

# The Little Pumpkin



There was a time in the very cold country of Russia... a time before something that the people called 'The Revolution.' The way plants look at things, it was as many summers as a large flock of Snow Geese or as Humans count about a hundred years ago.

An old farmer and his wife Olga had worked their farm about half of that time. Although living modestly, they always planted a nice mix of crops considering the short growing season of the northern climate where they lived. They planted wheat in the east field, carrots, turnips and potatoes to the south and there was an apple orchard on the north face of a hill leading up to the mountains. This left a small patch of land to the west of the farmhouse about a quarter the size of the wheat field where the old farmer planted pumpkins each year.

As the economy in Russia was changing, the farmer and Olga, like all the other farmers had to sell more of their crops to buy necessities at the marketplace. To make it worse, it was a poor growing season because of the cloudy weather and the wheat crop looked like it was going to be smaller than usual. At night the farmer and his wife would often talk, sitting at the table at the end of the day where a lone candle gave them some light. Olga would say that the Tsar, who was like a King, had thousands of candles. But the farmer would remind her that only having one candle, they still had all the light they needed.

Outside in the Pumpkin patch, the summers evenings began to cool as autumn moved in and the pumpkins started to take on that beautiful orange color that makes them so well known around the world. In the evenings the pumpkins would also have discussions among themselves, preferably under the light of the moon low on the horizon. *Because the pumpkins had no candles you see.* "The humans use us to scare their children." One of the grown pumpkins would say and that would start up a conversation.

“They cut holes in us and put candles inside and the soot ruins our beautiful inner pulp.” a concerned lady pumpkin added, in a distinct Russian accent. Other girls agreed and most of the boy pumpkins didn’t seem to care much about getting a little dirty.

“Better than being made into soups and pies!” Another pumpkin would invariably add which usually led to most of them agreeing with that outrage while a small number disagreed.

“You can call me the Tzar this year” an especially large pumpkin interrupted the conversation. *I can’t tell you his name because pumpkins don’t have names like some other vegetables do.* “You guys are all going to be made into soups and pies, but it is I who will be chosen to be placed on the farmer’s doorstep.”

“What do you mean by that?” a little pumpkin interrupted the especially large pumpkin who looked over indignantly at the little fellow, losing his train of thought and obviously annoyed by the interruption.

“Why will you be on the farmer’s doorstep?” the little pumpkin restated the question now a bit cautiously as the whole patch was suddenly paying attention, knowing that you are not supposed to talk to especially large and important pumpkins like that.

“Can’t you see that I’m the biggest and most important one here?” the especially large pumpkin shouted. Some of the other pumpkins scoffed quietly at that statement remembering that he was flattened out and most likely faded on one side because of his weight. “I’m big enough to flatten you into a pancake if I got on top of you.”

“I can see that you are big.” the little pumpkin asserted, “but why are you more important than any of us and why do you think that you can scare me?” He added, sensing that the Moon was nodding in support as its beams seemed to flicker as they cast a silver light on the little guy. Then concentrating and using his stalk, the little pumpkin was able to roll himself to one side and then the other. The whole patch went silent, and their mouths would have dropped, *If they had mouths that is, which they don’t*, as the little pumpkin stood up to the bully.

“I can do that too.” the especially large pumpkin said, but all the tugging on his stalk was to no avail and he just sat there like a blob. Suddenly many of the other pumpkins all realized that they too

could move by concentrating on their vines and stalks. Before you knew it the moon was sending beams all over the patch lighting up this dancing pumpkin and that until one of the pumpkins guarding the edge of the patch noticed the farmer and his wife coming from the orchard in the wagon being pulled by Nicholas III, the farmer's horse. He got them all to stop dancing before getting seen. *People wouldn't understand pumpkins dancing in the Moonlight I suspect!*

"Olga," the farmer said as they approached the patch. "We're going to have a tough winter this year with all the bad weather and problems going on in the cities."

"What do you think we should do dear?" Olga asked.

"I think we should sell some of these larger pumpkins at the market tomorrow, with these apples, before the price drops anymore." The farmer answered. "We'll put some of the medium sized ones in storage so you can make some pies and your wonderful pumpkin soup to help get us through the cold winter nights."

"Whatever you say dear." Olga agreed and added... "But I was hoping to carve a scary face on one of the pumpkins and place it on the doorstep to scare the grandchildren when they visit!"

"That's what I love about you Olga, you're always thinking about the children. Grab that little one over there and you can give him to them when they visit next month. Now help me get some of these pumpkins into the cart." He grunted as he picked up the especially large pumpkin after cutting its stalk and loaded it into the wagon.

As the wagon moved slowly away with the little pumpkin on Olga's lap one of the pumpkins named... *Oh, that's right, I almost forgot... pumpkins don't have names.* One of the especially smart pumpkins said "See, I told you so." to which one of the girl pumpkins asked him, as she tugged on her vine to get his attention...

"May I have this dance?"

A Sean Allen Story