

## The Boot Boy

The butler's face was serious, a thief he could not bear  
Some victuals had gone missing from the pantry in his care  
The servants ate together, there was plenty to go round  
But a loaf of bread, a piece of cheese and some eggs could not be found

The servants all looked puzzled and wondered at this news  
No-one would admit it and no-one would accuse  
But the boot boy shuffled forward as tears ran down his face  
His grubby hands were shaking as he stood there in disgrace

"I didn't mean to do it sir, my mother's ill you see  
My father left us long ago and she depends on me"  
"This is not the answer" said the butler looking grim  
While the boot boy stood and wondered what would become of him

"There can be no more stealing, I hope that's very clear  
But there is something we can do while you're working here  
Leftovers from the kitchen which happen now and then  
Will be packed into a basket, 'till your mother's well again  
But you must tread an honest path to work as one of us  
And we will help you all we can, without favour, without fuss."

The boot boy had a lighter heart as he walked home that night  
Perhaps life would be better if he tried to make things right  
He vowed that he'd work harder, help his mother, do his best  
Sleep with an easy conscience when he could take his rest



"A Boy" by J. Young from "Servants" (after William Hogarth)

This painting is in the collection of Watford Museum who hold the copyright.