

IF THE SHOE FITS

By Kristi Thielen

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CHARACTERS

AL WEARIT	genial, but clueless patriarch of the Wearit family; too impractical to be a good businessman
GLADYS WEARIT	world-weary, pessimistic wife of Al; not amused by his antics
SANDY WEARIT	cheerful, imaginative daughter of Al and Gladys; fond of books
MICHELLE/MICHAEL BROGAN	young police officer; sweet-tempered and fond of the Wearits
MRS. PETUNIA P. LEATHERS	ruthless, overbearing landlord to the Wearits
SHOEHORN	the leader of the Elves; level-headed and practical
BOOTS	stubborn, brash elf who often resists Shoenhorn's leadership
LACES	thoughtful, supportive elf who has a taste for the glamorous
TOESHOES	a young elf who loves to dance
WADERS	little brother to Boots; shares his sibling's traits; likes to play "Go Fish"
THE COBBLER	nonspeaking character who enacts scene changes; should be a good dancer or gymnast

*The Cobbler role should be played by someone who has either dancing or gymnastic ability. Their movement is only suggested by the script, as it can be as elaborate or as simple as the director chooses and the individual production dictates.

There are no roles which can be doubled or triple cast. Gladys, Sandy, Laces, Shoenhorn, Toeshoes and Mrs. Petunia P. Leathers are females; Al is male. It is preferred that Boots and Waders be male but they can be female. The Cobbler can be female or male; the police officer is Michael if male and Michelle if female.

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SETTING

Tables and several small chairs, to indicate a shoe shop

Display case(s), easily moved to hide or reveal their contents

Open window unit (self-standing) through which people in the shop can "look out" onto the street

NOTE: the set pieces should be as colorful as possible but also portable, as they are brought on or arranged by the COBBLER.

SET PROPS

large assortment of shoeboxes (painted) and 15-20 pairs of colorful shoes, including red sequined sneakers

large sign that reads "OPEN" on one side and "CLOSED" on the other; it can be suspended from a set piece, flat, or can be self-standing and placed on the window unit.

HAND PROPS

GLADYS
wrist-watch

SHOEHORN
large bag with shoe design "plans" rolled up inside
dark glasses

LACES
handful of blue feathers+
dark glasses

BOOTS
large bag of shoe-making "tools"
dark glasses

TOESHOES
sparkly wand

WADERS

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Metal tackle box
Deck of "Go Fish" cards

MICHELLE BROGAN

handcuffs
large "police blotter"
single shoe box, money enclosed

AL WEARIT

pair of nondescript sandals
pair of ugly boots
pair of plain boots
four lettered signs*
pencil and pad

SANDY WEARIT

blue feathered high heels
colorful storybook**

MRS. LEATHERS

large handbag (can hold a pair of high heels)
heavy stock paper notice with "eviction" printed on it

+ must be the same kind of feathers used on blue-feathered shoes

* Signs include 1 of "If the Shoe Fits, Wearit!"

1 of "Let Wearits Give You the Boot!"

1 of "You've Got Feet? We've Got Shoes!"

1 of "That's All She Wrote!"

(NOTE: this sign will be torn up during performance, so number of copies needed depends upon number of performances given)

**book is most effective if it is over-sized but not heavy

COSTUMES

AL WEARIT

Colorful jacket, shirt and pants; perhaps bow-tie and suspenders. (Jacket must contain room for a pad and pencil.)

GLADYS WEARIT

A workdress in a bright color; weird cat-eye or some other odd glasses are also effective

SANDY WEARIT

a girlish outfit; perhaps in a pastel

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MRS. LEATHERS	garish hat and ensemble; she can be attired the same through the play or dressed different for each entrance. An extravagant (and large) handbag is a must
MICHELLE BROGAN	a police officer uniform and hat
ELVES	All in some fantastical apparel that marks them as magical creatures; LACES wears very fancy shoes with sequins; WADERS can wear a fishing hat to complement his waders; TOESHOES wears toeshoes.

All ELVES wear trench coats or something akin to this in the final scene; TOESHOES wears a tutu beneath hers.

SOUND/LIGHTS

The play can be performed on a stage where lighting effects mark the difference between light and day or one day and another, but this is not necessary, as the changing signs and the actions of the COBBLER indicate the passage of time.

