

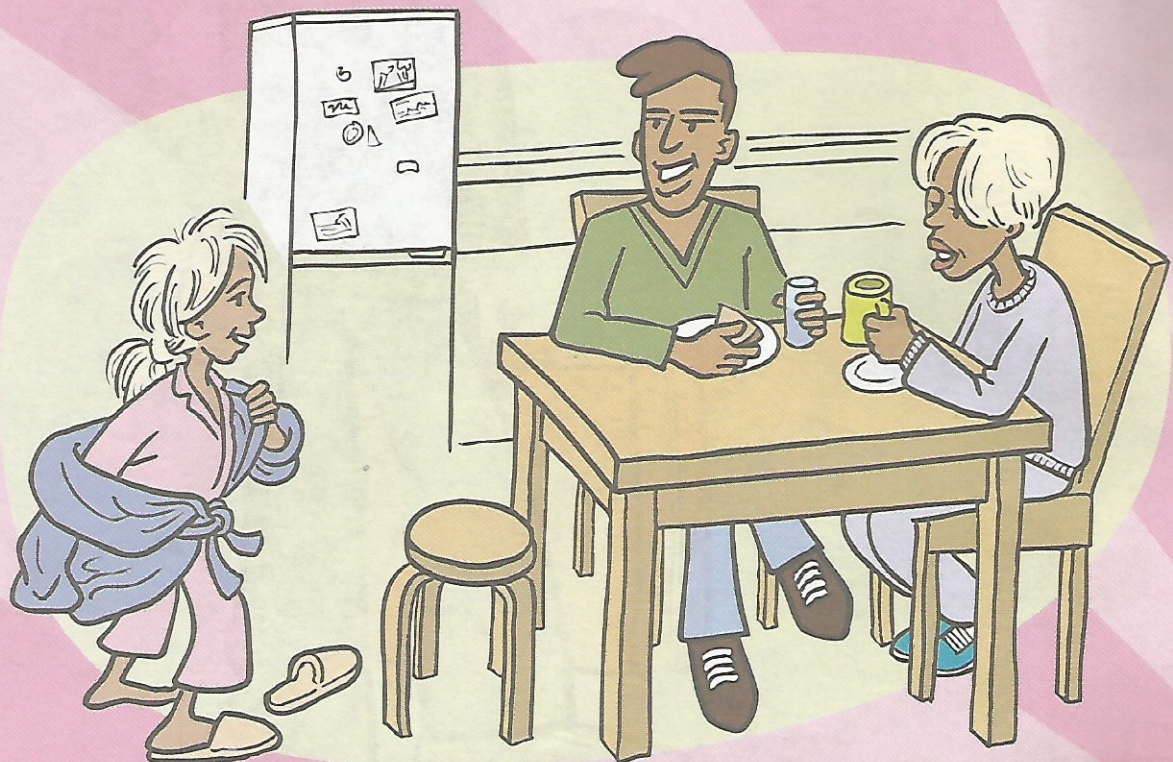
Lisa woke up with a start. She looked across at her alarm clock and although she wasn't supposed to get out of bed until her mum came in, jumped out anyway. Shuffling her slippers on, she grabbed her dressing gown and shot out of her room like a rocket. She was half way down the stairs when she nearly fell over the suitcases.

"Whoa there, speedy!" her dad said as he made his way up the stairs.

"Sorry, dad!" Lisa said without stopping.

Lisa's dad carried on up the stairs, shaking his head, but with a smile on his face.

Lisa skidded into the kitchen, just as her mum was pouring some orange juice.



