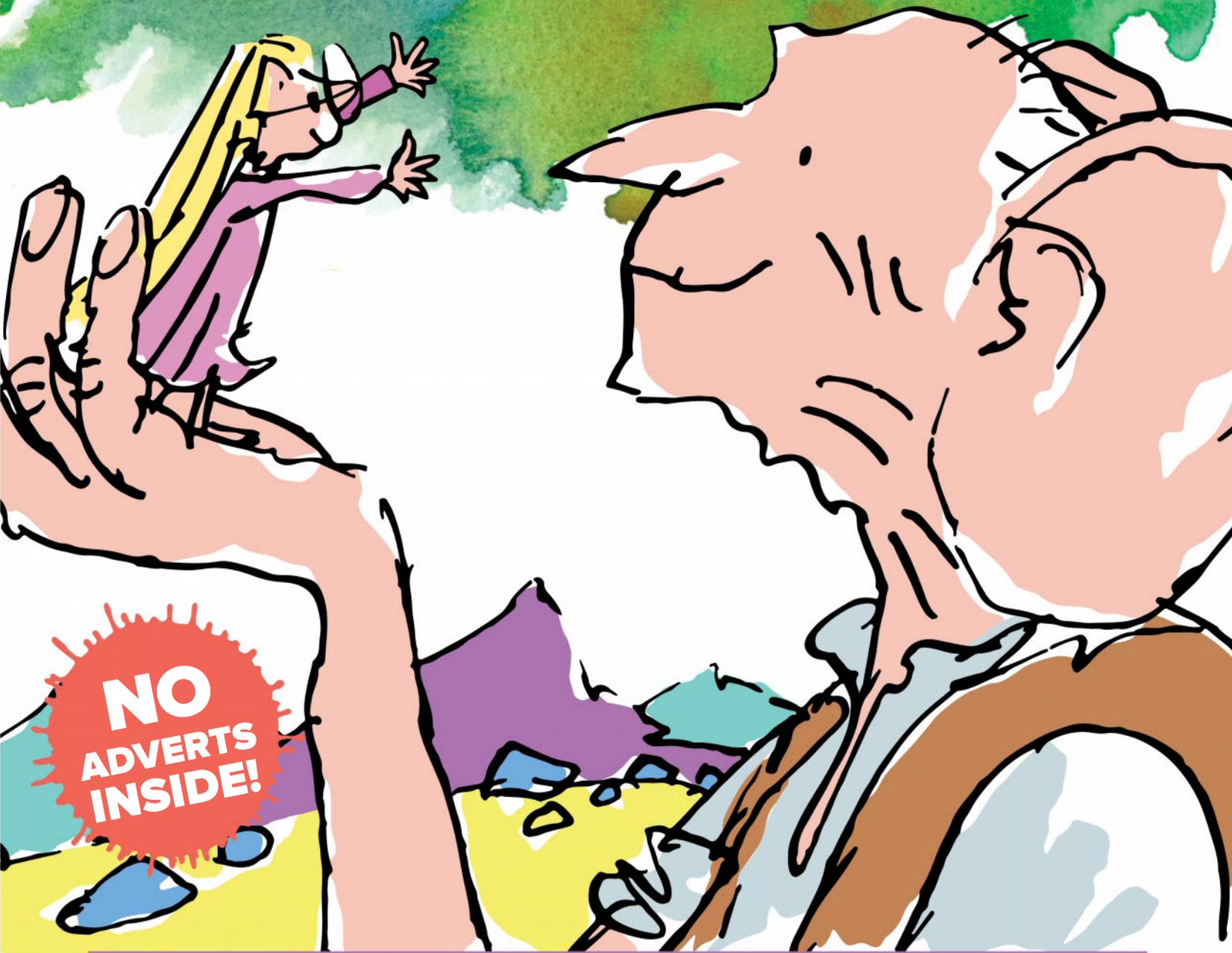


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Why Whales Swim in the Sea



Long ago in far-off Patagonia, the whale was a giant of an animal who lived on land. She had four little legs and was known as Goos.

Goos lived in the grassy meadows, near to a group of people known as the Tehuelche. Goos liked the Tehuelche folk and they liked her too. Because Goos was so big and heavy, and her legs were so small, she couldn't move around much, so she spent most of her time sitting in the grass, watching the world go by. She liked to watch the cougars stalking by and look at the condors flying in the sky. Sometimes, she'd watch the people going about their business.



One day, Goos watched the young members of the Tehuelche heading off for a day of hunting and she began to feel restless. “Oh, I wish it wasn’t so difficult to walk around,” she sighed. “I wish I could see more of the world – just like these people do.”

Poor, bored Goos broke into a huge, gaping yawn – and her mouth was so big and her breath so strong, she accidentally sucked in the trees, all the huts in front of her and all of the remaining Tehuelche villagers! When she opened her eyes, she wondered why everyone had disappeared!

With nothing to look at any more, Goos lumbered away to the woods, where she fell fast asleep. When the hunters returned later that day, they were shocked to find that their homes and families were gone. “Thieves!” they cried. “Kidnappers!” they all shouted. “Where are our families?”

But the bravest and wisest of the Tehuelche people, a man named Elal, calmed everyone down and offered to lead the search for their missing villagers. He spotted a huge patch in the meadow where the grass had been flattened, and saw a trail of footprints. “Goos!” he thought. →



Find It!

Can you find Patagonia on a map? It’s an area in South America that stretches across two countries, Argentina and Chile. What do you think it’s like to live in Patagonia? Do children play the same games and have the same toys as you do?



