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# The King and the Shoemaker

an old story

### Before You Read

Before you read “The King and the Shoemaker,” go over the words below. Make sure you know what each word means. This will help you when you read the story.

**soldier:** someone who fights for a king or others. The *soldier* had been fighting all day.

**sword:** something used for fighting. He killed three men with his *sword*.

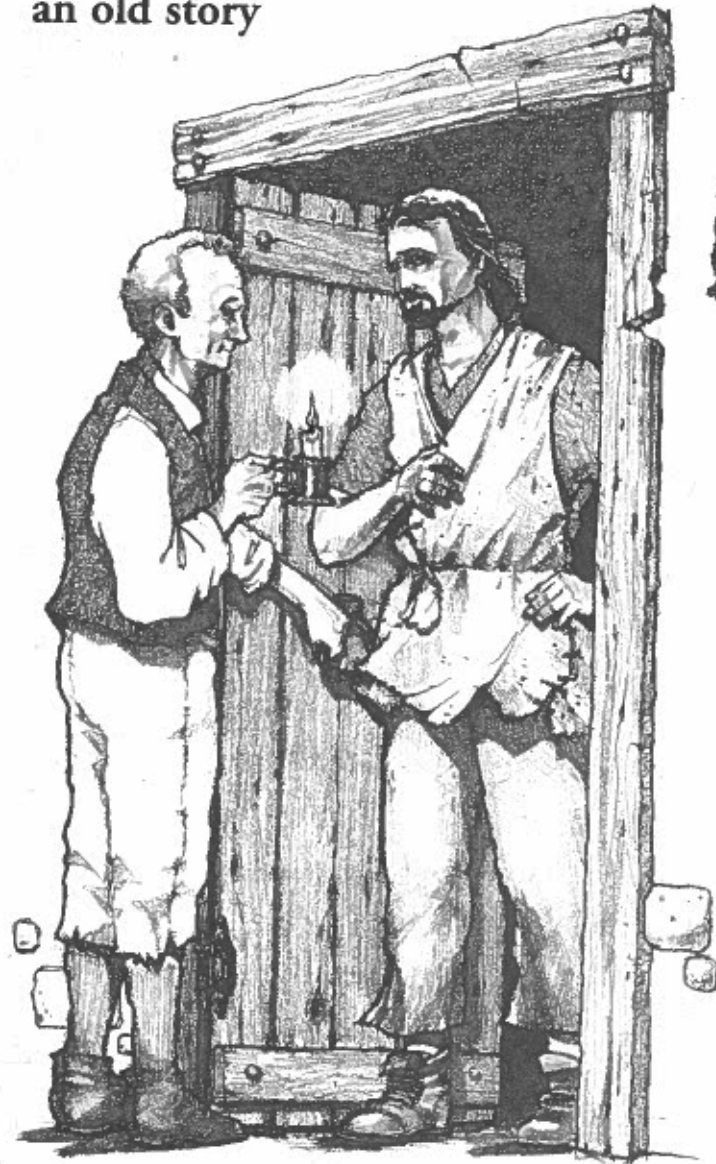
**sharp:** having an edge that cuts easily. You can cut your hand on something that is *sharp*.

**blade:** the hard, cutting part of a sword. The *blade* of the sword was hard.

**palace:** the place where a king or queen lives. The queen lives in a *palace*.

# *The King and the Shoemaker*

an old story



A king liked to travel around his land. He liked to see his people. He liked to talk to them. But he did not want them to know who he was.

So the king put on old clothes. He got on a horse. And he rode around his land.

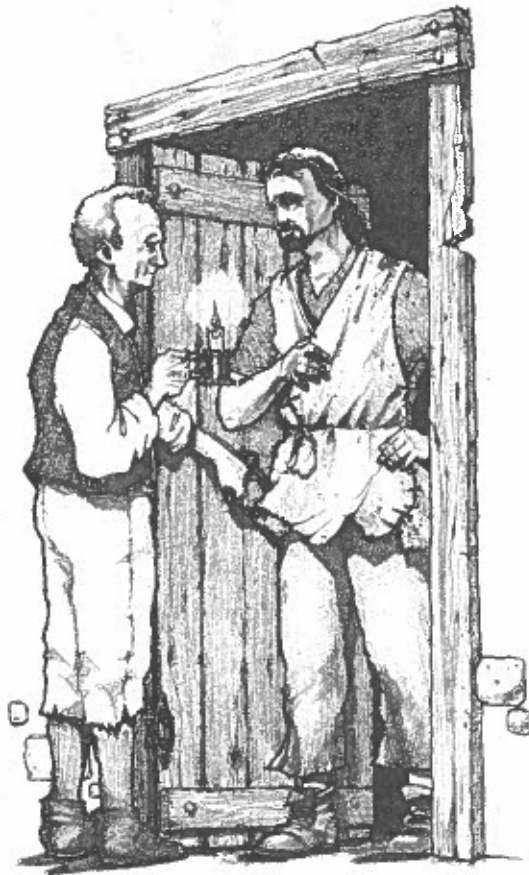
One day the king was out riding. He came to a woods. There was a house by the woods. The house was very small. It was very old. It was nearly falling down.

