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# The Return

By Vladimir Moiseenko

## **THE RETURN:**

Sunday

Let's jump, like we said!

Use the ladder if

you're a stupid chicken.

- Go on, Vityok. You're next.

- Why me?

- Scared?

- Go on, go on...

- It's scary!

- Don't chicken out!

Don't hurt your armpits!

- Andrei, let's use the ladder.

- You want to be called a chicken?

What if something happens?

Quiet! You jump after me, got it?

- Did you hurt your armpits?

- No.

Come on, Shorty. Jump!

Hey! What's wrong?

If you're scared, climb down.

We're not waiting!

Wait! He's jumping!

He just needs to focus!

Vanya,

jump! Come on!

Andrei, let's go!

It's already late!

Jump or climb down!

To hell with you then!

Vanya, my son!

Mum! Mummy!

I told you not to come here!

Oh Lord!

- Get dressed.

- I can't.

- Let's go home!

- I can't.

- Why?

- I have to jump.

- I can't climb down.

- Why?

If I climb down,

they'll call me stupid and a chicken.

No one will know! Don't worry!

But you'll know

I climbed down instead of jumping.

Don't be silly, I won't tell anyone.

You can jump another time.

- Really?

- Of course.

Mum, I was sitting here

and I was scared.

If you hadn't come, I'd have died.

Don't be silly, dear!

Really, I'm here with you!

Monday

Hello everyone!

Hello!

We don't talk to chickens.

- What? Who's a chicken?

- You! A stupid chicken.

You're a chicken. aren't you?

Go on, Andrei, what is he?

A chicken.

- Got it?

- You're a jerk!

- You ripped my shirt, arse!

- You busted my lip, idiot.

Mum'll kill you!

Go on, catch me! Go on!

Mum! He ripped my shirt!

He's lying! He busted my lip!

- Hush, both of you.

- Mum...

I said quiet! Dad's sleeping!

Who?

Who's sleeping?

Your father.

Go in.

That's definitely him.

Pour them some wine.

Well, hello.

Hello.

Hello, Dad.

Let's drink.

Like it?

Not really.

I liked it.

Can I have some more?

That's enough. Eat.

- Is that your car in the yard?

- Yes.

- Will you give us a ride?

- Of course.

- We're going on a trip.

- Really?

Really. Tomorrow morning.

- Really, Mum?

- Really, son.

- Are we going fishing?

- Of course, if you want.

Shorty!

Listen, Shorty!

- What?

- Did you put the sinkers in?

Yes.

Good.

- You packed them yourself.

- Right.

Did you see how big he is?

Probably works out.

Probably.

- Where did he come from?

- He just came.

- Aren't you happy?

- Yes, I'm happy.

But Mum said he's a pilot.

Doesn't look like one.

Why?

Well, you know how pilots are.

Uniforms, their caps...

He's on holiday,

why would he wear a uniform?

Maybe.

Did you pack the camera?

Yes, and a notebook.

What for? Homework?

To keep a diary, stupid!

We'll take turns.

Yes, we can keep a diary!

What's all this talk?  
Why aren't you sleeping?  
Alright, Mum. We'll sleep.  
What did you put in here, bricks?  
- You'll be home in two days!  
- We need all that!  
Alright. Sleep.  
Where did he come from?  
He just came.  
Get to sleep, you're getting up early.  
Tuesday  
Ivan...  
- What?  
- "What, Dad?"  
What?  
You should say, "What, Dad".  
What... Dad?  
That's better. What's the problem?  
Are you ashamed of calling  
your father "Dad"?  
- No...  
- Don't lie to me!  
I'm not lying!  
Call me Dad, like a son should!  
Got it?  
- Yes, Dad!  
- Well done, son.  
- Andrei, where are we?  
- Are you awake, Shorty?  
I thought you'd sleep the whole way!  
- You're the one who slept the whole way.  
- What?  
Are we there yet?  
I think another thirty kilometres.  
Yes.  
- Who's he ringing?  
- How should I know?  
- I'm hungry.  
- Hold on.  
The town's not far, we'll eat there.  
Dad said so.  
- Dad did?  
- Yes.  
But I'm hungry now!

