

1. TIMOTHY TIP GETS A MAKEOVER

Timothy Tip was very sad and lonely. No-one seemed to visit him any more. He couldn't understand why they didn't come because he always kept his large skip clean and shiny. He was pleased to take care of any rubbish his customers wanted to bring but still they didn't come. He had even planted a lemon tree at the entrance to the yard and this year, for the first time, she was covered in lemons. He called her Juicilla and occasionally she had been known to say a few words. But still no-one came, even to pick the lemons.

Then one day a little girl cycled into the yard with two large carrier bags, one full of paper and one full of glass.

“Good morning” said Timothy “I'm so glad to see you. Just throw the bags in here and I'll gobble them up.”

The little girl (her name, by the way, was Amelia Brown) looked shocked.

“Why, don't be silly, I can't put the bottles in with the paper. Where is your bottle bank? Where is your paper bin?”

Timothy was confused, he always thought people just threw all their rubbish away in the same bag.

“Why, don't you worry about that” he told her “I'll soon get rid of it for you”.

“Oh no, I'm sorry” said Amelia “I have to keep it separate, it's very important. My Mum says so.”

“Important, why would it be important?” asked Timothy.

“Because it's to recycle” said Amelia

“Like on your bicycle?” he asked

“No, silly, paper can be recycled and used again. So can glass and cans and clothes.”

She looked around in despair “You don’t have any of these things do you? There’s no point coming here again, I’ll have to get my Dad to take me to the big tip the other side of town.”

“I’ll give you a free lemon” said Juicilla, hoping to change the little girl’s mind but Amelia said she didn’t need a lemon and cycled off down the road.

Now Timothy had heard about this “big tip” from his friend Oscar, a parrot who had escaped from his owners (who never used to talk to him anyway) and now lived in the steeple of the local church. He enjoyed singing along with the choir and they would bring him apples and bananas as a special treat. Today he was perched in the lemon tree, a serious look on his face. Timothy had just told him about the little girl, Amelia Brown and what she had said.

“I don’t understand it” moaned Timothy “rubbish is rubbish after all and the things that people throw away are rubbish – and I’m a rubbish tip!”

“Hmmm” said Oscar, scratching his head with his right foot “you need some help with this I can tell. A friend of mine knows a man at the Council. We’d better call him in for advice.”

So it was, just four days later, Mr. Pennyfoot from the Council Office was standing under the lemon tree at Timothy’s Tip. He had a briefcase in his hand and he looked very stern.

“You’ve certainly got plenty of space here” he said “but where are all the facilities?”

“Facilities?” said Timothy “I’m the facility, I’ll take anything and

“No, no, no” said Mr. Pennyfoot “this won’t do at all. You must have boxes for paper, tubs for glass, a place for batteries and electrical goods, clothes, shoes, books, nearly everything can be re-used. Anyway, one skip is no use at all.”

“No use?” said Timothy, who was feeling really down in the dumps “but it’s all I’ve got.”

“Exactly” came Mr. Pennyfoot’s reply, “you are not offering the proper facilities.

Separate skips for garden waste, cardboard, metal, wood...”

“But how can I get all that?” wailed Timothy “I don’t know where to start.”

“Well, we can help you” said the official. He opened his briefcase and took out a large

notebook and a pen. “We can do with a refuse site on this side of town.” He looked

around, making notes and little drawings “the lemon tree might have to go.”

Juicilla shuddered and ten lemons fell to the floor. “Oh no” said Timothy “I’ve grown her

from a pip. If the lemon tree goes I’m giving up right now.”

Mr. Pennyfoot frowned and rubbed out a line which looked like a road over the top of the

tree and drew a bend around it instead.

“Alright” he said “you can keep your tree. It certainly has a lot of lemons. Can I have one?”

“Certainly” said Timothy, “the more they are picked the more they seem to grow.”

“Lovely” said Mr. Pennyfoot as he shut his briefcase and set off down the path. “Ill send the men in to start work. They’ll be here during the next week. Goodbye.”

“Bye” said Timothy. This had all been rather a shock but at least with the improvements he might get some customers.

Three days later the men arrived with buckets and shovels, hammers and drills and a huge

concrete mixer. They made a road round the lemon tree and laid foundations for the

skips and soon the transporters arrived with what to Timothy looked like four domed

metal hoods with a rubber flap in the middle, just like a mouth. One was brown (for

brown glass) one was green (for green glass) one was white (for clear glass) and the

fourth one was brown but with a big sign painted on it ‘Mixed Glass’.

Next came the huge skips, every bit as big as Timothy, which were placed in a row alongside him. Then above each skip was a sign `wood`, `garden waste`, `metal`, `cardboard` and they put a sign above Timothy but he couldn't read what it was.

Oscar flew across and sat on it "What does it say?" asked Timothy

"You're The General" said Oscar "you're in charge and quite right too!"

