



## THE MAGIC BOOTS

Once upon a time there lived a poor farmer who made his living by tending to a field he had rented from a greedy landowner. The field was not a very fertile field, so it was difficult to grow anything there, but nevertheless the landowner still demanded a very high rent. During seasons when the harvest was poor, the farmer was often worried that his family would have nothing to eat, let alone sell on the market to make the money for the rent.

One day when it was time to pay rent and the farmer didn't have a single coin to spare, he sent his son to ask the landowner for a little more time. The son went to him, but the greedy man wouldn't hear of it.

"Tell your father you can all pack your things and leave," the scrooge said. "If you can't pay rent, you can't stay on my land!" And he slammed the door in the boy's face. The son was distraught and, his head hanging low, began to walk home. As he crossed the field, he was stopped by an old man with a grey beard. "Why are you so sad, my boy?" he asked, and the boy tearfully told him all about the field and the rent money and the landowner who was kicking them out of their cottage.

"Don't be sad, I'll help you," the old man said gently. "If you will come and pay me a visit – you know, like a grandson coming to see his old granddad – I'll give you a pair of magic boots that will surely be handy and help you with your problem."

## THE MAGIC BOOTS

The boy didn't hesitate and immediately promised to visit the old man. After a moment, however, he asked,

"But where do you live, Gramps? How will I find you?"

"Ah, I live far, far away," replied the old man. "But don't worry, the boots will take you there. As soon as you put them on, you'll know the way." And then, just like that, he vanished, leaving only a pair of boots on the road in his place.

The boy picked them up cautiously. They looked like a normal pair of boots to him! When he went home, he told his father everything that had happened and the two of them started thinking about what to do. In the end, the farmer told him that he should go and pay the old man the promised visit. After all, what else was there to do?

The boy put on the boots, which fit him perfectly, and before he knew it, it felt as though something was dragging him out of the shack. Suddenly a strange force lifted him up toward the sky, and within a moment, he was standing in front of a golden palace on a cliff by sea.

The old man appeared next to him and welcomed him to his home.

"Come in, my boy, come in!" he said. "I'm glad you kept your promise."

He made the boy tea and after some conversation he handed the boy a small wooden box.

"Here's something to remember your ol' gramps by. But whatever you do, don't look inside before the boots take you back home."

The boy promised he wouldn't open it, put on the boots and took one big step toward the sky. Suddenly he was back on the road in his father's field, not far from his home. As soon as he took a step towards the cottage, he tripped over something and fell. He clutched the box to his chest, making sure to keep it closed, and when he looked to see what had tripped him he saw a pouch full to the brim with gold coins. Quickly, he picked it up and ran home to where his father was waiting anxiously for him.

They opened the box from the old man together, and you can imagine their shock when a great big golden egg fell out. Crack! The egg burst open, thunder rumbled, lightning flashed, and then, suddenly, their house transformed around

## THE MAGIC BOOTS

them into a huge golden palace, just like the one where the old man had lived. Now, because they were honest people, they didn't forget their debt to the landowner. The next morning, the son took the pouch of money he had found and went directly to the landowner to pay their rent. But as soon as the greedy man laid his eyes on the pouch, he started asking questions.

"Where did you get this money, boy?" he demanded.

Scared, the boy told him all about how they had gotten the money, the magic boots and the golden palace. The nasty man nearly burst with envy. He ran to the field to see the palace for himself, and as soon as his eyes took in the golden towers and the golden spires, he began thinking about how he could get even richer.

"This palace and this bag of money are on my property, so clearly they belong to me!" he shouted. But then he thought for a moment and came up with an even better idea. "But to show you what a gracious man I am, I'll let you continue to live here. You just have to keep paying me the rent."

He immediately calculated a new, very high rent. The farmer nearly fainted when he heard it, but he couldn't argue with the fact that the palace was on the man's land, and since he didn't want to lose their home, he reluctantly agreed.

The scrooge turned to leave, feeling very clever indeed, and was about to walk away when he remembered the boy had said something about magic boots.

"You have no use for the boots, clearly! What good would they be to you anyway? Where would you go? You'd just wear a hole in them with all the work you do in the fields. Give them to me! I'll have much more use for them than you ever will."

The landowner grabbed the boots from the boy and shoved his feet in them. As soon as he put them on, he felt a strange force lifting him up to the sky.

But the boots didn't take him to the palace in the sky. No, there's always a little bit of justice in the world, and instead of leading him to the old man's castle, the boots took him into the depths of a raging sea. And since that day, no one has seen him again and the farmer and his family lived happily ever more in their palace on the field.