Ivan, get the flask from the rucksack.

Not there, in the pocket!

Thank you.

Drinking and driving?

- Yes, want some?

- No.

Don't take a picture of that rubbish!

Take a picture of me.

Hang on.

Closed.

- Dad, the cafe's closed.

- I can see.

Andrei, go find out where we can eat.

- How?

- Ask someone, stupid!

Hurry, get moving!

- Where's Andrei?

- I'm hungry.

He can find us, he's not a baby.

Andrei!

Come here!

Closer!

- What're you doing here?

- Me?

Yes, you.

What are you doing here?

Dad, I found a restaurant.

- It took you 3 hours!

- I just wanted to have a look.

While we were waiting

you're standing here wasting time?

This won't happen again, right?

- I just wanted...

- Answer me! Right?

I won't do it again, Dad.

Good. Let's go eat.

- Ivan, let's go!

- I'm not coming.

- Why?

- I am not hungry anymore.

You said you were starving.

It went away

Ignore him, Dad.

He's as stubborn as a mule.

- You go eat, I'll wait here.

- You're coming with us.

Thank you.

Ivan, you have two minutes to eat.

I'm not hungry.

Your time's running out.

Eat that bread.

It's dirty.

Who do you think is going to eat it?

Nobody. We'll just throw it away.

You've got thirty seconds left.

Eat your soup and bread.

I'll be waiting in the car.

Sit down and eat your bread and soup.

Got it?

Yes.

"Yes, Dad."

Yes.

Alright, sit down.

- Is everyone happy and full?

- Yes. Thanks, Dad.

- Yes.

- Good.

Here, call the waitress over and pay.

No, sit down and call her over!

- But how?

- With your mouth!

Lady!

Lady!

Andrei! "Excuse me."

- Excuse me.

- Just a moment.

Wait for me outside!

Hello? Hi, it's me.

What was that fit about the food?

Trying to be funny?

Get lost.

Did you see all this money?

- So what?

- Never mind.

Alright, boys!

- Got any money?

- No.

What if I find some?

All right, then.

Sergei, let's go!

They stole the wallet! Get them.

Can't you do it yourself?

Wait for me here!

I don't know how it happened.

They just attacked us.

If he finds them, he'll kill them!

I would.

Follow me!

- Is it him?

- He stole the money!

- He's yours.

- What do you mean?

He hit you.

Do what you want with him.

- Please, don't!

- Shut up!

Go to it, he hit you.

No, I don't want to!

- Ivan, he hit you too. Come on, son!

- Let him go!

- What was the money for?

- I was hungry.

Get out of here!

You have no guts!

- I wasn't ready.

- You should always be ready.

- What if I hadn't got the money back?

- I don't know.

- Why didn't you come out?

- I was on the phone.

Andrei, Ivan, come here!

Get your stuff.

Don't forget the rods.

Andrei,

here's enough for two tickets home.

There's your bus.

- Why?

- I've got business to do!

- What about the waterfalls?

- Next time!

Next time...

In another 12 years?



What did you say?

It will be another twelve years before  
you take us to the waterfalls again.

Did I say something wrong?

- Dad!

- Go with your brother.

Go, go...

- It must be about the money.

- No, it's not.

Then because you threw a fit  
in the restaurant.

That's not why!

- What then, brainy?

- He couldn't care less about us.

Only an idiot like you can't see it.

- Who's an idiot?

- You!

You're a chicken!

You're a dick!

Get off!

See what an idiot you are!

What about your business?

Are we going to the falls?

I've got exactly three days  
to get somewhere for business.

Then we'll go to the falls. Alright?

Mum's expecting us tomorrow morning.

Don't you want to spend  
three more days with your dad?

Or wait another 12 years?

What do you think?

We wanted to fish.

And Mum knows we're with you.

So it's fine with me.

Unanimous!

Andrei, get in, we're off!

