





STORY 1: Jay's Tree

When Jay was born, his parents planted a tiny tree outside his bedroom window. The tree and Jay grew tall and strong side by side. Of course, the tree grew much taller and stronger.

Jay loved his tree. Every morning, he watched the birds gather on the branches, and he listened to them sing as they greeted the day. In the spring, birds often built nests at the top of his tree. And Jay would watch the baby birds grow, protected by his tree.

When Jay leaned out his window and got very close to the branches and leaves of his tree, he sometimes saw a caterpillar munching on a leaf. He liked watching the caterpillar. He knew it was getting ready for its long sleep before it turned into a butterfly.



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STORY 1: Jay's Tree

On hot summer afternoons, Jay loved to sit in the shade under his tree and watch Mimi, his cat, climb the tree and use its trunk to sharpen her claws. Often, Jay used the tree to hide behind when he and his friends played hide 'n' seek. Every Saturday, Jay watered his tree, so that its branches would stay strong and its leaves would stay green. And Jay always liked to just look at his tree. It was a very pretty tree.

One day, Jay's father, who knew how much Jay loved his tree, said to Jay, "How would you like a treehouse in your tree?"

"A treehouse!" Jay exclaimed. "I'd love to have a house in my tree!"

"Then come on," said Jay's dad. "Let's go to the lumber yard to get the wood to build your treehouse."







STORY 1: Jay's Tree

At the lumberyard, everywhere Jay looked there was wood—light-colored wood and dark-colored wood, rough wood and smooth wood, little pieces of wood and big pieces of wood. “Wow!” said Jay. “Where did all this wood come from?”

Mr. Stevens, who was sitting up on his forklift, heard Jay and called down, “From trees—it all comes from trees!”

“From trees?” Jay repeated, looking up at Mr. Stevens. “You mean we cut down trees to get wood?”

“Yes,” replied Mr. Stevens. “Some trees are grown just so we can use their wood.”

“But what do we use all this wood for?” Jay asked, looking at the stacks and stacks of wood.

“The wood from trees is used for many things,” Mr. Stevens answered, climbing down from his forklift. “We use wood to make tables and chairs and bookcases and other furniture. Look out on the street. Those telephone poles and power poles are made of wood. And we use a lot of wood for houses.”

“Like my treehouse!” exclaimed Jay.

“That’s right,” said Mr. Stevens.



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STORY 1: Jay's Tree

"Gee," Jay sighed, sitting down on a stack of wood. "I never knew we used so much wood. It must take a lot of trees."

"Yes, it does," answered Mr. Stevens. "And wood from trees is used for something else, too—to make paper."

"Paper!" said Jay surprised. "We make paper out of trees?"

"That's right," replied Mr. Stevens. "Wood is chopped up into tiny pieces and made into paper."

"Like the paper I write and draw on in school?" Jay wanted to know.

"Yes," said Mr. Stevens. "Wood is made into all kinds of paper. Just look around." Mr. Stevens pointed here and there while saying, "See the bag the popcorn is in, see the newspaper that man is reading, see the cardboard boxes against the wall, see the tissue that woman is using, and see the book that girl is looking at? All of these are made from wood from trees."

"Boy," said Jay. "I knew I liked trees, but I never knew how many things trees were used for."

"Trees are very important," said Mr. Stevens, "both when they are alive and growing and when they are cut down. We'll always need trees."







STORY 2: The Treehouse Party

Jay was having a birthday, and he decided he wanted to have a party in his new treehouse. On Saturday, Jay's friends arrived—Misa, Rickey, Rachel, and Desmond. Everyone was excited to have a party in Jay's treehouse.

They all climbed up and into the treehouse and put on party hats. First, Jay opened his presents, and then they decided to have cake and ice cream bars. After singing "Happy Birthday" to Jay, everyone unwrapped his or her ice cream bar. Rachel put her wrapper into the trash bag Jay's mom had put up in the treehouse. But then Desmond crumpled his wrapper up in a ball and threw it out of the tree as far as he could.

"I bet no one can throw a wrapper farther," he bragged.

So it became a contest. They all rolled the ice cream wrappers into balls and threw them as far as they could toward the front of Jay's house. Misa's went the furthest.

As the children finished their ice cream bars, they dropped their sticks out of the treehouse and watched them bounce through the branches and onto the ground. As the last stick hit the ground, the children heard a voice call out, "Hey, who's up there?"



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STORY 2: The Treehouse Party

"We are," answered Jay, peering down at the woman below. "It's my birthday party."

"Well, that's very nice," the woman said as she climbed up the steps. "It's very nice to have a party up here, but you are making a mess down there!"

"Hello, Mrs. Harvey," said Jay as he recognized the woman. Mrs. Harvey came by his house every Saturday to pick up the newspapers his family saved all week. He never knew why Mrs. Harvey picked up the newspapers, but he liked to help her put the papers into her truck.



"Hello to all of you," said Mrs. Harvey. "And happy birthday to you, Jay. Now tell me why these sticks and paper wrappers are all over the ground?"

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"We were playing a game," answered Rachel.

"That's very nice," said Mrs. Harvey. "But who do you think is going to pick up all this trash?"

The children just shrugged their shoulders. They didn't know who picked up litter on the ground.

Mrs. Harvey continued, "There's no one to pick up your trash. So what do you think it would look like out here if everyone just threw trash on the ground?"

"I guess it would look pretty messy," Desmond answered.

"And it probably wouldn't smell very nice," said Rickey.

"And the birds and animals that live out here probably wouldn't like it either," Misa said. "It would take up their space and might make them sick."





STORY 2: The Treehouse Party

"You're right," Mrs. Harvey said happily. "We shouldn't litter for all those reasons. All our trash should be put in trash cans, or in trash bags," she said picking up the trash bag in the treehouse.

"Okay," they all said together, and they started to put all their napkins and the wrappings from Jay's presents into the trash bag.

"Wait just a minute!" exclaimed Mrs. Harvey, looking at all the trash in the treehouse. "Why do you have so much trash?"

The children looked at one another and once again shrugged their shoulders. They didn't know why they had so much trash.

Mrs. Harvey began counting crumpled up napkins. "Nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen! Thirteen napkins for five little people," she exclaimed. "That's very wasteful, you know."

Jay knew exactly what she meant. "Paper is made from trees," Jay explained to his friends. "So when we waste paper, it means more trees have to be cut down to make more paper."

"But we can always grow more trees," said Rickey.

"You're right," Mrs. Harvey agreed. "But do you know how long it takes for a tree to grow big?"

The children stared at Mrs. Harvey with blank faces.

