

Noa & Max Collection

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and the Missing Carrots



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educa



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It is a very special Friday for Noa, Max and their dog Kika. Their parents are away and they are spending the weekend with their recently retired grandparents, who now live in the countryside.

“Do you think I’ll get to see wild animals, like the ones on television?” asks Max eagerly.

“Max, I think the only animals we’ll be seeing here are cats and dogs,” says Noa to her younger brother.

“What a dull place! We’re going to be bored silly,” grumbles Max.

“I know, but don’t say anything to Grandma and Grandad,” whispers Noa. She doesn’t think they are going to have a very exciting weekend either, as she takes her tablet out of her bag and realises it doesn’t work.

Eat a
balanced diet!

Choose a variety of
different foods.





Luckily, their grandparents make them a wonderful dinner: Spanish omelette and salad, with baked apple for dessert.

"It's yummy! The food at home and at school is nice, but Grandma and Grandad's cooking is scrumptious!" says Noa. Their grandparents chuckle and promise to tell the children the secret to delicious food the next day. After dinner they all head up to bed.

The children are both tucked up in bed. Noa is reading Max a story, as she does every night to Max's delight. Suddenly, they hear a strange noise and Noa gets up. She rummages in her bag until she finds the LED torch she made at the science and robotics workshop she goes to every Tuesday after school.

"What are you doing?" asks Max.

"Didn't you hear that? There's someone downstairs. I'm going to see who it is. You stay here."

"No, I'm coming with you!" says Max, slightly alarmed.

Kika stirs. "What a pain!" she thinks. She would like to go back to sleep, but she has to look after Noa and Max.

Kika and the children peep down the stairs in silence, but then Max trips and rolls down the stairs.

"Ow!" cries out Max.

Grandma appears with a look of alarm on her face. After making sure Max hasn't hurt himself, she tells them that she was in the kitchen making a glass of warm milk to help her get to sleep, as well as taking the opportunity to keep an eye on the vegetable garden. The day before, while they were out doing the shopping, somebody had stolen some of their carrots. Upstairs, she thought she heard a noise and wondered whether it might be the thief. But whoever it was must have run off after all the racket in the house. Grandma sends them back up to bed and they fall asleep as soon as their head hits the pillow.



The next morning, Noa and Max discover their grandparents' secret to delicious food: their henhouse and vegetable garden.

"You mean all the fruit and vegetables we ate yesterday didn't come from the supermarket?" asks Max with a look of surprise.

"No, they were from our vegetable garden," boasts Grandad.

"I wanted to make carrot soup, but there are only a few left," says Grandma Lola sadly, showing them the half-empty carrot patch.

"Grandma's soup won first prize in a cooking contest in the village," says Grandad Victor proudly, before asking them: "Who wants to do some digging and watering?"

