

Ninka Reittu

Storm and Saana in the forest



**Outdoor Etiquette
stories**

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Doggy Dougherty's birthday



Meet Storm, Saana, Grandad Onni and Doggy Dougherty, the main characters of this story. I will now tell you about Doggy Dougherty's birthday. The plan was to celebrate it outdoors in the nearby national park. It had an amazingly beautiful campfire site, almost like built for a party.

Since Doggy Dougherty was a true night owl, they decided to have the party after dark. It was early summer and a beautiful blue dusk spread into the forest, keeping it light for a few hours into the night. Everyone got a fancy headlamp to wear. Doggy Dougherty was also wearing a light collar with beautiful flashing lights and a new reflective leash attached to it. They packed their rucksacks full of snacks, which this time consisted mostly of birthday treats.

Grandad Onni was excited about the national park. He was carrying a herbarium from his schooldays. It was as old as the hills, of course, as Grandad Onni was almost a hundred years old. His age was not catching up with him, though, and he sprinted along the paths like a little boy. The herbarium was in his ancient satchel, which had just and just enough room for it.

They ventured out around nine o'clock in the evening.
At that hour in May, the forest was beautifully blue and
filled with evening birdsong.

The path had been restored and it was wide enough for them to
walk side by side. But at times, they had to walk in single file along
duckboards. Storm was leading the way with Doggy Dougherty,
who had his nose to the wind at all times, sniffing the movements
of forest animals. Oh, how he loved his adventure in the nocturnal
forest!.

Saana walked after Storm, followed by Grandad Onni, who kept
stumbling as he was reading the map along the way. It was pretty
difficult to walk and read the map at the same time, and so
Grandad Onni stopped. And then he noticed something interesting
in the forest. It was a flower, a fairy slipper orchid, to be exact.
Grandad Onni could not get a clear view from afar, and so he
decided to wander off the trail a bit to take a closer look at the
delightful flower.

-Why not, Onni thought to himself. He was just about to lift
his boot from the path into the tall grass, when something
grabbed his coat. That something was Saana. She was
standing there with her eyes pinned on Grandad.

-Grandad, you are not allowed to stray away
from the path in the national park, Saana said.
-I hear you, but when I was a little boy, we used to run
about in the forests instead of sticking to the paths.
-That's what we do in the forest near our home, too,
but it's not a good idea here in the national park.
And right here, in an area of restricted access, it's
actually forbidden, Saana said knowingly.
-Let me show you why, she continued.



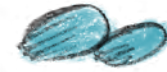
Storm and Doggy Dougherty had now joined them. All four of them were standing on the path, and Saana started adjusting her headlamp. At first, she lit up the tiny little fairy slipper orchid. Then she adjusted her headlamp so that it illuminated both sides of the path. And then they saw what was hiding in the dense and dusky forest. The entire embankment was covered in the rare little flowers, twinkling in the forest like stars.



-How awful! If I'd trudded out there to look at that flower, I would've trampled on at least half of these beauties, Grandad Onni sighed, sounding upset.

-Luckily that didn't happen! Saana said chirpily and took out a camera from her rucksack. The four of them admired the rare orchids blooming in the summer night, and Saana took many beautiful photos of them.

Then, they continued towards the campsite. A breathtakingly beautiful view was waiting for them by the pond. Dusk was rising from the surface of the pond, making everything look magical. They spread their snacks onto the benches at the campfire site, and Grandad lit a fire.



Doggy Dougherty was over the moon: he got sausages and many hugs from everyone for his birthday. Grandad and the children sang Doggy Dougherty's favourite song called "Squirrel song".



At bedtime, the group packed all their things, snacks and rubbish into their rucksacks and put out the fire. For a moment, they sat in silence, listening to the sounds of the summer night. They walked back without their lamps, as dawn was already breaking. Back at home, Doggy Dougherty had lots to tell his doggy friend Musti, who got bits of sausage as a little souvenir.

Later, Saana gave Grandad Onni some photos she had taken of the orchids during their trip. Grandad Onni glued them into his new album called "Grandad Onni's new herbarium".



