

A fairy tale adapted for the youngest ears

The Cobbler and the Elves



As told by Brandi Chase
Illustrated by Erin Vaganos



A hardworking cobbler and his wife need help to make ends meet. They get help from a surprising source and find a great way to say “thank you!”

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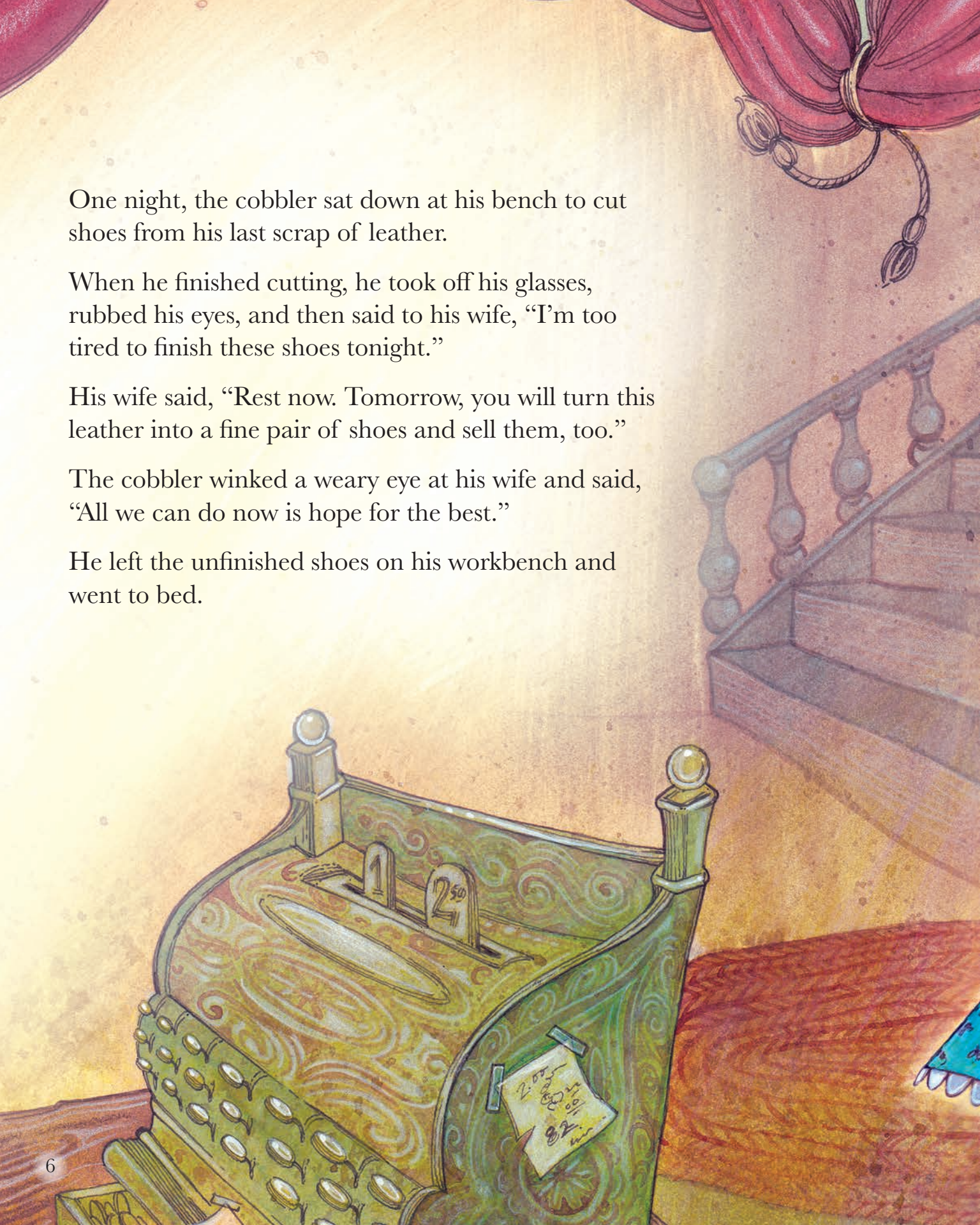
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Not so long ago, a cobbler lived with his wife above their shoe shop. Even though this cobbler was a hard-working fellow, he did not sell very many shoes. People were buying factory-made shoes instead of hand-made ones.