Soon the old shed was painted and given a new door which was labelled `old batteries and electrical goods`, a charity brought a container for clothes and another one for shoes, then finally three large paper bins arrived, with metal flaps to stop the paper flying away. (Timothy thought this could be a bit difficult if you were small, like Amelia, so decided to look out for a footstool for her to stand on.)

Everything was ready. The containers gleamed in the sunlight, the road was brushed and clean and the lemon tree had more lemons on than ever before. All they needed now were the customers.

Mr. Pennyfoot came on a last inspection and he seemed very pleased with the results.

"I've had this sign made for the front" he said "I hope you approve." It was a large wooden board with the words `Timothy Tip` emblazoned across it in bright yellow letters.

"Fabulous" said Timothy, but secretly he was very concerned about this new arrangement. What if lots of people came, all these skips and containers were filled, who was going to empty them? He hoped Mr. Pennyfoot had thought about that, he would just have to wait and see.

And so he waited, and waited, one day, three days, five days and still no customers came. He was feeling very sad. "What's gone wrong Oscar, everything has been done and still no-one wants to visit me".

“Perhaps they don’t know about you” said Oscar, wisely “I’ll get some leaflets and drop them around the town. That should do it.”

“I’ll give a free lemon to everyone who calls” said the lemon tree (which, as it turned out, was a magic lemon tree and could make as many lemons as anyone could want in a whole lifetime) “put that on your leaflet as well.”

So Oscar flew up High Street, down East Street, across Saddle Road and round all the cul de sacs until he was dizzy. One of the leaflets landed in Amelia Brown’s basket and she ran to her father “Look Dad, Timothy Tip’s had a makeover. Can we take all our rubbish there now? Mum can have a free lemon as well, it’s pancake day next Tuesday.”

Soon the first cars started to arrive and it wasn’t long before there was a queue for Timothy Tip right back to the island on the main road. Mr. Pennyfoot had to get special signs put up to direct the traffic one way in and one way out but he was so delighted with its success he gave Timothy a special award, to acknowledge all the effort he had made to make the project work.

Amelia Brown came with her bottles and paper every week, stood on the footstool Timothy had thoughtfully provided and collected her free lemon from the lemon tree. She wouldn’t go to the big tip on the other side of town ever again.

c. Juliet Deane

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2. TIMOTHY TIP AND THE VERY GRAND PIANO

Timothy Tip was really excited that so many people now brought their rubbish to him. Car after car edged their way along the drive, round Juicilla the lemon tree, bringing paper, glass, wood, garden refuse, metals and plastic, all for recycling. Some people probably came for the free lemon Juicilla offered to every customer but they had to bring something to recycle as well - or no free lemon.

Mr. Pennyfoot, the Council official, was delighted by the success of this new tip.

“What happens when all the bins get full?” asked Timothy “The garden waste is almost up to the top of the skip and I’ve noticed people leaving bottles in bags around the green bottle bin, so that must be full too.”

“Now don’t you worry about that” said Mr. Pennyfoot “emptying the bins is our problem. I must say you are proving to be so popular we must make sure all your bins are emptied on a weekly basis. I’ll put in a request as soon as I get back to the office.”

Sure enough, the very next day, large bin lorries arrived with a huge ‘crusher’ to squash down all the rubbish in the skips. As Timothy was The General, it started with him.

“Oooh!” said Timothy, “Not so hard, you’re giving me a headache.”

Soon all the skips were empty and ready for more rubbish. The bottle banks and paper bins were all cleared and tidy, only the clothes, shoes and books remained because special charities came for those once a month.

The next day, in the middle of the afternoon. Timothy was dozing quietly (no-one had visited for about fifteen minutes) when he suddenly heard a strange clanking and banging. His friend Oscar, the parrot, let out a loud ‘screeeech’ and flew across to perch on Timothy’s ‘General’ sign.

“Quick, quick stop them, they’re trying to put it into wood but there’s lots of metal and plastic as well.” Oscar chattered excitedly.

“What, where, on what?” asked Timothy, still half asleep

“On that” squawked Oscar, feathers fluttering and pointing wildly with his wing in the direction of a van and large trailer “Mr. Pennyfoot won’t like them mixing the recycling, not at all, it will spoil the whole skip.”

Timothy looked where Oscar was pointing and there, in the middle of the parking spaces, stood a grand piano, so large it had taken four men to get it off the trailer. They were now trying to lift it up into the skip marked “Wood”.

“No, no” shouted Timothy, “what about all the metal strings and the plastic keys? No, that will never do, you’ll just have to push it up in that corner by the paper bins and I’ll ask Mr. Pennyfoot how to deal with it next time he comes round.”

The men shrugged, then grumbled quite a bit but did as they were asked and soon the piano was tucked between the paper recycling and the hedge.

“Phew, that was a near thing” said Oscar, flying across to Juicilla to tell her what had happened. She didn’t have a good view of the main parking area and was shaking her branches in frustration so that lemons were falling everywhere, bouncing on the roofs of the cars and getting squashed by the tyres.

When Amelia Brown cycled in later that day with her two bags of paper, she was very excited when she saw the piano.

