

Hobnobby's Story

Prequel to Where Did They Go?

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The World of Vesda

Long, long time ago in the age of giants and elves lived a small collection of gnomes who hid under bridges, in caves, and dark cellars. Giants and humans alike shunned and hunted the underground dwellers who dabbled often in magic and alchemy. The humans feared their awesome powers when the small people walked through solid earth and walls. Some were small as two spans or twelve to fifteen inches tall called Nissers, to the larger gnomes or dwarves, like one called Hobnobby, who stood almost to four feet.

Hobnobby spent his adult life repairing shoes for human children or small watches for young maidens. Not all gnomes and dwarves were decent to the humans. Some used trickery to steal their money. Woe to those of his kind if they were discovered. Giants and humans would chase them with their dogs on their heels, forcing them into their underground homes.

Walking through the dark forest at night to avoid detection from the giants, he vanished without a trace. When he woke up, he found he was lying on the ground still surrounded by a forest of trees. However, these trees looked different. A ghost of sunlight shafted through bent and thin trunks. Some of them appeared to have starved for water. He rose up, dusted himself off, and took off down through a grassy path.

After a few minutes of walking, Hobnobby arrived in a clearing, a small meadow. There in the center was an odd looking machine of great height. The closer he approached it, the higher it seemed. A feathered small rodent reared up to stare at him for a second from the machine's base which was buried part way into the ground. After glancing at Hobnobby, the creature scurried off into the forest.

The sky still had that dreary sunlight as if clouds were filtering the rays. Hobnobby decided he'd better locate a shelter. All of a sudden, the machine hummed and a pile of wood planks appeared on the ground nearby. Now being a carpenter, he ran over to inspect the various sizes and shapes of the cut boards. A can of brand new nails rested on the ground. As if this wasn't miraculous enough, a beeping sound began.

He looked up at the machine and a red number counted down. When it got to zero, two men appeared.

"Well, where are we, Cal?" the tall skinny one asked.

"Don't know, Fin. Say, who is that?" Cal asked, pointing toward the small dwarf with the long white beard.

"Hmm," Fin peered down at Hobnobby. "Say, little fellow, do you have a name? And do you know why we are here?"

"I don't know any more than you. I just got here a while ago," the gnome answered. "We need a shelter, can you help me?"

"I suppose. Who are you?"

"My name is Hobnobby, and you two?"

"I'm Finindaddle and this is my trade partner, Califogle. You can call us Fin and Cal. I shall call you Hobs."

"Hmph," Hobs replied.

"What is this magnificent machine?" Fin asked.

"I-I made it when I arrived. It transported all this wood," Hobs explained.

Then the machine began talking.

"We are a race of people who built the world of Vesda long before this world existed. We knew how to fly through the stars and galaxies. Our knowledge was so great that our people wanted to create another universe. But they soon found out a serious mistake had been made in their calculation. Our world was in serious danger. We had to flee to our artificial moon called Vesda and propel it away into space. We escaped just in time to witness our planet blowing up."

The computer continued to explain how to control the weather and the captured sun above.

"You were saying, Hobs?" Cal asked.

"Uh, the Controller instructed me to build this. I didn't know it came from another world," he lied. This was his chance to be somebody respected.

"The Controller you say," Fin said under his breath. He rubbed his pointy chin. "How can we help you, Hobs?"

"Just help me make a shelter," Hobs replied. "And I'll ask the Controller for more wood—and food."

"Then let's get to work," Fin said.

After the two men constructed the small shack around the computer, they started to build a large framework for storage down the road. Inside they made room for living quarters, a kitchen, and a room they could conduct their scientific experiments. They soon discovered deer and a fruit grove when they explored the forest. This kept them busy for a month.

One day Fin came to Hobs and wanted to make a request of the computer.

"We are going to need more houses and people to help us," Fin said. "People that can farm, sew, and raise animals for food."

"I will enter your request," Hobs said and closed his door on the scientist.

Once again, the giant computer came to life. Hobs asked the all-knowing machine and before he knew it, five confused people appeared at the edge of the forest. One man appeared as a giant, to Hobs. Now, he had to prove he was more powerful in their eyes as they marched up to his small home.

"Where are we?" a cat lady asked.

"How did we get here?" a man in overalls asked.

"Who's responsible?" boomed the large man in the black beard.

The other two was an older lady and a short man with wide clawed hands.

Hobs stepped out on his porch and straightened his back. Raising his hand, the group of people hushed.

"Now, I realize you are confused and maybe don't wish to be here. But, the Controller on this land called Vesda has chosen you for important work. When your work is completed, I will personally transport you back

to your homes. But for now, we need your help with building a town, cooking, and sewing."