One night, the cobbler sat down at his bench to cut shoes from his last scrap of leather.

When he finished cutting, he took off his glasses, rubbed his eyes, and then said to his wife, "I'm too tired to finish these shoes tonight."

His wife said, "Rest now. Tomorrow, you will turn this leather into a fine pair of shoes and sell them, too."

The cobbler winked a weary eye at his wife and said, "All we can do now is hope for the best."

He left the unfinished shoes on his workbench and went to bed.





The next day the cobbler woke bright and early, ready to work. To his surprise he found perfectly finished shoes in place of the leather he had left the night before!

Astonished, the cobbler and his wife looked around the room. Apart from the shoes, there was no sign anyone had been there at all.

The shoes sold straight away, for much more than the cobbler expected. He now had enough money to buy leather to make two more pairs of shoes.





That night the cobbler cut the leather before bed, planning to finish the shoes the next day.

This time he woke to discover two pairs of perfectly finished shoes! Again, they sold for more than expected. The cobbler was able to purchase enough leather for four more pairs of shoes.







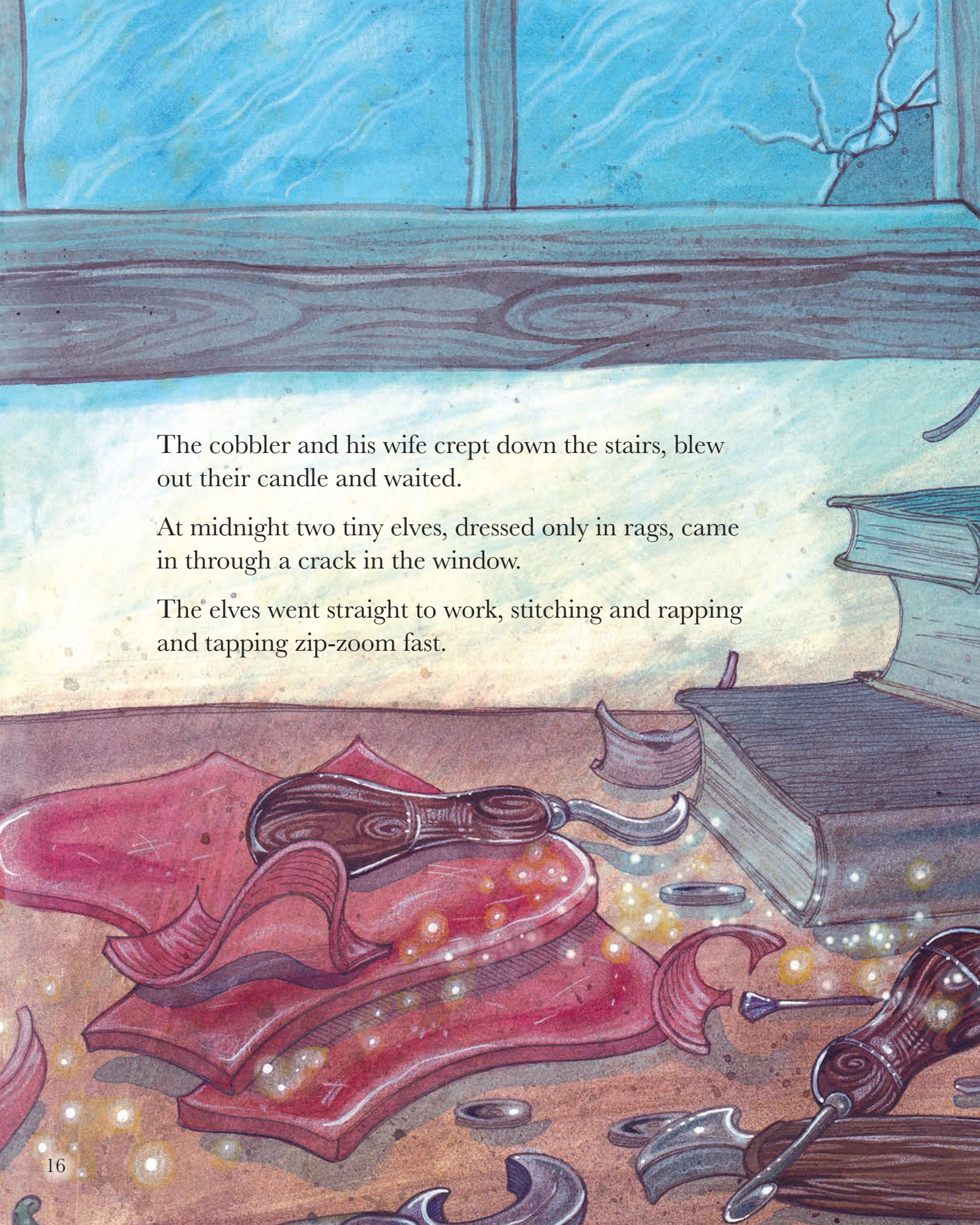
And so it went for some time. Every night the cobbler cut the leather. Every morning he woke to discover perfectly finished shoes. Every day the shoes sold for more than expected. Every day he was able to buy more leather. The cobbler and his wife soon sold enough shoes to live without worry.

