

Boots And The Beasts Retold  
By Ellen Baumwoll

One day Boots saw a lion, a falcon, and an ant beside some carrion. "It's mine," growled the lion. "I was here first," said the falcon. "I don't take up very much room," said the ant. "Can you help us settle our dispute?" they asked Boots. The lion said, "The falcon keeps eating more than his share and the ant wants to eat as much as she can before it spoils."

Boots gave them each a fair share. "Thank you, kind sir," they said. "Now, what can we give you for helping us?" asked the falcon. "Nothing," said Boots. "But we want to give you something," said the ant. "It is enough for me to see you at peace with one another," said Boots. "Then, you must accept a gift from each of us," said the lion. "We will each grant you one wish." "I can't think of anything," said Boots.

"We will choose for you," said the animals. Then, the lion said proudly, "I am the king of the jungle. I am strong and brave. I will give you the magic power to wander through the forest in the form of a lion. When you need strength, this wish may help you one day." And, the lion touched Boots with his magic wand.

The falcon said, "My wings make me a master of the air. I bestow upon you the magic power to become a falcon. Then, when you need to, you can fly anywhere." And, the falcon touched Boots with his magic wand.

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Then, the ant said, "I am small but my heart is as true as the lion and falcon. I give you the magic power to shrink in size and become a little ant." And, the ant touched Boots with his magic wand.

Boots thanked them and went on his way. "I think I'll try to fly," he said, and he changed himself into a falcon. He soared through the air for most of the day.

But then, he was caught by a beautiful princess who placed him in a cage in her castle.

"I am tired of this cage," he said, and he changed himself into a little ant and crept through the keyhole to escape. Suddenly, he heard someone crying. It was the princess.

"A little ant can't comfort her," he said. So, he changed back to himself, the kind Boots, and asked "Why are you crying?" "I'm afraid you cannot help me," said the princess with tears rolling down her face. "A cruel dragon has carried my dear sisters to his den and he will soon come for me." "Do not worry," said Boots. "I will help you. I am strong enough to kill a dozen dragons." "Oh, thank you kind sir," said the princess. So Boots went off in search of the cruel dragon.

Just before he reached the dragon's den, Boots changed himself again into a little ant. There, he found the princess's sisters

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huddled in a corner, scared and weeping. He waited until the dragon left.

Then, he changed back into himself again. The sisters were very surprised. "Shh," said Boots, "I will save you. But you must not be frightened by what you see. Before the dragon returns, I will change myself into a little ant. If you see an ant, do not touch him or brush him with your hand. It will be me, your friend Boots. And then, I will change myself into a fierce, strong lion and I will kill the dragon with one stroke of my mighty paw. Do not be scared of me as a lion. I will not harm you. Just remember it is also me, your friend Boots." "Oh, thank you, kind sir," they said.

Just as they finished saying this, the cruel dragon returned. Boots quickly changed himself into a little ant before the dragon entered the den.

Then, he suddenly changed into a strong, powerful lion and killed the cruel dragon with one stroke of his mighty paw. The sisters were huddled in the corner in fear.

But he changed himself back to the good, kind Boots again, and brought them home to the princess.

THE END.