"I can sew," said the older woman.

"I can dig in the earth," offered the large-handed man.

"I can cook stew and lift building supplies," said the giant.

"Great. My name is Hobnobby, or Hobs if you prefer. What are your names?"

"I am Bosloe," the large man bellowed.

"I'm Collin," the thin short man said.

"I'm Thyla," the cat woman replied as her long striped tail flickered back and forth behind her.

"I'm JackOput. I love to farm. Do you have any sheep?" he asked.

As soon as the words were out of his mouth, a 'baaa' could be heard in the distance.

"My name is Mae," said the old woman.

"Glad to meet you all. Oh, here are our scientists, Fin and Cal. Fin, I've brought you help," Hobs said, noticing the two men approaching them.

"Good. Come with me and I'll show you the lay of the land. Uh, Hobs have you walked the entire length of Vesda?"

"No, do I need to?"

"Yes, you need to go now."

"Very well, I shall see everyone later and assign you materials to build your homes," Hobs said, waving everyone as they walked off with Finindaddle.

Hobnobby signed and walked down the lane to his left. The countryside had a cloudy glow from the

obscure sun above. When a large black shadow passed over his head, he looked up.

Shading his eyes with his stubby fingers, the blackbird landed on a large boulder.

"Caw, who goes there?" the raven said.

"It is I, Hobnobby. What is your name?" he asked. He was familiar with talking animals from the world he left. This did not seem unusual to him.

"I am Condor, ruler of the sky."

The ebony bird took a couple of side steps stretching his wings, clamping his talons around the rough edges of the rock, and then returned back toward the gnome.

"Silly bird, you are nothing but a raven."

"Do you see any condors?" the bird rasped back.

"Well, no, but—"

"Then I am Condor, the largest bird in the skies."

Hobnobby sighed. "I must be going to the end of this world."

"A world that is no world. In circles, you shall go."

"Now, you aren't making sense, Condor."

The raven flew off over the forest.

"Hmf," Hobnobby muttered and continued his walk straight ahead.

After a couple of hours, he could see a small building in the distance. Picking up his step, he stopped a few yards away.

"This can't be, I must have walked in the wrong direction."

He turned to his left again and strolled into the forest. Another two hours and he returned to the same

spot he left. Only this time, Fin and Cal were sitting on the porch of his home.

"I don't understand how I can walk in one direction and return to the same spot," Hobnobby said.

"Have you ever heard of a Dyson planet?" Fin asked.

"Dyson what?"

"It, well this, is an inside planet. Not real large but adequate for our needs."

"You mean to tell me, we are in a ball?"

"Correct, my friend. Remember what the Controller said? They created a world called Vesda. This is that world. Cool, huh?" Fin explained.

Hobnobby stared at the ground and scuffed some dirt aside. He then looked up at Fin.

"Then that means—" he began as he looked skyward.

"Yes, the sun is in the center. By my examinations, it is a real sun in miniature. The fibrous material around it protects us from the radioactivity given off. Collin has discovered a two-layer shell surrounding us and this world. Maybe the controller will explain how they function."

"I will look into that, but now I'm tired from all that walking. Has everyone settled in all right?" Hobnobby asked.

"Yes, a few still want to go back to their home. Bosloe in particular."

"They'll get used to it. Bye."

The two scientists watch as Hobnobby entered his little home and closed the door.

"Maybe we can invent a controller, too," suggested Califogle.

“What a splendid idea. Let’s start working on it.”

“Where will we go? You gave Bosloe the large building for his cooking,” Cal wondered.

“Let’s see if JackOput has room in his barn.”

In the following years, no one left Vesda. In fact, the machine continued to bring people from all over the universe. As soon as the population totaled one hundred, the machine quit importing and would only fulfill small requests for tools or food.

Hobs kept busy assigning new building of homes. When the computer stopped sending building materials, he sent Bosloe and the other men into the forest to chop new wood. As long as everyone was busy constructing their new homes, they didn’t have time to bother Hobnobby with questions about returning to their former homes.

Years passed and many of the Vesda occupants gave up wishing they could return to their former lives and families. Bosloe and Collin became good friends and served only stew at his new mercantile restaurant. Fin and Cal had relinquished for another location.

Ol’ Mae, as everyone called her, made garments and repatched worn outfits from the settlers. Thyla helped out wherever someone needed her either with Bosloe or Hobnobby.

Fin and Cal, ostracized from JackOput’s barn when a fire broke out, had to build their own structure. They were experimenting how to create another universe when the blast occurred. Hobs warned them not to fool with nature. Against Hobs concerns, Bosloe built another shack behind his store where Collin could stay.

