





STORY 2: The 3 R's

For the next week, Tony and Tina checked the trash cans in the alley every day when they took out the trash. But the rascals were nowhere to be seen.

Then one afternoon when the twins were washing the dishes, Tony put the last glass in the dish rack for Tina to dry and said, "Tina, grab some paper towels. There's water all over the counter and the floor."

Tina hurried to the cupboard, opened the door, and stuck her hand in to pull out the roll of paper towels. But the towels wouldn't budge. She tugged harder, but it felt as if something was tugging back. She knelt down to look in the cupboard to see what the problem was and came face to face with a rascal, who was holding on tightly to the paper towels.

"So there you are," exclaimed Tina. "We've been looking all over for you. Come on out of that cupboard and bring those paper towels with you."

"I'll come out," replied the rascal, "but I'm not bringing the paper towels with me."

"Why not?" asked Tina as she backed up to let the little creature out of the cupboard.

"Because," answered rascal R1, "you could use a sponge or a rag instead of the paper towels."

"Yeah, so what?" Tony spoke up.

R1 wasted no time jumping up on the counter so he could look Tony right in the eye. "So using paper towels when you don't need them," the rascal explained, "wastes natural resources and creates more trash that has to go to the landfill." And as he said that, he turned around to show the word "REDUCE" printed on the back of his shirt.

"REDUCE?" said Tony and Tina at the same time.

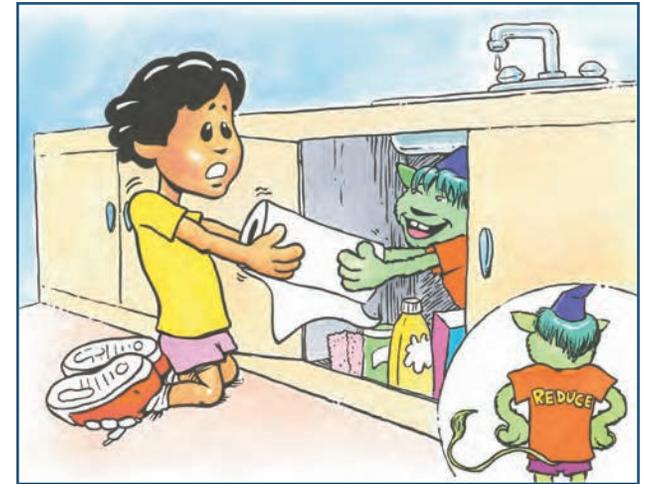
The rascal spun back around and explained. "Yes, REDUCE," he repeated. "You can reduce how much trash you have simply by using fewer things that need to be thrown away."

"Like paper towels," said Tony.

"And paper cups and plates," added Tina.

"That's right," cried R1 jumping excitedly up and down. "And lots of other things, like disposable pens and razors, and plastic spoons and forks."

"We'll do it!" said Tony. "We'll REDUCE how much trash we have."



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"We're going out to play," said Tina. "Why don't you and the other rascals come with us? By the way," she paused, looking from side to side, "where are the other rascals?"

"Oh, they're around," answered R1, sliding off the counter. Then the rascal ducked around the corner and disappeared.

"Wait!" called Tina and Tony, but it was too late; the rascal was gone. So they headed for the closet to get jackets before they went outside. They pulled on their matching red jackets and stared at each other. The sleeves were halfway up their arms and the jackets wouldn't close. "We've grown," said Tony, wriggling out of his jacket. "It's time to get rid of these."

Tina took her jacket off and the two of them walked straight into the kitchen and put the jackets into the trash can. Then they went back to the closet to get their sweatshirts. They opened the closet door, and there, sitting on the closet floor, were two rascals, wearing the red jackets they had just thrown away!

The twins' mouths fell open. Tony was the first to speak. "We just threw those jackets in the trash," he said. "Why do you have them on?"

"Because," started rascal number 2, jumping up off the floor and scurrying out of the closet, "these are perfectly good jackets. Why throw them in the trash when someone else—like us—can use them?" And at that he slipped out of the jacket, did a somersault, and stood up with his back to Tony and Tina. On the back of his T-shirt was the word "REUSE."







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"REUSE what?" asked Tina.

"All sorts of things," answered R2, turning around to face the twins.

"The more you reuse instead of throw into the trash can, the less trash that has to go to the landfill."

The rascal darted into the kitchen with Tony and Tina and R1 close behind. When he reached the trash can, he started pulling things out. "This shoe box," he said tossing it up, "could be used to store baseball cards. This old towel could be used for a dust cloth. And this ball could be patched and be almost good as new."

"Hmmm, you're right," said Tina, lifting a margarine tub out of the trash. "We do throw away a lot we can reuse."

"But we can't reuse all this stuff!" Tony exclaimed, holding an aluminum can in one hand and an old newspaper in the other.

The two rascals looked at each other, giggled, jumped up in the air, and ran out of the room. Tony and Tina started to chase them, but the rascals were too fast. The last thing the twins saw was the orange T-shirts saying "REDUCE" and "REUSE."







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"They do like to disappear," sighed Tony as he turned to throw the can and the paper back into the trash. Just as they were about to fall into the trash can, rascal number 3 leaped up from behind the trash can and caught them, the aluminum can in one hand and the newspaper in the other.

"These don't belong in the trash," R3 stated.

"Why not?" asked Tina. "They're trash."

"No, they're not," responded the rascal. "They're 'resources' that can be used again." Then he grabbed hold of the edge of the trash can, flipped over the top of it, and landed on his feet so Tony and Tina could read the back of his T-shirt, which said "RECYCLE."

"RECYCLE—I've heard of that," said Tina. "That's when old products are used to make new things."

"Very good!" cried R3. "We can RECYCLE aluminum, glass, paper, and some plastic; and it's easy." He busily started sorting the twins' trash and continued talking. "Put aluminum cans in a box or bag. Separate glass bottles and jars and put them in boxes. Stack up newspapers and tie them together or put them in brown bags. You can even collect plastic bottles—like this soda container—so new plastic products can be made."

"Yeah, but what do we do with them?" Tony wanted to know.

The rascal stopped sorting and looked up at Tony. "That depends," he said, "on where you live. In some communities, the recyclables are picked up right at your home. In other communities, there are places to drop them off. Sometimes you even get money for them!"

"Seems like recycling would really cut down on the amount of trash," said Tina, seeing how much R3 had taken out of the trash can to be recycled.







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"Indeed it would!" answered R3. "And we save lots of resources, too, since it takes less energy to make products from recycled materials, and we don't have to find and use new natural resources."

"So to make less trash," Tony said . . .

"And," Tina chimed in, "help the environment . . ."

Instantly, the three rascals appeared in front of them, and said all together, "You should follow the 3 Rs!"

Then the rascals all spun around backwards and Tony and Tina read aloud from their T-shirts, "REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE!"

"Yes, yes, yes!" cried the rascals. Then they scurried out the door and disappeared.

