

Puss in Boots

By

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Traditional Folk Tales

2010 Joe Thompson

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Cast of Characters

Cat:

Jack:

Princess:

Queen:

King:

Narrator 1:

Narrator 2:

ACT I

Scene 1

NARRATOR 1:

One of the great uses for words is, of course, story telling. Passing on personal histories, knowledge and cultural identity.

NARRATOR 2:

Or just having fun. This is a story about a cat. A cat with a pair of boots. It is called Puss in Boots. Now, once there were three brothers named Jack, Jake, and Jaques..

NARRATOR 1:

And when their father died, he left everything he owned to them.

NARRATOR 1:

The oldest, Jake, got the half the farm.

NARRATOR 2:

The middle son, Jaques, got the other half of the farm.

NARRATOR 1:

And our hero here, Jack, got an old burlap bag, some red boots. .

NARRATOR 2:

and a cat.

CAT:

Me? He got me? I'm the cat. So I that means he got me. Kid, This is your lucky day. All right. Take me away. I'm yours. (jumps in Jack's arms)

JACK:

It's not fair. My brothers got the farm, and I didn't get anything.

CAT:

ahem. Hello? You have to look at this from a more positive frame of mind. The future isn't about what you get, it's about what you do with what you've got. And you - You got this, uh, beautiful, useful bag for putting things in; who!! and these cool boots. I love boots. Did I mention that?

JACK:

Boots? Those are fancy boots, not work boots. What would I do with them?

(CONTINUED)

CAT:

Come on man. Look on the bright side. Best of all you got me. You got the best of the deal if you want to know. Are you listening to me? Hello.

JACK:

It's not what I want.

CAT:

What was it you wanted? The cow? The pigs? Cause I'm pretty clever as cats go. I can help you get whatever it is you want. Really. Trust me. Cats can do that, you know. Dogs can't. Cats can. Just tell me what it was you wanted, and we'll make a plan. Come on, tell me. The sheep? The chickens? What?

JACK:

I want to marry the princess.

CAT:

(laughs hysterically with Narrator 2) Jack, That's funny. And here I thought all work and no play made you a dull boy. But you have a sense of humor. I can hardly breath, I was laughing so hard. So really, what do you want? Tell me the truth.

JACK:

I want to marry the princess.

NARRATOR 1:

He wants to marry the princess.

NARRATOR 2:

He wants to marry the princess.

CAT:

Do you know the princess? How do you know you'll like each other? How do you know she's not annoying and obnoxious and irritating?

JACK:

I had a dream. I met her there. She was wonderful. We got married in the dream. But I know it will never happen in real life. It's impossible. Just a dream.

CAT:

Just a dream? Impossible? Nothing is impossible, If you really want it badly enough. You have the dream. Now you need to do three things:

NARRATOR 1:

One- you have to believe in the dream. No matter how impossible it seems.

NARRATOR 2:

Two - you have to have a plan. And be willing to work hard at that plan.

CAT:

And three - this is important - you have to give me everything you own.

JACK:

Give you - That would be crazy! I only have a burlap bag, some boots, my last lunch, and two copper coins. And I'm supposed to give them to you?

CAT:

That would be a crazy thing to do. Insane! Absurdly whacko. But if you want to do the impossible, you have to be crazy, insane and whacko. That reminds me, the fourth thing you have to do

JACK:

You said three things.

NARRATOR 1:

He's not very good at math.

CAT:

The fourth thing you have to do is trust me. One hundred and five percent. No matter what. Now give me what you've got.

JACK:

I don't know why I'm doing this. Here's the bag. Here are the boots and here are my two copper coins.

CAT:

Uh uh uh. Don't hold out on me, now.

JACK:

My lunch? Really? But I'm hungry!

CAT:

Have lunch? Marry the princess? What is more important?

JACK:

Oh all right. Here is my lunch. What are you going to do with my boots?

CAT:

I'm going to wear them of course. These are some cool looking boots.

JACK:

Well, what are you going to do with my two copper coins?