“I can play a bit” she said to Timothy, “would you like to hear a tune?”

“Yes please” said Timothy, “make it something jolly will you, I’m feeling rather stressed.”

So Amelia picked up the footstool she used to stand on to put the paper in the paper bin, placed it in front of the grand piano, sat down and played a very pretty little tune called 'Party Piece'. Timothy was very impressed that she could play just from memory and Oscar flew around in ecstasy, making rather strange noises to join in with the tune.

(Juicilla was trying to dance and showering even more lemons on the waiting cars.)

"That was lovely" said Timothy, "it seems a shame to scrap something as special as a grand piano. I wish we could keep it here then you could play some more tunes for us." "I'll bring some of my music from home" said Amelia, jumping on her bike. "I won't be long."

Soon she was back with a bag full of music and she sat playing on the very grand piano, much to the delight of all the customers coming to the tip. (Not only were they getting a free lemon, now they were getting a free concert as well!)

Amelia had been learning to play the piano for three years so she was really very good at it. Some of the tunes she could play were quite difficult but the very grand piano seemed to make it so much easier with its beautiful tone and smooth keys and Amelia said it was much better than the piano she had at home, even though some of the notes were a bit out of tune.

One day, when she was playing, Mr. Pennyfoot arrived on his regular inspection.

"When did this come?" he asked, running his hand along the shiny wood, "What a glorious piano and you are a very clever girl to play it so well."

"Sometimes Oscar sings with me too" said Amelia, "you know he lives in the church steeple so he has lots of practice with the church choir."

"We didn't know what to do with it" said Timothy, "it didn't fit in with any of the recycling and it would have been such a shame to break it up."

“I see” said Mr. Pennyfoot, rubbing his chin “you know this could be quite an attraction from time to time, you playing and the parrot squawk....(Oscar ruffled his feathers angrily) er, I mean singing” he corrected himself, just in time. “I’ll see whether I can arrange a canopy to keep the rain off, so you can play any time you wish. I know a piano tuner as well, he only lives a few doors away from me. I’ll bring him here tomorrow and he can check it over.”

The very next day Mr. Pennyfoot arrived with the piano tuner. They walked across to the piano and the man sat on the footstool and ran his hands up and down the keys.

“Exquisite” he murmured “this is truly a very special grand piano, it will be a real pleasure to make it sound perfect once more”.

It took him most of the morning to bring all the strings in tune and when Amelia came later in the day to try it out, she was overjoyed with the sound. “Better than ever” she said and played one of her favourite tunes, just to prove it.

“You won’t be able to leave it here” said the piano tuner, “even with a cover over the top, it needs to be in someone’s home, not out in the open air.”

Now Mr. Pennyfoot had just had a new extension built on his rather large Victorian house just outside the town and he could suddenly see that this very grand piano would fit in nicely. It only took him a moment to decide.

“I’ll have the piano” he said “my son is too young to learn to play at the moment but it will be there ready and waiting for his lessons in the future,” he turned to Amelia “and you can come and play it any time you like. It certainly does have a very special sound.”

“One of the best I’ve ever heard” agreed the piano tuner.

So the very grand piano was taken to Mr. Pennyfoot's house where it fitted perfectly in the new extension and was much admired by everyone and Mrs. Pennyfoot took great delight in polishing it until you could see your face quite clearly in the glossy wood. Timothy Tip was very pleased with himself and with Oscar, who had noticed the piano in the first place.

"You see" said Timothy "it's right what they say. One person's rubbish is another's treasure. Almost everything can be recycled after all – even a very large, very grand piano."

c. Juliet Deane

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3. TIMOTHY TIP AND THE UNEXPECTED TREASURE

Winter was coming. The first snow was falling and settling on Juicilla, the lemon tree as she stood shivering at the entrance to the tip. She normally gave away a free lemon to each of the customers but the fruit was frozen solid and no-one seemed to want a frozen lemon, even though it would have tasted like a lemon sorbet. So she shook just to show her frustration and showered snow all over Oscar, the parrot, who was sheltering on one of her branches.

“You need to cheer up” he told her “it’s nearly Christmas and everyone will be on holiday, even us.”

“I don’t want a holiday” she said moodily “I just want some sunshine so I can ripen my lemons and give them away.”

“Never mind” said Timothy, who had been listening in on their conversation “you’ll feel more festive when the Christmas tree arrives.”

“Christmas tree?” gasped Juicilla “What Christmas tree?” and she shook her branches so angrily that Oscar fell off his perch and a frozen lemon landed on his head.

“Why, Mr. Pennyfoot from the Council office has kindly said we can have a giant Christmas tree on the yard and it will be covered with fairy lights that blink and wink at you all day. I’m sure that will cheer you up.”

Juicilla was speechless with anger and Oscar flew across to perch on Timothy’s ‘General’ sign, just to keep out of the way.