Elal followed the trail into the woods and saw the snoozing whale. As he drew nearer, the leaves crunched beneath his feet, and Goos fidgeted restlessly, then let out a giant yawn. Elal was shocked to see that as Goos yawned, she sucked in the branches of the tree in front of her, along with some birds that were nesting there.

Elal ran towards the whale and shook her as hard as he could. “Goos!” he cried. “Goos, you must wake up!”

But Goos was fast asleep and having a lovely dream about floating in the air, as light as a feather. Goos let out another yawn and, this time, Elal leapt into the whale’s mouth and tiptoed nervously into her stomach.

In the darkness, he could just make out the Tehuelche villagers huddled in a corner, with their belongings scattered all around. There was even a horse in there! His people were completely overjoyed to see him.

“Okay everyone, grab what you can, then we must tickle Goos to make her stir. When I say so, everyone run towards Goos’s mouth and jump out!”

Elal took the horse by its reins, and they all tickled inside Goos’s tummy. Sleepy Goos twitched and yawned again, and her prisoners sprinted out and leaped onto the ground.

When Goos woke up later, Elal was waiting to speak to her. He told her what had happened and Goos felt terribly sorry. But Elal had an idea.

“You know, we’re not far from the sea, Goos. You could live there. The water will support the weight of your body, and you’ll be able to see the world!”

Goos thought this was a brilliant plan, so the next morning, Goos, Elal and the Tehuelche people set off for the beach. When Goos walked into the sea, the feeling of water supporting her body was so wonderful, she realised that she was truly home. She said farewell to her friends and, at last, began the exciting life of adventure she had always longed for. **And that is why whales swim in the sea!** 🌀



Sif's Golden Hair

Nobody liked to make mischief more than the Norse god Loki – and this is the tale of one of his most foolish and fiendish tricks.

Sif was the goddess of harvests and was famous for her long, golden tresses – the healthier her hair looked, the better the harvest was. She was also the wife of Thor – the god of thunder. Thor greatly admired his wife's shining hair, and she liked to care for it to make it look as beautiful as possible. Every night and every morning, without fail, she combed her golden locks one hundred times.



One summer's day, Sif had finished her work and had fallen asleep in the garden with her lustrous hair spread around her. When Loki spotted her, he had an idea for terrible mischief – an idea he couldn't resist.

He grabbed a pair of scissors and, while Sif slept peacefully, Loki cut off her beautiful locks. By the time he had finished, her head was almost bare.

When Thor returned later that day, Sif wasn't waiting to greet him as usual. He called out her name, but there was no answer. Eventually, he heard a sob.

Sif stepped out from her hiding place with her head covered by a veil, and cried, "Oh, Thor, something terrible has happened." When she pulled away the veil, Thor could barely recognise his wife. Her beautiful hair was all gone! ➔



“Who did this, Sif?” stormed Thor.

“I don’t know,” she sobbed. “I fell asleep after tending the crops and when I woke, my hair had been shorn. What will happen to the harvest?”

Thor was enraged. “We must go to Odin’s council and find out who did this wicked deed!”

So Thor and Sif hurried to the council, where the gods were stunned to see Sif without her usual long golden hair.

Odin and the gods whispered among themselves. It didn’t take long for them to reach the conclusion that Loki was the culprit.

“No other god in Asgard would cause such trouble,” sighed Odin.

“Then I will find him and punish him!” thundered Thor.

“No!” said Odin. “You will do no such thing! I will summon Loki here, and I will choose his punishment.”

FIND IT!

Sif has lost her comb somewhere in this picture. Tick this box when you find it!



And so Odin let out his special call – a call that couldn't be ignored. Loki was in hiding, but he heard Odin and knew he had no choice but to go to the council of the gods.

When he arrived and saw the rage in Thor's face, the sorrow in Sif's eyes and Odin's stern expression, he knew he had gone too far this time.

“Your foolishness has brought great shame on Sif and threatened the harvest for everyone, Loki. You must

do as I say – restore her golden locks as soon as possible. Or else...”

Loki gulped. He didn't want to find out what “or else” meant, but he had no idea how to bring back Sif's hair. “Yes, Odin, as you wish,” mumbled Loki, and he bowed before the council.



Loki had angered so many gods with his endless tricks that the only beings he could ask for help were the dwarfs. ➔





Loki made his way down into the secret tunnels that wound deep into the belly of the earth. At last, he came to the hot forges, where the dwarfs lived, who were all master blacksmiths. Nobody could work metal like the dwarfs. This gave Loki an idea, and he began to shower them with praise.

When the dwarfs were well and truly flattered, Loki asked, “My dear, clever friends, do you have a bar of gold, from which you could hammer a fine head of hair, fit for a goddess? Are you skilled enough to make such a thing?”

The dwarfs were keen to impress their smooth-talking guest and immediately set to work on melting and hammering a bar of gold. They did it over and over again, until it was finally transformed into a wig of millions of delicate, pure golden hairs. It was the finest work they had ever created. It was pure glittering gold, yet as light as a feather!

The dwarfs proudly handed the golden hair to Loki, who flattered them again and promised rewards and honours they would never get, then he took their handiwork and left for Asgard.