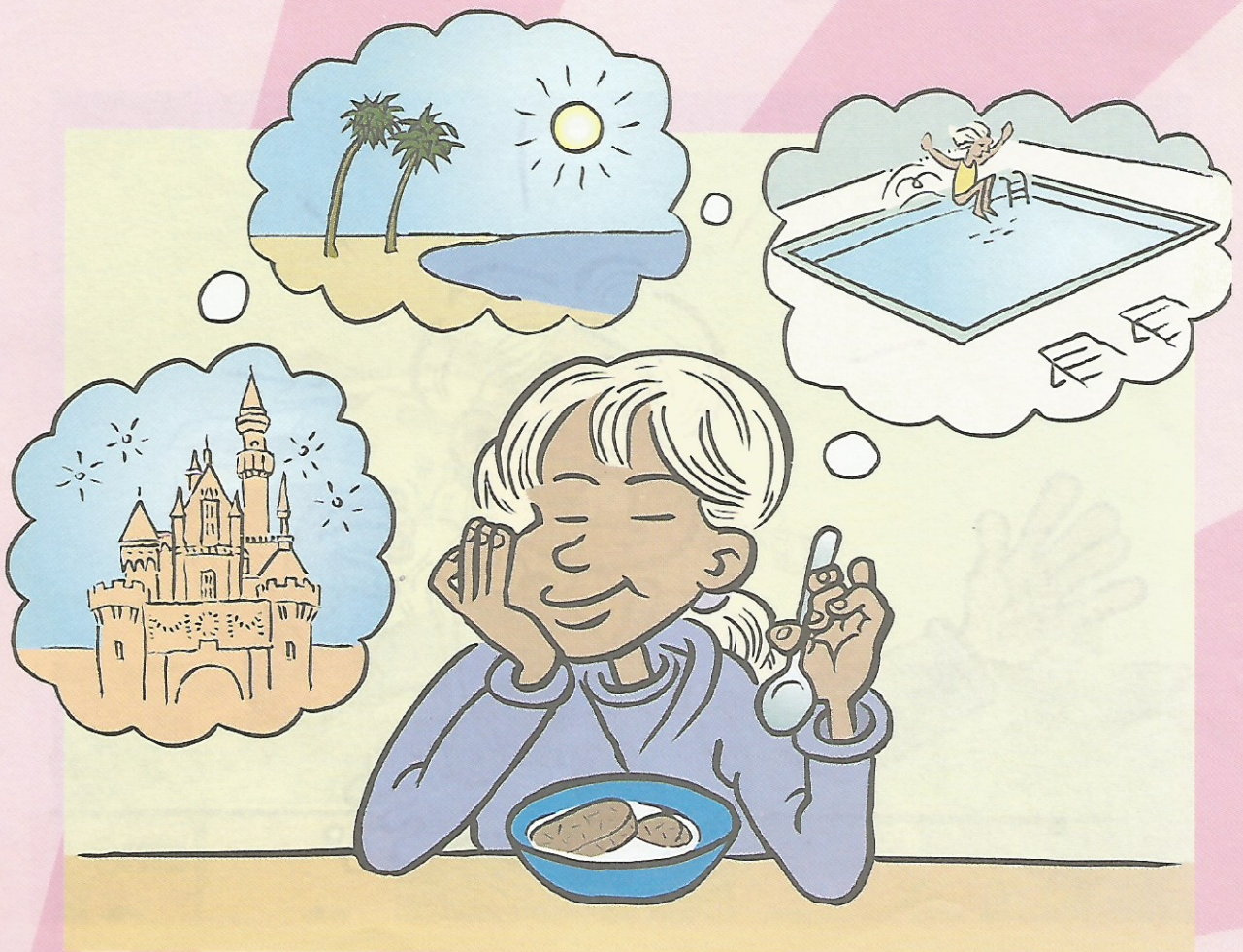
"Morning, dear, would you like some?" her mum said, passing her a glass. "I suppose you're pretty excited about the summer holidays."

That was an understatement! Today was the first day of the summer holidays and to Lisa it felt like her birthday and Christmas combined.

Last year her mum and dad had taken her to Spain, where she spent nearly every day playing in the pool. The year before that they had gone to Greece and the year before that they went to Portugal.

Where would it be this year? Lisa was hoping for Disneyland. Her friend Laura had been and said it was the best place ever.

"Well?" Lisa asked, unable to contain her excitement any longer. "Where are we going on holiday?"