One evening the cobbler's wife said, "Our lives are much better now. I wonder who has been helping us all this time?"

The cobbler winked a cheery eye at his wife and said, "I don't know about you, but I'm not the slightest bit sleepy! Let's wait up and see what happens."







The cobbler and his wife crept down the stairs, blew out their candle and waited.

At midnight two tiny elves, dressed only in rags, came in through a crack in the window.

The elves went straight to work, stitching and rapping and tapping zip-zoom fast.



When the shoes were finished, the elves frolicked and pranced in a circle, chanting:

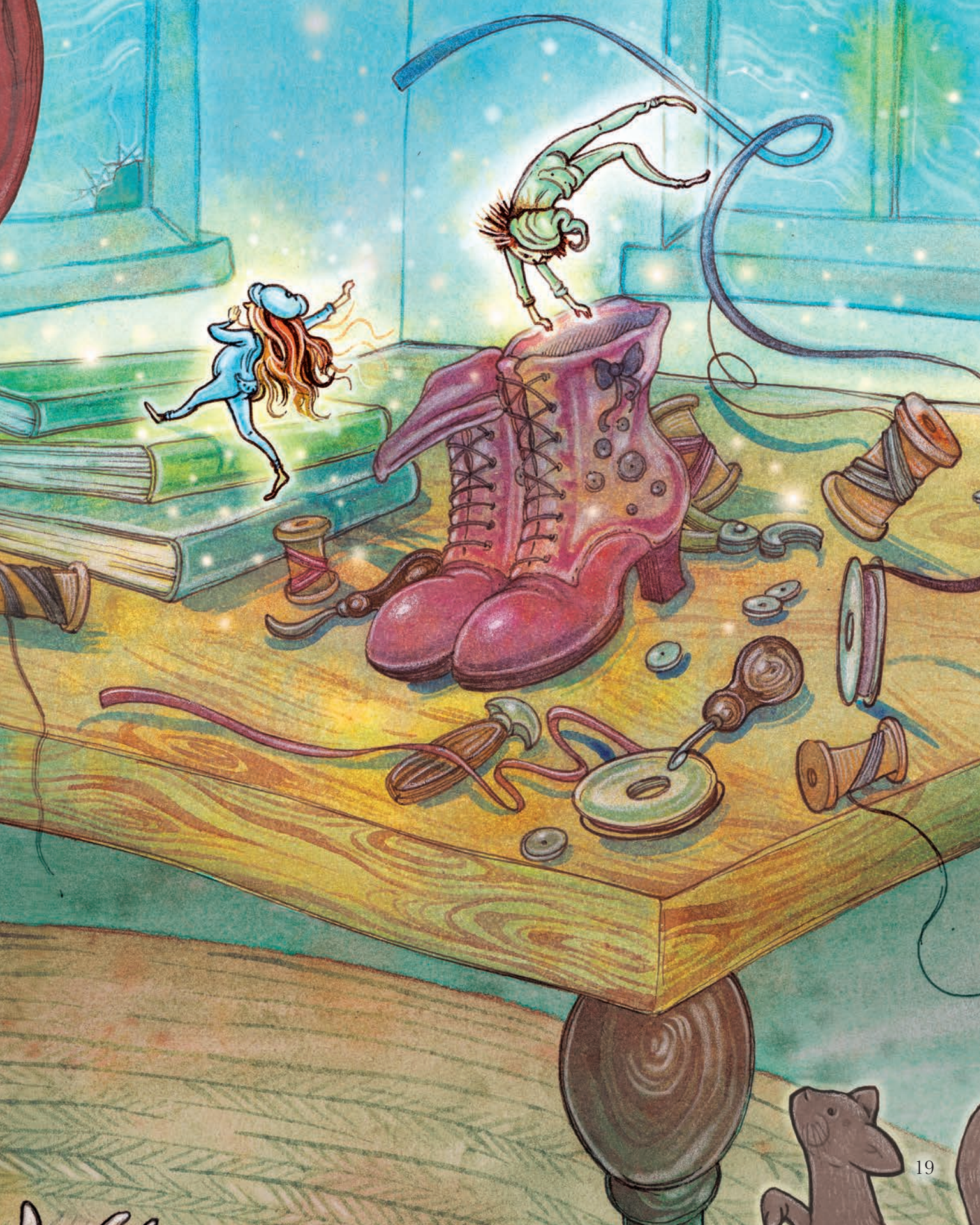
*We two cobblers work late at night,
Still every stitch is stitched just right!*

...then they scampered out again.

