

Oliver's Big Adventure

with Grandma and Grandpa



THIS BOOK WAS MADE ESPECIALLY FOR



Oliver



May this book fill your imagination with
wonders, your days with adventures, and your
heart with joy. Always remember how special you
are and how much you are loved.



With love, Grandma and Grandpa



2026





One evening Oliver spun Grandpa's globe so hard that the seas and the mountains blurred into one bright stripe. Grandpa Ian stopped it with his finger, right at the very top. "See that dot? That's Salekhard. Grandma and I lived there for many years. That's where your daddy chased a puck around the ice rink, and Auntie Olga spun on her skates like a snowflake."

Grandma Gale smiled and laid three tickets on the table.

"Pack your bag, captain. We're going all the way around the world! A desert, a ship as big as a city, real lions..."

"And at the end?" whispered Oliver.

"And at the end — the most important place in the world," winked Grandpa.



Early the next morning Oliver drew a map of his own: blue seas, a yellow desert, green forests. And right at the top he left an empty space — for Salekhard.

On the plane he spread the map out on the tray table and pressed his nose to the window. The clouds below lay like fluffy snowdrifts.

“Our journey has one rule,” said Grandpa. “After every adventure we draw a star on the map.”

Grandma Gale rummaged in her beige handbag and pulled out a red marker.

“In this bag,” she said proudly, “you can find anything in the world.”

Oliver squeezed the marker tight, tight. He couldn’t wait for the first star!



First stop — the desert! The sand was golden and hot, and the dunes rolled away in waves right up to the sky. Waiting for Oliver was a two-humped camel called Humphrey — with a red saddle and a shaggy fringe.

Humphrey strode along grandly, like a ship: up and down, up and down. Oliver swayed between the humps while Grandma and Grandpa walked beside him on the warm sand.

Suddenly Humphrey turned his head, stretched out his lips and — crunch! — gave Grandpa's sun hat a thoughtful chew. "Hey, that's not lunch!" cried Grandpa Ian.

"It's a compliment," laughed Grandma. "It means your hat smells delicious!"

That evening Oliver drew the first red star on his map.

"Star — on the map! Where do we go next?"

"To the place where a whole city sails across the sea," said Grandma Gale.



The city sailing across the sea turned out to be a snow-white liner — as huge as a hundred houses at once. And up on the very top deck sparkled a water park!

Oliver climbed to the top of the yellow slide with the red stripes and looked down. Ooh, that was high... The slide curled around like a dragon's tail.

“Shall we go together?” offered Grandma Gale.

And off they whooshed! Wheee — round every bend, faster and faster, and — splash! — straight into the blue pool. The spray flew up like a fountain.

“Hoo-rayyy!” cheered Grandpa Ian from the poolside, louder than anyone.

That evening a second star appeared on the map.

“Star — on the map!”



In the evening Oliver went out on deck — to show his map the real stars. And suddenly a gust of wind swooped down! It tore the map out of his hands and flung it against the railing. Rrrip! The map tore almost in half.

Oliver pressed the two halves together, but the wind kept tugging at the paper and wouldn't let them hold.

And then he remembered: Grandma's bag has anything in the world in it!

The plaster went right across the tear, straight down the middle.

"I made it better," said Oliver, and stroked the map.

"Look," Grandpa Ian pointed up at the sky. "There's the North Star. It stands right above Salekhard. Now we'll never get lost."



In the savannah Grandpa Ian drove the open jeep himself. Golden grass rustled against the wheels, and far away the acacia trees stood like umbrellas.

By a big acacia Grandpa suddenly cut the engine and put a finger to his lips.

A whole lion family was resting at the waterhole! The lion dozed on a red rock, the lioness sat up straight and tall, listening to the savannah. And the cub was chasing his own tail — that little dark tuft — tumbling over and over and never quite catching it.

Oliver watched without breathing. Real lions!

“Star — on the map!” he whispered, very, very quietly, so as not to wake the lion.