"Years!" she answered. "It takes years to grow trees. So if we cut them all down for paper, we won't have any trees for a long time."

"We don't want that to happen," said Misa. "We like trees. But we're just little kids. What can we do not to waste paper?"

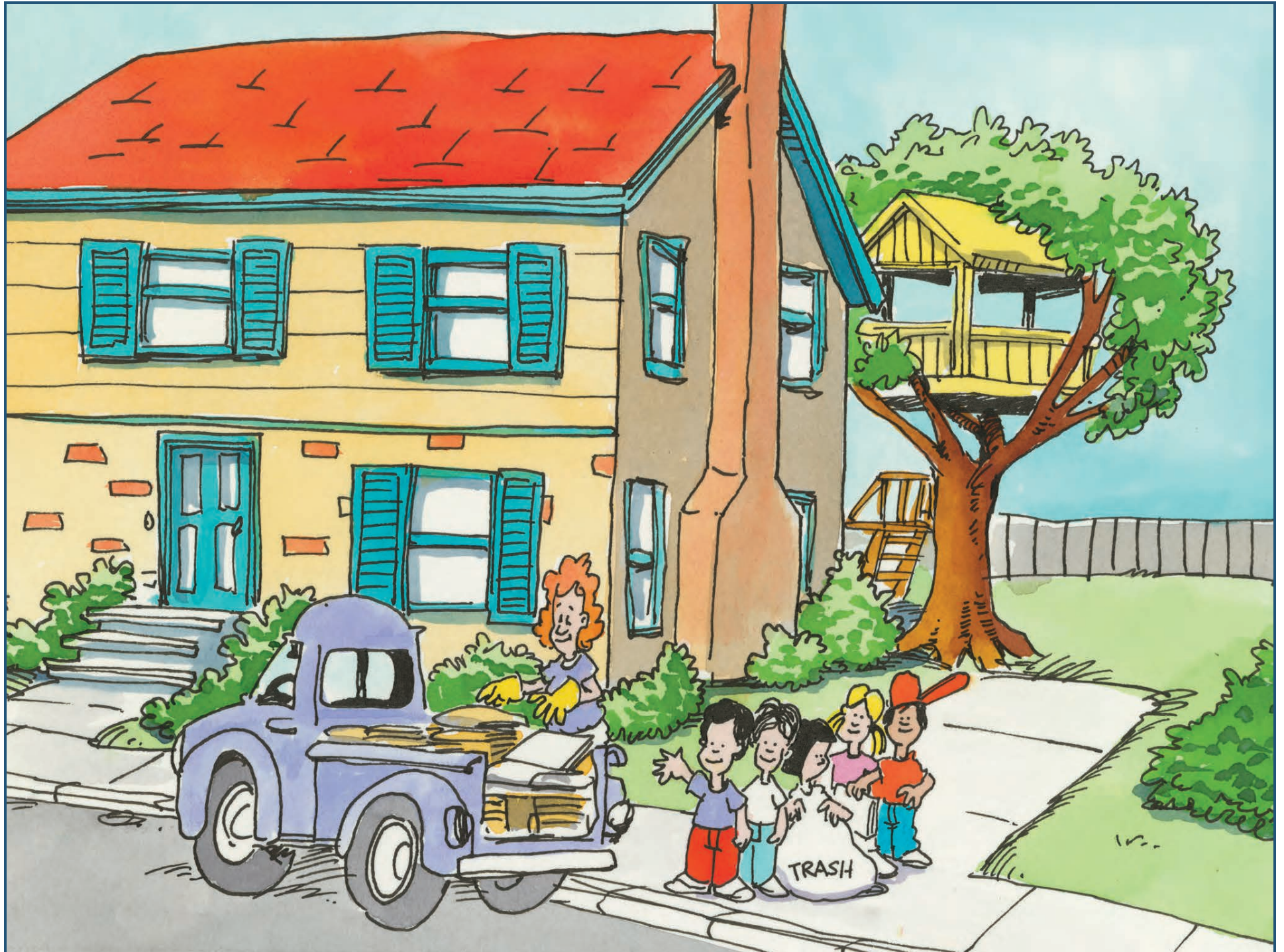
"Lots," answered Mrs. Harvey. "First, you can use only the paper you really need, like napkins and paper towels. Don't use two when one will do."

"Second, don't throw away paper that can be used again for something—like these boxes that Jay's presents came in and these ribbons and bows. They could be used to wrap presents another time or two."

"And these hats could be used for another birthday party," Jay said.

"You've got the idea," said Mrs. Harvey. "And don't use a paper product if something else will do," she continued. "For example, often you can use a cloth towel instead of a paper towel, and a glass or plastic cup that you can wash instead of a paper cup that you have to throw away."







STORY 2: The Treehouse Party

The children were excited. "We can all do those things," said Rachel, "if they will help save trees."

"Good," replied Mrs. Harvey. "Now I've got to go put the newspapers Jay's family saved into my truck."

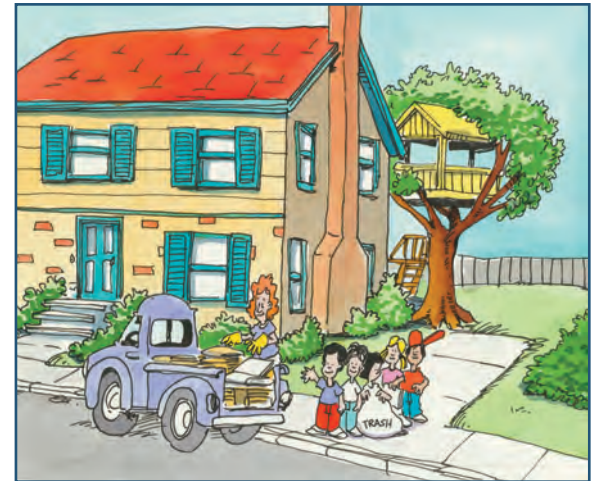
"Why do you pick up our newspapers every week?" Jay asked.

