

# Diplomatic Training

## By Rupert, aged 11

It was gym class at a 700-year-old university. Zoom in and you will see the school bully sitting on Kora. It was late spring in Middle Earth, meaning there was the constant threat of orcs, giants and bad cafeteria food. Elves, humans and dwarves lived cautiously alongside each other. Being an elf, Kora could usually stay unnoticed – but not today.

Roland Grind started leaning more aggressively on Kora's back. It had been like this for the last few years. Kora had always wanted to be a diplomat and solve problems between the races and kingdoms. Yet she had still not succeeded at making peace with the bullies though she made many attempts. Her dream did not look like it was going to happen. She asked herself if she was on the right path. Kora was immensely frustrated. Enough was enough.

Kora took refuge in the ginormous, musty library. It went up seven stories, had tons of leather bound books and was full of intellectual devourers. Kora scoured for a book that told her how to negotiate and communicate with bullies. She climbed many rickety ladders with several shelves toppling over, and survived the pseudo-dragons (of which there has been an infestation for years), and the shush-ing of the very old elvish librarians. Finally, she found a book titled, 'How to Negotiate and Communicate with Bullies' by Sir Vargal Viggel Humperdink. "*Bingo!*" she thought.

Kora quickly opened up the heavy cover and, to her surprise and despair, the whole book crumbled apart. "They should take better care of these things!"

Kora decided to discuss her problem with her best friend who had 'a little bit' of skill with magic. Snickett Earwig was a gnome who was very ambitious but also very nervous. Kora found him where she suspected, in their

Cultural History of Humans class, which she was now late for. She crept in, scrawled out a note and passed it to him.

The note read: *Can you do a spell on me that would make Roland Grind agree with me?* When the professor looked away, Snickett Earwig handed one back that said: Consider it pouff-ed.

The following day, Kora and Snickett Earwig attempted to perform the spell. They attempted several complex spells, to no avail. Each time, Snickett Earwig got more nervous. Finally something did happen, but not what they had planned. Kora looked in the mirror and discovered that her beloved long, black hair had turned purple. How despairing! She questioned, “Why am I going through all this? Is there anything I haven’t tried?”

Snickett Earwig responded, “Yah, there is something you haven’t tried. You can invite him to a formal meeting and try to make him agree to stop bullying you”

“How do I get him to come?” she asked nervously.

“Simple... lure him with snacks! Pretzels, marshmallows, Cheetos, Pringles and breath mints.” he replied cunningly.

It was in the library. The familiar musty smell made the idea of eating the snacks almost intolerable. Kora was nervous and the palms of her hands were starting to sweat

BAM! The door opened and in trumped Grind. There was a small mountain of snacks on one side of the table and Grind started to mush all the snack together with his fingers. Then, as Kora started to negotiate the terms of an agreement, Grind picked up the plate of mushed up snacks and poured it into his mouth. He burped and repeated the process.

Grind though, “*Good think no one knows that I would do anything for snacks!*”

Unfortunately, he had a tendency to think out loud. And at that moment, Kora added a note to the document mentioning that Grind could have more snacks if he agreed to the contract. He scribbled his name on the dotted line as soon as he heard about more snacks.

Kora was relieved. She took the document so she could refer to it. From that point on, there was no more bullying and Kora graduated with her Masters. She went on to become a diplomat for the Elvish Kingdom of Grey Hawk.

The End

***Eleven-year-old Rupert loves having fun and trying to protect the environment. His favourite book is Wings of War by John Wilson and when he's writing his own stories, he loves how everything is in the author's hands. Someday he hopes to become a rocket engineer and develop sustainable technology for space exploration.***