

Small Wonders

The Last Day

The Toys have a giant picnic to celebrate the last day of summer and hear sad news.

Lesson Link: The Last Supper. Goodbyes and consequences.

Jesus had a final supper with his disciples. While they didn't understand why it was important for Jesus to go, they learned after his Death, Resurrection, and Ascension into Heaven.

The Toys were very excited. Granna the Rabbit announced in the morning that they were all invited to a big picnic in the park.

"It's going to get colder," she said in her invitation, which was delivered out loud by Manifold the Robot. "It may be the last good day of the summer."

Manifold, Granna, and Pinnetti the Puppet brought picnic tables out of the old shed. Granna covered them with a white tablecloth and put down napkins and spoons and forks. She also put down plates of little cakes and cookies.

The Toys arrived around noon.

They came carrying food to share.

Overbite the Beaver brought tree bark. Brambles the Porcupine brought red berries. Stern the Owl brought a jar of black crunchy things he had caught somewhere. Percy the Possum brought a pie that he called a *secret soufflé* with things in it that moved on their own. Pencil-Neck the Brachiosaurus brought a giant bowl of leaves. Tell-Tale the Mouse brought cheese, and Kevin brought grass and seeds from a marsh on the other side of the stream.

"I also brought something else," Kevin said to Percy and Stern. He put a small red bottle on the table. "I found this the last time I flew south."

"What is it?" asked Stern.

Kevin wasn't very good at reading, so he said, "Read the label."



Stern and Percy looked closely. The label was white and green with red words.

Percy read slowly, "Jal-A-Peen-Yo Sahs. Very Hot."

"Would you like to try some?" Kevin asked.

"Eating something very hot on a very hot day wouldn't be helpful," Stern replied. "Ask me again in the winter time."

Percy opened the bottle and sniffed the inside. He winced. "No, thank you," he said. He left the bottle on the table.

After a little while, the Toys sat down to eat. There was a lot of munching and chewing sounds and *hmmms* and *ahhs*.

Manifold went around to each table to make sure everyone was happy. Then he moved to the center of them all and said, "If I may have your attention."

The Toys looked at him.

"I have to leave very soon," he said.

"Leave?" asked Tell-Tale the Mouse. "Where are you going?"

"Away," he said.

"I've been there," said Stern the Owl. "Worth the distance, if you don't mind the traffic."

"For good?" asked Pencil-Neck.

Manifold smiled at him. "I may come back one day. But there is a lot to do first."

He didn't say what kinds of "a lot to do" things he meant, but the Toys didn't ask because they were still thinking about his leaving.

"Don't be sad," Manifold said. "Today is a day to share and celebrate."

The Toys didn't feel like celebrating after hearing the news.

Manifold moved from table to table again, carrying trays of bread and jars of drink that he shared with everyone. The Toys could never explain why, but they began to feel happy again.

Soon, they were up from the tables and spread out in the park playing games that involved Overbite's big yellow ball and some sticks and hoops and tagging and running back and forth and jumping and sliding.

Later, after allowing some of the Toys to use his back and tail as a slide, Pencil-Neck went to his bowl of food. He looked at the leaves. "How boring," he said and sniffed around the table to find something interesting. He came to a red bottle.

"This could be tasty," he said and poured the *Very Hot Jal-A-Peen-Yo Sahs* onto the leaves. He gulped it all down. Right away something *very, very* hot was burning his tongue and throat.

He gasped and stumbled around. He saw a jug of water, but his tail knocked it to the ground.

Pencil-Neck looked feverishly for more water. *The stream was too far away*, he thought.

He remembered a large water pipe behind the barn. He clambered that way.

The pipe was there, but it didn't have a knob to turn it on. He put his mouth to the faucet, hoping drops would come out. They didn't.

He made a loud groaning sound and kicked the pipe. It moved a little. He kicked it again. It moved a little more. He gathered all of his strength and kicked it as hard as a brachiosaurus could.

The pipe snapped to one side and a fountain of water shot into the air.

Pencil-Neck was delighted. He caught the water in his mouth and let it pour all over his body. He was relieved.

"Ahhhhh," he said loudly.

Then he reached to turn the water off. That's when he knew he couldn't.

Pencil-Neck bellowed.

Questions:

1. **Does the story of Manifold remind you of a story you've heard from the Bible?** (Answers may vary, but should include the story of Jesus and the Last Supper.)
2. **Why were the Toys unhappy about Manifold leaving?** (He had helped them and became their friend.)