

Otto's Tales

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America.



Today is

INDEPENDENCE DAY!

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INDEPENDENCE DAY!



“A little higher!” Dennis called up to his best friend. Otto the bulldog wobbled on a ladder, tying red, white, and blue ribbons on the porch.



“Ruff Ruff!”

Otto barked. “Got it!”

“Looks great,” Smidge the kitten said as she pulled a red wagon full of treats and decorations. A mischievous twinkle sparkled in her eye.



POP!

Colorful streamers burst into the air. “Happy **4th of July!**” she cheered.



Otto jumped in surprise, lost his balance, and tumbled into the wagon!

“Smidge, you scared me!” the bulldog exclaimed, brushing himself off.

“Otto!” Smidge gasped. “You crushed all my food for the barbecue!”



“Barbecue? I thought we were going to the parade,” Otto said, his ears drooping. “I want to see the floats!”

Dennis shook his head. “I know, but in my family, we always watch fireworks together.”

“Fireworks are so loud and scary,” Otto groaned. “No way!”



“Parades are crowded and noisy,” Smidge added. “I just want a tasty meal with friends!”

“Fine, you can stay,” Otto huffed. “Dennis and I will go!”

“Wait a minute,” Dennis said. “We all have our own ideas, but let’s get another opinion.”

“From who?” Smidge asked.

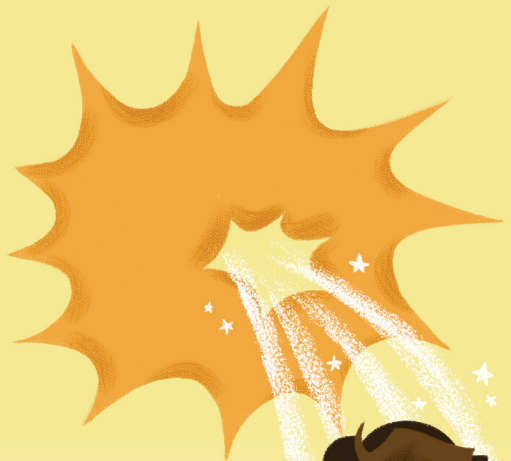
“The **Founding Fathers!**” Dennis exclaimed. “They helped create America and made big decisions as our nation’s first leaders. Maybe they can help us decide the *best* way to celebrate!”



Otto wagged his tail. "Great idea. Smidge's wagon can be our time machine!"

"I get to ride in the front!" Smidge jumped in.

ZOOM! The wagon transformed into a horse-drawn carriage and landed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1776.



"Hey, we've been here before!" Otto said, pointing to a big brick building. "It's Independence Hall."
Dennis grinned. "Let's go inside."



The room was loud and crowded.
Men in long coats talked excitedly.

“Wow, it’s busy! Who are we looking for?” Smidge asked.



A tall man with reddish hair walked up to them. “Hello there! I’m Thomas Jefferson. How can I help you?”

“Mr. Jefferson,” Dennis said eagerly.
“Can you tell us what’s special about today?”



Mr. Jefferson smiled.
“Of course! Today is
Independence Day.
We’ve decided that America
should be its own country,
free from Great Britain’s
unfair rules. We want to make
our own choices about
how we will live.”



“But doesn’t that mean war with Britain?” Smidge asked.

Mr. Jefferson nodded. “Yes, the fight for freedom has already begun.
But freedom is worth it. We believe every American should have the
right to **life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.**”

“What does that mean?” Otto asked. “It means everyone should be able to make their own choices about how to live their lives and find their way to happiness.” Mr. Jefferson said. “It’s all right here in this document...”



Mr. Jefferson pointed to a large piece of paper. “This is the **Declaration of Independence**. It’s a letter to King George III, telling him we want to be free to make our own rules.”

“Wow,” Smidge marveled.
“That’s an important letter.”



“That’s right,” Mr. Jefferson nodded. “It took some time to write because we didn’t agree on everything, and we needed to **compromise** with each other. We worked hard to make sure every word was right. We finally approved the Declaration two days ago, on July 2nd!”



“Then why are you celebrating today, on July 4th?” Otto asked.

