

COPPER-TOED BOOTS

Marguerite de Angeli



By the Author of THE LION IN THE BOX

COPPER-TOED BOOTS



BY
MARGUERITE de ANGELI

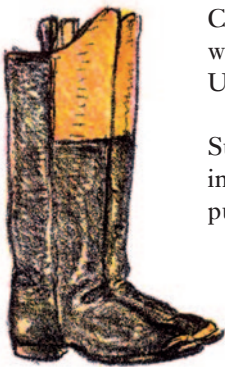
PURPLE HOUSE PRESS
KENTUCKY

Published by
Purple House Press
PO Box 787
Cynthiana, Kentucky 41031

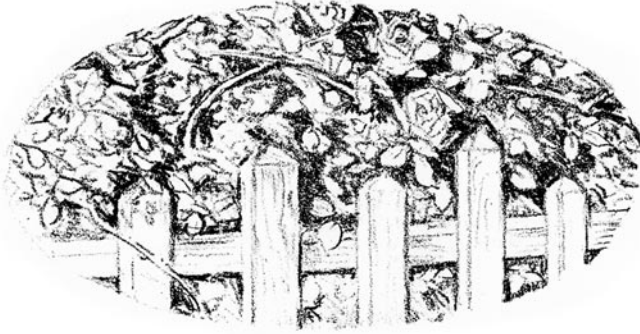
Classic Books for Kids and Young Adults
purplehousepress.com

Copyright © 1938 by Marguerite de Angeli. Reprinted
with the permission of the estate of Marguerite de Angeli.
Unabridged. All rights reserved.

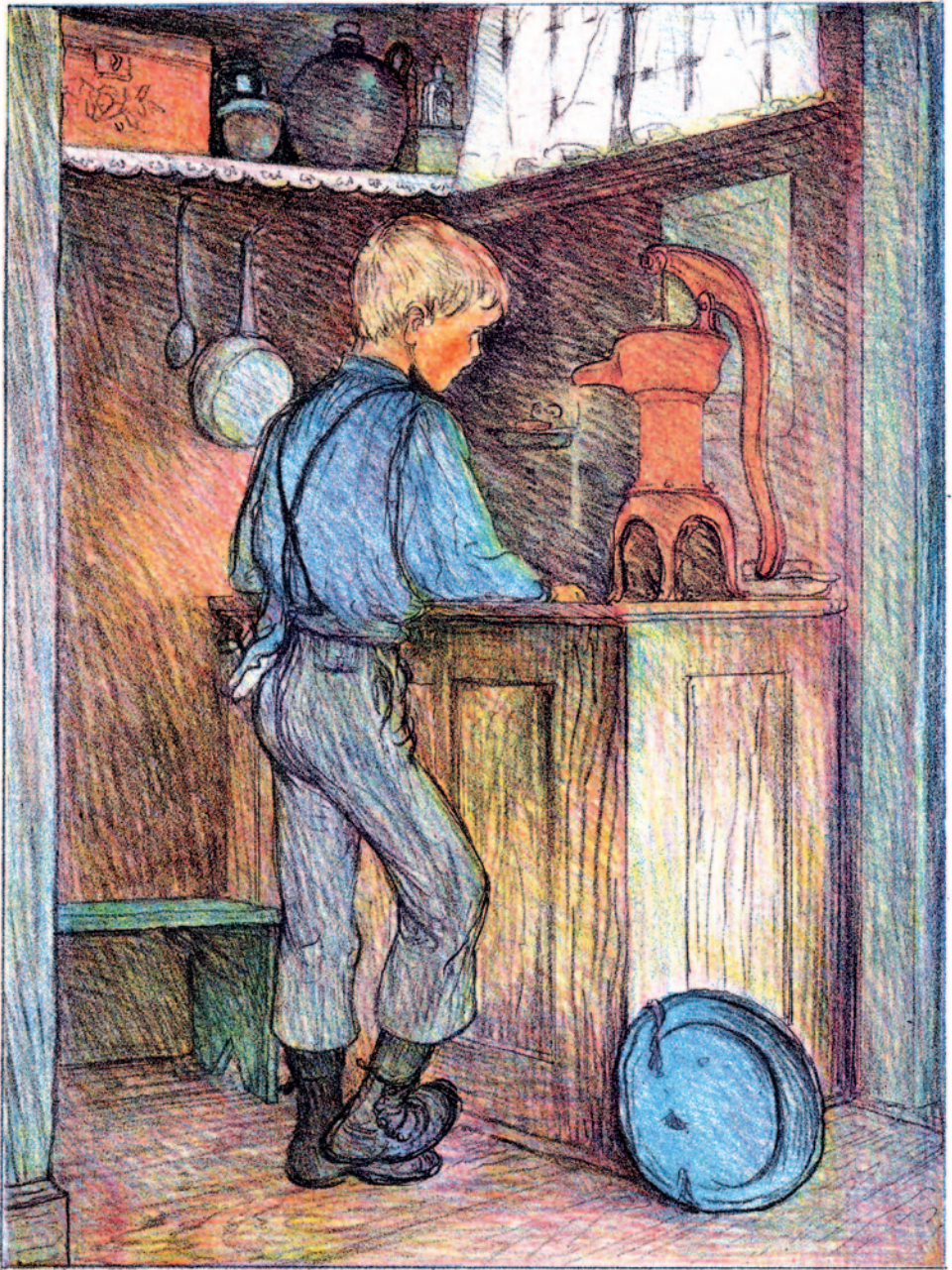
Summary: The summer adventures of a young boy living
in Michigan during the nineteenth century and how he
pursues the two things he most desires.



