Gigi can’t wait to meet her grandfather from Japan. They are going to have so much fun together!
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In loving memory of D.N.,
my Ojiji
—M.I.
Gigi was making a special present.

“Ojiisan is going to love this,”
Gigi thought.
Oojiisan means grandfather in Japanese.
Gigi’s grandfather was coming from Japan
to live with them.
“We’re going to have fun
with Ojiisan, right, Roscoe?”
“We’ll play tag. We’ll read books.
We’ll teach you new tricks!”

“Ready, Gigi?” her mom called.
“Hai!” said Gigi.
Hai means yes in Japanese.
Gigi practiced her Japanese words on the way to the airport. She knew how to say “thank you,” “good morning,” “good night,” “hello,” and how to count to ten.

“Ojiisan is going to be so happy to hear you speak Japanese!” said Dad.
At the airport, Gigi and her parents waited for Ojiisan to arrive.
“There he is!” Mom said.

“Is that man really Ojiisan?” asked Gigi.
“He doesn’t look like he can play tag,” she thought.
This was not going well.
“This is Gigi,” Mom said.
Mom pressed on Gigi’s back to remind her to bow.
Gigi tried to say “hello” in Japanese, but her tongue got all twisted up.

“What?” Ojiisan said.
“She said konnichiwa,” Mom explained.
Ojiisan laughed and nodded his head.
“Konnichiwa!” he said.
Gigi’s cheeks got hot.
He was laughing at her!
Gigi remembered the present.
“This is for you, Ojiisan,” she said.
“Arigatoo,” he said.

All the way home,
Mom and Ojiisan spoke in Japanese.
“Ojiisan says he got lost at the airport!
He couldn’t read the signs,
and a nice woman helped him.”

Gigi knew that meant “thank you.”
Ojiisan carefully put the envelope in his jacket pocket.
“Oh no!” thought Gigi.
“Ojiisan can’t play tag, and he can’t read books with me.”
This was not going well at all!
“At least we can play with Roscoe and teach him tricks . . .”

Back at home, Roscoe was excited to see everyone. Uh-oh . . .
“Roscoe!” Mom scolded.
Ojiisan said something in Japanese.
“What did he say?” Dad asked.
“He said, ‘This is why dogs should not live indoors,’” Mom said.
Dad showed Ojiisan to his room.
“Does Ojiisan hate Roscoe?”
Gigi asked her mom.
“No, hon. Ojiisan just needs to get to know him better.”

“I wanted to play tag and read books with Ojiisan. I wanted us to play with Roscoe and teach him new tricks. But we won’t be able to do any of that,” said Gigi.
Gigi began to cry.
“I don’t think Ojiisan even likes me.”
She began to cry even harder.

“Ojiisan loves you,” Mom said.
“But why didn’t he hug me at the airport?” asked Gigi.
“Japanese people rarely hug. We bow.
It took me a while to get used to it too!”
Mom said.
“Ojiisan laughed at me when I tried to say konnichiwa,” said Gigi.
“He wasn’t laughing at you. Sometimes he just laughs when he doesn’t know what to say,”
Mom said.

“But he didn’t even open my present when I gave it to him!” Gigi said.
“Most Japanese people his age think it’s rude to open a present in front of the person who gave it to them,”
Mom explained.
There was so much about Japan that Gigi didn’t know!
“I can’t even speak Japanese right!” she said.

“You’ve been doing great with your words!” Mom said.
“Maybe Ojiisan can teach me words too?” Gigi said hopefully.
“He would love that,” said Mom.
“C’mon. Let’s go see how he’s doing.”
Ojiisan said something and pointed to the drawing when they entered his room.

“What?” said Gigi. It sounded like a Japanese word.

“He said, ‘Thank you,’” Mom said.

Ojiisan laughed. “My English is not so good,” he said slowly. “You teach me, OK?” he asked Gigi.

“Hai!” Gigi said.
Then Ojiisan gave Gigi a big package.
“Arigatoo!” she said.
Gigi began unwrapping it.
She remembered what her mom said and stopped.
“Go ahead and open it!” Mom said.

Inside was the most perfect gift!
“Thank you, Ojiisan!” shouted Gigi.
Without thinking, she gave him a big hug.
“Oh!” he said, surprised.
Then he gave her a big hug back.
“You call me ‘Ojiji,’ OK?” Ojiisan said.
“That means grandpa,” said Mom.

“We’re going to have so much fun together, Ojiji!” said Gigi.
Even Roscoe agreed.
GLOSSARY

Arigatoo  Thank you

Hai  Yes

Konnichiwa  Hello or good afternoon

Ojiisan  A grandfather

Ojii A nickname version of “grandfather.” You would only say this to your own grandfather and only if you are close to him. It’s like saying “grandpa.”