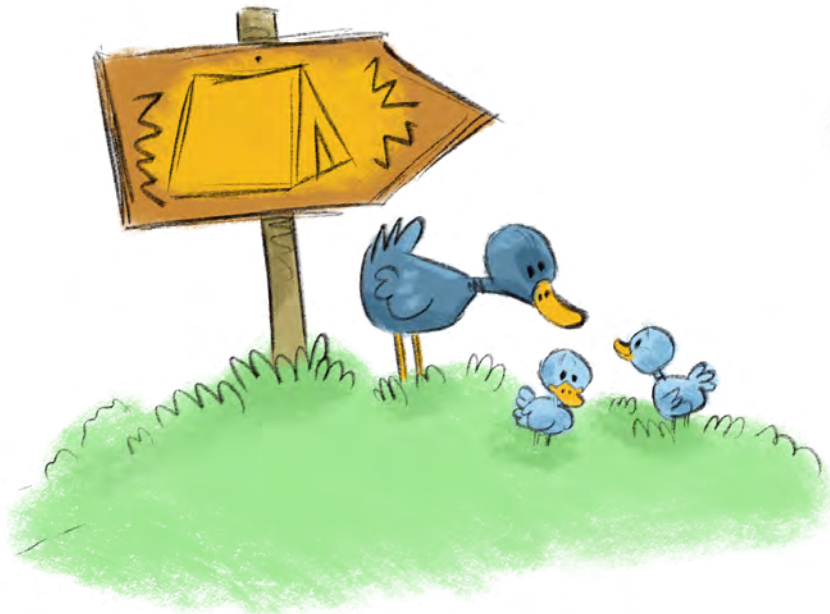
A night in the forest

Storm loved the stars. He had always dreamt of being able to fly to the moon or a distant galaxy.

-I want to be an astronaut! he announced very decisively.

Grandad Onni and Saana knew little Storm well enough to realise that he would be able to make his dream come true.

Storm had been given a telescope for his sixth birthday. It was a magnificent brass apparatus, and you could actually see the nearest astronomical objects with it. Every evening, Storm dragged his telescope and a star chart onto the front steps of his home, wrapped himself in a blanket and started looking at the stars twinkling in the distance.



One evening, Storm was looking through his telescope as usual. Saana was reading a book in a hammock and Grandad Onni was knitting a scarf. Doggy Dougherty had been given a juicy bone to chew. Storm put his telescope down and looked contemplative.

-I cannot see all the stars that should be visible right now. It's almost like there's a curtain between me and them in the sky, Storm said, sounding upset.



-That's exactly true. It's called light pollution, Saana said knowingly, lying in her hammock.

- Yuck! Storm said in a huff. -How can we get rid of it? I'd like to see all the stars, he continued.

-Unfortunately light pollution exists almost everywhere, but you can still find places in nature where there is less of it, and you can see a great many more stars, Grandad Onni said.

-I want to go to a place like that! Storm said, jumping down from his viewpoint and tossing his blanket aside.



-Can we take my telescope and spend the night somewhere really deep in a forest, where there's none of that icky light pollution about? Storm enthused.

-Ok, but first we need to find a suitable place. Tonight we will still sleep at home, Grandad Onni laughed.

The following morning, which happened to be a Saturday, all four of them sat down at the kitchen table and studied a map. Together, they picked a beautiful national park for their overnight trip. It was located a nice distance away from the hustle and bustle of the city, particularly from the glow of its street lamps.

After choosing their destination, they packed their rucksacks. They had to pack quite a lot for their overnight trip, and Storm carried the extra weight of the brass telescope in his rucksack. Luckily Doggy Dougherty had his own little backpack, so they did not have to carry his grub. They took a bus to the national park. When they arrived, they were faced with an entire jungle of signs.



There were all kinds of signs, big and small. Now they had to find the right one that would show them where to camp. Could you point out the correct sign for the campers?

Well, the tent sign, of course, told the campers where to go. Storm was the first one to follow the tent signs and the yellow dots, which pointed them in the right direction.



The path was astoundingly beautiful. It wound through a dark spruce forest, descended to a meadow-like valley, dived down amongst ferns and eventually took them to a pond. Grandad Onni had taken with him a faded, orange canvas tent. It was big enough for all of them to sleep in, all bundled up. It took the full effort of three people and a dog to set up the tent, but eventually they managed to get it up nicely.



