



If I Were a Grandpa

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In *If I Were a Grandpa*, a little boy dreams about one day becoming a grandfather. He would always be a fantastic grandpa to his grandchildren. He would play all kinds of exciting games with them and let them do all sorts of things all of the time. His grandchildren would be very good and well-behaved, so he would never really need to scold them. Grandpa and his grandkids would love one another and always have fun times together. Koff sees inter-generational harmony and strong mutual ties as being important elements of such relationships.

Award:

2013 Nominee of the Annual Children's Literature Award of the Cultural Endowment of Estonia



If I Were a Grandfather

If I ...

If I were a grandfather, then ...

Yes—if I were a grandfather, then I would be one all-around mighty grandfather, and I'd have a lot of grandchildren. At least ten, but maybe so many as twelve or thirteen. We would have great fun together, and I think they would probably like me even more than their own mothers and fathers, because I would make them laugh all the time and would play all sorts of exciting games with them both night and day, and would always allow them to do all kinds of things.

I would be big and strong, and they would never have to be afraid of anything when they were with me. My legs would be really long, because all of my grandchildren would have to fit on my lap all at once. At first, my legs could actually be completely ordinary, too; but every time another grandchild came along, they would have to grow a little bit so that by the end, they would be about eight or ten feet long. Or twelve. I would be so strong that all of my grandchildren could sit on my knee at once, and I would bounce-bounce-bounce them like on a pony, and would never, ever say that we should stop now because I'm getting tired. I would always have the energy to keep playing.

Trouble and Joy

My grandchildren would always come straight to see me and their grandma when their summer break started. Their fathers and mothers would drive them there. Then, we would all eat some good food together and talk about things. The children would go right outside to play, because they wouldn't really care to listen to the grown-ups' boring stories. Still, I would discuss all kinds of important things for hours on end with the fathers and mothers, and they would all listen to what I had to say, because I would be the oldest and the wisest of all of them. After that, we would drink more coffee and eat pancakes, and then the fathers and the mothers would start to head out, because they would have to go to work the next day and get up awfully early in the morning.

The children would watch them go, their eyes fixed on the cars driving further and further away, until finally, they would only see tiny, colorful dots. Big, clear tears would roll from their eyes, because while they would surely be glad that they get to spend the entire summer with me, they would still be sad that their mother and father had to drive away. But I would pick my grandchildren up onto my lap and stroke their heads and tell them such funny jokes that they would all forget about being sad. In the evening, we would swing under a big tree, and every child would get a couple more pancakes. And when we went to bed, they wouldn't be sad anymore, but instead cheerful, because a long and exciting summer awaited them.



Reading sample

The Neighbors

The neighbors would live a little farther away from our house, but they would be incredible people. On the one side would live Auntie Milk, who we would visit almost every day to fetch fresh milk and see the calves. Auntie Milk would sometimes offer us apples and pears from her garden, and would tell us all kinds of words of wisdom while we ate them. For example, she would tell us about the waning and waxing moon, and about planting, and all kinds of things that you can use to treat yourself when you get sick or something hurts.

Living on the other side would be Auntie Egg, who would be a fantastic person and would dreadfully love to tell stories. We would visit her for hours and hours every time we went to go fetch some eggs. She would let us taste her sweet tomatoes, and would teach us the most correct way to make jam, as well as how to jar the best pickles.

Living a little farther away would be Uncle Nicko, who would know how to fix machines and craft all kinds of exciting things. It would be a thrill to go and watch how he saws and welds and forges and solders and looks for wrenches and all kinds of tiny gadgets in his vast garage, and how he always finds them, too. The most amazing thing at his place would be an airplane that he keeps on building and building, but which never seems to be finished because there is always one or another piece missing.

And even farther away would live deaf Uncle Juku, who would be a little frightening, because he would talk so loudly and in a strange voice and be drunk sometimes. However, other times, it would be exciting to secretly creep over to his place. It would be so dangerous, and we would almost be like real spies. If we were lucky, we would catch him doing some very secret act – pretending to solve a crossword puzzle, but really writing some secret letter, or else going to feed the ducks, because they would be some kind of top-secret messenger ducks for him.



Heroes

In summer, we would all have skinned knees and elbows all the time, because we would speed around on bikes and have races and climb to the tops of tall trees every day. We would do all kinds of hard chores, so my grandchildren's mothers and fathers would have no idea where those children got that strength.

At first, a little bit of blood would come out of a wound, and the skinned spots would hurt. It would be especially painful when Grandma cleans a wound with a strong medicine that makes the scratch sting awfully. But we wouldn't cry at all, and then the pain would already pass, too, because we would be really good and strong and what does one hole in a knee or an elbow really do, anyway? We would be incredibly brave and mighty heroes.

After that, we could see who has the biggest scabs.

Music

I would have a ton of all kinds of instruments at home, because I would like music an awful lot. My grandchildren would take their instruments along when they came to visit me, too; but I wouldn't force them to practice every day, because who really cares to practice their instruments during school break, when you need to be doing many more exciting things all the time? Things like climbing to the tops of trees and going to swim in the sea and spying on Uncle Juku. But sometimes, we would all get our instruments out and play them together and sing fun songs. I would know how to play the trumpet and the guitar and the harmonica and the recorder. And the piano. But sometimes around a campfire in the evening, I would sing a sad song to my grandchildren. Even those songs would be just as long and pretty as the ones Uncle Juhan sings. I would also teach my grandchildren to hear the kind of music that doesn't have to be made by instruments. At the seaside, we would listen to the surf, and in the evenings, we would listen to the crackling of the fire outside. And one time, we would go into the forest at night and listen to the forest noises. We would sit on top of a fallen tree and be very quiet and the forest would softly speak its night language. However, we wouldn't be afraid at all, because we'd all be together, and on top of that, I would know that the forest is our friend. It is our friend because we are its friends.



Reading sample

Thieves

One time, thieves would go and steal from Auntie Egg, and would take away a lot of her things, and she would be the saddest about her wheelbarrow, because what could she use to haul all kinds of objects when there was no more wheelbarrow? And it would be a little scary for her to be alone at night and to fall asleep alone, because who knows when those thieves might come back again.

But I would start investigating the case with all of my grandchildren, because we would all want to become police officers. We would take a magnifying glass out of the drawer of important things in my old cupboard, and would look for the thieves' footprints on the road to Auntie Egg's home. We would lie in wait everywhere and would ask everyone whether or not that had noticed anything suspicious. In the end, we would find the thieves and catch them. The police would put them in a police car and take them to the station while we would return all of Auntie Egg's possessions to her. We would get impressive medals from the police, and no one would have to be afraid that the thieves might come again any more, because we would protect everyone.

The Grandfathers' Olympics

If I were a grandfather, then I would go to the Grandfathers' Olympics every year. I would win most of the competitions there every time, because the other grandfathers would be so old and have aching backs and legs, but I wouldn't ache anywhere. I would have fast legs and strong hands. And then, I would get a whole heap of gold medals.

The most important competition there would be the grandfathers' dearness competition, and I would win that one too, of course, because the grandchildren would pick the dearest grandfather, and all of them would like me best of all. Even the ones who didn't know me before would like me oh-so-very-much right away.