CAT:

Buy myself the fanciest hat I can find. A cat in a hat - maybe they'll write a book about me.

JACK:

And my lunch?

CAT:

Eat it. I'm very hungry. (starts eating)

JACK:

That's it? You get fancy boots, a nice hat and my lunch? But I trusted you.

CAT:

And you have to keep on trusting me, no matter how crazy, whacko and insane it seems. Now go take a walk while I start catching us a plan.

JACK:

Trust the cat. Trust the cat. I believe. I believe.

NARRATOR 1:

And so Jack trusted the Cat, although it was a very, very hard thing to do.

NARRATOR 2:

Especially when he didn't see him again for days and days. Now, what do we know about this princess?

NARRATOR 1:

Well, King and the Queen were good people, mostly. And did their best to rule fairly and wisely, but there are some things that test the wisdom and patience of even the fairest and wisest.

NARRATOR 2:

Like what?

PRINCESS:

Fine! Go ahead and ground me. Lock me away in a tower. I don't care! I never get to do anything. I want to have a dream. I want to believe in it, work towards it. Not just stay locked up in this stupid castle, studying all the time.

QUEEN:

Dear, it's for your own good. You can't keep sneaking out of the castle. It isn't safe.

PRINCESS:

But I have ideas about how we can make the kingdom better for everyone who lives here - Royalty and peasants alike. I have wonderful ideas and dreams, but I need to get out and learn about things - take a few chances. Maybe do things that seem a little crazy.

KING:

What I don't understand, and I understand a lot- I even understand word puzzles- like the one where there are two horses, one going east and the other going west and -

QUEEN:

You were saying dear?

KING:

Oh yes, got a bit off the subject. What were we talking about? Word puzzles wasn't it?

PRINCESS:

My getting out of the castle occasionally, learning, exploring, taking chances -

KING:

Oh yes. Well, I don't understand why you would want to. The world outside is so messy. There are ogres, I'm told, though I don't believe it, mind you. There are people you don't know. Mud, wild animals. All sorts of disgusting things. It's why I never go outside the castle myself. But here. Things are so nice. Clean and orderly. No surprises. You know everybody. Who you can trust, who you can't. Who has been sneaking down to the kitchen at night and eating my strawberries, even though I've told him that those strawberries are mine, and I'm the king, by golly, I ought to be able to have my own strawberries when I want.

QUEEN:

So you see the point is -

PRINCESS:

The point is I should stay locked inside this nice safe little castle all my life and never meet anyone new, have any adventures, or do anything interesting. Not take any chances or make any new discoveries.

QUEEN:

Yes dear, I think that sums it all up pretty well.

PRINCESS:

Arggggggggggg

HERALD (NARRATOR 1)

Excuse me for interrupting. But, Your Majesties have a visitor.

KING:

A visitor? No one ever comes to visit us. I don't know why that is. Do you know why that is?

PRINCESS:

We don't know anyone. Remember, we never go outside the castle. We have no friends. We never meet anyone.

QUEEN:

That's not true - we know - never mind, send the visitor in.

HERALD (NARRATOR 1):

Send the visitor in.

(The Cat enters in boots and a fancy hat with the bag over his shoulders)

CAT:

(bows)Your most royal majesties. I come to you today as an emissary from my master. He has long admired your leadership. Your nuanced perfection of diplomatic ingenuity. Your. . .

KING:

What language are you speaking? Is it French? I don't speak french.

CAT:

Let me put this another way. My master likes you, and sent you this present.

KING:

A present. Oh open it. Open it. Let me have it.

QUEEN:

And who is your Master?

KING:

Can we open the present now?

CAT:

He has asked that in exchange for his gift, you do not ask his name or inquire about him in any way.

KING:

Why? Doesn't he like his name? Is it a funny name like Brian Dogearsoup? Or Jack fishpants? But fine, whatever. Let's open the present now. Open it.

(CONTINUED)

CAT:

(seeing the princess) Ohh my!

PRINCESS:

What? Why do you gasp when you see me? Am I so ugly to anyone outside this castle?

