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Armando In the Summer Camp

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Age: 8+

Armando has an Estonian mother and an Argentinian father. The latter is an explanation behind Armando's name - the legendary Diego Armando Maradona of course. Might be because of the special name that Armando really loves football and for some time already has been playing for the FC Nõmme's Pines. With the arrival of Summer, the coach Timo decides to take the boys to a summer camp to South Estonia to practice on footwork and team spirit. For the last day of the camp a friendly with a local team is planned but the locals get down with a stomach bug and the game is on the verge to be cancelled. Luckily the local boys are happy to take the FC Nõmme's Pines on. City kids are confident they will beat the rookies easily because how could they possibly not?

Armando

Reading sample

[pp 17-23]

Armando stuck his head out of the window and saw an even grass patch among the beech trees, well fit for a football game. On it, a little boy tried to get a ball away from a bigger one who protected it with his whole body. The little one wrapped his hands around the larger one and that led into problems.

Armando called his team members to the window.

“Come and take a look!”

Sprout, Jaan and Priit leaned on the windowsill. There were six kids on the field, three wearing t-shirts and three bare chested. A small boy wearing a white t-shirt tried to wrestle down a large shirtless one.

The smaller boy had long blond hair that the larger one tried to pull over the smaller one's eyes to distract him. Shorty was full of energy, his shirt was ripped apart but that only made him spunkier. The larger boy seemed stronger but somehow the small one made him fall on his back, which led to a pretty even wrestling match.

“The short one is brisk!” admitted Sprout with respect.

Shorty didn't manage to win however, the larger boy managed to change position, get on top of the smaller one and push his hands against the grass.

“Giving up?” the large one called out but didn't get a chance to wait for the reply as one of the shirtless lads shouted:

“Mammie is comin!”

The big lad got up with freight, reached a hand out to the smaller one and pulled him up as well. Together they ran as fast as they could into the surrounding forest. All the kids ran to different directions. The ball they had played with stayed behind on the field.

At the edge of the field a short woman wearing a blue overall appeared. Armando noticed that she was wearing a straw hat just like the one gauchos wear to protect their heads from the sun.

Under the hat, long strands of grey hair were falling on her shoulders. The woman was holding a very large basketwork. That was the Mammie the boys had run away from.

Mammie walked rapidly to the ball, picked it up and put it into her basket. He squinted, combed the edge of the forest with her glance, and called out with a shrill voice:

“Owther yous cam here or A'm comin efter ye! Hermann-laddies! A ken yer there! At the meenit weeding and wattering tomataes!”

First one to give in was the large lad with no shirt on. He grabbed the shirt he had tossed on the raspberry bush and put it back on. The rest of the boys crawled out of their hiding places one by one. The short boy tied his hair up to a bun and waved goodbye to a dark haired one who stayed behind.

The woman did not utter another word. She turned her back to the boys and rushed away along the small road towards the beech trees. Five boys sauntered after her slowly till they were out of sight as well.

Armando looked at Priit. “Do you know who they are?” he asked.

“Hermann-laddies. That's what the old lady called them.”

“Hermann-boys.” translated Sprout to the others.

Armando frowned. He looked at Priit again. “Do you know them?”

“I remember them from last year.” Priit answered. „I think they are pretty wild.”

“Rubes are usually wild.” Jaan, who had started to unpack his bags, stated. He and Priit compared their stash of crisps and sweets they had packed to go. Jaan seemed to have a larger variety than Priit.

“Really?” Armando debated.

“Sure thing,” retorted Jaan.

Priit disagreed. “They are just regular people who don't happen to live in the city. They are all right. Don't try to wrestle them though, they are a lot stronger than you or I. My dad says it's because they do a lot of physical labour. Even now, their grandma wanted them to weed and water the tomatoes. Tomatoes need a lot of water during the summer.”

“Do you want to swap sweets?” asked Jaan who got bored discussing tomatoes. His eyes peered Priit's stash of sweets, as it seemed to him that his friend had a lot more interesting flavours in his collection than he did.

“Okies,” Priit agreed. On the contrary, it seemed to Priit that Jaan had snacks that he had not thought to bring.

Armando looked out of the window again. The birdsong was piercing his ears. Who said that life in the countryside was quiet and relaxed?