



Picture Books

The Rope

Joe Kulka

Joe Kulka, illustrator

Pelican Publishing

978-1-58980-487-6

(July 31, 2008)

Today, everyone wants more—more comfort and, definitely, more money. The family in this story has found a way to get it with a thick rope dangling from the sky with a tiny note attached to it that simply reads, “Pull for more.” At supper, Pa decides to pull the rope to get more soup. When he pulls it, they are not prepared for the waterfall of potato soup that soils Junior, Ma, Pa, and the nameless baby. Next, Ma wants more shoes, but pulling the rope yields all kinds: bunny slippers, stilettos, clogs, and boots. ““None of them match!” said Ma. ‘What good are a bunch of left-footed shoes?’” When Junior pulls the rope, Pa and Ma holler for money. Pennies pelt the family, forcing Ma, Pa, and the bawling baby to run for cover. Pennies crack the roof’s shingles and dent the already-worn truck. A double page spread shows the family huddled together surveying the damage.

Angry, Pa burns the rope. The family cleans up the pennies and puts the shoes to good use as birdfeeders and flowerpots. Rid of the rope, Ma de-clares she has learned a lesson, but has she? The look of possibility in Ma and Pa’s eyes when they learn a metal chain replaced the rope leaves readers to wonder. The author/illustrator, a graduate of the University of the Arts, has won several awards for his book *Wolf’s Coming!* He is also the illustrator of *Monkey Math* and *Granny Gert and the Bunion Brothers*.

Readers will find it refreshing to return to the wholesomeness of a traditional tale like this one. The morals, folksy language, rustic setting, and earth tone illustrations are warm and reminiscent of a simple, but meaningful, way of life. This is a good book for story time with grandparents and their little ones.