CAT:

My master has had a dream for many months now. He says that in his dream he meets a beautiful, intelligent woman. And they dance through the night to the most romantic music-

KING:

Yes. Yes. Good. Now, let's see the present.

PRINCESS:

And what has this dream to do with me?

CAT:

When he woke up just yesterday, he drew a picture of this beautiful lady and when I saw you-

KING:

I want to see the Present!

PRINCESS:

Wait. What were you about to say - about the drawing?

CAT:

Well, it looked so much like you that I was amazed.

PRINCESS:

The beautiful, intelligent woman in his dream looked like me? Is your master is some old man with grandchildren on his knee.

CAT:

NO! He is young and handsome, but he has never found the right girl. Whenever he meets someone, he thinks "ahh but she is not as beautiful, clever or sweet as the girl in my dreams." It is a sad romantic story, don't you think?

PRINCESS:

Oh yes, very sad - and perhaps romatic.

KING:

So do you have a present for us or not?

CAT:

Yes, your majesty. My master could not decide whether to give you gold or diamonds, rubies or pearls. Fist he

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CAT: (cont'd)
thought gold, but no - rubies would be better - but everyone loves diamonds. But the truth is anyone could give you more treasure. So instead, in this bag you find two of the fattest, most delicious-

KING:
(looking in bag) Rabbits? These are rabbits.

PRINCESS:
What a sweet thoughtful gift.

KING:
Rabbits? Sweet and thoughtful?

PRINCESS:
Everyone gives you gold and diamonds. This is unique, and personal. Your master is truly a unique person - someone not afraid to be different - to take chances.

CAT:
I couldn't have said it better myself princess.

QUEEN:
We should meet your Master. Please arrange it.

PRINCESS:
Could he come for dinner tonight? We have plans of course, but we might be willing to change them. Just this once, you understand.

KING:
Rabbits? Rabbits? It is true that no one ever gives me rabbits. That makes it quite unique. Tell me, how did he catch them?

CAT:
He sat quietly under a tree with his lunch on the ground next to him, and when the rabbits came to nibble the sandwich he pounced and threw them into the bag.

KING:
But he would have to be as quick as a cat to catch rabbits that way. Wonderful reflexes. I am intrigued. Well, tell him I command that he come to dinner tomorrow.

PRINCESS:
Yes!

CAT:
Tomorrow? That's too soon. I mean, my master must travel tomorrow to far way lands and so coming here to dinner is impossible.

PRINCESS:

But we could visit him. Tonight. A surprise. Daddy please? Pretty please. I do so need to have an adventure, of some sort. If we go, I promise I will stop sneaking out the castle without your permission. And we should see how our kingdom is doing.

QUEEN:

I think that is a wonderful idea.

CAT:

Tonight? Ahh tonight? Well, the castle is not ready for a visit from the Royal family. Besides, didn't I understand that you never leave the castle?

PRINCESS:

But how I've dreamed of changing that. It is time to change it, isn't it Mother? Father?

QUEEN:

Yes, it is time for a change. Tell him to prepare for us this evening. Surely his servants can clean the castle. Now, where is his castle? I know our kingdom very well.

CAT:

His castle? His castle is - It's over- no it's over-

PRINCESS:

You don't know where he lives?

CAT:

Well, his lands are so great that it is hard to say. His castle is - oh yes, north of here next to the great blue lake.

KING:

I have always heard that an ogre lives there. Not that I believe in Ogres, mind you.

CAT:

Ogres? Ha, we are sensible people your majesty. We don't believe in ogres. Do we? Oh, and do bring an extra set of clothes tonight.

KING:

Extra clothes?

CAT:

It is the style these days to change your clothes at least several times during the evening. But of course you already know that.

(CONTINUED)

PRINCESS:

Oh how wonderful. An adventure. My dreams are starting to come true.

NARRATOR 1:

So the cat hurried home to Jack to tell him the news.

CAT:

Well, the good news is that the princess wants to meet you.

JACK:

What's the bad news?

CAT:

No bad news. None. My goodness. You are so tense. (starts massaging Jack's shoulders) Take a breath. Good. Relax. Good. You're doing great. I do have some - interesting news maybe.

