

CHAPTER EIGHT



"I'm starting to think this is a **bad idea**," said a voice.

It was Magnus, the *magpie*.

"~~That's rubbish~~," squeaked his *caterpillar* friend.

"**You're right.** Of course you are. We're doing the right thing. The Litter Queen will rise and I will be her favourite."

"~~That's rubbish.~~"

"**What!** Why don't you think I'll be her favourite? You've been listening to the other magpies, haven't you? **Admit it!**"

"~~That's rubbish.~~"

The argument continued as we crept forward, hardly daring to breathe, and peeked into the clearing.

The litter pile stood just as high as ever. Dotted around it were **cageS** made from litter and **inSide...**

"No!" gasped Hannah.



The **fairies** and their **foxes** were all trapped. The **foxes** paced back and forth, **snapping** and **snarling** at the bars of the cage. But the **fairies**

looked dazed. Some of them were crying quietly.

Magpies perched in the trees around the litter pile- **hundreds of them**, each tiny beak calling out.

ck-ck-ck-ck-ck

ck-ck-ck-ck-ck

ck-ck-ck-ck-ck

And more were arriving all the time. The calling was getting **louder and louder**.

Then the plastic pile began to **rustle and move**.

It started to grow a face with **MOULDY, MILK-CARTON TEETH** and **PALE, PIZZA BOX EYES**.

It was **HORRIBLE!**

Soon, the face started to rise up from the ground on **TWO TOWERING LEGS OF LITTER**.



We needed to act fast before that thing grew a body and arms.

“How did we all end up back here?” asked Sugar, astonished.

“Never mind that now,” hissed Blaze in the darkness. “Hannah, Jo, did you get a magical gift?”

I nodded.

“So what is it?” hissed Sugar.

Hannah held up the crown hair slide.

“Oh, that's **pretty!**” said Sugar reaching for it.

“Shhhhhh,” hissed Blaze.

Sugar glared at Blaze and turned an angry red colour **which wasn't going to help us stay hidden.**

But the **MONSTER** didn't seem to have noticed us.

Not yet.

“The Fairy Queen said it has to go on the monster's head to work,” I said, quietly.

“**You've got to be kidding,**” hissed Sugar. “That thing is **taller than the trees!** And look at it's **teeth!**”

All our eyes turned back to the **MONSTER**. It had grown a body now with **two stubby arms.**

“**SHE IS WAKING,**” cried Magnus, hopping around at the monster's feet. “**Our Litter Queen is waking.**”

Encouraged, the magpies started to clack even louder

ck-ck-ck-ck-ck-ck-ck

ck-ck-ck-ck-ck-ck-ck

ck-ck-ck-ck-ck-ck-ck

until...

"ENOUGH!"

roared the litter monster. IT WAS ALIVE!

The magpies stopped. In their cages, the foxes and fairies froze. Everyone held their breath.

"I HAVE LIFE," growled the monster. **"YOU,**
my **MAGPIE MINIONS,** have been **FAITHFUL.**
As I **DESTROY THE WOOD,** you alone will not be

CHOKED in my **PLASTIC GRIP OF DEATH.**”

The magpies click-clacked their thanks. Or possibly they were just clacking in terror.

Hard to say.

“BUT I STILL NEED HANDS. YOU CAN'T HAVE A PLASTIC GRIP OF DEATH WITHOUT FINGERS. GO, FETCH ME MORE LITTER!”

ordered the monster. **“GO!”**

The magpies scattered in an instant. All except for Magnus. He **tried** to fly off but the monster pinned him to the ground with its littery leg.

“NOT YOU, YOU IDIOT,” it growled. **“WE NEED TO TALK.”**

“Erm, of course, My Queen,” said Magnus, sounding **t**errified.

"QUEEN?!" roared

the monster. **"I'M NOT A QUEEN!"**

"Erm...you're not?"

"OF COURSE NOT," growled the monster.

**"I'M A KING. ISN'T THAT
OBVIOUS? DON'T YOU THINK I'M
HANDSOME?"**

"Erm..."

"I'VE GOT PACKETS, WRAPPERS," he
pointed at himself, **"PIZZA BOX EYES - I'VE
GOT IT ALL. CHECK OUT MY**

SMILE."

The litter monster leaned down and bared its milk-carton teeth. Close up, the smell of all that



litter must have been dreadful.

I could understand why Magnus was finding it hard to think of a compliment.

"I have an idea," whispered Sugar. "Give me the slide."

"Are you sure you know what you're doing?" asked Hannah, handing it to her.

Sugar nodded.

"I may not understand **boys**," said Sugar, glaring at Braveleaf, "but I do understand **style**."

She narrowed her eyes studying the **MONSTER**.

"Braveleaf! Blaze!" she hissed. "You can both fly, so you'll need to chase away Magnus."

"Or..." said Braveleaf, "...maybe we should, erm, not do that. We should, erm, go look for the other magpies."

"What!" frowned Sugar. **"How would that help?"**

"Well, because....because..." Braveleaf looked flustered.

Blaze put a gentle paw on his shoulder.

"I'm scared, too," said Blaze quietly. "Let's do it anyway, eh?"

