

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 the house clearance begins in two days? Everyone can put their unwanted or broken down things out into the street. We are going to collect everything and bring the things here to Waste Works Yard."

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

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

"That's nothing!" Wera, the old water truck joined the conversation. "They also put out a lot of hazardous waste. Everything from used oil and pesticides to paint and construction debris. It is awful to even think about what could have happened if the children had 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 up 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 considered hazardous waste and someone still left it in the street!” Wera, the wise old water truck said indignantly.

At that moment the device started crackling, and 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 elements in it that don’t exist in reality. 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 for the little street sweeper to finally get to the point.

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

“Ha-ha,” Goliath groaned, “you are very funny, Wilma. 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, little green things.”

Malvina couldn't help herself from teasing the little street sweeper.

“Was it a stuffed dog or 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 who laughs last laughs best! I did indeed see 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. “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 their waste out into the street. The residents of the building as well as the neighbours have looked high and low; they have checked all the streets in the area but still 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 roll past their gate, he always tries to get through the lattice and follow me. I knew that all his curiosity would 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 of 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 and paint buckets lay on top of each other.

“I can’t believe that someone could leave these outside 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 it alone without saying something.

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

“Not really!” Wanda turned to him. “Maybe you’ll 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 such things as blue dogs, and that’s that.”

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

“Tell us exactly what you saw!” Wera, who wanted any further quarrel to be nipped in the bud, begged her.

“I was rolling by the office buildings Downtown when I noticed a moving blue



something in one of the shop windows. First I only saw that it was blue and small and that it was running in the street, but as I turned around I recognized it clearly. It was a blue-coloured puppy. Unfortunately it disappeared from my view 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 that kidnapped Weensy and is now scaring passers-by 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 the streets of Wriggle Town amongst 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 the playgrounds. They looked into the dead end streets and the gateway houses too with no luck. In the end the gang met up in Dandelion Street again, 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 other places to go to 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.”

“These are paw prints from 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. Taylor ran to the garden gate with tears in her eyes.

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

“Unfortunately not,” 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. Taylor 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 things 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, even for a house clearance. It is considered hazardous waste, and it needs to be brought in to Waste Works Yard.”

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

The garbage trucks set out on their search again. They wandered the streets for a long time, they checked everything and everywhere 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 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. “We could use it to lure the dog 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 a blue dog emerged behind them. He must have been really hungry because he immediately pounced on his prey, and he made the food disappear in the blink of an eye. The garbage trucks watched with amazement. Wilma was right, the little dog was 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? Even you can be wrong from time to time! 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 at what your alleged Smurf-blue dog is doing!” he pointed at the pooch jumping around Clara. “Isn’t that tail-wagging familiar to you?”

“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 blue puppy, and Goliath was not wrong either when he said blue dogs don’t exist unless someone dyed them.”

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

Only after 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 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 fully rejuvenated.

THE END