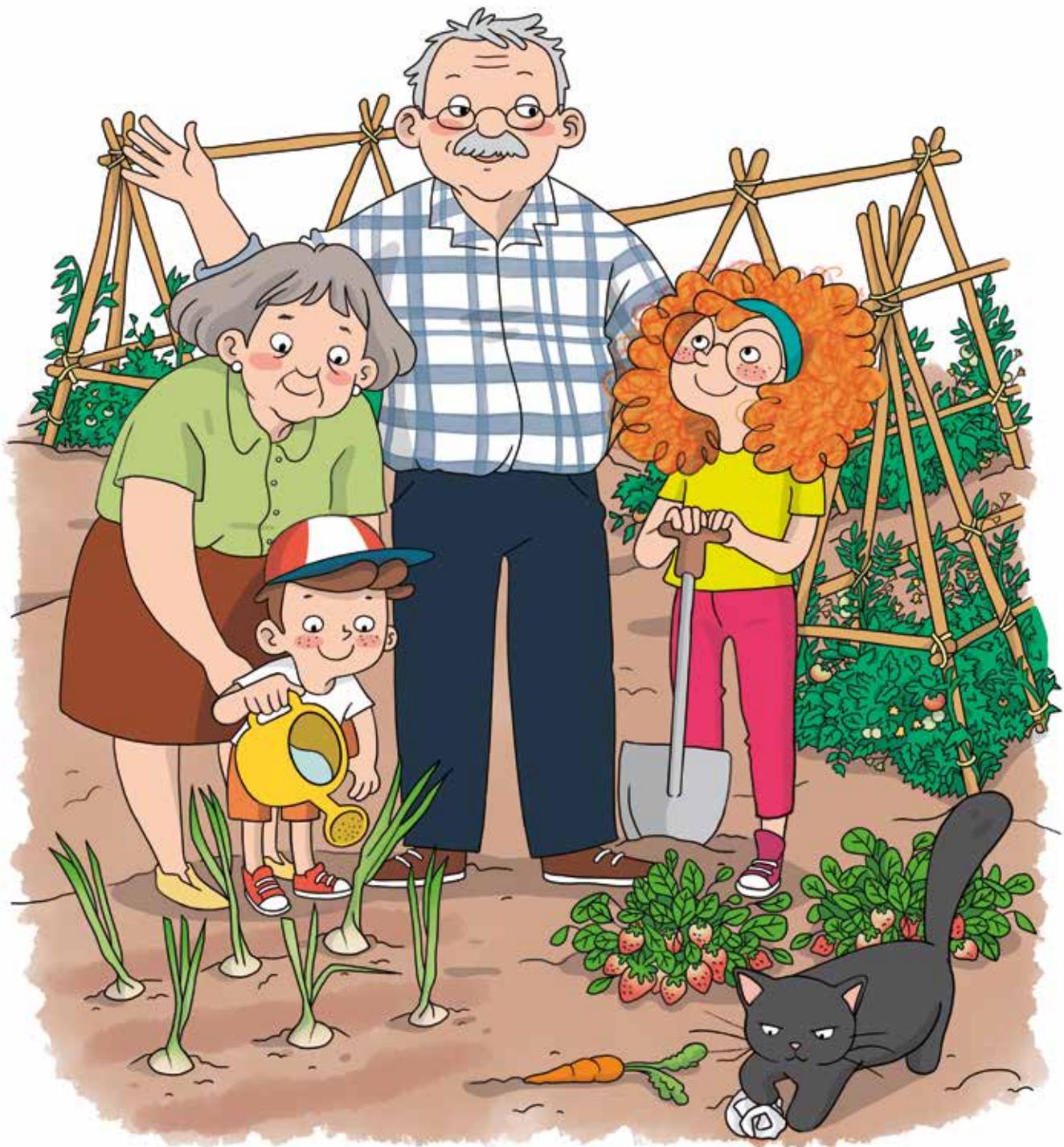
Noa and Max both raise their hand and Grandad gives Noa a spade and Max a watering can. As they get to work, he tells them that a vegetable garden can teach us lots of things.

"Wow! Like what?" asks Max, eager to learn as much as possible.

"Well, the seasons, for example. Now it's late spring and we've got strawberries, onions and lettuces to eat. And it won't be long before the tomatoes and peppers start to come through because summer is nearly here."

"Amazing! You don't even need to check the internet," says Noa.

"Fruit and vegetables follow their own calendar. They aren't available all year round, you know. The best ones are those in season, because that's what nature is offering us," adds Grandma.



Grandad talks about other jobs in the vegetable garden. He also tells them that ladybirds eat bugs that attack plants and that herbs like basil actually repel insects. Max is listening so intently that he accidentally treads on a cat's tail. The tail belongs to Blacky, the neighbour's cat, who is playing with a scrunched-up ball of paper. When Kika hears the cat wail, she immediately starts to chase him. Blacky dashes off under Grandad's feet and he falls onto the tomato plants. And then Kika and Blacky trample some other vegetables as well. What a disaster!

After lunch, while Grandma and Grandad are having a nap, Max sighs. He feels bad about the morning. His sister gives him a hug and offers some words of encouragement.

"Cheer up, Max. I've got an idea. We'll solve the mystery of the missing carrots and Grandma and Grandad will be really happy."

Noa manages to reset her tablet and get it working. They decide it might be useful to take some photos on their search for clues.

The children head out to the vegetable garden. Kika follows them drowsily. "When are they ever going to let me get some sleep?" she wonders. Noa takes a photo and spots something shiny lying on the ground right next to the carrot patch: a keyring with an unusual picture on it.

"I bet this belongs to the thief!" she shouts in excitement. "Let's go into the village to find some more clues!"

After leaving a note for their grandparents telling them where they have gone, they fill a water bottle and set off to investigate.

