

The tale of Hunter the Sea Otter

Just as Sibelle had predicted, the weather became much cooler as Cubbacius and Littlenow made their way north in search of Hunter the sea otter. Keeping to the shore line, the beauty of the sea and land was overwhelming to our little heroes and they stopped many times to simply enjoy the majesty of it all.

"Whew," Cubbacius said as he plopped down on a large rock overlooking the Pacific Ocean, "my paws have never been so sore, don't you ever get tired Littlenow?" "Sometimes I do," Littlenow replied, "but it's so important that we find this Hunter fellow, it's all I can think about." "Our friends who live in the sea have been so happy that someone is finally going to tell the story from their point of view that I have been excited to get tired," Littlenow said as he munched contentedly on a discarded newspaper.

"Don't you remember those Dolphins we met a few days ago, they offered to give us a ride straight to the Hunter, but as I remember you would have no part of that." "How could I forget," Cubbacius replied, "I could barely keep up with the conversation you guys were having, those Dolphins are so smart!! And as to riding around on the back of a dolphin, I am very happy here on land, thank you." "They are very smart," said Littlenow, "as a matter of fact they had a real 'hair raising' story to tell about their people problems, we have to come back here after we visit the Hunter to see how we can help them."

"That must have been some story," Cubbacius giggled, "between you and the dolphins you would have to grow some hair before you could raise it." At this point Cubbacius got into a real giggling fit and rolled off the rock across the grass down a steep embankment and onto a small bench. Still giggling and laughing, he rolled only a short way before he smacked into two large black poles sticking out of the sand. As he began to pick himself up he looked more closely at the poles and realized with a start that they weren't poles at all but the tops of large black boots!! "Well what have we here?" thundered a booming voice from way above Cubbacius.

Cubbacius froze, slowly looked upward and into the wicked grin of the Baron Waste!! "So, we meet again, my furry little friend," snarled the Baron. "What are you and that green lizard up to today, still trying to clean this place up, I'll bet? Well, I've about had it with you guys, let's see if you can swim." "Nooo," screeched Cubbacius, as he tried to run away, "Littlenow, help me," he cried. "Not so fast little boy," the Baron said as he swept Cubbacius off the bench and threw him far out into the ocean. "Clean that up, you little meddler," cackled the Baron. Hearing Cubbacius scream Littlenow began to race toward the cliff, just in time to see him go sailing through the air and far out to sea. Skidding to a stop at the edge of a cliff Littlenow was terrified to see the Baron Waste slowly turning his way and rubbing his head with glee. "My lucky day for sure," said the Baron, "I can rid of my planet of both you guys at once."

With this he started up the face of the cliff after Littlenow. In a near panic Littlenow began to back away from the approach of the Baron Waste, keeping one red eye on his little friend Cubbacius as he headed for a splash-down far out into the ocean. The Baron began scrambling faster and faster up the cliff, determined to finish off Littlenow. "Oh Boof, Oh Boof," cried Littlenow as he backed smack into the same rock that Cubbacius was sitting on before he fell down the cliff. Trapped, he looked up to see the Baron Waste looming over him. "Now, you little green nuisance, why don't you join your furry friend out there for a taste of salt water," snarled the Baron as he reached for Littlenow.

Littlenow froze, and in that instant, somewhere in his fuzzy little brain the mighty beast that he once was came thundering back, eager for another chance at the Baron Waste. What would have been another pitiful little "boof" was transformed into a mighty earth shaking roar, louder and more terrifying than a volcano and earthquake combined. The force of it straightened the Baron up and knocked him backwards over the edge of the cliff and down on the beach. While this was happening, our other little hero was flying far out into the ocean, certain that his end was near as the ocean rushed up to meet him. "Oh no" cried Cubbacius, "I don't even know if I can swim, and what I land on a hungry shark?" "Help, help" he screamed as he shut his eyes ready to meet his fate. A second later what should have been very wet and cold was rather soft and smooth as a dolphin leaped from the water and caught Cubbacius just before impact. "Hang on Cubbacius," said the dolphin, "I'll get you safely back to land."

