THE GREAT RADISH

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CLASSIC TALES OF THE WORLD

The Great Radish

An illustrated edition by Pewitos

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In spring, Grandfather planted a radish seed beside the house. Grandmother watered the soil, and their granddaughter pulled the weeds. “Grow strong,” they told it each morning.

The radish grew and grew. Its leaves rose above the fence, and the soil formed a great mound around the root. At harvest time Grandfather said, “Today we will pull it up.”

Grandfather gripped the leaves and pulled: one, two, three! He pulled forward and back, but the radish did not move. “I need help,” he admitted.

Grandmother held Grandfather around the waist. They pulled together: one, two, three! The soil cracked a little, but the radish stayed in place. Then they called their granddaughter.

The granddaughter held Grandmother. One, two, three! The leaves trembled, but nothing more. The girl whistled, and the dog ran from the barn to join the line.

The dog took her place behind the girl. One, two, three! The radish tilted only slightly. The cat, watching from the fence, jumped down and took a place behind the dog.

Now Grandfather, Grandmother, granddaughter, dog, and cat pulled. The root rose a finger's width and sank back. A mouse peeped from between the stones. "May I help?" she asked.

No one laughed. “Of course,” the granddaughter answered. “Let’s listen for the same rhythm.” The mouse held the cat’s tail. Everyone breathed and waited for Grandfather’s count.

“One, two, three... now!” They pulled together. Pop! The radish came out of the ground, and everyone rolled onto the grass laughing as the enormous leaves fell beside them.

That evening they made a great pot of soup and sat down together. Grandfather gave the mouse the smallest spoon. “Your help was not small,” he said. “It was the help we still needed.”

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About this edition

The Great Radish

A cumulative tale from Russian oral tradition, with no known individual author. Printed versions spread in the nineteenth century. In this adaptation, a family discovers what everyone can accomplish together.

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A family discovers that an enormous task may depend on the smallest helper when everyone pulls in rhythm.

A joyful read-aloud about cooperation, respect, and the decisive value of every participant.

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