

# Small Wonders

## The Last Fix

***Pencil-Neck tries to stop the explosion of water from the broken pipe.***

**Lesson Link: Sacrifice and death.** God shows us through Jesus that the ultimate show of love is to sacrifice ourselves, even unto death. While it is a sad thing to experience death, we, as Catholics, don't believe that death is the real end of life.

At the big picnic, Trifles the Kitten chased the tail of a kite as it bounced on the ground while Pinnetti the Puppet tried to get the kite to fly.

Trifles pounced and suddenly wasn't on hard ground but splashed in a puddle that wasn't like a puddle but moved and flowed like a stream. Then water sprayed on him.

"It's raining," he said until he saw a fountain shooting high into the air behind the old barn.

Right then, Pencil-Neck the Brachiosaurus bellowed like a loud foghorn.

By this time the other Toys had left the picnic to see what was happening.

Pencil-Neck, meanwhile, was behind the shed trying to stop the water shooting up from the pipe he'd broken. He tried to shove dirt and grass and even a log into the large pipe, but everything popped out again.

"I'm sorry," Pencil-Neck said to the Toys as they rushed up. "I didn't mean to."

The water now sprayed and flowed every which way. The roof of Percy the Possum's attic home was drenched and collapsing. Tell-Tale the Mouse *knew* her home inside the shed would be flooded.

The Toys didn't say it, but they thought the entire Kind Garden would be ruined if they couldn't stop the water.



Manifold the Robot said simply, "Pipes usually connect to other pipes. And there is usually a way to get to those pipes. And those pipes usually have a lever to stop the water."

So the Toys searched all around. It was Brambles the Porcupine who found a manhole cover in the middle of some bushes. She was very proud of herself.

Manifold lifted up the cover. There was a dark hole and a ladder that led down to the biggest pipe any of them had ever seen.

Manifold got down on his hands and knees and looked into the hole. "The pipe is rusted and leaky. However, I see a lever at the far end. That lever will stop the water. I'll go move it."

He started down the ladder, but stopped when his head was just above ground. "Don't do *anything* until I come back," he said. Then he dropped down.

The Toys muttered to each other about what, exactly, Manifold thought they might do *before* he came back. It was Pencil-Neck who thought that what *might* be done is for something big to cover the pipe and stop the fountain. He then realized that *he* was big, and if he sat on the pipe, he would be a hero.

The Toys were looking at the manhole when Pencil-Neck sat down on the pipe. The water sprayed from all sides of him. He wiggled and some of the spray stopped. He wiggled again and the water stopped altogether.

"Look what I did!" he called out.

They were about to give him a cheer, when a loud rumble came from deep within the manhole. The rumble led to a very loud *boom*, and water exploded in the hole. The Toys looked down. The water below swirled and rushed around violently. They heard bangs and bumps like the sound shoes make in a tumble dryer.

"Where is Manifold?" Granna asked, craning her neck to see.

The water suddenly shot up from the hole.

The Toys cried out and stumbled back.

The water under Pencil-Neck stopped. He stood up. "I'll have to sit on that one," he said.

Suddenly, the fountain slowly dropped down again until it was only a dribble.

"What about Manifold?" Granna asked again.

Overbite dove into the water of the manhole.

"Something's wrong," Overbite sputtered when he came back. "His lights are off. He's not moving. I'm not big enough to pull him out."

"Find rope in the shed," Granna ordered. "Overbite will tie it around him, and we'll pull him out."

That's exactly what they did. When Manifold was at the top of the manhole, Pinnetti, Percy, and Pencil-Neck lifted him out and lay him dripping on the grass.

The lights on his face and panels on his body were dark.

Granna put her ear to his chest. She looked up at the Toys sadly and said, "He's ruined."

"Can he be fixed?" Brambles asked.

"Only the Toymaker can do that," Granna said.

The Toys knew what that meant.

*The Garbage Dump.*

That's where Toys went when they didn't work anymore. The Toys also knew that no one they knew ever came back.

Granna once told them, "If the Toymaker fixes them, then he moves them to another garden."

Granna now said sadly, "There's nothing else to be done."

The Toys unhinged a door from the barn and used it to carry Manifold the Robot out of the Kind Garden to the Garbage Dump.

There were many tears and sniffles as they went.

#### **Questions:**

1. ***What did Manifold do to save the Kind Garden? (He sacrificed himself to save the Kind Garden.)***
2. ***Does this story remind you of another story you know? (Jesus' Death on the Cross.)***
3. ***How do you think the Toys feel about losing Manifold? (Sad.)***