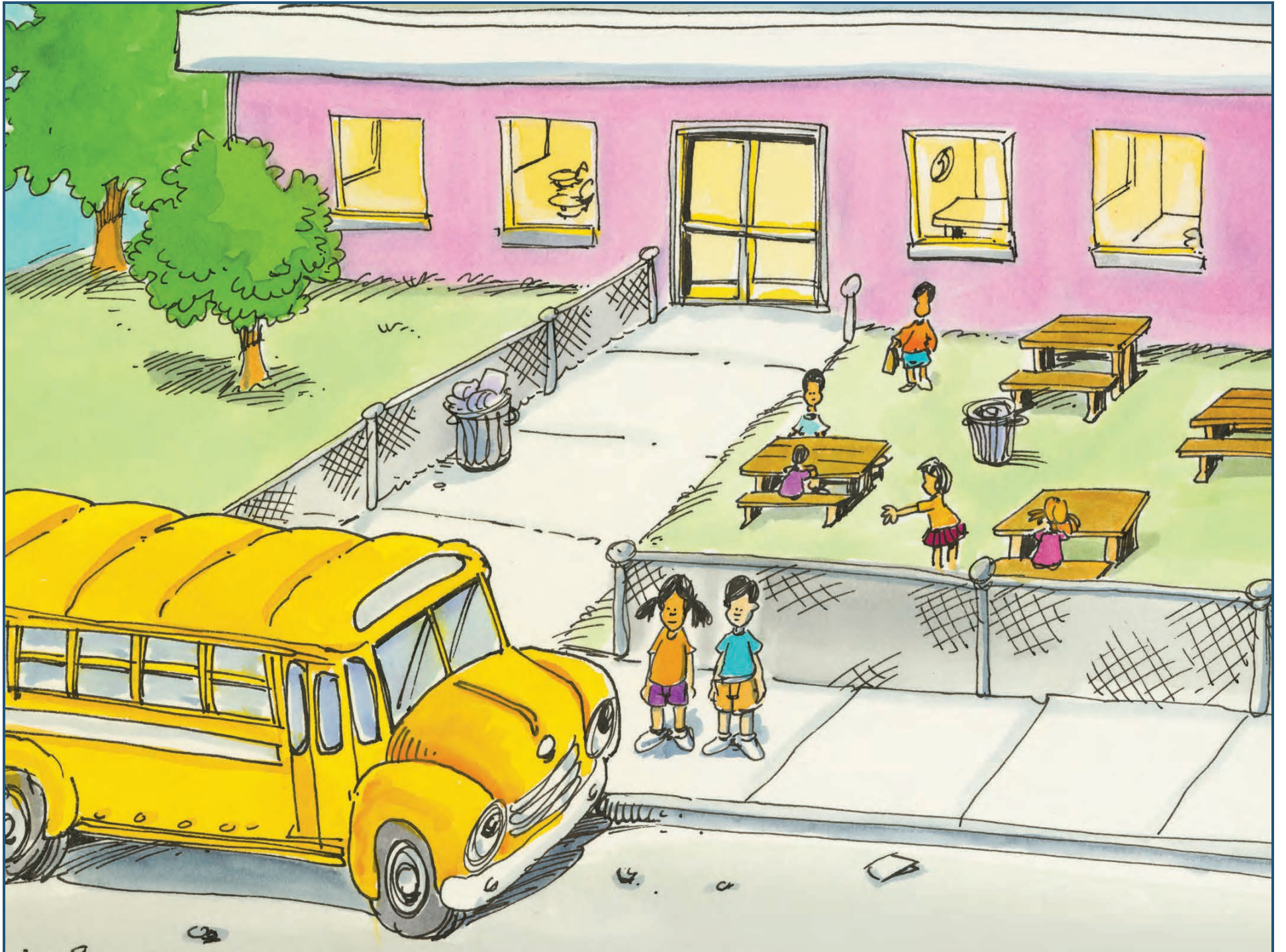
"Well," said Mrs. Harvey, "that saves trees as well. I take the newspapers to a recycling center where they are made into new paper. Instead of cutting down trees to make new paper, we can use newspaper over and over to make paper. And that saves a lot of trees!"

The children followed Mrs. Harvey down from the treehouse and helped her put the newspapers into her truck. Then they started picking up the litter all over Jay's front yard.

As Mrs. Harvey drove away in her truck, she called to them, "Remember, don't waste paper, and don't litter. It's not good for the environment!"

The children waved goodbye to Mrs. Harvey as they stuffed the last pieces of litter into the trash bag.



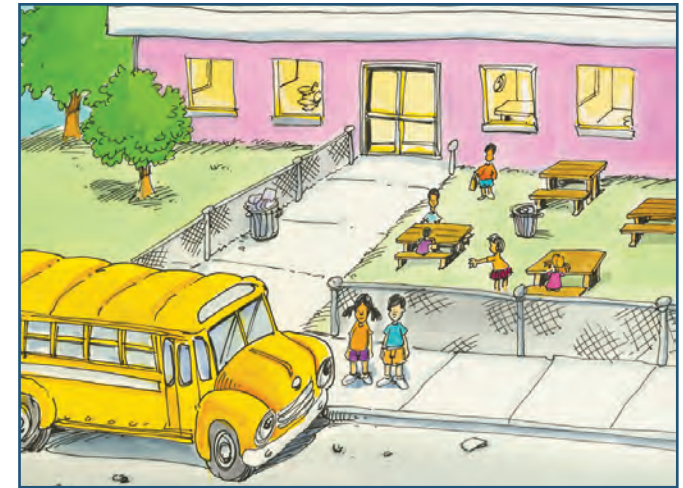




STORY 2: Bernie is Back

It was a cold crisp day, and Bernard Bartholomew Omnibus III stood happily next to the playground at school waiting to take the children back home. He looked wonderful! His metal body was clean and smooth, and his new bright yellow paint shone in the sun. His tires were patched and plump, and his leather seats newly padded and repaired. He now used cleaner fuel to run, and when he drove down the road, he no longer went klatter kabang kabang, but hummed a pleasant little tune.

The school bell rang, and Bernie watched as all the children emptied from their classrooms into the yard for lunch. Patti waved and Bernie flashed his headlights. Patti had told everyone that Bernie was not junk but was valuable natural resources that should be conserved. Bernie was happy that he had been fixed up so that the natural resources in him were not wasted, but he was not happy about what he was seeing right now.



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All the children and teachers were outside in the lunch area, but all the lights were left on in the rooms. Bernie began honking his horn loudly. The children stopped rustling their lunch sacks and stared at Bernie.

"Why's he doing that?" Joe asked, covering his ears.

Patti knew something was wrong. Many of the kids followed her over to Bernie. She looked right up at him and asked, "What's up?"

