot even imagine where people have been storing all this junk!”

“And this is not even our biggest problem!” Samson, the container carrier joined in the conversation. “Even though Waldy made all these posters, people still put a lot of hazardous waste out into the streets. I don’t understand how people can be this irresponsible!”

“You are right Samson!” Walter was shocked. “I happen to have found a refrigerator, a box full of used light bulbs and bottles full of used oil.”

“And what do you think about this?” Clara shouted to them from the garage door. “I brought this all in from Dandelion Street.

The others rolled closer and saw with horror that her container was filled to the brim with construction debris. Pieces of bricks, broken roof tiles, gravel, lime and paint buckets lay on top of each other.

“I can’t believe that someone could leave these outside, just like this!” Wera said in shock.

Wanda and Wilma didn’t join the conversation. They were standing in the corner, whispering about something. They seemed really excited. Walter couldn’t leave alone it without saying something.

“What are you girl talking about?” he pried. “Wouldn’t you like to tell us too?”

“Not really!” Wanda turned to him. “Maybe you would laugh at me too.”

“Oh, come on, don’t be childish! Tell us now; what have you been chit-chatting about?”

“This morning I also saw the blue dog!” the little garbage truck stated pertly.

“That’s very funny!” Goliath remarked with a grimace. “So now it looks like you too have visions. There are no blue dogs of course, and that’s that.”

“But I have seen it!” Wanda kept on going. “You can say whatever you want, I saw what I saw. I believe my own eyes more so than what may or may not exist according to you.”

“Tell us exactly what you saw!” Wera, the wise water truck, who wanted any further



quarrel to be nipped in the bud, begged her.

“I was rolling by the office buildings Downtown when in one of the shop windows I noticed a moving blue something. First I only saw that it was blue and small, and that it was running in the street. But as I turned around, I could recognize it clearly. It was a blue-coloured puppy. Unfortunately it disappeared from my eyes within seconds.”

“Are you certain it was a dog and not something else?” Wera kept on asking.

“I am definitely sure!” the little garbage truck answered assertively. “Wilma wasn’t imagining things; she was telling us the truth.”

“Perhaps the blue dog is really a UFO but kidnapped Weensy, and it is now scaring passers-by, looking like him,” Goliath was joking around. “There is something like this in your favourite TV show, am I right?” he kept teasing Wilma and Wanda.

“Shame on you, Goliath!” Wera looked at him sternly. “You cannot be so sure of yourself. What if the girls are right after all?”

“That’s right! Let’s not leave it like that, let’s find out the truth!” Clara closed the debate.

“Are we going to look for the blue dog? Fantastic idea! You can count me in!” Wilma said enthusiastically.

“Good idea!” Waldemar joined them as well. “This way we can kill two flies with one stone. Maybe we can even find out who put out the hazardous waste,” he winked at Clara.

The investigation started the following morning. The garbage trucks split up the streets of Wriggle Town among themselves. Everyone did their best to comb through the area that was assigned to them thoroughly. They rolled through the main and side streets, the parks and playgrounds. They looked into the dead end streets and the gateway houses too. But without any luck. In the end the gang met up in Dandelion Street again, at the very place Clara carried the construction debris and the paint buckets away from.

“This is the exact place where I found the paint cans!” Clara pointed at the paint splatters on the ground. “I haven’t had time to clean it up yet, as I had to go to other places as well,” she apologized.

“This is not a problem right now,” Wera smiled at her. “And look at that!” A narrow grey line is running here in the direction of one of the houses.”

“And these here are paw prints of a dog!” Waldemar stated after thorough



examination. “I suggest we follow the paint line! If my instinct is correct, this will lead us to the house where the paint cans were brought from.”

The exuberant investigative team found themselves in front of Number 7 Dandelion Street. When they rang the bell, Mrs. Tailor ran to the garden gate with her eyes cried out.

“Have you found Weensy?” she asked the garbage cans hopefully.

“Unfortunately not him,” Waldemar answered, “but we found something else.”

“Your house has turned out beautifully. The grey walls with the blue window frames look really splendid,” Malvina took over from him. “We just don’t understand why the surroundings of such a wonderful house needs to be ruined with debris and paint.”

Mrs. Tailor was shocked. She was not expecting this. But slowly she realized what the garbage truck was talking about.

“I didn’t think it would cause trouble!” she was apologizing. “It was only because of the house clearance that we took the leftover building materials out with all the other whatnot that we don’t need any more. I don’t even understand how the paint got spilled. When we put them out, both cans had their lids on.”

“The problem is,” Waldemar explained patiently, “that it is absolutely forbidden to put paint cans out in the street. Not even at the time of house clearance. It is considered hazardous waste, and it needs to be brought in to Waste Works Yard.”

Mrs. Tailor continued to apologize at length and promised to make things right. She would do that by properly cleaning the mess up, and next time she would really pay attention to keeping the rules of house clearance. In return the garbage trucks promised her to find Weensy, no matter what it takes.

The garbage trucks set out for their search again. They wandered the streets for a long time, through and through they checked everything, and still they didn’t see any signs of Weensy, nor the blue dog. They were standing at Main Square despondently, mulling over how to continue their quest, when Wilma suddenly cried out and pointed in the direction of one of the corners of the square:

“There is my Smurf-blue dog!”

They all turned in that way, and indeed, they saw Smurf-blue paws peeping out from behind a garbage can.

“I have a nice big marrowbone in my container. I brought it from the yard, I thought we might need it,” Malvina whispered to the others for fear of scaring the animal away. “With



that we could lure it here, so we can take a closer look.”

And that’s exactly what happened. The blue paws moved with the smell of the juicy bone, and just as the garbage trucks hoped, behind them a blue dog emerged. He must have been really hungry; because he immediately pounced on his prey, and he made that food disappear in the blink of an eye. The garbage trucks watched with amazement. Wilma was right, the little dog was Smurf-blue from the top of his head to the tip of his tail.

“Do you believe me now?” the smallest street sweeper asked joyfully. “See, Goliath? You can be wrong once in a lifetime! Smurf-blue dogs do exist in reality.”

“I am sorry Wilma, but you still haven’t convinced me!” the lanky crane truck smiled at her. “Look what your alleged Smurf-blue dog is doing!” he pointed at the pooch jumping around Clara. “Isn’t that tail-wagging familiar to you from somewhere?”

“Weensy!” the others shouted almost at the same time. Suddenly it all became clear.

“It is not that difficult to guess what happened, is it?” Goliath continued confidently. “Weensy escaped through the gate when Mrs. Tailor and her family were carrying the paint cans out to the street. He must have hustled among the waste until he accidentally knocked over the paint cans. The leftover paint must have spilled on him, so no wonder nobody recognized him.”

Wilma was quite crestfallen, but she had to admit that Goliath was right.

“Don’t feel bad!” Wera, the wise old water truck consoled her. “After all, you were both right! You really did see a real, Smurf-blue puppy, and Goliath was not wrong either when he said blue dogs didn’t exist, only if someone dyed them.”

“Let’s call it even!” Goliath reached out his right to Wilma.

Only after long and laborious work were they able to rid Weensy of the blue paint. Mrs. Tailor made up for his suffering with tasty treats, and she promised that the following year she would help put up Waldy’s posters and would explain to her neighbours why it is forbidden to put hazardous waste out into the garbage cans or in the street.

The house clearance ended successfully. The exhausted garbage trucks rolled away to their well-deserved weekend rest, so that on Monday morning they could carry on with their usual work in Wriggle Town with rejuvenation.

THE END

