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The Little Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe

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Once upon a time, there was a Little Old Woman who lived in a shoe. The shoe was located by a large forest and was so big that it served as a home for the Old Woman and all of her children, of which she had so many that she didn't know what to do with them.



But the Little Old Woman loved her children very much, and they loved her. The children always thought of the best ways to please their mother. The oldest, named Strong Arm, chopped down trees for firewood. Peter made baskets out of wicker. Mark was the head gardener. Lizzie milked the cow, and Jenny taught the younger children how to read.

Now, this Little Old Woman had not always lived in a shoe. She and her family had once lived in a beautiful house covered in ivy. Her husband was a woodcutter, just like Strong Arm. However, on the other side of the forest, there lived a fierce Giant in an enormous castle. One day, he came to their house and smashed it to pieces with his club. Then he picked up the poor woodcutter and carried him to his castle on the other side of the forest. When the Little Old Woman returned home, there was nothing left of her house, and her husband was nowhere to be found.



Night fell, and when the father did not return, the Old Woman and her family went to search for him. When they reached the part of the forest where the Giant had met their father, they saw an enormous shoe. They spent a long time crying and calling for their father, but they received no answer. Then the Old Woman realized that they had better take shelter in the shoe until they could build a new home. Peter and Strong Arm put a roof on it, cut a door, and made it into a dwelling.

Here they were all happy for many years, but the Little Old Woman never forgot

her husband and his sad fate. Strong Arm, seeing how much his mother was grieving, suggested to his eleven brothers to go with him and rescue their father from the Giant. Their mother, now aware of the Giant's strength, did not want to hear of this plan. She was very afraid that they, too, would be killed. But Strong Arm was not afraid. He bought a dozen sharp swords, and Peter made strong shields, helmets, crossbows, and iron arrows.

They were now completely prepared. Strong Arm gave the command to depart, and they went, in a row, on their way to the forest. The next day, they came in sight of the Giant's castle. Strong Arm left his brothers in the forest and walked bravely to the entrance, where he grabbed the knocker. The door was opened by a funny little boy with a big head who kept grinning and laughing.



Strong Arm walked across the courtyard and saw a servant, who took off his hat and asked him what he wanted. Strong Arm said that he had come to rescue his father, who was being held captive by the Giant. The little man then said that he pitied him because the part of the castle where his father was imprisoned was guarded by a large Dragon. Strong Arm, who was not discouraged by anything, soon found the monster, which was fast asleep. He quickly dispatched it by thrusting his sword straight through the Dragon's heart. The Dragon sprang up and let out a loud cry, pretending to lunge forward and grab Strong Arm, but the good sword had done its work, and the heavy monster fell dead on the ground.



The Giant, who had drunk much wine, lay in a remote part of the castle in a deep sleep. Hardly had Strong Arm killed the Dragon when the funny little boy who had opened the door was with him again. He took Strong Arm to another part of the courtyard, where he saw his poor father, who immediately stood up and embraced him. Then Strong Arm called his brothers, and after they had also hugged their father, they immediately broke the lock of the chain and set him free.

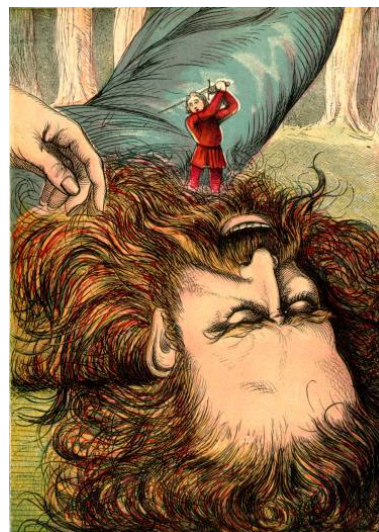
But what happened to the Little Old Woman now?

After her sons went on their mission to execute their plan, she was deeply saddened. While she was in this state, an old witch came to her and said she would help her. The witch said she hated the Giant and wanted to kill him. The old witch put the Little Old Woman on her broomstick, and they flew through the air, straight to the Giant's castle.



Now, this old witch had great magic powers, and she conjured up hard painful bumps on and under the Giant's feet. When he woke up from his sleep, he had so much pain that he could no longer bear it. So he decided to look for his missing shoe. It was as big as the other shoe he had in his castle, big enough for his feet, and his feet would hurt less in it. When he reached the place where the Old Woman and her children lived, he saw his old shoe and, with a laugh that shook the trees, he put his foot in it. This broke the roof that Strong Arm and Peter had put on it in half.

The children ran in great panic through the shoe, climbing through the door and the cracks, scared and trembling. By that time, the witch and the Little Old Woman, as well as Strong Arm, his eleven brothers, and his father, had also arrived. Strong Arm and his brothers immediately shot their arrows at the Giant until he finally fell wounded to the ground. Then Strong Arm walked over to him and chopped off his head. After that, the father and the Little Old Woman built a new home with all their children, and they all lived happily ever after!



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