

The Pumpkin Seed Tale

By Kristin Novak

Grade 5

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“Whoa!” I fell with a bump. Everything was dark. It smelled like denim.

A voice said, “It looks like you dropped a seed, Mom. I’ll plant it for you.” Suddenly the denim began to move about as the boy, for now I had guessed it was a boy, was running.

A hand shot down and grabbed me. I was pinched, and then dropped down into the rich, brown soil. “At last,” I sighed. The hand came back and began pushing soil over me.

The last thing I heard before I was enveloped by dirt was, “Come, Joe. We must finish the planting. It probably won’t grow anyway.” Then everything was black and earthy. I fell into a wonderful, deep sleep.

A while later I was rudely awakened by wet, gurgley water splashing on my head. I expected this was the doing of the boy, but I wasn’t sure. Suddenly a plaintive voice said, “It’s raining.” I looked up and saw an earthworm looking at me.

“How do you know?” I asked.

“Because I can stick my head above the soil. All earthworms can do that!” the earthworm went on, patiently. “I can see the whole garden!”

“I wish I could do that,” I sighed. “What is a garden, anyway?”

The earthworm laughed. “A garden is a place where plants like you grow. You’re in a garden right now!”

“I wish I could stick my head above the soil,” I said.

“Oh, you just wait!” the earthworm said. “You will some day.” I wasn’t so sure.

I slept soundly for what seemed like five years. I awoke and gasped. I was as different from when I had fallen asleep as I could be! Then, for the first time, I noticed that I was above the ground. I shouted for joy as I saw the sun poured on the sunflowers. The pansies and lettuce were dripping with dew and the golden corn was tall! Suddenly the ground moved around my roots. I looked down and saw the little earthworm poking his head out of the soil. He was holding his head as he blinked in the bright sunlight.

“Oh...” he said. “So it has finally come true...you’re a plant now. A shoot!”

“Excuse me,” I said, not sure what he meant. “But I don’t shoot.”

He laughed so hard tears came to his eyes, and instead of holding his head, he held his sides. “No, no, no!” he laughed. “A shoot is a young plant.”

“Oh,” I replied. The earthworm, still giggling, crawled away to get his breakfast. The boy came later that day. He was so surprised. His mom said he could have me, although I didn’t know what that meant.

The days passed and I grew. One day I felt a weight on one of my stems. I looked and saw a vine that trailed away from me. It was attached to me and at the end was a flower.

Disappointment crossed my face. A flower. Not a big piece of corn or a lettuce leaf. Everyone was bigger than me. I felt alone and unimportant.

Suddenly, a familiar little voice said, “Howdy!” I turned to see the earthworm staring at me.

“I’m growing a flower,” I said.

“Not a flower,” the earthworm corrected, “a bud.”

“Flower, bud, whatever,” I said crossly.

The earthworm said, “You wait. It will be a pumpkin soon!”

For once I didn’t ask questions. The days passed. I grew and grew, but I wasn’t the size of the other plants and now the flower had turned into a green round lump. The boy visited me every now and then, but not often. I didn’t see the earthworm. I slept for a long time. I was awakened by exclamations of delight.

“Look!” the boy cried. “Mom, it’s a pumpkin!”

I was confused. I had been too upset to ask questions of the earthworm, so I didn’t know what a pumpkin was. I looked behind me and saw the prettiest, round, orange vegetable. I was so happy! Then, a familiar little voice piped up. “Told you so!”