**Once upon a time, there was a**

**little boy called Zico, who lived on**

**the planet Zonar.**

**Everyone on the planet had a**

**superpower, except for Zico.**

**Zico’s father had eyes in the**

**back of his head and could walk**

**backwards without falling over.**

**His mother could see through**

**walls. She often checked to see**

**whether Zico was actually doing**

**homework in his bedroom, instead**

**of playing on the computer.**

**All the kids at Zico’s school had amazing**

**powers, too. One boy could fly and would**

**swoop into the classroom with a swish of**

**his cape. Another could make fireballs by**

**clicking his fingers. One time, he had**

**thrown a fireball at the teacher. She**

**hadn’t been very happy about it.**

**But Zico had yet to discover his**

**superpower. It was so embarrassing.**

**The other kids at school made**

**fun of him. “Zico has no**

**superpower, Zico has no**

**superpower,” they chanted.**

**Zico pretended that he didn’t care, and**

**would stick his tongue out at them. This**

**made the girls giggle.**

**All the same, deep down, he did care.**

**His mother tried to comfort him.**

**“Your time will come,” she said.**

**But Zico didn’t want to wait. He**

**hoped that he would discover his**

**superpower soon.**

**“I wish that I could live**

**somewhere like planet Earth.**

**No-one has superpowers there**

**and I would be like everyone**

**else,” he thought to himself.**

**So that night, while his parents snored**

**loudly, he crept out to their space car. With**

**a giant whoosh, it shot into the air.**

**Zico stared out the window as it hurtled past**

**the stars, faster than the speed of light.**

**He couldn’t stop smiling. No-one would laugh**

**at him on planet Earth, he was sure of it.**

**But, the smile didn’t last for long.**

**Through Zico’s telescope, planet Earth**

**had looked so blue and pretty. But, as**

**the ship landed, he noticed that it was**

**positively grey. The air reeked and made**

**him cough.**

**Zico decided to explore the planet and**

**went in the direction of a town called**

**Greenville. But Greenville wasn’t very**

**green at all.**

**You see, the people who lived in Greenville**

**were very lazy. They lay around all day**

**snoozing and never bothered to clean up**

**after themselves.**

**When they had finished their dinner, they**

**threw mouldy cheese, rotting tomatoes and**

**sticky bananas out the windows.**

**No-one ever bothered to reuse anything.**

**“Recycling? What a waste of time!” they**

**said.**

**So, over the years, gigantic mounds of**

**rubbish had grown and grown, until they**

**reached the sky.**

**Everyone in Greenville walked around with a**

**clothes peg on their nose to block out the**

**dreadful smell that wafted around the town.**

**The stench was so vile that Zico almost**

**toppled over.**

**“Why do you have to live in such a stinky rubbish**

**pile?” he asked the people of Greenville. “It’s**

**polluting your town.”**

**“Why should we listen to you?” one man said.**

**“Well, Mister Litterbug, it will save you money,**

**for one thing,” Zico replied.**

**The townsfolk were intrigued.**

**“On Zonar, we stitch our clothes and**

**make them as good as new, or take**

**our shoes to the menders to make**

**them last longer,” Zico replied.**

**“I suppose we could all do with a little extra**

**cash in our pockets,” they said.**

**“And after my Mum makes me clean my room, I**

**bring my old toys and books to the charity shop.**

**Even if you don’t want your old stuff, someone**

**else will use it.”**

**“This all sounds so boring!” one boy said.**

**“No way! It’s great fun smashing and crashing**

**glass bottles at the recycling centre. My Dad**

**says that you can save energy if you recycle.**

**We recycle many things and turn them into**

**something useful again,” Zico said with a**

**smile. “If we all pitch in, we can tidy up**

**this place in a flash,” he added.**

**The townspeople all huddled together to decide**

**what to do.**

**“I guess it would be nice to live somewhere**

**clean for a change,” they whispered.**

**“The flies that buzz around the trash**

**are itchy and scratchy, and the rats’**

**squealing drives me crazy,” one girl**

**admitted.**

**“Let’s take a vote,” the mayor**

**said. “All in favour, raise your**

**hand!”**

**With that, dozens of hands shot**

**into the air.**

**The townsfolk took a leaf out of**

**Zico’s book and transformed their**

**old junk into something marvellous.**

**They sorted the rubbish from the paper,**

**plastic, cans or anything that could be**

**recycled.**

**Soon enough there wasn’t a speck of dirt to**

**be seen. The grey haze that had surrounded**

**the town lifted for the first time in years,**

**and the air was fresh and sweet-smelling.**

**The flies and rats didn’t know what**

**to make of it all and stood there**

**with their mouths open. They were**

**astonished that the townsfolk had**

**cleaned up their act.**

**People from all over the world came**

**to marvel at how clean and pretty the**

**town was. They asked Zico to visit their**

**towns too, to show them how he used his**

**powers of persuasion.**

**The mayor of Greenville proudly declared**

**it to be a green city. “You’re a true**

**superhero!” the mayor said. “Now, we’ll**

**have to call you Eco Zico.”**

**The mayor gave him a smart cape with**

**the initials “EZ” stitched in blue across**

**it.**

**Zico smiled. He couldn’t wait to return**

**home to Zonar to tell everyone about**

**his remarkable feat.**

**He didn’t fly, or throw fireballs. He**

**didn’t see through walls, or have eyes**

**in the back of his head. But, Zico did**

**have the best superpower ever: the**

**power to save a planet.**