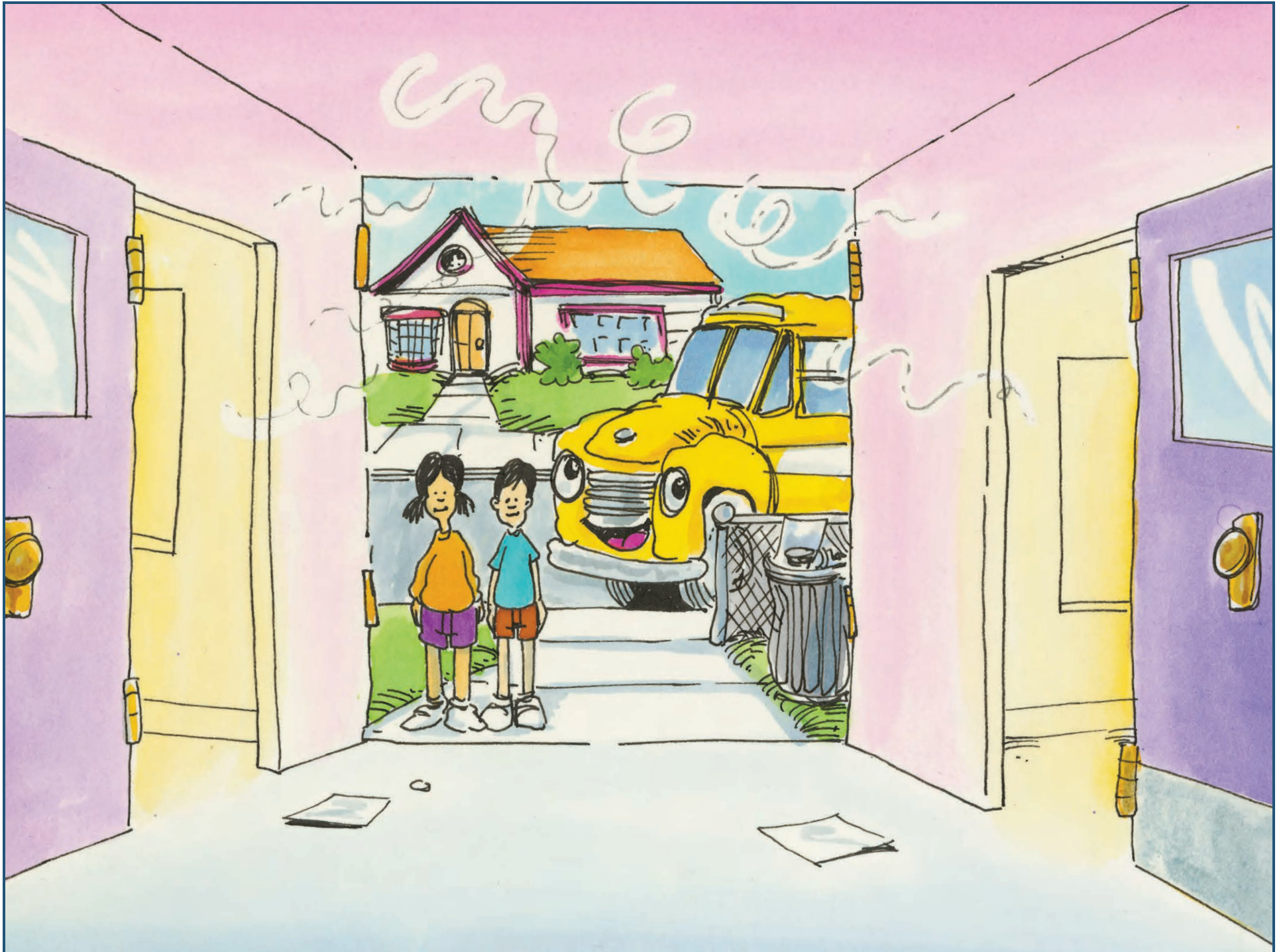
"The lights," answered Bernie. "You left the lights on in the classrooms."

"So what?" said Patti. "We're going back in after lunch."

"The lights use electricity," Bernie stated, "which is usually made from fuels we get out of the ground."

"So," Patti exclaimed, "leaving the lights on wastes natural resources!"

"That's right!" Bernie said. "Leaving on any electrical appliance, such as a TV or a radio, when you're not using it wastes natural resources, which is not good for the environment."





STORY 2: Bernie is Back

Several children ran back to the classrooms to turn off the lights, but as they came back into the lunch area, Bernie sounded off again. He wouldn't quiet down until they all gathered around him.

"Okay," said Joe. "We turned off the lights. Now what's wrong?"

"The doors," Bernie replied. "You left the doors open so all the heat in the rooms is escaping outdoors."

"We'll just turn the heater up when we go back in," said Joe.

Bernie frowned and tooted his horn. Patti knew what the problem was. She explained. "Heat comes from burning fuel that comes out of the ground. So wasting heat wastes natural resources."

Bernie smiled. "You can't heat up the outdoors," he said. "So keep the doors and windows closed when you have the heat on, and don't heat the room up more than you need to be comfortable."

All the doors of the classrooms were closed to keep the heat inside, and the children settled down to eat lunch. As they finished eating, many children got up to leave, but they left their lunch sacks on the tables. It wasn't long before they heard Bernie bellowing again.







STORY 2: Bernie is Back

“Not so fast!” Bernie called after the children. “Your trash belongs in the trash can, and it’s up to you to see it gets there. Litter looks and sometimes smells terrible, and it can be unsafe for animals and people.”

The children picked up their lunch sacks and put them into the trash can. But Bernie’s horn didn’t stop blaring.

Patti looked up from her lunch. “Are we wasting more natural resources?” she asked.

“I’m afraid so,” answered Bernie. “Look at these lunch sacks that have been thrown in the trash,” Bernie demanded. “Why, some of them are as good as new. They could be used several more times.”

Joe didn’t understand why he should reuse his lunch sack, but Patti did. “Paper is made from trees,” she told Joe, “so when we waste paper, it means more trees in the environment have to be cut down to make more paper.”

“And it also means that you create more trash,” Bernie continued. “So you should use only as much paper as you really need—like one paper towel instead of two, and a real glass or plate or towel instead of paper ones when you can. And you shouldn’t throw away anything made of paper that you can use again, such as a lunch sack or a box.”

“We’ll do it!” cried many of the children at the same time. But as Joe pulled his paper sack out of the trash, he frowned and said, “There’s still a lot of trash in here.”

“You’re right,” Bernie agreed. “But not all of it is trash. The aluminum cans, the glass and plastic bottles, and the newspapers can be recycled—that means that they can be used to make new things out of aluminum, glass, plastic, and paper. They belong in a recycle bin, not in the trash.”







STORY 2: Bernie is Back

Lunch time was almost over, so Joe and Patti ran into the restrooms to wash their hands. But when they walked back outside, Bernie was howling again.

Joe and Patti looked at each and then looked straight at Bernie. "What now?" Joe wanted to know.