The following week, as promised, Mr. Pennyfoot arrived with some helpers and a large van. Inside the van was the largest Christmas Tree Timothy had ever seen, it must have been at least ...metres(?) tall. They dragged it over to the driveway and positioned it on the grass verge, just opposite Juicilla, where it could be seen from the road. They then

took out long cables of brightly coloured lights, red, blue, green and yellow and draped them from the top of the tree to the bottom. When they turned on the lights they flashed and twinkled so brightly that Juicilla was shocked into silence, but not for long.

“Get that tree away from me” she screamed to Timothy “no-one will notice me here or take any of my lemons with that flashy monster getting all the attention”.

“Now don’t be a spoil sport” said Timothy, “it’s Christmas after all and people like to see bright lights. Anyway, your lemons are all frozen to your branches, so you can’t give them away, can you?”

Suddenly Juicilla started to cry. “Everyone’s against me, even you Timothy. Why couldn’t I be dressed up for Christmas, why did it have to be some fuzzy green thing?”

“Because it’s traditional” said Timothy “it’s what people expect. They don’t expect bare twigs on their Christmas tree”.

“Ooooooh” wailed Juicilla, “it’s not my fault I lose all my leaves at this time of year. The least you could do is give me something shiny to wear so I can feel part of the festivities.”

Just then Amelia Brown walked in through the gate with her delivery of paper for the recycling bins. She normally came on her bicycle but the roads were far too slippery to be safe, so she had pulled on her bobble hat, wrapped her huge woollen scarf round her neck and set off on the 20 minute walk. Now she was a bit out of breath and had quite a shock when she saw the huge tree, winking and blinking at her.

“My, when did that arrive?” she panted

“Just today” said Timothy “isn’t it pretty?”

“Not really pretty” said Amelia “I would have said flashy but it does make the place seem very festive I must say.”

“Juicilla doesn’t like it” whispered Timothy, “she’s sulking now”.

Amelia looked across at the little lemon tree. Juicilla had wrapped her branches around herself as best she could, trying to protect her lemons from the cold.

“That’s a shame, she needs something bright for her branches. Can’t she have some flashing lights as well?”

“Mr. Pennyfoot said we could only have one set because of all the cut backs this year. I guess she’ll just have to put up with it.”

All the same, Oscar and Timothy felt really sorry for their friend and as the days went by she became more and more miserable and her branches drooped lower and lower. Even the Christmas Tree could see how sad she was and offered to share his lights with her but Mr. Pennyfoot wouldn’t allow that, there were only just enough lights for one tree.

It was on the Thursday morning that Oscar, sitting preening himself on the ‘General’ sign, noticed something very sparkly at the side of the skip. Now Oscar was very fussy about flying down into the skip, he liked to keep his feathers as clean as possible but thinking of his friend Juicilla and how she wanted something shiny to wear, he put aside his worries and swooped down to take a look. It was a brooch, in the shape of a star with long strands of sparkly stones dangling from the side, making it look like a shooting star.

“I’ve found something for Juicilla” he shouted to Timothy, “it’s down here at the back of your skip” and he picked up the brooch in his claws and carried it across.

“My”, said Timothy, “doesn’t that look good, too good to throw away. I wonder whether someone has got rid of it by accident.” But Oscar wasn’t listening, he was too delighted with his find and was flying over to Juicilla to present it to her.

“Look what I’ve found for you, isn’t it beautiful?”

Juicilla slowly unwrapped her branches and gasped with delight. The lights from the Christmas Tree reflected in the shooting star brooch and it sparkled and shone in all the colours of the rainbow. Oscar flew up to her topmost branch and placed the jewel right in the centre. Juicilla was quivering with happiness, her Christmas wouldn't be so dull after all.

It wasn't until Mr. Pennyfoot arrived two days later and noticed the brooch at the top of the lemon tree that things started to get rather confusing.

"Where did that come from?" he asked, pointing upwards.

"Why, Oscar found it in my skip. It must have been there a while, lodged in the corner."

"It looks rather special to me" said Mr. Pennyfoot, "I think I'd better get it down and take a look."

Timothy saw how Juicilla shuddered at the mention of losing her special star and tried to distract Mr. Pennyfoot.

"Oh I'm sure it's nothing, something you get in a Christmas cracker."

"But we haven't had crackers yet" said Mr. Pennyfoot "at least not in our house".

"We've had some crackers" said Amelia, who had just come in at the gate and was trying to be helpful "we had them at our school Christmas party. Anyway, perhaps it's a present someone didn't want?"

"We haven't opened our presents yet, either" said Mr. Pennyfoot rather crossly. He was obviously not going to be distracted from his plan and he went to get the tall ladders from the shed.

So up Mr. Pennyfoot climbed to the top of the lemon tree and brought the shooting star down to earth again.

"I'm taking this away and getting it valued" he said.

“Poor Juicilla” said Amelia “she was so proud of her decoration. Will Mr. Pennyfoot really not buy her any lights?”

“No” said Terence “he says he’s broke”.

Juicilla gave a great sob and hugged her branches around her once more. She was going to have a miserable Christmas after all.

It was just four days later when Mr. Pennyfoot returned and this time there was a beaming smile on his face.