-This tent is full of great memories from my youth! Grandad Onni chuckled, crawling into the tent with only his hairy legs sticking out; it seemed like he had been considerably shorter as a young boy.

As they were waiting for nightfall, they ate their snacks and sang camp songs. Nocturnal birds were singing in the forest, and everything was incredibly peaceful. As darkness began to fall, the stars appeared. One by one, a new, bright lamp came on in the sky, and before long, there was a myriad of them.

Storm dug out his telescope and star chart. He stood almost breathless, admiring the wonderful work of art in the sky.



-One day I will fly to space, Storm said to Grandad Onni and Saana, who were sitting on a patch of moss next to him, admiring the starry sky.

-I'm sure you will do just that, Grandad Onni said, stroking the little boy's fluffy hair. -But first you get to be a tiny little boy and admire the stars here with us, he continued and gave Storm a warm cuddle.

Respect nature

One day in early summer, Storm and Saana decided to go out on their kick scooters. It was an exquisite June morning, and everything was bathed in a bright green glow. It was hard to even imagine that only a few months earlier, all this had been covered in snow.

The children were scooting towards the sea shore. They had their binoculars with them, as it was a good time for spotting baby animals out in nature.

-First one to the top is the winner!
Storm cried and started kicking as fast as he could with his tiny silver scooter.

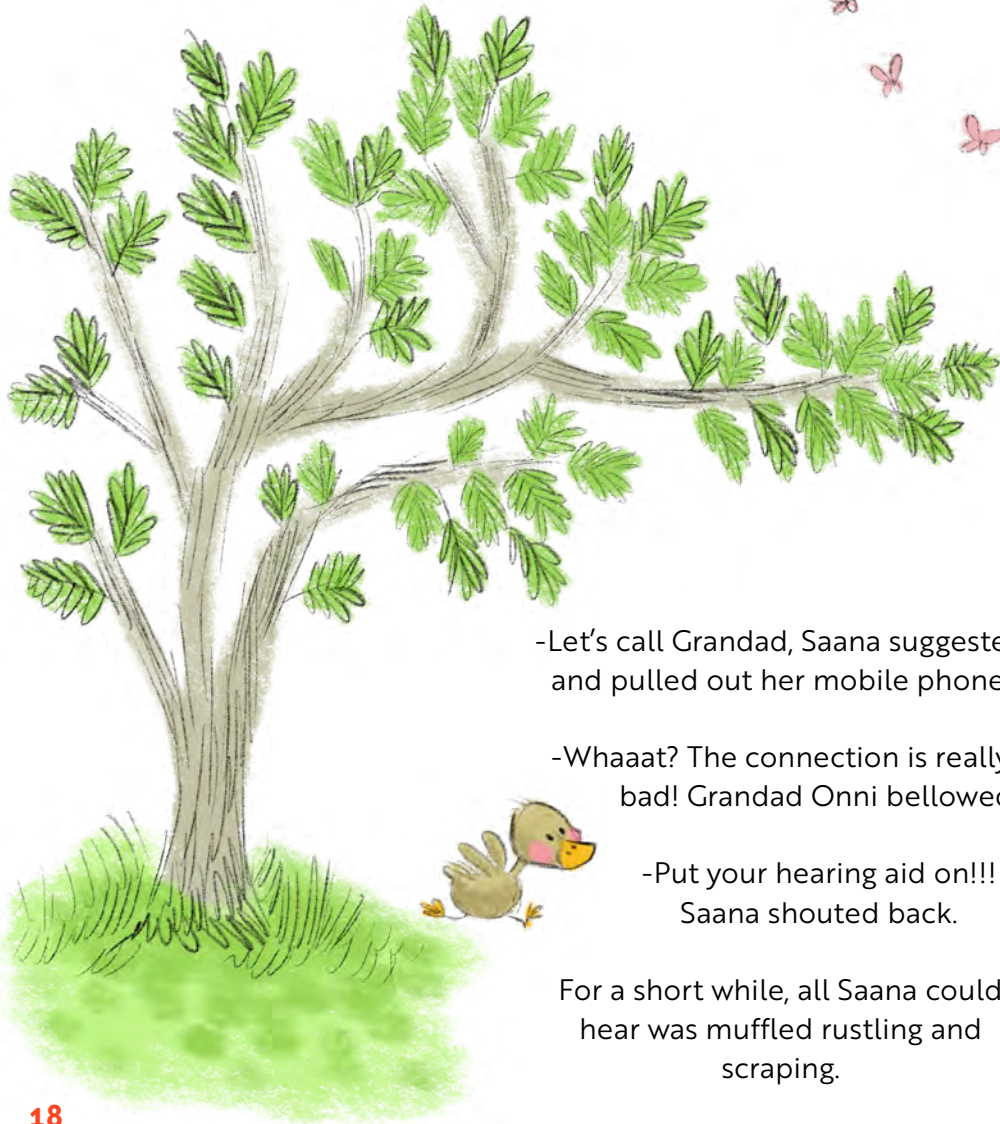
Saana raced right behind him with her red scooter. After a fierce race, they both arrived on top of a small hill pretty much the same time. They stopped to catch their breath and laugh. And right then, they noticed something standing in the middle of the road. Or some things.



