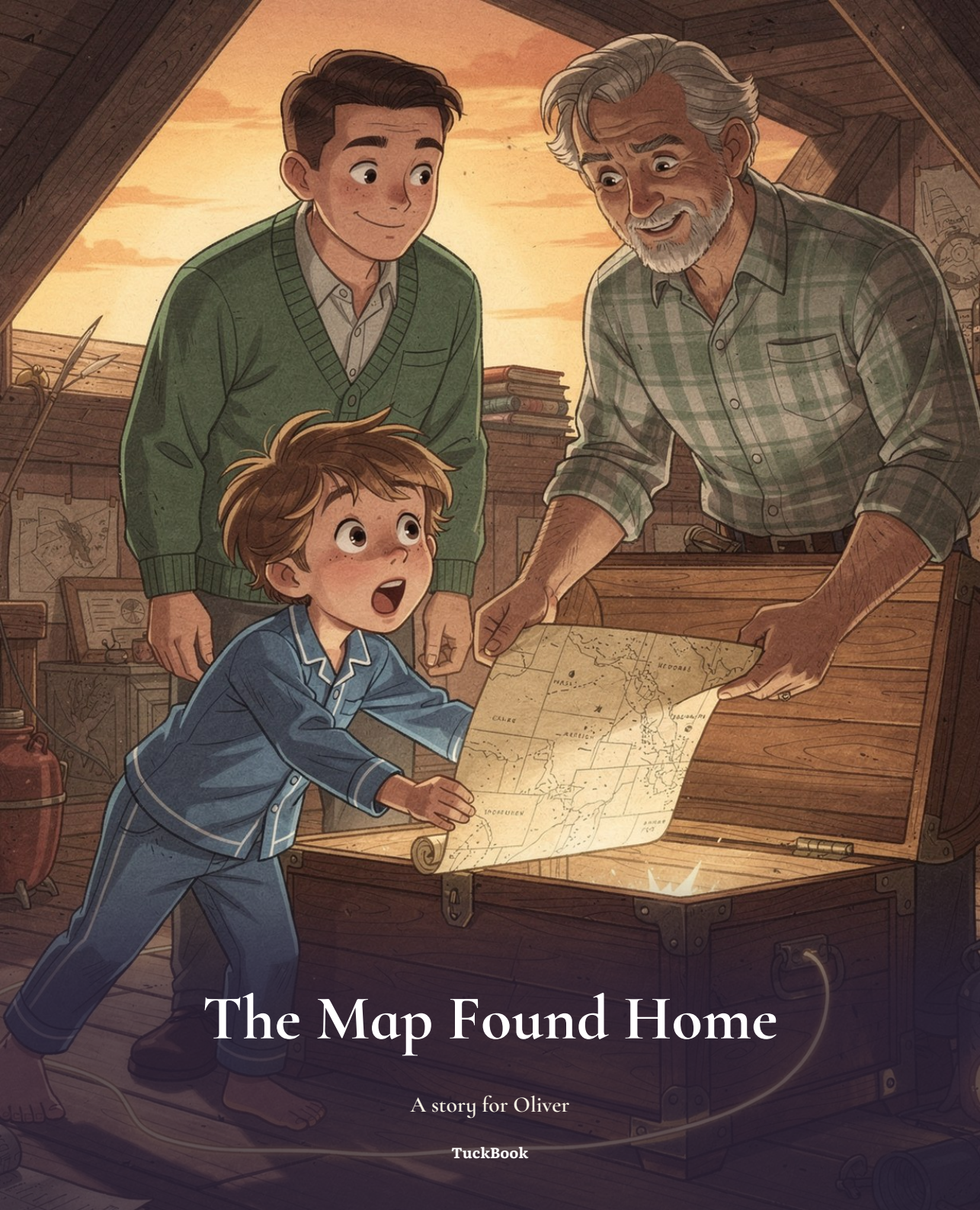




The Map Found Home

A story for Oliver

TuckBook

The main character of this story: **Oliver**

Oliver tugged a rolled-up map from a cedar chest in the attic, and a thin gold line blinked awake across its paper. “Dad, look! Where does it lead?” School was only a few sleeps away, and Oliver wanted to solve the map before the first bell rang.