The king heard a man's voice. The man was singing a song. The king listened to the words. This is what the man sang:

"I am old. That is so.  
But wherever I go  
I will find a way  
To eat every day."

The king got off his horse. He walked to the house. He knocked on the door.

An old man came to the door.



"Yes?" said the old man.

The king said, "I have been riding all day. Now I am tired. May I rest here for a while?"

"Yes," said the old man. He did not know he was talking to the king.

"What do you do?" asked the king. "How do you make a living?"

"I am a shoemaker," said the old man. "I can fix shoes."

"You can fix shoes?" said the king. "Where do you work? Do people come to your house?"

"Oh, no," the shoemaker said. "I have a few tools. I take them with me. I go out every day. I stand by the side of the road. People pass by. I fix their shoes."

"I see," said the king. He thought about that. Then he said, "What if you could not fix shoes? How would you live?"

"Oh," said the old man. "I would find something to do."



Then he began to sing:

“I am old. That is so.  
But wherever I go  
I will find a way  
To eat every day.”

The king said to himself, “We will see about *that!*” Then the king left the house.

The next morning a man came to the shoemaker’s house. The man told the shoemaker, “I come from the king. The king says this. To fix shoes, you must pay one piece of gold. You must pay it to the king.”

“One piece of gold?” the shoemaker said. “But I do not have any gold.”

“Then you cannot fix shoes,” said the man.

That night the king put on old clothes. He got on a horse. He went to see the old man.



The king came near the house. He heard the shoemaker’s voice. The old man was singing:

“I am old. That is so.  
But wherever I go  
I will find a way  
To eat every day.”

The king knocked on the door. The old man let him in.

The king said, “I was thinking about you. I know what the king said. Now you need gold to fix shoes. But you do not have any gold. What did you do? Were you able to eat?”

“Oh, yes,” said the old man. “I thought for a long time. Then I said to myself, ‘There are trees in the woods.’ So I went into the woods. I cut down a tree. I **chopped** the tree into pieces. I sold the pieces for firewood. I made enough money to buy food for the day.”

“I see,” said the king.





The next day the shoemaker went into the woods. He cut down a tree.

A man rode up on a horse.

"You there!" said the man. "Did you cut down that tree?"

"I did," the shoemaker said.

"Come with me," said the man.

"But why?" said the shoemaker.



"I work for the king," said the man. "I watch over these woods. No one may cut down a tree. That is what the king said. He said that this morning."

"What will happen to me?" the shoemaker asked.

"You must work for the king. You must work for a week. You will work every day. You must work until five o'clock. Then you can go home."

The shoemaker asked, "Will they pay me for my work?"

"Yes," said the man. "But you must wait for a week."

"Wait for a week!" the shoemaker said. "But I need money for food!"

"There is nothing I can do," said the king's man. "Come with me now."

That night the king put on old clothes. He got on a horse. He went to see the old man.



The king came near the house. The king was surprised. The old man was singing. The king heard these words:

“I am old. That is so.  
But wherever I go  
I will find a way  
To eat every day.”

The king knocked on the door. The old man let the king in.

“What happened today?” asked the king.

“I cut down a tree,” the shoemaker said. “The king’s man saw me do that. He took me away.”

“But why?” asked the king.

“No one may cut down a tree. The king said that today. Now I must work for the king. They will give me some money. But I must wait for a week.”

“Wait for a week! Oh, you poor man!” said the king. “So you did not eat today!”

“Oh, yes,” the shoemaker said. “I was able to eat. I got money for food.”

“You did? Tell me how,” said the king.

“They made me a soldier,” the shoemaker said. “They gave me a sword. I put the sword in the holder. I marched up and down. I marched until five o’clock. Then I went home.”

“Yes?” said the king.

“On the way home, I looked at the sword. It had a good blade. It was sharp. It could cut very well. I said to myself, ‘I can sell this blade.’ So I took the blade off the handle. I sold the blade. I bought food with the money I got.”



The king was surprised. He said, “But what did you do with the sword? It did not have a blade.”

“Oh,” the shoemaker said. “I made a blade out of wood. I put the blade on the handle. I put the sword into the holder. No one can *see* the blade. It is in the holder.”

“*A blade made of wood!*” said the king. “But what if they look at the blade?”

“We will see,” said the old man.

The next day the shoemaker was marching around. One of the king’s men came up to him.

"You there!" he said. "Come with me now. A man has done a bad thing. You must cut off his head!"

"Cut off his head?"

"Yes. Cut it off with your sword."

"I do not want to cut off a man's head!"

"The king says you must. You must cut off the man's head. Or you will lose your own head!"

They went to a place in the town. There were people all around. The people were waiting.

The king's man said, "See that man there. You must cut off his head. Use your sword. It is sharp. It has a sharp blade."

The man called out, "Do not cut off my head! *I did nothing bad!* Do not cut off my head!"



The shoemaker turned. The people were waiting.

