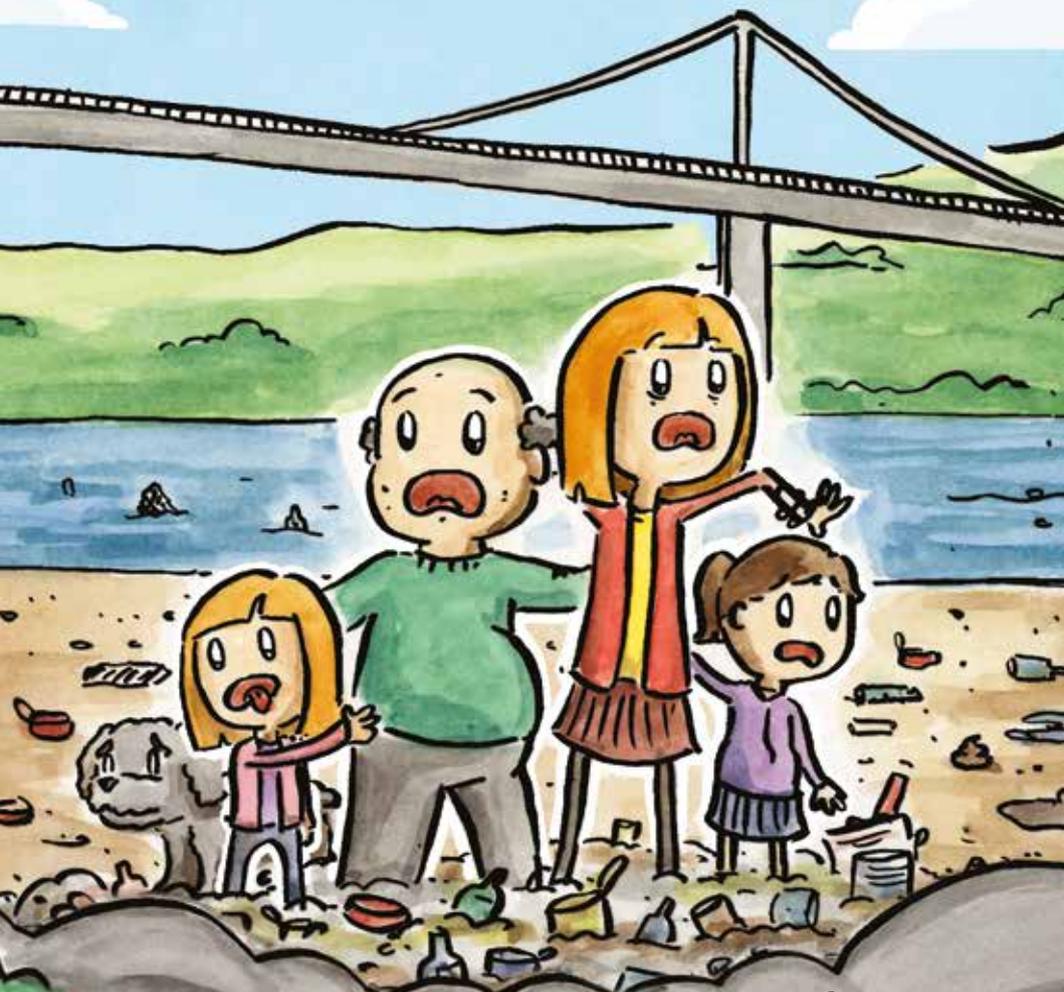


# The Clumps', BIG mess



Ross MacKenzie

illustrations by Neil Slorance

Ross MacKenzie is an award-winning children's author who lives in Renfrew.

You might already know Ross because he visits schools across Renfrewshire all the time. Some of you might even remember another book he wrote for us called Grace's Big Idea.

Ross wrote his first story when he was seven – it was about a hungry crocodile called Crunchy Colin and he wrote it in the back of his school jotter!

Ross has written this especially for all of you...

Some of you will be big enough to read this by yourself; some of you might need someone to read it with you.

**But this is a present from Ross to everyone.**



# Team Up to Clean Up

## Do you want to join our team?

No one likes the rubbish on our streets, it looks bad, it's smelly and dirty and well, it's just mess.

We would like everyone to be able to play outside on the swings or kick a ball in the park without worrying about crisp packets blowing in the wind, broken bottles that you could fall on top of, or even dog poo on your shoe – yuck!

We have been working really hard to tidy up our streets and help make our play parks, streets and countryside clean and tidy, but we need your help too.

If you see an area that you think is really messy ask a grown up to help you arrange a clean up. They can speak to us and we will help them arrange a litter pick and we will give them all the tools you will need.