"The water," said Bernie, who could hear the water still trickling out of the faucets in the restrooms. "Water is an important natural resource that you're just letting run down the drain."

"Sorry," said Joe and Patti as they ran back into the restrooms to turn the water off tightly.

"And furthermore," Bernie called after them, "when you brush your teeth, you shouldn't let the water run. And when you take a bath, you shouldn't fill the tub all the way to the top. You can get just as clean in half as much water!"

"Okay," said Patti, looking out the window. "Anything else?"

"Just one more thing," answered Bernie, who had finally quieted down. "Please let everyone know that saving natural resources is good for the environment—for the water, for the land, for the air, and for all the animals and people."

The bell rang and Patti hurried out to go back to class. "Don't worry," she said, smiling over her shoulder at Bernard Bartholomew Omnibus III. "I'll tell them!"







STORY 1: The Rascals

Every day, Tony and Tina, who were not only brother and sister but also twins, took the trash out to the alley behind their house. They didn't like the job much because the alley was usually pretty messy. The trash cans were overflowing most of the time, and trash was always lying around.

For the past two days, however, they noticed that the alley didn't look so bad. The trash cans were still full, but everything was neatly organized and arranged. Glass bottles were in one box; aluminum cans were in another. Newspapers were stacked neatly and tied with string. Grass clippings and leaves were swept into piles.

"What's going on?" said Tony as he stood in the alley, looking around. "Who do you suppose did this, and why?"

"Beats me," answered Tina. "I don't know why anyone would spend time cleaning this up. It's just a lot of trash!"

"Trash! Who said this stuff was just trash?"

Tony and Tina spun around quickly to see a strange little creature in a pointed purple hat pop up out of one of the trash cans.

"I said that," replied Tina. "But who are you?"

"I'm a rascal," answered the little creature, scrambling out of the trash can. "But who I am doesn't matter. What matters is all this valuable stuff people are throwing in their trash cans!"

"Valuable?" Tony blurted out. "This stuff is just trash!"

The little creature, his chest puffing up under his orange T-shirt, walked right up to Tony, jumped up on a trash can so he could look Tony in the eye, and said, "Every single piece of 'trash,' as you call it, is made from valuable natural resources."



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STORY 1: The Rascals

"I know about natural resources," said Tina, moving up next to this little rascal. "Natural resources are what nature gives us—trees, water, soil, air, animals—they're all natural resources. I know conserving water and energy saves natural resources. But what do natural resources have to do with trash?"

"Have a seat," the little rascal said, jumping off the trash can and pointing to some crates for Tina and Tony to sit on, "and I'll tell you. Everything you have—your clothes, your house, your toys—comes from natural resources. For example, those boxes you're sitting on are made from trees, and so are all these papers people have thrown out."



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"What's so valuable about trees?" asked Tony. "They grow all over the place."

"Oh, yes, indeed, we can grow more trees," replied the rascal, "but do you know how long it takes to grow a tree?"

Tony and Tina stared at him with blank faces.

"Years!" he screeched.

"Okay," said Tony, "I got it. Wasting paper wastes trees. But all this stuff isn't made from trees."

"You're right," the rascal agreed. "This aluminum can is made from mineral ore—a rock mined from the ground. This glass bottle is made from sand, and all this plastic stuff is made from fossil fuels—like oil and natural gas. We can't grow more of these natural resources, and we're using them up fast. Once they're gone, that's it, no more, ever!"

"Wow," Tina exclaimed. "That doesn't sound good."





STORY 1: The Rascals

"Just look at this alley," the rascal demanded, twitching his tail. Tina and Tony looked around.

Most of what they saw was either paper or yard waste, such as leaves and grass. But there were also metal cans, plastic bags, old clothes, even an old car battery.

"Gosh, there is an awful lot of stuff," sighed Tina.

"This trash is a waste of natural resources," the rascal said, "and is making a mess of the environment."

Tony was thinking. "I guess picking up some of this junk is a good idea. Then the garbage truck will take it all away."

Just as he said that, the top popped off another trash can, and another rascal appeared. "Away?" he called out, his ears wriggling. "There is no away! This stuff has to go somewhere."

Tony and Tina looked from rascal to rascal. They were twins too. The only way you could tell them apart was by their T-shirts, one saying "R1" and the other "R2."

"Well, where do the trash trucks take all this stuff?" asked Tina.

"To the landfill," answered rascal number 2. "Everyone pays to have the trash trucks pick up the trash and take it to some open land."

"And the trash is just dumped there?" Tina asked.

"Oh, no. They don't just dump it," rascal number 2 continued. "Every day bulldozers spread it out and cover it with a new layer of dirt. It takes lots of work."

"Sounds pretty good," said Tony. "The trucks take the garbage to the landfill and it gets buried. No problem."







STORY 1: The Rascals

“Wrong!” echoed a voice as a lid popped off another trash can and still another rascal appeared, an “R3” printed on his T-shirt. The rascals were triplets, not twins. “The trash trucks and the landfills do take care of our trash, but there are plenty of problems. First, did you forget what happens to the natural resources?”

“Oh, yeah,” said Tony. “They’re buried and lost forever.”

“Very good,” replied rascal number 3. “And what happens when the landfill gets full?”

“I suppose,” Tina spoke up, “that we’ll just open a new one.”

“Oh really,” said R3. “Where? We have only so much land in our town, and we need it for other things besides burying trash. If we just keep opening landfills, someday the land will be covered with trash!”

Tina and Tony looked at each other and wrinkled their noses. That didn’t sound like a good idea.

“Besides,” said rascal number 3, continuing to sort the trash into boxes and piles, “there are other problems. The trash in landfills can create gas, which pollutes our air. Dangerous chemicals in buried trash can pollute our water. And that’s not good!”

“So, what do we do with our trash?” Tony asked.

“Tony! Tina!” The twins’ mother was calling them to come back into their house.

The twins turned to answer their mother. When they turned back to the alley, the rascals were gone.







STORY 1: Bye-Bye, Bernie

Klatter kabang kabang. Klatter kabang kabang. The old school bus rattled down the road and arrived in front of the school just as it did every school day. All the children poured out of the bus, laughing and talking, ready for another day at school. Then Mr. James, the bus driver, stepped off the bus.

“Good morning,” he said to Mrs. Marquez, the principal, who was greeting the children.

“Yes, it is a good morning, Mr. James,” she replied. “But old Bernie, your school bus, doesn’t sound so good.”

Bernie’s headlights flashed on and his windows opened just a bit so he could hear what was being said.

“No, he doesn’t,” replied Mr. James. “I think that old Bernie is about ready for the junkyard.”