It is recommended that two different pieces of music be played during the COBBLER movement; one piece which represents the WEARITS and one that represents the ELVES.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

"If the Shoe Fits" was first performed at the Heritage Festival at Rapid City, South Dakota, during July of 1995 by Black Hills Community Theatre, under the direction of Kristi Thielen. June 15, 2000, it was performed by the ABC Productions and the Orinda Community Center players in Moraga, California. That production was directed by Rachel D. Hauser. In 2004, it was directed by Rebekah Gilbert at the Black Hills Literacy Council "Cat in the Hat" birthday celebration at Rapid City's Rushmore Mall. It was performed by Cherries Jubilee.

This play is dedicated, with affection, to Rachel D. Hauser.

IF THE SHOE FITS

by
Kristi Thielen

SCENE 1

At Rise: The COBBLER enters to music and greets the audience with a smile and a wave. SHE then either brings on the pieces that will form the interior of the Wearit Shoe Store or arranges pieces already on the stage. One of these must be a display case, easily turned to and from the audience's view; an open window unit through which the actors can "look" out to the street is also effective. When all the pieces are in place, the COBBLER brings on a sign that bears the words OPEN" on one side and "CLOSED" on another. It can either be suspended somewhere or set on top of the window unit. SHE faces the "CLOSED" side to the audience.

When the COBBLER is done, SHE exits and the music fades out. After a beat, AL WEARIT enters, but we cannot see him well. HE is carrying a tall stack of shoe boxes that towers over his head. HE tries valiantly to balance them but they tip precariously, this way and that, as HE walks. AL is a genial man, but far too impractical to be a good businessman.

AL: Whoa! Whoooooooooo! Don't worry, Gladys, I've got 'em! Yes, ma'am. Nothing to worry about! **(The tower of boxes begins to weave dangerously.)** Nothing to worry about, 'cause I got 'em. Everything's under control-- I've got 'em! I've got 'em! I've-- **(The boxes tumble to the floor and reveal a crestfallen AL WEARIT.)** Well . . . I had 'em.

(GLADYS and SANDIE WEARIT enter. GLADYS is a salt of the earth type who is bewildered by her whimsical husband. SHE is also a world-class pessimist. SANDY is an open, charming girl; much more like her father than her mother.)

GLADYS: Oh, for heaven's sake, Al! Look at this mess! And we open in just minutes!

AL: I was doing my best! I had 'em, Gladys. Besides, you have no idea how heavy these boxes are.

GLADYS: Heavy? They're empty! How heavy can a bunch of empty boxes be?

AL: They're not empty. They're just. . . unoccupied.

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GLADYS: This store is going to be unoccupied if we don't get it cleaned up in time for opening! Although heaven knows there isn't much reason to open. We must be the only shoe store in the world with a backroom full of boxes and only a handful of shoes to sell.

AL: So things haven't been good lately! So what? Just as soon as we make enough money to place an order at the shoe factory, we'll have plenty to sell.

GLADYS: ***(looking at her watch)*** In four minutes?

(AL's shoulders slump; SANDY steps into the conversation to fend off a quarrel.)

SANDY: It's okay, poppa; I'll help with the boxes. We can be done in a jiffy.

(SANDY helps AL pick up the boxes; GLADYS nervously dusts with a cloth she has pulled from her pockets.)

AL: ***(to GLADYS)*** There! Did you hear that? Sandy's got the right attitude. Never let the little problems get you down. Keep a smile on your face and think of the only thing in the world that really matters: shoes! And that's why, someday, our daughter will inherit all this!

(AL gestures around the nearly empty shoe store; as there obviously isn't much anyone would want to inherit, SANDY is dispirited by the remark.)

SANDY: Poppa, I've told you, over and over - I don't want to run a shoe store.

AL: Well, you can't spend your entire life reading books! That won't pay the bills.

GLADYS: Your father is right, Sandy. And you know how I hate admitting that.

SANDY: I could open a bookstore!

(AL laughs; GLADYS shakes her head, ruefully.)

AL: Ridiculous! We're a shoe family and always have been. Why, your grandfather had the first shoe store anybody'd seen in these parts. And you know what people called him?

GLADYS: Herman?

AL: A great businessman! That's what they called him - a great businessman. And when he died--

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GLADYS: --he took all his business sense with him. **(to SANDY)** Which is why your father hasn't the money to keep us in anything but boxes. **(looks at her watch)** Four minutes.