Plus, always remember to put your own rubbish in a bin and if you can't find one, take it home with you and put it in the bin when you get home.

If we all work together we can make Renfrewshire the tidiest place in Scotland. Are we all up for the challenge?

**Let's do it.**



The Clump family were the biggest lot of litterbugs you are ever likely to meet. Mr Harry Clump and Mrs Hilda Clump would drop their litter anywhere, at any time, without feeling even the slightest shiver of shame or remorse – and the worst of it was, they taught their little daughters, Selina and Mollie, that this was the correct way to behave.



Once a week, on a Saturday evening, the Clumps would go to the cinema for a family treat. On the way home, they'd stop in at their favourite fast food place and order a feast of burgers and fries and ice creams. They would sit in the car and gulp it all down, and when they'd finished, Selina and Mollie would cry, 'What shall we do with the rubbish, daddy?'

'Out the window with it my dears!' Mr Clump would answer. 'Out the window with every bit of it! This place has cleaners who'll pick it up!' And the burger wrappers and ice cream containers would go flying into the car park.

On a Sunday, if the weather was fine, the Clumps would take a picnic down to the river. It really was a lovely place, full of wild flowers and woodland and the gurgling sound of the water. They would find the perfect spot, and down would come the blanket, and they'd eat sandwiches and fruit and home-made chocolate cake, and when they were done the children would chime, 'what shall we do with the rubbish, mummy?'

'Leave it where it is, pumpkins!' Hilda Clump would tell them, pointing at the paper plates and foam cups. 'The wind will blow them all away!'

These, I'm sure you'll all agree, are terrible, nasty, disgusting habits. But we're just getting started. It gets worse, if you can believe it.



They had a dog, you see. A lovely black cockapoo called Murphy. Like every other dog, Murphy needed a good walk several times a day, so that he could exercise and get fresh air and do his business. Now, if you have a dog yourself, or if you have seen a neighbour out walking their own dog, you will know that it is the dog owner's responsibility to pick up after their pet. Mr Clump NEVER did this. He would let Murphy do the toilet anywhere, and he would leave the poo lying on the grass or pavement, and sooner or later some poor person would come along and trample on it and end up with a terrible mess all over their shoes.

'Maybe we should pick it up,' said Mollie one sunny evening, pointing at the place on the playing fields where Murphy had left a fresh gift.

'There's a sign over there that says you can get in trouble for not picking up after your dog,' said Selina. The girls were clever, you see, and had begun to suspect that their parents were in the wrong.

'Aha!' said Mr Clump. 'You only get in trouble if you get CAUGHT, and I'm too clever for that! Watch this!' He reached into his jacket and pulled out a poo bag. Then he leaned down and pretended to pick up the dog poo. 'You see, girls? Now it LOOKS like I've picked that disgusting thing up, when really I haven't had to touch it at all! Isn't your dear old dad clever?'

'But this is a playing field,' said Mollie.