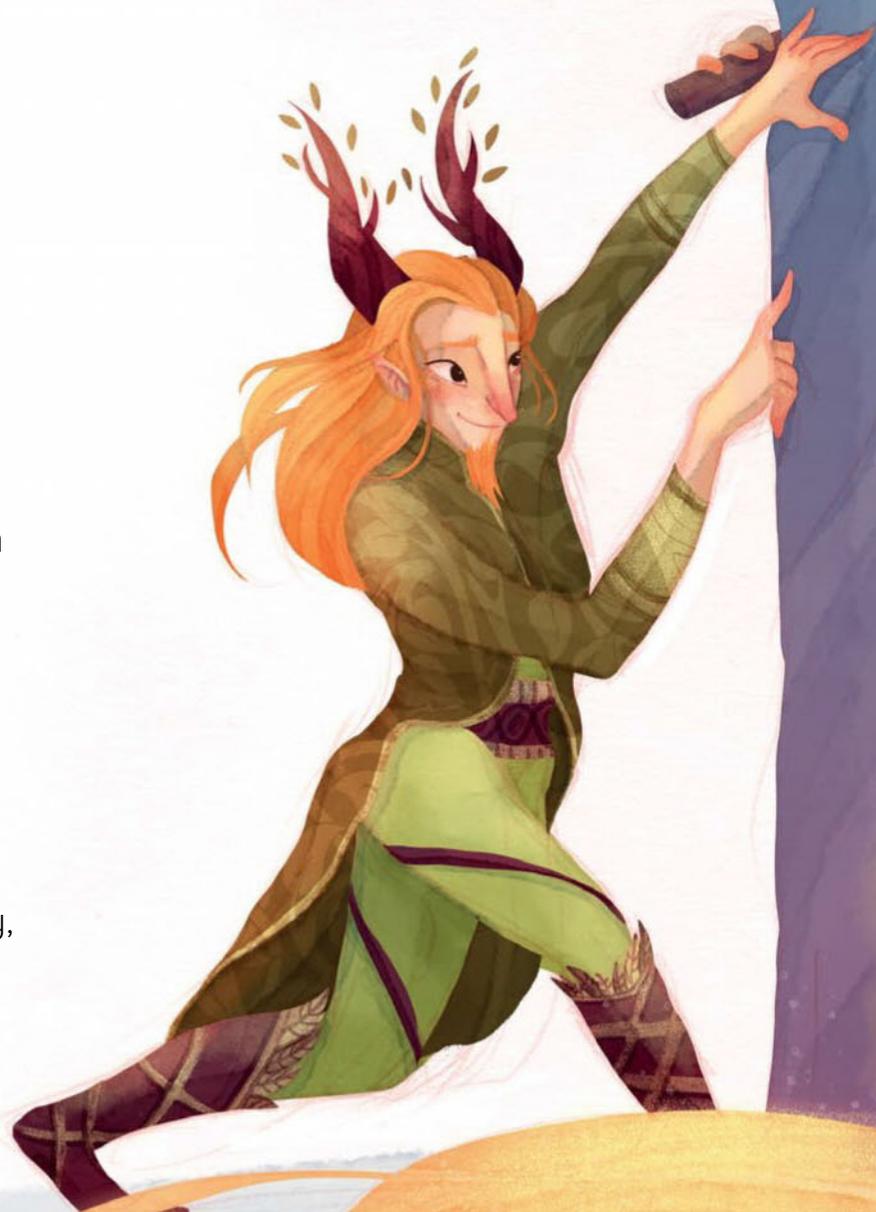


At the council, Odin greeted Loki coldly, but when he produced the beautifully

crafted hair the dwarfs had created for Sif, the council fell silent in awe.

Sif placed the hair on her head and it cascaded over her shoulders and down to the floor, shimmering like the sun. It was better, brighter and more beautiful than her old hair had ever been, and it looked like it had always been there. The harvest was saved!

The gods clapped and cheered with delight, Sif was overjoyed, and Loki – mischievous Loki – got away with his bad behaviour for one more day. 🌀





In Norse mythology, the trickster Loki loved getting up to no good. One of the strangest stories tells of how Loki turned into a mare and gave birth to an eight-legged foal, which became Odin's favourite horse!

Minnie and Winnie

By Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Minnie and Winnie
Slept in a shell.
Sleep, little ladies!
And they slept well.

Pink was the shell within,
Silver without;
Sounds of the great sea
Wandered about.



**Sleep little ladies!
Wake not soon!
Echo on echo
Dies to the moon.**

**Two bright stars
Peeped into the shell,
What are they dreaming of?
Who can tell?**

**Flew a green linnet
Out of the croft;
Wake, little ladies,
The sun is aloft!**

SAY IT!

Can you say this tongue-twister three times? How quickly can you say it?

“She sells seashells at the seashore”

Do you know any more tongue-twisters, or can you make one up?

The Money Snake

There was once a farmer who toiled all day long in his field, but nothing ever grew for him. However hard he worked, the land remained bare.

One day, exhausted by the heat and hard labour, the farmer fell asleep in the shade of a tree. When he opened his eyes, he was surprised to see a beautiful snake with a spectacular hood slip out from a nearby hole.

“A-ha!” thought the farmer. “Perhaps this explains my bad luck. Maybe the snake is the true owner of this field? I will leave a gift for the magnificent beast and see what happens.”



That evening, when he had finished digging yet again, he returned to his farmhouse, poured a saucer of milk and brought it to the entrance of the snake's home. "Wonderful serpent," he called. "Please forgive me – I did not know that you were the rightful owner and protector of this field. I bring you a gift of thanks for letting me plant my crops here." The farmer felt a little silly, but he left the saucer and hoped for the best.



The following morning, the farmer rose bright and early, and went to the field to see what had happened. There in the bowl was a shiny silver coin – it was equal in value to a whole day's wage. The farmer was delighted!

He worked all day in the field again and, that evening, he poured more milk into the snake's bowl. The next morning, the same thing happened – he was greeted by the sight of a shiny silver coin.

And so it went on. Every day, the farmer would bring milk for the snake, and the snake would leave a coin. The field even started to sprout crops!

The weeks went by, the crops grew higher and the farmer had got so much money, he decided to treat his family. He planned to go to the local market, which was a day's ride away. 



