

A Work of Art

by Simon Cooke



SAM



MIA



KAHU



EMMA



JENNY

(holiday programme supervisor)



ARTIST

Scene: The local park. **SAM**, **EMMA**, **MIA**, and **KAHU** sit on a bench surrounded by rubbish. **JENNY** is busy texting. Just in front of the bench, there is a sign covered by a piece of newspaper.

MIA. What a mess!

KAHU. Who dumped this rubbish in our park?

EMMA. Some people had a party here yesterday – they must have done it.

SAM. Dad said the party was something do with a famous artist.

MIA *(pointing)*. Look over there. People are taking photos of all the rubbish, but no one's picking it up.

JENNY *(finishing her text)*. That's where we come in, team. Does anyone know what today is?

KAHU. Friday.

JENNY. Apart from Friday.

SAM. Fish-and-chip day. At home, we always have fish and chips for dinner on Friday.

JENNY. Apart from it being Friday and fish-and-chip day?

EMMA. No idea.

JENNY. It's Environment Day. And we're going to take care of our environment.

MIA. She means we're going to pick up rubbish.

KAHU. Pick up rubbish? I'm supposed to be on holiday!

JENNY. It's important to look after our environment. Imagine if no one picked up their rubbish.

MIA. There'd be mountains of it.

EMMA. It would block roads.

SAM. It would cover houses.

KAHU. It would look like Sam's bedroom!

JENNY *(handing out gloves and sacks)*. Exactly. So keeping our community tidy is very important.

JENNY. Right, I need to send a few important texts, so you start without me.

*She sits on the bench and starts texting.
The others start picking up the rubbish.*

KAHU. This might not be so bad. We might even end up on TV – reporters like stories about kids doing good stuff.

SAM. TV? You wish!

They carry on picking up rubbish until their sacks are full. No one notices the piece of newspaper covering the sign.

EMMA. We've finished.

SAM. I'm exhausted.

MIA. But look at our park – it's spotless!

JENNY (*looking up from her phone and pointing to the piece of newspaper covering the sign*). Good work, team, but you've missed a bit.

KAHU (*picking up the newspaper and looking at the sign*). This sign says there's installation art somewhere in our park. What's installation art, Jenny?

JENNY. No idea. I'll look on the Internet. (*She taps her phone a few times.*) It says that installation art is a three-dimensional artwork that transforms or changes the space it's in.

EMMA. Space ... like a park?

JENNY (*shrugs*). I guess.

Everyone looks around, trying to spot the artwork.

EMMA. I don't see anything.

KAHU. Looks like the same old park to me.

MIA. Same swings and climbing frames.

SAM. Same roundabout and seesaw.

JENNY (*reading the sign*). It must be here somewhere. The sign says the installation shows what happens to communities when people don't help each other. Everything falls into chaos.

SAM. What's chaos?

JENNY. A big mess.

KAHU. Like your bedroom, Sam.

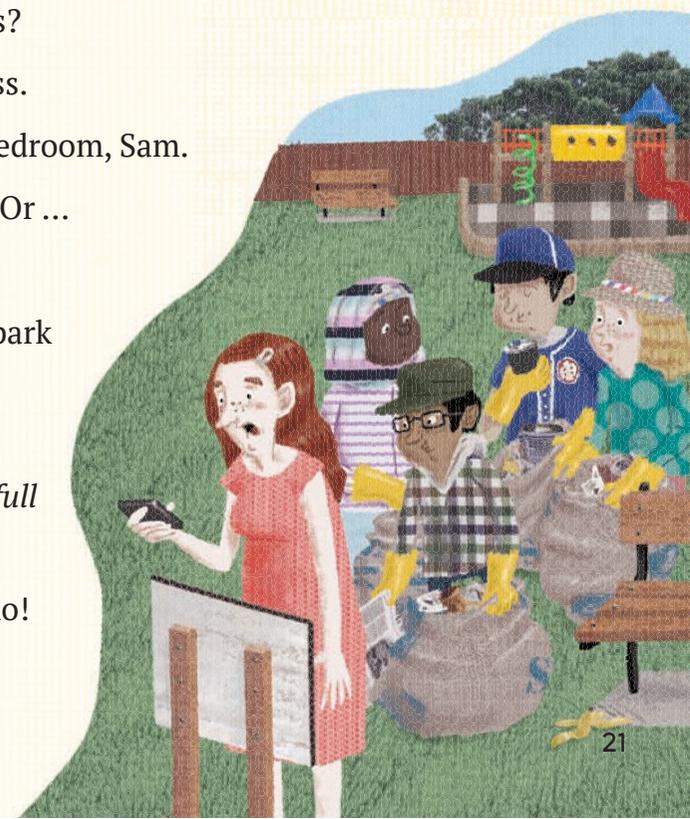
JENNY (*worried*). Or ...

MIA. Or ...?

JENNY. Or like a park full of rubbish.

They all look at their sacks full of rubbish.

EVERYONE. Oh no!





The **ARTIST** enters and walks around.

ARTIST (confused). Where's it gone? Where's my installation?

JENNY. Um ... about that.

ARTIST (sitting down on the park bench and holding his head in his hands). It took me all yesterday afternoon to install. I've got a TV interview in a few minutes, and now I have nothing to show them. This is a disaster!

