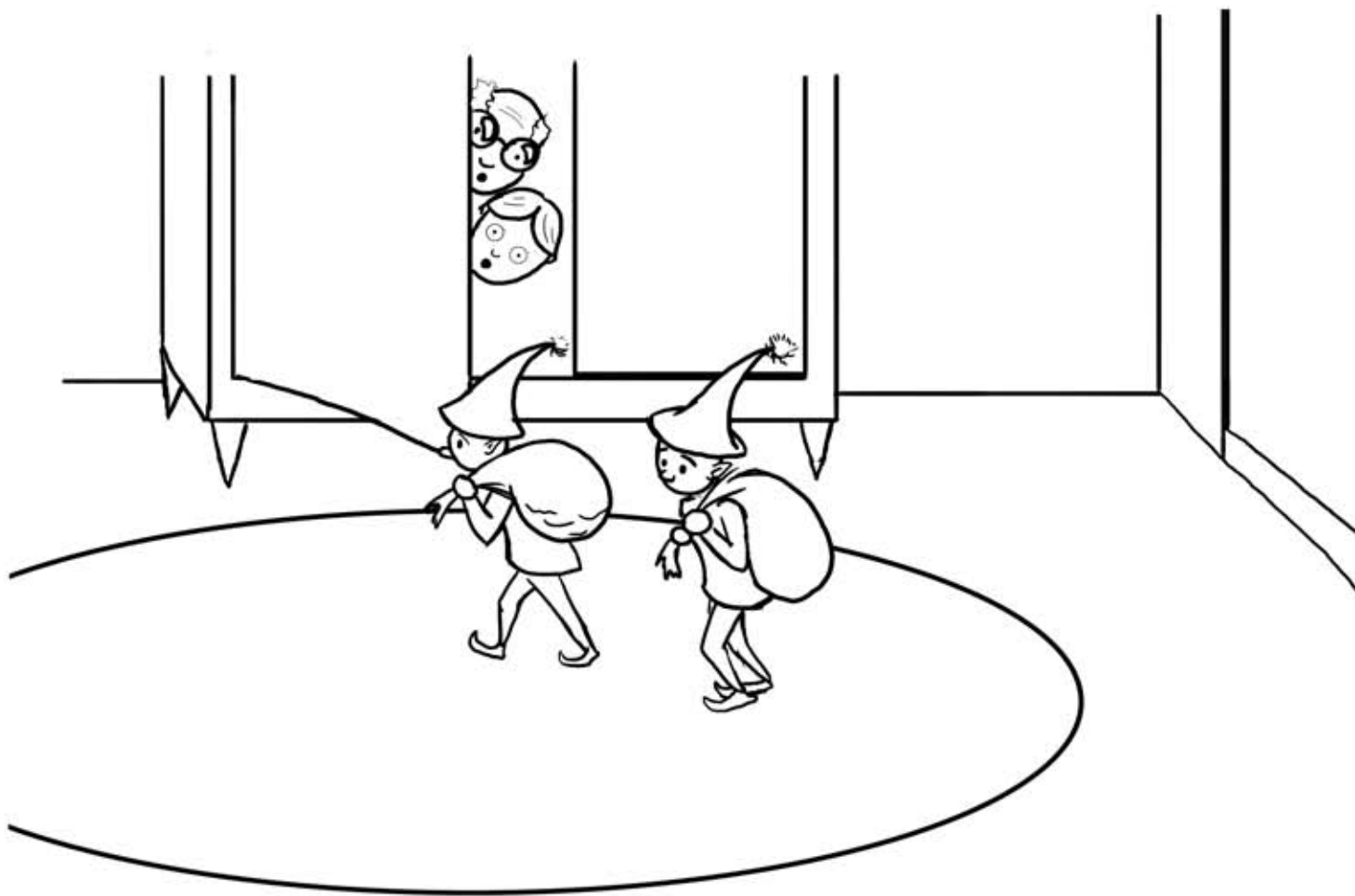


One evening the shoemaker and his wife were sitting by the fire, when suddenly he declared, "I must find out who has been helping us!"

That night, he and his wife hid in the cupboards of his workshop, waiting for the mysterious helpers to appear.



When the clock struck midnight, the shoemaker and his wife heard a noise. Two tiny men, each with a bag of tools, were squeezing in through a small crack under the door. They clambered onto the workbench and began to sew, humming as they worked.

"My, those elves are so small," the wife whispered. "They have done so much good for us. Since it is nearly Christmas, we should make some gifts for them."