

Great-Aunt Elka Saves the Day



jolly
solly

Fishel and Faivish Friedman were bored. The weather was hot and muggy. There was absolutely nothing to do. They were tired of their scooters. They were fed up with their bikes. They were uninterested in their roller blades.

So, when Great-Aunt Elka offered to take them to the zoo, they jumped at the chance.

They didn't often see Great-Aunt Elka. She loved nature and animals. She'd even worked as a zoo volunteer. Fishel and Faivish's interest in nature was limited to climbing trees. But still, anything beat sitting around doing nothing.

"Let's go! We've gotta get out," said Fishel.

"We've *really* gotta get out," said Faivish.

"That's what I said."

"Isn't!"

"Is!"

"Isn't!"

"Is!"

"Boys!" Mrs Friedman tried to maintain the peace. "I'm calling Great-Aunt Elka. I'll tell her you're accepting her invitation."

Soon the troublesome two were on their way to the bus stop.

The trip took about half an hour. Great-Aunt Elka led the way briskly into the zoo. Her large straw hat bobbed up and down.

"Let's start with the panda bears," she declared. "They're a conservation success story."



Simi Shalom

Fishel and Faivish nodded politely. They didn't understand anything she had just said. And when they got to the pandas, things weren't better. The creatures were holed up in their shelter. They were refusing to come out.

"Um... can we go look at the monkeys?" asked Fishel.

Faivish nodded (his brother was right for once).

"No problem!" responded Elka. "I'll stay here. I want to read about the panda conservation program."

The brothers nodded. Then they ran off to see the monkeys.

But what a disappointment! They'd expected to see monkeys like Manny from Eli's place. Manny always had a trick up his sleeve. These monkeys looked half-asleep.

"Hey! Get moving! Swing from the treetops," called Fishel.

The monkeys eyed him lazily.

"Maybe there are some parrots we can see," said Faivish. "Parrots are usually fun."

Fishel agreed. The brothers grinned as they thought of Tuki the parrot. Tuki liked to screech, "Pop goes the weasel! Pop-pop-pop!"

The city zoo had two parrots, in separate cages.

"Hello-hello-hello!" called Fishel.

The parrots didn't answer.

"Pop! Pop goes the weasel!" tried Faivish.

The parrots stared at the boys in doleful silence.

"Say something!"

"Sing a song!"

But the only response was quiet.

Fishel and Faivish eyed each other glumly. This zoo trip was a failure!

Fishel groaned. "If only Jolly Solly were here."

"Yeah, he'd make things exciting," said Faivish.

"Or tell us to look on the bright side."

"Huh? There is no bright side."

"Well, it was nice of Great-Aunt Elka to take us," said Fishel.

"I guess it was," said Faivish.

The brothers looked around. Where was Great-Aunt Elka? She

on its own."

A firm voice stopped him in his tracks.

"I have him!"

And to Fishel and Faivish's astonishment, there stood Great-Aunt Elka. She was wearing the chinchilla around her neck like a scarf!

What excitement. The zoo manager came out. He thanked Great-Aunt Elka in person for saving the chinchilla.

The zoo worker put the chinchilla back in its cage. Then he gave Great-Aunt Elka a VIP

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must have finished reading the panda information by now.

A crowd had gathered a little distance away. The brothers wandered toward it. A zoo worker was giving a talk. He held a white, furry animal. He said it was called a chinchilla.

Suddenly, there was a commotion. A truck made a loud noise that frightened the chinchilla. Without warning, it leaped to the ground and ran.

The zoo worker gave chase.

"Gotta get this chinchilla back," he cried. "It won't survive

tour of the zoo. This included Fishel and Faivish of course. They were taken to all the parts not open to the public.

"Great trip!" Fishel declared.

"Yeah!" Faivish couldn't help but agree.

"I guess it was *furry* exciting, wasn't it?" Great-Aunt Elka winked at them. 

R. Atkins's book, Around the Year with Jolly Solly, featuring 50 fabulous stories, is in bookstores now. For information about a personalized version, contact the Mishpacha office.