

Two Pairs of Shoes

BY ESTHER SANDERSON

“**L**ook what I bought, *nitanis*,” Maggie’s mother said, holding out a box, for it was Maggie’s eighth birthday.

“What is it?” asked Maggie.

“Look in and find out,” said her mother.

Maggie’s heart was pounding as she took the box into her hands. She had hoped, but didn’t dare believe, that in the box would be the thing she had been waiting for.

She looked in the box and inside were the most beautiful shoes she’d ever seen—black, patent leather shoes! They were the ones she had seen at Fowler’s Store. She had been dreaming of these shoes ever since she saw them in the store that spring. Maggie quickly tore off her moccasins and slid her feet into the black leather shoes. They fit perfectly!

Down the road she ran to show off her beautiful new shoes to her *Kokom*.

She hardly even felt the ground beneath her as she floated down the gravel road.

When she arrived at her *Kokom*’s house, she was sitting in her favorite chair in the corner of her kitchen.

“Look *Nokom*, I have new shoes,” said Maggie, her little face beaming.

“Come *nosisim*, and let me feel them,” said her *Kokom*, for Maggie’s *Kokom* was blind and could only see by touching.

Kokom felt the shoes all over, while Maggie stood silently watching her.

“They’re very nice, *nosisim*,” said *Kokom* handing Maggie back her new shoes.

“Now go to the box that I keep under my bed and bring out the bag that’s in there.”

The box that *Kokom* kept under her bed was opened only on special occasions. It was known to Maggie, her sisters and brothers as the “special box.” As Maggie looked under the bed she wondered what would be in the special box for her today. She brought the paper bag to her *Kokom*.

“Open it, *nosisim*,” said *Kokom*. Maggie opened up the bag and inside was a pair of moccasins. They were beaded in the most beautiful flower designs that Maggie had ever seen. Tears came to her eyes as she suddenly remembered *Kokom* couldn’t see. How could she have made such a beautiful pair of moccasins?

“Well *nosisim*,” said *Kokom*, “today is a special day for you, for you have been given two pairs of shoes. From now on you must remember when and how to wear each pair.” ♦

nitanis *my daughter, my girl*

nosisim *my granddaughter*

Kokom *grandmother (used when talking about any grandmother but your own)*

Nokom *my grandmother (used when talking to or about your own grandmother)*

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Questions for Readers

Right There: Describe Maggie's two gifts by making a Venn Diagram to compare. Who did they come from? What did they look like? How did they make Maggie feel?

Think and Search: Why is Kokom's blindness an important part of the story?

Author and You: "From now on you must remember when and how to wear each pair," Kokom tells Maggie. Describe an occasion when you think she should choose the moccasins and a time when she should wear the black leather shoes instead.

On My Own: Do you ever feel like you have to remember when and how to wear different parts of yourself? Explain how the way you dress, the food you eat and the way you speak is different when you are at home than when you are at school.

See the online Teachers' Toolkit for additional ideas about how to use this story across grade levels and subject areas. VISIT » tolerance.org/two-shoes