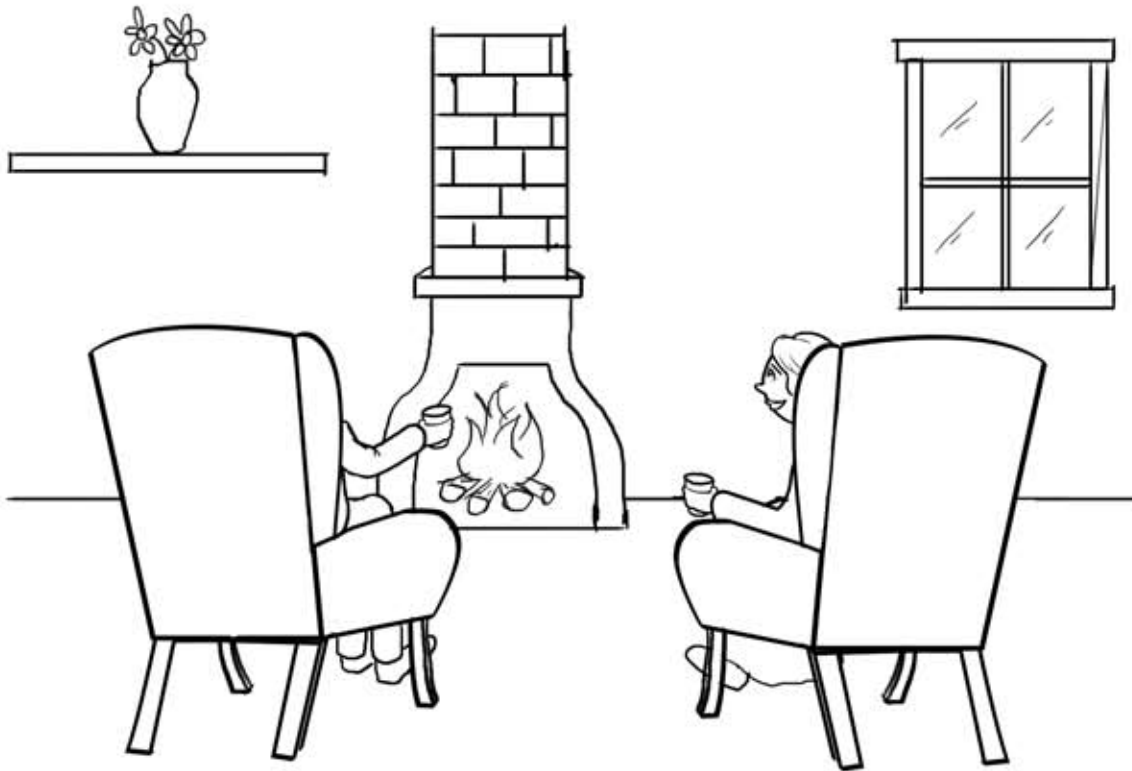




After Christmas, the shoemaker cut out his leather as he always had, and laid the pieces out on the table at night. But the two elves never returned. "I believe they heard us whispering," said his wife. "Elves are so very shy when it comes to people, you know."

"I know. I will miss their help," the shoemaker said, "but we will manage. The shop is always so busy now. But my stitches will never be as tight and small as theirs!" The shoemaker did continue to prosper, but he and his family always remembered the good elves who had helped them during the hard times. And each and every Christmas Eve, they gathered around the fire to drink a toast to their tiny friends.



THE END!