“It’s worth a fortune” he said “all diamonds, real ones, I thought it looked good. We’ve contacted all the local police stations but no-one has reported a loss so we’re sending it to Auction up in London and all the money can be donated to local charities. Quite a feather in Oscar’s cap for finding it, although I expect he’s got enough feathers of his own.”

Mr. Pennyfoot’s effort to make a joke didn’t please Juicilla at all. She unfurled her branches and scattered snow all over him.

“Now, now” said Mr. Pennyfoot “I know how upset you are” and he walked over to his car and brought out a huge bag of silver and white lights. “These are just for you to replace your wonderful shooting star.”

With Oscar’s help the little lights were soon in place and twinkling almost as brightly as the diamonds. Juicilla was so very happy, now she had a whole net of star lights instead of just one and she could shine just as brightly as the large Christmas tree with all its coloured, flashing bulbs.

So Timothy Tip was in the news again. This time the local hero and his friends had found a fortune and the money could be used for the charities to buy Christmas presents for all the poor local children who needed them. A Happy Christmas for everyone. What a star!

c. Juliet Deane

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4. TIMOTHY TIP AND THE FLYING UMBRELLAS

It was a dull, wet, Monday morning and Timothy Tip was feeling very depressed. It had been raining most of the weekend and, even though he was the most popular tip in town, very few customers came on wet and windy days. It seemed they only wanted to visit on sunny, warm days. Juicilla the lemon tree had hardly given away a single free lemon and Oscar the parrot was sitting on one of her branches looking very bedraggled and trying to get some shelter from her leaves. Even Amelia, the little girl who visited almost every day with paper and glass to recycle, was on holiday in Devon for two weeks, so he couldn't tell her what trouble he had had with the champagne bottles not wanting to be put in with all the other green glass bottles. They had decided they were too special and should be treated differently, with their own personal recycling bin. Timothy had had to be very firm and pointed out that they might, indeed, be special and no doubt very expensive when they were full of champagne but now they were empty they were just green glass the same as any other green glass and must be recycled in the same way. There had been a great deal of 'Ou la la' and various other comments made in French, which Timothy didn't understand and he needed Amelia to translate for him. All in all he was quite exhausted and hoped something good would happen soon to cheer him up. Unfortunately there was still more gloom and doom when Mr. Pennyfoot, the council official, came in the afternoon. "We're not doing very well at the moment" he said seriously, "there are a lot of people on holiday and no-one wants to work in their garden or do DIY outside in this weather, so the skips are not as full as they should be." "I'm very sorry" said Timothy, feeling even more distressed, "but I don't know what I can do about it. If people aren't around they are not going to have anything to recycle, are they?"

Mr. Pennyfoot nodded but still looked rather stern. "Let's hope it picks up soon" he said and left for his next visit, which was to the big tip on the other side of town.

"Oh dear Oscar" said Timothy, "looks like we could be in trouble if business doesn't improve."

Oscar stretched, then ruffled his feathers to try and get rid of some of the water. "What we need is an item of interest, something people will want to come and see. That way they will make the effort to visit, perhaps it will even inspire them to start making things or working in the garden, even in the rain."

"What sort of thing?" asked Timothy, "We can't have a roundabout, or a water slide, or an ice cream van. It's all too much of a worry, I really don't know what to do for the best."

Just then a van pulled up, two men jumped out, opened the back doors and proceeded to throw armfulls of large, brightly coloured umbrellas into Timothy's 'General' skip.

"Hold on a minute" said Timothy, taken by surprise, "those look brand new to me. Someone may still want to use them."

"Nothing to do with us mate" said the men, "they've been used for a garden party and the people don't want them any more and told us to bring them down here. They paid us a good bit to do it too, so in they go" and another armful of umbrellas landed with a thump on the metal floor.

When the men had finally driven away Timothy called Oscar over. "Look at all those lovely umbrellas, brand new. It's a terrible waste to just throw them away. They'll be crushed if we leave them in here, can you try and lift them out?"

"Hmm, not sure I can" said Oscar "but you're right, they have hardly been used and are such lovely bright colours. I'll have a go" and with that he fluttered down into the skip,

seized an umbrella with his feet and flapped his soggy wings as fast as he could, rising up over the side of the skip holding onto the spokes and the handle. He dropped the umbrella by the side of the shed and then went back for another and another, until twenty of them were lying side by side – and Oscar was lying exhausted on top of them!

“Well done” said Timothy “I’m sure Mr. Pennyfoot will be pleased we’ve kept them.

They would be really useful and very pretty over tables for a party outside, especially in this weather.” He frowned as the grey clouds sent even more rain down on him.

Suddenly one of the umbrellas started to twitch and flutter, almost doing a little dance to itself, then it sprang up and opened like a beautiful flower.

“Oooh” said Oscar, “how pretty you are.”

“We know” said the umbrella “we were specially made for a wedding day celebration. It was a terrible shock when they just threw us away.”