Braveleaf stared at him. Finally, he nodded. Blaze grinned.

"Hop on my back, **Dragon Fairy**," winked

Blaze. "Let's do this together!"

"Seriously?" asked Braveleaf, beaming.

Blaze nodded and Braveleaf flew up to perch between his wings.



"Ready," said Braveleaf, proudly.

I looked back to Sugar.

"What do you want us to do?" I whispered.

"You're with me!" said Sugar, turning a nervous pale blue. **"Just follow my lead."**

CHAPTER NINE

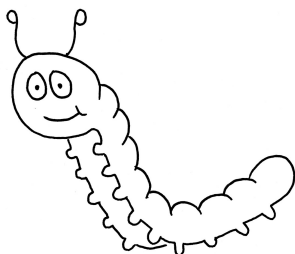


We looked back to the **MONSTER**. Down in the clearing, Magnus had **finally** thought of something to say.

“You are very **handsome**, my King,” he grovelled. “I’ve never seen anyone **so handsome...**”

For a moment, the litter monster looked like it might be trying to smile. But then the caterpillar popped up.

“**That's rubbish,**” he squeaked.



"WHAAAAT!"

screamed the **MONSTER**, exploding with **RAGE**.

"Now!" yelled Sugar. **"Go! Go!"**

We **BURST** into the clearing. Blaze and Braveleaf roared a battle cry and **RACED** towards Magnus, shouting the most terrifying things they could think up.

"You'll never have another nap ever again!" threatened Blaze.

"I'll make you ride a hedgehog," yelled Braveleaf. **"See how your bottom likes that!"**

Magnus **SCREAMED** and **FLEW OFF** into the woods, and they went **HURTLING** after him.

And we walked forward to face the monster.

"HUMANS!"

snarled the Litter King. **"AND A FAIRY.** I suppose you've come to try to **DESTROY ME?** Just like all those **GROTTY LITTLE ROTTERS."**

He pointed towards the cages of fairies.

"Oh no! Not at all," lied Sugar.

"GOOD!" snapped the King. "Because I'm here to stay. Plastic litter can last for hundreds of years, you know!"

"Really? Hundreds of years? How incredible," gasped Sugar, faking admiration.

"AND THAT'S NOT ALL," added the King, proudly. "Plastic just like this is building up all around the world. Soon, I will rule an army. **THOUSANDS,** just like me. Well, not quite as **FABULOUS** or **STYLISH** as me but you get the idea."



"More of you would be lovely," smiled Sugar, sweetly. **"You're so handsome.** And I should know. **I'm a beauty expert."**

"YOU ARE?"

"She is!" I chipped in.

"She really is," agreed Hannah. "She helps me pick my clothes every day so that I look amazing."

The monster paused, considering.

"COULD YOU..." said the litter monster.
**"COULD YOU HELP ME LOOK AMAZING...FOR
WHEN I CHOKE THE EARTH AND
EVERYTHING. I WANT TO LOOK MY BEST."**

"Of course," said Sugar. "It's all about
accessories."

In a flash, I realised Sugar's plan. **And it
was brilliant.**

"Your overall look is great," she said.
"You've got packets, cartons, wrappers."

Sugar counted things off on her fingers and
the monster nodded eagerly.

**"You just need something that
says 'KING',"** said Sugar, **"and I have just
the thing."**

She pulled out the crown hair slide and it
sparkled in the moonlight.

"OH, THAT IS POSH," growled the monster.

“WHERE DOES IT GO?”

“On the top of your head,” said Hannah.

“So it won't get in your way when you're choking and killing stuff,” I added, trying to help.

The monster nodded.

“Shall I pop it in for you?” asked Sugar.

We all held our breath, waiting.

“GO ON THEN,” growled the monster. “I suppose a **BIT OF SPARKLE** won't hurt.”

Sugar gave us a 'be-ready-to-run-for-it' look and flew forwards.

“WAIT!” said the monster, frowning.

Sugar paused in mid air.

“YOU GOT HERE JUST AS THAT DRAGON CHASED OFF MY MAGPIE SERVANT,” said the monster, thoughtfully.

“What dragon?” asked Sugar, innocently, but her wings started to buzz a little faster.

The monster raised an arm towards the sky.

“THAT ONE!” he growled, pointing.

Sure enough, Blaze and Braveleaf were **SPEEDING BACK** towards us **CHASED** by a massive cloud of black and white magpies.



“Heeeeeeeeeelp,” yelled Blaze as he **WHIZZED** past, looping the monster and surrounding it with a flapping magpie cloud.

The time for tricks was over.

Sugar ~~WENT~~ **FLEW UP** through the flurry of wings towards the monster's head. But the Litter King had guessed she was up to something.

"NO! RARGH!"

he roared and he swung a stubby litter arm, knocking Sugar out of the sky.

She landed in the dirt on the opposite side of the clearing.

"Sugar!" screamed Hannah.

We ~~WENT~~ **RAN** to help but Sugar had already jumped up and dusted herself down.

"I'm OK," she said. **"Free the prisoners. Blaze needs back up."**

The **MONSTER** was trying to swat Blaze, too. So far, he hadn't hit him but he was knocking magpies in every direction and

ROARING WITH RAGE.