The children sneaked closer and noticed five ducklings huddled up together. The baby birds looked miserable on the hard tarmac.

-What should we do? Saana whispered to Storm.

-Maybe we need to take them to a zoo?
Storm replied, also in whisper.

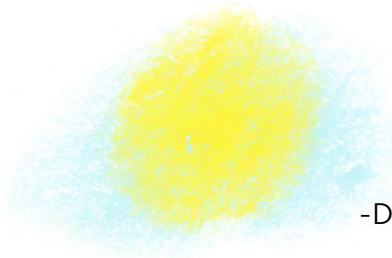


-Let's call Grandad, Saana suggested and pulled out her mobile phone.

-Whaaat? The connection is really bad! Grandad Onni bellowed.

-Put your hearing aid on!!!
Saana shouted back.

For a short while, all Saana could hear was muffled rustling and scraping.



-DID YOU MANAGE TO TURN IT ON?
Saana shouted

-Why do you always shout at me, dear child, Grandad replied, sounding slightly annoyed.

The children exchanged a meaningful look: "Why does it always have to be like this?". Then Saana told Grandad about the ducks and the road and everything.

-All right. Now, children, it would be good if you moved the ducklings out of the way. Maybe to the grassy area next to the bike lane, Grandad advised.
-How can we do that? Storm asked



-You take the ducklings carefully into your palm, one at a time. Be very careful not to drop them or twist their legs, Grandad replied.

-Ok... Saana said. And then what?

-Well, their mother is very likely to be somewhere close by, and when the situation calms down, she will come back for her offspring.

The children looked around, but they could not see any sign of the mother duck, only the peeping ducklings.

-Ok, we'll do as you said, Grandad. We'll give you a call as soon as we have moved the ducklings. Saana ended the call and put her phone into her pocket.

Very, very gently, the children carried the baby ducks, one at a time, into the tall grass next to the bike lane. The grass provided a cool shelter for the birds, and they calmed down straight away.

After rescuing all the ducklings, the children took their scooters and sat down on a nearby bench to wait and see what would happen.



Time passed remarkably slowly. After an hour, Saana was fed up waiting and pulled out her mobile phone again.

-Nothing is happening, she whispered to Grandad Onni.

-Be patient, my darling, Grandad said calmly.

And right then, the tall grass next to their bench started swaying, and the mother duck appeared. First, it waddled onto the road and looked around. Then it started to croak gently.

The ducklings responded by peeping, and the mother duck waddled towards them along the warm tarmac. The children watched the scene in quiet amazement.