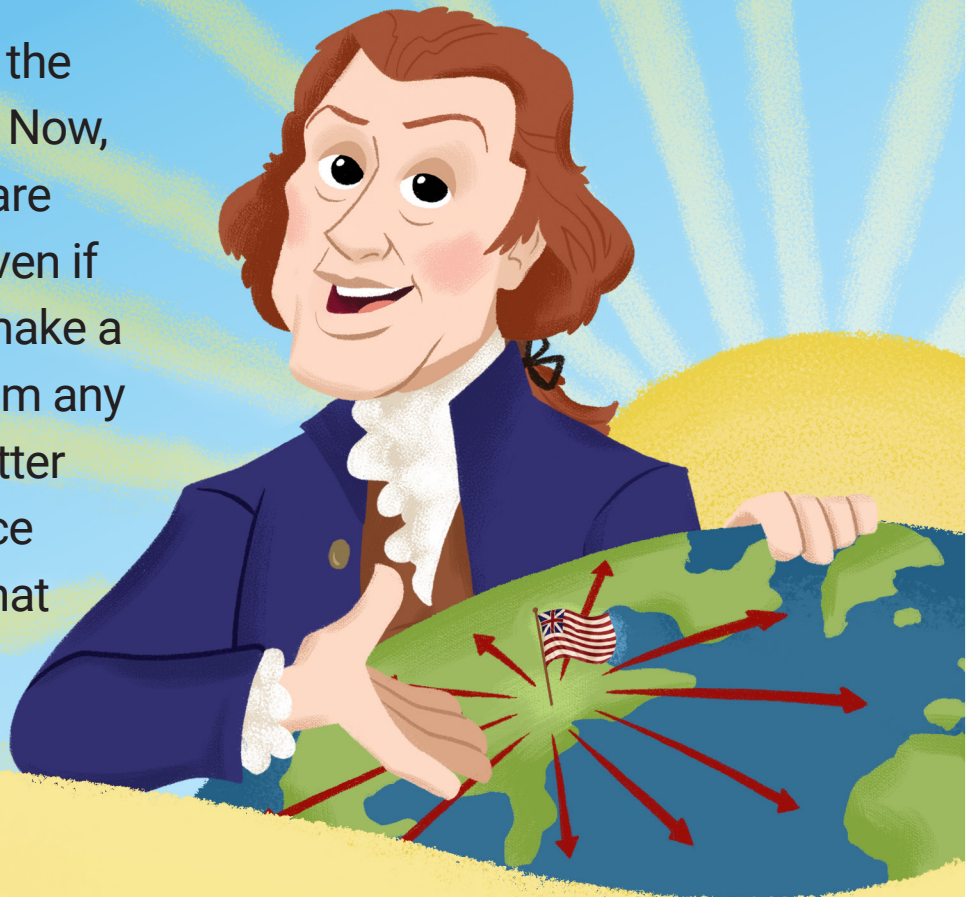


A short man with a determined expression chimed in. "Great question! I'm John Adams, and I think we should have celebrated two days ago."



"Everything takes so long around here," Mr. Adams sighed. "There should have been parades already!" Otto wagged his tail. "See? Parades are a great idea!"

Mr. Jefferson said, "Today, the Declaration is being adopted. Now, we will tell the world that we are taking a stand for freedom, even if it costs us our lives. We will make a new nation that's different from any other, where everyone, no matter their past, can have the chance of a brighter future. This is what we continue to fight for."



"Can I take a closer look at the Declaration of Independence?" Smidge asked, leaning in—and accidentally knocking over an ink bottle!

"Nooo!" Dennis shouted.





Otto jumped to grab the paper and **BONK!**, crashed into Smidge, ink flying everywhere.



“Careful!” Mr. Jefferson gasped. He snatched the Declaration out of harm’s way just in time.
“That was close!”



“Oops... sorry,” Smidge replied.
“We’ll put this in a safe place,” Mr. Jefferson said. “Like this document, our freedom must be protected. As Americans, we should never forget the hard work and sacrifice that made this day possible!”
Dennis nodded. “We won’t forget.”

“Spread the word of **liberty** far and wide!” Mr. Jefferson called as the friends **ZOOMED** to Washington, D.C., in 1870. They landed on the White House lawn, where President Ulysses S. Grant spoke to a crowd.



“Why did we stop here?” Otto whispered.

“It’s been almost 100 years since Independence Day,” Dennis said. “Let’s listen.”



President Grant spoke with pride. “Today, the 4th of July officially becomes a national holiday. We fought each other in the **Civil War** a few years ago, but today we come together. We are all Americans. Out of many peoples, we became one, joined by our shared commitment to liberty.”

The crowd cheered.

“Mr. President, what's the best way to celebrate?” Smidge piped up.

President Grant smiled. “Independence Day is about our history and the courageous people who risked everything to bring us freedom. The best way to celebrate is by being grateful and sharing with others what makes America special.”



“I guess arguing over how to celebrate was silly,” Dennis admitted. “Independence Day isn’t about the parties or food; it’s about our history and standing up for what’s right, even when it’s hard.”

“Yeah,” Otto agreed. “If the Founding Fathers learned to compromise, we can too!”




“Okay, you’re right,” Smidge said. “It’s not about *what* we do—it’s about *why* we do it. Our freedom isn’t free, and it’s our job to keep the spirit of America alive!”

ZOOM!


They raced back home.





“That was my favorite adventure yet!” Otto barked.

