**International Letter-Writing Competition – Belarus**

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**Age**: 11 years

Hello, my dear grandfather Mikhail!

Six months has already passed since your death, but I am still missing you. I need your wise eyes, strong and safe hands, and your affectionate embrace. I miss your long stories about people, life, truth...

You have taught me to believe in miracles, my beloved grandfather! And now I am writing a letter to you hoping that you will magically read it…

You know, I'm very upset today…

Ah, if you were alive, grandfather, I would come to you, sit knee by knee and tell you everything. And perhaps you would stroke me on the head and whisper: “Olenka, you are living in a happy time, living in love and peace, in abundance and joy. Cheer up! Things will get better. Look at the world: it is wonderful!”

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“But what do you know, grandfather, about the present, about today’s world? - I would stubbornly object and continue: - I met a homeless kitten on the way to school today. In fact, someone has betrayed it. It is hungry and unlucky. And there are plenty of other abandoned animals. People are cruel and unfair.

During the break I accidentally stepped on a classmate’s foot and he pushes me and calls me names. I am sad and hurt. I started to cry. How can it be possible? I have stepped on his foot by accident!

Then, when I am coming back from music school, I am scolded by a woman on the bus for not giving away my seat. But that has happened because I have been falling asleep due to fatigue and I just have not noticed her.

And in the evening, I quarrel with my friends because I do not want to sit outside on the bench and play on the phone like them but want to play snowballs. “You are like out of this world”, - my friends tell me. I walk by myself outside enjoying the long-awaited snow and having a lot of thoughts in my mind... Yes, they are right…I am out of this world…But what is it, “this world”?

It's complicated! People are not able to listen and hear each other. Everybody cares only about himself and his interests. The world is ruled by greed and thirst for profit. People are enslaved by gadgets. They no longer appreciate painting, music, books... The nature is being indefinitely destroyed. The fight of people against terrible diseases has almost lost. It is enough to mention the number of COVID-19 victims.”

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I would start to cry then. And at that very moment you would wisely notice, as it has been before: “Granddaughter, do you remember that a medal usually has two sides? Do you remember that the side of the medal that you are wiping shines more?” And then you would tricky wink and snap your fingers, “Turn it over!”

I would dry my tears and gather my thoughts and “having turned the medal over” continue the monologue:

“Is the Peace complicated?

Do people not understand or love each other? Are people not able to listen and hear each other?

But, for example, I have not tried to explain. What if I told that boy who pushes me and calls me names that I have stepped on his foot by accident, if I apologize to him. Maybe our conflict would end in different way?

And what about the woman in the bus? What if I told that I have not noticed her because I have been falling asleep due to fatigue, would she not understand me? Since she is someone's mother, wife, daughter... Probably, she has just been very tired. It never even occurs to me.

And what about the poor kitten? Brutal people have left him homeless without food? But what about me? I will find him tomorrow and will take him home. It will be a good start…

And what about my friends with gadgets? I am angry at them. But after all, the scientific and technical progress, moving forward with seven league steps, helps people easily get the right information, provides the opportunity to communicate with people from different parts of the world, helps to make our life easier, make the world better!

Medicine is developing either! I agree that sometimes it is quite difficult to find the vaccine to cure new diseases, emerging and attacking mankind. But there are many intelligent, brave people, fighting for our health! After all, I see how selflessly and hard my parents are working as doctors. How much they are happy for each recovering person, how hard they are worried when they are not able to help someone.

What about the environment? I agree that from time to time the man unwisely uses wealth and gifts of nature. However, there are plenty of environmental communities, volunteers and just involved people, promoting by actions, as well as by words a protective approach to the nature. For instance, every spring my friends and I plant a tree in our neighborhood...

Guys are good now…

And most of them appreciate art. Many guys go to music schools, like I do; many go to art schools, read, sing, dance… Not all, but many of them!..

Ah, grandfather! So, our world isn't so bad! It's complicated, but how wonderful it is in its diversity! And if you look at the world with the eyes of a man in love, it's easy to see how wonderful it is!!!”

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You would give a cunning smile, grandfather, and might say: “Miracles are always surrounding us! The main thing is to be able to feel and see them!”

And then I would become silent being excited…

My dear grandfather, you have taught me to believe in miracles, and even now, after you have gone, I am learning from you to love this world! Is it not a miracle?

With love,

Your granddaughter Olya.

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