



Findel and Pomido

The treasure of the mini-Ents

Kevin Oscar White

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Author: Kevin Oscar White

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Foreword

I would like to sincerely thank everyone who contributed to the creation of *Findel and Pomido – The treasure of the mini-Ents*.

First of all, my greatest source of inspiration: the magic that lives in our imagination. Thanks to a creative environment, the world of FACTS, my family and friends, I was able to bring this adventurous world to life.

I also want to thank my readers and beta readers for your enthusiasm. Your imagination and love for stories continuously inspire me and motivate me to keep writing new adventures with joy.

Finally, a special thanks to the staff of FACTS. Without their energy and valuable feedback, this story would not have come to fruition. Collaborating with you as an author is a great privilege, for which I am very grateful. Anne-Marie Steenhoudt also deserves a special mention here. Thank you for all your help and the wonderful moments of brainstorming about our stories.

This story is written for all young adventurers who believe in the power of magic and connection. It shows that even the smallest creatures can make a big difference, and that sacrifice and friendship always open the way to hope.

I hope you get just as immersed in this enchanting world as I was when I wrote it. Let your imagination run free and enjoy the adventure!

Together, we make this world just a little more magical!

Happy reading!

Kevin

Chapter 1

Grandma Sprunge

***I**t was a drizzly Friday, somewhere in the middle of autumn. Black clouds had been hanging over the village all day. Every so often, the threatening sky released a heavy downpour, only for the clouds to drift on again.*

It was one of those days when grown-ups often say: 'Well, it's too miserable to go out, that's for sure,' or 'It's raining cats and dogs!' School had just finished, and the sun had already set.

In the twilight of that evening, a grey car drove through the street where the Sprunge family's farm was located. The vehicle drove through several deep puddles before coming to a stop.

Fred Sprunge, son of Mr. and Mrs. Sprunge, had just parked his car when the back door on the roadside swung open immediately. A little boy stuck his feet out. With his bright yellow rain boots, he jumped out of the car, exactly into a puddle of rainwater. The splashing droplets made wet spots on his dark brown trousers, but his exuberant giggle showed he loved the playful moment.

'Is that really necessary?' called father Fred, walking quickly around the car, having heard Peter's giggle. He looked at his

youngest child with an angry glare, frowned his eyebrows, and shook his head disapprovingly.

'No worries?' the boy asked, shrugging his shoulders. 'I'll take them off right away when we get inside, Dad.'

But Fred remembered his mother's words when he was a little boy who had gone inside the farmhouse with wet boots. 'Boots off!' he could still hear her shouting in his mind.

'Grandma probably just cleaned, and she definitely wouldn't be happy with dripping boots,' muttered Fred, while raising the same warning finger his mother used to show him long ago.

The sound of a second splash made Fred's blood rise to his ears. 'Fiona!' he called angrily to his daughter. 'Blimey, you're supposed to set an example! Come out of that water, now!'

Fiona looked at her younger brother. Feeling guilty, Peter brought his hand to his mouth. Fiona grinned mischievously at him and shrugged. 'Oh, Grandma really doesn't mind, Dad,' she said reassuringly. She gestured with one hand to her father, indicating he needn't worry.

The eleven-year-old teenager wore a dark green coat, bought to grow into, and blue pants. She vigorously shook her pink rain boots, knocking off the droplets. Then she stepped out of the puddle with exaggerated large steps.

The brightly dressed girl walked over to her brother and grabbed his shoulders. 'You really... shouldn't... do that... anymore, Peter!' she said, shaking his shoulders and giving him a

wink. Then she turned with a broad smile to her father. He had already noticed the big-sister game but couldn't help but laugh at her clever response.

'Thanks for your help, girl,' said Fred with a somewhat defeated tone. They then walked together towards his parents' farm.

An electric bell, only ringing after three firm pushes, caused a dull rumble in the hallway. The wooden front door of the farmhouse creaked open.