ISBN 9798888180679 paperback
ISBN 9798888180686 hardcover



To my father, Shad,
and to Ash,
his boyhood friend





SHAD slammed the kitchen door and threw down the pan in which he had carried the potato parings for the chickens. Then he set the pail of drinking water on the shelf with a thud. He was still *mad*. Miss McKinnon had kept him an hour after school, and made him do sum after sum. Ma called to him from the other room, where she was setting the table for supper.

“Wash good, now, and don’t wipe all the dirt on the towel!” she said. “Cousin Lija’s here. He just stepped over to say ‘Hello’ to Miz Scott.”

“Yes, Ma,” said Shad putting the tin basin in the wooden sink, and beginning to pump. Pa had just had the cistern rain water pumped in that spring. Shad thought how much carrying of water it saved. He could smell the delicious odor of the potatoes, and hear their gentle *sissing* in the iron pan.

Shad dabbled his hands in the water round and round. He

was wishing he knew some way to make the teacher feel like he did. He could hear the scratch of the slate pencil yet! Shad didn't like examples. And the slate pencil set his teeth on edge. Uhh! He swished the water around the basin.

“Are you using soap?” Ma called again. “I don't hear any squish of soap suds!”

“Yes, Ma,” Shad answered as he reached for the soap. He was just going to dry his hands on the roller towel when Ma called again, and came to the kitchen door.

“Tuck in your shirt, and wash your face, too. Mind! No streaks down the sides!” Ma went to the stove to turn over the browning potatoes, and to lift the lid where dandelion greens were boiling with salt pork.

Shad buried his face in a handful of soap suds. He even washed back of his ears. He thought he might as well, then Ma would let him alone. Will came in the back door with an armful of wood, which he threw down with a clatter into the wood box by the stove.

“You didn't give those little biddies any water! I had to do it,” he said to Shad.

Will was Shad's older brother. Not much older, only two years, but enough so that Will thought it was a great deal. He brushed the wood chips from his clothes, and went to wash. Shad was drying his hands on the towel that hung back of the door, when Cousin Lija came in. He made believe he didn't know that Shad was behind the door, and pushed it back as far as it would go, squeezing Shad to the wall.

“Seems as if this door won’t open like it should,” he said, then suddenly let go so that Shad sat down, plump! on the floor. They all laughed. There was always nonsense when Cousin Lija came. He never sent any word that he was coming, but just happened in, sure of a welcome. He was always shabby, but shining clean. Shad thought his cheeks looked like those blush apples Ma used for apple sauce. He was full of fun, and Ma said he was a saint. Shad didn’t know what a saint was, but he knew he did love to have Cousin Lija come.

Then Pa came in.

“Hello! Well, well, when did you get here?” he said to Cousin Lija.

“You’re just in time!” said Ma. “Everything is ready for supper.” She stooped down to lift a rhubarb pie from the oven, and began to dish up the food.

“I guess there’s plenty of room,” she said. “I didn’t put another leaf in the table. It’s more cozy this way.”

“Oh, plenty of room, plenty of room,” said Cousin Lija. “Now, I remember”—he winked at Pa, and Shad knew there was a story coming—“how we used to have so much company we had to take turns sitting down to table, and Paw used to get ’em to sleep one by one, and then stand ’em up in the corner.” They all laughed again.

When they were nearly through eating, Pa, who was the leader of the town’s singing society, said, “One of you boys will have to go out to Mr. Tyler’s after supper, and tell him to come to the singing practice tonight, instead of tomorrow

night. He's bass solo, and we need him. Concert's next week."

"I can't do it, Pa. I've got a whole lot of jography to write, and then my examples to do," said Will.

"I'll go, I'll go!" said Shad. It was fun to go somewhere after supper. Pa never let the boys play out after supper, except a little while in the summer.

"Put your jacket on," said Ma. "It's chilly after dark. And hurry back. Hear?"

"Yes, Ma," said Shad, scooting out before she had a chance to tell him to go alone. Ma said he always got into mischief when Ash Tomlinson went with him on an errand. Shad was around the corner and whistling for Ash in less time than it takes to tell about it. Ash came out with a piece of cake in his hand.

"Want to go with me out to Josh Tyler's? Pa sent me on an errand."

"Wait till I ask Josie. Ma's not home," said Ash, cramming the rest of the cake in his mouth.

He came out in a moment, and they set off toward Main Street. It was just after sunset, and the streets were empty. Birds were making sleepy sounds as they settled for the night and Tuttle's cow was lowing in the pasture. The cool green of the sky was reflected in little pools on the ruts of the road, left by the rain of the morning. It made the houses a pure white against the dark of trees and bushes. The trees cast no shadow now because the sun was gone, and the new leaves glistened with moisture. Tulips were in bloom, and they could smell the lilies of the valley in Whites' garden as they passed.