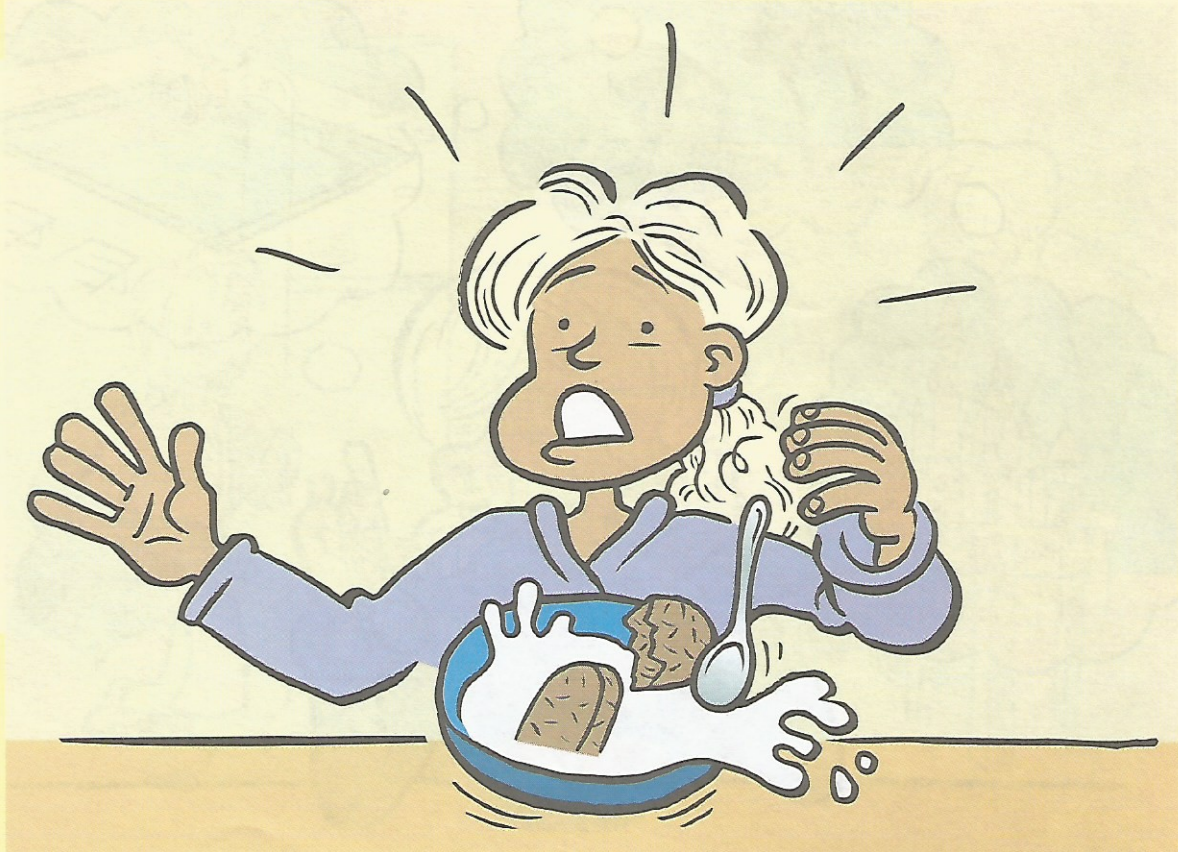
"Oh yes, right," her mum said. She was very good at pretending to be calm. "This year, your dad and I thought we might drive down to France."

For a moment Lisa was sure her mum had just said they were going to drive to France.

"Pardon?" Lisa said.

"I said, we are going to drive to France. It will be lovely, dear. We've booked a really nice farmhouse to stay in. It's in the middle of the countryside."