AL: We'll be ready; we'll be ready. **(fusses with the few pair of shoes in the display rack, trying to arrange them artfully, so they look more impressive)** And I don't know why you always have to remind me about my failures. A lot of poor men have gone on to be a great success.

SANDY: That's true. I know a man who spent his last dollar on a fish for dinner and when he sat down to eat it, he discovered there was a huge diamond in it. And he became rich!

GLADYS: The fish?

AL: **(to GLADYS)** The man, Gladys. **(to SANDY)** That's a great story! Where did you hear it?

(SANDY crosses to a shoe display case and reveals a book she has hidden there.)

SANDY: I read it in this book I bought!

AL: Ah! Books, books, books. All you talk about is books! Just once I wish you'd get interested in something important, like-- **(picks up a plastic pump from the display case)** --shoes! Look at this beauty! When you see this, what do you think of?

SANDY: Cinderella. I read it last spring.

(AL discards this shoe and shows her a boot.)

AL: What about this!

SANDY: Puss 'n' Boots. It's about--

AL: -never mind! **(shows her a sandal)** There's nothing like this in any book.

SANDY: Actually, there's a Greek myth about someone who had wings on their sandals, and--

AL: -I give up!

GLADYS: Not everyone is as fond of shoes as you are, Al.

AL: They should be! Shoes are fascinating. So many colors and shapes and styles. You can tell a lot about a person by what kind of shoes they wear. A world without shoes would be boring, not to mention uncomfortable. You can't possibly be a success without shoes. How could you ever put your best foot forward without them? Ha! **(AL is pleased with his own wit but shifts his tone when he sees that GLADYS is not amused.)** I know, I know--

GLADYS and AL: two minutes.

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SANDY: I think we're all ready to open. I'll just go put my book away so I don't misplace it when the customers come.

(SANDY exits; GLADYS draws AL aside to speak to him.)

GLADYS: Never mind about feet and books and fish. You know who's coming into the store today. And you know what she wants AND you know we don't have it.

AL: ***(grimly)*** Mrs. Petunia P. Leathers. Just because she owns this building, doesn't mean she has the right to throw us into the street.

GLADYS: She won't. If we can come up with the money to pay the rent.

AL: Well, we haven't got it. ***(craftily)*** Yet.

GLADYS: ***(surprised)*** Al! You've got an idea?

AL: The best one I've ever had!

GLADYS: Better than the plan to sell snowboots that play "Jingle Bells" when you walk?

AL: I still don't see why those didn't catch on. Yes, a better idea than that. And if it works, we'll have more than enough money to pay Mrs. Petunia P. Leathers her rent money. ***(looks offstage and sees SANDY approaching)*** Here comes Sandy!

GLADYS: I don't want her to know about all this!

AL: Act casual!

(Both AL and GLADYS freeze in unnaturally stiff poses which are anything but casual. SANDY enters, looks at them, and shakes her head.)

SANDY: Nervous about Mrs. Leathers asking for the rent money?

(AL and GLADYS break out of their postures and slump together.)

GLADYS: We were hoping you wouldn't hear us.

AL: We don't want you to worry.

(SANDY crosses to look out the store window.)

SANDY: Oh, I'm not worried about it. ***(beat)*** I expect things to get much worse than this before they get better. That's how it always is in books. ***(turns the "Closed" sign to "Open," glances out the window again and reacts to what she sees)*** Hoo, boy! Here comes a customer!

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(AL and GLADYS erupt in a flurry of wasted activity, scurrying here and there, tidying the store.)

AL: Someone important? Someone powerful?

GLADYS: Someone you wouldn't want to meet in a dark alley?

AL: Someone who could throw you out into the street if they wanted to?

SANDY: Well. . . I guess so.

AL and GLADYS: **(wailing)** Mrs. Petunia P. Leathers!

(AL and GLADYS strike poses of anxiety as their first customer of the day enters. But it isn't MRS. PETUNIA P. LEATHERS, after all. It's MICHELLE BROGAN, a young police officer with a sweet, unassuming manner. MICHELLE has obviously overheard them and gives them a teasing smile.)

MICHELLE: Sorry to disappoint you, Mr. Wearit.

AL: **(relieved)** Michelle Brogan! My favorite police officer! Come in, come in!

MICHELLE: Good morning, Mrs. Wearit; good morning, Sandy. I guess you were hoping to see Mrs. Leathers.

