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CALL ME FONDOLO!

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Casse Rurali
Trentine



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CALL ME FONDOLO!

You probably already know Fondolo -the friendly gnome who is the mascot of Marcialonga- but so far he had never told us his story and how his big passion for Nordic ski has begun...



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Get involved!
by Dolomites!





It was a cold and snowy night, when a snowflake different from all the others fell on the top of a mountain covered with cream. It was heavier than the others; once it got on the ground among the white larches it rolled for a bit before stopping and...suddenly stretched a pair of little legs and arms.

It was not a snowflake! It was a tiny creature. In the dark, it opened its big curious eyes above its cute button nose. Its eyebrows were as thick and white as the snow that lays on the ground and from its chin a fluffy cotton candy popped out...it was a gnome!





There we go! He was a lilac-dressed gnome, with big hands and big feet wrapped up in soft leaves. On his head, he was wearing a cosy warm beanie with a pure white edelweiss on the top of it. How old was that unusual creature? With that beard, he was for sure no puppy but his eyes were filled with the same amazement and sparkle as those of a happy child. Those eyes lighted up when something warm and bright started to rise from behind the pointy mountains: the sun! Maybe that gnome had never seen sunrise, as his mouth opened wide with surprise and he stretched his hands to catch the sun.





You all know that the sun is too far away to be touched, but he did not. Stretching and stretching forward he slipped and started rolling down the mountain almost to the bottom.

He then tried to move some steps down the bottom of the valley, but his legs were too short to walk in the fresh deep snow and each step turned into a somersault. At first, he was amused by this but after a while, the world around him started turning and he found it difficult to distinguish the sky from the ground. It could not go on like that; he needed to find a solution!





In that moment he saw a bunch of colorful dots slipping down a white stripe: they were curious, like gnomes.

They had long wooden feet
and long long arms that
they used to push forward.

But no! They were no gnomes, they
were skiers! Maybe they were chasing
the sun too, the gnome thought.
They looked so happy on their skis;
some of them were chatting, some
others were greeting the friendly
spectators clapping them
along the slope. The gnome wanted
to do the same!





He went looking for two pieces of wood to attach to his shoes and two branches to use as poles.

And when he wore them...what a speed! He reached the skiers in a flash and started to move his arms and legs back and forward at a steady pace. One, two, one two...it was hard, but it was a lot of fun!

He looked around and saw many smiling faces, tall and small creatures clapping their hands and shouting out encouraging.





Some of them offered him glasses with a lemon smell, others gave him biscuits, oranges, pieces of chocolate and even sandwiches. Along the track he saw high mountains, houses, clock towers, flags, ice crystals, chicken wings, snow statues and there, high in the sky, there was always the sun as supporting and accompanying the long colorful line of skiers. It was first shy, then high in the sky, strong and finally attentive and a little embarrassed as his cheeks started to turn red.





The gnome skied into a village bigger than the ones he had crossed before...so many people were waiting for him! Were they all there for him? He smiled back and raised his poles to the sky to greet them. There were music, choirs, bells attached to the people's belts and ringing and many, many laughs. It was so different from the silence he heard that morning in the forest. The sun seemed now so close that he could reach it with a couple more pushes but...he found himself surrounded by humans who could not stop looking at him, shaking his hand to congratulate him and putting a strange shiny charm around his neck. Some of them grabbed the gnome and threw him up in the air, carrying him in triumph.





The gnome's surprise was interrupted
by the arrival of a cheering
human with a microphone saying:
"Congratulations, you completed the
first edition of Marcialonga! Could
you tell me your name?" "Fondolo" the
gnome answered, "Call me Fondolo".

