

## Deepening Understanding

### YR4 Traditional Tales Text

#### The Magic Porridge Pot by Joe Duffin



Many years ago, in an old, tired German village, a young girl named Erika lived with her mother. The village was small, even for a village, and food was scarce. The farmers' crops failed to grow in the barren soil and as a result, many of the villagers were starving.

One day, bored and hungry, Erika wandered into a dense forest near the village. As her eyes adjusted to the darkness, she suddenly made out in front of her the figure of an old woman carrying a large iron lidded cooking pot. The old woman immediately realised that the girl was sad and asked her what the matter was.

'I am so hungry,' moaned Erika. 'We have little food at home and we don't know if we will have food in the future.'

The old woman thought for a moment, and then she smiled, holding out the iron saucepan. 'Take this pot, young girl, and I promise this will solve your problems!' exclaimed the old woman. 'How will a pot solve my problems?' asked the young girl, puzzled.

"Ah, but this is not any ordinary pot," the old woman explained. "This is in fact a magic pot! Watch carefully!"

With that, the old woman uttered the words, "Cook, little pot, cook!" and in the blink of an eye the pot was bubbling with delicious smelling, creamy porridge. Erika could not believe what she was seeing, but before she could utter a word, the old woman instructed, "Stop, little pot, stop!" and instantly the pot stopped boiling.

Erika's mind whirled and her heart raced as she realised that, with this magic pot, she and her mother would never go hungry again. She hardly dared believe her good fortune. Nonetheless, she breathlessly thanked the old woman and rushed home as fast as a young hungry German girl could run, clutching the iron pot to her chest.

"Mother," she shouted as she raced into the cottage, "come quickly! An amazing thing happened today. I met a kind, old lady and she gave me this pot!" Weak with hunger, Erika's mother looked at her daughter sadly. "It is indeed a fine cooking pot you have there. But what use is a cooking pot if we have nothing to cook in it? We have used every last crumb of food in the cottage."

"But Mother," continued Erika, panting with excitement, "this is no ordinary pot - it is a magic pot!" Then she commanded, "Cook, little pot, cook!" and instantly the cottage was filled with the tasty aroma of fresh porridge. Excitedly, Erika's mother spooned helpings of porridge from the pot into two bowls and once they were full to overflowing, her daughter ordered, "Stop, little pot, stop!"

So full of porridge that they could barely move, Erika and her mother laughed and cried with joy. It was a miracle! The old woman was right, thought Erika, and now all their problems had been solved. And because she and her mother were kind and



generous people, they would ensure that their friends and neighbours would not starve either.

Days later, Erika decided to return to the forest. Perhaps she would again come across the kind old woman, and if so she would thank her for her life-changing generosity. However, when her daughter had not returned by tea time, Erika's mother was hungry and impatient. She decided that she would cook porridge for herself, rather than wait for Erika. After all, she knew by now what instruction was needed.

"Cook, little pot, cook!" she commanded and, as always, the pot began to bubble and steam with porridge. As soon as her bowl was full, she ordered, "That's enough now...stop cooking, little pot...stop!" But the pot bubbled and boiled, boiled and bubbled until porridge overflowed onto the table. Soon it cascaded onto the floor and flooded towards the door and out into the street.

'Magic pot, stop!' pleaded Erika's mother. But the pot kept going. And going. And going. More and more. Porridge. More porridge. On and on and on. 'Stop! Stop! Stop', but stop the porridge would not...