AL: Hoping? I wouldn't put it that way, exactly.

GLADYS: I wouldn't put it that way at all.

SANDY: But we're glad to see you, Officer Brogan. Looking for a new pair of shoes?

MICHELLE: I'm afraid so. I'm having a miserable time with this pair of shoes. They hurt, the buckle is hard to do, and for some strange reason - they squeak! **(walks across the room; the shoes do, indeed, make an odd sound as she moves)** You see what I mean? This is no good. I'm on my feet nearly all day. I need shoes that are comfortable. And a police officer is the last person in the world who wants squeaky shoes. Makes it hard to sneak up on crooks and catch 'em in the act. You see the problem here.

AL: I certainly do. You must have new shoes at once, and the Wearit Shoe Store is here to help. I'll place an order this very afternoon. **(whisks a pad and pencil out from under his coat and makes notes)** "One pair of completely comfortable and completely silent shoes for Officer Michelle Brogan." There! It's done!

MICHELLE: I really appreciate it, Mr. Wearit. Well, I-- **(looks around the store; it's obvious that business hasn't been good.)** I hope I'm not the only customer you get today. **(The three WEARITS react; MICHELLE realizes her error, but blunders on, helplessly.)** And I hope you don't have to wait too long for Mrs. Leathers. I think she's just down the street, bustling along like nobody's business.

GLADYS: **(glumly)** I can believe that.

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SANDY: Thanks for coming in, officer. And if-- **(corrects herself)** when the shoes come in, we'll call you.

MICHELLE: Thanks, Sandy. Well. . . so long everybody!

(MICHELLE BROGAN leaves; the WEARITS give her a cheery smile and a wave, then collapse as soon as she is out sight.)

GLADYS: Well, we can forget about ever selling her a pair of musical snowboots. And just where are we going to get a pair of "completely silent shoes," even if we could afford to order them? There are no such shoes!

AL: **(looking out the window)** One problem at a time, Gladys; one problem at a time. **(beat)** She's coming.

GLADYS: She is?

SANDY: She is?

(SANDY rushes to join AL at the window.)

GLADYS: Maybe she'll stop at the baker's.

SANDY: She didn't.

GLADYS: Maybe she'll buy a newspaper at the corner and go home.

SANDY: She hasn't.

GLADYS: Maybe she'll forget the whole thing and catch a flight to Argentina.

SANDY: She wouldn't.

AL: This is it!

GLADYS: There's no escape!

SANDY: It's -

ALL THREE: -Mrs. Petunia P. Leathers!

(And in SHE comes - a battleship of a woman. SHE wears an extravagant get-up, topped by a ridiculously large hat. MRS. LEATHERS is vain, pompous, mean-spirited - and SHE likes herself that way. SHE pauses at the door, taking in their frantic expressions.)

MRS. LEATHERS: There's nothing quite like the welcome you get at the Wearit Shoe Store. And how is everyone? **(And now her genteel demeanor is dropped; SHE becomes angry.)** Where's my money?

(GLADYS and SANDY remain frozen, and give each other pleading looks; AL tries to take control of the situation.)

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AL: Now, Mrs. Leathers, I'm glad you asked about that. **(GLADYS gives him a startled look; AL winks at SANDY.)** Because I've got an idea that will bring in customers and money from all over and you're going to be the first person to hear about it.

GLADYS: I'll be the second.

SANDY: Shhhh, momma!

MRS. LEATHERS: What is this idea, Mr. Wearit, and tell me it has nothing to do with snowboots.

AL: No, no, nothing at all. It has to do with-- **(AL pauses dramatically, then)** A sale!

MRS. LEATHERS: A sale? Oh, that is unique! Imagine! **(to GLADYS)** Is he always this idiotic or do I just bring out the best in him?

AL: **(barreling on)** Now, I know you can't expect people to just show up and buy shoes with no encouragement. You need a gimmick! A slogan to really catch their attention. And I've whipped up a few that are real winners. Why don't you all sit down and I'll be right with you?

(AL goes off to fetch some placards; SANDY, GLADYS and MRS. LEATHERS sit on what chairs are available. AL returns with the cards but keeps them turned so that no one can read them yet.)