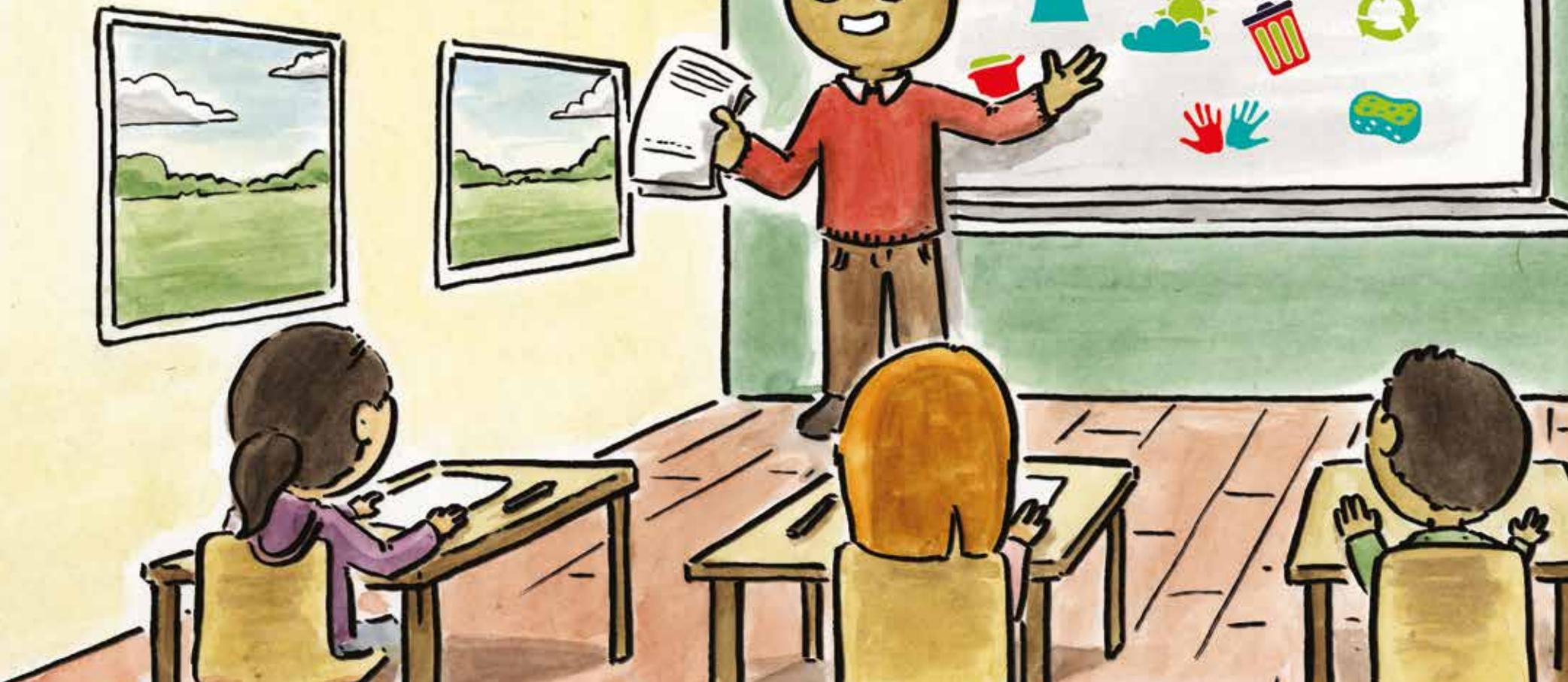
'They play football here,' said Selina. 'Someone could get really sick.'

'The rain will wash it away,' said Mr Clump. 'Come on. Home for dinner!'



One lovely spring day in school, Selina and Mollie's teacher, Mr Grover, began to tell his class about something the council were organising. It was called Team Up to Clean Up.

'It's our job to help keep our world safe and clean,' he said. 'There are lots of litterbugs out there, and they're spoiling our lovely towns and parks and walkways with their rubbish. It costs lots of money to have people pick it all up, and the litter can harm wildlife. So our school is going to help. We're taking part in a Team Up to Clean Up litter pick. It'll mean an afternoon out of school. We'll walk around the local area and clean it up, putting everything we find in rubbish bags. You'll need to take these letters home and have your parents sign them if you want permission to take part.'





Later, when Selina and Mollie showed their parents the letters, the reaction was quite spectacular.

'No children of mine are going to be dragged about picking rubbish up off the streets!' yelled Mr Clump, turning a quite deep shade of red. 'It's not right! I won't have it!'

'But it sounds like fun,' said Selina.

'We don't mind,' added Mollie. 'We'd quite like to go.' They both flashed their big blue eyes at their dad, the way they always did every time they wanted something. But Mr Clump's cheeks only flushed more.

'You're not going and that's the end of it! My daughters, picking up rubbish! Ha! I've a good mind to phone the school and give that head teacher a piece of my mind...'

The next day, Selina and Mollie found out that all their friends were taking part in the litter pick.

'It's not fair,' said Selina during morning break.

'We really wanted to help,' said Mollie.

'Maybe your dad will change his mind,' said their friend Orla.

'You don't know our dad very well,' said Selina. 'He NEVER changes his mind.' And for the first time ever, she put her snack wrapper in the bin.

That Sunday was warm and full of buttery sunshine. In the morning Mr and Mrs Clump prepared the picnic, and in the afternoon, they set off for their usual family walk along the river. Selina and Mollie did not enjoy the picnic as much as usual. They even left their chocolate cake slices unfinished.

When the picnic was over, Mr and Mrs Clump stood up and patted the crumbs from their clothes and turned to leave. Selina and Mollie, though, did something very unusual; they began to clean up.

'Girls?' said Mr Clump, his eyes narrowing. 'What are you doing?'

'Oh. We thought... we just thought maybe we'd clean up after ourselves for once.'

Mr and Mrs Clump looked at each other in amazement.

'Why EVER would you want to do that?'

'It's just our class has been learning all about litter,' said Mollie. 'It's actually quite horrible.'

'That's right,' said Selina. 'Our teacher says some of it can even harm wildlife.'

'Your teacher,' said Mrs Clump, 'is a twit. How can a paper plate harm an animal?'

