

# Professor Clever

by Trish Puharich



ASSISTANT TWO

DEBRA (daughter)

TREVOR (son)

**Scene one.** *The professor's laboratory. PROFESSOR CLEVER is looking out the window and scratching his head. ASSISTANT ONE and ASSISTANT TWO are working on inventions.*

**PROFESSOR CLEVER** (*sounding cross*). What a mess out there in the yard. It's those stupid trees! They're a real problem!

**ASSISTANT ONE.** Why are they a problem, Professor?

**PROFESSOR CLEVER.** They're always dropping their leaves and making a mess.

**ASSISTANT TWO** (*looking out the window, too*). I see what you mean. Someone should do something about them.

**PROFESSOR CLEVER** (*suddenly smiling*). I have a great idea. (*He shouts.*) Trevor! Debra!

**TREVOR and DEBRA** *arrive on skateboards.*

**TREVOR and DEBRA.** Yes, Dad?

**PROFESSOR CLEVER.** I want you to go outside and rake up the leaves.

**TREVOR and DEBRA.** Yes, Dad.

*They go to rake up the leaves.*

**ASSISTANT ONE.** Was that your great idea?

**PROFESSOR CLEVER.** No, I have a brilliant idea for a new invention. I'm going to get rid of one of the biggest problems around.

**ASSISTANT ONE.** Are you going to find a cure for hiccups?

**PROFESSOR CLEVER.** No, better than that.

**ASSISTANT TWO.** Are you going to save all the endangered animals in the world?

**PROFESSOR CLEVER** (*looking smug*). No, better than that, too.

**ASSISTANTS ONE** and **TWO** (*sounding hopeful*). Are you going to sort out global warming?

**PROFESSOR CLEVER.** Nope. Even better than that. I am going to rid the world of those messy trees!

**ASSISTANTS ONE** and **TWO.** What?

**PROFESSOR CLEVER.** You heard me. I'm going to get rid of trees. They never do anything anyway. They just stand there dropping leaves everywhere – and they block out the sun, too. Here's my idea. (*He picks up a notepad and starts drawing in it. The assistants huddle round and watch.*)

What do you think?

**ASSISTANT ONE** (*frowning*).

Well ...

**ASSISTANT TWO** (*also frowning*). Ummm ...



**PROFESSOR CLEVER** (*not listening to his assistants*). Right, let's get to work. This is what we'll need.

*He shows them a list.*

**ASSISTANT ONE.** If you say so. I'll go and get started.

**ASSISTANT TWO.** I'll help you.

*The ASSISTANTS hurry off.*

**Scene two.** *A few days later. The PROFESSOR and his ASSISTANTS are looking proudly at their work.*

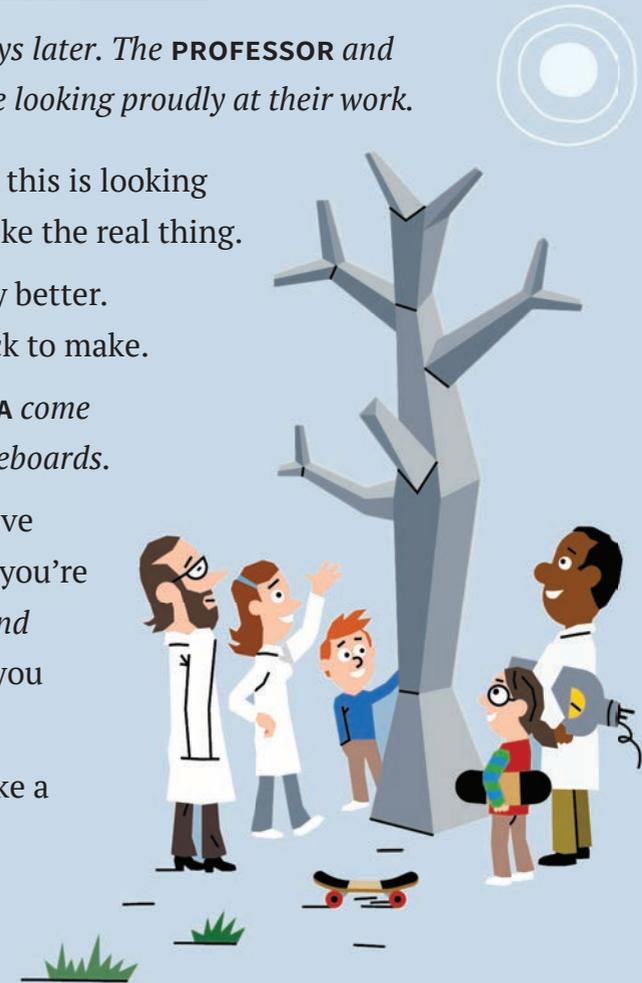
**ASSISTANT ONE.** Hey, this is looking really good. Just like the real thing.

