

T H E S H O E M A K E R ' S T A L E

B Y L E W I S S H I N E R

Okay, so once upon a time there was this shoemaker, this was back when people made shoes by hand, okay? He was really poor and the IRS was shafting him and the SBA was trying to call in his loan and he'd had to lay off all his employees who then sued him and called for federal arbitration. So he's in really bad shape. Besides he's old and his eyes are going bad and he can barely manage to get any shoes made at all.

But in spite of all that he's a pretty nice guy and he's got a good heart and everything. And every night before he goes to sleep he kneels down by his bed and prays to the King for help.

So one night he wakes up and there's all kinds of loud music and bright lights coming from his workshop. At first he's terrified, then he recognizes the music: "Now or Never." He creeps out of bed and looks through a knothole in the wall and sees them.

There's about a hundred of them, no more than three feet tall, pudgy little guys running around his workshop, making shoes like crazy. All of them with their jet black hair and sideburns and their jewel-studded white leather jumpsuits.

"It's true," the old shoemaker whispers. "The elvises have come to save me."

He goes back to bed, but he's so excited he can't really sleep.

He lies there till dawn when he hears, faintly, a voice say, "Ladies and Gentlemen, the elvises have left the building."

Then he gets back out of bed and goes into the workshop, and when he sees what they've done he clutches his chest and sits down on his workbench. "This is really cool and all," he says. "But what am I going to do with 500 pairs of blue suede shoes?"

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