'It's madness!' said Mr Clump. 'You've been brainwashed! Leave that rubbish on the ground or you'll both be grounded for a month. Two months!'

Selina and Mollie looked at each other and shrugged, knowing there was no use in arguing any more.

They were walking away when a voice made them turn.



'Excuse me.'

Just a moment ago, there had been nobody on the riverside but the Clump family. Now there was someone else; an old man with wild grey hair and watery blue eyes. He wore a ragged tweed suit and it seemed to Selina and Mollie that he had come from nowhere, popped out of the ground or, perhaps, from among the trees.

'Who are you?' demanded Mr Clump.

'I'm the spirit of the river,' said the old man, opening his arms out in dramatic fashion. 'I've been watching you lot, you know, and I thought it was about time I did something about your behaviour.'

'Behaviour?' said Mrs Clump.

'What are you blabbering on about?' demanded Mr Clump.

'I don't think you should speak to him that way, daddy,' said Mollie.

'Nonsense!' Mr Clump fixed his dark little eyes on the old man.

'What behaviour are you going on about, old timer?'

'That!' said the old man, pointing at the remnants of the picnic.

'The litter! Every time you lot come here you seem to leave more of it behind. It's clogging up the river, you know. It's hurting the animals.'





'Not you too!' cried Mr Clump. 'Why is everyone so obsessed with litter these days? I pay my taxes! I can do what I want! There'll always be someone to come and clean up after me!'

'Calm down, daddy,' said Selina.

'I will not calm down! I've had enough of this!'

'Imagine,' said the old man, 'what state the world would be in if everyone had your attitude, dropping litter at their backside wherever they went. Imagine the mess.'

'Come, children,' said Mr Clump. 'We're going home. Ignore this batty old codger. He's clearly a sandwich short of a picnic.'

The old man pointed a twisted finger at the Clump family.

'I'll give you one more chance. Change your ways, or you'll have to live with the consequences. **PICK. UP. YOUR. LITTER!**'

'Maybe we should do as he says,' said Selina and Mollie.

'It won't take any time at all to pick up our wrappers.'

'Absolutely not!' said Mr Clump.

'We're going home,' said Mrs Clump, nodding curtly to the old man.

'Spirit of the river, indeed. Ha! Good day, sir.'

'I warned you!' the old man yelled after them.

'You'll have to live with the consequences!'

As they walked away, the Clump family heard a great splash. When they spun around to see what had made the sound, the old man was gone.

That night was perfectly normal. The Clumps had supper and brushed their teeth and went to bed as usual, and soon their encounter with the strange old man seemed like nothing but a dream.

In the morning, though, it quickly became apparent that something was terribly wrong.

Selina and Mollie opened their eyes and stretched and yawned, but soon they were clamping their hands over their mouths in disgust, because a terrible, rotten smell was fizzing right up their nostrils.

‘What IS that?’ said Selina.

‘Has daddy blocked the toilet again?’ said Mollie.

Just then, Mr and Mrs Clump came charging into the room.

‘What’s that smell?’ Mrs Clump said, her eyes watering.

‘Is it you two? Have you played some sort of prank on us?’ said Mr Clump.

Mrs Clump threw open the curtains and opened the window. But instead of clean, fresh air, the room filled with an even stronger pong.

‘It smells like mouldy socks and eggs and cabbage!’ said Mollie.

‘What is it?’

‘Look!’ said Selina. She had gone to the window and was pointing to the street. ‘Look outside!’



The Clumps crowded around the window, and their mouths dropped open in horror. Outside, the entire world was covered in litter. It was everywhere. There were so many cans and bottles and boxes on the ground, that you could only see glimpses of the pavement and the grass beneath. The bushes and trees were filled with crisp packets and plastic bags were tangled in the branches. A thin mist of stink hung in the air, sticking to everything. And the flies! The flies were everywhere! The sound of them was a constant drone, and in the few minutes the Clumps' window had been open, two dozen flies had come buzzing into the bedroom.

'It's a dream,' said Mr Clump. 'It has to be a dream.'

'We ate some cheese last night,' said Mrs Clump. 'I'll bet it's that. It's upset our stomachs.'

'We can't ALL be having the same dream,' said Selina. 'Owch! What was that for?'

'Sorry,' said Mollie. 'I was just pinching you to check we're awake.'

The family dressed in a hurry and bundled out of the door to the street. Murphy, the black cockapoo, was sniffing madly at the air and whining, like the stench was too much even for his taste. As they walked down the driveway, they heard a cheery voice.



'Morning Harry! Morning Hilda! Morning girls!'