By now the other nineteen umbrellas were coming to life and opening up. They made a really impressive sight all in a row.

“We are so grateful that you rescued us. It was awful when they just threw us away like that and we would like to thank you, wouldn’t we girls.”

“Yes, yes” came the chorus of rather giggly voices.

“But what can you do for us?” asked Timothy

“Well, we can keep your customers dry for a start. Come on ladies, let’s line the route” and fifteen gloriously bright umbrellas floated up and hovered, just where the people stood to throw things in the skips. The other five floated over to the glass recycling and the paper bins. It was an amazing sight and the drivers of the two cars waiting under the lemon tree were almost too shocked to move forward with their rubbish. When they

finally plucked up courage, drove in and walked to the skips the umbrellas hovered above them and kept them completely dry.

“Hooray” they cheered “we’ll come here again. It’s a real adventure.”

When Mr. Pennyfoot arrived for his weekly visit the sun was shining so the umbrellas were rolled neatly in the corner of the shed.

“Where did those come from?” he asked

“From a wedding party” said Timothy “but they’re really useful. When it rains they open up and keep all the customers dry.”

Mr. Pennyfoot looked shocked. He didn’t believe for a minute that that could happen. Perhaps Timothy was suffering from not enough work, although looking at the long queues waiting in line for their free lemon business seemed to be booming again and there didn’t seem any reason for upset.

“You don’t want me to take them away then?” he asked “we could use those at the Council Office.”

“Well, perhaps you would like to use them in the summer as sunshades and we can use them in the winter to keep our customers dry in the snow and rain?”

“Sounds just right to me” said Mr. Pennyfoot “I’ll put up a special little shed for them, right by the entrance, then they will be ready to do their job whenever they are needed.”

When Amelia came back from her holidays she could hardly believe her eyes. On a drizzily, grey afternoon here were a troop of beautiful bright umbrellas bobbing and bouncing overhead to keep everyone happy and dry. Then when her father came and took a picture for the local newspaper, well, that was the end of no-one coming to the tip when the weather was bad, now they wanted to come on wet and windy days just to see those wonderful flying umbrellas (and to get their free lemon, of course!).

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5. TIMOTHY TIP AND THE ROGUE TRADER

It was a bright blue-sky morning in June and Timothy Tip was feeling particularly pleased with himself because Mr. Pennyfoot, the council official, had just been to tell him he had been entered for the National contest of 'Tip of the Year'. Juicilla, the lemon tree growing at the entrance to the tip, was basking in the sunshine and stretching out her branches so the sun could ripen all her lemons at once. Even Oscar, the resident parrot (who didn't really like to be out in too much sun) had been for a bath in the nearby pond and was now sitting on the 'General' sign above Timothy, preening his feathers.

There had been quite a few visitors to the tip already. Timothy's special friend, Amelia Brown had cycled in with a big bag of paper which she was posting into one of the large bins at the far end of the yard.

"I hope we have a busy day today" said Timothy "have you heard, we've been nominated as 'Tip of the Year'? Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could win."

"You've certainly worked for it" said Oscar "and I'm sure Juicilla giving everyone a free lemon must make us even more special."

It certainly was a busy day. Everyone seemed to have been encouraged by the good weather to get out in their garden to weed the flower beds and mow the lawns. Soon the skip labelled 'Garden Waste' was over half full.

"We'll have to put a call in to Mr. Pennyfoot at this rate" said Timothy, "we won't be able to wait until tomorrow to get it emptied."

It was getting near to lunch time when Timothy decided he didn't feel very well.

"I feel all hot and bothered" he said to Oscar, who was still perched on the wooden sign, his head tucked under his left wing, snoozing gently.

"It's the sun" he replied "I feel rather warm myself".

“So do I” said Juicilla, “isn’t it marvellous, all this sunshine will make my lemons taste better than ever.”

“No”, said Timothy, “it’s not the sun. It’s like a burning sensation, all around my inside. Ooooh, I feel really sick.”

“Don’t be silly, you can’t be sick” said Oscar, “you’re designed to take all different kinds of rubbish and you’re nowhere near full.”

“I know” said Timothy “and I don’t want to make a fuss but, oh dear, I feel terrible. You couldn’t take a look could you Oscar, see if you can spot anything wrong.”

“Hmmm” said Oscar, who didn’t much like flying down too near the rubbish bags, especially when he’d just cleaned all his feathers but, like the true friend he was, he stretched out his wings, flapped a few times then glided over the back of the skip.

It was then he saw one of the black plastic bags was melting and a rather smelly mist seemed to be hovering above it.

“I say” said Oscar, “this doesn’t look too good. Something bad has been thrown in here, something that should have been disposed of in a special way.”

“What do you think it is?” asked Timothy “Do you think it will catch fire?”

“I don’t think so” Oscar replied “but it looks like acid or some sort of chemical and it’s eating its way through all the bags and will soon be eating into your metal sides.”

“We’ve got to get it out” said Timothy, “Mr. Pennyfoot will be so cross when he finds someone has thrown something really bad into the skip. He’ll be sorry he put us in for the competition. I don’t know what to do and, ooooooh, I really do feel terribly ill.”