Bernie couldn’t believe his ears. True, his paint was rather dingy and was peeling off in several places; many of his windows were cracked; most of his leather seats were torn and sagging; and he coughed black smoke now and then. But he wasn’t ready for the junkyard. Why, he wasn’t junk at all!

“Yes,” said Mrs. Marquez, “we should probably replace Bernie at the end of this year.”

Bernie didn’t like the sound of that at all. But what could he do? Just as Mrs. Marquez was saying goodbye to Mr. James, an idea came to Bernie. He’d run away. That way he wouldn’t have to go to the junkyard.



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STORY 1: Bye-Bye, Bernie

So Bernie eased off his brake and started rolling down the little hill away from the school.

“Oh no!” cried Mr. James and Mrs. Marquez. “Bernie is running away!”

And indeed he was. With a klatter kabang kabang, Bernie rolled down the hill, turned the corner, and headed for the country.

“Away I go!” called Bernie, his tires barely touching the road as he flew past houses and stores and parks.

On and on he klattered, feeling the sun on his roof and hearing the wind whistle through his windows. Faster and faster he seemed to go. He was going so fast, in fact, that when he reached the curve just over the bridge, he couldn’t quite make it. His tires squealed, he tilted up on two wheels, and then he flipped tires over roof and tumbled into the ditch alongside the river.







STORY 1: Bye-Bye, Bernie

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Bernie, his tires now flat and his fenders all dented. "What am I going to do now!" As he looked around, thinking about what to do, he saw empty cans and bottles, an old book, a T-shirt, and some tennis shoes. "I might as well be in the junkyard," he sighed. "This place is a mess."

All day Bernie sat there in the ditch, sure no one would ever find him. But then he heard a noise. He flashed on his headlights and saw Patti, one of the children that he usually took to school. Bernie took a breath and with all his might, he tried to honk his horn. All that came out was a little squeak. But it was enough, for Patti stopped, looked over the side of the bridge, and saw Bernie lying in the ditch.



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"Bernie!" called Patti. "We've been looking all over for you. Whatever are you doing down there?"

"Oh," answered Bernie, "I was running away so I wouldn't have to go to the junkyard, and I got going so fast that I couldn't get around the curve, and I tumbled right down into this ditch."

"Well," said Patti, climbing down into the ditch, "you certainly look as if you're ready for the junkyard now!"

Bernie propped himself up the best he could on his flat tires and said, "I may be battered, but I am not junk. I am Bernard Bartholomew Omnibus III, and I am made from valuable natural resources."

"From what?" asked Patti, looking Bernie over from top to bottom.

"Natural resources," repeated Bernie. "Things we get from nature, from the environment. Every single part of me comes from a natural resource."





STORY 1: Bye-Bye, Bernie

"Like what?" Patti wanted to know, peering in through Bernie's windows.

"Well," answered Bernard Bartholomew Omnibus III, "I am proud to say that my wooden steering wheel, for example, was made from a lovely tree. And my leather seats come from the hides of cows."

"Oh, I like trees and cows," said Patti, clapping her hands. "But what about the rest of you?"

"My tires," Bernie continued, "are made from rubber plants. My metal body is made from ore mined from the ground. My windows are made from sand. And even the gasoline that I need to run is made from oil, which is pumped out of the ground."

"Gee," said Patti, settling down in the grass in front of Bernie, "does everything come from natural resources?"

"Oh yes!" exclaimed Bernie. "The natural environment provides all the resources that we use to live. Trees are used to build houses and to make all kinds of paper. Plants and animals are used for food and to make the clothes you wear. Water is used to drink and to clean things. And oil, natural gas, and coal, which we get out of the ground, are burned in power plants to make electricity, as well as used to heat your home and to run cars and buses, like me!"

"And these natural resources are valuable?" asked Patti.

"Absolutely!" answered Bernie. "It takes time and money to get them and to make them into products. And some of them, like oil and metal ore, we can't get more of once we run out."

Bernie glanced at all the litter lying around him in the ditch, and then said sadly, "People are wasting natural resources as well as making a mess when they just throw out everything they no longer want, like these cans and bottles, that book over there, those old clothes."

"And you!" Patti spoke up as she jumped up off the ground. "I'm going to tell everyone that Bernard Bartholomew Omnibus III is not junk but is made from valuable natural resources!"

"Oh," replied Bernie, flashing his headlights and squeaking his horn, "thank you ever so much."







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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STORY 2: The 3 R's

"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."







STORY 2: The 3 R's

"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."







STORY 2: The 3 R's

"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.







STORY 2: The 3 R's

"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.







STORY 1: Trashbot

MaryAnn had finished reading her new comic book, “Earthlings,” and tossed it into the trash can as she walked by. Just as the booklet hit the trash, she heard, “Get that out of here!”

MaryAnn turned around, surprised. “Who said that?” she asked.

“I did,” said the trash can, which all of a sudden looked less like a trash can and more like a robot or something—a Trashbot. “Throwing away that perfectly good comic book is not good for the environment.”

“What do you mean?” said MaryAnn. “It’s just one little comic book.”

“One little comic book!” the Trashbot shouted back. “Why the waste that comes from producing that one comic book could fill this entire kitchen!”

“Yeah, right,” MaryAnn muttered as she turned to walk away. But she was stopped short as the one-time trash can turned into various machines, factories, and vehicles and began spewing out leaves and branches, boxes and bags, cans and bottles. Then, out the bottom of this contraption flowed a little river of dirty water.

“Whoa!” said MaryAnn, stepping around and pushing aside all the waste now filling the kitchen. “You mean all this waste comes from making one comic book?”

“This and more,” answered the little Trashbot. “From producing the paper from a tree, to printing the words and pictures, to delivering the comic book to the store, to your bringing it home in this plastic bag,” it said, coughing up a bag that came from the local market, “all kinds of wastes are created.”



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STORY 1: Trashbot

"Gosh, I had no idea," MaryAnn replied, looking around her kitchen. "There's a lot of stuff here."

"More than most people realize," the Trashbot continued. "And people don't think of all the natural resources that are not only in the comic book but also in all this waste that is left over. Trees, minerals, fossil fuels," it said, tossing up a product that came from each natural resource. "We use up a lot of natural resources for every product we make. Even if natural resources would never run out, we have to put this waste somewhere."

"You're right," said MaryAnn, trying to stuff some of the trash back into what used to be her trash can. "What do we do with all this waste?"

"Well," answered the know-it-all trash can, "we have developed systems to take care of most of our wastes. Without these systems, our environment would look a lot like your kitchen right now and would be unsafe and unhealthy."