Mrs Fletcher, the next-door neighbour, was walking across her front lawn, carrying an enormous black bag. When she got to the end of her driveway, Mrs Fletcher tipped the bag out, sending rubbish scattering and fluttering out onto the pavement and the road. She gave the Clumps a little wave and headed back towards her house.

'I say,' said Mr Clump. 'What's the deal? Why have you just dumped all that rubbish in the street?'

Mrs Fletcher looked at him like he had two heads.

'It's what everyone does, Harry. You know that.'

'But the mess!' said Mrs Clump. 'Look at the mess. Our lovely neighbourhood is ruined.'

'And the smell,' said Mr Clump. 'It's outrageous.'

'I'm used to it now,' said Mrs Fletcher.

'Have a nice day, dears.'



Murphy, the black cockapoo, whined.

‘Murphy needs a walk,’ said Mollie. ‘He’s desperate.’

So off they went, along the street. Every step was more disgusting than the last, for it seemed like every inch of the world was covered in something sticky, or rotting, or squidy. The Clumps had to wave their arms constantly to ward off the clouds of flies, and seagulls swooped low over their heads and called out at them.

‘EEEE! A rat!’ squealed Mr Clump, and he jumped into his wife’s arms, quivering and shaking. ‘I don’t like it here anymore!’

As they trudged through the mountains of rubbish, it seemed that everywhere they looked people were dumping litter out of windows, or from cars that made tracks in the sludgy rubbish on the road. When they got to the playing field, they found an endless expanse of litter, and to make matters worse there was so much dog poo on the ground that it was impossible to take even a single step.

‘My shoes!’ screamed Mrs Clump. ‘My new shoes, ruined!’

All across the field, owners were letting their dogs do the toilet without so much as thinking about picking it up. The smell here was so thick that Selina and Mollie could feel it in the back of their throats, and it made them quite unwell.



'The spirit of the river!' said Selina suddenly, her blue eyes growing wide. 'He said we'd have to live with the consequences!'

'He did!' said Mollie. 'That must be it! He's showing us what the world would be like if everyone was a litterbug!'

'It can't be,' said Mr Clump. 'I don't believe it.'

'Look around, daddy,' said Selina. 'The LITTERBUGS have ruined everything! I don't want to stay here. Please!'

She began to cry, and soon Mollie was crying too.

'I want my nice clean world back!'

'Me too!' said Mrs Clump.

'And me!' said Mr Clump, and soon the four of them were wailing and crying among the hills of rubbish.



