

The Village of Tiny Windows



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In the village of Windowbrook, every house has a tiny window. No two windows are the same size or shape, but each one is small enough to peek through with one eye. When people look through their tiny windows, they see their happiest memories. Max lives in the yellow house at the end of the lane, and his window is round like a coin.



Max is eight years old, with messy chestnut hair that sticks up in tufts and a small scar on his left eyebrow. He wears a mustard yellow jumper with rolled sleeves and carries a little leather satchel everywhere he goes. Every morning, Max climbs on a stool to look through his tiny window. He usually sees the day he got his satchel, but today something is different.



Through the round glass, Max sees a place he has never visited. There is a rocky shore, a blue boat, and a tall man waving from a wooden pier. Max blinks and rubs his eyes, but the view stays the same. He runs to find his grandmother, who is sitting in her lavender cardigan with her round spectacles on a chain. 'Grandmother Ella,' he says, 'my window is showing a strange place!'



Grandmother Ella smiles and pats the chair beside her. 'That view comes from an old family story,' she says. 'Long ago, our family lived by the sea. The tiny windows remember what we forget.' Max leans closer. 'Who is the man on the pier?' he asks. Grandmother Ella's grey eyes twinkle. 'That might be Uncle Tobias, your grandfather's cousin. He still lives by the sea, far from here.'



Max's heart beats fast. 'I want to meet him!' he says. Grandmother Ella nods. 'Then you must go on an adventure. Follow the river path north until you reach the salty air.' She gives him a small map and a kiss on the forehead. Max packs his satchel with an apple, a biscuit, and his map. He waves goodbye and sets off down the lane.



At the edge of the village, Max meets his friend Lily. She is ten years old, with long red braids and a gap-toothed smile. She wears a teal raincoat and yellow wellington boots. 'Where are you going?' she asks. Max shows her the map. 'To find my Uncle Tobias by the sea,' he says. Lily's green eyes light up. 'Can I come? I love adventures!' Max grins. 'Of course!'



Lily pulls Max to her house to see her tiny window. 'Look,' she says. Max peeks through and sees a circus tent with juggling clowns. 'That's from the day my baby brother was born,' Lily says. 'Everyone sees something different,' Max says. 'Yes,' says Lily. 'That's what makes our village special.' They laugh and start walking along the river path.



The path winds through green fields and tall trees. Max and Lily take turns reading the map. They share the apple and the biscuit. 'What does your window show?' Lily asks. 'A rocky shore with a blue boat,' Max says. 'I've never seen the sea.' Lily smiles. 'You will soon!' After a long walk, they hear waves crashing. 'We're close!' Max says.



They reach a small fishing village with wooden houses and nets drying in the sun. A tall, broad-shouldered man with a thick beard and a crooked nose is mending a net on the pier. He wears a faded blue fisherman sweater and a red knitted scarf. 'Hello!' Max calls. 'Are you Uncle Tobias?' The man looks up, surprised. 'Well, I am! Who are you?'



Max and Lily introduce themselves. Uncle Tobias's warm brown eyes light up. 'You're Ella's grandson!' he says. 'Come, come, I'll show you my tiny window.' In his little house, the window is shaped like a fish. 'Look,' he says. Max peeks through and sees a family picnic with a little boy and a woman who looks like Grandmother Ella. 'That's your grandmother and me when we were young,' Uncle Tobias says.



Uncle Tobias tells them stories about the old family home by the sea. 'Your great-great-grandfather was a fisherman,' he says. 'He built the blue boat you saw in your window.' Max beams. 'So that's why my window showed the shore!' he says. 'The tiny windows keep our happy memories safe,' Uncle Tobias says. 'And when we share them, we share our hearts.'



Max realizes something important. 'Everyone sees different views through the same tiny windows,' he says. 'That's what makes Windowbrook special.' Lily nods. 'And everyone's memories are different, but they're all happy.' Uncle Tobias gives them each a seashell. 'Take these home,' he says. 'They'll help you remember your adventure.' Max and Lily thank him and start the journey back.



When Max gets home, Grandmother Ella is waiting. He tells her everything about Uncle Tobias and the blue boat. 'I'm proud of you, Max,' she says. 'You followed the family story and found a new friend.' Max hugs her tight. 'I learned that our tiny windows show us who we are,' he says. 'And now I have a new memory to add.'



That evening, Max looks through his tiny window again. This time, he sees Uncle Tobias waving from the pier, and Lily and Grandmother Ella standing beside him. Max smiles. He knows that the village of tiny windows will always keep his happy memories safe, and that every view is a story waiting to be shared.



The next day, Max visits Lily's house. They take turns looking through her tiny window and his. 'Your window shows the sea,' Lily says. 'And yours shows the circus,' Max says. 'But both make us happy.' They laugh and run outside to play, knowing that their friendship is the best memory of all.



In Windowbrook, every house still has a tiny window. And every person who looks through one sees a different view. Max has learned that it's not just the windows that make the village special. It's the people who share their memories, and the adventures that bring them together. And that is a happy memory worth keeping forever.