Stay
hydrated!
Drink plenty
of water.



Noa and Max reach a dairy farm and go in to make enquiries. Maybe the farmers needed the carrots to feed their animals...

"Carrots? No, our cows eat only grass," explains the farmer.

Noa and Max are astonished to see the cows being milked by robotic milkers.

"That's amazing! But doesn't it tickle?" asks Max.

"I don't think so, Max. They look pretty relaxed," replies Noa.

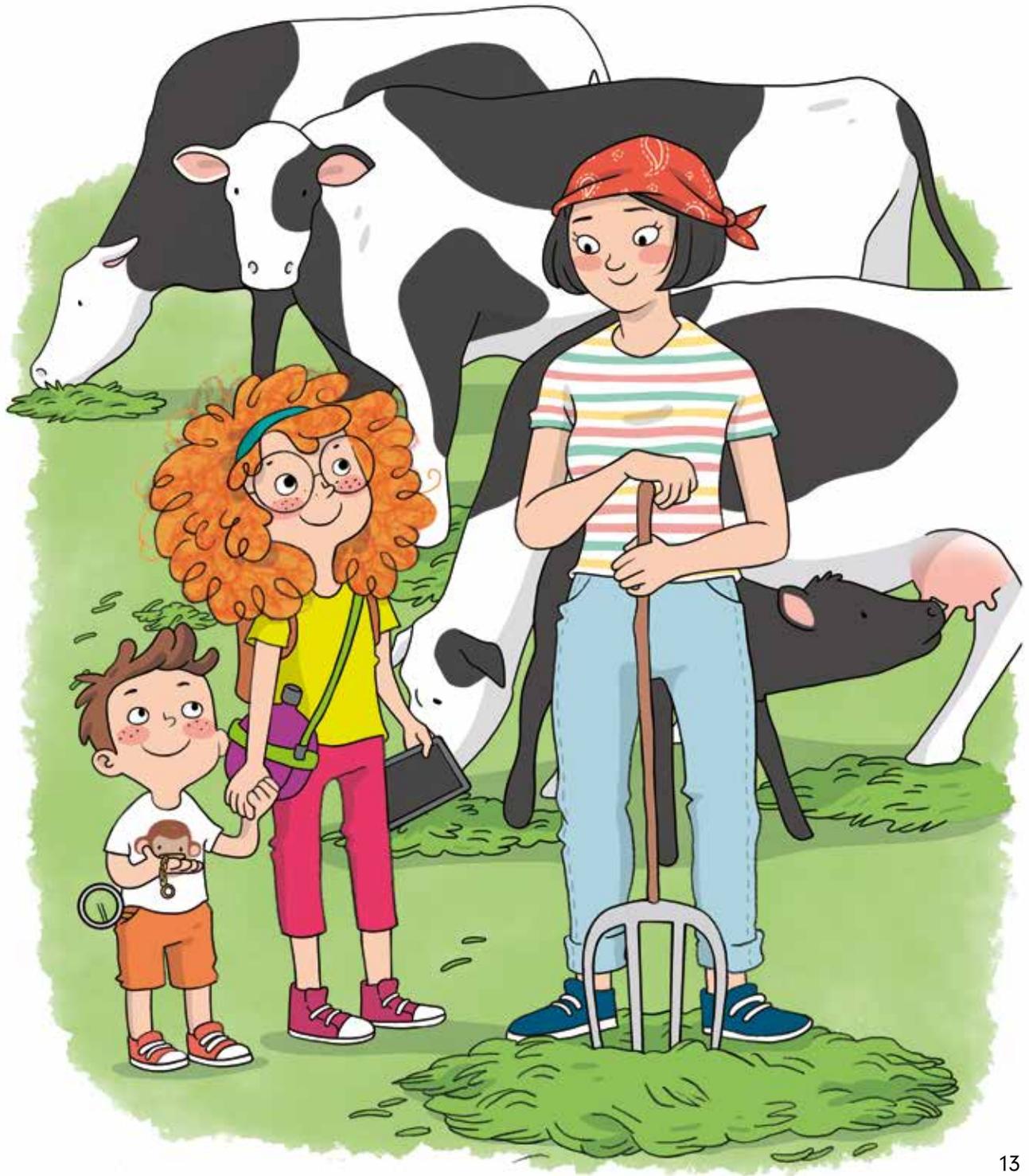
The dairy farmer laughs and reminds them to drink some milk every day if they want to grow up strong and healthy. Milk has lots of calcium, which helps build strong bones.