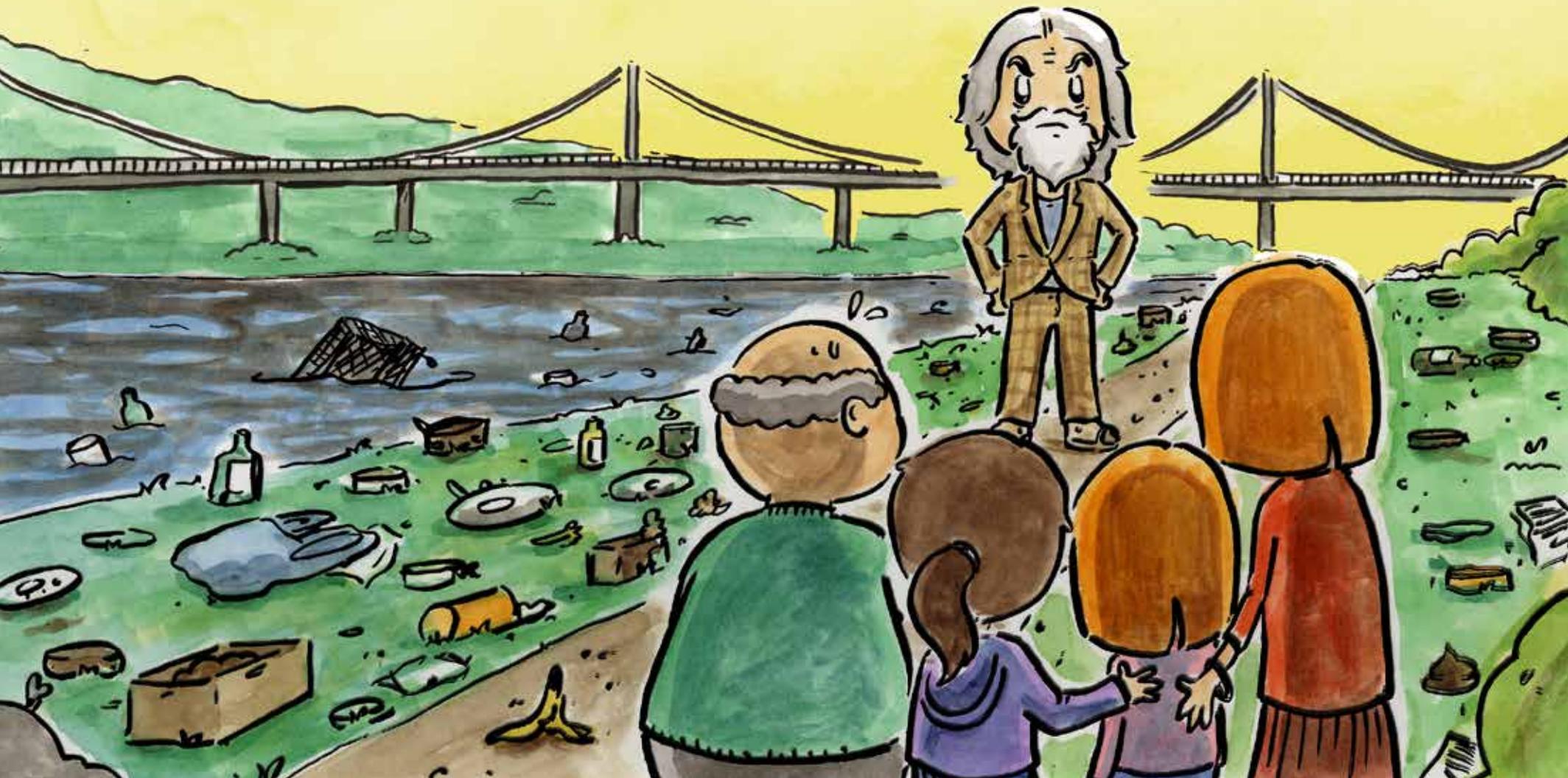
They hurried to the river as quickly as they could, which was not very quick at all in this messy place, and they were horrified to see that things at the river were even worse. The beautiful wild flowers had all withered, the bushes and trees were filled to bursting with plastic bags, and the river itself was coated in an oily film of grease and plastic bottles and all sorts of disgusting-looking objects. The swans' lovely white feathers were dirty and falling out in patches, and the sounds of the river, the birds and the water, usually so loud, seemed to have suffocated to silence.

'We're sorry!' cried the Clump family to the river.

The surface began to churn, to bubble, and from the river came a great wave, up and up, hanging over the Clumps, who hugged each other and wailed.

And then, there he was again, standing on the path before them.

The old man.



'Have you learned your lesson?' he said, his arms folded.

'We have! Oh, we have!' said the Clump family. 'We're so sorry we were litterbugs. We know we were wrong.'

'And what are you going to do about it?'

'We promise to pick up our rubbish from now on,' they moaned.

'We promise to clean up after Murphy! We promise we'll do our best to keep the world clean!'

The old man nodded, and clicked his fingers, and the great river wave crashed down over the Clumps as they screamed...



Selina opened her eyes first.

'We... we're back home.'

'We're in the living room!' said Mollie.

'We're dry,' said Mrs Clump, patting her clothes.

'My shoes! They're clean again!'

Mr Clump ran to the window, and he laughed in delight.

'It's clean! The rubbish is gone!'

They ran outside, laughing and skipping with happiness. The world was bathed in springtime sunshine, and the sky was clear and blue. The pavements were clean, the roads and grass too. The terrible smell of rotting garbage was gone. Selina and Mollie and Mrs Clump danced a jig of happiness. Mr Clump was so ecstatic he dropped to his knees and kissed the pavement.

From then on, I'm very glad to say, the Clumps were true to their word. They never dropped another piece of litter, and they always cleaned up after Murphy when he was out for a walk. Selina and Mollie did get to go on the Team Up to Clean Up litter pick – in fact, Mr and Mrs Clump volunteered to go along as well, and they had a great time walking around the streets and woodland filling great bags with dropped litter and making the place feel shiny and new. They felt so good afterwards, so proud that they'd done something to clean up the community, that they convinced the school to make it a regular event and were involved in every single one for years, making a great many new friends in the process.

To this day, the Clumps still walk to the river for a picnic every Sunday afternoon. Only these days they take empty bags and pick up litter as they walk, and they certainly would never dream of leaving their own rubbish behind.

Sometimes, as they collect rubbish from the trees and bushes, if the wind is blowing just the right way, they can hear the river whisper to them.