JACK:

(relaxed and limp) Oh, that feels so good. What is the interesting news?

CAT:

The princess and the royal family are coming to your castle tonight to meet you.

JACK:

What? How? That's bad news. That's really bad news. That's horrible news.

CAT:

Why?

JACK:

I don't have a castle. Or any fancy clothes. Or anything that the princess would expect. I have nothing.

CAT:

Not true. You have a cat. But chill out, dude. Relax. No problemo. There is castle up north near the great blue lake that I think we can get. It's a fixer upper. But it does have a water view.

JACK:

Up north? Great Blue Lake? That's the Ogre's castle. A big ugly, mean ogre who can change his shape into any animal he wants to. He could trample you as a bull or eat you as a lion. Why would he give us his castle?

CAT:

Let me take care of that. But, I need you to do two things before the princess rides by on her way to the castle.

JACK:

I can't give you anything else. I have nothing else. All I have are the clothes I'm wearing.

CAT:

Good, that's exactly what I need. Take off all your clothes.

JACK:

That's crazy!

CAT:

Trust. Remember. Trust the cat. Then go stand in the river.

JACK:

The river? This is insane. Trust the cat. Trust the cat.

NARRATOR 2:

And though he felt like a fool he stood in the river without his clothes.

CAT:

Help help. Robbers thieves. Help. (runs off stage) Help thieves. Oh, thank heaven a coach. Could you help us sir?

JACK:

Trust the cat. Trust the cat.

CAT:

(Cat reenters with the King, Queen, Princess and the Coachman) Oh its you, Your majesty, what a wonderful surprise. Thank heaven you arrived when you did.

QUEEN:

Oh my goodness. Princess, don't look. This man has no clothes.

PRINCESS:

No clothes? Oh. But he has a towel. Nice towel.

CAT:

We were headed back from Market where we picked up the choices most delicious foods for dinner tonight, when twenty masked thieves leaped out and over powered us. They took the Coach, the horses. Everything. Even, I'm embarrassed to say, my master's clothes.

(CONTINUED)

PRINCESS:

Robbers? Real robbers? An adventure! Oh, How exciting.

QUEEN:

This is your master?

JACK:

Well, I guess dinner is off. I feel so bad about that.

CAT:

Don't be silly. You just told me we would have dinner anyway.

KING:

You have no clothes on. Princess, this man has no clothes on. Don't look.

CAT:

Wait, what good fortune that you have an extra set of clothes with you.

KING:

Yes. Yes I have. But that is neither her nor there. My clothes weren't stolen. His were.

PRINCESS:

But you could lend him your extra clothes.

JACK:

Only for a little while, till I get mine back.

PRINCESS:

Do you know what this is? This is an adventure. I love adventures. Robbers stealing your clothes. Wow. You are so lucky. Good thing they left you a towel. Did they leave you anything else?

JACK:

Just my dreams.

PRINCESS:

I have dreams too. I don't know what I'd do without them?

JACK:

Do you know you are even more beautiful in person than you are in my dreams?

PRINCESS:

I bet you say that to all the princesses.

CAT:

And now if you'll excuse me, I need to run ahead and see if the castle is ready.

JACK:

But wait. By yourself? Isn't that dangerous?

PRINCESS:

Why would it be dangerous to see if the castle is clean?

CAT:

Oh you know how the servants are these days, why some of them are almost ogres.

KING:

Oh that's funny. Ogres. But of course there is not such thing, is there?

NARRATOR 1:

So Puss in Boots went ahead to the Ogre's castle.

OGRE (NARRATOR 2):

Who is knocking at my door? Where are the servants? Oh yes, I ate them. I shall have to answer it myself. Hello, who are you? Ahhhh ahhhh ahhhh choo. Say is there a cat around here? I'm allergic to cats.

CAT:

No sir, No cats. Look, I'm a reporter with the medieval times newspaper, and we'd like to do a story on you. Is it true that you do horrible mean, nasty things?