I'm hungry!

- Andrei, are you hungry?

- No.

Me neither. Wait for supper.

I'm off to get one...

- There're so much fish here!

- There are loads!

- Get me one!

- Get it yourself.  
I dare you to ask me for something else.  
Here, eat this!  
What do I do with it?  
We could make fish soup.  
Do you know how?  
Yes, but I don't eat fish.  
- Why?  
- I've had too much fish.  
Where?  
Far away.  
Don't forget to put the fire out.  
Hey, geniuses!  
Who puts a tent up like this?  
Stretch it out!  
Andrei.  
- Andrei!  
- What?  
What did he say about fish?  
Where could that happen?  
In the North, maybe.  
Did you see how quiet he got  
when you asked him where?  
Why?  
Who knows?  
Maybe he wants to forget.  
- Why?  
- "Why, why"! How would I know?  
- He lies about everything!  
- He's not lying.  
Who knows where he's been.  
Why do you suck up to him?  
- Who sucks up?  
- You do! "Dad this, Dad that."  
- He's a grownup.  
- So? Are we short of grownups?  
You believe every word he says.  
And who is he?  
He could be a gangster!  
He could slit our throats in the forest!  
- What?  
- You heard!  
You're stupid, Shorty.  
We'll see who's stupid

when he gets his knife out.  
Go ahead and laugh.  
Ivan the fool is about to get slit!  
- What're you doing?  
- Little Ivan's going to get slit!  
Knock it off!  
- Do you give up?  
- Get off!  
- Give up!  
- Don't you get it?  
How do I know he's our dad?  
Why do you believe him?  
Idiot! Mum said he's our father.  
Our father! Got it?  
Idiot!  
Shorty?  
Vanya! Are you crying?  
Get lost!  
You got these crazy ideas in your head.  
I want to go home.  
Let's go fishing tomorrow.  
Early in the morning, while he's asleep.  
They bite a lot at dawn!  
Okay, Vanya?  
Alright.  
Sleep then.  
What's that?  
The diary, it's your turn.  
Tomorrow, it's late now.  
Get the torch, we said every day!  
Nothing ever gets past you, does it?  
Just write!  
Wednesday  
Shorty, get the rods ready.  
To go where?  
- Further on.  
- Is that what Dad said?  
Yes, Dad said. Let's go!  
Why did we have to go?  
They just started biting.  
Leave that channel.  
I wasted all the bait.  
Turn it off.  
I saw a huge pike there!

We could have tried the spinning rod.  
Andrei,  
check how much further to Beketovo.  
Who needs this Beketovo?  
There's great fishing here!  
Why are you complaining?  
We could have fished more,  
we're on holiday.  
Get out!  
Here, fish.  
So, are they biting?  
Here, get changed.  
Tell me why you came.  
What for?  
Why did you make us come?  
You don't need us!  
We were fine without you!  
With Mum and Granny!  
Why did you come?  
Why did you take us with you?  
What do you need us for?  
Answer me!  
- Mum asked me to spend time with you.  
- Mum did?  
- What about you?  
- I want to spend time with you too.  
Why? To taunt us?  
Get changed.  
Are we stuck, Dad?  
Alright, get out of the car.  
You can at least take your shoes off!  
What?  
Ivan, take your shoes off!  
Here, put your coat on!  
Cut some branches.  
Andrei, let's tell him  
that we're not going anywhere else!  
Let's make him take us back home!  
I don't want to.  
- How much longer?  
- One second.  
Put the branches under the wheels.  
I said under, not in front!  
But how?