A sturdy lady with a round face appeared in the doorway. She was wearing two grey slippers, a blue striped dress, and an apron with flowers. A black hairpin kept her grey hair neatly in place.

Although the children visited every week at the same time, Mrs. Sprunge excitedly greeted them: 'Look who we have here! Fiona and Peter! Come in quickly and take off your boots!' She gave her son Fred a nod and smiled briefly in greeting.

Mrs. Sprunge loved her son, but her attention at that moment was focused on the two young ones she had been caring for every Friday since they were little. Usually, it was an evening full of games, drawings, coloured pencils, markers, and for several years now, story time.

'You're much friendlier than when I was standing in the hall with wet boots,' Fred Sprunge remarked.

'You kept them on more often than you took them off,' Mrs. Sprunge replied with a grin.

The children ran to their grandmother and hugged her. Like many grandmothers, Mrs. Sprunge's main concern was that her grandchildren ate and drank enough to grow well. The reunion often brought a stream of questions: 'Have you eaten yet? Shall we... roast a marshmallow? Or perhaps... have a warm cup of hot chocolate?' The children nodded enthusiastically to the last suggestion.

'Mom... they've already eaten at home, please don't load them with too much sweets,' Fred cautiously suggested.

'Don't worry, darling. No need to fret. After all, you've done just fine too,' Mrs. Sprunge said, looking curiously at her son's rounded belly.

Father Fred walked back to the car and called out, 'Tomorrow morning? Ten o'clock?' Mrs. Sprunge nodded and waved goodbye to her son as he drove away. Then she closed the front door behind her.

The large wall clock in the farmhouse hallway just struck six o'clock. The echo lingered for a while before fading away, and Grandma Sprunge waited until the last sound disappeared. Then she looked at her grandchildren and said: 'First take off your boots, and then we can read a story together by the fireplace. Do you think that's a good idea? For you, Peter, two scoops of chocolate powder?' she asked, already heading towards the kitchen.

Peter's eyes sparkled. 'Yes, thank you, Grandma!' he exclaimed happily. Then he looked at his sister with a longing gaze for hot chocolate.

'Maybe Grandma will read us again from the stories of the nymphs..., ' Fiona suggested, curious how her brother would react. That idea sounded like music to his ears.

'YES!' Peter cheered excitedly. 'I'll ask her right away!' After hanging his raincoat on a hook and placing his boots on a mop, he tiptoed on wet socks towards the kitchen. Meanwhile, Fiona was struggling a bit with the zipper of her oversized winter coat.

'Hurry up..., ' Peter said impatiently, already holding the door handle. He stepped into the kitchen and stood next to Mrs. Sprunge. Peter looked pleadingly at his grandmother and asked, 'Grandma... could you maybe read us a story about Findel and Pomido later?'

'Of course I will,' she replied with a smile. Meanwhile, she stirred in the steaming pot of milk and said: 'Choose a book from the shelf and sit cosily by the fireplace. I'll be there soon.'

Peter went to the living room and stood just behind the door, near the oak bookshelf of his grandparents. Several rows of colourful books were neatly organised on the shelf, sorted by colour, title, or character.

There was something for everyone in Mrs. Sprunge's bookcase. That was the result of years of collecting stories. Peter admired the tidy shelves of books of all kinds: nature books, notebooks

with pictures to be glued in, various comics, travel guides to faraway places, and encyclopaedias — about everything imaginable. But in the large cabinet, there were mainly... stories. A whole lot of stories. Imaginative books with magical creatures, true stories, and even books with subjects that made your head spin — like space or the inner human body.

The most noticeable were the children's stories. Each one featured magical covers with fairy-like beings or showed worlds where you could only dive in through your own imagination. For Mrs. Sprunge, reading was, besides being an enjoyable pastime, clearly a true passion.