SAM (apologetically). We cleaned it up.

JENNY. We didn't see the sign until it was too late.

ARTIST (looking thoughtful). You cleaned it up?

KAHU. We didn't realise it was art.

EMMA. We thought it was rubbish.

MIA. It's all here in our sacks.

SAM. We can help you put it back.

JENNY. I'm sorry. It's my fault. I should have noticed.

ARTIST (starting to smile). Don't be sorry. I made the artwork because I was afraid people had stopped caring about their community.

JENNY. So you're not going to tell anyone what we did?

ARTIST. I'm going to tell the TV people.

JENNY. Oh no, please ...

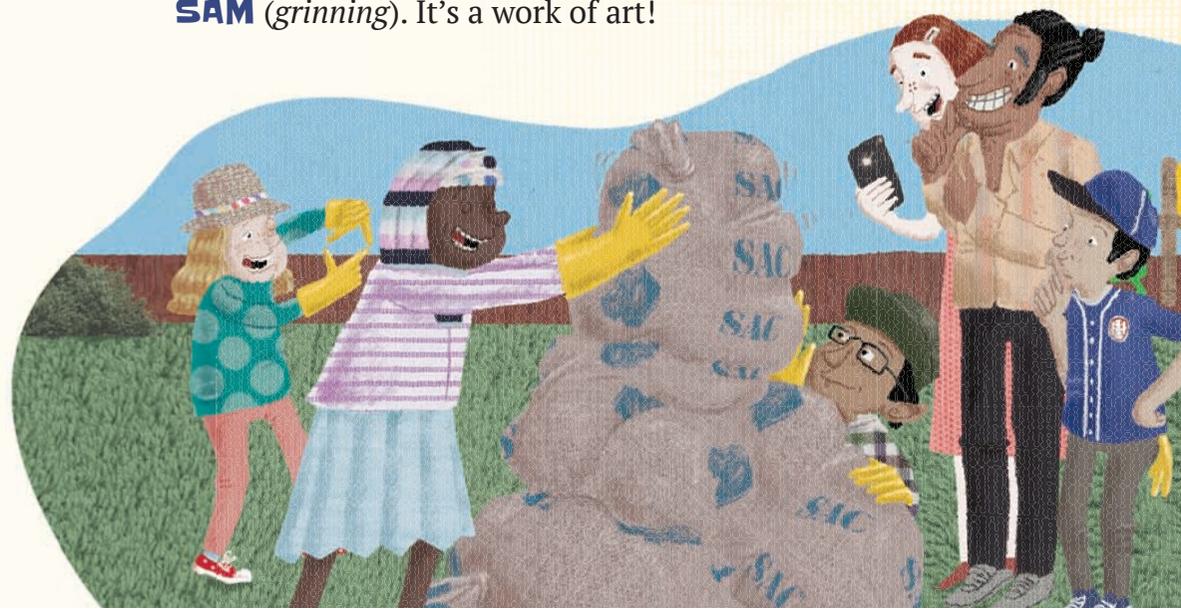
ARTIST. But not because I'm angry. You haven't ruined my installation. You've made it better. Your sacks of rubbish are the new installation – they represent hope for the future. It's easy to see that you all care about the environment.

KAHU. You haven't seen Sam's bedroom. It's a rubbish dump!

SAM. It's not a rubbish dump.

KAHU. Then what is it?

SAM (grinning). It's a work of art!



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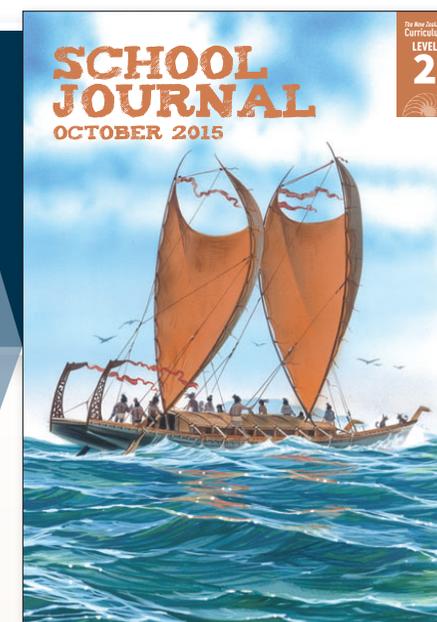
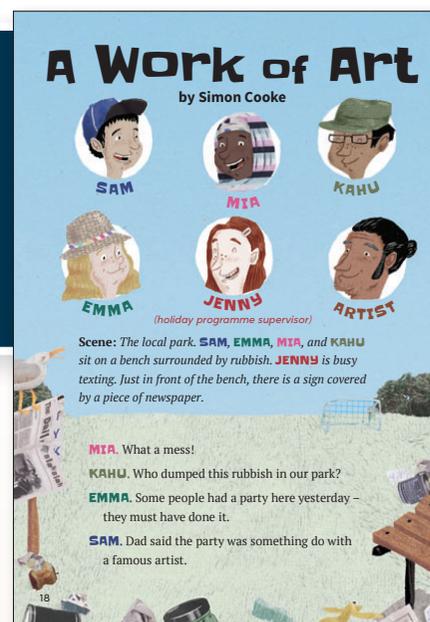
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