

Mother's Day Flowers

It was a long winter. The snow and the ice retreated slowly. The weather remained grim and unfriendly, as if spring was never going to arrive.

“It is still so cold outside in the mornings!” Wanda, the pretty little garbage truck sighed as she looked out the garage window. The trees were still bare at Waste Works Yard, and the first buds were still not showing on the bushes.

“Wriggle Town is very depressing too,” Malvina, the residential garbage truck rolled up next to her. “You can see the grungy remains of winter everywhere, and there is barely a trace of the rebirth of nature.

“I miss the flowers the most,” Wanda sighed. “All those wonderful colours! This time last year all the trees were turning green everywhere.”

“Come on, girls!” Wera, the wise old water truck interrupted. “It’s time to get to work! Instead of being sad, let’s turn the town into something pretty. We will all be in a much better mood after that!”

“Wera is right,” Walter agreed. “We always have a lot of work in the spring. I have the list of tasks for today, let’s take a look!” the selective waste collection truck started reading.

“Goliath and Samson are going to help the fire brigade collect the broken tree branches, Waldemar, you will need to sweep up the rubble on Main Street, and Wilma, you will have to do the same in Old Town.”

“Oh, no!” the little street sweeper cried. “This is the world’s worst task! Has anybody ever tried to sweep those tiny little pebbles out from between the cobblestones? I don’t really understand why we don’t use something else on the slippery roads. The other day I read something about a special material that melts with the snow. Next year we could try that.”

“Wilma, we have already talked about this,” Waldemar lectured the little street sweeper. “Sand and rubble are the only things that don’t harm the environment. That special material you read about seeps into the ground with the melted snow and ruins the soil. The rubble doesn’t cause any damage; we can sweep it up in the spring and save it for the next



winter. It is much cheaper too since we don't have to pay for it year after year, we only have to replace the missing amount."

"Alright, alright! Just don't scold me!" Wilma was on the defensive. "But please acknowledge that it is no small task to scrape up the gravel from the rifts."

"Wera, Wili!" he spoke to the old water truck and the little tractor. "Your task for today is to eliminate the ice skating rink next to the school. The melted ice needs to be cleaned up and the railing has to be taken down. If you need help, just let me know. Fred the fire truck mentioned that he would be happy to lend a hand in the spring cleanup!"

On her way home, Wanda could hardly wait to get to Chrysanthemum Street. That's where the community centre of Wriggle Town was: a beautiful yellow building with large windows. In the afternoons many people visited the place. Some came to exercise, some to learn to play music, and there was an enthusiastic group that did arts and crafts on Fridays. Wanda was admiring the wonderful artwork they were making through one of the gigantic windows. In her free time the little garbage truck also enjoyed tinkering with the materials Walter saved for her from the recycling containers.

"Hello, Wanda!" a little girl with brown hair spoke to her from the other side of the window. "Look! I made this!" she raised her drawing paper.

"Hi Blanca!" Wanda greeted her with joy. "You have painted a lovely picture. Who did you make it for?"

"It is a secret, but I will tell you!" she smiled at Wanda knowingly. "We are getting ready for Mother's Day! I painted this picture for my Mum. I hope she will like it!"

"I am sure she will be very happy to have it!" Wanda nodded with admiration.

"I would also like to give her a bouquet of flowers," the little girl continued and she ran back to the others.

As she was rolling home, Wanda thought of a great idea. She opened the garage door of Waste Works Yard enthusiastically.



“What if I did arts and crafts here at the yard? We have found so much thrown away stuff that could be turned into amazing new things! We could announce in town that I have sessions on Saturdays here in the Garage,” she babbled with excitement.

“I like the idea!” Waldemar looked up from the pile of newspapers he was reading and started searching for something right away.

“There is a magazine here somewhere with pictures about how to renovate and remodel things that have been thrown into the garbage but are still useful. Here you go, I found it!” he scooped out a slightly rumpled magazine from the pile. Wanda immediately sprang at it and started reading.

“We will be happy to put up posters in the Suburb,” Clara and Malvina offered. “A lot of children live in that area, I am sure they would be glad to come to the workshop!”

“And I will continue to put all reusable material to the side,” Walter added ardently. “What will you need to begin with?”

“Everything you can find in the selective waste container,” Wanda looked up from her magazine eagerly. “But I especially need tin cans, socks with holes, pieces of rags and plastic bottles. We can start by making rag dolls and sock-dogs.”

The following week all the trucks of Waste Works Yard were preparing for Wanda’s arts and crafts workshop. Pretty, colourful and inviting posters were put up all over Wriggle Town. Walter found lots of materials and Waldemar surprised Wanda with new magazines. Wilma swept the courtyard of Waste Works twice to make sure everything was in immaculate order for receiving guests. In other words, everybody took part in the preparations.

Wera the water truck was on her way home to Waste Works Yard from her usual afternoon roll when she noticed a familiar figure in a red coat.

“Hello, Blanca! Where are you going in such a hurry?” she recognized the little girl.

“Hi Wera! Today is Mother’s Day. I am heading to Main Square to buy flowers!”