“Son, I will be away for a few days. The crops are tall and healthy, so I ask just one thing of you – every evening, please leave a bowl of milk for my good friend, the snake.”

The son thought it was a strange request, but he agreed, and the farmer went happily on his way, dreaming of the delicious treats he might buy.



That evening, the son filled the bowl with milk, and when he went to fetch it the next day, he found a shiny coin.

“Ha!” thought the son. “This is where Father got his money! What a fool he is! Instead of wasting our fresh milk,

he could just dig up this hole, kill the snake, and take all the coins at once!”

So that night, he filled the bowl with milk and hid behind the tree, waiting for the snake to slither out. It wasn't long before he heard a hiss and saw the snake sipping eagerly from the bowl. The son leapt forward and struck the snake as hard as he could with a club. The snake was flung into the air, but when it landed, it darted forward and bit the son on the leg.



HIDDEN TREASURES!

Can you find five silver coins hiding in our pictures? Tick this box when you've found them all.



The greedy son limped home, wailing all the way, and his mother bandaged his wound. When the farmer returned and found out what had happened, he shook his head with shame. “Son, I’m afraid you got what you deserved.”

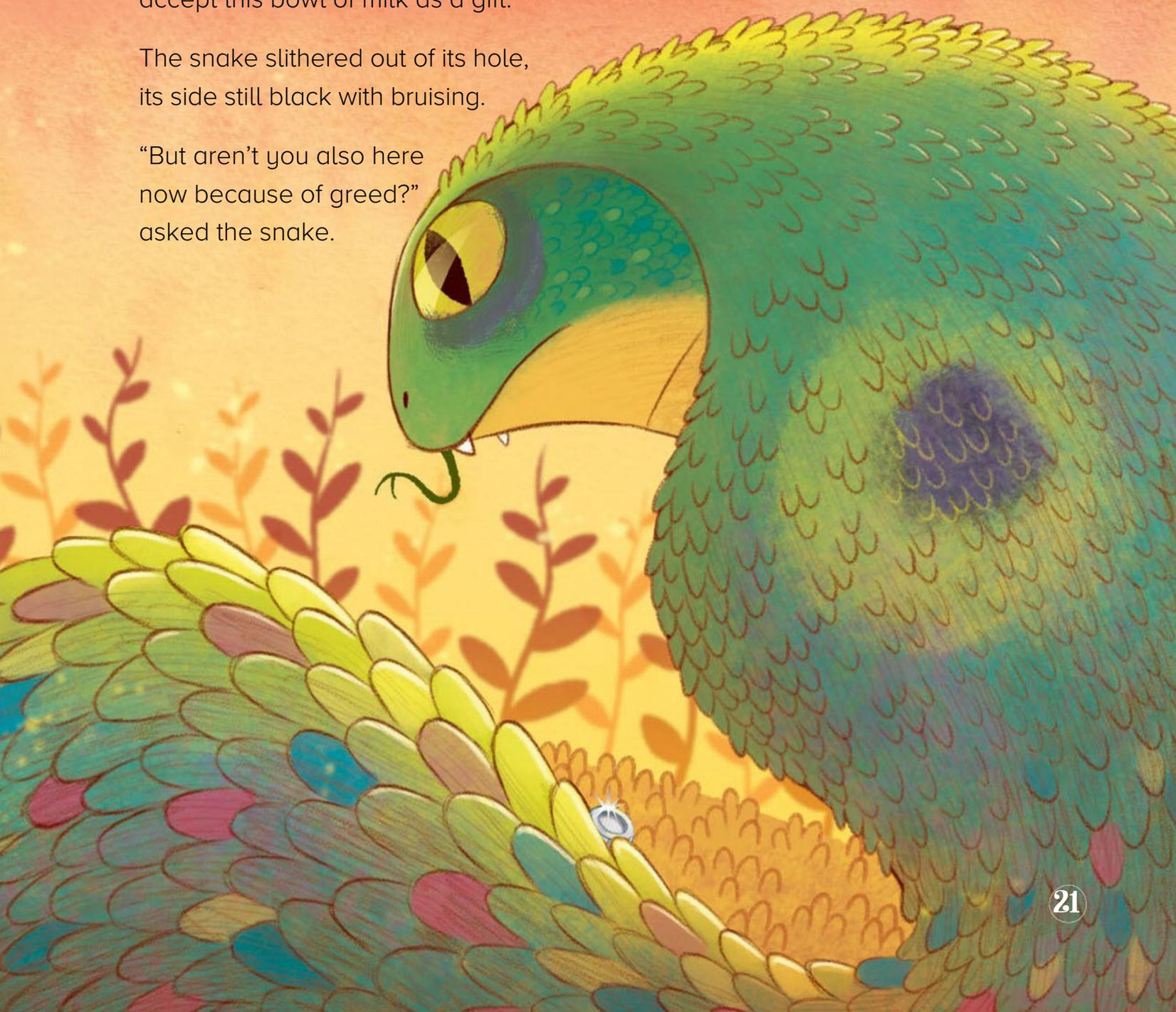
He took a bowl of fresh, creamy milk to the snake’s hole, where he knelt down and said, “Dear snake, please forgive my son’s foolish greed. Please accept this bowl of milk as a gift.”

The snake slithered out of its hole, its side still black with bruising.

“But aren’t you also here now because of greed?” asked the snake.

“I can forgive your son, but I cannot forget the pain he has caused me and the fear he made me feel. You can harvest the field, but I will no longer be exchanging gifts with you.” And the snake quickly disappeared into the hole, never to be seen again.

And that’s how the farmer and his foolish son learnt that **it’s better to give kindness than gifts.** 🌀



The Fantastic Fox

Once upon a time, there was a king who loved his palace gardens very much. He was especially proud of a tree that grew golden apples.