Fiona had overheard the conversation between her grandmother and her brother and immediately went to the bookshelf. Standing beside Peter, she ran her fingers along the spines of the books he couldn't reach yet, and suddenly said, very convinced: 'This one!' She slid a green book towards herself and let it drop into her hands. Wondering, she looked at the cover, which already gave a little hint about the story inside. On the cover, there was a beautiful drawing of two forest nymphs, with something next to them that looked like a small tree.

'Can I read the title? Can I? Can I?' Peter asked curious, hopping up and down to see the cover better.

'You may,' Fiona answered, handing him the book.

Peter held it tightly with both hands and carefully looked at the drawing on the cover, as he walked towards the bean bags in

front of the fireplace. These were prepared every week to make every Friday evening cozy. The smell of burning wood had already spread through the living room, and the crackling fire was glowing behind him. He sank into one of the bean bags and loudly read the title: 'Findel and Pomido - The Treasure of the Mini-Ents!'

'Oh, that's really a very beautiful book!' Grandma Sprunge exclaimed from the kitchen when she heard Peter reading the title aloud.

A little later, grandma came into the living room with two large mugs of hot chocolate and a cup of tea. She sat down in her rocking chair. Peter handed her the book and smiled at his sister, who had already settled into a bean bag. Grandma Sprunge's evening was now perfect: a good book, her grandchildren, the cozy fireplace, and a fresh cup of tea. She didn't need anything more to be happy. She put on her angular reading glasses, rubbed her fingers over the cover of the book, and opened it.

Chapter 2

The mini-Ent

In Silvaña, a land not far from here, lies a hidden world full of magic and wonders. In this lush and enchanting land live various kinds of creatures; some more magical than others.

One of these creatures living in Silvaña are the nymphs of the Eryn forest. The large forest where these nymphs dwell stretches across the entire southern part of Silvaña and lies right next to the Zephyra Sea beach.

A forest nymph can best be compared to a fairy or a small elf. They have four transparent wings on their back—like those of a dragonfly or damselfly—a round face with a small nose, pointed ears, and always a light blush on their cheeks. Besides the nymphs, other animals and forest dwellers also live in the Eryn forest, but of all the creatures, they are certainly the bravest and most adventurous.

One day, two nymphs found themselves on the Zephyra Sea shore, just outside the Eryn forest. On the high rocks and cliffs of the beach, they could easily practice their flying skills.

Findel, the smaller of the two, stood on one of the highest rocks. He wore a brown adventurer's trousers with wide legs, a bright green jacket opened at the chest, and brown diving goggles with large lenses around his neck.

Pomido, the slightly older nymph, stood below on the beach and looked at her best friend. She wore the exact same clothes, although they fit her a bit tighter because she was a little bigger. Around her neck, she also wore a white handkerchief knotted with red dots.

Findel was ready on the rock for a daring dive downwards. Although he could already fly very well, he wanted to learn the most difficult techniques and flying skills to become the most talented nymph of all the Eryn forest.

'Go on! Jump, Findel! Otherwise, you'll never get the hang of it completely!' called Pomido, raising a fist to encourage her best friend.

'You can do it for sure!' she added. Pomido admired Findel's perseverance because every time he succeeded in learning a new technique, her heart would leap with happiness. She was always quick to tell the other nymphs of the Eryn forest about his daring jumps and aerial skills.

Findel looked down from the rock and nodded confidently at Pomido. He cupped his hands around his mouth and shouted, 'I'm doing it now! I can do it!' He put on his diving

goggles, brought his arms to his sides, and clenched two strong fists with determination.

The young forest nymph stepped a few paces back, bent his knees, and then ran swiftly to the side of the rock. With both feet together, he leapt in a half-arch over the edge and let himself fall. He pressed his arms firmly against his body and closed his wings. His goggles were pressed against his face. The wind moved his lips and cheeks up and down.

When he was almost at the ground, the nymph opened his transparent wings and flew just above the ground to land right in front of Pomido's feet. He immediately took the goggles from his face and placed them on his head.

‘Did you see that?’ asked the adventurous nymph proudly.