**'Well done, Clumps. Well done.'**



# Take part in a rubbish treasure hunt

We need everyone to help Team Up to Clean Up. Ask a grown up if they will help you organise a litter pick with your class, your friends or even your family. Can you find these items on your litter pick? Remember to be careful and ask a grown up to pick up any sharp items.

Banana skin

Plastic bottles

Chocolate wrappers

Orange peel

Drink cans

Crisp packets

Apple core

Sweet wrappers

Plastic bags

Other (what else did you find on your litter pick?):

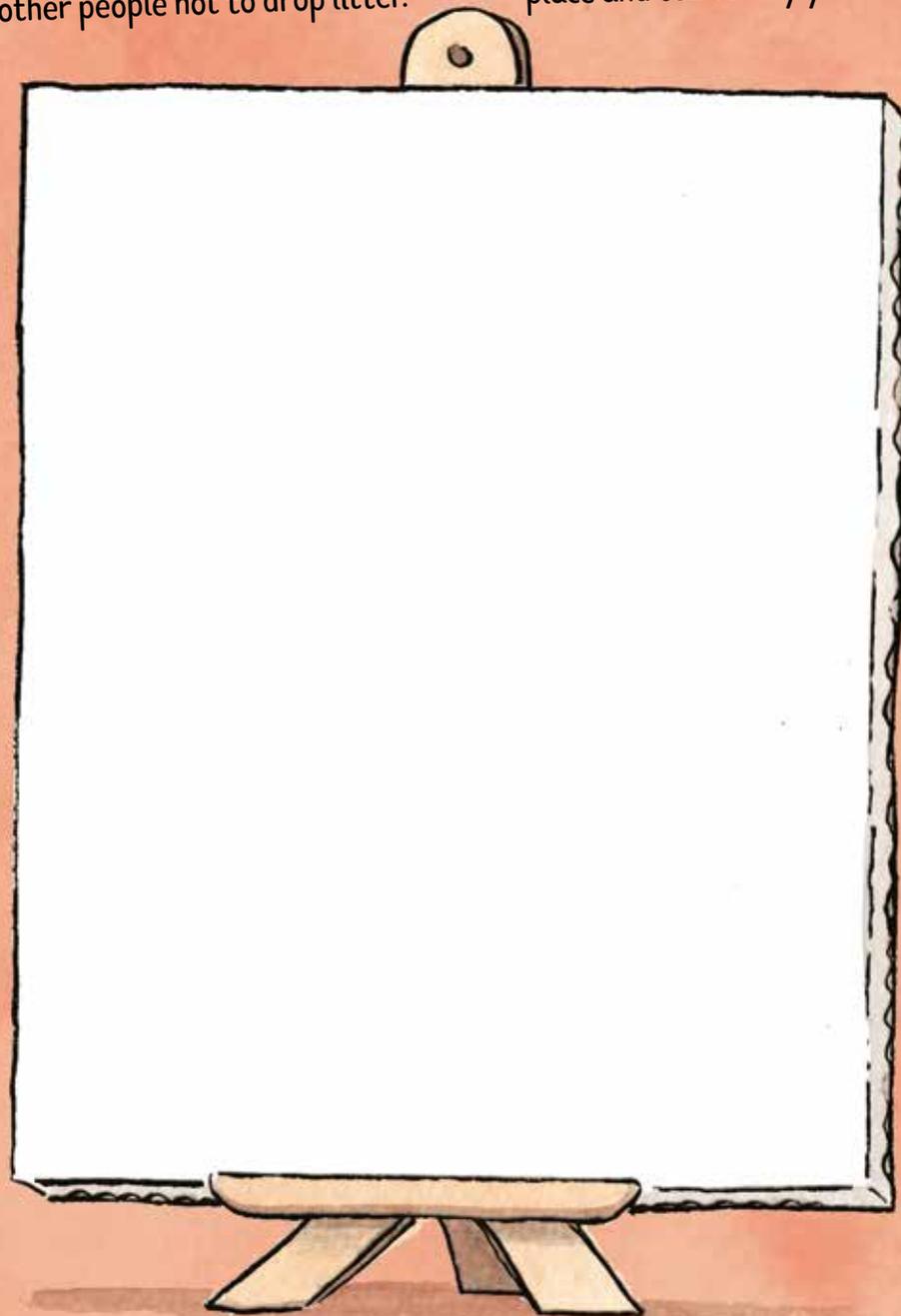


# Get creative

Design a poster to help persuade other people not to drop litter.

or

Draw a picture of your favourite place and tell us why you like it.



# Word search

Can you find all the hidden words? Look closely and you will see them, they can be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal.