With your hands, with your hands!  
I'll show you once.  
- Got it?  
- Yes.  
Now, do the same with the other wheel.  
What are you doing now?  
What?  
Why don't you just do it yourself!  
Stand behind and push!  
Push. On the count of three.  
One, two, three, push. Got it?  
Got it!  
Had enough?  
Go and steer.  
Throttle on the right,  
clutch on the left.  
I know.  
Do it!  
Good work, Andrei!  
Move it.  
Ivan, get in!  
Thursday  
Dad, what is this place?  
Where are we?  
- Is there anyone here?  
- No. Just us.  
- What are we doing here?  
- Nothing.  
- We're going to an island.  
- An island?  
Which one? That one?  
No, another one.  
Get out.  
Wind it up tight,  
so it won't rock.  
Found it? Good, put it on the fire.  
- Dad, what's next?  
- We'll tar boat and set sail.  
- Will it take a long time?  
- Yes.  
Andrei, spread it better  
so there are no gaps.  
That seam there.  
Let the boat down to the water.

Put the things in.  
Start rowing!  
What are you staring at? Row!  
- Where to?  
- Straight ahead.  
Ivan, keep the bow towards the wave,  
blockhead!  
I can't!  
Row on my command!  
Oars up!  
I said oars up!  
Row!  
Heave! Heave!  
That's it, Andrei!  
Heave, heave!  
- I can't go on!  
- Yes, you can!  
You row, you're stronger!  
Heave, heave!  
We're here.  
- Did you hang your wet clothes up?  
- Of course, Dad.  
Hold your breath and drink.  
- Drink!  
- I don't want to.  
Drink!  
Wash it down.  
What, Dad?  
Go to sleep.  
How are you, Shorty?  
If he touches me again, I'll kill him.  
Damn, it's soaking wet!  
- Are you serious?  
- What?  
- About killing him?  
- If he touches me, I will.  
I see.  
Friday  
- Where did you get that?  
- From the tent.  
- Is he sleeping?  
- He's not there.  
Where is he?  
- Did you steal that?

- Yes.  
- Put it back now!  
- No, I want it with me.  
Why?  
- What if he notices his knife's gone?  
- I don't care.  
I didn't do it, he lost it.  
- You won't tell him, will you?  
- Of course not.  
Then what's the problem?  
I saw a fish jumping by the shore.  
It was this big!  
We need worms though.  
That one won't go for bread.  
Don't bring the knife.  
Not now, later.  
No, I want to have it with me.  
Let's go, sleepy-heads!  
I'll show you the island.  
- What about breakfast?  
- You can have it later. Let's go!  
- Ivan, what's wrong?  
- My leg hurts.  
Your leg?  
It probably fell asleep, let's go.  
My leg hurts!  
If it doesn't go away you can come back.  
Follow me, kids!  
Now you'll see.  
- Well, are you coming up?  
- Go on, go on...  
Are you scared?  
My leg hurts.  
- Give me your hand. Where's Ivan?  
- He didn't come.  
He's scared of heights, Dad.  
Cool!  
Come here!  
Look over there!  
Wow!  
Andrei, get down, quickly!  
Do you know this joke?

**A guy rings:**

"Hello, is that the missile base?"  
"You got the wrong number."  
"No, you're the one  
who got the wrong number, dear!"  
Another one. A guy is riding a camel...  
Okay, that's enough.  
Thanks for the company.  
Andrei and I will get some wood,  
you wash dishes, Ivan.  
- Why do I have to wash up?  
- Last one cleans up.  
Not bad, for the first time.  
You know...  
your bowl sank.  
Sank?  
A wave carried it away.  
A wave?  
How am I supposed to eat now?  
I didn't do it on purpose.  
Alright, I'll show you how  
to make a bowl from wood.  
- I won't be able to.  
- I'll teach you.  
- Now what's wrong?  
- Nothing.  
Look after yourselves for a bit.  
- Where are you going, Dad?  
- For a walk.  
We need worms.  
The fish here won't go for bread.  
Find some.  
Easier said than done...  
It's all sand round here!  
- Why did he take the rucksack?  
- Maybe to pick mushrooms.  
Why don't we go into the forest  
to get some worms?  
- It's too far.  
- But we need the worms.  
Then let's go.  
Bring a jar.  
- Will this do?  
- It will do fine!  
- Is this really an island?