And at sunrise the savannah turned pink and gold, and a hot-air balloon floated up above it. In the basket stood Oliver, Grandma and Grandpa.

The land below lay like a real map: there was the river — a blue thread, there were the acacias — green dots, there was the jeep — tiny as a toy.

“My map is just like this one, only mine!”

Oliver unfolded his sheet of paper.

Red stars were scattered across it, and the plaster showed white along the fold. Only the space right at the top was still empty.

“One star left — the most important one,” said Grandpa Ian.

“Time to head north.”



A long, long train was going north. Outside the window the forests grew whiter and whiter, and then the trees ran out altogether — the tundra began, flat and snowy all the way to the edge of the sky.

The frost drew patterns on the glass: feathers, stars, ferns. Oliver breathed a little round window in the ice and watched the white world float past.

Grandma Gale warmed her hands on a glass of tea and told him:

“We lived in Salekhard for many years. That’s where your daddy got his first skates — this big. He stomped about in them like a duckling, and then he went flying across the ice faster than anyone.”

The train’s wheels knocked out: to the north, to the north, to the north.



Salekhard! The snow squeaked under their boots like fresh sugar, and warm yellow windows glowed above the snowdrifts.

Oliver caught a snowflake in his mitten. Then another one. The snowflakes settled and didn't melt — that's how cold it was here.

"Look," said Grandpa Ian quietly, and stopped.

Behind a little gate stood a blue house with carved white window frames, and under the windows — a wooden bench.

"This is where we lived. This is where your daddy grew up. Right under that window he used to build snow forts."

Oliver looked at the house. The house looked back at him with its warm windows — as if it had recognized him.



In the ice palace the ice sparkled like an enormous mirror.
Oliver stepped onto it carefully — and glided!

“This is where your daddy scored his goals,” said Grandpa
from the barrier. “And on this very ice Auntie Olga spun on
her skates like a snowflake.”

Oliver took a run-up, swung an invisible stick and sent an
invisible puck straight into the red goal.

“Go-o-oal!” he shouted.

“Go-o-oal!” the echo answered under the ceiling.

“Star — on the map!”

“On the ma-a-ap!” the echo agreed.



In the mammoth museum it was warm, and their coats stayed behind in the cloakroom.

Oliver walked into the hall and froze. In the middle stood a mammoth — huge, shaggy, with tusks curved like sled runners. As tall as the ceiling!

“He’s taller than our house...” whispered Oliver.

And next to him, on a low platform, stood a baby mammoth. Oliver came closer... and closer... and stood right beside him. Head to head! The baby mammoth was exactly his size.

“Say hello,” smiled Grandma Gale. “He’s a northerner too. And I expect he loves adventures just as much as you do.”

Oliver looked into the baby mammoth’s kind eyes. What a friend he would make!



That night Grandpa drove them out to the tundra beyond the town. All around lay blue snow, their breath rose in little clouds, and the lights of Salekhard glowed far, far away like a string of beads.

“But why have we come out in the dark?” Oliver began. And then the sky burst into light.

Green and purple ribbons unrolled from one edge of the world to the other and rippled like an enormous magic curtain. The snow glowed back at them.

“The northern lights,” said Grandma Gale softly.

“The biggest star of all — up in the sky!” breathed Oliver. He held his map up to the sky and, by the light of the northern lights, drew the very last star — in the empty space right at the top. Now the map was complete.



Home smelled familiar and warm. The map — with the plaster on its fold and all, all its stars — now hung on the wall, next to the shelf.

Oliver went up to the globe and spun it — just a little, gently. The seas and the mountains floated slowly round. Then he stopped the globe with his finger right at the top — there, where Salekhard is. Where the blue house stands with its warm windows, and the ice palace with the cheerful echo, and the baby mammoth exactly his size. Where a whole sky dances above the snow.

“We were there,” he whispered to the globe. “And we’ll go back again.”