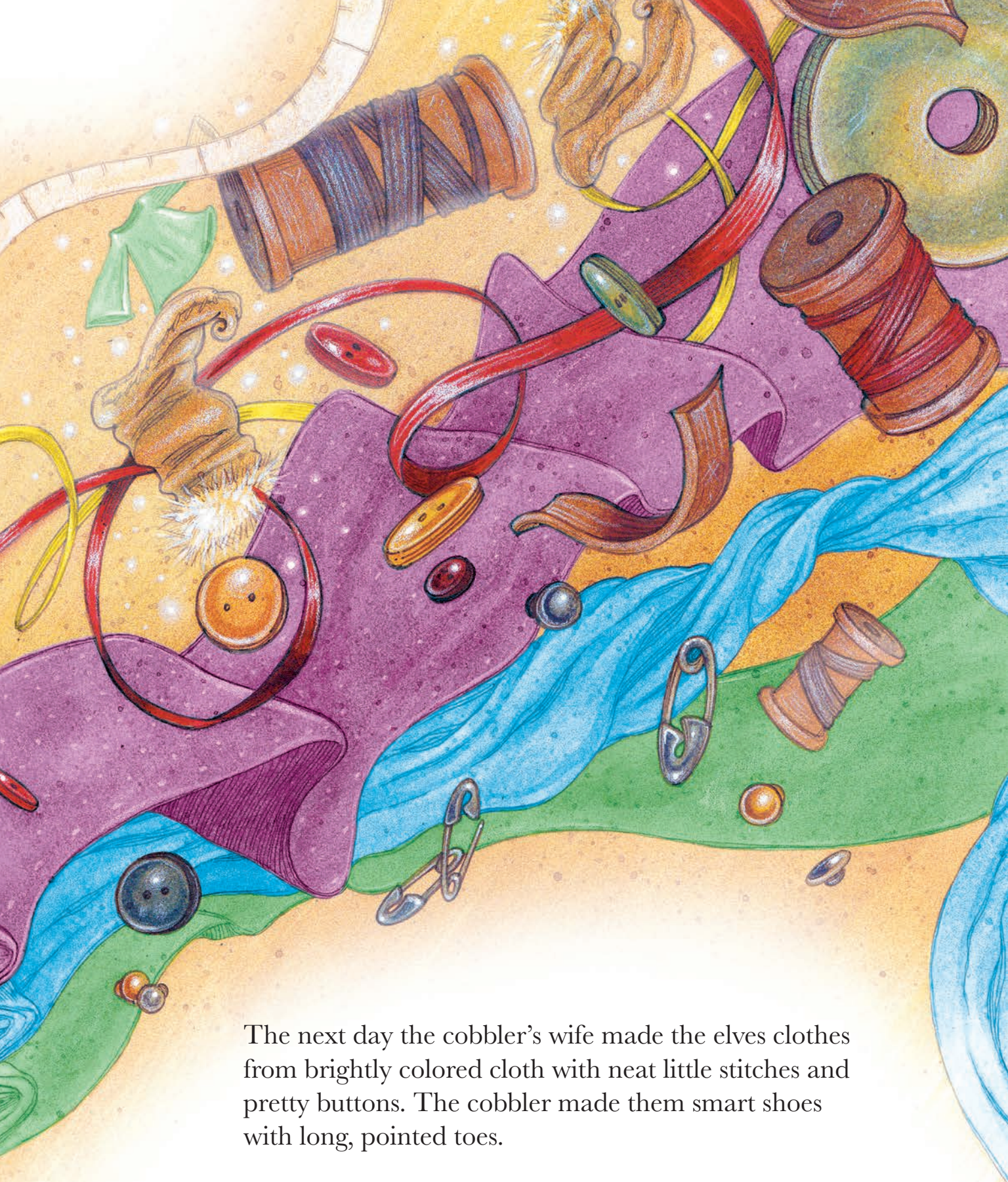
“My goodness!” said the cobbler with gratitude.

“What can we do to thank them?”









The next day the cobbler's wife made the elves clothes from brightly colored cloth with neat little stitches and pretty buttons. The cobbler made them smart shoes with long, pointed toes.

That night the cobbler and his wife laid out the gifts,
then waited as before to see what would happen.

The elves arrived at midnight. At first they were
astonished to find the clothes and shoes instead of
leather, but soon laughed with joy.

They put on the gifts, then frolicked and pranced in a
circle, chanting:

*We were cobblers, yes it's true—
But now our cobbling days are through!*

...then they scampered out through the window.







The cobbler and his wife never saw the elves again, but thanks to their help lived a long happy life free of worry.

About the Author

Brandi Chase was diagnosed with leukemia in her mid-thirties and endured two-and-a-half years of treatment for her disease. During this time she had help from elves of her own. Some mornings she would wake to find her garden beds weeded. A knock on the door would precede cards or gifts of encouragement. From time to time a meal would appear on the dining table. She will never forget the kindness of these elves and dedicates this story to them.

About the Illustrator

Erin Vaganos grew up in an underground house her parents built. She grew up among various critters — and a sister! Erin likes to collect fossils, read adventure stories with plucky heroes and fearsome beasts, hike the wide wilderness, and fly planes. Today she lives with her husband Anthony and spunky dog Juno in Philadelphia where they love to dine on local fare such as cheese steaks and Italian ice.