Just then Amelia cycled in through the gate. She had been home for her lunch and was bringing another load of paper on her way back to school.

“I’m sick” said Timothy, “I need to get in touch with Mr. Pennyfoot right away or my skip will be ruined.”

“You can’t be sick” said Amelia, “you can take any sort of rubbish”.

“Not the sort that someone has thrown in here” said Oscar, “come and look”.

Amelia looked over the side of the skip and saw all the melting bags and smelt the awful smell.

“I’ll get him at once” she said, “it looks as though you could catch fire any minute”.

Within twenty minutes Mr. Pennyfoot had arrived with helpers dressed in special protective clothing and carrying what looked like fire extinguishers.

“Hold on there Timothy, we’ll sort this out right now.”

They sprayed all the bags and used long hooks to pull them out and put them safely into the back of a lorry.

“Looks like some rather nasty chemicals have been thrown in here” said Mr. Pennyfoot “we’ll take these bags back to the depot and get them analysed.”

“I recognise that bag” said Oscar, jumping up and down “that one with the yellow writing, I know the van and the men that threw it in. I noticed it because of the writing – yellow has always been my favourite colour.”

“How can we catch them?” said Timothy, who was feeling much better now one of the men was hosing him down with some cool, clear water.

“I have a plan” said Mr. Pennyfoot, “leave it to me”.

The next day a man arrived in a Council van and parked over by the hedge. He had brought a ladder with him and a large box and lengths of cable.

“What can he be doing?” asked Juicilla, “I hope he’s not thinking of climbing up into my branches, he’ll shake off all the lemons.”

The man didn't want to climb into the lemon tree, instead he climbed the telegraph pole at the back of the yard and wired up a camera that looked out across all the skips. Mr. Pennyfoot would be able to see everyone who came to bring their rubbish and Oscar would be able to tell him which was the van. At the moment all he could remember was that it was dark blue.

Nothing happened for the next few days and it wasn't until the following Tuesday that a dark blue van full of bags pulled up in front of the 'General' again.

"That's it" hissed Oscar "and look, they didn't even want their free lemon from Juicilla". The two men got out and slammed their doors than opened the back of the van. They put on heavy gloves to handle the bags and threw them into Timothy and then drove off as quickly as possible. Oscar leaped up and down on the sign then turned a complete summersault, a signal to the man watching the CCTV camera that these were the rogues who had thrown the bad waste into the skip. Mr. Pennyfoot and his helpers arrived to get the bags out before Timothy had even the hint of stomach ache and the police tracked down the van to where the men were working, dismantling an old chemical factory. They had been trying to catch these villains for a long time. The rogue traders won contracts by giving a very cheap price and then did not want to pay the proper fee for getting rid of dangerous waste. Now they were going to pay the price of a heavy fine and a long spell of community work, cleaning out all the skips at the big tip on the other side of town.

Timothy Tip was a hero and so, of course, was Oscar the parrot. It was no surprise at all when he was voted 'Tip of the Year' by everyone on the panel. Mr. Pennyfoot took Oscar with him to receive the certificate and Amelia's father framed it for him so it could

hang, in pride of place, from the brass hook Juicilla had allowed them to hammer into her trunk. After all, she said, it was a very special award for a very special place.

c. Juliet Deane

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6. TIMOTHY TIP AND THE EGG

It was late Spring. The sun was shining, birds were singing and people were flocking to Timothy Tip to bring all their garden waste. Clippings from hedges, grass from the lawns, weeds from the garden, they all went in the big skip ready to be recycled as compost to be used back on the garden again.

Amelia Brown and her Dad had just arrived with a car boot full of rubbish bags, brimming with weeds and cuttings. Juicilla, the lemon tree at the entrance to the tip, had given them a special treat, four lemons instead of just the one given to other customers, so they could make some home-made lemonade.

“This bag’s fallen over” said Mr. Brown, “the boot’s full of soil now. I’ll have to give it a good vacuum when we get home. Perhaps you’ll help me, Amelia...”

But Amelia wasn’t listening to her Dad, she was peering over the side of the skip, gazing intently at the middle of a patch of brambles thrown against the side.

“What are you looking at?” asked her Dad “Be careful now, or you’ll fall right in”.

“There” said Amelia, pointing towards the brambles, “it’s a nest, I’m sure of it and I think there’s an egg in it.”

Mr. Brown closed the boot of his car and moved across to take a look

“Yes, indeed it is an egg and quite a big one too” said Mr. Brown, “we’d better try and get it out from there as soon as possible.”

He went over to the shed where all the tools were stored and found a big rake, brought it back and started pulling at the brambles. Bit by bit they moved towards the edge of the skip until Mr. Brown could lean over and pick out the nest.

“What shall we do with it now?” asked Amelia

“Well, it needs to be put somewhere safe and warm” said Mr. Brown.