- Yes, I'm telling you it is.  
I was up on the tower,  
there is water all around.  
- No one else is here?  
- Looks that way.  
- It's probably 100 years old.  
- Probably.  
- Andrei, where are you?  
- I'm coming.  
Come here.  
- Look.  
- How did this pit get here?  
Who cares, it's full of worms!  
Where's the jar?  
The fish will be begging for these worms.  
- Shall we cast from the shore?  
- No, from the boat.  
Wait, we have to get Dad's permission.  
- Vanya!  
- Why?  
Can't we row on our own?  
Come on, push.  
- Where are you going? Get back here!  
- We won't go far.  
Dad, we won't be long!  
Here, be back in an hour.

**- At 3:**

- Got it, Dad.  
Come on, sit down.  
Be back here in an hour!  
- And stay where I can see you.  
- Got it, Dad.  
"Got it, Dad!"  
You're asking for it, Shorty!  
I'm warning you!  
Shorty, let's go.  
It's already three o'clock.  
Dad said to be back in half an hour.  
I'll just cast a couple more times.  
There's no point.  
They're not biting today.  
Andrei, let's go a little further.  
- Dad said to go back!

- Will you stop nagging?  
Just a bit further then we'll go back.  
Alright, come on then.  
Andrei! Come here!  
Hurry!  
What's wrong?  
I saw a huge fish there!  
Where?  
- Andrei, run and get the rod!  
- Why me?  
- Hurry!  
- Shit!  
What'll we tell dad?  
That we caught a fish  
but it wasn't your idea.  
- Look what we caught!  
- Andrei, what time is it?  
- What?  
- What time does your watch say?  
Seven o'clock, Dad...  
- When were you supposed to be back?  
- At half past three...  
Did you see this fish?  
I'm not talking to you.  
Why were you late?  
Well, you see...  
What are you doing?  
- Did you hear me calling you?  
- No!  
Don't even think about hitting me!  
Let me explain, the fish...  
- Why did I give you the watch?  
- So, I'd have the time.  
- And what happened?  
- We caught a fish!  
Don't touch him, it was me!  
We found a ship!  
Daddy, it's true!  
It was Ivan.  
But you had the watch!  
What do you want from me?  
You're a coward, scum!  
Kill me then, just kill me!  
You're a bastard! I hate you!

- Kill you?  
- Yes!  
- Kill you?  
- Yes!  
Stop! Touch him and I'll kill you!  
- You'll kill me?  
- Get back!  
Get back!  
Don't move!  
If you weren't so evil  
I could love you like a father!  
I hate you!  
Don't even think about hurting us!  
You're no one!  
- You're wrong, son...  
- No, no, no!  
Ivan!  
Stay here!  
Ivan!  
Ivan!  
Dad!  
Ivan, wait for me.  
Stop, Ivan!  
Go away! I hate you!  
Son, open up! Let me in!  
- What do you want, go away!  
- Son, please.  
If you don't leave, I'll jump!  
Hear that, I'll jump!  
- Don't move, wait for me.  
- Did you hear me, I'll jump!  
I can do it!  
I can!  
You hear, I can!  
Did you hear me?  
Hear that? I can do anything!  
Asshole, I can do it!  
Vanya, son...  
Andrei...  
He's dead.  
We have to take him away.  
Where to?  
The boat.  
How?

"With your hands"!  
What are you looking at?  
Take him by his legs.  
I can't.  
Come here.  
We'll drag him by his arms.  
- Get the axe.  
- What for?  
I said get the axe, idiot!  
I can't, Andrei.  
Hang on, we can rest a little.  
- It's the wrong way, Andrei.  
- It's the right way.  
We're lost, I'm telling you.  
Get up, let's go.  
Andrei!  
What?  
What should we do?  
His eyes are open.  
Get up, let's go.  
Saturday  
Let's load everything in.  
- What was that?  
- I don't know. We hit a stone.  
Let's take the stuff to the car.  
Wait.  
We'll put him inside.  
Dad!  
Dad!  
Dad!  
Dad!  
Look!  
Hide it.  
- Andrei, my feet are wet.  
- Take your shoes off.