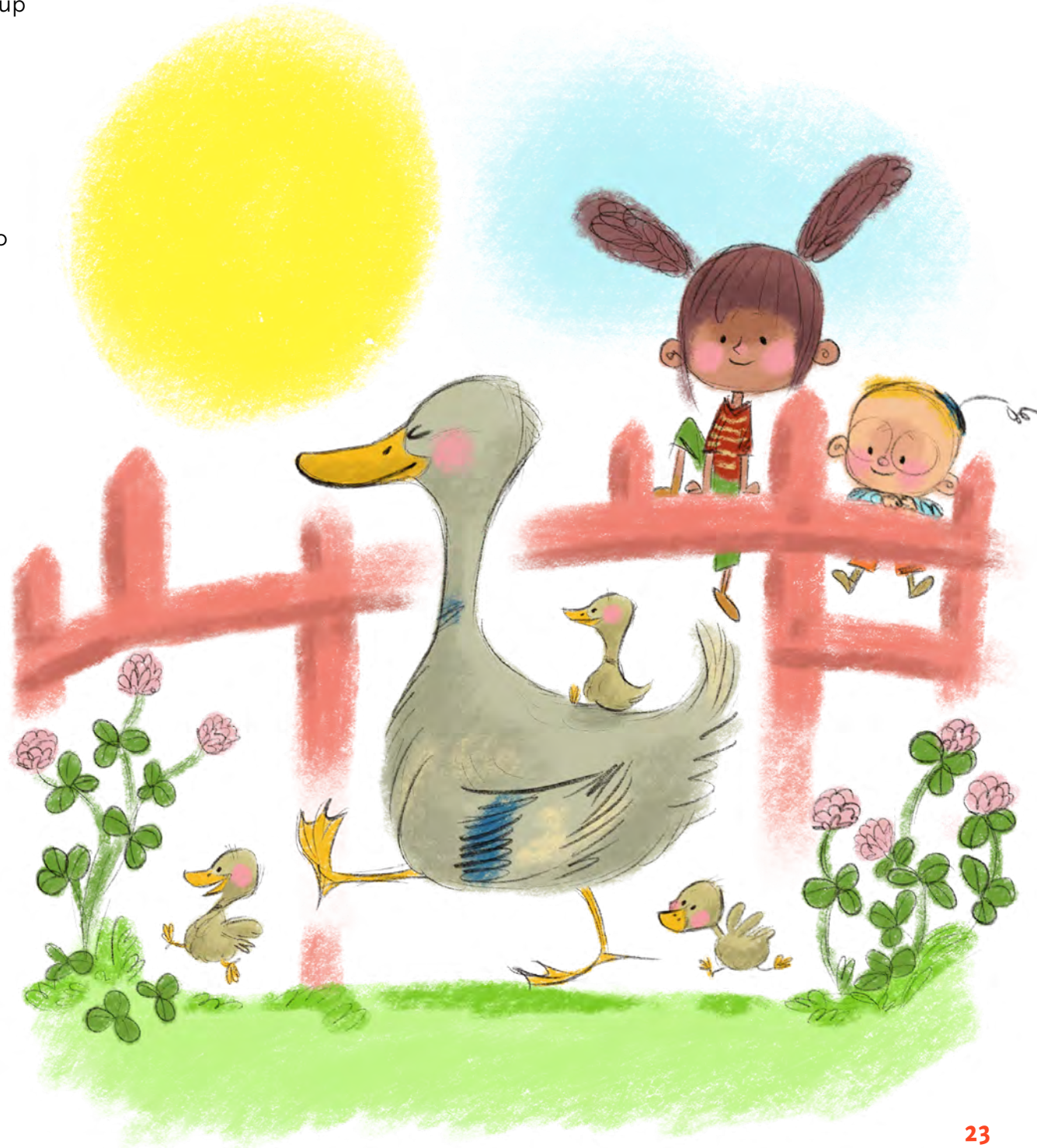
-The mother duck came! Saana whispered into her phone.
-What did I just..., Grandad started, but Saana had already ended the phone call in excitement.

They watched the duck family in total silence. The ducks waddled into the tall grass, then to a forest slightly further away and to a quiet forest pond, where they started swimming and looking for something to eat.

-Nature is truly wonderful, Storm sighed.

-So it is, and people should take good care of it to make sure it stays that way, Saana stated, wiping a happy tear from the corner of her eye.

The mother duck and her babies continued to live their life by the pond, and when autumn came, they all flew slightly southwards to overwinter. But for now, the warm summer's day continued, and the children scooted off on their next adventure.



Litter trolls



Once upon a time, three kind-hearted trolls lived in the Koli National Park. Koli is part of an old mountain range in eastern Finland, one of its last remaining summits. In the past, it used to be as high as the Alps, but today, only a few, beautiful old fells remain. The rocky terrain is perfect for trolls to live in.



These three trolls were all very nice, although sometimes a little thoughtless. They had a lovely little cave at the bottom of the Ryläys Hill. The family of trolls had been living there for centuries. Lump, Blewit and Navelfluff were siblings. They were the children of the brave Troll-Lord Celeragus and Lady Rosy Raisin. Trolls had roamed the majestic forests of Koli throughout the ages, and they still continued to do so.



