



LADUSHKI

Published by Progress Publishers, Moscow.

Cloth 22.5 × 29 cm 32 pp.

Colored illustrations.

**\$3.00**

*Ladushki* is a colourful, brightly illustrated book for the younger child. It contains twenty-eight little fairy tales, songs, poems, "teasers", nonsense rhymes retold by such connoisseurs of Russian folklore as A. Tolstoi, M. Bulatov and K. Chukovsky and rendered in English by Irina Zheleznova, well-known Soviet translator who specialises in fairy tales and verse for children.

Vasnetsov has been working for children for forty years. He finished the Academy of Arts in Leningrad but was born and grew up near Vyatka, now Kirov, a town famed for its laceweavers and makers of chests, caskets and toys and where even the houses and churches wear coats of paint that remind one of the rich colours of the world-famous Vyatka toys.

In his youth Vasnetsov modelled and painted the clay whistles that are a Vyatka specialty. There was never any need for him to make a study of Russian folk art: it is a part of his background and his own work naturally derives from it.

Vasnetsov is not so much an illustrator of Russian folklore as its interpreter. His style is original, his drawings being an artist's version of the text. They are as infectiously emotional and as vivid, as imaginative and fantastic as anything they illustrate or as any toy fashioned by a Russian craftsman.

Vasnetsov never lets himself forget a child's love of invention and play, and by having the rhythmic structure of his drawing echo that of the song or poem it interprets, turns it into a kind of game.

Vasnetsov is careful to dress his characters in fanciful clothes as a child would do with his dolls and to decorate their houses in the way a child would a doll's house. Knowing that children are liable to be upset if they find anything missing in a picture, he takes great care to be accurate in following the written text.

Endowed with an extraordinary sense of colour, Vasnetsov makes his drawings bright and cheery and the animals, trees and flowers in them large and festive enough to please any child.

It would be hard to determine the exact age of these gems of Russian folklore, but though they are centuries old, to our children they sound like something that might have been written today.

*Ladushki* has yet another author. He is People's Artist of the USSR Yuri Vasnetsov, an expert on Russian toys, popular prints and applied art and illustrator of nearly three hundred books for children.

*Ladushki* is called "the complete works" of Vasnetsov, who designed and illustrated the book, choosing for it the best of his drawings. One page is a colourful picture; on the opposite page he puts the text, setting it off with a decorative pattern and with coloured silhouettes and drawings.

The book is gorgeously gay and rich, a treat for the eye. Every child will welcome it, every art critic, artist and book lover will be glad to have it on his library shelf.

*Ladushki*, whose first Russian edition numbering 150,000 copies appeared in 1964, is now a bibliographical rarity. It is the winner of an All-Russia book prize and of three of the highest international awards.

You can buy or order the English edition of *Ladushki* from the book-trading firms in your country dealing in Soviet literature.

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