Noa shows the dairy farmer the keyring and asks her if she knows who it belongs to.

"The picture is familiar, but I can't remember where I've seen it before. Try asking the cheesemakers," she suggests.

But the cheesemakers can't help either. They tell the children that they don't use carrots to make cheese: all they need is milk, salt and a few other things. They also explain that they make three different kinds of cheese, depending on the type of milk they use. In addition to cow's milk from the farm, they also use sheep's milk and goat's milk from the local shepherds and goatherds.

"Wow!" exclaims Max, excited to discover so many interesting things about so many different foods. "I could drink a whole glass of milk right now!"



Noa and Max explore the village and take lots of photos.

“Look, there are more vegetable gardens like Grandma and Granddad’s,” says Noa.

The two children head over to one of the vegetable gardens. When the owners find out they are Lola and Victor’s grandchildren, they offer to help them. Noa and Max ask them if they know who the mysterious keyring belongs to, but no-one has any idea.

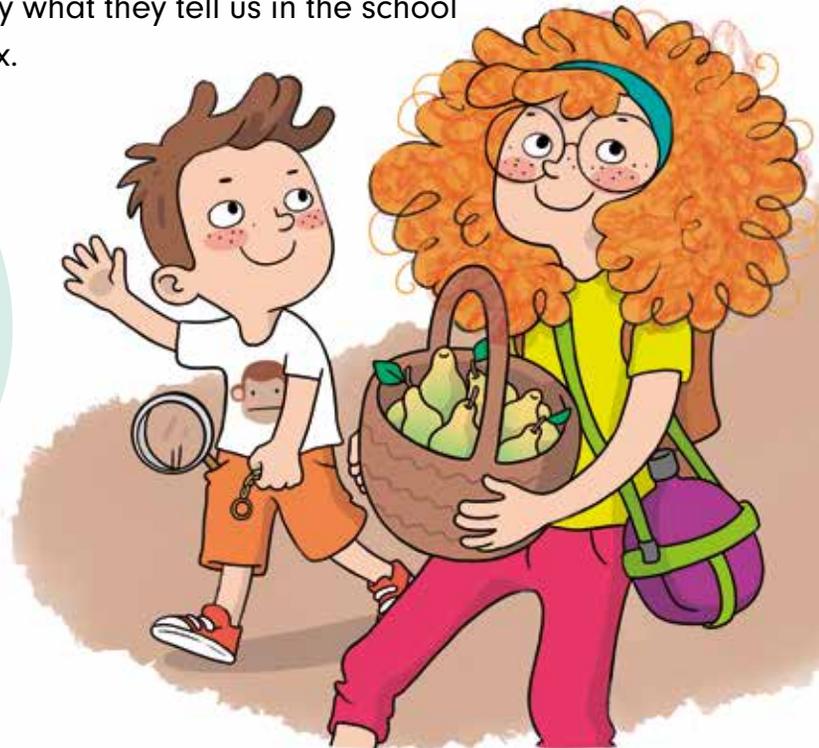
“Congratulations to your grandma! That carrot soup she made for the contest was delicious!” says a friendly neighbour as he hands them a basket full of pears.

“I always have some fruit for breakfast to give me the energy I need to work in my vegetable garden. And fruit also quenches your thirst and gives you lots of vitamins.”

“You’re right! That’s exactly what they tell us in the school canteen,” remembers Max.

Give me 5!

Remember to eat
5 portions of fruit
and vegetables
a day.





In another vegetable garden, they notice that onions and potatoes grow underground, just like carrots. Later, some other neighbours tell them that they use any leftover fruit and vegetables to make jams and chutneys for the winter. Suddenly, Kika catches sight of Blacky and races after him. By the time she comes back, it is almost dark, and even though they still haven't discovered who stole the carrots, they have to head home before their grandparents start to worry.



Noa and Max tell their grandparents all about their expedition into the village.

“We had pears and strawberries at tea time,” says Max, licking his lips.

“Grandma, your carrot soup is really famous! And people gave us some lovely fruit and vegetables,” adds Noa.

“But we still don’t know who stole the carrots,” sighs Max in a crest-fallen voice.

