

LITTLE VIK THE LITTER SPLITTER – a story for children by Jack Hastie

Erin screwed up her sweetie paper and dropped it in a puddle. Mum would have given her a row, she knew, but Mum was busy putting Mac, the big black Labrador's dog poo in a poo bag and she didn't notice.

Erin smirked. "I'm seven. I can do what I like." She opened another sweetie.

"Oh no! Not again!"

Erin jumped. The voice seemed to have come out of the puddle. She looked down into it. The water was clear and still, like a mirror. Erin could see herself and behind her a little fleecy white cloud sailing across the blue sky. That was all. But the voice DID seem to have come from there. She screwed her head around till it was almost upside down, but all she could see was the point of the Pencil monument poking above her shoulder.

Erin was a sensible girl, like all seven year olds. "I must have imagined it," she said sensibly to herself, popped the sweetie into her mouth, screwed the paper up and flicked it into the puddle.

There was a sort of schlooping sound, like when you stir porridge with a spoon. The puddle went all wrinkly and out of it stepped, right beside her, a most unusual figure.

"Litter belongs in the litter bin.  
So do the right thing and throw it in," he chanted.

"Who are you?" She looked him in the eye because he was almost the same height as she was.

"I'm Little Vik, the Litter Splitter>"

"Why are you all covered in red whiskers and what's that thing with horns like a cow on your head?"

"I'm a red bearded Viking. That's my helmet, and they're BULLS' horns, by the way."

Erin was speechless. Mac was chasing rabbits and Mum had sat down for a rest on a seat by the Pencil.

"Do you know that every time you throw away a piece of litter a Valkyrie gets sick?"

"What's a Val-whatsit?"

"They're girls who live in Valhalla, our heaven. Sometimes, there's so much rubbish about on earth they get very sick and when that happens a shooting star goes out."

"Don't believe you. The Vikings were long ago. You're not real."

“Not real!” Vik lifted up his sword and shield and clanged them together. The whiskers in his red beard bristled in anger. “Odin, King of the gods, sent me here specially to be a litter splitter. Look!” He poked his sword into the puddle, skewered Erin’s second sweetie paper on it and popped it into a big blue bag he carried round his tummy. “But one of the Valkyries will still be sick for several days,” he sighed.

Erin sucked on her sweetie. “Don’t care about the Valskyre-people. Anyway you don’t know what I’m doing with my sweetie papers.”

“Oh, yes I do.”

“How?”

“Wherever you can see your reflection, I can see you and I can come and scold you, if you deserve scolding. I saw you in that puddle and I came to scold you, didn’t I?”

“Won’t go near any more puddles!”

“Where else can you see your reflection?”

“Mirrors.”

“And?”

“Windows.”

“What about the pools in the Gogo Burn, or the Noddle? Or the sea when it’s calm? Or the Barrfields boating pond? Or your own bath?”

Erin nodded.

“So I can see you almost anywhere.  
Litte belongs in the litter bin.  
So do the right thing and throw it in.”

Erin unwrapped another sweetie and popped the paper in her pocket.

“That’s better. No more sick Valkyries.”

Mac’s rabbit had bolted down a hole. The big black Labrador came bounding up to Erin and started licking her face.

“Down boy,” she commanded. “Vik, this is my dog.....” But the Little Viking Litter Splitter had vanished.

“Was I dreaming?” she muttered to herself.

Mac wagged his tail in agreement, but of the two sweetie papers she had thrown into the puddle no trace remained. Besides, there was a tuft of bristly red hair lying on the path and it certainly hadn’t come from Mac’s jet black coat.