

# Small Wonders

## Percy Searches for a Reason

***Percy the Possum decides to find out what Manifold the Robot is really doing in the Kind Garden.***

**Lesson Link: Reacting to goodness.** Sometimes we suspect people who do good things of being “up to something” because we have a hard time believing that they do what’s good just because it’s the right thing to do. Often, the people who do good things end up helping those of us who suspect or tease them.

One afternoon Percy the Possum was at home thinking. He was musing, too, which is a different thing. With the thinking and the musing together, he decided that Manifold the Robot was a character that *should be watched*.

Why he thought Manifold should be watched wasn’t because Manifold had done anything wrong, but because Percy didn’t like that Manifold was smarter than he was.

*He’s always here and there, helping, fixing everything,* Percy thought. *He’s up to something.*

Out Percy went and eventually came upon a few Toys sitting on a fence near Granna the Rabbit’s cottage. It wasn’t unusual for Toys to sit on fences, but these Toys were watching the cottage with great interest.

“What’s going on?” Percy asked Stern the Owl.

“Manifold and Granna are helping Brambles, Pencil-Neck, and Pinnetti make up.”

“Make up?” asked Percy.

“For the balloon incident,” Stern replied.

“Two balloons,” Tell-Tale the Mouse corrected him. She was sitting on a thick post nearby.

“What do you mean by ‘make up’?” Percy asked.

Stern said, “Apologies, forgiveness, and what-not.”



“They need *Manifold* to help them do that?” Percy was irritated. He leaned against the fence, realized it was dirty, and stood up straight again. “Well, he’s Mister Perfect, isn’t he? Always showing off by helping. He struts into our world and acts like a king.”

“There aren’t a lot of kings that help everyone the way he does,” Kevin the Duck said. Kevin had been at Percy’s feet, but Percy didn’t realize it.

“He’s up to something,” Percy said.

Granna's cottage opened. Granna came out and looked surprised to see the Toys gathered there. Pencil-Neck the Brachiosaurus squeezed through the door, then Pinnetti the Puppet, then Brambles the Porcupine. Everyone looked very happy and friendly.

Manifold came out last. He said goodbye to the others and walked off in a northerly direction, which Percy knew because it wasn't south.

"Where is he going?" Percy asked.

Tell-Tale gave a small shrug. "He sometimes goes off by himself to places we don't know about."

"Oh, oh," said Percy, thinking that secret places meant secret deeds and secret deeds meant secret other-things that were so secret Percy couldn't think about them.

By that time, no one was paying attention to Percy. They had turned their attention to the three happy Toys. Percy watched Manifold go around the corner of the cottage and followed him.

The following was long and hard. First, Percy followed him through the woods to the park. He had to be careful to keep from being seen, so he hid behind wide trees and thick bushes.

Percy's full name was Persnickety because he was persnickety. He wore a tweed jacket and a waistcoat with necessary things in the pockets and riding breeches, though no one had ever seen him ride anything *ever*. He kept himself and his clothes very clean.

So you can imagine what happened when Percy hid behind a wide tree and some of the dark stuff on the bark rubbed onto his jacket. Or when he knelt behind a bush and dirt got on his hands and knees.

The possum got agitated and kept brushing at his clothes while he tried to follow Manifold without being seen.

Eventually, Manifold crossed a meadow. Percy had to run very fast and occasionally had to dive on the ground in case Manifold suddenly turned around.

After the meadow, Manifold walked into the Brackenbury Forest, and then out again.

All along, Percy was diving and ducking, crawling and creeping, and brushing and bashing. He fell into a hole, tripped over a log, hit his head on a low branch, and even encountered a family of skunks that didn't like him.

Manifold and Percy were now in a part of the Kind Garden that Percy had never seen before. There was a small clearing leading up to a log cabin.

Manifold reached the door of the cabin and turned around.

Percy gave a little yelp and dove into a bush to hide.

It was a very thick thorn bush. The thorns poked into Percy on all sides with tiny needle-like jabs that made Percy want to yowl, if possums ever yowled.

He waited, hoping that Manifold had gone into the cabin. He waited some more, even though the thorns pricked and burned. He waited a little more, even though he could feel one of his legs beginning to swell and a part of his arm going numb. Finally, he gave up waiting and crawled out of the thorn bush. He tried to stand up, but his whole body hurt too much. He looked down and saw that his clothes were covered in dirt and shredded like torn paper.

Percy made a little whimpering sound.

"Are you all right?" a voice asked.

It was Manifold.

Percy was caught.

#### Questions:

1. **Why does Percy think Manifold is up to something?** (Percy is jealous. Manifold is kind to everyone, and Percy doesn't think people do that without wanting something in return.)
2. **What do you think Manifold will do with Percy?** (Answers may vary.)