Noa is showing them the photos on her tablet when they suddenly see the picture from the keyring in one of the photos.

“Look! It’s painted on the wall of that restaurant!” cries Noa.

“That can’t be right,” says Grandma Lola in surprise.

“It’s the same picture as on the keyring, Grandma,” exclaims Max.

“Of course! They must need carrots for cooking,” says Noa excitedly.

“Yes, but they’re good, honest people. It’s all very strange. We’ll go and talk to them. But that will have to wait until tomorrow. Now it’s time for dinner and you need to wash your hands to get rid of any infections,” says Grandad Victor.



Clean hands
in the air!

Wash your hands
often, especially
before meals.

The next morning, the children and their grandparents go for a walk and visit the restaurant, where the mystery is finally solved for once and for all.

“It was me who took the carrots,” confesses the cook. “I wanted to make a tasty soup just like the one your grandma made for the contest. And since there was no-one at home, I left a note. That’s what we do here in the village.”

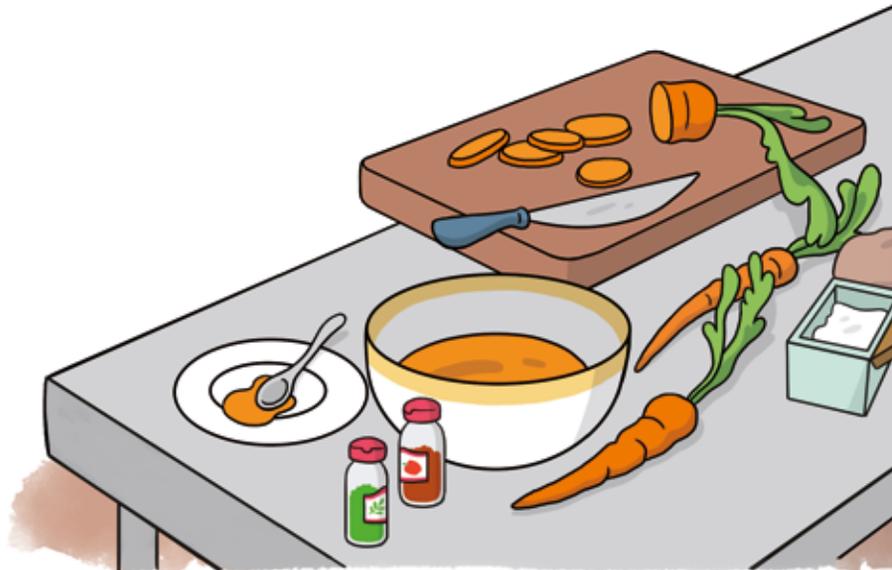
“Goodness,” says Grandad. “We didn’t find any note. It might have blown away.”