**ASSISTANT TWO.** Only better. And it was so quick to make.

**TREVOR and DEBRA** *come in on their skateboards.*

**TREVOR.** Hi, Dad, we've come to see what you're doing. (*He stops and stares.*) What are you making, Dad?

**DEBRA.** That looks like a concrete tree!



**ASSISTANT ONE.** That's exactly what it is.

**ASSISTANT TWO.** It's looking fabulous, don't you think?

**PROFESSOR CLEVER.** I have created the perfect tree.

**TREVOR.** The perfect tree?

**PROFESSOR CLEVER.** Yes, the perfect tree. This tree will never drop leaves, so I'll never have to rake them up.

**TREVOR** and **DEBRA.** You always make **us** do that anyway!

**PROFESSOR CLEVER.** This tree will never die. It won't rot. It won't grow any new branches to block my sunshine.

**ASSISTANT ONE.** You don't have to plant a seed and wait for it to grow.

**ASSISTANT TWO.** And it's strong. The branches won't break off in a cyclone.

**PROFESSOR CLEVER.** My concrete tree will be famous. People won't need real trees any more.

**TREVOR.** But, Dad, people **will** need real trees.

**PROFESSOR CLEVER** (*sounding really surprised*).  
Whatever for?

**DEBRA.** Trees are really important.

**PROFESSOR CLEVER** and **ASSISTANTS ONE** and **TWO.** Really?

**DEBRA.** Yes, Dad. Trees give us food to eat. They make oxygen for us to breathe.

**TREVOR.** And they give us shade.

**DEBRA.** And we can climb them.

**TREVOR.** And they give us wood.

**DEBRA.** And they look good.

**TREVOR** and **DEBRA.** Trees help the planet!

**PROFESSOR CLEVER** (*putting his hands up*). OK! OK!  
Perhaps my concrete tree isn't such a good idea after all. I'll get rid of it.

*He picks up a hammer and walks towards the tree, but he stands on one of the skateboards and falls over.*



**PROFESSOR CLEVER.** How many times have I told you not to leave those things around?

**TREVOR.** Sorry, Dad.

**DEBRA.** Are you all right?

**PROFESSOR CLEVER.** Yes, I am, luckily. *(He smiles.)* And I've just had another brilliant idea.

**ASSISTANT TWO.** What's that then?

**PROFESSOR CLEVER.** Wheels! They're a real nuisance. Look how I fell over when I stood on that skateboard. It's got me thinking. Why are wheels always round? Why do they roll everywhere when you don't want them to?

**ASSISTANTS ONE** and **TWO** *(nodding)*. Good point.

**PROFESSOR CLEVER.** So what we need is something like this. *(He picks up his pencil and starts drawing again.)* My design for a new wheel – look!

**ASSISTANTS ONE** and **TWO** *(looking over his shoulder)*.

A square wheel! That's really clever, Professor.

**PROFESSOR CLEVER.** That's why they call me Professor Clever. Now, let's get to work!

illustrations by  
Ned Wenlock



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