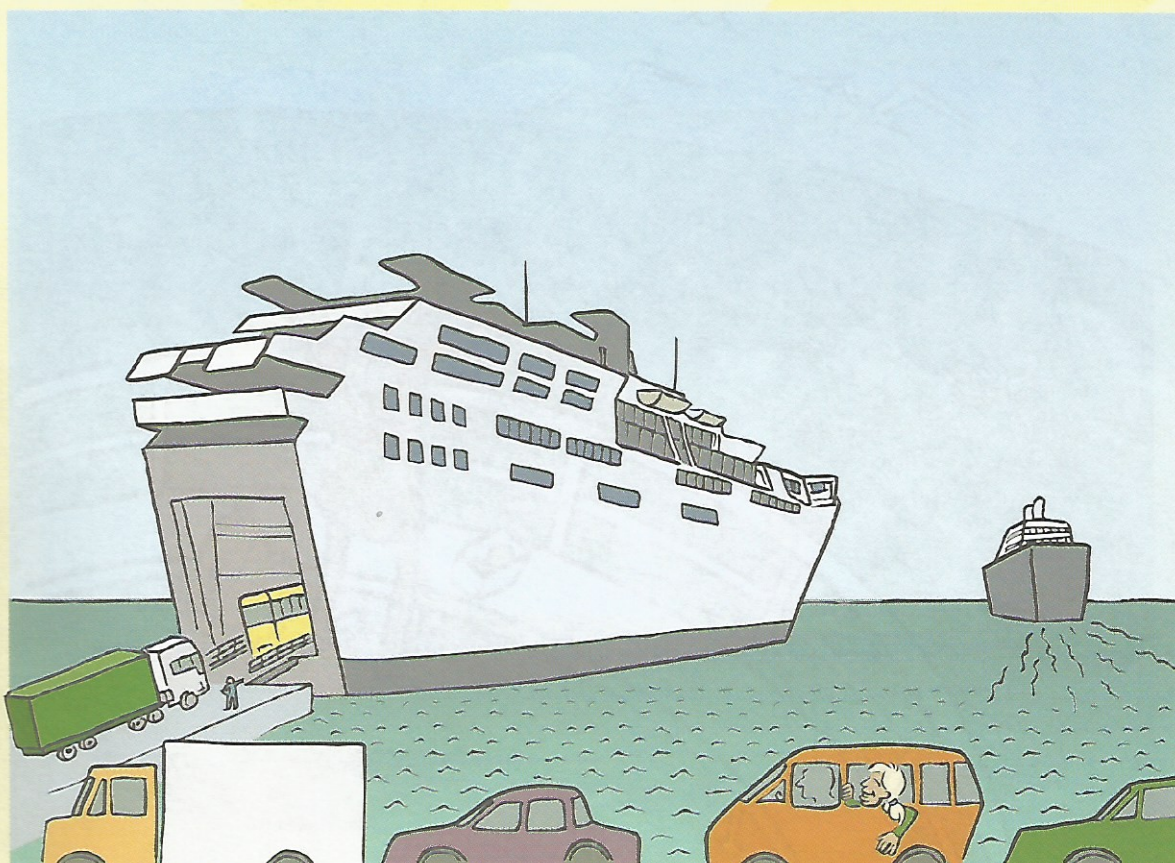
No Disneyland, no beach and no airport. All of a sudden, Lisa wanted to climb back into bed and sleep for the rest of the summer holidays.



They had been driving for nearly two hours and Lisa's bad mood hadn't lifted. Before they left the house Lisa's dad had tried to cheer her up by telling her how much fun they would have, but Lisa wasn't convinced. So she had sat in the back of the car in silence, with a huge frown on her brow. What would she tell Laura when she got back to school? No doubt Laura had been on a wonderful holiday, to somewhere hot with big beaches, somewhere you had to get on an aeroplane to get to.

The only good part about this trip was that Lisa could now smell the sea. Just then they turned a corner and Lisa saw the biggest ship she had ever seen in her life.

"What's that?" she asked, her face pressed up against the car window.



"Why, that's the ferry," said her dad, smiling. "We have to drive the car onto the ferry, then the ferry takes us across the Channel."

"What's the Channel?" Lisa asked.

"It's the name for the sea in between England and France," Lisa's dad replied.

"Cool!" Lisa said, looking at the ferry.

Lisa's mum and dad looked at each other and smiled.

Lisa spent the entire ferry journey outside, watching as the huge ship pushed its way through the water on its way to France. She watched as the white cliffs of Dover disappeared into the distance and shrieked with laughter as she threw bits of her cheese and onion sandwich for the passing seagulls to catch in their beaks. Time flew by so fast that it wasn't long before they were back in the car and driving off the ferry.



Although the next part of the journey took a really long time, Lisa didn't mind. She played a game with her mum as they tried to spot the names of the towns they passed through. Lisa got a good start as she spotted Calais, the name of the town the ferry had docked in. The tricky part was pronouncing the names correctly, but her dad helped her. One of the names she saw on a sign she knew straight away.

"Hey, that sign says 'Paris'!" Lisa exclaimed.

"We've learnt about that in school. It's the capital city of France."

"Nice one, Lisa!" her dad said.

"You can have two points for that."



By the time they got to the farmhouse it was nearly dark. Lisa was feeling pretty tired, but as soon as she saw where they would be staying, all her weariness disappeared. The farmhouse was beautiful. It was an old stone building surrounded by meadows on one side and a huge wood on the other. Lisa could imagine herself running through the tall grass in the meadows, playing hide and seek with her mum and then building a tree house in the wood with her dad.

"Oh yeah," her mum said, "there's also a pool around the back."

"This is going to be the best holiday ever!" Lisa said, rushing inside.

Her mum and dad looked at each other and smiled.