‘That was truly a fantastic dive!’ replied Pomido. She winked at her friend and gave a thumbs-up.

‘Shall we head back to the forest now?’ asked Findel, still enjoying his daring jump.

Pomido smiled and already walked towards the first tree lines at the edge of the Eryn forest.

‘Fly or walk, best flyer of Eryn?’ she teased.

Findel laughed and thought for a moment. ‘I think I’d rather walk now. My wings have already done their best today,’ he answered. ‘By the way, I’m pretty hungry, do you feel like eating something when we’re back at our fort?’

‘Sure!’ said Pomido, smiling brightly. ‘There are probably some cookies or something left...’

Thinking about a snack, Findel suddenly walked a bit faster. His goggles slipped in front of his eyes and tilted down to his nose. He turned to Pomido and made a funny face. They burst out laughing, and Pomido had to hold her stomach because she was laughing so hard. Then they continued walking towards the forest together.

Since childhood, they had been the best of friends because their families lived in the same tree in the Eryn forest. Pomido was a bit taller and older, so she sometimes acted like a big sister. She stepped a little closer and gently pulled her friend towards her. Her hug made Findel feel shy, but he let her.

Suddenly, Findel saw something moving along the path between the trees. The moment he looked at it, it froze in place. The strange figure or creature realised it had been seen. Findel’s heart pounded in his chest. ‘Did you see that, Pomido?’ he whispered softly. Standing like a statue, he looked straight ahead and, out of fright, spread his arms in case danger was imminent.

‘What? What do you see?’ Pomido asked curiously, quickly scanning around. Because she didn’t immediately see what he meant, she looked in all directions.

Findel pointed to a small, brown, knobby piece of wood. 'There's something in the middle of the path. Look, there!' he whispered.

'Oh, I see it now. What could it be?' Meanwhile, Pomido stepped a few small paces closer to the piece of wood to get a better look.

'It looks like a little stump,' Findel whispered almost inaudibly.

Pomido looked questioningly at Findel, noticing he was still wearing his diving glasses. He grabbed the glasses by the sides and turned two screws, which allowed him to enlarge or reduce the view. That adjustment had been made by his Uncle Freck, so he could also use the glasses as a telescope or a microscope.

'I'm almost... there,' Findel said concentrated, sticking his tongue out slightly as he turned the screws on the glasses.

Pomido passed her friend and encouraged him to follow her. 'Come on, you're not afraid of a little piece of wood, are you?' she teased.

'She's right. Don't be silly,' Findel said to himself. He placed the glasses back on his head and hurried after Pomido.

As they approached, the nymphs saw that indeed, a small stump was standing in the middle of the path. On each side, two twigs stuck up, with some fresh green leaves attached and some larger ones on top.

‘Where did that come from all of a sudden?’ Findel asked, kneeling down and gazing at the little tree in wonder.

Pomido shrugged and sat cross-legged. ‘I don’t know,’ she replied.

‘Could someone have placed it here?’

‘But who? Would someone want to tease us and have put this little stump here?’

‘Tease us? There’s no one around,’ Findel looked around to check if any other nymphs were nearby.

‘No, indeed, no one else is here,’ Pomido decided. She leaned closer to the little tree and carefully examined it from all sides. Gently, she grabbed one of the green leaves and stroked it softly.

Suddenly, a high voice that was almost inaudible giggled, ‘Hihihi...’

The nymphs quickly jumped back.

The little stump opened two tiny eyes hidden in its bark. ‘That tickles...’ said a small mouth.

Startled and completely surprised, Pomido jumped up and flew backwards.

Findel looked at her with a big smile and said, ‘You’re not really afraid of a little piece of wood, are you?’ Then he turned to the little tree. ‘Hi, who are you?’ asked Findel curiously, inspecting the tree from all sides.

‘I’m Tri, and I’m a mini-Ent,’ replied the little stump, shaking with its twigs and causing the green leaves to rustle back and forth.