Dad stood beside the attic stairs, holding the small lantern so its moonstone glowed pearly white. Oliver, in his blue pyjamas, spread the map on a low trunk. It showed their house, but not quite as it usually was. The hallway curled like a river. The reading corner wore a tiny crown of stars. In one corner, almost hidden, was a soft star-shaped compass.



The gold line slid from the attic door and pointed down the stairs. Oliver took one eager step. At once, the line wriggled into words: WHERE DO BRAVE FEET WAIT FOR MORNING? “Oh, honestly!” Oliver said. “It was a path a moment ago.” Dad kept one hand on the railing and smiled. “Perhaps it changes when you try to hurry past the thinking part.”

Oliver looked at the riddle, then at the little picture of a backpack drawn beside it. “My school backpack!” Downstairs, Dad stayed close while Oliver opened the blue canvas backpack hanging on its hook. In the front pocket, beneath a packet of tissues, he found his soft star-shaped compass. It was felt, yellow as butter, with a stitched arrow in the middle. Oliver tucked it safely into his pyjama pocket.

Back at the map, the gold line had stretched towards the sitting room. Oliver tried to guess quickly. “The window? The clock? The biscuit tin?” Each guess made the line curl into a new little knot. Then he noticed something Dad had not mentioned: the map had tiny drawings of his own places along the edges. His backpack. His bed. The striped cushion in the reading corner.





“It isn’t showing me a faraway treasure,” Oliver said slowly. “It’s showing me things I already know.” The compass in his pocket gave the tiniest warm bump against his hand. Its stitched arrow pointed through the sitting-room doorway.

The reading corner waited under the window, with its striped cushion, low shelves, and a small lamp making a puddle of honey-coloured light. The map’s line reached the shelf and became another riddle: WHAT STORY CAN WALK BESIDE YOU WHEN YOU GO SOMEPLACE NEW? Oliver ran his finger along the book spines.

There was a tall new book about castles, shiny and tempting. Oliver nearly chose it. But then he saw his favourite book, *The Moonlit Fox*, with its worn green cover and the silver paw print he liked to rub before reading. He knew where the fox hid her acorn lantern. He knew the funny page that always made Dad snort. “This one,” Oliver decided. “I could take it on my first school day. It knows me already.”



Oliver laid The Moonlit Fox on the map and set the soft star-shaped compass on top. The gold line trembled once, like a ribbon being gently smoothed. “I thought you wanted me to find one enormous brave thing,” he whispered to the map. “But you meant my backpack, my compass, and my book.” Dad nodded, saying nothing, because Oliver was still working it out.



Then Oliver pressed his palm flat beside the little drawing of the reading corner. “I choose to take what I love with me,” he said. The gold line stopped changing. It flowed neatly around the rooms, joining attic, hallway, backpack hook, and reading corner until the whole map became a glowing picture of their home.

Oliver slipped The Moonlit Fox into his blue canvas backpack, beside the compass. He did not need to pack everything he knew. Just those two things felt right. Dad folded the map carefully, and its glow became a quiet golden seam along the paper.





Upstairs, the attic lantern was put away, and the house made its small bedtime sounds: a floorboard settling, pages closing, the soft click of the backpack buckle. Oliver placed the folded map on his bedside table. Before he climbed under his covers, he saw one last picture on it: his home, with a tiny gold path leading gently out and gently back.





Good night, Oliver.



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After the story



WHAT THIS STORY IS ABOUT

On the eve of school, Oliver follows a glowing attic map through familiar rooms and discovers which beloved things can help him feel brave. With Dad nearby, he chooses a few comforts to carry into a new beginning.

TALK ABOUT IT AFTER READING

After reading, ask: “Oliver, which moment felt the warmest or bravest today?”

AND TOMORROW...

On the first school morning, Oliver may discover that the star-shaped compass has one more direction to show him.





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The Map Found Home

On the eve of school, Oliver follows a glowing attic map through familiar rooms and discovers which beloved things can help him feel brave. With Dad nearby, he chooses a few comforts to carry into a new beginning.

6 minutes of reading



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