



Pig Whistle in Litter Land

Eleven in the morning and Poppy was already bored. She sat on her swing, eating a bag of cheese and onion crisps. Granny dozed in her chair on the lawn. Poppy scrumpled up her empty crisp packet and swung higher and higher.

"I hope you'll pick that crisp packet up before the wind blows it away," said Granny opening one sleepy eye.

Poppy swung higher until she could see right into the top of the apple tree to where a long silver whistle hung on a yellow ribbon. In moments Poppy had slowed down, jumped off and shaken the apple tree till the whistle and its ribbon fell into her hands. She put the whistle between her lips and blew. Out came a clear, beautiful tune accompanied by the sound of dancing feet. Then, round the corner of the garden shed came the strangest little pig. It was all purple except its bright pink ears, yellow feet and green eyes. It had the cutest curly tail. The dancing pig collapsed in a purple pile right in front of her.

"Hello!" he laughed, and a big piggy smile went right round his face and under his ears. "Hello! I'm Pig Whistle. I heard you were bored. I came as soon as I could. I've come to take you on my next mission."

Pig whistle trotted to the far end of the garden path. "Come on! Get on my back." he

squeaked. "Put the whistle ribbon round your neck." As soon as she had her legs across Pig Whistle's back, he was running down the garden path, and they rose into the air. Higher they flew above the apple tree and Granny asleep in her garden chair. They swept over high mountains, over the sea, above the clouds until Poppy could see the whole world, like the school globe, below her. Stars and planets of different colours rushed past them until Pig Whistle began to slow down. Ahead of them Poppy saw a huge yellow ball covered with enormous brown and blue blotches. It was a planet.

Pig Whistle went right round the planet before landing. "The blue is the sea," he grunted to Poppy. "There's a lot of it. The brown is the mountains."

"What's all the yellow then?" asked Poppy.

"It all used to be green! It only looks yellow from here. It's really a whole mixture of colours."

Poppy waited for the bump to tell them they had landed. but it did not come. Instead it was like jumping on a soft bed and sinking in with a lot of rustling and crackling. Poppy screamed. All around her, tickling her, pressing her, under her nose, in her mouth and ears and even between her toes, was litter - papers and bottles and bags and tins

"Come on, let's get out of here!" Pig Whistle led Poppy to higher ground where they could see the whole country was covered in litter. In the distance all the colours combined in a yellow glow. Poppy wrinkled up her nose. The place smelled like an enormous dustbin.

Their arrival had been noticed. People came crowding around to look at Poppy and Pig Whistle. At least they looked like people. They were all green, except for their blue

eyes and pointed red noses. Every nose had a green cap held on with a little clothes peg!

"They used to be just like you," Pig Whistle told her. "They lived in towns and houses like you, but they dropped their litter everywhere. Nobody wanted to pick the litter up. Everybody said it was somebody else's rubbish. Then they decided it was too dirty a job for anyone to collect it. Eventually there was so much rubbish they couldn't see the grass anymore, so they painted themselves green instead. They wear nets to keep the litter from touching them and they have those nose caps because of the smell. Now they can't even find their homes under it all!"

"They all look so miserable," said Poppy.

"We're going to change that," said Pig Whistle. He trotted further up the hill from where they could see above the litter. "Now, take the whistle and blow it hard."

The tune which came out of the whistle went faster and faster as Poppy saw pieces of paper start dancing at the top of the litter piles. Now plastic bottles were jiggling on their noses while cardboard boxes bumped each other. All the rubbish danced into little hills; one of papers neatly folded; a hill of bottles stacked side by side; a pile of boxes flattened out straight, and another of plastic bags rolled up together. Soon the green grass appeared and they could see the roofs of the houses below them.

When all the rubbish had danced into enormous piles the tune changed. Now the people danced. They threw off their green nets and turned them upside down to make bags into which they pushed the rubbish. Poppy could smell beautiful flowers. A long line of people danced and carried their rubbish bags to bury in an old quarry in the brown mountains.

"Time to go!" called Pig Whistle. Poppy jumped on his back again. Pig Whistle rose

into the air. Below them Poppy saw long lines of people, singing as they carried the rubbish away across the green hills. The next thing she knew was the bump as they landed back on her own lawn. She tumbled off Pig Whistle's back, turned to look at Granny opening her eyes, and when she looked back, Pig Whistle, the yellow ribbon and the whistle had all disappeared. "I must have been asleep," yawned Granny. "I dreamed I saw a purple pig!" Poppy ran round to the side of the garden shed. There was no sign of Pig Whistle, just the empty cheese and onion crisp packet she had dropped. She picked it up and took it to the bin.