However, every night, a golden apple would go missing. This angered the king greatly, so he asked the elder, and favourite, of his two sons to guard the tree and catch the thief.

The elder son settled down by the tree, but as the night grew darker, he fell asleep and, in the morning, another apple was missing.

The king was rather annoyed, so he asked his younger son to guard the tree instead. Eager to prove himself, the young prince stayed awake and, at the stroke of midnight, he saw a fabulous bird gliding towards the tree. It had shining golden feathers!

The golden bird landed on the tree, plucked a golden apple and hastily flew away. The prince quickly shot an arrow at the bird, which sent a single golden feather fluttering down.

When he showed the feather to his father, the king declared it the most

precious thing he had ever seen – so precious that he decided he wanted the whole bird! However, much to his younger son’s disappointment, the king sent his elder son in search of the golden bird instead of him.



Off went the older brother and, before long, he met a fox. He raised his bow and arrow to shoot, but the fox said, “Don’t shoot me, sir! I have some good advice. When you reach the next village you will find two inns – one will look full of cheer, and the other will seem dull. Don’t go into the merry one – it’s enchanted!”

“Why should I listen to you?” said the brother, and he raised his arrow again, but the fox darted away. →





When he reached the next village and saw the quiet inn, the older brother ignored it and strolled into the merry one, where there was music, dancing and enchantment in the air – and there he stayed, forever forgetting his mission to find the golden bird.



A few months passed and the elder son didn't return. "Please let me look for the golden bird for you," begged the younger son. He nagged the king so much, he eventually gave in.

The prince set off the next morning and, like his brother before him, he met the fox on the road.

"Good morning, fox! How are you?" said the prince. The fox was pleased not to have to beg for his life – and to meet such a polite young man.

"May I offer you a ride to the next village?" asked the fox, and he invited the prince to take a seat on his back. They raced over the fields, and the fox gave the prince the same advice about the two inns. The young prince thanked him and paid attention, and he spent that night in the shabby inn, where he had a deep and restful sleep.

The next morning, the prince was surprised to find the fox waiting for him. "I can lead you to your golden bird," said the fox. "Climb on my back!"



And so the prince sat on the fox's back and off they sped again until they reached an old castle.

"Go through the gates and past the sleeping soldiers in the courtyard," advised the fox. "Don't worry – they won't wake. In the castle, you'll find the golden bird in a wooden cage."

The young prince followed the fox's instructions, but when he found the golden bird, he saw an intricate golden cage right next to it.

"The golden bird should be in this wonderful cage, not an old wooden one!" he thought, and he transferred the prized bird to the golden cage. Just as he did so, the bird squawked

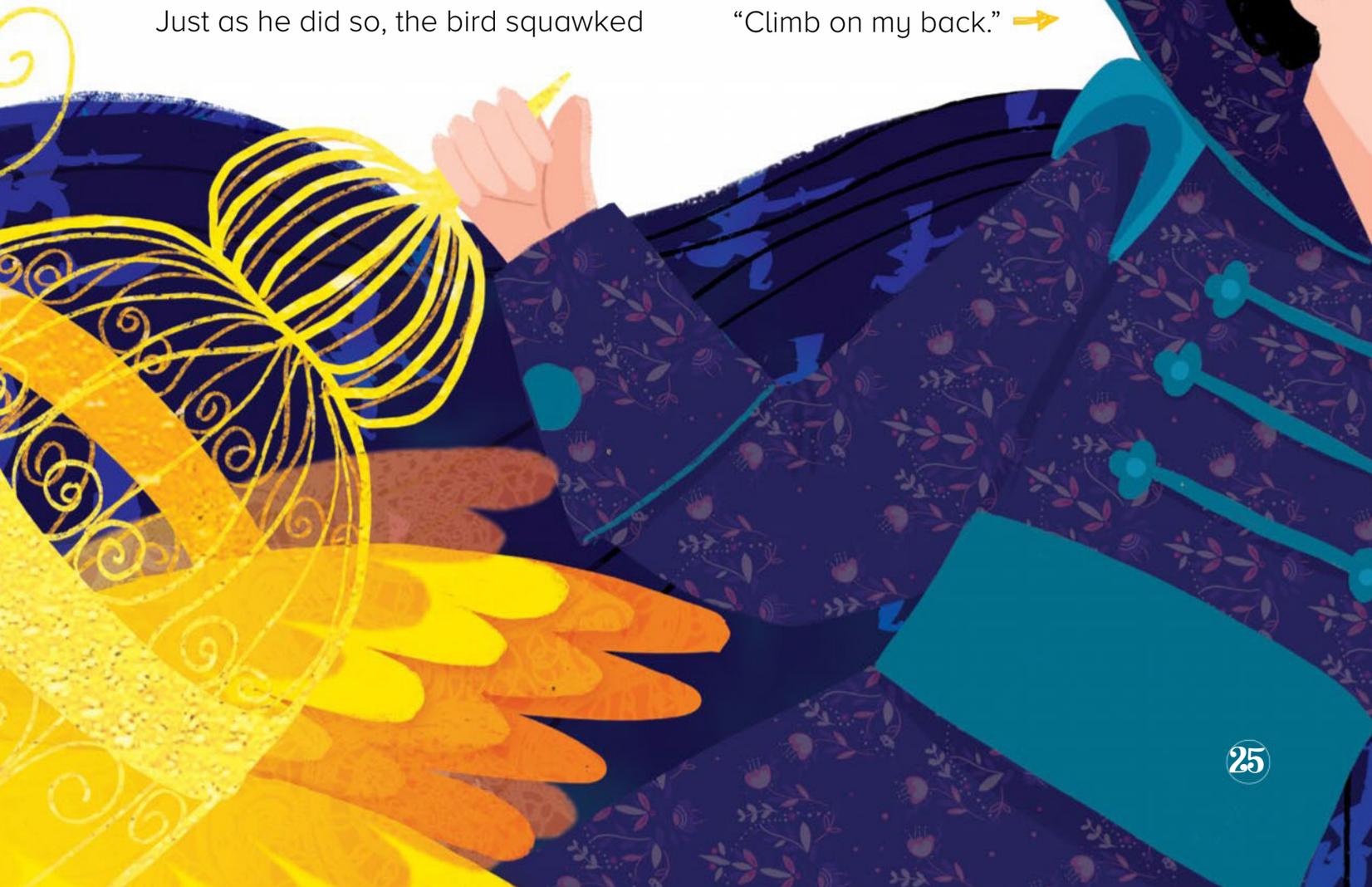
and all the soldiers in the courtyard woke up. They dashed in and dragged the prince to the baron who owned the castle. He was furious, but he also admired the young prince's bravery.