AL: Here we are! Now! Let's say you're just walking down the street and you see a shoe store. Wouldn't this make you want to rush right in! **(turns the placard with a flourish and proceeds to read what is on it)** "You've got feet? We've got shoes!" **(AL grins broadly; waiting for their approval. Instead, GLADYS is skeptical, SANDY squirms in discomfort and MRS. LEATHERS retains her stony expression. AL rushes on.)** Not to worry! I have more! **(pulls out a new placard and reads it aloud)** "Let Wearits give you the boot!" **(MRS. LEATHERS rolls her eyes; SANDY and GLADYS wince. AL is unfazed.)** Okay, okay. But I've saved the best for last. **(turns the third placard and reads.)** "If the shoe fits, Wearit!" **(They all stare at him in disbelief. HE assumes they merely don't get the wordplay.)** Get it? We're the Wearits. "If the shoe fits, Wearit!" Pretty clever, huh?

(MRS. LEATHERS rises, majestically, and crosses to AL. SHE takes the sign, examines it coolly - then rips it in half. The WEARITS react with dismay.)

MRS. LEATHERS: You have one more day to come up with that money. Sale or no sale. Goodbye, Mr. Wearit.

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(MRS. LEATHERS steams out of the store. There is a beat or two of silence, then GLADYS rises.)

GLADYS: I'll start packing.

SANDY: But we have one more day. We can still come up with the money somehow, can't we poppa?

AL: ***(brokenhearted)*** Oh, sure. We'll all be saved at the last minute by some magical creatures. . . like the ones in those books you read. The little guys with the beards and funny hats?

SANDY: Elves?

AL: That's right. Elves. Elves are gonna come in here tonight and make shoes to save our shoe store. And if you believe that, I've got some oceanfront property in Montana to sell ya! HA!

(AL exits; absorbed in his gallows humor. GLADYS and SANDY exchange a sad look before GLADYS, too, exits.)

GLADYS: I'm getting those suitcases down out of the attic. While we still have them!

(SHE exits; SANDY glances around the store for a beat or two, before SHE crosses to look out the store window.)

SANDY: ***(hopeful)*** Maybe elves do exist. Maybe they will come and help. Maybe-- ***(sighs)*** --there must be something someone can do!

(SANDY exits.)

SCENE TWO

(Music plays; perhaps a magical sounding theme which is always played during the "night" scenes when the ELVES are onstage. The COBBLER enters, and changes the sign from "OPEN" to "CLOSED." She then exits and the music fades. We hear whispers and ad-libbed conversation among five unusually dressed characters who make their ways to the stage. They are elves: SHOEHORN, LACES, BOOTS and two "junior" elves, TOESHOES and WADERS. SHOEHORN carries an oversized bag; BOOTS wears a tool belt and LACES has something that appears to be rolled-up blueprints. WADERS carries a tackle box and a deck of cards. TOESHOES carries a sparkly wand. The ELVES' whispers give way to dialogue just as they reach the stage.)

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BOOTS: Beards and funny hats!

SHOEHORN: Shhhhh!

BOOTS: Like every elf in the world is an old man!

SHOEHORN: Shhhh! Boots! Hush up!

BOOTS: What century does he think this is, anyway?

LACES: Shoehorn told you to be quiet! Don't you ever listen?

BOOTS: Listen to what?

SHOEHORN: Oh, never mind.

LACES: Never mind what Mr.Wearit said about elves. That's not our concern, anyway.

SHOEHORN: A lot of people have funny ideas about elves. Most people don't even know we exist!

TOESHOES: They don't know all the wonderful things that we can do!

(SHE pirouettes to WADERS and taps him on the head with her wand; HE brushes her off with annoyance.)

LACES: And they certainly don't know how much we do for them--
(looks left and right, to make sure none of the WEARITS are listening) --when they aren't around.

BOOTS: I don't know why we should do anything for this Wearit fella. He insulted us. He's a lousy shoe salesman. And this store of his is really the pits.

WADERS: Exactly! I brought my cards! Let's take a break and play go fish!

(BOOTS plops into a chair, dropping his tool belt as he does. WADERS plops down next to him, noisily dropping his tackle box. TOESHOES hums to herself as she dances around the room. LACES and SHOEHORN react nervously to all the noise.)

LACES and SHOEHORN: SHHHHHHHH!

(SHOEHORN lowers her bag to the ground, quietly, and opens it; LACES daintily takes a seat next to BOOTS.)

LACES: Well, Boots is right. This isn't the best looking shoe store I've seen.