But the modern times had left their mark in the family of trolls, too. The trolls continued to gather their food mainly from the forest, but Navelfluff had learnt new 21st-century ways to forage for food.

One day, this tiniest of trolls found a mobile phone in the forest. In some weird way, she managed to access the internet. At first, she ended up in the online store of a small local shop. Oh, all those delicious treats!

-You can order food directly to your home cave with this! Navelfluff exclaimed, clicking more and more chocolate bars into her shopping basket. Lump and Blewit were too busy stuffing themselves with lingonberries to pay much attention to Navelfluff's shopping frenzy.



In no time at all, the local shopkeeper trekked to the trolls' cave, carrying a massive shopping box and sweating profusely.

-You boys sure have found quite a place to stay in, the shopkeeper panted, slumping onto a tussock to rest. -We're certainly not boys, but whatever, Blewit said tartly.

Right, ok. That'll be three hundred then, the shopkeeper managed to say, puffing and panting

-I have the exact change here, Navelfluff said happily, and filled the empty shopping box full of cones.

-Good-bye! the trolls cried. And before the shopkeeper managed to utter anything about currency, the trolls had already gone their way.



The trolls shoved the treats into their rucksacks and headed to a nearby meadow to stuff themselves and enjoy the autumn day. Since trolls are very keen on sweet treats, they could not help themselves, but tasted the delicacies already on their way.

In no time at all, they arrived at the campsite. The trolls had the most wonderful picnic, and thereafter, all three of them threw themselves onto the grass to have a rest.





Meanwhile, two little hikers were walking along the path towards the campsite. Storm and Saana were visiting their grandmother in Koli for the weekend, and they decided to go on a little adventure. But what on earth did they find on the path: litter! Heaps of sweetie wrappers, plastic bags, fizzy drink bottles and banana skins. They had spent quite a while collecting the litter into their rucksacks and pockets.

Now they arrived at the campsite and found three happy trolls sleeping in a pile of litter.
-Wake up! Didn't your mother tell you that you need to collect your rubbish and put it in a bin, away from nature! Storm shouted, although he already knew the answer. The three trolls jumped up from the grass and looked baffled.

-Naughty trolls! the children said in unison.
-You must collect all the litter away. Do it now!
-We didn't know! Lump was crying his head off. He was a very sensitive little troll, and could not stand shouting at all.
-But why should we collect it? said Navelfluff, who was clearly the boldest of the trolls.

-Because litter never disappears from nature. It can remain there for centuries, Saana said seriously.
-And because some of it can be harmful to wild animals and plants, Storm continued.
-We didn't know..., Lump kept sobbing. -We've been totally moronic, he continued.
-That's ok. Now you know, Saana said gently.





-We will collect all the rubbish straight away,
Blewit and Navelfluff said in a quavering voice.
-And we will help you, the children said
in unison.

And so the three trolls and the human children
collected all the litter that the trolls had thrown
into the meadow and forest. Together they dragged the rubbish
bags to Granny's bin, and everyone was happy again.

-It was nice to meet you! the children said excitedly.
-We will never again fool about in nature, the trolls
swore solemnly.

Then the trolls disappeared into the fading evening light.

The children were standing on the steps when
Granny came to holler for them outside.

-What have you kids been up to? Granny asked.

-We bumped into a few trolls and helped
them collect rubbish.

-Well, that's something! Granny laughed.

- Why don't you come in for some hot chocolate
and tell me the whole story.

The trolls were walking slowly towards their home cave. They
had had a lovely day, and all three of them were in a good
mood. But then Navelfluff started digging into her pockets and
noticed that her mobile phone was gone.



