



PUSS IN BOOTS

In a faraway land, a long time ago, there was a big mill. An old miller and his three sons lived there. Times were hard and they had to be very humble. From sunrise to sunset, the four of them had to work at the mill to make enough money to live. The miller made flour from grains and his sons helped him. Every day, they would load bags of flour on a carriage drawn by a horse and went to sell it to the village and to the castle, which was nearby.

One day, the miller got very ill, and because he could feel the end coming, he called his sons to his sickbed.

“Sons of mine, my time is coming to a close, and soon, you will have to take care of the mill by yourselves. There isn’t much I can leave you in this world, but I trust that you will divide everything fairly,” the miller told his three sons. Sadly, his premonition came true in only a few days, and so the sons began dividing what their father left them. The eldest kept his father’s mill, the middle one took the carriage and the horse, and so the youngest had to content with just a grey cat who always roamed around the mill.

The two older brothers inherited enough to get by, while the youngest was worried about his future. How could he ever make do with just a useless cat that couldn’t do anything? And what’s more, his brothers didn’t want him at the

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mill anymore, and they soon sent him away.

“Dear brother, there’s no way around it. We don’t need you anymore. You need to find a new place for yourself, and please, also take that cat, because he only gets in the way. And just so you don’t say we were mean to you, take these two coins for the road,” said the eldest one haughtily and threw two gold coins on the table. The youngest brother had no choice but to leave the mill. He thanked his brothers warmly, took the cat and set off into the world.

As he was walking along, the grey cat suddenly said:

“Finally a change, I was tired of the mill, I knew every last nook of it... what a boring life, meow.”

“Oh my goodness, what magic is this? You can talk?” shouted the miller’s son, who could not believe his ears.

“Talk? Oh, come on! Just you wait, you’ll see what else I can do and the skills that I have. Don’t be afraid. I can be very helpful to you,” answered this furry bragger.

“And while we’re walking through the world, I wouldn’t say no to a pair of boots. That will make me look like a real lord. And lords are always better off in the world,” added the cheeky cat while the young man was still dumbfounded.

“Well, aren’t you a brazen little cat? A talking puss in boots – people would stare their eyes out for sure. I only have two coins in my pockets that my brothers gave me. If you think I am about to waste them on some shoes, you’re mistaken,” snapped the young man.

But the cat kept persuading him until the kind-hearted brother agreed... And so, their first stop was at a cobbler’s shop, who had made hundreds of shoes before, but never for a cat.

“Well, I have never heard of a request like that, but the customer is king to me. And that is why I will make whatever you like. Even boots for your kitty cat,” said the wise old cobbler.

“What do you mean, a kitty cat? I’m a proper puss, pff,” grumbled the offended cat.

The cobbler measured his paws and got to work. They were finished in no time and they fit perfectly. The cat was ecstatic and ran out of the shop immediately.

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By the time the miller's son paid the cobbler and left the shop his feline friend was gone. The young man lost even the little bit he had left – his coins and his cat. “Oh dear, what a pickle. Well, serves me right, getting fooled by that sly old talking cat,” he sighed and walked on, even though he didn't know where he was going. Meanwhile, the puss in boots ran over the hills and the valleys, until he reached the gates of the royal palace. He walked right up to a snoozing bearded guard, who was fast asleep, leaning on his pike and snoring. The puss greeted him respectfully and started chatting away. At first, the guard could not believe that there was a cat standing in front of him, wearing boots and talking.

“Well, look what the cat dragged in! Boots! How is that even possible?” wondered the guard.

“Yes, indeed, I'm a puss in boots. My lord has given me a proper outfit for this long journey,” purred the cat.

“Your lord? And who is that? Is he a king?” asked the guard.

“Well, not exactly a king, but certainly a count. A count with a good heart. And how gracious! I have nothing but praise for him,” boasted the cat.

“Well, it would not be a good idea for him to meet our king, then. Our kingdom is going through very rough times. The king decided he wanted to eat roasted quail, but nobody could hunt any for him. He's been miserable and angry at everyone,” complained the guard.

When the cat heard that everyone had been searching for quail for the king to no avail, he started thinking about catching one to make the king happy. The clever cat soon got an idea. He prepared a trap with a bag and a handful of seeds, lured some quail into it and caught them. In a while, the cat was marching toward the palace with a bag full of birds.

The guard was very happy when he saw the catch that the cat brought back. He went to announce this unusual guest to the king and so, the cat stood in front of His Royal Majesty himself.

“I bow before you, Your Majesty. It is an honour to stand in front of you. I would like to send my lord's regards and also a gift from him, as he is a noble count,” invented the cat and handed him the tied-up bag.

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The king looked at him in suspicion for quite a while, because he had never had a cat in boots visit his kingdom before. But soon he was too curious, and so he looked into the bag to see what was inside.

“But these are quail! So many and so big!” he smiled from ear to ear.

