

**BABOUSCKA: A RUSSIAN  
CHRISTMAS STORY,  
AND OTHER STORIES**

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Babouscka: A Russian Christmas Story, and Other Stories by Various

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**VARIOUS**

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BABOUSCKA  
A RUSSIAN  
CHRISTMAS STORY



*AND  
OTHER  
STORIES*

**Illustrated**



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ZWANGENLOCH



1. The first step in the process of identifying a problem is to recognize that a problem exists. This is often done by comparing current performance to a desired state or goal. For example, a manager might notice that sales are declining or that customer satisfaction is low. Once a problem is identified, the next step is to define it more precisely. This involves determining the scope of the problem, its causes, and its potential consequences. For instance, a manager might define a problem as "a 10% decrease in sales over the last quarter, primarily due to a loss of market share in the competitive market." This definition helps to narrow down the focus of the problem and provides a clear starting point for further investigation.

2. The second step in the process of identifying a problem is to gather information about the problem. This involves collecting data and facts that are relevant to the problem. For example, a manager might gather data on sales trends, customer feedback, and market conditions. This information is then used to analyze the problem and identify its underlying causes. For instance, a manager might analyze sales data and find that sales are declining in all major markets, but the decline is most pronounced in the competitive market. This analysis might lead to the identification of several potential causes, such as a loss of market share, a change in customer preferences, or a change in the competitive landscape. By gathering and analyzing information, a manager can gain a deeper understanding of the problem and its causes, which is essential for developing an effective solution.



THE LAST TRIP.



## BABOUSCKA.



OUT OF BREATH, TIRED, YET HURRYING ON.

If you were a Russian child you would not watch to see Santa Klaus come down the chimney; but you would stand by the windows to catch a peep at poor Babouscka as she hurries by.

Who is Babouscka? Is she Santa Klaus' wife?

No, indeed. She is only a poor little crooked wrinkled old woman, who comes at Christmas time into everybody's house, who peeps into every cradle, turns back every coverlid, drops a tear on the baby's white

## BABOUSCKA.

pillow, and goes away very, very sorrowful.

And not only at Christmas time, but through all the cold winter, and especially in March, when the wind blows loud, and whistles and howls and dies away like a sigh, the Russian children hear the rustling step of the Babouscka. She is always in a hurry. One hears her running fast along the crowded streets and over the quiet country fields. She seems to be out of breath and tired, yet she hurries on.

Whom is she trying to overtake?

She scarcely looks at the little children as they press their rosy faces against the window pane and whisper to each other, "Is the Babouscka looking for us?"

No, she will not stop; only on Christmas eve will she come up-stairs into the nursery and give each little one a present. You must not think she leaves handsome gifts such as Santa Klaus brings for you. She does not bring bicycles to the boys or French dolls to the girls. She does not come in a gay little sleigh drawn by reindeer, but hobbling along on foot, and she leans on a crutch. She has her old apron

#### BABOUSCKA.

filled with candy and cheap toys, and the children all love her dearly. They watch to see her come, and when one hears a rustling, he cries, "Lo! the Babouscka!" then all others look, but one must turn one's head very quickly or she vanishes. I never saw her myself.

Best of all, she loves little babies, and often, when the tired mothers sleep, she bends over their cradles, puts her brown, wrinkled face close down to the pillow and looks very sharply.

What is she looking for?

Ah, that you can't guess unless you know her sad story.

Long, long ago, a great many yesterdays ago, the Babouscka, who was even then an old woman, was busy sweeping her little hut. She lived in the coldest corner of cold Russia, and she lived alone in a lonely place where four wide roads met. These roads were at this time white with snow, for it was winter time. In the summer, when the fields were full of flowers and the air full of sunshine and singing birds, Babouscka's home did not seem so very quiet; but in the winter, with only the snow-flakes