SHOEHORN: The best-looking stores don't need our help. And that's why we're here. ***(reaches into the bag for a piece of paper)*** Waders, put those cards away. Toeshoes, you can do your Sugar Plum Fairy act later. Right now, I need everyone's attention. ***(All ELVES do as SHOEHORN requests.)*** Okay. According to the instructions I got from the chief, we come here three nights in a row

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to make shoes. That should put the Wearits back on their feet.
(pauses, then laughs at her feeble joke) Ha- ha!

LACES: **(groaning)** Shoehorn!

BOOTS: Enough with the lame humor.

SHOEHORN: Well, anyway. The real person we're here to help is Sandy.

LACES: I like her!

WADERS and TOESHOES: We do, too!

BOOTS: The girl is not a problem, as far as I'm concerned. I just wonder how long I have to be on this job before I get better working conditions.

SHOEHORN: There's really nothing wrong with this place. **(moves to examine the meager selection of shoes in the display case)** It just needs a little imagination. . . and some good fortune. **(holds up an especially unattractive shoe for LACE'S approval)** Would you wear something like this?

LACES: No, I wouldn't. But then, I'm an elf.

SHOEHORN: **(putting the shoe back in its place)** Our work is really cut out for us! We'd better get down to business. If we don't come up with some shoes that will bring the Wearits a profit and fast, then Mrs. Leathers--

BOOTS: --don't mention her name! She's not a woman, she's a walking, talking headache.

LACES: She reminds me of. . . lima beans. **(SHOEHORN and BOOTS give her puzzled looks)** You know I hate lima beans.

BOOTS: YECCH!!

SHOEHORN: All right, enough of that. Boots, get your shoe-making tools. **(BOOTS sighs heavily, but reaches for his tools)** Laces, are you ready with those shoe plans?

LACES: **(waving the "blueprints")** Here they are!

(SHOEHORN unfurls the plans and examines them.)

SHOEHORN: Hmmmm. I wonder what kind of shoes would sell around here.

BOOTS: The kind you wear on your feet.

LACES: Well, as for me, I like shoes that are dignified and businesslike.

(SHOEHORN and BOOTS examine LACES feet; SHE is wearing very frivolous footwear: high-top sneakers covered with sequins.)

SHOEHORN: Yes, we can see that. Well, naturally, we'll want to make some dignified, practical shoes--

SHOEHORN: Some fun, sporty shoes--

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TOESHOES: Dancing shoes!

WADERS: Fishing shoes!

LACES: And a few pairs that are really glamorous!

SHOEHORN: Of course. Variety is what we're after, here.

BOOTS: And if you'd like my opinion--

LACES and SHOEHORN: Forget it.

BOOTS: Okay, sure. But I'm telling you: someday I'm gonna be in charge of one of these elf details, and when I am, you two will have to treat me with some respect.

SHOEHORN: Thank you for reminding us of that. We haven't heard you say that in at least--

LACES: -ten minutes.

SHOEHORN: Just worry about the tools, Boots.

LACES: Shoehorn! I just thought of something. Remember the conversation Mr. Wearit had with the police officer? He promised to get her a special order. . .

SHOEHORN: That's right! "Completely silent shoes." That's a pretty tall order.

LACES: Well, I insist on giving Boots the opportunity to make those shoes.

BOOTS: Oh, yeah. Let me do all the tough stuff. While everyone else sits around with their feet up.

SHOEHORN: No one will sit around with their feet up, not while I'm in charge of this outfit. We'll all work straight through the night and then disappear into thin air at daybreak. . . the way elves are supposed to.

BOOTS: The corny things we have to do to keep the customers happy!

SHOEHORN: Laces, are you ready?

LACES: Of course I am! Toeshoes?

TOESHOES: *(twirls about)* I'm all warmed up!

WADERS: Me, too!

(EVERYONE looks at BOOTS.)

BOOTS: Do I have a choice?

SHOEHORN: Then let's make shoes!

(All ELVES freeze as the lights fall or a musical interlude begins.)

SCENE THREE

(Music begins; the COBBLER enters to conduct the scene change. Depending upon the set pieces, SHE can either turn a display case

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to the audience, revealing it to be filled with shoes, or SHE can bring on various kinds of shoes to display artfully around the set.