"So, what do these systems do?" MaryAnn wanted to know, realizing that all the waste in her kitchen was certainly not going to fit back in her trash can.

"As you know," the Trashbot started, "paper, plastic, glass, cans, and other things we throw into our trash cans get picked up by trash trucks. Most of it gets taken out to landfills and buried."

"Oh," said MaryAnn, "I know about landfills. They are sort of like mountains of trash."

"That's right," Trashbot said, sort of nodding its head. "Or maybe mountains of natural resources."

"Hmmm, I see your point," said MaryAnn. "Now what do we do with all this dirty water?"



2 of 4





STORY 1: Trashbot

“All the dirty water that goes down drains,” Trashbot explained, sloshing through the kitchen, “goes through underground pipes to a wastewater treatment plant, where dirt and germs are removed. The water is returned to the ocean, or into the ground, or to rivers, where it can be used again.”

“Sounds like we’re doing a good job,” MaryAnn said hurriedly. “So let’s get all this stuff to the landfill and to the wastewater treatment plant before my mom comes home.”

“Not so fast,” Trashbot said as ink cans and bottles filled part way with bright colored liquids popped out of the top of it. “We do a pretty good job controlling most of the waste people create. But not all waste is so easily taken care of.”

“What do you mean?” asked MaryAnn, jumping out of the way of the flying cans and bottles.

“Some inks and chemicals that we use,” Trashbot told her, “are dangerous, like poison. If they leak into the soil or into rivers, lakes, or water under the ground, the land and water can become polluted—you know, unsafe or unhealthy for all living things.”

“I never thought of that,” MaryAnn said clearing a space on the kitchen floor and sitting down. “So what do we do with dangerous chemicals?”

“Good question,” Trashbot said, now moving around the kitchen picking up all the ink cans and chemical bottles and putting them into one of the boxes. “They have to be disposed of in special places, not poured down drains or dumped on the ground.”







STORY 1: Trashbot

MaryAnn and Trashbot finished putting all the ink cans and chemical bottles in a box. Just when MaryAnn thought that her trash can was going to go back to being a trash can, it began spurring smoke and fumes into the air.

“What’s all this?” MaryAnn frowned, waving the smoke out of her face.

“Air pollution,” the trash-can-now-turned-smoke-stack answered. “A lot of waste is released into the air. When we burn fossil fuels—oil, coal, and natural gas—particles, gases, and smoke go into the air. And we burn fossil fuels for almost all the energy we need. It takes fossil fuels to run the saw that cuts down the tree, to create the heat to make the paper, to make the electricity that runs the printing presses, to power the trucks that transport the logs and the paper and the comic books, to power your car so you can get to the store to buy the comic book, and to make the plastic bag that you bring the comic book home in.”

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“So don’t we have a system to take care of the pollution in the air?” coughed MaryAnn.

“We’ve found ways to cut down how much pollution goes into the air,” the transformed trash can answered. “But not much can be done once it is released. So we must try to pollute the air as little as possible.”

“Boy,” said MaryAnn, shaking her head. “This pollution stuff doesn’t sound good or look good.”

“It isn’t good,” replied Trashbot. “All living things need clean air, water, and land to live. If our soil is polluted, or if we fill up our land with trash, where will people and animals live, and how will we grow plants to eat?”

“If our water is polluted, what will we drink, and what will happen to plants and animals that need the water?”

“And if our air is polluted, how will we breathe, and what will happen to plants and animals that need that air?”

“I’m sure I don’t know,” answered MaryAnn, pulling her comic book out of a once-again-trash-can. “But I do know that this pollution stuff is not good.”





STORY 2: A Little Means A Lot

MaryAnn skipped in the house after school and went right to the list of chores her parents always left for her. She stood in front of the bulletin board in the den and read the first item on the list, "Take out the trash."

"Oh no," said MaryAnn out loud. "I'm not going anywhere near that trash can!"

"Hey, what's wrong?"

MaryAnn heard the words and felt the gentle nudge against her at the same time. She looked down to see Trashbot right beside her. It continued talking. "Only trying to help you do what's best for the environment."



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"I know," said MaryAnn, wondering what this one-time-trash-can was going to turn into now.

"But what can I do? I took the comic book out of the trash and gave it to a friend. There's not much else I can do to help the environment. I'm just a kid."

"Is that what you think?" said Trashbot. "Come on, I'll show you how you can help the environment every day."

"Where are we going?" MaryAnn wanted to know, not sure what to expect from this contraption.

"Nowhere special," it responded. "You just do what you normally do, and I'll let you know what you're doing to hurt the environment and what you can do instead to help it."

"I bet you will!" MaryAnn said. "Okay. First I'm supposed to take you out."

"Good," said Trashbot, turning back into a trash can. "Let's go!"





STORY 2: A Little Means A Lot

MaryAnn picked up the trash can and carried it out to the big trash bins behind her apartment house. Just as she was about to dump the trash into the bin, the trash can lit up like a Christmas tree and started whistling and flashing.

"What's going on?" MaryAnn asked, setting the trash can back on the ground. "I was just putting the trash into the bin where it belongs."

"Yes, the trash belongs in the bin," Trashbot replied. "But what about all these aluminum cans, glass bottles, and newspapers in here? They're not trash. They're resources. They can be recycled."

