

Oliver's Holidays at Grandma's





Oliver lived in Prague with his mum and dad. At home he had everything a boy could wish for: his favourite scooter, a speedy bicycle, and warm, friendly streets that were simply perfect for riding.

And close by, always, were Grandma Galya and Grandpa Igor. What Oliver loved best of all was when the whole family got together.

But every summer, something special happened. Oliver would take out his little suitcase, pack his most important things, and choose one toy — the lucky one that would fly with him, high above the clouds.

Because a long, long journey lay ahead — four thousand kilometres! — to the faraway city where Grandma Nadya lived.

A big, BIG family was waiting for him there. And with a big family, even summer turns out big: so many cousins and friends and adventures that you could never count them all.

✈ Arrivals



And then, at last, the day would come. The plane climbed higher and higher, the clouds turned into fluffy white mountains, and Oliver pressed his nose to the window, thinking only one thing: nearly there, nearly there! The journey was long, but he wasn't bored one bit: he watched the tiny houses far below and counted the minutes until landing.

At the airport, Grandma Nadya was always waiting. She spotted Oliver from far, far away and threw up her hands: "You're here!"
"And WHO is this, grown so tall?!"

She hugged him tight and said:
"Right, then. NOW the real holidays begin."

And Oliver felt it at once: something interesting was on its way. Because a whole team of family was waiting for him here — and every single one of them had a brand-new adventure up their sleeve.



The very next morning, the kitchen turned into a real laboratory. Flasks, cups and jars of coloured water stood in neat rows on the table, and Grandma Nadya announced grandly:

“Today, Oliver, you and I are chemists!”

Oliver put on an apron and sat down at the table, looking as serious as a scientist about to make a great discovery.

First, they mixed colours. Yellow and blue suddenly turned into green, and red with one tiny drop of white became soft pink. Best of all, Oliver loved stirring the water with a little stick and watching it change colour right before his eyes.

But then he mixed ALL the colours at once — and instead of something beautiful, he got a murky grey-brown, exactly like mud soup.

“That happens,” laughed Grandma. “Even scientists don’t get it right the first time.”



“And now,” said Grandma Nadya mysteriously, “for the most interesting part of all.”

She took out baking soda and a little bottle of citric acid. Oliver held his breath.

Grandma sprinkled some soda into the flask and dripped the mixture on top. And then — magic! The liquid hissed and fizzed and bubbled, and thick foam came climbing up out of the flask — just like lava from a real volcano.

“ERUPTION!” shouted Oliver, clapping his hands. He immediately wanted to make the volcano even bigger, and reached for the soda.

“Wait,” said Grandma, stopping him gently. “Real chemists work carefully — even when the experiment is the funnest one in the whole world.”

Oliver nodded: being a scientist isn’t just exciting — it’s a big responsibility, too. And they wrote the volcano recipe down in a notebook, so he could make it again at home in Prague and amaze his dad.



A few days later, Oliver and Grandma went out to the countryside — to visit Granny Natasha. Everything there was different from the city. Hens strutted importantly around the yard, a cat called Muffin dozed on the porch, and in the barn lived a little calf named Marta, who had been born only a short while ago.

At first, Oliver felt shy and didn't dare come close. But Marta herself took a step towards him and looked right into his face with her big, gentle, shining eyes.

Granny Natasha gave Oliver a handful of straw and let him feed the calf. Marta took the straw with her warm lips — and then suddenly licked his hand. Her tongue was warm and scratchy, like sandpaper!

Oliver laughed so loudly at the tickle that the hens scattered in a fright. Even the lazy cat opened one eye, looked crossly around the yard, and went straight back to sleep on the porch.



Oliver made friends with his cousin Vasilisa in no time. Together they carried fresh grass to the hens and collected eggs in a basket.

The hens paraded importantly around the children, clucking loudly — as if they were discussing very serious chicken news and simply could not agree.

One egg was so warm that Oliver looked at his cousin in surprise:

“Why is it hot?”

“The hen only just laid it,” explained Vasilisa. “It hasn’t had time to cool down yet.”