“Jump on up, I will take you! Buckle up!” the wise old water truck smiled at the little girl.



A small group of people were standing despondently at the flower shop. At the door the shop assistant was explaining to them that the truck containing the flowers had gotten stuck on the road due to a technical problem. The entire shipment was ruined, meaning there would be no flowers for Mother's Day and so the dear customers had come to no avail.

Wera and Blanca were surprised by the news but there was nothing they could do. On top of that Wera had to hurry as she didn't want to miss Wanda's first workshop. She quickly said good bye to Blanca and rushed back to Waste Works Yard. She rolled into the Garage, out of breath.

"Please forgive me for being late; I hope I haven't missed anything!"

As no one answered, Wera looked around, bewildered. Besides the garbage trucks she couldn't see a single soul.

"Don't tell me it's already over! I am so sorry Wanda, I didn't realise how much time had passed! Please don't be mad!" she explained. Only after that did she notice that Wanda's windshield had fogged up quite a bit. She could barely dry it with her windshield wiper.

"Is something the matter?" she asked with concern.

"Yes!" little Wilma whispered. "The problem is that nobody came to the workshop. Malvina and Clara filled the town with posters to no avail. We all prepared with such enthusiasm in vain since no one bothered to stop by."

"Geez! I didn't think this would happen!" the old water truck remarked loudly. "But how could this have come about?" she asked the others. "What did we do wrong? So many people like to do arts and crafts in Wriggle Town. Why didn't they come *here*?"

Malvina and Clara, the two residential garbage trucks looked at each other knowingly. Wera caught their glance and started quizzing them immediately.

"Do you know something we don't?" she asked.

"The truth is," a very embarrassed Clara started, "that yesterday, when I was in Lilac Street, I heard two mothers talking to each other. They were discussing what a nonsensical idea it was to have an arts and crafts workshop at Waste Works Yard, where there is nothing but tremendous amounts of garbage. They also said that trash is not good for anything."



“Unfortunately I heard something like that as well,” Malvina nodded. “When I invited two school girls to the programme, they laughed at me and told me that they had no intention of coming to a stinky, dirty waste yard.”

“What on earth are they talking about?” Wera cried out angrily. “No way we are stinky! No way we are dirty! I cannot accept this!”

She would have continued on with her furious monologue, but the bell rang suddenly.

“Who is that?” Wera burst out in an unfriendly tone.

“It’s just me, Blanca,” a child’s thin voice spoke up. “I came to see Wanda about the arts and crafts activity. I’m not late for it, am I?”

“No, of course not,” Wera relented immediately. “Come right in, we were waiting for you!” she winked at the garbage trucks standing next to her.

Within a few minutes the little girl was sitting at the table placed in the middle of the Garage and telling the garbage trucks standing around her that there is a big problem in Wriggle Town because there will not be any flowers for Mother’s Day.

“I thought you might have a good idea,” she turned to Wanda, “because I would reeeally like to give flowers to my Mum!”

Wanda’s headlights blinked with excitement. She started making arrangements right away.

“Waldy, could you please hand me that arts and crafts magazine? And please open it at the flower ideas! Walter, could you please bring some paper egg crates? Wilma, bring the paints! Goliath, please look for thick wires in the Recycling Hall! And coloured papers!”

“Don’t worry for a second, Blanca! You can be certain your Mum will have the prettiest bouquet of flowers in town,” she turned to the little girl.

An hour later Blanca stepped out of the gates of Waste Works with a bright face, holding a bouquet of vibrant flowers in her hand. Wanda and the garbage trucks really outdid themselves. With the help of a bit of imagination they had turned the egg crates, the coloured papers and the wire into beautiful flowers.



The garbage trucks discussed the events amongst themselves with satisfaction when the bell rang again. Waldemar peeped through the window to see who was visiting this late in the afternoon. He could barely speak from the shock. Townspeople big and small were standing at the gate waiting to get in.

“Goliath, please open the gate and find out to what we owe this mass visit!”

“We have seen Blanca’s bouquet!” a young girl stepped up when she heard the voice of the crane truck. “We would like to ask Wanda to teach us how to make those beautiful paper flowers from egg crates and wire. We also want to celebrate our mums.”

“Please don’t be upset with us for saying silly things about Waste Works Yard. I am sure we have offended you! The truth is that we have never visited you and we had no idea how you live here at the yard,” an older gentleman added. “But Blanca’s bouquet surprised us all. This is why we thought we would personally check out where masterpieces are made.”

There was great joy at Waste Works Yard. Goliath opened the large gates wide and invited everyone waiting outside to the Big Garage.

“Alright, there are no hard feelings,” Wanda rolled to the front. “Feel free to take a look around, I am happy to show you everything. But first the yard itself, of course.”

The residents of Wriggle Town talked about that particular Mother’s Day for a long time, the day when everyone surprised their mums with flower bouquets made from egg crates and wires. From that day on nobody spoke ill of Waste Works Yard again, and the children eagerly attended Wanda’s arts and crafts workshops every week.

THE END

