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Russian Fairy Tales, Russian 0090

16 April 2003

Once upon a time there lived a wealthy businessman in a high class neighborhood. He was married to a beautiful woman and they lived together quite happily for some time. After a few years of married life, the wife became pregnant and gave birth to a darling baby girl and they named her Josephine. They all lived and grew together merrily until one fateful day the wife was out shopping and was fatally injured in a car wreck. After they took her to the hospital, the young child Josephine and her father rushed to see her. The wife knew she was going to die and when the husband left the room for a minute, she told Josephine to go home, find the trunk that held all of the wife's most beloved things, and take out her little white stuffed cat. She said to Josephine, "I am leaving you with my little white stuffed cat as my last gift to you. Make sure it is always secretly kept with you no matter what, my lovely child". With that she lay back and closed her eyes, and Josephine knew that it was the end.

So little Josephine went home and took out the little white stuffed cat and kept it with her at all times. For a while, Josephine and her father lived alone together in their huge house, both very sad from the death of the wife. But after some time the father decided to date some other women and soon he was engaged to a woman with two daughters, both a few years older than little Josephine. Although Josephine was more beautiful than the other daughters, they were all very nice to her. So the father soon married the woman and they all moved into the father's huge house together. For some time, everything was

merry in the house, even though Josephine missed her mother greatly. But she always had the little white cat with her for comfort. Then one day the father had to go to Japan for important business, and he was to stay there for a long time. As soon as he was gone the stepmother became meaner and meaner each day towards Josephine. While she let her own daughters lie around and watch TV, she made Josephine clean her room and also the stepdaughters' rooms. She soon made Josephine do more and more little tasks around the house. This kept getting worse and worse until Josephine was like a servant in her own house. Then one day the stepmother and her two daughters said they were going into the city the next day to go shopping. Josephine wanted to go so badly, for the stepdaughters always got to buy new clothes, while she was left with their old hand-me-downs and her own, worn out clothes. When Josephine asked to go, the stepmother said yes for the first time ever. But then she added, "You can go, but only if you clean out the entire garage and organize the entire wine cellar in alphabetical order first." After hearing these words Josephine ran up to her room, crying hysterically, for she would never be able to clean the whole garage AND organize the wine cellar in one evening! She pulled out the little white cat and cried and cried while she was hugging it. Suddenly the cat came alive and spoke to Josephine saying, "Your tears of sorrow have brought me to life to help you, as were your mother's wishes. Let us go downstairs and begin the work." So Josephine and her little white cat went to the garage to clean it out, and right before her eyes the cat did all the work faster than Josephine could even

imagine. As soon as that was done they went to the wine cellar and the cat organized the entire thing for Josephine in a very short time also. She thanked the little white cat and kissed it and then put it into her pocket and they went upstairs to bed. The next day the stepmother awoke and saw that Josephine had finished all of the work that was assigned to her. She was furious because she did not want to take the gorgeous Josephine to the city where all the young men would see her and want to pursue her, and not her own daughters. So the stepmother woke her daughters up and they got ready quickly and were almost out the door when Josephine came running and cried out, "Stepmother I have finished the chores you asked me to do so I can go with you to the city!" The stepmother and her daughters turned around and laughed at poor Josephine and then the stepmother said, "Josephine, the chores were not done well and also a dinner still needs to be made, and the entire house must be cleaned before the party tonight that we are having here. If you want to come to the party, you have to finish all that I have told you to do." With this, she turned and walked out and the plain looking stepsisters stuck out their tongues at Josephine, then followed their mother out the door. They laughed together about how Josephine would not be able to attend the party, where the most handsome and wealthy young man in the whole city was going to come with his family. At the home Josephine once again ran up to her room crying hysterically, for she would never be able to clean and make dinner in time for the party. Once again her tears of sorrow kept falling on the cat and once again it became alive and told Josephine not to cry, for it

would help her with the tasks. So they went downstairs and Josephine once again watched in awe as the little white cat cleaned the entire house quicker than a flash. Then they went to the kitchen and the cat put together a marvelous dinner in no time. After some time, the stepmother and her daughters came home and saw that Josephine had accomplished all of the tasks once again. Josephine said to her stepmother, "I have finished all of my chores and made a great dinner so I can attend the party tonight." The stepmother turned to Josephine and told her "Yes, you have finished all of the chores of the day. But it is beginning to snow outside and the driveway needs to be shoveled before the guests arrive. After you shovel the driveway, then you may come to our party." Now this would not have been too big of a task, but the driveway was almost a mile long and there was no way Josephine would be able to shovel it in time to get ready for the party. So once again she ran to her room crying desperate tears of sorrow and hugged the cat and once again it came to life and said to her, "Don't worry beautiful Josephine, I help you shovel the driveway." So they went outside together and the little white cat shoveled the driveway in a very short time while Josephine watched in amazement. The plain stepsisters and the stepmother were upstairs trying to make themselves look as beautiful as they could possibly look (which is not too say much). After the little white cat shoveled the driveway Josephine thanked it and gave it a kiss. The stepmother was too busy trying to make her daughters look pretty to notice that the driveway was completely finished and that Josephine was in her room.

The guests began to arrive, and what a grand party it was with all the wealthiest, well known people around. Josephine was still in her room watching everyone arrive when she thought of the fact that she had nothing at all to wear! She once again took the little white cat in her hands and as one lonely tear rolled down her cheek the cat said to her, "Josephine, take me and wrap me around your neck, and I will turn into a beautiful white dress for you to wear to the party!" So Josephine did just that and the little white cat turned into a beautiful white dress for her. Soon she walked down the steps to the party, and everyone stopped in amazement to look at the most beautiful girl they had ever seen. Since Josephine was rarely allowed to go out of the house for many years, nobody had seen her transform into a beautiful young woman. The most handsome and wealthiest young man in the entire city walked up to Josephine and kissed her hand. He then turned around and announced to his family, and everyone at the party that he was going to marry the beautiful Josephine. As soon as the stepsisters heard this, their eyes bulged out in shock and their faces turned green with envy. The stepmother was so embarrassed that her daughters' faces had turned permanently green with envy, and their eyes permanently bulged out in a jealous shock, that she snatched them up and all three fled out of the house. They left the city forever and were never heard from again. Meanwhile Josephine and the most handsome, wealthy young man in the city married a short while after the party night. No matter what, Josephine still always had her most beloved little white cat with her at all times and she always made sure to give it a

kiss every night. The newly weds soon moved into a new, beautiful mansion very close to Josephine's father's house and were living very merrily. Not long after, her father returned home and was overjoyed that his daughter had married such a fine young man. He threw a huge party to celebrate their happiness, and they all lived happily ever after. I was at the party and drank wine; it ran off my lips but never a drop got into my mouth.