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## **THE ELVES AND THE SHOEMAKER**



**A CHRISTMAS PLAY WITH MUSIC**

**Written by  
LYNN  
BRITTNEY**

# **THE ELVES AND THE SHOEMAKER**

## **CAST LIST**

**THE SHOEMAKER**

**THE SHOEMAKER'S WIFE**

**RICH LADY**

**RICH GENTLEMAN**

**MAN**

**WOMAN**

**BOY**

**GIRL**

**4 ELVES**

**CAROL SINGERS (*AT LEAST 6*)**

***12 speaking parts and at least 6 singing parts***

## **THE ELVES AND THE SHOEMAKER**

### **SCENE 1.**

*The Shoemaker's shop, which is also his front parlour. It has shop windows, for displaying the shoes, a workbench for making the shoes, on which are various tools such as a cobbler's last, hammers, big needles and leather thread and pieces of leather. Over the other side of the room is an armchair, a footstool, a little bookshelf and a fireplace. This scenery remains the same throughout the entire play.*

*When the play opens, the Shoemaker is sitting at his workbench; cutting out some leather and his wife is sitting in the armchair doing some sewing.*

*At the front of the stage, or to one side, a group of carol singers, carrying lanterns, are chanting.*

### **CAROL SINGERS**

**Christmas is coming, the goose is getting fat  
Please put a penny in the old man's hat  
If you haven't got a penny, a ha'penny will do  
If you haven't got a ha'penny, then God Bless you.**

**(Repeat.)**

*The Carol Singers leave or sit down.*

### **SHOEMAKER**

**Did you hear that my dear? Christmas is coming. Perhaps business will get better when people start to buy presents for their friends and relatives.**

**WIFE**

**Mm. You said that when Autumn came. You said that business would get better when people started to buy stout winter boots. But it didn't. Here we are, with hardly any food on the table and no money.**

**SHOEMAKER**

**I know. I've only just got enough leather to make one pair of ladies' shoes. But I'm so tired I shall just cut out the leather tonight and make the shoes tomorrow. Have we enough food for supper?**

**WIFE**

**I've made some good hot vegetable soup and, when I've taken this sewing back to Her Ladyship tomorrow, she will pay me enough to get some food in for next week. We shan't starve husband. As long as I can sew and you can make shoes, we shall make enough to live on.**

**SHOEMAKER**

**Yes, I suppose so.**

**WIFE**

**Have you finished cutting out the shoes?**

**SHOEMAKER**

**Yes.**

**WIFE**

**Well, it's getting late now. Let's go in the back room and have our soup before we go to bed. It will be snowing soon. The weather has turned very cold.**

**SHOEMAKER**

**I think you're right my dear. Some hot soup and a warm bed is the answer.**

*(The shoemaker and his wife get up and leave the room, taking the candle with them. The shop gets quite dark.)*

*One verse of "In the Bleak Midwinter" is played softly on recorder or piano. Then the Carol Singers sing one verse.)*

**CAROL SINGERS (Singing softly)**

**In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan  
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone  
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow  
In the bleak midwinter, long ago.**

*(The door opens quietly and four elves, dressed in ragged clothes, with bare feet, come into the shop.)*

**ELF 1**

**Brr! It's so cold outside!**

**ELF 2**

**My feet are frozen.**

**ELF 3**

**Let's warm ourselves by the dying fire before we do some work.**

**ELF 4**

**Good idea.**

*(All the Elves huddle around the fireplace)*

**ELF 1**

**That's better! This is a nice place to come on a cold winter's night.**

**ELF 2**

**Much better than sleeping in the woods.**

**ELF 3**

**If we're going to come in here every night to keep warm we should  
leave the householders a present.**

**ELF 4**

**But we haven't got anything to give them.**

**ELF 1**

**There must be something we could do for them. Perhaps we could clean the house?**

**ELF 2**

**It looks pretty clean already.**

**ELF 3**

**Look! The Shoemaker has cut out a pair of ladies' shoes; we could make them up for him.**

**ELF 4**

**That's a really good idea! Let's get started.**

*(The Elves all crowd around the workbench and start miming the making of a pair of shoes.)*

**ELF 1**

**You hammer the sole and I'll stretch the leather into shape.**

**ELF 2**

**Right.**

**ELF 3**

**I'll thread the needles, ready to start sewing the shoe together.**

**ELF 4**

**I'll make the eyeholes in the front of the shoes, ready to take the laces.**

*(All the Elves start to sing.)*

**ELVES**

**Cobbler, cobbler, make my shoe**

**Get it done by half past two**

**Half past two is much too late**

**Get it done by half past eight**

**Stitch it up and stitch it down  
And I'll give you half a crown.**

***(Repeat)***

**ELF 1**

**There, that's done!**

***(The Elves move away from the bench and there is a new pair of shoes.)***

**ELF 2**

**They need a good polish.**

**ELF 3**

**There's a cloth on the bench.**

**ELF 4**

**Right. I'll do it.**

***(Elf 4 starts to polish the shoes. The chorus of "Past Three o'Clock starts playing softly on a recorder or piano. Then the carol Singers begin to sing softly.)***

**CAROL SINGERS**

**Past three o'clock, on a cold and frosty morning**

**Past three o'clock, good morrow masters all.**

***(Repeat)***

**ELF 1**

**It's past three o'clock! Come, elves, we must leave.**

**ELF 2**

**Back to the cold woods and our cold beds.**

**ELF 3**

**Can we come again tomorrow night?**

**ELF 4**

**Of course we can. Perhaps the Shoemaker will have another pair of shoes we can make for him.**

*(The Elves leave. "Past Three O'Clock" plays softly on the recorder or piano, then it is followed by five bell chimes, signaling that it is five o'clock. The Shoemaker comes into the shop with a candle, rubbing his eyes.)*

**SHOEMAKER**

**Ah! At least I had a good night's sleep. Now I can set about making those shoes before I open the shop today.**

*(He goes over to the workbench)*

**SHOEMAKER**

**Bless my soul! Wife! Wife! Come quickly!**

*(The Shoemaker's Wife comes running in)*

**WIFE**

**What is it dear? What's the matter?**

**SHOEMAKER**

**Look! One perfect pair of ladies' shoes! All beautifully stitched and polished! Wherever did they come from?**

**WIFE**

**Well, they're made from the leather that you cut out last night. You must have made them in your sleep!**

**SHOEMAKER**

**No! That's not possible! I had a wonderful night's sleep. I didn't stir at all. It couldn't have been me.**

**WIFE**

**Well, what other explanation could there be?**

**SHOEMAKER**

**It must be magic. The leather must have been under a spell or something.**

**WIFE**

**Don't be silly. It must have been you. You were so worried about us being so poor that you walked in your sleep. You must have come downstairs and made these shoes and then gone back to bed without knowing anything about it.**

**SHOEMAKER ( *Holding up a shoe* )**

**But look, these stitches are so perfect and so tiny. I know I'm a good shoemaker but even I couldn't do perfect little stitches like that – especially in my sleep.**