OGRE:

Oh yes. Mean, nasty. All those people out there live in fear of me. Fear that if I'm not happy I might eat them up. Or even if I'm happy. Yes I'm pretty mean evil wicked bad and nasty. Ahhhh ahhhh ahhhh choo. You sure there's no cat around? Ok. Next question.

CAT:

I am told you can change shape into anything you want. But I'm afraid our readers don't believe it. Can you prove it to our readers?

OGRE:

I can't change into something big in the house, I would break the ceiling.

CAT:

Then step right outside the door. I need to see this

OGRE:

I'll go outside. Now watch.

CAT:

Whoa!!! That's big. But hey, anybody can do big. I bet you can't turn into a teeny weeny little mouse.

OGRE:

(off stage) Oh yeah, watch this.

CAT:

Whoa. Good. Come inside and let me see. You look like a real mouse, let me look closer. (cat picks up mouse)
Yep, you're a mouse. Oh yes, by the way, I'm a cat.
(cat swallows mouse)

NARRATOR 1:

And that was the end of the ogre. And, just in time.
Here comes the Royal family with Jack.

QUEEN:

Hello. Any one home? We just couldn't wait to see the castle.

CAT:

What do you think? Pretty nice eh? Great water view.
Needs a little work, but that is coming.

QUEEN:

This is - this is - Terrible. Disgusting. Cobwebs, dust
- bones.

CAT:

Well, it was the servants' day off.

KING:

This looks horrible. Almost as if an Ogre has been living here. Not a brave young prince. Oh this is not right. Come princess. We have made a terrible mistake. We must leave, now.

PRINCESS:

Jack?

JACK:

Cat?

CAT:

Uh well, your highness, there is an explanation. You see, Jack - well, I mean the castle, I mean. You see there was a - Then a - I'm sorry Jack. I'm out of tricks.

(CONTINUED)

QUEEN:

This is quite - I can't find the right words. Come dear. I knew we should not have left the castle.

JACK:

No wait. You are right. This place is terrible. It isn't a wonderful, beautiful castle, and I don't have wonderful, beautiful clothes. The truth is I have nothing.

CAT:

You have a cat.

JACK:

The truth is I have nothing, except a hope and a wish and a dream.

CAT:

And a cat.

KING:

Whose castle and lands are these really?

CAT:

Well, they belong to Jack now, because I ate the Ogre that used to live here. (burp) eww, ogres, even small mouse shaped ones are rather sour. But Jack is a wonderful young man who has dreams and the trust and bravery to do what needs to be done, even when it is crazy, and embarrassing.

KING:

Come daughter. It is time for us to leave. Ogres. Ugh.

PRINCESS:

No.

QUEEN:

No?

PRINCESS:

No. We were invited to spend an evening and it would be extremely rude to leave right now. Daddy, Mommy. Give him a chance. You look around and see what is here right now. I look around and see what could be here. Look how Jack changed when he put on your royal clothes, Daddy. Things change. Things grow. Look how beautiful this place could be now that the ogre is gone. It just needs a chance - a little love. We need to take this chance. No matter how crazy, insane or whacko it seems.

JACK:

And that is what I offer you, princess. A chance to build a future, to have faith in our dreams, and watch them come true. A chance for love to grow. You said your dreams were important to you. I would like to know -What are your dreams, princess?

PRINCESS:

I thought no one would ever ask me that. Let's take a walk and I'll tell you about them. And my name is Diana, not Princess. (they walk off together)

NARRATOR 1:

And as you might well imagine, in time, they fell in love and married. They moved into the Ogre's castle and it turned out quite beautiful, I do believe.

CAT:

Wait a minute. Aren't you forgetting someone rather important to this story? Hello? Over here. The cat! The story is called Puss in Boots. What happened to the cat?

NARRATOR 2:

The cat got to keep the boots. (cat pantomimes for more info) and the hat. (cat pantomimes for more info) and lived in the castle with all the fresh sweet mice he could eat. What? What did I forget?

JACK:

What happened with the princess and me?

Princess:

What do you think silly! We lived happily ever after.