That day in the kitchen, the cooks had a lot to do to prepare the feast that their king had wanted for such a long time, with many, many different quail dishes. The king wanted to repay this gift to the cat’s lord, and so he had the bag that the cat had used to catch the quails filled with golden coins.

And so, the cat went to find his lord, the miller’s son, this time with a bag full of money. The man had already lost all hope of ever seeing his cat again. When the puss in boots came back, he was pleasantly surprised, especially seeing how much money he had brought. The cat told him all about the things that happened and how he had found all those riches.

Time went by and the youngest son had built his own house with the money his feline friend had brought him.

“Now, you only need a woman for this beautiful house. Well, but not just any woman... you should get a princess,” teased the cat, once the house was all finished.

“But how could a man like me even think about a princess? Have you lost your mind?” the miller’s son said shaking his head.

One day, it was sweltering hot, flies were buzzing outside, and they decided to go to the lake to cool down a little. When they arrived, the cat was afraid to even get a single paw wet, and so only the miller’s son got into the water.

While the young man was swimming in the lake, the cat saw the royal carriage coming towards them from far away. Inside, the king was travelling together with his only daughter, the beautiful princess. The cat immediately had an idea, he took his master’s clothes from the shore and ran to hide them in the bushes. The carriage stopped, the king got out and recognized the cat at once. How could he ever forget something so unusual – a cat in boots who brought him a bag full of quail.

“Good day to you, Your Majesty,” said the cat respectfully. “My lord went to refresh himself into the lake, but unfortunately, somebody stole his clothes. And

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so, he cannot come to greet you, Your Majesty,” the clever cat said.

“I’m glad to see you, servant. We could probably find some clothes in our carriage. After all, how could we just leave the noble count in the lake? Here you go, bring them to him and tell him to come see us after. I would like to meet him,” said the king and handed him a set of his own clothes.

The puss in boots ran to the shore to see his master, gave him the king’s clothes and asked him to put them on and ask no questions. Then he led him to the carriage to meet the king and the princess.

“My respects, Your Majesty... Princess,” the young man bowed.

“So, there he is. Finally, we meet, noble count,” said the king.

The miller’s son watched the king and then the cat, very surprised. He had no idea what the king was talking about and why he was calling him count. Luckily, the cat saved him once again. He changed the subject, started talking about the quail he brought some time ago, and they all chatted for a few moments. Then, the king invited the count to take a ride in nature with him. The young man was hesitant at first, but the cat pushed him to take a ride with the king and the princess. Quite quickly, he and the princess took a liking to each other, even the king noticed that the young count was making an impression on the princess. The puss in boots asked them which way they were going, and he ran ahead as fast as he could.

He stopped by a field that belonged to a great wizard from a nearby castle. On it, a farmer was cutting the grass with a scythe. The cat started to persuade the farmer to tell the king that the field belonged to the young count instead, and in return, he promised the farmer a satchel of coins. Having many mouths to feed at home and never enough money, the farmer was quickly persuaded.

The cat made a similar deal with a lumberjack who was cutting down trees in the wizard’s forest. If he told the king that the forest belongs to the count in his carriage, he would get a satchel of coins.

And it happened exactly as the cat wanted. The king was very impressed with the wealth of the young nobleman – an enormous field, a beautiful forest, and still so humble.

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The cat, pleased with himself next set his sights on the wizard's castle. There was not a soul in sight, only the scary wizard, who appeared out of nowhere.

"What are you looking for, cat? Are those boots on your paws? My word, I have never seen a cat wear boots before," the wizard marvelled.

"That's right, I'm a puss in boots, great wizard. I have heard so much about your mighty magic that I decided to come and join you to learn something," said the cat slyly.

"Do you think it's all that simple, doing magic? You don't even have any power, so you could never become a real sorcerer," said the wizard.

"Well, that's a pity. Could you at least show me a bit of your abracadabra? Just to see if it's even true that you can do magic. Could you change into a lion? That would be something..." the cat provoked him.

"A lion? Of course I could. Any time, just look," and as soon as he said it, smoke started appearing from his feet. Suddenly, there was a lion in front of the cat, roaring loudly.

"Wow, what a spell! And how about something different, something tiny? How about a mouse, for example? Could you turn into a mouse?" said the puss in boots very fast because he was afraid of the dangerous lion.

"Big and small. I can turn into any animal I want," said the wizard proudly and in the blink of an eye, he became a little mouse.

Which was exactly what the clever cat wanted. He grabbed the mouse and that was it. The wizard's castle was completely empty. The cat ran toward the royal carriage and he invited the king and the princess to have a glass of wine inside his young count's castle. The miller's son was confused because he had no idea what castle his cat was talking about, but he just followed silently. After the visit at the castle, the king was fascinated with the young count. So rich, and still so humble and gracious. A perfect match for his royal daughter. After they returned to his palace, he announced to everyone that the princess was marrying a noble count and he would pass the throne to him.

The puss in boots became the chief advisor to the new king and he got a pair of brand new sparkling boots to boot. The end.