"I will spare your life and give you this golden bird," he said, "if you can bring me the golden horse that can run faster than the wind."

The prince agreed, but truly he had no idea how to find such a horse.

He left the baron's castle feeling gloomy, but was pleased to find the fox waiting for him. "I will help you find the golden horse," said the fox.

"Climb on my back." →



So the young prince sat on the fox's back and



they sped off until they came to another castle.



Spot It!

Can you find these three close-up images in the picture? Tick the boxes when you find them.



When they arrived, the fox said, “Make your way to the stables, walk past the sleeping grooms and you’ll find the golden horse in there. Be sure to bring it out as it is.”

Everything was just as the fox had said, and the prince found the golden horse wearing a battered old leather saddle. Hanging next to him was a glinting golden saddle. “Surely such a horse deserves to wear a golden saddle?” thought the prince, and he quickly swapped the saddles around.

Just as he did so, the golden horse neighed loudly and woke the grooms, who dragged the prince before the lord who owned the castle. “I can see you are a daring young fellow,” said the lord, “so I will spare your life and give you the golden horse, if you can bring me the beautiful princess who lives in the golden castle.”

The prince had no choice but to agree, and he set off once more with a heavy heart. He was relieved to find the fox waiting for him again.

“If you had followed my advice, you wouldn’t be in this trouble,” sighed the fox. “But I will help you find the princess. Climb on my back.”

And so, off they sped again, until they reached a magnificent golden castle.



“At night, the princess bathes in a pool in the garden. Run up to her and take her hand, and she will follow you. But, whatever you do, don’t let her say goodbye to her parents.”



ACT IT OUT!

Download and print out **Fantastic Fox, Prince and Princess Masks** so you can pretend to be some of the characters in this wonderful fairy tale! Visit: www.storytimemagazine.com/free



So the prince waited until it was dark and, at last, he watched the beautiful princess leave the golden castle and step into the pool. As soon as she did so, he sprang out, and took her by the hand. The princess was startled. "I can't just follow you!" she cried. "I must say goodbye to my parents first!" But the prince recalled the fox's advice.

"I promise I will bring you home soon, but I need your help!" And he led her through the gates of the palace. Yet again, the patient fox was waiting.

"Well done!" said the fox. "Now, I can tell you how to leave the lord's castle with both the princess and the golden horse, but you must follow my advice.

"When you're ready to leave, the lord will be busy celebrating, so lean down, take the princess by the hand and pull her into the saddle. Now climb onto my back. There is hard work ahead."

So the prince and princess sped off on the fox to the lord's castle. The lord was overjoyed to meet the beautiful princess. He wanted her for his wife, and announced a grand celebration there and then. He brought out the golden horse, and the prince mounted it and did exactly as the fox had told him. Before the lord knew what was happening, the prince had galloped away, faster than the wind, on the back of the golden horse, with the princess by his side.

They met the fox on the way to the baron's castle. "Now, do the same at the baron's castle," said the fox. →



“When you have the golden bird, gallop away and they will never catch you!”

So the prince followed the fox’s advice once more. Distracted by the sight of a beautiful princess on the golden horse, the baron handed the golden bird to the prince, and they galloped away together, faster than the wind!

On the way back to his father’s castle, they caught up with the fox again.

“Fox, you have done so much to help me. How can I possibly repay you?” asked the young prince.

“You must shoot me!” said the fox.

“But I could never hurt you,” gasped the prince.

“Then I will always be a prisoner. I beg you to shoot me now,” wept the fox.

The prince hated the idea of hurting the fox, but felt he had to honour its request, so they stepped into the trees together. When they stepped out again, the princess was amazed to see her long-lost brother standing where the fox had been. He had been enchanted many years before by a wicked witch, and could only be freed by someone true of heart – like the young prince.

And so the prince whose father didn’t believe in him, returned home that day with a golden bird, a golden horse, the prince whose life he’d saved, and a beautiful princess, who he had fallen in love with. And his father never, ever doubted him again! 🌀



The Laughing Pixie

In the light of the moon, hundreds of little pixies were dancing in the gardens of Tintagel Castle in Cornwall, where good King Arthur had been born.

Round and round they danced in a ring, while a little pixie stood in the centre, playing a merry tune on his fiddle. The air was filled with the sound of magical music and pixie laughter. One pixie, who had the merriest laugh of them all, was whirling around with a friend when, quite suddenly, he fell to the floor, dragging his partner down with him. ➔





The music was so fast, the other pixies couldn't stop dancing, and they were soon tripping over him until there was a heap of tangled pixies in the circle.

