

## **The story of the Farm Elf**

The first time I heard this story told by Odds Bodkin, a fabulous American storyteller Odds Bodkin, he called it The Elf of Springtime.

The story is set in a Northern European country, one where there was a widely held belief that each farm has its own elf. The elf looks after the farm and the creatures and plants that grow there. But not everyone believes in the elves nowadays, and sometimes they are ignored, occasionally with dire consequences.

In this story there is a farm on which, for the last 100 years, every farmer who has farmed there has died of starvation. One year a farmer who believes in elves is given a farm and the first thing he does is address the invisible elf and invite him to a feast the next spring.

Over the year the crops grow well, the farmer and his wife manage to store food and even have enough money to buy some presents at Christmas. The farmer's wife buys some lovely slippers for the farmer, who swears never to wear them outside. When spring comes they have a feast and the forgotten elf knocks on the door and joins them for the feast, eating almost everything on the table. The elf then invites the farmer to his house under the cowshed. The farmer walks through the cowshed in his lovely slippers (good opportunity for sound effects here) and goes down a mouse hole to the elf's house. The elf gives him a bowl of porridge. Cow poo drips into the porridge from the roof. The elf explains that he had cow poo dripping into his porridge for last 100 years and that is why the farm has been unproductive, and the farmers have been dying. The farmer then has the idea to move the cowshed, so the elf can have his home back, and they all live happily ever after. The moral of the story is be sure to check in with the spirits of the land before you do any building.