After the change is complete, the COBBLER changes the sign from "CLOSED" to "OPEN and exits as the music fades. SANDY enters. SHE yawns and stretches as SHE walks to the window. It isn't until SHE is on her way back through the store that SHE sees the wonderful assortment of shoes before her. SHE looks about in amazement, then calls excitedly to her parents.)

SANDY: Momma! Poppa! Come quickly! You won't believe it!

(THE WEARITS rush on with AL in the lead. They look at the store in shocked silence. Then AL speaks, in a stricken voice.)

AL: Gladys! It's finally happened. Just the way you said it would.

GLADYS: What's happened?

AL: I've lost my mind and I'm seeing things.

SANDY: No, poppa; it's real. Real shoes - look at them. So beautiful! *(goes from pair to pair, lifting them for examination)* Aren't they wonderful? We'll have no trouble selling these. Poppa! Why don't you put one of these signs of yours in the window right now! Let's see what happens!

GLADYS: Wait a minute! Forget the sign. I'd like to know where these shoes came from. Al, did you place an order with some factory I don't know about? And if you did, how are we going to pay them?

AL: I didn't place any order, anywhere. Not even the one for Michelle Brogan. I have no idea how these got here. . . except. . . hmmm. Well, no; that's impossible. On the other hand. . . absolutely not. Creatures like that don't exist and if they did-- *(stops abruptly as HE watches SANDY examine a pair of red sequined high-top sneakers. Clearly these are not the kind of shoes that come from any factory. HE takes one of the sneakers from SANDY. A look of hope and wonder crosses his face.)* Gladys! Someone out there likes us! PUT UP A SIGN!!!!!! *(GLADYS throws her hands up in the air in a sign of surrender. Then SHE fetches the "You've got feet; we've got shoes" sign and sets it out. SANDY and GLADYS bustle about in preparation for opening; AL waves the sequined sneaker about as he talks.)* Now, when the customers come, just let me do the talking. Sandy; brush your hair.

SANDY: Yes, poppa.

(SANDY runs her fingers through her hair to smooth it.)

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AL: I'll take care of everything today because I know how to sell shoes.
That's my special talent! Gladys, put a smile on your face.

GLADYS: **(stony)** This is a smile, Al.

AL: We'll have people walking outta this store with piles of shoeboxes, a mile high. The Wearit Shoe Store will be the envy of the business community or my name isn't-- **(As HE says these very words, MRS. PETUNIA P. LEATHERS abruptly enters.)** --Mrs. Petunia P. Leathers!

MRS. LEATHERS: Funny, I thought that was my name. Mrs. Wearit, how nice to see you. And little Mandy.

SANDY: It's Sandy.

MRS. LEATHERS: If you insist. My! You've all been busy since I last saw you. Busy, busy, busy. **(As in the previous scene, SHE now drops her pretense of civility and becomes vicious.)** Cough up the money, mister, or you're toast.

AL: Now, really--

GLADYS: See here, Petunia--

MRS. LEATHERS: Feel free to call me Mrs. Leathers.

GLADYS: You said one day - one full day - and that was. . . yesterday afternoon. We haven't had a chance to deal with a single customer yet, this morning. It's not fair.

SANDY: That's right. With this new. . . shipment of shoes, we're sure to make a lot of sales!

(AL rushes to MRS. LEATHERS; in his anxiety HE is still swinging the sequined shoe back and forth.)

AL: Exactly. Why don't you go back home and we'll call you when we have the money. That way you won't have to go back and forth and back and forth-- **(swings the shoe for emphasis, MRS. LEATHERS becomes transfixed by the sight of it. AL frowns at this development, but SANDY senses the situation and gestures for her father to continue his motions.)** and back and forth and back and forth--

(MRS. LEATHERS grabs his wrist and stops the motion; SHE focuses solely on the sequined sneakers and speaks as if SHE were in a trance.)

MRS. LEATHERS: Where - did - you - get - those - shoes?

AL: **(coily)** What shoes Mrs. Leathers?

MRS. LEATHERS: Those shoes! Those wonderful, magnificent - where did you get them?!?!

AL: Oh, well, these. Just a little something I picked up at the shoe manufacturers' convention. Like them?

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(AL twirls them around for effect; MRS. LEATHERS' eyes never leave them. This time, it is SANDY who steps in to grasp AL's wrist and stop the motion.)