The shoemaker said, "People. Listen to me. I believe this man. I believe what he says. But let us see. If he *did* something bad, let my blade be sharp—as it always is. If he did nothing bad, let my blade be made out of wood."

The shoemaker pulled out his sword.

It had turned to wood!

The people were amazed. They called out, "Let the man go! You must let the man go!"

So they let the man go.

The king was watching. He went up to the old man.  
"Shoemaker," he said. "I am the king. I am also the man who was visiting you. I was wearing old clothes."

The shoemaker saw that the man was the king.

The king said, "Shoemaker. You are very clever. Someday I may need a man who is clever. Come to my palace. You may live there as long as you want."

The shoemaker said, "I will be happy to go."

So he went to the palace. And the shoemaker lived there the rest of his days.

Now and then people passed by the shoemaker's room. Sometimes they heard his voice. He was singing a song.

The song went this way:

"I am old. That is so.  
But wherever I go  
I will find a way  
To eat every day."

### TELL ABOUT THE STORY.

Put an X in the box next to the right answer. Each answer tells something (a *fact*) about the story.

- The king heard the shoemaker  
 a. calling for help.  
 b. singing a song.  
 c. talking to a friend.
- The king's man said the shoemaker had to work for  
 a. a day.  
 b. a week.  
 c. a year.
- The shoemaker sold the blade to get money for  
 a. food.  
 b. clothes.  
 c. shoes.
- The king asked the shoemaker to  
 a. cut down a tree.  
 b. fix some shoes.  
 c. live at the palace.

× 5 =   
NUMBER YOUR  
CORRECT SCORE

### END EACH LINE.

Finish the lines below. Fill in each empty space with one of the words in the box. Each word can be found in the story. There are five words and four empty spaces. This means that one word in the box will not be used.

A man named Thomas Beard was the first American                     <sup>1</sup>.  
He went from house to house and from town to                     <sup>2</sup>. He knocked on doors and told people what he                     <sup>3</sup>. Then he made shoes for anyone who gave him                     <sup>4</sup>.

town	money	did
shoemaker		sang

× 5 =   
NUMBER YOUR  
CORRECT SCORE



## SHOW WHAT WORDS MEAN.

The words below are printed in **dark letters** in the story. You may look back at these vocabulary words before you answer the questions. Put an X in the box next to the right answer.

- The king liked to travel around his land. The word *travel* means to  
 a. stay at home.  
 b. go from place to place.  
 c. have fun.
- The shoemaker used tools to fix shoes. People use *tools*  
 a. to walk on.  
 b. to wear.  
 c. to do work.
- He chopped the tree into pieces. The word *chopped* means  
 a. cut up.  
 b. jumped on.  
 c. looked at.
- When the sword "turned to wood," the people were amazed. The word *amazed* means very  
 a. glad.  
 b. sad.  
 c. surprised.

x 5 =   
NUMBER CORRECT      YOUR SCORE

## THINK ABOUT THE STORY.

Here is how to answer these questions. First think about what happened in the story. Then work out the right answers. This is called *critical thinking*.

- The king put on old clothes because he  
 a. liked old clothes.  
 b. did not have new clothes.  
 c. did not want people to know who he was.
- The king said the shoemaker had to  
 a. cut off a man's head.  
 b. fix the king's shoes.  
 c. sell some firewood.
- When the shoemaker pulled out his sword, he knew that the blade was  
 a. very sharp.  
 b. going to break.  
 c. made of wood.
- The shoemaker showed that he could  
 a. live for a long time without food.  
 b. find a way to eat every day.  
 c. make money by singing.

x 5 =   
NUMBER CORRECT      YOUR SCORE

## SPOT PARTS OF A STORY.

Stories have **characters**, a **plot**, and a **setting**. (See page 3.) Put an X in the box next to the right answer.

- What happened first? (**Plot**)  
 a. The king asked the shoemaker how he made a living.  
 b. The shoemaker worked for the king.  
 c. The shoemaker cut down a tree.
- What happened last? (**Plot**)  
 a. The king went to the shoemaker's house.  
 b. The shoemaker went to the palace.  
 c. The man said, "I did nothing bad."
- Which best tells about the shoemaker? (**Character**)  
 a. He had a lot of money.  
 b. He was clever.  
 c. He was lazy.
- When did the story take place? (**Setting**)  
 a. a year ago  
 b. five years ago  
 c. many years ago

x 5 =   
NUMBER CORRECT      YOUR SCORE

## THINK SOME MORE ABOUT THE STORY.

Your teacher might want you to write your answers.

- Why did the king say the shoemaker had to pay gold to fix shoes?
- Why did the king say the shoemaker had to cut off a man's head?
- Why did the king ask the shoemaker to live at the palace?

Write your scores in the box below. Then write your scores on pages 122 and 123.

TELL ABOUT THE STORY  
+  
 END EACH LINE  
+  
 SHOW WHAT WORDS MEAN  
+  
 THINK ABOUT THE STORY  
+  
 SPOT PARTS OF A STORY  
=  
 TOTAL SCORE: **Story 2**