
Otto Ponders
The Way Home
A story about curiosity, friendship, and finding your way.


Beside a river, bright and blue,
Otto loved things old and new.
He watched the ripples, birds and trees,
and wondered where this world will lead.


One sunny morning, Otto said,
“I wonder what’s beyond that bend?”
His mother smiled. “Go have some fun,
but not too far, my little one.”
His father added, “If you’re not sure,
find our bridge and you will find this shore.
If you don’t know where you roam,
retrace your steps and you’ll find your home.”


Otto skipped along the shore,
past these places he had seen before.
But over there, beneath a tree,
another path sparked his curiosity.
“Now where,” he wondered,
“could that lead?”
“Perhaps I’ll take a look and see.”


The forest floor was soft and green,
With sights that Otto had never seen.
A spotted stone, a twisting vine,
A patch of flowers in the sunshine.
“Just one more look,” he softly said,
And followed where the pathway led.


At last, young Otto turned around
and looked across the leafy ground.
The bridge was gone. The river too.
Surrounded by something new.
He tried one path, then stopped to say,
“Hmm… was this the way I came today?”


I am an otter,
sometimes I ponder.
Where is the water?
Where is the water?
I must think further
before I go farther.
Where is my mother?
Where is my father?


Then came a sound: a flip! A flop!
Beside a stream, a plip! A plop!
A turtle moved some stones in place,
but the current swept the stones away.


“Need some help?” young Otto cried.
The turtle smiled. “Come to this side!”
They moved the stones, both big and small,
Until they made a crossing after all.
“I’m Otto,” said the otter. “And you?”
“I’m Tully,” the turtle said.
“A friend, if that will do!”


“I’m looking for my home,” said Otto.
“It’s by the river, where the willows grow.”
“Which way did you come?” asked Tully.
“I followed one path, then two, then three.
Now every path looks the same to me!”
“Let’s look together,” Tully replied.
“We’ll find more clues with two pairs of eyes.”


A rustle came from **bushes near,**
and out leapt a fox with a playful cheer.
“Hello! I’m **Finn,**” the fox said with a grin.
“What kind of trouble are you two in?”
“We’re trying to find my home,” **said Otto.**
“But we aren’t to sure what path to follow.”

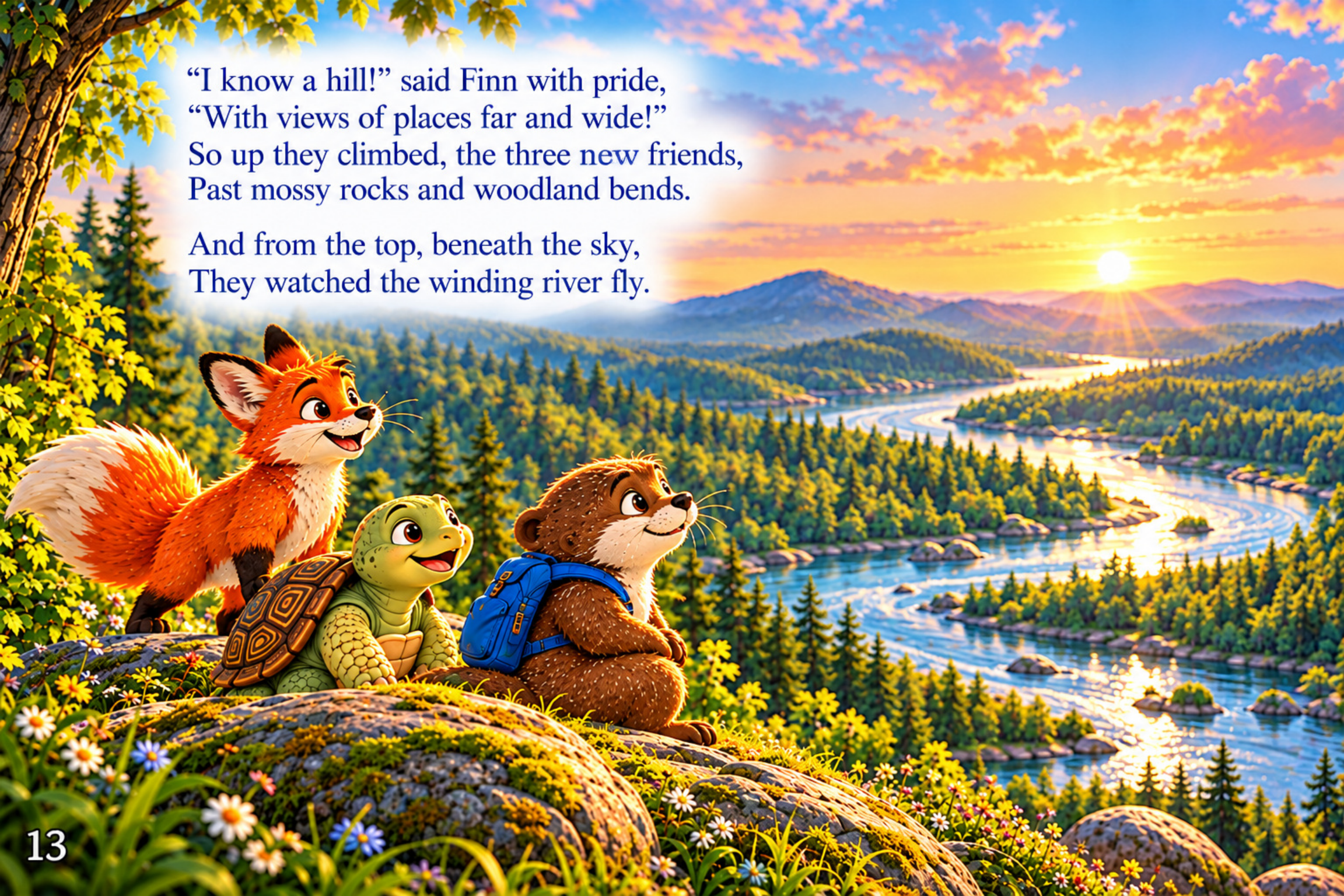


"The river? I know the way!" said Finn.
"Hurry, follow me! Come on, let's begin!"

"Perhaps," said Tully, "We ought to stop and see,
which path runs down between the trees."

Otto looked left, then Otto looked right.
"Let's think," he said, "before we decide."

Finn tilted his head and gave a grin.
"Well, thinking first might help us win!"


“I know a hill!” said Finn with pride,
“With views of places far and wide!”
So up they climbed, the three new friends,
Past mossy rocks and woodland bends.
And from the top, beneath the sky,
They watched the winding river fly.



"The water flows that way," said Tully. "That's right."
"And there's a bridge!" cried Finn with delight.

But Otto looked a little more
at something near the river shore.
A willow tree with branches wide,
its leaves hung low beside the tide.

"That's it!" cried Otto. "Now I see!
That willow is my family's tree!"


They hurried down the winding track,
with Otto happily leading back.
The river sang its welcome song.
The bridge stood where it had all along.
And waiting there, beside the shore,
were Otto's familiar faces once more.
"Mother! Father!" Otto cried,
and ran to meet them, arms spread wide.



Otto proclaimed, “I wandered farther than I knew,
but along the way I found friends, too!”

“Thank you, Tully. Thank you, Finn.
You helped me find my way again.”

His mother smiled, and his father said,
“We’re glad you’re home, our wandering friend.”

As sunset warmed the riverside,
Otto sat with his friends nearby.

And one more thought began to grow:
“Where might our next adventure go?”

Now Otto pondered, with a happy heart,
A simple path can lead to a brand new start.