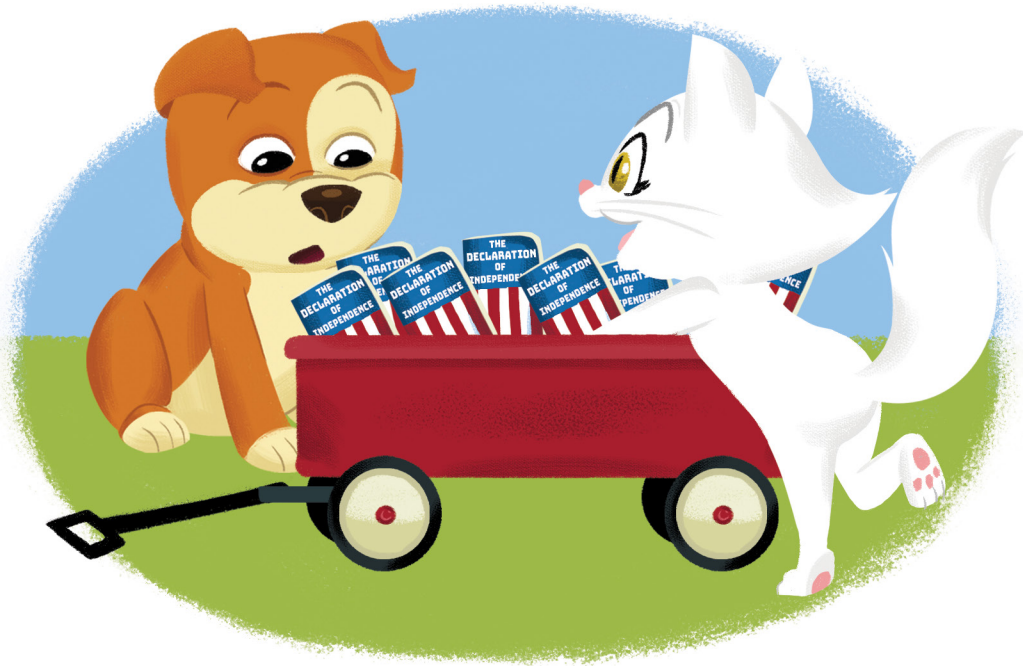
“You say that every time,” Smidge laughed.



“But today’s adventure isn’t over,” Dennis reminded them. “Let’s go celebrate our history!”

“What are you doing?” Otto asked as Smidge packed her wagon with little booklets.

“Instead of food, I want to share copies of the Declaration at the parade,” Smidge grinned.



“Great idea!” Otto perked up. “And after, we can watch the fireworks.”

“Really?” Dennis asked.



“Of course!” Otto pulled a pair of earmuffs over his floppy ears.

Dennis grabbed the wagon handle.

“Then let’s invite all our friends, too!”

As they reached the town square, people in red, white, and blue waved American flags.



Parade floats rolled by, and the friends passed out their Declarations.



American songs filled the air as the sky faded. Fireworks crackled above them.

Dennis pulled out an ink bottle, quill, and a larger copy of the Declaration. "Here's one that's safe to get some ink on." He smiled at Smidge.





We Love Our History

4th of July: The day Americans celebrate the birth of the United States. It marks the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, when the 13 American Colonies declared their separation and freedom from Great Britain. Today, people celebrate with parades, fireworks, barbecues, and by displaying American flags to honor the country's history and independence.

Founding Fathers: The leaders who played a key role in creating the United States. They helped write important documents like the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution and worked to build the country. Famous Founding Fathers include George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Benjamin Franklin.

Independence Day: Another name for the 4th of July, the holiday that celebrates America's independence from Great Britain in 1776. It's a day to remember freedom and the birth of the nation.

Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness: A famous quote from the Declaration of Independence. It means that every person has the right to live, to make their own choices, and to try to do what brings them happiness.

Compromise: When two or more people or groups solve a problem by agreeing to give up part of what they want so everyone can work together. Compromise is important for making fair decisions.

Declaration of Independence: A famous and historic document written in 1776 that announced the 13 American Colonies' decision to become independent from Great Britain. It explained why they wanted freedom and declared the United States a new nation.

Liberty: The freedom to live your life and make your own choices without unfair control by others. Liberty is one of the core values of the United States.

Civil War: A war fought in the United States from 1861 to 1865 between the Northern states (the Union) and the Southern states (the Confederacy). It was mostly over the issue of slavery and how the country should be run. The war ended when the Union defeated the Confederacy, and slavery was abolished with the 13th Amendment to the Constitution.



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**See you in
our *next* adventure!**

**- Dennis, Otto,
and Smidge**



ABOUT

Otto's Tales

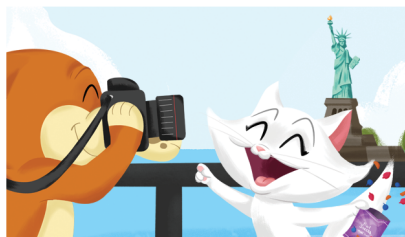
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TODAY IS

Celebrating American holidays & traditions



LET'S VISIT

Traveling to important locations around the United States



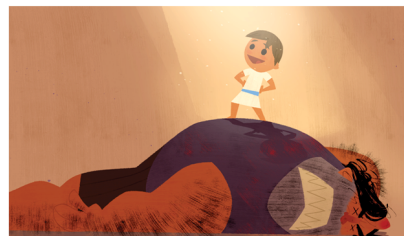
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