



OSCAR and the FOLDING AIRPLANE

Story by Peter Chapman

Illustrations by Carl Osberg

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On Saturdays, Oscar did chores for Mr. and Mrs. Hutchinson. Sometimes he weeded the garden and sometimes he cut the grass. Today, Oscar raked autumn leaves and when he finished, Mrs. Hutchinson gave him 10 cents, as she always did.

On his way home, Oscar stopped at Mr. Putt's store. He wanted to buy something special. Walking up and down the aisles, he saw toothbrushes and sewing needles, cans of beans and rubber boots. Nothing looked interesting.

Then Oscar saw an envelope marked "Folding Airplane," price 10 cents. "That is what I would like," he said. Mr. Putt stood behind the counter. Oscar gave him the ten cents he'd earned, took the envelope and raced home.



Oscar's favorite place was the clearing at the top of the hill behind his house. He climbed up the path, sat down and looked closely at the envelope. Inside was a folded piece of paper covered with arrows and lines.



He unfolded the paper carefully. As he did, the airplane took shape; first the body, then the wings. It grew bigger and bigger — big enough for him to fit into! It had a windscreen and a cockpit and a little storage compartment at the back. Oscar opened the compartment door. Inside was a propeller. He fitted it onto the front of the airplane and climbed into the cockpit.



A small sign read: “To start engine, say up little plane.”

Oscar fastened his seat belt and said, “Up little plane.” The propeller began to spin. The folding airplane rolled forward and lifted into the sky. Oscar was flying! Below he saw his home, the clearing at the top of the hill and the village beside the lake. The trees, buildings and people below grew smaller as the folding airplane climbed higher into the sky.



As the little airplane flew on, Oscar left the village behind. He flew along a sparkling river, over the thick forest and past tall mountains. The bright blue sky stretched out above him.



In the distance he saw a clearing in the forest with a barn and a house. Beside them was a big pile of logs and a large building. Oscar could tell that it was a sawmill and said, "Down little plane." The little airplane dipped gently to the ground and glided to a halt.



Oscar climbed out of the folding airplane. A big, burly man came out to greet him. With a warm smile, he said, “Hello, my name is Jerry and this is my sawmill.”

Oscar smiled, and said, “How do you do, my name is Oscar.”



The air smelled of freshly cut wood. Oscar followed Jerry as they walked past stacks of bright new lumber and piles and piles of sawdust surrounded the sawmill.

As Oscar looked closely, one pile of sawdust started to move! Suddenly, he saw a nose and floppy ears and big brown eyes. It was a dog. His fur was covered in sawdust.

Jerry said, “This stray dog has been at my sawmill for the past week. He needs a proper home and a name.”

Oscar said, “His name should be Sawdust and I would love to bring him home.” Jerry agreed and gave Sawdust a friendly scratch behind his ear.



Oscar and Sawdust explored the forest and creek around the sawmill all afternoon. Then, when the sun dipped low in the sky, it was time to go home. Oscar helped Sawdust climb into the cockpit and buckled their seat belts. Oscar wrapped a green scarf around Sawdust's neck to keep him warm.

Jerry called out, "Come back soon."

"We will," said Oscar as the folding airplane lifted into the sky and turned toward home.



Sawdust's green scarf flapped happily in the wind as they headed toward home. In the distance, Oscar heard his father ringing the dinner bell. He saw the clearing at the top of the hill behind his house and said, "Down little plane." The folding airplane dipped gently toward the ground and came to rest on the grass.



Oscar and Sawdust climbed down. Oscar put the propeller away, carefully folded the airplane and slid it back into the envelope. Then he ran down the hill toward home as he had done so many times before, but this time with Sawdust at his heels.



After dinner, with Sawdust already asleep, Oscar placed the envelope in the drawer beside his bed, ready for more adventures.



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Peter Chapman is a British Columbia author prone to flights of imagination. Oscar's story began in the mountains, forests and waters of the Lardeau Valley, inspired by his sons, who listened to stories about Oscar and his folding airplane at bedtime.

Carl Osberg was born in Vancouver, B.C. Canada in 1985. He has lived and worked as an artist throughout Europe since 2009. His work often takes inspiration from the natural world, particularly the observation of birds. Carl has a Master's of Printmaking from the Helsinki Academy of Art.

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