"SMASH THE ROTTERS! RARGH!"

Sugar tried to take off but one of her wings didn't buzz. It was bent at a funny angle.

"Sugar, is it broken?" gasped Hannah.

Sugar glared at the monster, turning volcano-lava red.

"Not as broken as he's going to be," she said, grimly.

Since she couldn't fly, she ~~SPRINTED~~ for one of the monster's legs and started to climb.

Hannah tugged at my arm.

"We have to free the fairies and foxes," she yelled. "Come on!"

We ~~RAIN~~ around the cages, **ripping** them apart. ~~Foxes~~ leaped out and began to throw themselves at the monster's legs. ~~Fairies~~ flew into the air and started to **battle** the ~~magpies~~.

Sugar was still climbing, **clinging on** for dear life, as the monster spun round, waving his arms.

I kept ripping at the cages until Hannah tugged at my sleeve.

"Jo, look!" she yelled, pointing to the Litter King.

Sugar was sitting on top of the monster's head, riding him as he staggered around.

"Check me out!" she yelled over the noise of the battle. **"I'm a monster fairy!"**

And she clipped the ~~crowd~~ ~~slide~~ onto a wisp of its crisp packet hair.



"NOOOOOO!"

roared the monster.

Packets and wrappers began to drop from the monster's head like **bad dandruff**. Then, his legs started to crumble, first one, then the other, sending him **sprawling** to the floor.

"NOOOOOO!"

he roared.

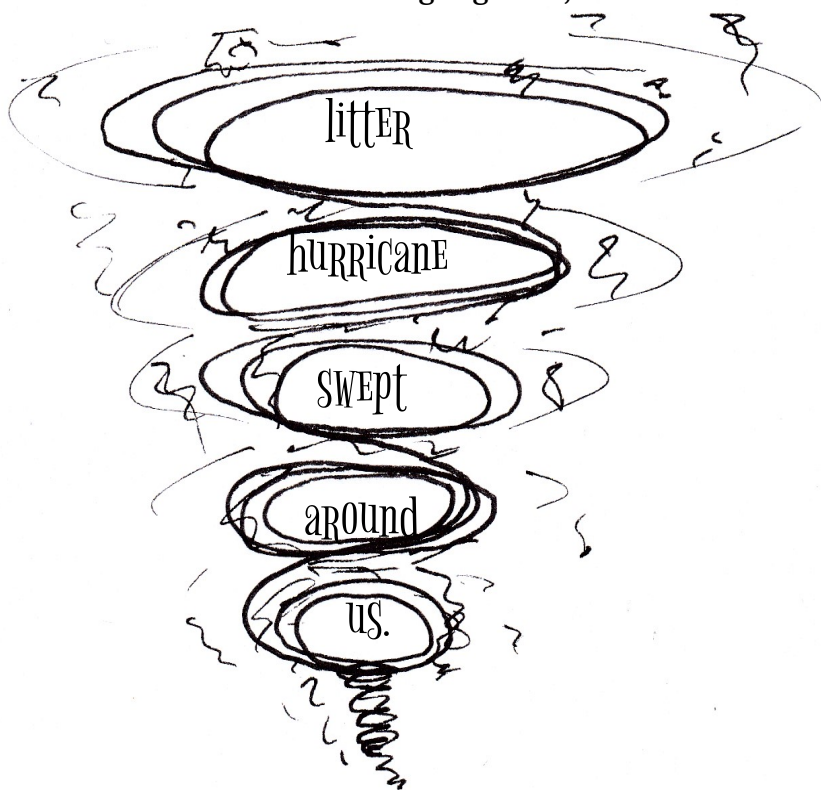
"**Ck-ck-ck-ck-ck,**" screamed the magpies.

The **wind** whipped up, until a **gale** was blowing round the clearing. It was carrying away **litter** and **magpies**, gust by gust.

The last few cages fell apart. The **fairies**

clung to the trees. The ~~foxes~~ crouched low to the ground. The **MONSTER** was roaring furiously as he came apart, bit by bit.

Hannah and I clung together, as a



Finally, the wind died down and everything was still. I opened one eye to peek, **still** a bit

scared about what I might see.

The litter was knee deep in some places.

Fairies and foxes sat half-buried in the rubbish like children in a ball pool. It was an absolute mess – but the monster... was gone.

In the centre of it all, stood an extremely dirty, but triumphant, Sugar.



“Looking good is about actions, not hair clips!” she announced to her dazed

audience. **"And, of course, it's about
expreeeeeesiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiing
yourseeeeeeeeeeeelf!"**

Blaze came to land next to her. He pulled a face at the singing.

"Well-done, Noisy," he said.

She winked at him, turning a happy yellow colour.

Braveleaf sprang from Blaze's back.

His jaw was practically on the floor.

"You...you did it?" he stammered at Sugar. **"You're amazing."**

"Yes, I aaaaaaaaaaaaaaam...." she sang. **"...it's about tiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiime you noticed!"**

She took a theatrical bow towards the foxes and fairies, as Hannah ran to hug her, and the whole clearing burst into applause.