

## The Elves and the Shoemaker

Once upon a very long time ago, there lived a kind-hearted shoemaker and his wife. Unfortunately, the couple had become so poor that at last they had nothing left but the leather to make one pair of shoes.

One night, after a supper of bread and jam, the shoemaker shuffled to his workshop with his head hung down and his shoulders hunched. As he cut out the shoes from the last piece of leather, his wife appeared, "Try not to worry. Everything will soon be all right. Leave that tonight. You can finish the shoes tomorrow," she said softly.

Little did they know but three little elves, Clary, Pepper and Jas, heard the shoemaker's wife. They felt sorry for the kind man and decided to help. Working through the night, they cut, sewed and decorated until they had made a beautiful pair of shoes!

In the morning, the shoemaker and his wife were amazed to see the delightful, little shoes on the workbench. "Where have these come from? Who made them?" they wondered. Soon, a merchant saw the shoes in the shop window and bought them immediately. He was so impressed by the shoes that he gave the shoemaker enough money to buy leather for two pairs of shoes.

That night, too, the shoemaker cut out the shoes and left them on the workbench. Again, the three little elves returned.

Working through the night, they cut, sewed and decorated until they had made two beautiful pairs of shoes!

This continued for many more nights, until the shoemaker and his wife were no longer poor. One night, the couple decided that they wanted to know who was making the shoes so that they could thank them for their kindness. After a hearty supper, they laid out the leather, hid in the workshop and waited to see who their helpers were.

Clary, Pepper and Jas crept into the workshop and by the light of the moon, cut, sewed and decorated until they had made several beautiful pairs of shoes! "How lucky we are! We must return their kindness!" declared the shoemaker's wife.

"Their clothes are ragged and torn. Let's make them some new clothes," the shoemaker suggested.

So, all day, they cut, sewed and decorated until they had made three teeny hats, three perfectly miniature suits and three tiny pairs of charming shoes. That night they left them on the workbench for the generous elves.

By the light of the moon, Clary, Pepper and Jas danced a jig of happiness on the workbench. Dressed in their brand-new hats, suits and shoes they left the shoemaker's workshop, not ever to return.

The shoemaker and his wife lived happily ever after, never forgetting the three little elves who helped them in their time of need.