The two scientists were trying to emulate the Controller by building another transport machine. Hobs was not happy, but glad the universe thought was left alone.

A few people had babies, but when the Controller said no more, the desire left them in a depressive state. That is until a human from Earth appeared in the forest.

Hobs manipulated the Controller for moist fog across the landscape. He had studied and listened to the directions the machine offered to create weather or watch out for lone meteors passing near the outside shell.

With Fin and Cal fooling with their new machine, odd implements began to appear around Vesda. A spatula, a pen, and then a snow globe materialized throughout Hobnobby's shelves.

His door swung open. Fin and Cal enter as excited as can be.

"Did you get it?" Cal asked.

"Get what?" Hobs asked and resumed his work on Bosloe's iron pot.

"Did a snow globe arrive?"

Hobs pointed to the far end of the room.

"I wish you get something useful," he said.

"Splendid. Now, all we have to do is reverse our process," Fin replied.

Hobs watched the two men leave and placed the snow globe on his workbench.

After he repaired the pot, Hobnobby worked on small devices to light up his home and had to retrieve a tool in the back room. While he looked in the drawers,

he heard his door slam shut. Thinking it was Fin again, he didn't bother to answer. Then he thought he heard an unfamiliar woman's voice.

When he walked out to see who was here, he was surprised. "Who are you and what are you doing in my house?" he demanded of the tall woman.

"Well, I—"

"Speak up, speak up. I'm very busy you know."

"My name is Susan Edwards."

"Susan Edwards, that's a long name," he replied.

"You can just call me Susan. Where am I?"

He peered at her and then sat down behind his worktable.

"You are here, in my house."

"Well, I know that sir, but— Say what is your name?"

"Hobnobby. Go away I have work to do." He picked up a beaker filled with green fluid and began pouring a small amount into a jar.

"Look Mr. Hobnobby—"

"That's just Hobnobby to you."

"Fine, I want to go back to my home. I was in my living room when suddenly I found myself here. What is that?" She saw the pen lying on his tabletop next to his sleeved arm.

"What is what?" he asked, getting disturbed about this new person in Vesda.

When she picked up the pen, he jerked back in surprise.

"This pen, you took it didn't you?" the woman accused.

"I'll have you know that I have used this pen many times, although it did take me longer to find it this last time. Go away."

Susan looked around the room again and on his workbench against the wall, she noticed the globe.

Grabbing it, she wailed, "This is mine too."

He looked at the snow globe and then at me. "You can have it. That globe just appeared yesterday. I have no use for a silly ball of snow."

He turned to focus on his experiment and then looked up.

"Are you still here? Now go away. Can't you see I'm trying to finish an experiment?"

"What experiment?" she asked.

He sighed. "I suppose it wouldn't hurt to show you, then maybe you will leave, yes?"

"I guess."

"In this container, of which I have poured three inches of sasaqual, tiny microbes have begun to multiply. Can you see the blob building up at the bottom?"

The woman stepped closer. "Yes, I do."

"You will notice soon when their numbers exceed the dimensions of the container. I have to kill a few off to save the healthy."

"Why don't you just put them in a larger jar?"

Hobnobby wrinkled his nose and merged his bushy white eyebrows together. He could feel the stress boiling within his stomach.

"Fool. The population would still overflow and blow us all up."

“Do what you have to do. I just want to go home,” she told him.

Hobs started to snicker. “If you don’t know how you got here, I can’t help you. But, since you are, you might as well be of some use, take this pot I repaired to Bosloe, he’s just down the road. And here is some wool for Ol’ Mae when you see her.” He placed both items in a canvas bag. “Go on, get!”

The woman took the pot and the pen and walked out of his home. He’d have to have a talk with Fin about bringing more people into this world. We can’t have demanding people come here and ruin his status quo.

He slipped into the back of his small hovel. He took out one of his keys and unlocked a closet. There, with blinking lights and a soft hum sat the Controller. Hobnobby pressed a couple of buttons. Within a minute, he could hear the soft patter of raindrops on his slatted roof.

This is a prequel to my novel, *Where Did They Go?*

If you want to find out what happens to Hobnobby next and why Susan Edwards showed up, please locate my book on digital at [Kindle](#), [Books2Read](#), and [Smashwords](#). You can also find the book through iTunes, Barnes and Noble, Kobo, and many other digital suppliers.

My printed books are listed on [Amazon](#).

About the Author

A. Nation travels the west with her husband. I decided to write in a futuristic fashion creating interesting adventure stories that have a moral realization. Whether from prejudice, political crime, retribution, or enslavement, the sagas shall continue.



For more insights how this story progressed, see my blog at: [My Blog](#).

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