“Let’s put it up in the lemon tree” said Amelia, “I’m sure it will be safe up there and perhaps Oscar will sit on it and keep it warm.”

So they fetched some step ladders and Mr. Brown climbed as high as he could to the top branches of Juicilla, the lemon tree, and tucked the nest and the egg safely in a corner next to the trunk.

“There, that should be safe enough” he said “now let’s just hope for the best”.

Now Oscar, being a very particular parrot, would hardly have been a first choice to sit on a nest and incubate an egg, especially when he didn’t know what kind of an egg it was.

“Come on” said Timothy, “don’t be mean. You’ll only have to sit there for a while until it hatches and it looks like a very comfortable nest, plenty of moss and feathers to keep you cosy.”

“That’s as may be” said Oscar “but I like sleeping on my perch in the shed.”

“Well you can’t” said Juicilla, “I’m not going to be responsible for this egg all on my own. You’ll just have to help out and see what kind of a baby bird we get from it.”

“Oh all right” said Oscar, fluffing his feathers and making a great scene of it all “I suppose the weather’s warm enough to sleep outside and it does look like a fairly comfortable nest. I’ll give it a go.”

So Oscar sat on the nest and kept the egg warm for one day, two days, three days.

“Has that egg hatched yet?” asked Amelia when she came to the tip with all the paper to recycle.

“Not yet” said Timothy “but Oscar said he’s heard a bit of tapping on the shell”.

“How exciting” said Amelia “I wonder what it will be.”

Oscar had been sitting on the egg for nine days when he suddenly felt it rock about underneath him. He looked down and saw the shell starting to crack

“It’s breaking out” he squawked and hopped up onto a branch

“Don’t be such a baby” said Juicilla “it’ll need some food now, you’d better start looking for some bugs and worms”,

“Ugh!” said Oscar “I don’t eat bugs and worms”.

“But a baby bird does” said Juicilla “so you’d better start hunting”.

While they were watching the hole in the shell got bigger and bigger and soon a large beak poked out.

“What kind of a bird is that?” wailed Oscar, “It looks huge.”

“I’ve no idea” said Juicilla, “I’ve never seen anything like it before”.

“Neither have I” said Timothy, who could see it perched on the side of its nest “we’ll have to ask Amelia to bring her bird book round next time she comes and tell us what it is. In the mean time you’d better get it some food.”

So Oscar started hunting and feeding the greedy chick. Backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards to the little patch of grass picking up moths and grubs, flies and worms until he was completely worn out.

“It eats an amazing amount” he said, panting while he had a rest on the ‘general’ sign. “I don’t know how much longer I can keep this up, I’m exhausted.”

Amelia Brown arrived that afternoon with her bird book. They looked at all the pictures and yes, there it was, a baby heron with its great long legs and pointed beak.

“I’ll find out where we can take it” she said “it will need to go where there is a pond so it can learn to fish and find its own food.”

“What are you all looking at?” asked Mr. Pennyfoot who had just come to make his weekly inspection.

“Up there” said Amelia, “a young heron and we need to find it a home”.

“Certainly it can’t stay here” said Mr. Pennyfoot “it will need to go near some water”.

Now luckily Mr. Pennyfoot, being a council official, knew about all the organisations in the area “I’ll get in touch with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds” he said, “they have a large nature reserve just over a mile away. I’m sure they will be pleased to take it in.”

Sure enough, two days later a man arrived in a van with RSPB on the side.

“I hear you have a young heron to be looked after” he said, just as Juicilla shook her branches and the bird stood up in its nest and flapped its wings. “We’ll be pleased to take it down to the reserve. I’ll just get a box to put it in.”

So the young heron found a new home where he could wade in the water and hunt for fish.

“I’m rather sad to see him go” said Oscar “I started to get attached to him”.

“Don’t be silly” said Timothy, “you’re a parrot and he’s a heron, he probably could have eaten you for supper one day.”

“All the same” said Juicilla, “he did put in a lot of effort and it was thanks to you Oscar that the bird survived.”

Oscar felt very pleased with himself and fluffed up his feathers with pride. Still, he had to admit it was a relief not to have to hunt for all that food every day.

About a month later, just as the tip had closed and the last customer had left for home, there was a great flapping and commotion in the barn where Oscar was having his late afternoon nap.

“Aaaaaagh” he shrieked and flew out to take refuge in Juicilla’s branches “there’s a great grey thing attacking me”.

“It’s the heron” said Timothy, “look how large he’s grown. He must have come back to see you, he probably thinks you’re his Dad”.

“Yes” said Juicilla “he’s coming over to sit with you”.

Sure enough the now very handsome heron was landing right next to Oscar and pecking at him with his beak.”

“How lovely” said Juicilla “he thinks he’s come home”.

“He won’t stay” said Timothy “no pond for him here.”

“Thank goodness for that” said Oscar, who was quite overcome by the size of this young bird “the quicker he goes home the better”.

Although secretly he was very pleased to see the heron and felt proud he had been the one who had given it the chance to survive and do so well.

c. Juliet Deane

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