

The New Shoes

Story By: Andrew Frinkle

Bob loved buying new sneakers. It was his birthday, and his mother had brought him to the shoe store. Once they were there, she knew better than to bother him. She'd set a price limit and let him go for it.

Bob looked at the shoes on the rack. New shoes were just about the best thing ever. Having the worker grab the right size for you from the mysterious room in the back was about as good as it got. His eyes grew wide as the worker handed him the orange box containing the shoes he'd chosen.

There were dozens of shoes on the wall, but he'd chosen his favorite. Bob sat down quietly on the wooden bench and opened the box. He gently lifted the tissue paper aside and drew the two shoes from the box. He smiled and sniffed the shoes. Like a new car, new shoes had a smell. The new fabric, rubber, and leather smelled wonderful.

He put them on quickly, so he could feel how they felt on his feet. Once they were on, he bounced up and down a couple times and rolled from heel to toe. Oh, the fit! They fit like a glove. They'd be tight at first, but they'd stretch to fit his foot perfectly after a few weeks of wearing them. He watched his feet in the mirror as he walked back and forth.

"Are those the ones you like, dear?" Bob's mother asked.

"I think they just might be the ones." He replied.

"Do they fit right in the toes?" She inquired.

"They certainly do!" Bob was excited. These were the best shoes ever. He couldn't contain himself. "I'm wearing them out of the store."

While his mother paid for them, Bob strutted back and forth admiring his shoes in front of the mirror. On the way out of the store and out of the mall, Bob felt like he was floating on air. Just as they were about to leave the mall, an old man stepped on the toes of his brand new shoes, leaving a black mark on the front.

"Hey!" Bob shouted angrily.

"Oh, sorry there, young man." The old man said.

"Look what you did to my shoes, you old geezer! Watch where you're going."

"I'm sorry. I don't see so well anymore."



“Bob!” His mother hissed at him. Her cheeks were red and she seemed more embarrassed than angry. “I’m very sorry. I don’t know what has gotten into him.” She glared at him. “Apologize to the man.”

“But, mom! He stepped on my shoes.”

“You won’t have any shoes to be stepped upon if you don’t apologize.”



Bob took a breath. As he looked into the old man’s cloudy eyes, he realized that the man didn’t see very well. The old guy probably had stepped on his foot by accident. He glanced at his shoe. The scuff would come out. It wasn’t that big of a deal. “I’m sorry, sir.”

The old man shook his head. “No worries. It was my mistake. I need to watch where I put my feet, too.” The old man smiled and walked away then.

Bob frowned as he saw the old man’s shoes. They were really worn out. Suddenly, his new shoes didn’t seem so necessary. His old ones weren’t that dirty or worn out. “Mom, do I really need new shoes?” He wondered aloud.

Bob’s mother steered him out across the parking lot, leaving the mall behind. “Not really, but what else would you get for your birthday? You love shoes.”

“I just feel bad. Did you see that old man’s shoes?”

“Maybe he likes something else as much as you like shoes, so he doesn’t mind if his shoes are not as new and nice as yours. Did you notice that he had a nice wristwatch?” Mother asked, but Bob shook his head. “To each his own: respect each person’s right to have an opinion.”

Bob thought for a moment as they were getting into their car. “So everyone likes something different, and that’s okay?”

“Yes, and don’t forget to respect your elders.” Mother reminded him.

Bob smiled. “I won’t. Not again.”

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Use the information in the story to answer the questions below.

1. What is Bob shopping for?
 - A. School clothes
 - B. New shoes
 - C. A bracelet
 - D. A present for his mother

2. Why is Bob getting new shoes?
 - A. His old ones don't fit.
 - B. His teacher told him to buy new shoes for P.E.
 - C. It's his birthday
 - D. None of the above

3. How does Bob feel about getting new shoes?
 - A. It's his favorite thing ever.
 - B. It's just okay.
 - C. He just wants to keep his old ones.
 - D. He wants a shirt instead.

4. How does Bob treat the old man?
 - A. He is rude and unforgiving at first.
 - B. He is kind and helpful.
 - C. He is silly and playful with the old man.
 - D. None of the above

5. What is one of the lessons Bob learns?
 - A. Don't talk to strangers
 - B. Share what you have
 - C. Give to the poor
 - D. Be respectful to your elders

The New Shoes – Answer Key

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Use the information below to check the answers.

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