The fiddler stopped his fiddling and came to see what had happened. All the pixies stood up, except for the one who had fallen.

"Why did you fall?" asked the fiddler.

"I don't know," said the pixie, feeling overcome with sadness. "I feel odd." The pixie did indeed look ill – and his eyes were full of woe.

"But pixies never get ill!" said the fiddler. "Where's Grandfather Pixie? He'll know what to do!"

Soon a pixie with a wise old face came forward. It was Grandfather Pixie. "Why aren't you all making merry?" he asked, so the fiddler explained what had happened.

"I see," he nodded, inspecting the fallen pixie. "Hmm..." he muttered, as he looked at him more closely. "I'm afraid it isn't good news. This little pixie has lost his laugh!"

The other pixies gasped. "Lost his laugh?" cried the fiddler. The fallen pixie was now sitting on a toadstool, looking very glum indeed.

"Yes, it's very rare," said Grandfather Pixie, "and the only way he can get it back is to go and look for it, or he'll never be a true pixie again."

The poor fallen pixie groaned with dismay and wailed, "Can't anyone help me look for it?"

"Oh no," said Grandfather Pixie. "A lost laugh will only return to its owner. If I were you, I'd start searching for it right now, before it gets away. Look for the Lantern Man – he might have seen your laugh."



And, so the little pixie waved goodbye to his friends and set off to look for the Lantern Man, who lived in the marshes.

He had never known how it felt to be miserable and he didn't like it one bit. But soon enough, he spotted a flash of light coming towards him.

The pixie stood on his tiptoes waving desperately and, when the Lantern Man was close, he shouted, "Lantern Man! Lantern Man! Please stop, I have something to ask you!"

The lantern stopped right by him. It was a wonderful sight – an old metal lantern, which hovered just above the ground, with a little sprite inside whose

whole body glowed with a soft, gentle light. It looked so cosy in there and the Lantern Man had a very kind face. He opened up the lantern and asked, "How can I help you, my friend?"

"I've lost my laugh and Grandfather Pixie said you might have seen it."

"Oh, I'm sorry, little fellow. I haven't seen your laugh. But I might know someone who has. Hop inside and I'll take you to the lake where the Tiny Bargeman lives – he might be able to help you." ➔



The little pixie stepped into the glowing light of the lantern. "Hold tight!" said the Lantern Man, and they whizzed off through the marshes at a terrifying pace. They flew over bogs, moors, rivers and tors until they arrived at a still, moonlit lake.

The Lantern Man stopped at the edge of the lake and the little pixie got out. "Be patient," said the Lantern Man. "The bargeman will be along shortly." And off he sped again.



The pixie sat and waited for a long time and, just as he was about to give up hope, he saw a dim light travelling across the water towards him. It was the Tiny Bargeman.

He looked even older and wiser than Grandfather Pixie and he had a long silvery beard.

"What are you doing here at this time of night?" asked the bargeman.

"I'm a sad little pixie who has lost his laugh. The Lantern Man said you might have seen it," said the pixie.

"How dreadful to lose your laugh," said the bargeman, and he took pity on the wee fellow.

"Step aboard now. I haven't seen your laugh tonight, but I might know somebody who has."

"Where are you taking me?" asked the pixie nervously.

"To a place where an old friend of mine sometimes visits."

So the pixie stepped onto the barge and they sailed away. It wasn't long before they reached the other side of the lake and, just as it seemed the barge was going to crash, the Tiny Bargeman seemed to whisper a spell. The rushes rustled and parted, and they glided into a tunnel and floated into an underground river. The Tiny Bargeman's eyes shone brightly.

"This will take you to the sea, where I think you will be lucky." he said.

"How do you know?" asked the pixie.

"You haven't lived as long as I have without knowing a few things," smiled the bargeman. "You see, everyone calls me the Tiny Bargeman, but I was once known as Merlin the Magician."

Merlin laughed a twinkly sort of laugh.

The pixie was surprised – he had heard tales of Merlin, but thought he had died a long time ago.

“Here we are,” said Merlin, as he pulled up the barge in a rocky cove below Tintagel Castle. “Just climb the stone steps and look for the bird with the red beak when you reach the top. Good luck, my little friend!”



By now, the pixie was exhausted, but he heaved himself onto the rocks and began to scale the steep stony staircase. By the time he reached the top, he was worn out. But as he was catching his breath, he heard a gentle ‘caw’, and there stood a black bird with an elegant curved red beak. ➔



“There stood a black bird with an elegant curved red beak.”

“Dear bird,” said the pixie woefully. “I’ve lost my laugh and I’ve travelled so far to find it. Your friend Merlin said that you might have seen it. I feel so tired and sad. Please can you help me?”

The bird spread out its wings and, in the blink of an eye, transformed into a splendid-looking human, wearing a robe and a crown – the little pixie knew straight away that it must be good King Arthur himself.

“Ah, so it’s *your* laugh, is it?” said King Arthur, chuckling. “Why, I saw it running across the grass just a few minutes ago. It made me laugh till my sides ached when I saw it.”

“My laugh!” cried the pixie excitedly. “Where is it now, good King Arthur?”

Did You Know?

Tintagel Head in Cornwall has been the site of castles for over 700 years and today is home to a fantastic castle ruin. It has been linked to the legends of King Arthur and folklore about pixies and fairies for many years. You can find out more about it from english-heritage.org.uk, who also look after it.

“Oh, if you hurry, it should still be there.”

So the pixie used the last of his energy to scramble over the cliff edge. There, he leapt with excitement to see his laugh tumbling about in the grass.

