Kindness, elfin magic, and gratitude combine in this tale of a down-on-their-luck shoemaker and his wife. Preschoolers will love this heartwarming fairytale.

Meet the Writer

Vicky Shiotsu
Like the brave little duck in her favorite fairy tale, The Ugly Duckling, children’s author, Vicky Shiotsu, followed her dreams, leaving her native British Columbia for Los Angeles. Vicky recalls biking to the library each week as a child to pick up a new volume of fairy tales. Now enjoying a fulfilling writing career, she loved penning these new takes on her old favorites.

Meet the Illustrator

Julissa Mora
Brooklyn, NY resident, Julissa Mora, enjoyed illustrating the fairy tale classic, The Elves and the Shoemaker. She especially loved seeing the story unfold from the perspective of the old couple’s mischievous cat and dog. Her favorite illustration is the last page where everyone is together and happy—just the way life should be.
The Gift of Reading Aloud

Reading aloud to your child is fun for you both. Plus, it’s the best way to encourage a lifelong love of reading and promote the skills necessary for school success. Here are some tips.

Begin at the Beginning

- Set aside a special time to read aloud each day and stick to it.
- Choose a comfortable spot: the couch, your child’s bed, a picnic blanket under a shady tree, a “reading hideaway” created by throwing a sheet over the table, etc.
- Vary the reading materials: different genres (fairy tales, fiction, non-fiction, poetry), children’s magazines on topics from nature to sports, joke and riddle books, newspapers and comics, etc.
- Invite your child to help plan your reading routine.

Experience the Fun

- Read slowly and with expression. Use different character voices.
- Talk about the pictures.
- Stop to answer your child’s questions. Discuss any unfamiliar vocabulary.
- Encourage your child to chime in on repetitive phrases, complete rhymes, and predict what might happen next.
- Follow the words with your finger to reinforce important reading basics, such as text is read from left to right.

A Family Library

Your neighborhood library is a treasure! But a home library demonstrates the value of books to your family. Used book stores, garage sales, and flea markets are all great places to pick up inexpensive books that your family will treasure for years!

Favorite Fairy Tale Activities

Here are some hands-on activities to spark enthusiasm for learning and get your child excited about reading.

Shoe Shopping Collage

Provide catalogs, magazines, and newspaper flyers for your child to cut out pictures of shoes, sandals, sneakers, boots, or other footwear. Provide construction paper and glue for your child to create a collage. Discuss when and where the different types of shoes are worn. For example, sandals are usually worn in warm weather, while boots are worn in cold or rainy weather.

Thank You Card

Discuss how the elves helped the shoemaker and his wife and how the shoemaker and his wife made the elves clothing to thank them for their kindness. Ask your child to name someone who has helped him or her and how. Provide your child with a manila folder and markers or crayons. Have your child decorate the front cover. Inside the folder, have him or her write or dictate a note to the chosen special person, thanking the person.

Sole Rubbings

Check your family’s closets for shoes with different types of soles. Provide copier or other lightweight paper and peeled crayons. Show your child how to lay a piece of paper over the sole of a shoe and rub the side of the crayon over the paper to reproduce the pattern on the sole. Compare and contrast the different patterns the soles make and discover the different lengths and widths of the shoes.
Long ago, there lived a shoemaker and his wife. They were very poor. One day, the shoemaker had only enough leather to make one pair of shoes.

Sadly, he cut out the leather and left the pieces on a table so he could sew them in the morning. Then, he went to bed.
The next day, the shoemaker went to his table to work. To his surprise, he found that the shoes were already made!
A man walked in and saw the shoes. He liked them so much that he paid more than the usual price for them.

With the money, the shoemaker bought leather to make two more pairs of shoes.
In the evening, the shoemaker cut out the leather. He laid the pieces on his table and went to bed.

In the morning, the shoemaker found two beautiful pairs of shoes sitting on his table!
A couple walked in and saw the shoes. They liked them so much that they gave the shoemaker a lot of money for them.

The shoemaker bought leather to make four more pairs of shoes.
The next night, the shoemaker cut out the leather for the shoes. As before, he found new shoes on his table in the morning. This happened day after day. Soon, the shoemaker and his wife became very rich.
One evening, the shoemaker said, “Let us stay up tonight and see who is helping us.” His wife agreed. The shoemaker cut out some leather and put the pieces on the table. Then, he and his wife hid behind a curtain and waited.
At midnight, two little elves in raggedy clothes arrived. They skipped to the table and went to work. All night long, they hammered and stitched. When the shoes were made, the elves darted away.
In the morning, the shoemaker said, “We should do something to thank the elves.”

“We can make new clothes and shoes,” said his wife. “The poor things are wearing nothing but rags.”

So, the shoemaker and his wife went to work.
When they were done, the couple left the clothes and shoes on the table. Then, they hid and waited.
The elves appeared at midnight. They skipped to the table to work. When they saw the tiny clothes and shoes, they stopped.

The elves clapped their hands with joy and quickly dressed themselves. Then, they danced around the room and left.
The shoemaker and his wife never saw the elves again. But everything went well for the kind couple from that time on, and the two lived happily ever after.