

The Pickle Parade



Yavuz DEMİRKIRAN

The Pickle Parade

Yavuz DEMİRKIRAN



In the merry town of Pickleton, everyone counted down the days to the Pickle Parade. Banners of dancing pickles flapped on every lamppost. Bakers shaped pickle pies, and children practiced their pickle wiggle. Rosie watched from her workshop window, her goggles pushed up on her forehead. She loved the parade more than anyone, and this year she had a secret plan.



Rosie was nine years old, with warm brown skin, curly puff-bun hair, and a gap-toothed grin. In her yellow overalls, she had built something wonderful all by herself. It was a cucumber robot named Cucumbo, tall as a person, shiny green, with headlight eyes and a red ribbon bow. 'We're going to march together,' Rosie told it. Cucumbo honked its bumper mouth happily.



At the parade office, tall Committee Chair Mabel frowned and tapped her clipboard. 'Giant pickles only,' she said. 'This cucumber machine is far too unusual.' Mayor Picklebottom straightened his pickle-shaped top hat. 'Rules are rules, dear.' Rosie's smile wobbled. 'But Cucumbo could dance!' Mabel shook her silver bun. 'No. The committee decides.' Rosie walked home slowly, her red sneakers scuffing the pavement.



On parade morning, the whole town of Pickleton gathered on Main Street. Pickle balloons bounced, and a brass band tootled loudly. The giant dancing pickles swayed in the breeze. Mayor Picklebottom stood on the platform with his gold watch in hand, ready to start the celebration. Rosie watched from the crowd, holding Cucumbo's hand. 'Maybe next year,' she whispered sadly.



Then came a terrible CRUNCH and a CLANK. The enormous parade float, covered in pickle vines and pickle stars, rolled to a stop. Its engine sputtered, smoked, and went completely silent. The dancing pickles stopped dancing. The band stopped tootling. 'The float is stuck!' cried Mayor Picklebottom, his walrus moustache drooping. 'Nothing can pull it!' gasped the crowd.



Committee Chair Mabel marched over with her clipboard. 'We need a strong machine to pull the float!' she announced. The tractor was too small. The fire truck was too busy. The crowd murmured and worried. The parade could not go on without its giant pickle float. Rosie looked at Cucumbo, and Cucumbo's headlight eyes glowed bright. 'We can help,' Rosie said. 'Cucumbo is strong.'



Mabel looked doubtful and clutched her pearls. 'That odd cucumber thing?' The crowd went quiet. Rosie stood tall in her yellow overalls. 'Please,' she said. 'Give Cucumbo one try.' Mayor Picklebottom stroked his moustache and looked at the broken float. 'Well,' he said slowly, 'I suppose one try cannot hurt. Go ahead, young lady.' Rosie's heart thumped with hope.



Rosie led Cucumbo to the front of the broken float. She tightened a bolt, checked a wheel, and patted its green metal side. 'You can do this, friend,' she said softly. Cucumbo honked its bumper mouth. Its treads gripped the road. It leaned forward, pulling with all its might. Slowly, creakily, the enormous pickle float began to move. The crowd gasped. 'It's moving!' shouted a child.



Cucumbo pulled the float down Main Street, its red ribbon bow bouncing. The dancing pickles waved again. The brass band started tootling a happy tune. People cheered and clapped and laughed. 'Hooray for the cucumber robot!' the crowd sang. Rosie walked beside Cucumbo, beaming her gap-toothed grin. Mayor Picklebottom clapped his hands. Even Mabel smiled a small, surprised smile.



The float rolled all the way to the town square, and the Pickle Parade was saved. Mayor Picklebottom took off his pickle-shaped top hat and held it over his heart. 'Rosie,' he announced, 'you and your cucumber robot saved our celebration!' Mabel stepped forward with her clipboard. She crossed out an old rule and wrote something new. 'The parade should welcome every idea,' she said.



'From now on,' Mayor Picklebottom declared, 'everyone belongs in the Pickle Parade.' The crowd cheered so loudly the pickle balloons wobbled. Rosie hugged Cucumbo's warm green body. 'We did it,' she whispered. Cucumbo honked happily and wiggled its ribbon bow. Mabel handed Rosie a shiny medal shaped like a pickle. 'Thank you for showing us we were wrong,' she said kindly.



That afternoon, the whole town marched together. Giant dancing pickles swayed beside Cucumbo, who rolled along with its headlight eyes glowing. Rosie rode on top, waving to everyone. There were pickle pies and pickle songs and pickle hats of every kind. Mayor Picklebottom danced with Mabel, and even her clipboard bobbed to the music. Everyone belonged, and everyone smiled.



After the parade, the town painted a new sign at the parade office. It said: 'New ideas welcome. Second chances given.' Rosie read it and grinned her gap-toothed grin. People brought her broken toys and wobbly wagons, and she fixed them all with patience and care. Cucumbo helped too, carrying tools in its green metal arms. The little workshop on Mulberry Street became the busiest, friendliest place in Pickleton.



When spring came around again, the Pickle Parade was bigger and sillier than ever. There were giant dancing pickles, a brass band, and pickle balloons by the dozen. And right at the front rolled Cucumbo, polished bright, with a fresh red ribbon bow. Rosie marched beside it in her yellow overalls, waving to the cheering crowd. Everyone had a place. Everyone belonged.



Mayor Picklebottom waved from the platform in his pickle-shaped top hat. 'Best parade yet!' he shouted. Committee Chair Mabel nodded, her clipboard tucked under her arm, and gave Rosie a warm smile. Late that evening, Rosie sat with Cucumbo watching the last pickle balloons drift over the rooftops. 'You know,' she said, 'second chances make everything better.' Cucumbo honked softly in the golden light.



And that is how the town of Pickleton learned that fresh ideas and kind second chances make every celebration better. Rosie's cucumber robot still rolls through the parade every single year, and every child who has a wild, wonderful idea is welcome to join. Because in Pickleton, the pickle parade belongs to everyone. And that is the happiest ending of all.