

Magic Boots

by Moira Andrew



"Mum!" Jake shouted. He threw down his book-bag and ran into the kitchen. Mum hugged Jake as he skidded to a stop beside her. "Guess what?" Jake was pop-eyed with excitement.

"What?"

"I'm third reserve for Year 2!"

"Good for you," Mum said, but his baby sister had started to cry and Jake knew Mum wasn't really listening.

"The thing is, I'll need new boots."

"Not if you're just a reserve," Mum said. "Reserves don't usually get to play. Your trainers will have to do."

"But Mum, Mr Thomas says we've got to have proper boots."

"Does he now? I'm sorry, Jake, but you'll have to make do with trainers. We can't afford new boots right now."

"It's not fair!" He slouched round the kitchen, looking for things to kick. He kicked the bin. He kicked the cat's bowl. He kicked the baby's bouncy chair.

"Stop it, Jake," Mum said. "Let's ask Mrs Jones next door. Perhaps she'll lend us an old pair of Robin's."

"I'm not wearing Robin's old boots. They'll smell!"

Jake stamped up to his room and threw himself on his bed. He felt like crying, but screwed his eyes tight shut to keep the tears inside. He heard the phone ring.

"Come down and talk to Grandma," Mum called.

Jake told Grandma the news. "But Mum can't buy me boots till next month."

"Don't worry, Jake," Grandma said. "I have a good idea."

Ten minutes later she arrived carrying a shoe box tied with string. She looked

sad, as though she had been crying. Strange, Jake thought, grown-ups don't normally cry.

She gave the box to Jake. "Open it," she said. Jake did. A pair of brown leather boots lay inside. They were just the right size.

"Perfect," Grandma wheezed, blinking back tears.

"But I can't wear these! They're gross!" Jake pushed the heavy old boots back into the box.

Grandma looked disappointed. "They

belonged to Great-Grandpa Dan," she told him. Jake had never met Great-Grandpa Dan but he had seen a photograph of him on the wall in Grandma's living room. "Great-Grandpa Dan called them his magic boots. He was top scorer every time he wore them. You'll never be just a reserve again if you wear his boots!"

Grandma was right. Jake sat on the reserves' bench for the first half, hiding his feet in the old brown boots. When, at last, he was called on to the pitch his team was three goals down. But Jake ran like the wind with the ball at his feet and scored five goals in a row. He was the class hero, thanks to Great-Grandpa Dan's boots.

Even Mum was thrilled. "I will be able to buy you new boots next week," she said.

"No need," said Jake. "I'll keep Great-Grandpa Dan's boots – they're magic!"

