

The King of Pumpkins

Once upon a time there was a king who kept a big, beautiful pumpkin patch. It was so big that it stretched for a hundred miles. It was so beautiful that pilgrims traveled halfway around the world to see it. They said, "Nowhere else on Earth is there such a giant patch of plump, perfect pumpkins."

The king grew so proud of his pumpkins that, one day, he called in his chief farmer. "From now on," said the king, "no other vegetables may be grown in my kingdom. Fill every vegetable garden with pumpkins!"

"But your majesty," said the chief farmer, "your people enjoy many vegetables. They like carrots and mushrooms, beets and lettuce, to name a few. Do you think the cook in your own kitchen will be happy about this? You cannot be serious."

"Say no more, unless you want to lose your job," answered the king.

The chief farmer returned to the fields to address the other farmers. First, he told them what the king had said.

"Either the king is crazy," one farmer shouted back, "or you are a liar."

"How can the king be so cruel?" asked another. "Who wants to eat pumpkin at every meal?"

A third farmer called the king a monster.

"Quiet, please!" the chief farmer said, "I have an idea."

A month later, the king came to inspect his gardens. He saw green beans, tomatoes, cucumbers, and peppers growing next to his pumpkin patch. "What is the meaning of this?" he demanded.

"Your majesty," said the chief farmer "after we talked, I remembered that pumpkins are not vegetables. They are fruits, because they have seeds. You said we must plant no other vegetables. These are all fruits."

"They do look delicious," said the king, and he ate tomato salad for dinner.