With eyes as big as saucers, Cubbacius held on for dear life, as the dolphin turned for shore, just as Littlenow let out his primeval roar. In an instant, savage glee had turned to trembling fear for the Baron Waste as he tried to clear his head, certain he had heard that roar before. Staggering to his feet he grabbed his hat from the tide and disappeared, returning to his home in wasteland to lick his wounds and try to figure out this latest turn of events. Gliding smoothly on top of the water Cubbacius and the dolphin felt the shock wave of the roar before they actually heard it. "Oh dear" cried the dolphin "something terrible is happening, hold on tight Cubbacius." And with that the dolphin plunged

straight down under the water, and away from whatever mighty force was threatening the land.

Zooming a mile or so out the dolphin resurfaced to get some air and take a peek back toward land, only to find the shore line calm and quite. Sputtering and coughing, Cubbacius cried, "oh no, something horrible has happened to Littlenow, please take me back as quickly as you can, I've got to save my friend." With that the dolphin hurried back to shore and left Cubbacius on the deserted beach. "I'll wait here Cubbacius," said the dolphin, "let me know if I can help." Terrified at what he might find, Cubbacius scrambled up the side of the cliff and over the top, only to see his little friend lying on the ground, unconscious or DEAD!!! Screaming and crying, he picked Littlenow up, "Please wake up Littlenow, please be alright!" Finally Littlenow opened one red eye and muttered a faint little "boof, is that you Cubbacius?" Littlenow managed to say "What was that incredible noise?" it scared me so bad I must have fainted" and then coming fully awake Littlenow began to panic. "Cubbacius, The Baron Waste!! He was right here!! But I thought he got you too, how did you get back to shore?? Is he still there??" "It's ok Littlenow, there is no one here but you and me," Cubbacius said as he tried to calm his friend.

"After the Baron threw me out into the ocean a dolphin came along and saved me and brought me back to the beach." "We heard that terrible roar too, I just knew the Baron had done something terrible to you." "I'm ok, but I really don't know what happened," Littlenow said, "Let's get going Cubbacius, we've got to find this Hunter fellow, and according to Sibille's directions we shouldn't be too far away." Waiving to the dolphin, Cubbacius and Littlenow resume their journey northward, more determined than ever to learn the mystery of the Baron Waste.

On and on they plodded up the coast, cooler turning into downright cold and the shoreline becoming more rocky and barren. "What's that smell Littlenow?" Cubbacius asked as they walked closer to the waterline. "It smells a little like the cars the people drive everywhere and, oh nooooo!!!" Cubbacius found himself flat on his back having slipped on solid looking rock that was covered with a slick black coating. "I'm afraid that is the oil spill," Littlenow said, "Look on up the beach, its everywhere!" Looking past his blackened paws Cubbacius saw the rocky beach stretching out as far as he could see, all covered with that sticky black goo.

"It's horrible" cried Cubbacius, "How did this happen?" "Why the people did it, my boys" said a voice from out in the water, "with a little help from the Baron Waste of course." Startled, Cubbacius and Littlenow turned around to see a sleek whiskered head poking out of the water. "I'm Hunter," it said, "I hear you are looking for me." "Hunter!!!" cried Cubbacius. "Oh boy we really did find you. I'm Cubbacius B. Bear and hit is my friend Littlenow, we're traveling all over the world to help clean up the environment and Sibille the Sea Turtle told us you could tell us about the oil spills."

"Well that is true enough," said Hunter, "come on back down the beach little way, there is a clear spot where we can sit and talk." With that Hunter headed down the shore line and around a bend with Cubbacius and Littlenow slipping and sliding after him. "This will do fin," Hunter said as he paddled ashore on a clean little sandy area tucked into a cove. "They managed to clean this pot pretty well." Sitting there on the sand, cleaning the oil off of themselves, Cubbacius and Littlenow were told the tale of the oil spill by one of its survivors, Hunter the Sea Otter. "I'll never forget it," Hunter said as he started his story, "It was a beautiful day kind of like this one. I was playing out in the sound with some of my friends . . .