

Readers' Theater

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The Elves and the Shoemaker



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Each reader's part is highlighted in color.

List of Characters

(in order of appearance)

Group 1: Green

Group 2: Blue

Shoemaker: Orange

Wife: Red



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Group 2: With great delight, the elves put on their tiny hats, tiny shirts, tiny vests, and tiny pants. They pulled on their tiny well-knit stockings and their tiny shoes.

Group 1: The elves admired themselves in a mirror and showered each other with compliments. They looked so handsome in their new outfits.

Group 2: The elves danced and sang to celebrate their good fortune. When they could dance no more, they jumped on the windowsill and climbed out the window.

Group 1: The elves never returned.

Group 2: For the rest of their days, the shoemaker and his wife lived comfortably. And they always remembered the tiny elves with fondness and gratitude.



The Elves and the Shoemaker

Group 1: Once upon a time, there was a poor, hardworking shoemaker. He and his wife had a tiny shop at the edge of a town.

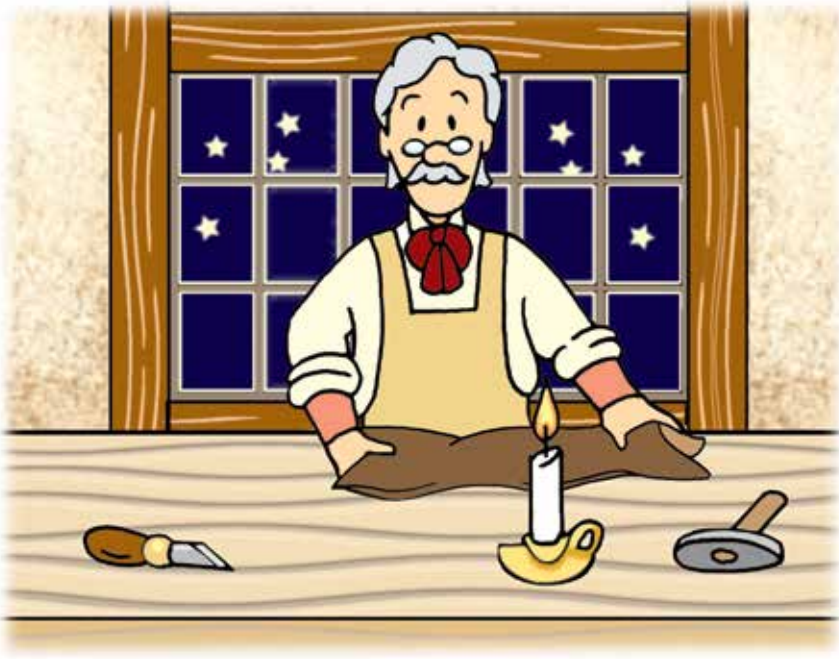
Group 2: Though the shoemaker worked hard, times were tough. One day, after buying food and firewood, the shoemaker had just enough money to purchase the leather to make one pair of shoes.



Group 1: So the shoemaker used the last of his money to buy the leather. Then in the evening, after supper, he cut the leather into the pieces he needed.

Group 2: He piled the pieces neatly on top of his workbench so that he would be all set to work in the morning.

Shoemaker: Tomorrow, when the sun is bright and my mind is fresh, I will make the finest pair of shoes that anyone in this town has ever seen.



Group 1: When evening came, the shoemaker and his wife placed the tiny clothes and the shoes on the workbench.

Shoemaker: Come, dear. Let's hide!

Wife: I do hope the elves like their thank-you presents! It's the very least we can do for them.

Group 2: The shoemaker and his wife blew out the candles and hid. Soon the elves climbed through the window.

Group 1: The elves were so surprised to see their gifts.



Group 1: The shoemaker and his wife slipped quietly out from behind the chest of drawers and tiptoed to bed.

Group 2: In the morning, to their delight, the shoemaker and his wife found hundreds of pairs of shoes!

Shoemaker: Look at all these shoes! I feel so grateful to the elves.

Wife: The elves have done so much for us. We should do something for them. Let's make them some clothes!

Shoemaker: Good idea!

Group 1: That day, the shoemaker cut a small piece of leather into pieces and fashioned two tiny pairs of shoes for the elves.

Group 2: Meanwhile, the shoemaker's wife sewed two tiny sets of clothes. She made tiny hats, tiny shirts, tiny vests, and tiny pants. She even knit two tiny pairs of stockings.

Group 1: The shoemaker and his wife went to bed. They slept very soundly.

Group 2: In the morning, the shoemaker and his wife were surprised to see a handsome new pair of shoes sitting on top of the workbench.

Shoemaker: Look at these shoes! They are the finest shoes I have ever seen. The stitches are so tiny and so even. I wonder who could have made them.

Wife: Someone must have sewn the pieces of leather together while we were sleeping. But who could have done this? I didn't hear anyone or anything!

Group 1: The shoemaker put the shoes on display in his shop window.



Group 2: A passerby saw the shoes in the shop window and stepped inside. The man tried on the shoes and liked the shoes so much that he bought them immediately. He insisted on paying the shoemaker double the normal price.

Group 1: With the money from the sale, the shoemaker purchased enough leather to make two more pairs of shoes.

Group 2: He spent the rest of the day cutting the pieces of leather. In the evening, he left them on his workbench.

Shoemaker: Tomorrow morning, when the sun is bright and my mind is fresh, I will make two more pairs of shoes. They will be the finest shoes anyone in this town has ever seen.

Group 2: That night, while the shoemaker and his wife were quietly hiding behind the chest of drawers, they saw two tiny elves climb through the window.

Group 1: The shoemaker and his wife were amazed to see how quickly the elves worked. The elves' fingers moved so fast that they could make a pair of shoes in minutes.

Group 2: At the same time, the shoemaker and his wife were dismayed. The hardworking little elves were dressed in rags.



Group 1: One day, as the shoemaker was cutting the leather to make more shoes, he and his wife talked.

Shoemaker: I wonder who is actually making these shoes at night.

Wife: I wonder, too! Let's stay awake and see if we can find out.

Shoemaker: Good idea! You and I can hide behind this chest of drawers and wait quietly.



Group 1: That night, the shoemaker and his wife slept very soundly. In the morning, when they awoke, they found two handsome pairs of shoes on the workbench.

Shoemaker: Look! These are the most perfect pairs of shoes I have ever seen. I wonder who made them.

Wife: Some friendly visitors must be making these shoes while we're asleep! Let's put them on display.



Group 2: In a little while, two customers came into the shop. They tried on the shoes and liked them so much that they bought them immediately. They insisted on paying double the normal price.

Group 1: With the money from the sale, the shoemaker purchased enough leather to make four more pairs of shoes.

Group 2: The shoemaker cut the leather into pieces and left them on his workbench. Then he and his wife went to bed. The next morning, they found four new pairs of shoes.

Wife: These are such beautiful shoes! They are the finest shoes I have ever seen.

Shoemaker: Whoever makes these shoes is a better shoemaker than I am!

Group 1: Soon after the shoemaker put the shoes on display, customers came into the shop to buy the shoes. Once again, the shoemaker used the money from the sale of the shoes to buy more leather.

Group 2: Once again, the shoemaker cut the leather into pieces and left them on his workbench. Then the shoemaker and his wife went to sleep. Once again, they found new shoes the next morning.

Group 1: Each morning, the shoemaker and his wife found twice as many shoes as the day before. And each day, more customers came in to buy shoes and paid double the normal price.

Group 2: In a short time, the poor shoemaker and his wife were no longer poor.

