

FARMER JOHN'S BOOTS

Farmer John's boots go missing, but PC Collar is soon on the trail...



One *dark* winter morning Farmer John crawled out of bed and groped for his clothes. Wendy his wife was still asleep. He didn't want to wake her. At last he managed to get dressed and tiptoed downstairs to go milking.

In the porch he turned on the light and looked for his wellingtons. There were his shoes and his trainers and his slippers but the space where his wellingtons usually were was empty!

'Where on earth have my wellingtons gone?' said Farmer John, annoyed. 'I've got work to do and I can't go outside in my bare feet.' He rummaged through the junk in the cupboard but they weren't there. 'How am I expected to milk the cows without any boots?' he complained. 'Oh well, the cows won't wait, I'll have to make do.'

He got two plastic bin bags from the kitchen, and tied them over his shoes then went out into the yard. The cows laughed when they saw him coming. ‘MOO HA,’ they chuckled, ‘we know you’re short of money, John, but can’t you even afford a pair of boots now?’

Farmer John grunted. ‘Huh,’ he said. ‘My wellingtons have disappeared. I can’t find them anywhere, it’s not funny.’

The cows giggled, ‘But boots don’t just vanish into thin air, John, unless they’re magic boots, of course.’

Farmer John snorted. ‘Magic boots indeed, whoever heard of such a thing!’

The cows had a great laugh making fun of Farmer John’s bin bag gumboots and by the time he had finished milking Farmer John was quite fed up. ‘I’ve had enough of this,’ he said. ‘I’m going to have my breakfast.’

Wendy was in the kitchen when he came in.

‘Goodness’ said Wendy, ‘you’re wearing bin bags! What’s happened to your boots?’

‘They’ve gone missing,’ said Farmer John.

‘Really?’ said Wendy, ‘that’s odd. Have you looked?’

‘YES,’ said Farmer John, ‘when I came down this morning they weren’t in the porch.’

‘How strange!’ said Wendy ‘Perhaps they’re hiding.’

‘What do you mean *hiding*?’ said Farmer John crossly. ‘Boots don’t have a mind of their own! Just give me my breakfast, will you?’

Wendy ignored him. ‘Perhaps they’ve been stolen!’ she said.

‘Stolen!’ cried Farmer John. ‘Who would want to steal my boots?’

‘I don’t know,’ shrugged Wendy. ‘Maybe a thief.’

‘Hmm...That’s possible,’ said Farmer John.

‘Perhaps I ought to call the police.’

So Farmer John called the police. PC Collar turned up in the farmyard in his smart police car. He squeezed himself out.

‘Morning John,’ he said. ‘What’s the problem?’

‘I’ve lost my boots,’ said Farmer John. ‘They’ve been stolen!’

‘Really?’ said PC Collar. ‘I’ve never heard of boots being stolen before, are you sure they haven’t walked off on their own?’

Farmer John was not amused. ‘I don’t think you’re taking this seriously enough,’ he said. ‘I expected better of the police force!’

‘Now, now, John,’ soothed the policeman. ‘I’m sure there’s a logical explanation. Perhaps you could give me a description?’

‘Well,’ said Farmer John, ‘they’re green.’

‘Size?’ asked PC Collar.

‘Ten,’ said Farmer John.

‘Any distinguishing marks?’

‘They’ve got quite a lot of muck on them,’ said Farmer John.

‘Hmm,’ pondered the policeman. ‘What does the tread look like?’

Farmer John drew him a picture.

‘Let me see,’ said PC Collar. ‘I might be able to track them down.’ He got out a magnifying glass and looked at the ground. ‘Here we are,’ he said, and in the mud of the farmyard was a *large* footprint.

PC Collar began to follow the trail of footprints. He carefully walked around the yard down to the pig-pens. There was a mess of prints by the pig-pen wall. Then he followed them past the barn to the cow yard.

‘That must be where I fed the cows yesterday,’ said Farmer John. ‘It’s a good job I didn’t clean the yards or I wouldn’t have left any marks.’



The policeman grunted. ‘You certainly seem to get around all over the place on *this* farm,’ he said, and carried on following the footprints.

They went from the cow yard to the sheep shed...

...from the sheep shed to the workshop...

...from the workshop to the tractor shed...

...from the tractor shed to the garden...

...and from the garden back to the farmhouse!

PC Collar scratched his head. ‘Well, by my reckoning,’ he said, ‘they should be in the house.’ He bent down and looked at the floor; there was a *big* mucky footprint on the carpet. The policeman bent over with his magnifying glass.

‘It’s your boots,’ he said and he began to follow them into the house.

They went through the hall...

...up the stairs...

...along the landing...

...and into Farmer John’s bedroom.

They went round the bed...

...and there, on Farmer John's side, was a pair of mucky green wellingtons!

The policeman held them up at arm's length. 'Are these *yours*, sir?' He said, wrinkling his nose.

Farmer John blushed. 'Of course, *now* I remember. I was *so tired* last night I couldn't be bothered to take them off in the porch. I just came straight upstairs in my wellies and flopped into bed!'

PC Collar laughed. 'Well,' he said, 'that's one mystery solved but in future I'd advise you to take your wellingtons off downstairs, it would save a lot of police time!'

Wendy was a bit cross when she discovered that Farmer John had left his mucky boots in their bedroom but she soon forgave him, and all the animals hooted with laughter when they heard how the mystery of Farmer John's missing boots had been solved!



From Thistledown Farm: Farmer John's Boots and other stories

by David Charles Evans / illustrated by Jake Tebbit

First published in Great Britain by Pen Press

ISBN13: 978-1-907172-31-1

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of the publisher, nor be otherwise circulated in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

All paper used in the printing of this book has been made from wood grown in managed, sustainable forests.

Printed and bound in the UK

Pen Press is an imprint of Indepenpress Publishing Limited

25 Eastern Place, Brighton, BN2 1GJ

A catalogue record of this book is available from the British Library

DO NOT
COPY