



# Finn's Bright New World

By C Magee



Finn was a happy boy who went to Ballymacrickett Primary School. He loved his school jumper and his bright classroom, but lately, Finn's eyes were always fixed on a glowing screen. Whether it was on the bus or at the breakfast table, Finn was scrolling, tapping, and swiping his childhood away. He was in a digital world, but he was missing the real one right in front of him.



On Ash Wednesday, Finn's teacher, Mr. O'Donnell, spoke to the class about Lent. "Lent is a time to grow," he said. "We can give something up to make room for things that truly matter, like kindness and family." Finn looked at his tablet. He realized he didn't even know what his friends had played at break time because he had been thinking about his high score.



When Finn got home, his little sister, Aoife, ran up to him with a painting. It was a masterpiece of a purple cow. But Finn didn't look up from his video. "Not now, Aoife," he muttered. Aoife's shoulders slumped as she walked away. Finn felt a pinch in his heart. He was physically there, but his mind was miles away in a world of pixels.



"That's it," Finn decided. "For Lent, I'm giving up my extra screen time." He went to his mom and told her his plan. Mom smiled and gave him a big hug. Together, they found a safe place to keep his tablet—the top shelf of the pantry. Finn felt a little nervous. What would he do with all that quiet time?



The first few days were hard. Finn felt like he was missing out on the digital world. He remembered what Mr. O'Donnell told them about staying safe online: "Never talk to strangers and only visit places your parents know." Finn realized that by stepping away, he was staying safest of all. He wasn't clicking on strange links or seeing things that made him feel worried.



On Friday, instead of playing a racing game on his screen, Finn went outside. The air at Ballymacrickett was fresh and smelled like rain and cut grass. He found his old kite in the shed. As the wind caught the colorful fabric, Finn felt a rush of excitement that no video game could ever give him. He was finally looking up at the clouds.



Inside the house, things were changing too. Without the constant hum of the TV or the ping of notifications, Finn started to hear things he had ignored. He heard the birds chirping outside the window and the sound of his Mom humming in the kitchen. He grabbed a tub of building blocks and started to create a giant castle on the rug.

"Finn, would you like to help me bake?" Mom asked. Usually, Finn would say he was too busy with a game. But today, he jumped up. They cracked eggs, stirred flour, and got spots of icing on their noses. The kitchen was warm and filled with the delicious smell of lemon cake. Finn realized he had missed the taste of real fun.



As Easter approached, Finn looked at the top shelf of the pantry. He knew he would use his tablet again, but it would be different now. He had learned that the digital world is a small place, but the real world is giant, colorful, and full of people who love him. Finn wasn't just a pupil at Ballymacrickett; he was an explorer of the big, wide, screen-free world.