R	B	Q	E	J	S	L	C	N	W	A
E	A	P	I	C	K	I	T	U	P	D
C	N	K	A	G	A	J	W	E	N	R
Y	W	V	L	L	X	C	F	A	K	A
C	H	A	I	V	T	L	W	O	R	J
L	G	M	T	R	W	E	A	R	T	H
E	S	U	T	E	O	A	H	I	E	N
L	U	A	E	E	R	N	D	A	G	F
R	T	M	R	A	L	U	M	V	B	P
A	L	Q	Y	A	D	P	G	E	I	O
W	A	S	T	E	I	M	L	D	N	O
C	R	U	B	B	I	S	H	D	E	T

Litter  
Rubbish  
Recycle

Environment  
Clean up  
Bin

Pick it up  
Waste  
World

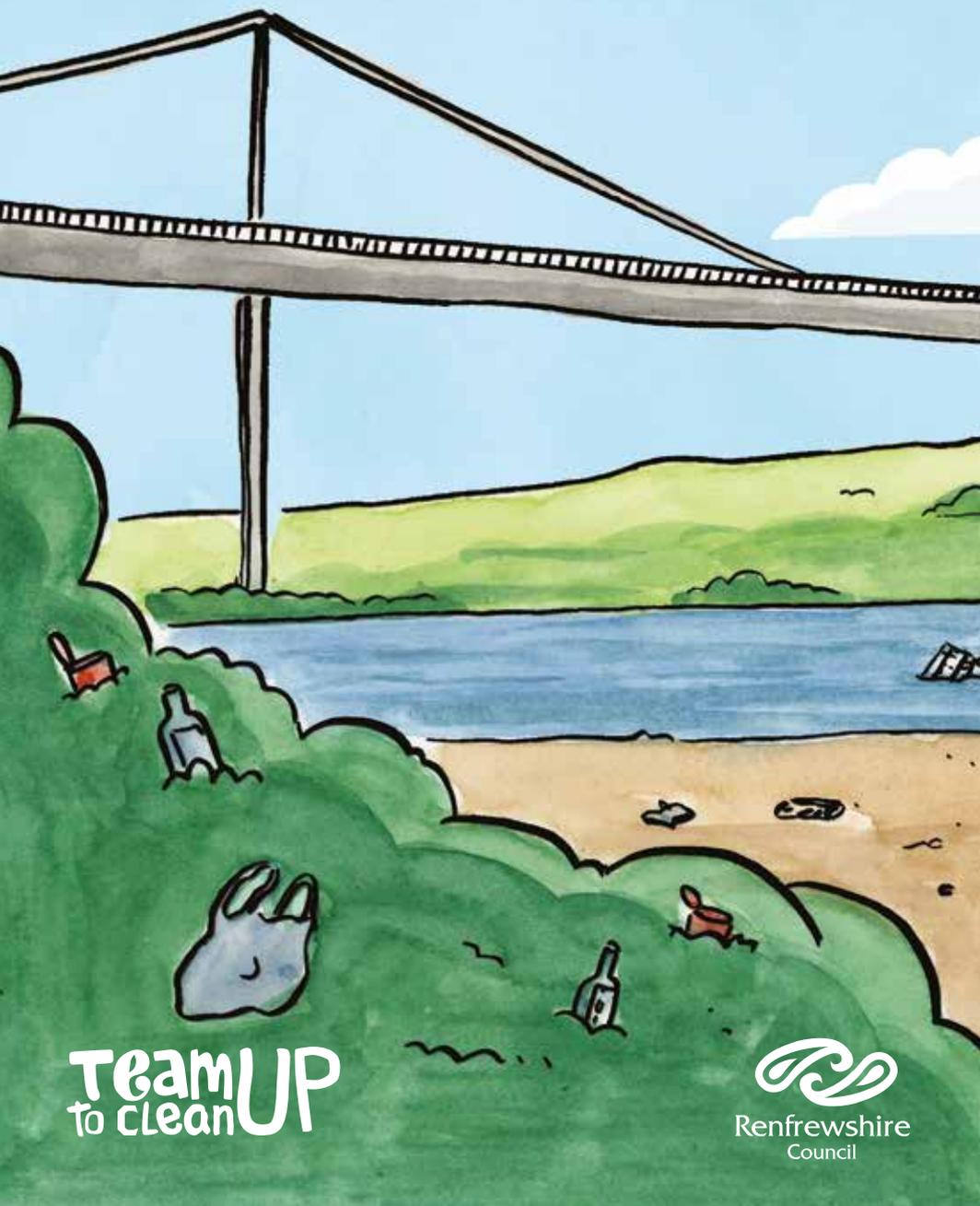
Earth  
Poo  
Water

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