

## Ola, Boris and their new friends

They have arrived. 'Pssssssss' the locomotive hissed and stopped. It's time to get off the train. Mum, Ola and Boris are taking out their luggage - mum has a small suitcase. Boris and Ola have the backpacks they used to go to school with. Ola still has her friend, a stuffed toy dog named Mimi, with her. Boris also took something with him, but he didn't want to tell anyone what it is.

The station seems huge to the children, it is difficult to look around - there were people rushing from left and right. Lots of people got off the train. Ola squeezes her mother's hand tightly. She has many questions: Where are we going? Where are we going to live? Is this the end of the journey? She sees Boris was looking around, and decides to start exploring the new place herself. The children notice some people smiling at them. Maybe it won't be so bad?

Tired, they enter a large room. There are even more people here. It is noisy. There are boxes with food and clothes on the floor and tables. Mom says she's not hungry, but Ola and Boris are already drinking the juice and eating the snack bars they got. Boris went to get another portion, and although Ola pretends to be angry, you can see that she's happy that he hasn't forgotten about her.

Finally they got to the car. Asia and Marek are waiting for them.

'Welcome.' said Marek.

'Get in,' Asia adds invitingly. 'We are going to our place.'

Ola and Boris look at each other with apprehension, but they see mum smiling and get into the car. Boris is interested in the silver Toyota they are in. It's the same as uncle's. Ola is listening to the new language. She is surprised to hear that every now and then she understands the words. She sighs with relief - if she meets some kids, they might be able to understand each other. The car starts moving.

During the ride, Ola and Boris look around. The streets, cars, buildings, shops, everything looks the same as where they are from. They finally arrive.

The blocks of flats look like the ones on their estate. They have several floors. There is grass, hedges, and narrow pavements. Further away, there is a playground. Ola looks at the playing children for a while, she's worried if she would find any friends here.

'I'll always have Mimi.' she thinks, homesick.

Only Boris doesn't look as if he was worried about anything. He has already run to check the slide.

'Come back, Boris!' mum calls, 'We have to go.'

Marek opens the door to the staircase and they all take the lift to the seventh floor. Asia quickly turns the key in the lock and says:

'Come in. This will be your home for a while.'

The flat smells of cake. They sit down in the kitchen. Mum is smiling, but the children can see tears coming to her eyes. Asia hugs mum and says that they will surely be fine.

—

The next day Boris really wants to go to the playground.

'OK' said Mum and looks at Ola.

'No! I don't want go. I want to stay at home!' Ola says with in a trembling voice.

'Let's do it this way. Boris will go on the slide for a while and then we'll go back home' mum decided.

Ola agreed, she was a bit curious herself, but then she sat on a bench next to mum. She was getting bored watching Boris climbing the slide over and over again taking turns with other kids. She started to kick little stones under the bench, when a ball rolled under her feet.

'Can you pass it?' the boy asked.

Mum nodded. Ola kicked the ball.

'Will you play with us?'

Ola didn't answer, she looked down and felt shivers. Mum said they had to go back now, but maybe they could play together another day.

Phew, thought Ola. But then she thought it would be nice to meet that boy again.

'See you tomorrow! I'm Michal!' the boy shouted and ran to his friends.

'And I'm Ola' she whispered.

Coming home, Boris was jumping up and down, talking about the slide.

'It was very big and very fast! Mum, can we go back there tomorrow, please?'

'And what do you think? Would you like to come back?' asked mum, looking at Ola.

'Hmm.... maybe' she answered not very sure. 'Maybe there will be that boy with a ball...' she thought.

Ola couldn't sleep in the evening. She felt strange excitement and couldn't wait for the next day.

---

The next morning mum, Ola and Boris went for a walk. They walked through strange streets and saw houses, shops, a pharmacy and even one restaurant. Everything was the same as at home, but the letters. But Ola had seen them before and told Boris how they all sounded.

'Everything here is so strange' said Boris sadly.

'How come?' said mum, 'What about the sparrows on the fence? You know them.'

'You can understand a lot, too' added Ola.

'Well, it's a sort of an adventure' agreed Boris much more confidently. 'We are like real travellers and explorers! We discover new places! Like in fairy tales!' he shouted with excitement.

'You're right' mum agreed. 'We're just like real explorers. And now, who's first at the playground?'

Boris, like a true explorer, set off right away. Even Ola, who had been unsure until then, shyly followed him.

---

Days passed. Sometimes they went for walks, sometimes they stayed at the playground. Ola started playing football with Michal, who she had met already, and with his friends Kazik and Kamilka. Boris met Ania, Nina and Mateusz.

After some time, mum said that soon Boris would go to nursery and Ola would go to school.

'Will there be any toys?' asked Boris.

'Of course' said mum, 'And what do you think, Ola?'

'I'm not sure yet, but maybe Michal and the others will be there. I already know them well' she said.

'Yes, Kamilka goes to that school. But remember, you'll meet new friends there.'

Ola wasn't so sure, she was afraid of going to school. But she knew that a lot changed since she came here. She's not so scared any more and she's getting along with others better. Boris is getting better with the new sounds, all these 'ą' and 'ę' too. He even said that he no longer sleeps with the amber he once found on the beach. Even Mimi the dog sleeps alone more and more often.

Ola's curiosity takes over her fear. How will her class look like? Who will be the teacher? Who will she sit next to? Will she manage with reading and writing? She did well in Ukrainian, but now she will have to learn from the start.

Now, when she goes for a walk or to the playground and meets new people, she thinks they might be cool. After all, Michal and his friends are really cool. Her and Boris's new friends.