



### **Baboushka**

**All the villagers were out, bubbling with excitement.**

**Villager 1 “Did you see the star again last night?”**

**Villager 2 “Of course we did.”**

**Villager 1 “Much bigger.”**

**Villager 2 “It was moving, coming toward us. Tonight it will be high above us.”**

**That night, excitement, like a wind, scurried through the lanes and alleys.**

**Villager1 “There’s been a message.”**

**Villager 2 “An army is on the way.”**

**Villager 1 “Not an army – a procession.”**

**Villager 2 “Horses and camels and treasure.”**

**Now everyone was itching for news. No one could work. No one could stay indoors.**

**No one that is, but Baboushka. Baboushka had work to do – she always had. She swept, polished, scoured, and shined. Her house was best kept, best polished, best washed, and best painted. Her garden was beautiful, her cooking superb.**

**Baboushka (Muttering) “All this fuss for a star! I don’t even have time to look. I’m so behind, I must work all night!”**

**So she missed the star at its most dazzling, high overhead. She missed the line of twinkling lights coming toward the village at dawn. She missed the sound of pipes and drums, the tinkling of bells getting louder. She missed the voices and whispers and then the sudden quiet of the villagers, and the footsteps coming up the path to her door. But the knocking! She couldn’t miss that.**

**Baboushka (Demanding) “Now what?” (Opening the door.)**

**Baboushka gaped in astonishment.**

**There were three kings at her door!**

**Casper, Melchior and Balthazar “We seek a place to rest. Yours is the best house in the village.”**

**Baboushka “You...want to stay here?”**

**Balthazar “It would only be till night falls and the star appears again.”**

**Baboushka (Gulping) “Come in, then”.**

**How the kings’ eyes sparkled at the sight of the feast Baboushka set before them.**

**As she dashed about, serving them, Baboushka asked question after question.**

**Baboushka “Have you come a long way?”**

**Caspar (sighing) “Very far.”**

**Baboushka “And where are you going?”**

**Melchior “We’re following the star.”**

**Baboushka “But where?”**

**They didn’t know, they told her. But they believed that it would lead them to a newborn king, a king such as the world had never seen before, a king of Earth and Heaven.**

**Balthazar “Why don’t you come with us? Bring him a gift as we do. See, I bring gold, and my friends bring spices and salves.”**

Baboushka “Oh, I am not sure that he would welcome me. And as for a gift...”

Balthazar “Why, this pickle’s fit for any king!”

Baboushka (chuckling) “Pickle? For a baby? A baby needs toys.”  
Pause (Sadly) , “I have a cupboard full of toys, My baby son, my little king, died while very small.”

Balthazar stopped her when she next bustled by.

Balthazar “This new king could be your king, too. Come with us when the star appears tonight.”

Baboushka (sighing) “I’ll...I’ll think about it.”

As the kings slept, Baboushka tidied as quietly as she could. What a lot of extra work there was! And this new king. What a strange idea – to go off with the kings to find him. Could she possibly do it? Leave home and go looking for him just like that?

Baboushka shook herself. No time for dreaming! All this washing up, and putting dishes away, and extra cooking. Anyway, how long would she be away? What would she wear? And what about gifts?

Baboushka (sighing) “There is so much to do. The house will have to be cleaned when they’ve gone. I couldn’t just leave it.”

Suddenly it was nighttime again. There was the star!

Caspar “Are you ready, Baboushka?”

Baboushka “I’ll...I’ll come tomorrow. I’ll catch up. I must just tidy here, find a gift, get ready...”

The kings waved sadly. The star shone ahead. Baboushka ran back into the house, eager to get on with her work. Sweeping, dusting, beating all the cushions and carpets, cleaning out the kitchen, cooking – away went the night.

At last she went to the small cupboard, opened the door, and gazed sadly once again at all those toys. But how dusty they were! One thing was certain. They weren’t fit for a baby king. They would all need to be cleaned.

Better get started at once.

On, on she worked. One by one the toys glowed, glistened, and gleamed. There! Now they were fit for the royal baby.

Baboushka looked through the windows. It was dawn! There was the sound of the farm cockerel. She looked up. The star had gone. The kings would have found somewhere else to rest by now. She would easily catch up to them. At the moment, though, she felt so tired. Surely she could rest now – just for an hour...

Suddenly, Baboushka was wide-awake. It was dark. She had slept all day! She ran out into the street. No star. She rushed back into the house, pulled on her cloak, hurriedly packed the toys in a basket, and stumbled down the path the kings had taken.

On she went, hurrying through village after village. Everywhere she asked after the kings.

Baboushka “Have you seen three kings?”

Villager 1 “Oh yes, we saw them. They went that way.”

Villager 2 “You just missed them. They were wonderful!”

Baboushka lost count of the passing days. The villages grew bigger and became towns. But Baboushka never stopped, through night and day. Then she came to a city.

*The palace!* She thought. That's where the royal baby would be born.

Baboushka “ I have come to see the royal baby. Where is he?”

Palace Guard “No royal baby here.”

Baboushka “Three kings? What about them?”

Palace Guard “Ah yes, they came. But they didn't stay long. They were soon on their way again.”

Baboushka “but where to?”

Palace Guard “Bethlehem – I can't imagine why. It's a very poor place. But that's where they went.”

She set off at once.

It was evening when Baboushka wearily arrived at Bethlehem. How many days had she been on the journey? She could not remember. And could this really be the place for a royal baby? It didn't look like it. It was not much bigger than her own village. She went to the inn.

Baboushka ‘ Did you see three kings?’

**Innkeeper** “Oh yes, the kings were here two days ago. There was great excitement. But they didn’t even stay the night.”

**Baboushka** “And a baby? Was there a baby?”

**Innkeeper** “Yes, there was. Those kings asked to see the baby, too.”

When he saw the disappointment in Baboushka’s eyes, he stopped.

**Innkeeper (Gently)** “I’ll show you where the baby was. I couldn’t offer the poor couple anything better at the time. My inn was packed full. They had to stay in the stable.”

**Baboushka** followed him across the yard.

**Innkeeper** “Here’s the stable.” (Leaves)

**Baboushka** went in to the stable and stood by the empty manger.

**Angel** “ Baboushka?”

An angel was standing in the half-light of the doorway looking kindly at her. Perhaps he could tell her where the family had gone.

**Baboushka** knew now that the baby king was the most important thing in the world to her.

**Angel** “They have gone to Egypt, and safety and the kings have returned to their kingdoms. But one of them told me about you. I am sorry but, as you see, you are too late.”

“Shepherds came as soon as the angels told them. The kings came as soon as they saw the star. It was Jesus the Christ child they found, the world’s Savior.”

**PAUSE**

It is said that Baboushka is still looking for the Christ child, for time means nothing in the search for things that are real. Year after year she goes from house to house calling,

**Baboushka** “Is he here? Is the Christ child here?”

And at Christmas, when she sees a sleeping child and hears of good deeds, she will lift out a toy from her basket and leave it, just in case.