SANDY: Mrs. Leathers, I'm surprised that in all the time you've known us, you've never bought a pair of shoes here. And yet, I'm sure a fashionable woman like yourself, must appreciate fine shoes.

MRS. LEATHERS: ***(still in a trance)*** Those shoes. . . they're so. . . I've never seen anything. . . like them. . .

SANDY: Of course you haven't.

GLADYS: Neither have we, and it's our store.

AL: ***(to MRS. LEATHERS)*** If you'd like to buy this pair--

SANDY: -oh, poppa, no! Why, with all the affection we feel toward Mrs. Leathers, it's only right that we give them to her. As a gift!

AL: What?

GLADYS: Sandy!

SANDY: ***(giving the shoes to MRS. LEATHERS)*** Here they are.

MRS. LEATHERS: Shoes! They're mine! All mine!

SANDY: That's right. Now, you just take them on home and enjoy wearing them.

GLADYS: Please!

AL: ***(catching on to SANDY's scheme)*** And we'll talk about the rent some other time, won't we?

(AL pushes MRS. LEATHERS toward the door; SHE does not resist. SANDY and GLADYS wave a cheery goodbye as MRS. LEATHERS exits.)

MRS. LEATHERS: Red shiny shoes. . . red shiny shoes. . . and they're mine!

(SHE drifts out of the scene; the WEARITS collapse from the strain of their concern, but SANDY is jubilant.)

SANDY: We're in luck! She's a shoe nut!

GLADYS: A what?

SANDY: I read about it in a book. Some people are just crazy for shoes and can't get enough of them. When they see a pair they really like, they have to have them, or else!

GLADYS: A shoe nut. I can see being a chocolate chip cookie nut, but not having a thing for shoes.

AL: ***(philosophical)*** I can understand it.

GLADYS: You would. Well, we got rid of her for a while at least, but those sequined sneakers won't keep her at home forever.

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AL: We've just got to keep coming up with new shoes to make her happy.

SANDY: And shoes to sell, so we can make the money we need to pay her off. That would make us happy.

AL: Of course! Of course! That's what we'll do. Somehow. Just as long as whoever helped us today will help us tomorrow.

SANDY: In the storybooks I've read, elves come back at least three times. . . so we've got two more days to sell shoes and make that money.

AL: By that time, we'll have sold shoes to everyone and their horse! Ha, ha! I feel like the salesman my father used to be. Come on, you two - get ready for those customers. The Wearit Shoe Store is now open for business!

(AL, SANDY, GLADYS freeze in tableau; they exit, after a beat, when the next scene's music begins.)

SCENE FOUR

(The magical ELVES music plays; during this, the COBBLER enters and shoes in the display case are struck; some empty boxes are left lying about the stage. She turns the "OPEN" sign to "CLOSED." Once this is done, the COBBLER exits, the music stops and we hear the sound of the ELVES entering from the back of the house, as before. They ad lib whispered conversation until they reach the stage proper.)

SHOEHORN: I'd say this turned out to be a profitable day for all of us. The Wearits sold all the shoes we made--

LACES: --and they got rid of you-know-who with those sequined specials I dreamed up--

TOESHOES: --and everyone's happy!

WADERS: Now can we play "Go, Fish?"

SHOEHORN: Not yet.

BOOTS: But I still don't see what we get out of the whole thing.

SHOEHORN: The satisfaction of knowing we helped deserving people.

BOOTS: ***(looking about the store)*** They're deserving of some cleaning help. I'll say that.

LACES: Just remember: Sandy is the one we're really here for.

BOOTS: I admit - I've got a soft spot for the kid. So what's planned for tonight, Shoehorn? More midnight footwear?

SHOEHORN: I've got some ideas. But first: Boots, are you about finished with those "completely silent shoes?"

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BOOTS: Yup. Ask the impossible and I'm the elf who'll get it done. But I'm not entirely sure that magical shoes like that really belong on human feet.

LACES: That's not your decision to make.

SHOEHORN: Laces, any ideas for some glamorous, new style to really wow Mrs. Leathers?

LACES: *(pulling a handful of feathers from her pocket, or bag)* I'm thinking. . . blue feathers!

BOOTS: Good grief!

SHOEHORN: All right! Do we have everything else we need for our work?

TOESHOES: Think so.

WADERS: Round two, here we come.

SHOEHORN: We've got to finish quickly. And do even better than we did before. Elves, start cobbling!

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