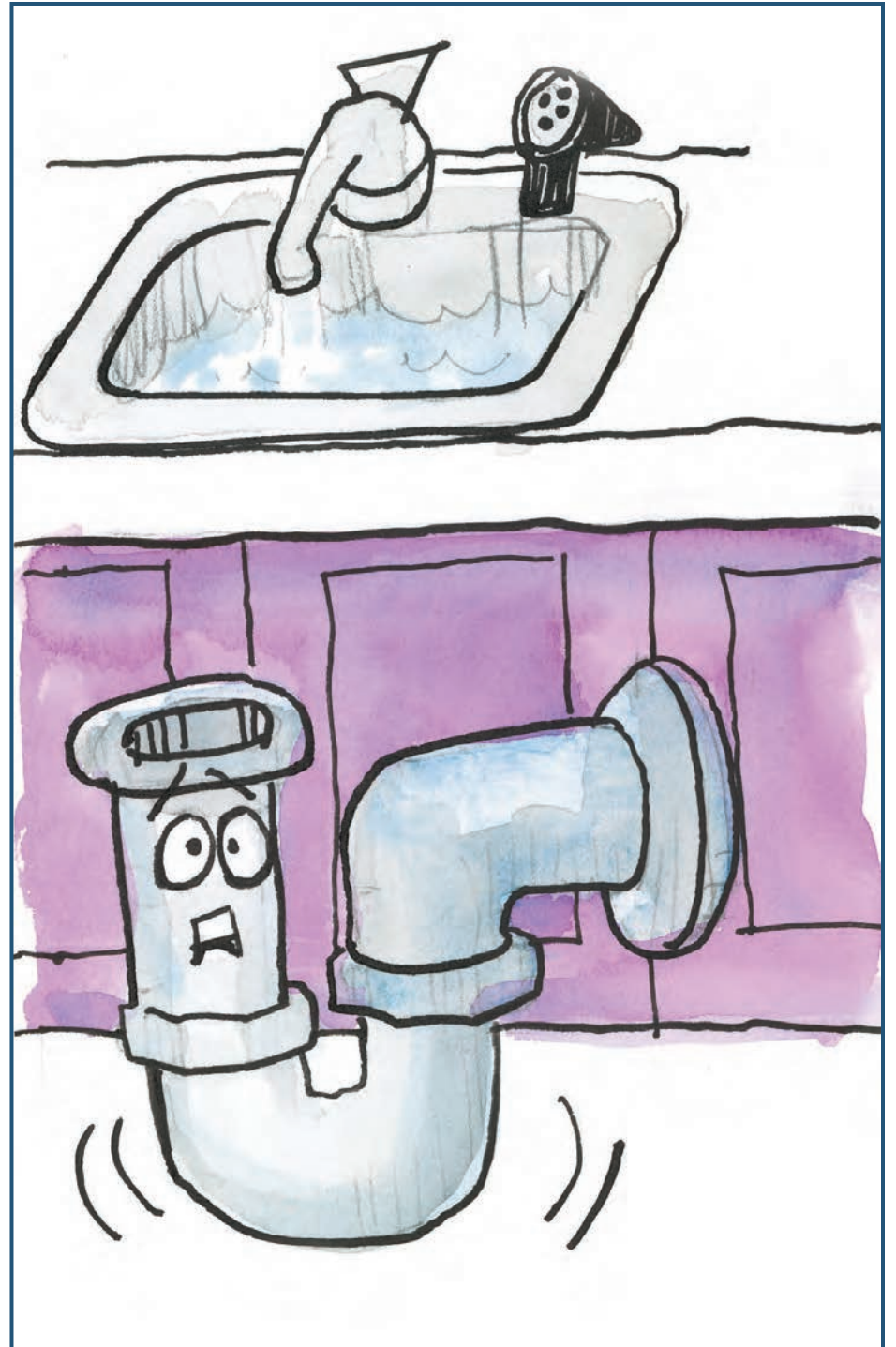
"Oh, yeah," said MaryAnn. "That's when old cans, bottles, and newspapers are used to make new ones."

"Very good," Trashbot said. "Recycling reuses the natural resources in the products and saves the energy it takes to make new products. So it's good for the environment."

"Great," said MaryAnn. "But now I've got more chores to do."



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STORY 2: A Little Means A Lot

Once MaryAnn and Trashbot were back inside, MaryAnn headed straight toward the heater thermostat. "It's cold in here," she announced.

As soon as her hand touched the thermostat, Trashbot, who now looked sort of like the vent on the top of MaryAnn's house, started rattling and coughing. MaryAnn quickly took her hand away and looked right at Trashbot.

"You could help the environment by putting on a sweatshirt instead of turning up the heat," it said.

"How's that?" she asked, not quite sure she believed that.

"Your heater," Trashbot began, "runs on natural gas, a fossil fuel. When you use your heater more than you need to, that means we must get more natural gas out of the ground, and it means that more emissions from burning the natural gas are going into the air."

"And that means more air pollution," MaryAnn chimed in. "I'll put on a sweatshirt. And then I've got to water the plants."

MaryAnn, warm in her sweatshirt, turned on the water faucet in the kitchen. Trashbot watched as she filled a little cup and took it into the living room to water a plant, leaving the water running in the kitchen. When she came back to the kitchen to fill the cup again, the little robot, which had now become a water pipe, started clanging and sloshing.

MaryAnn looked down at it. "Come on," she said. "Watering the plants must be good for the environment?"

"It is," was the answer. "But leaving the water running isn't. All that water just runs down the drain. That means we have to get more water from the environment, and we have to clean all the water that goes down the drain. And when it's hot water you waste, that means we had to burn fossil fuels to heat it."

"Which means more air pollution," MaryAnn added, turning off the water.

"You got it," Trashbot agreed.



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STORY 2: A Little Means A Lot

MaryAnn quickly finished watering the plants, with the water turned off. Then she grabbed a handful of paper towels to clean up the water she spilled on the counter. And, of course, Trashbot sounded off and spun in circles.

“Okay,” said MaryAnn. “I’ll figure this one out on my own. If I used a sponge instead of all these paper towels, I’d be saving the trees and the energy it takes to make these towels; and I’d be creating less trash that would have to go to the landfill.”

“My, my,” Trashbot said, obviously impressed. “I think you’ve learned quite well.”

“Good,” replied MaryAnn, “because now I’m going to Robin’s house to play.” She walked out of the kitchen, but only got a few steps before Trashbot was wailing like a siren.

“What now?” she asked, sticking her head back into the kitchen.

Trashbot had turned into a giant light bulb and was blinking off and on. “Leaving this light on when you don’t need it is not good for the environment,” it warned.

“Let me guess,” said MaryAnn as she switched off the light. “We burn fossil fuels to make electricity. That means the more electricity we use, the more fossil fuels we burn, and the more pollution we put into the air.”

“Okay,” it blinked off. “You’re on your way to Robin’s.”



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STORY 2: A Little Means A Lot

"Thank you," said MaryAnn. "I'll just go ask my brother if he's done with his homework and will drive me."

As MaryAnn headed to her brother's room, she was followed by a little car that was really a trash can honking its horn loudly.

MaryAnn stopped dead in her tracks and waited for Trashbot to explain.

"Cars use gasoline, which is made from oil, which is a fossil fuel," the trash-can-now-turned-car informed her. "Cars and other vehicles create most of our air pollution. Couldn't you get to Robin's house another way?"

"Well, it is only two blocks," MaryAnn admitted. "I could walk or ride my bike."

"You have great ideas!" Trashbot said excitedly. "And while you're at Robin's, maybe you could talk about carpooling to school instead of each of you arriving in separate cars."

MaryAnn sat right down in front of her little trash can/robot. "You mean," she asked thoughtfully, "if I do all these little things, I can help the environment?"

"That's right," Trashbot replied. "If everyone helps a little, the environment will be helped a lot. It's up to each of us."