In the evening, the two of them sat on the porch and watched the sky grow dark. When the first star lit up — the very brightest one — Vasilisa whispered: “Make a wish.” And soon there were so many stars scattered above them that nobody in the world could have counted them.



Oliver had a grown-up cousin in the village, too — Artem. And Artem had a real motorbike! The coolest machine on earth!

Oliver put on a helmet, climbed up behind, held on tight — and off they roared down the road to the big river. The wind whistled in his ears, the grass streamed past in long green stripes, and Oliver felt like the brave hero of an adventure film.

Then Mum took him for a ride too — and even let him rev the throttle himself, just a little!

First, Oliver turned it the tiniest bit. Then a bit more. The motorbike jerked forward — and he grabbed the handlebars in surprise. His heart went THUMP!

After that, he revved much more carefully. But he was still enormously proud of himself: not everyone knows how to handle a real motorbike.



Back in the city, new adventures were already waiting.

One day, Grandma Nadya announced that they were going to a big indoor play park. It had slides, and zip lines, and even air hockey!

Oliver picked the zip line first. Two ropes hung side by side, and another boy was already holding on to the second one.

“Race you! First one to the end wins!” said Oliver.

They pushed off — and went whooshing right across the hall.

“I’m Roma,” said the boy when they landed.

Oliver smiled back:

“And I’m Oliver. Want to be friends?”

Roma broke into a huge grin:

“Yes!”

And a minute later they were already battling at air hockey and building forts out of giant blocks.



On the way home, Oliver was thinking: “Want to be friends?” — those are almost magic words. You just say them out loud — and suddenly there’s a new friend right beside you!

He decided to test them again. He said the magic words to a boy at the skate park — and they rode together for half the day. He said them to Dima, the son of Mum’s friend, after they had built Lego all afternoon. Dima just shrugged in surprise: “Aren’t we friends already?”

Oliver laughed. So sometimes you don’t even need the words! And that made him especially proud — because Dima was older. A real schoolboy!

And that is how Oliver discovered an important thing: making friends isn’t hard at all. You just smile and say, “Want to be friends?”



Another thing Oliver and Grandma Nadya loved was going to the theatre.

And one day, his cousins Egor and Ira flew in all the way from the Far North — and the whole family went to the theatre together.

Inside, everything was festive and grand: lights twinkled, and the heavy velvet curtain seemed to be hiding some wonderful secret.

The lights went down, and the curtain slid apart. And onto the stage flew Peter Pan — really and truly flying, high above the boards! The hall burst into applause.

Peter Pan swooped under the ceiling, played tricks, crossed swords with Captain Hook and sprinkled fairy dust everywhere. The audience laughed and laughed — and loudest of all laughed Oliver.



Oliver really did have a lot of family in Grandma's city:
Grandpa Volodya, Uncle Sasha, Aunt Lena.

And Grandpa Volodya lived right next door to the jolliest
place in town — a huge amusement park. So one day, the
whole crew set off there together.

First they rode the Caterpillar coaster. Oliver held on tight,
and on the steep drops his tummy did somersaults. Then they
tried the shooting gallery, raced each other in bumper cars,
and went on a safari ride where you had to “catch” painted
animals with beams of light.

And at the very end, Oliver drove an electric car all by himself
— like a real racing driver!

They came home tired, but so happy that they chattered the
whole way about what they would ride next time.



But every holiday, even the very best one, comes to an end one day. And so Oliver was flying high above the clouds once more — homeward, this time.

He looked out of the window and remembered it all: the hissing volcano, warm little Marta, the roar of the motorbike, Peter Pan flying under the ceiling — and, of course, all of his new friends.

Oliver thought about how wonderful it is to have a big family in two cities. How good it is to have people to laugh with, dream with, and discover the world with. And he remembered his greatest summer discovery: to find a friend, all you need to say is “Want to be friends?”

Just before landing, Mum asked:
“What did you like best of all these holidays?”

Oliver thought for a long, long time. Choosing just one thing was impossible — because ALL of it had been the best!



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