



*Those Shoes*

Written by Maribeth Boelts

Illustrated by Noah Z. Jones

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*Those Shoes* is the all-too-familiar story of wanting the latest fad. Jeremy is a young boy who wants nothing more than to have the same black high tops with two white stripes as most of the other boys in class. However, when Jeremy shares that he wants those shoes, his grandmother responds, "There's no room for 'want' around here -- just needs." Grandma knows that Jeremy may want high tops, but he needs new winter boots. At school, one of Jeremy's shoes falls apart and Mr. Alfrey, the guidance counselor, gives him another pair with a cartoon character on the side and Velcro -- a little kid's shoes. The other boys laugh when they see Jeremy's shoes -- except Antonio.

When Jeremy and his grandmother go shopping, they see the black high tops with two white stripes are too expensive. However, Jeremy uses his own money to buy a pair at a thrift store, even though they are too small for his feet. A few days later, his grandmother puts a new pair of snow boots in his closet and does not say a word about the too small shoes that hurt Jeremy's feet. At school, Jeremy glances at Antonio's shoes and notices that they are taped up. He knows that Antonio's feet are smaller than his own feet. Jeremy does not want to give away his high tops, but knows what it is like not to have the 'cool' shoes. A couple of days later, Jeremy rings Antonio's doorbell and leaves the black high tops on his doorstep. At school, Antonio is smiling big in his brand-new black high tops.

Books that could be paired with *Those Shoes* are *Stellaluna* by Janelle Cannon (1993) and *Jamaica and Brianna* by Juanita Havill (1996). *Stellaluna* is the story of a bat who finds herself in a nest of birds after her mother is attacked by an owl and Stellaluna is accidentally dropped. Despite their many acknowledged differences, the birds and the bat become the best of friends and share their ways with each other. In *Jamaica and Brianna*, Jamaica needs new winter boots but her father gives her hand-me-down old boots from Ossie, her older brother. Jamaica longs for some pink boots with the fuzzy cuffs like her friend Brianna's boots. Brianna teases Jamaica about her old "boy" boots and the two friends stop talking to each other. However, one kind word between the two friends brings them back together.

Jones' illustrations set *Those Shoes* in a multiracial urban neighborhood. The subdued tones of blues, greens, and browns are digitally arranged illustrations created from watercolor, ink, and pencil, making use of simple lines to create smooth shapes throughout the story.

Maribeth Boelts was born and raised in Iowa and worked as a preschool teacher for several years before she turned her talent to writing children's books. She is married

and has three grown children and three grandchildren. Boelts is the author of over twenty books including the “Little Bunny” series. She has won the Charlotte Zolotow Award Honor designation, and the Cooperative Children’s Book Center for *Those Shoes*, and several other awards for her book *Before You Were Mine*. To find out more about Maribeth Boelts visit [www.maribethboelts.com](http://www.maribethboelts.com).

Noah Z. Jones is an author, illustrator, and animator. Jones took part in a monster drawing contest in elementary school and placed fourth out of five contestants, but he knew from that experience that he wanted to continue drawing. He began his career at the FableVision studio as an animator and eventually moved up to creative director. As creative director, Jones headed up award winning projects for Nickelodeon, the Public Broadcasting System, and Houghton Mifflin. However, he and his wife (a children’s librarian) left Boston to move to a small town in New Jersey and pursue a career illustrating children’s books. Visit Noah at [www.noahzjones.com](http://www.noahzjones.com).

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