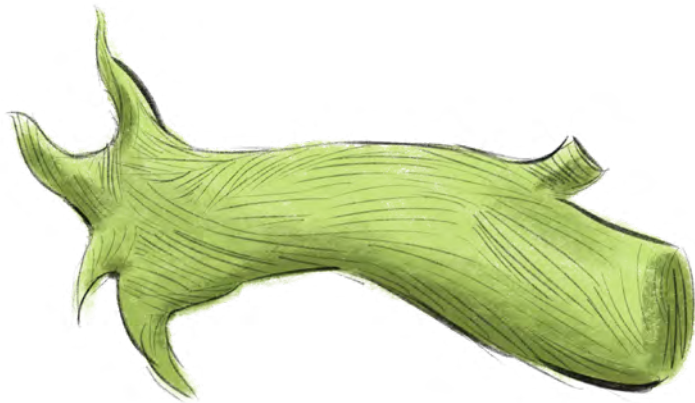
-I probably binned it, the troll said, sounding upset.
But straight away, she concluded: I reckon gadgets
like that are nothing but trouble for trolls. All three
of them agreed. Of course, the trolls will always
have a sweet tooth, but luckily the Finnish forests
are full of natural delicacies anyway.



The marked route is the safest

Sometimes even the most experienced outdoor enthusiast makes a mistake and an accident happens. This is exactly what happened to Grandad Onni on an ordinary winter day, when you would not expect anything special to occur.

Grandad Onni, Saana, Storm and Doggy Dougherty had set off on a small winter trip with their skis and snowshoes. Putting on his skis, Grandad Onni was almost more excited about the trip than the children.



-This reminds me so much of my childhood! We didn't have any cars then, not even roads for cars. You pretty much had to ski everywhere! Those were the days!
he bellowed.

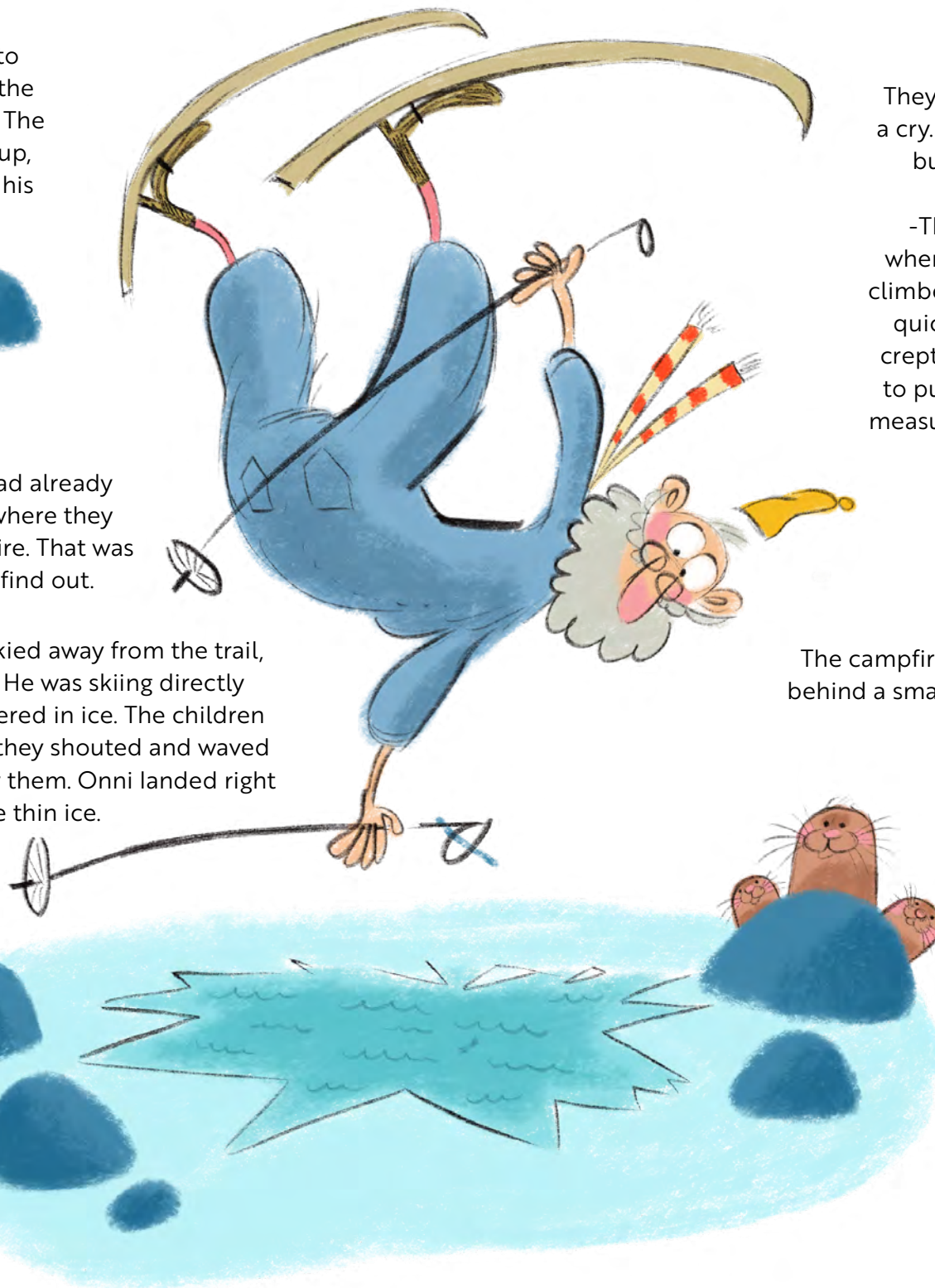
-He forgot his hearing aid again, Storm grumbled and adjusted his snowshoes.



