



## Parent /Teachers Activity & Study Guide



A Musical For Children  
Based on the Brothers' Grimm Tale

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Storybook Musical Theatre is a non-profit, professional children's theatre company operating under a Theatre for Young Audiences Contract with Actors' Equity Association, the union for professional actors and stage managers in the U.S.A.



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### Elves and the Shoemaker Synopsis

As Act 1 starts, Joseph Cobbler, a shoemaker, and his wife, Peach, are living in a rented house where he has his shop. The shoemaker works hard to make beautiful shoes, but he can't earn enough gold kroners for himself and his wife to live on. Finally, the day has come when all he had left on his workbench is a piece of leather to make only one pair of shoes. As Joseph and Peach realize they have money trouble, their landlord, Lord Lowenbrau, enters the shop. He tells them that since they can't pay the rent on the shop, they will have to move out and become farmers. Joseph says he is a shoemaker not a farmer and needs a little extra time before he has the money to pay the rent. Lord Lowenbrau reconsiders and gives them two weeks to pay the rent before he takes the shop away. He leaves. Joseph and Peach decide to go eat supper and not give up hope that someone will come to buy shoes. Joseph lays the leather and his tools out on his workbench and they leave the room. The next morning Joseph enters the shop to find an exquisite pair of shoes on his workbench where the leather had been. He calls for Peach, who comes, and they can't believe the beautiful shoes were left on the workbench. Peach puts them in the shop window and almost immediately Jacob, the printer, sees them in the window and comes in to buy them. He's so pleased that he buys the new shoes for five gold kroners and two new books. He goes away with his new shoes. Joseph takes the kroners and leaves to buy more leather. While he is gone Lord Lowenbrau returns to see Joseph. Peach tells him of their success and reminds him that he has given them two weeks to get the rent money. Lord Lowenbrau exits. The lights fade out. Lights rise on the next morning. Joseph and Peach are amazed at the new shoes that are left on the workbench each morning. Word of the marvelous shoes spreads through the villages. Jacob enters the shop again and wants to buy boots for his brother, Wilhelm. While he is there a traveling actor enters the shop to buy a pair of boots. He has travelled far because he has heard about the shoes Joseph Cobbler makes. Both Jacob and the traveler buy their shoes, and leave very happy. Jacob and Peach are overjoyed, but are very curious about who is making these shoes. The lights fade out. It is midnight as the lights rise. In the shadows are two elves, Sprite and Elvish. They are wearing tattered clothing, but are having fun busily making the shoes. They work into the night as the lights fade. Finding the shoes, Joseph and

Peach make a plan to stay up that night and watch the shop to see who is making the shoes. They are preparing as Act 1 ends.

## **Act II**

When the lights come up it is late at night. Sprite and Elvish are getting ready to work. They dance, sing and have a good time. As they get to work Joseph and Peach come out of hiding. They see the elves and decide they must repay them for their kindness. Peach, seeing the elves' old clothes, wants to make them new vests and coats. Joseph will make them new shoes. The elves hearing noise stop working, but do not see anyone and go back to work. Joseph and Peach fall asleep where they hide as the lights fade out. The lights come up on Joseph and Peach still sleeping on the floor when there is a knock at the door. They wake up and let Lord Lowenbrau into the shop. Joseph tells him they have money to pay the rent. Lord Lowenbrau cannot believe it. Joseph and Peach explain to him about the shoes when a wealthy Lady enters. The Lady states that she has been sent by the King to have the extraordinary shoemaker come to the King's court to make the King new shoes. All are surprised. Joseph says he will come to the King in a fortnight and she leaves. Lord Lowenbrau is so impressed he tells Joseph and Peach they can stay for as long want. He then buys a pair of shoes and exits. Joseph and Peach then prepare to make the clothes and shoes to give to the elves. The lights fade. It is night when the lights rise. Joseph and Peach place the new clothes on the workbench and they hide. Sprite and Elvish arrive and find the new clothes. They are very surprised by the gifts. The elves rejoice and gleefully leave the shop. Joseph and Peach come out of hiding very happy that they could help the elves, who helped them keep their shop and allow Joseph to continue making shoes for rest of his life.

### **For Parents, Teachers, and Counselors**

The following common core aligned\* activity ideas & questions may be beneficial to share with your student(s) before & after the play.

1. Read the original story by the Grimm Brothers. Talk with your child(ren) about the different characters and their feelings. Discuss how they might be different in the play and how they look when they come to life on stage. Share the Play Synopsis with them. How is the story different from what you read? How is it the same? Pose the question, "What would happen it..." (RL 2.1, 2.3)

2. Divide your group into teams for each character in the play. Write a descriptive sentence about them. Create a story about -- what if? Before the play, what did the children think the characters looked like? Have the teams draw a picture of their characters or let them write a letter to their favorite character. Send the drawings and letter to Storybook. We love to get them! (W 2.3)
3. Joseph Cobbler, the shoemaker, has one piece of leather left to make a pair of shoes, but the elves came and made many pairs of shoes for him. Talk about how it feels to help others in need. Do you help out around your house with chores or in the classroom for your teacher? (RL 2.3, 2.7)
4. The landlord wanted to take the shop away from the shoemaker and his wife. How do you think they could have saved the shop if the elves didn't come to make all the shoes for them? Would they have become farmers instead? (RL 2.7, 2.10)
5. The elves created wonderful shoes overnight. How long do you think it really takes someone to make a pair of shoes? Are there still shoemakers that make just one pair of shoes at a time or are shoes made in factories by machines? Do you go to a shoemaker to have your shoes repaired or do you just throw them away? (SL 2.2)
6. Joseph and peach made the elves new clothers and shoes as a thank you for helping them. What would you do if someone did something special for you? Would you give them some type of present or special "thank you?" (SL 2.1, 2.2)
7. A shoemaker uses lots of different tools to make a shoe. Using the internet, see if you can find out how shoes are made and what materials are used. Are all shoes made of leather or are other materials used? What are they? (RI 2.3)
8. Talk to your child(ren) about attending a live performance and how it is different from watching television at home. Try to help them understand what it means when there are a lot of other people who also want to see, hear, and enjoy the performance. They can meet the actors after the show. (SL 2.1)
9. Theater is about using your imagination. Before attending the performance why not try using some found objects to play a game. See how many different uses you can find for each item. Remember to use your imagination. Make-up different scenes from the play using these objects. (RL 2.1)
10. The shoemaker buys and sells things with Kroners? What are Kroners? Do these rally exist and if so are they used today? What do you use to buy shoes? (SL 2.2)