

# EVA’S LEAVING LIST

by Bonnie Farmer

Eva looks out of her bedroom window at signs of the season. Earthy colors dance in treetops. A patch of sunflowers nod in a crisp wind. Plump pumpkins and ripe zucchinis snuggle under a perfect September sky. Fall is Eva’s favorite time of year. Fall changes is what Eva will miss most when her family moves to Singapore in November. In Singapore there is no autumn.

“You’ll like it there. You can swim all day,” her dad explains.

“I don’t want to leave,” says Eva.

“Dad’s new job is there,” her mom adds.

“For how long?”

Eva’s mother sighs. Eva’s been asking the same question for weeks, ever since she found out she was moving away.

Eva’s father buys her an instant camera. “To help you remember fall.”

“To remember here,” says her mother.

“I don’t want to remember here. I want to be here,” says Eva, but to please her parents, she snaps photos of the trees and the garden.

Photos cannot capture the taste of a ruby red tomato plucked straight from the vine. Only doing can do that. Eva decides to make a list of fall things to do before moving away. She calls it, ***Eva’s Leaving List***.

## ***EVA’S LEAVING LIST***

### ***1. Going to an Amusement Park***

Eva munches on one cotton candy while deciding which ride at Carnival Land to go on first. She chooses the ferris wheel. Up at the top, she wonders about Singapore. Is there cotton candy there? Will I make friends in my new Grade 2 class? How will I say goodbye to my friends here?

## **2. *Decorating Pumpkins***

Eva decorates two pumpkins with leaves, acorns, and burlap. Come Halloween, she'll help carve them into jack-o-lanterns. One for the front door, another for the back door.

## **3. *Boiling Corn***

Eva shucks three ears of corn and pops them into a pot of water. As Eva checks items from her to-do list, she closes her eyes to remember each moment, like the feel of peeling fresh corn husks and shaggy silks from rows of sweet, juicy kernels. She sniffs her fingers for the greeny smell left behind by the husks.

"To keep here with me," she tells herself.

## **4. *Sleeping Over at Maggie's***

Eva has a sleepover at her best friend's Maggie's house where they toast marshmallows. Eva eats four of the gooey chews. Upstairs in Maggie's room, they play snakes and ladders.

"I'll miss coming over," Eva says.

"We'll have Zoom sleepovers when you move away," says Maggie, trying to cheer up her friend.

"Not the same," Eva answers, tossing the dice.

## **5. *Baking Apple Pies***

Eva comes down with the sniffles, so she takes to her bed with a cup of grandma's honey and lemon tea, a box of crayons and a pad of drawing paper. Instead of baking apple pies with grandma, Eva draws pictures of five apple pies.

"Are your pies ready, Granny? Mine are." Eva shows her drawings to grandma.

"They are fantabulous," says her grandmother, pretending to take a bite out of one of Eva's paper pies.

"Yum, yum," says grandma, rubbing her belly. "Sometimes, pretending is as good as doing," she adds.

Eva eats a piece of real apple pie with a scoop of ice cream. Ummmm. Real apple pie is way better than paper pie. She smiles knowing her grandma is trying to make her feel better, then sinks into a deep, sugary slumber.

### **6. *Helping Out at the Soup Kitchen***

Eva and her dad set six places at the community center’s long Thanksgiving dinner table.

“Thank you,” says Mrs. Jackson as she settles her twins into chairs.

“Thanks,” Danny, the sidewalk guitar player says, sliding his bag of belongings under his chair.

Deena walks in slowly, leaning heavily on her cane.

“Cheers,” she says to Eva’s dad who escorts her to a seat at the table.

Mr. Stubbs bustles in, tips his cap, and quickly finds a seat.

Eva knows the center’s visitors, but doesn’t remember noticing them before. Mr. Stubbs chews quickly like a squirrel. The first to leave, he dashes away without taking a Thanksgiving loot bag.

Mrs. Jackson and her kids have seconds and thirds and stay to help clean up. Deena and Danny talk a mile a minute about music and cures for hiccups, and all sorts of things. Eva finds a quiet corner in the pantry, closes her eyes and remembers the food and warmth and smiles of today.

“Thanks,” she says to her dad as they help put away pots and pans after the meal.

### **7. *Collecting Leaves***

On a cool, damp morning, Eva pulls on her boots and chunky sweater to collect leaves in the park. Her colorful leaf bouquet makes her happy. It makes her sad. It makes her feel everything.

As much as she tries, it’s getting harder for Eva to stand still with her eyes closed to remember because she’d rather be doing. I’ll remember later, she tells the clouds. She hurries home to make a leaf man with seven of her brightest leaves.

### **8. *Visiting a Farm***

Eva has lunch at her favorite poutine restaurant, then she and her mom and dad visit a farm. Eva pets a mama rabbit and her eight bunnies.

### **9. *Having a Halloween Party***

Eva invites nine of her friends to a Halloween party at her house. She dresses up in a scarecrow costume she and her mom made. Eva has so much fun eating spider cupcakes and dancing, she forgets to remember.

### **10. *Emailing Goodbyes***

Today, Eva sits on the floor in her bare room sending goodbye ecards to ten cousins. Her things have been sold, given away, or sent ahead to Singapore. As she taps away on her laptop, she hears a sound outside her window. She looks out and sees honking geese flying in a v under a grey November sky. I'm flying away, thinks Eva, but I'll come back one day too.

THE END