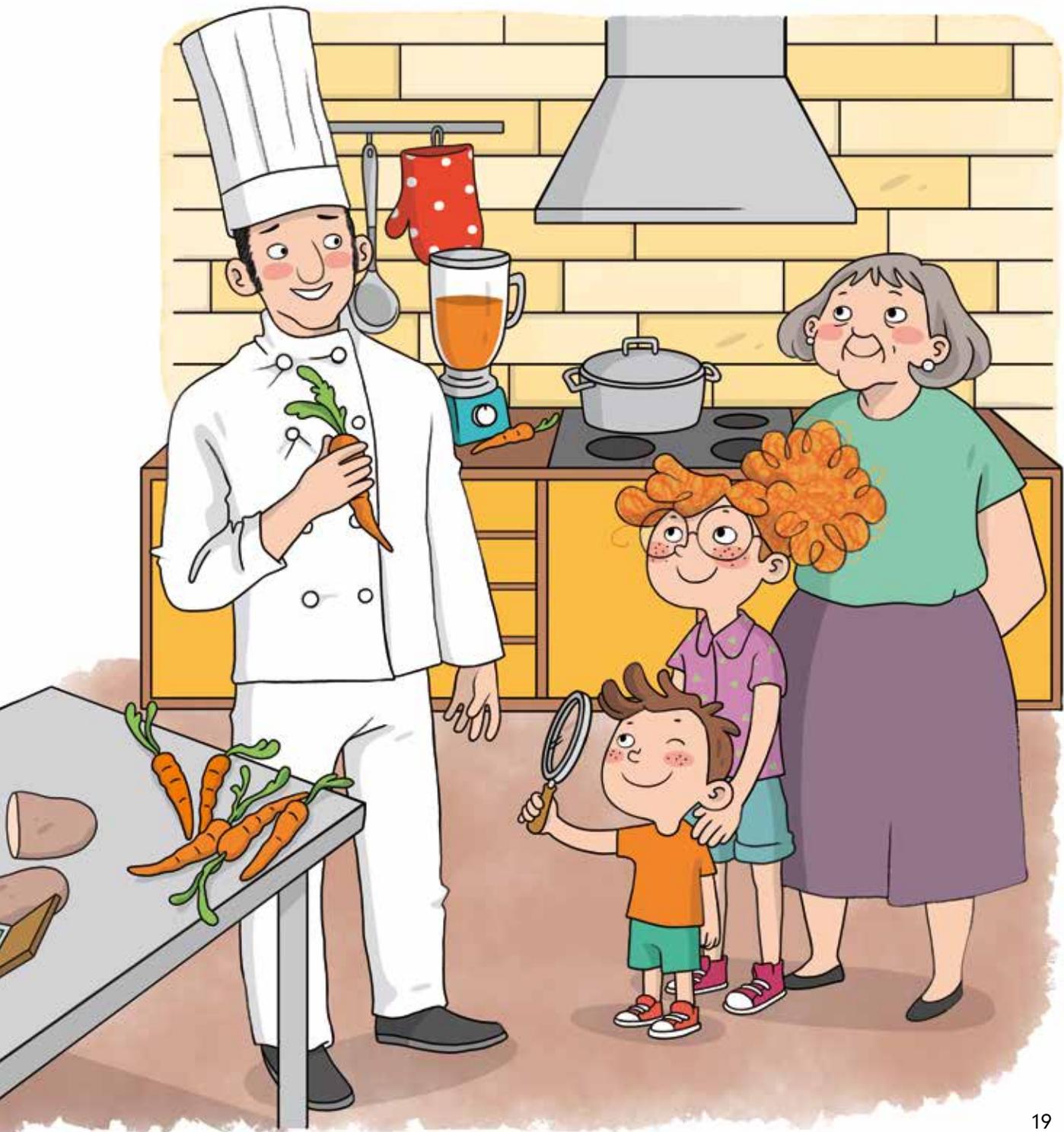
At that moment, Noa suddenly remembers something.

“No, it was Blacky! Yesterday I saw him in the vegetable garden playing with a paper ball.”

The cook apologises. He was planning to stop by the house later today to pay for the carrots. He also tells Grandma that his soup didn’t turn out as well as hers and that he has had an idea: if she gives him the recipe, he’ll call the dish ‘Lola’s Carrot Soup’. Grandma is delighted to agree!

Get moving!
Do some exercise
every day.





Back at their grandparents' house, Noa takes out her tablet and shows Grandma a video recipe contest organised by the company that runs the school canteen.

"We need to get you writing a blog, Grandma," says Noa.

"Oh, I don't know anything about the internet," laughs Grandma.

"Noa's an expert," boasts Max.

"You two have shown us how to grow fruit and vegetables, so now I'll show you how the internet works," suggests Noa with a smile.

She tells them that if they set up a blog, Grandma can share her recipes and Grandad can post tips about his vegetable garden.

"Hey, I'm a dab hand in the kitchen too!" jokes Grandad.

"And I do my fair share of digging and watering in the vegetable garden," quips Grandma.

"Well," says Noa, "we could call the blog 'From Garden to Table'."







On Sunday afternoon, Noa and Max's parents come to pick them up. As they are about to get in the car, though, Blacky appears out of nowhere. Everyone thinks Kika will chase after him again, but this time she doesn't: she is fast asleep inside the car. She is exhausted after her weekend in the countryside and now she can finally get some rest. They all laugh out loud and the children promise their grandparents they'll come back again soon to have more fun in their vegetable garden and enjoy their lovely food.

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Noa and Max are spending the weekend at their grandparents' new house in the countryside. They soon find themselves caught up in an exciting adventure as they try to solve the mystery of the missing carrots. Who might have taken them? And why? As they investigate, they learn lots of interesting things about where food comes from and eventually discover what really happened to the carrots... Do you want to find out too?