Grandad Onni was the first one to get ready, and he set off towards the marked trail, bursting with energy. The children were struggling to keep up, as he skied forward, immersed in his memories.

Saana was reading the map. She had already checked the route and the place where they could stop and make a small campfire. That was very wise of her, as you will later find out.

It turned out Grandad Onni had skied away from the trail, excited and half-deaf as he was. He was skiing directly towards a small forest stream covered in ice. The children noticed this all too late. Although they shouted and waved their arms, Grandad could not hear them. Onni landed right in the middle of the thin ice.



They could hear a loud crack, splash and a cry. Luckily the icy stream was not deep, but Grandad's trousers and feet got soaking wet.

-This is what always used to happen when I was a kid! Grandad chuckled and climbed onto the rocks by the stream. Very quickly, his smile vanished, as coldness crept through his wet gear. Now they had to put their heads together. The children measured the distance to the campfire site and to their home on the map.

The campfire site was only a stone's throw away, behind a small grove of trees, and so they decided to head that way.

Although the journey was short, Grandad's teeth started chattering wildly. Luckily they could soon see a small clearing behind the forest, with a signpost to the campfire site and a lean-to shelter.



Storm and Saana ran for the rest of the journey. By the lean-to shelter, they found a box full of dry birch logs. Using her mittens, Saana dug out the fire pit, partially covered in snow. Meanwhile, Storm carried wood for the fire. Grandad was watching them and shivering with cold. Then he remembered what to do in situations like this from his childhood



-Wet clothes are the worst, you need to take them off! he yelled and started pulling off his wet boots. Off came his wet socks and Grandad was ready and waiting for the heat from the fire. Since it was an emergency, the children decided to light as many matches at once as possible.





Luckily, there was no wind and the fire wood was dry, and in no time at all, the fire started burning. First it burnt slowly and then it crackled with big flames. The children started cheering and Doggy Dougherty was barking happily, and Grandad Onni stopped shivering with cold. He pushed his toes very close to the fire and let out a blissful sigh.



And that was not all: now they pulled out the snacks from their rucksacks and put some sausages on the campfire. Then it was time to enjoy the silence of the forest. Grandad Onni smiled contently: he really had succeeded in bringing up two clever and sprightly little campers. Cleverer than their Grandad, when it comes to knowing the route, he giggled inside.

Storm and Saana in the forest: Outdoor Etiquette stories

"The path was astoundingly beautiful. It wound through a dark spruce forest, descended to a meadow-like valley, dived down amongst ferns and eventually took them to a pond"

Storm, Saana, Grandad Onni and Doggy Dougherty like to spend time in nature. They celebrate Doggy Dougherty's birthday outdoors, sleep overnight in a forest, see beautiful flowers and meet trolls and a family of ducks.

The purpose of the Outdoor Etiquette stories is to encourage children to spend time in nature, and to explain how to respect nature and other people when spending time outdoors.

Ninka Reittu, the author and illustrator of the delightful Outdoors Etiquette stories for children, is well-known for her series of books Super, Tully and Roly the Pony, and Messi and Mystery Cat, and her illustrations for the Princess Pintsize books.

*Keep in
mind!*

OUTDOOR ETIQUETTE

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