“Please come back, laugh!” called the pixie, and the laugh gambolled towards him, climbed up his body and vanished into his mouth, leaving a big wide grin on the pixie’s face. How he jumped for joy!

He laughed and danced to the edge of the cliff, and thanked King Arthur. Then he jigged and giggled all the way back home, where he climbed into bed, happier than he had ever been in his life. 🌀



THE BFG

ROALD DAHL



Sophie couldn't sleep.
A brilliant moonbeam was slanting through a gap in the curtains. It was shining right on to her pillow.

The other children in the dormitory had been asleep for hours.

Sophie closed her eyes and lay quite still.
She tried very hard to doze off.

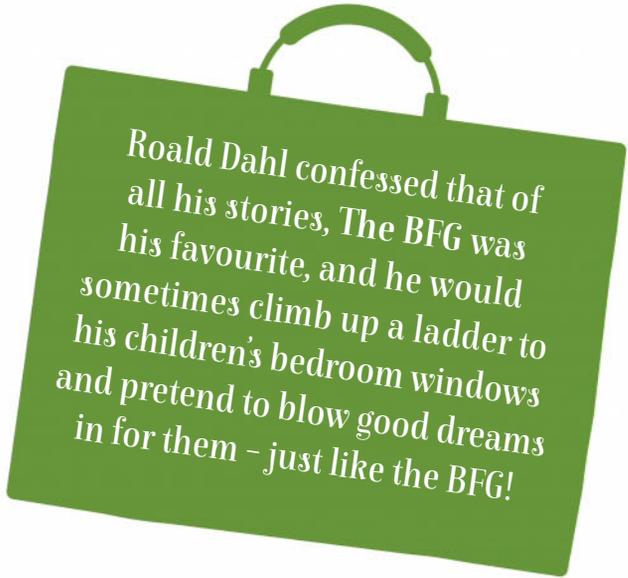
It was no good. The moonbeam was like a silver blade slicing through the room on to her face.

The house was absolutely silent. No voices came up from downstairs.
There were no footsteps on the floor above either.

The window behind the curtain was wide open, but nobody was walking on the pavement outside. No cars went by on the street. Not the tiniest sound could be heard anywhere. Sophie had never known such a silence.



“Everywhere it was deathly still.”



Roald Dahl confessed that of all his stories, *The BFG* was his favourite, and he would sometimes climb up a ladder to his children's bedroom windows and pretend to blow good dreams in for them – just like the BFG!

Perhaps, she told herself, this was what they called the witching hour.

The witching hour, somebody had once whispered to her, was a special moment in the middle of the night when every child and every grown-up was in a deep deep sleep, and all the dark things came out from hiding and had the world to themselves.



The moonbeam was brighter than ever on Sophie's pillow. She decided to get out of bed and close the gap in the curtains.

You got punished if you were caught out of bed after lights-out. Even if you said you had to go to the lavatory, that was not accepted as an excuse and they punished you just the same. But there was no one about now, Sophie was sure of that.

She reached out for her glasses that lay on the chair beside her bed. They

had steel rims and very thick lenses, and she could hardly see a thing without them. She put them on, then she slipped out of bed and tip-toed over to the window.

When she reached the curtains, Sophie hesitated. She longed to duck underneath them and lean out of the window to see what the world looked like now that the witching hour was at hand.

She listened again. Everywhere it was deathly still.

The longing to look out became so strong she couldn't resist it. Quickly, she ducked under the curtains and leaned out of the window.

In the silvery moonlight, the village street she knew so well seemed completely different. The houses looked bent and crooked, like houses in a fairy tale. →



Everything was pale and ghostly and milky-white.

Across the road, she could see Mrs Rance's shop, where you bought buttons and wool and bits of elastic. It didn't look real. There was something dim and misty about that too.

Sophie allowed her eye to travel further and further down the street.

Suddenly she froze. There was something coming up the street on the opposite side.

It was something black...

Something tall and black...

Something very tall and very black and very thin. Who?



It wasn't a human. It couldn't be. It was four times as tall as the tallest human. It was so tall its head was higher than the upstairs windows of the houses. Sophie opened her mouth to scream, but no sound came out. Her throat, like her whole body, was frozen with fright.

This was the witching hour all right.

The tall black figure was coming her way. It was keeping very close to the houses across the street, hiding

in the shadowy places where there was no moonlight.

On and on it came, nearer and nearer. But it was moving in spurts. It would stop, then it would move on, then it would stop again.

But what on earth was it doing?

Ah-ha! Sophie could see now what it was up to. It was stopping in front of each house. It would stop and peer into the upstairs window of each house in the street. It actually had to bend down to peer into the upstairs windows.

That's how tall it was.

It would stop and peer in. Then it would slide on to the next house and stop again, and peer in, and so on all along the street.

It was much closer now and Sophie could see it more clearly.

Looking at it carefully, she decided it had to be some kind of PERSON.



Obviously, it was not a human. But it was definitely a PERSON.

A GIANT PERSON, perhaps.

Sophie stared hard across the misty moonlit street. The Giant (if that was what he was) was wearing a long BLACK CLOAK.

In one hand he was holding what looked like a VERY LONG, THIN TRUMPET.

In the other hand, he held a LARGE SUITCASE.

The Giant had stopped now right in front of Mr and Mrs Goochey's house. The Goocheys had a greengrocer's shop in the middle of the High Street, and the family lived above the shop. The two Goochey children slept in the upstairs front room, Sophie knew that.

The Giant was peering through the window into the room where Michael and Jane Goochey were sleeping. →



WIN!

BY GUMFROG! We have a fantastically fun bundle of Roald Dahl books, including *The BFG*, up for grabs! See page 50 for details!

From across the street, Sophie watched and held her breath.

She saw the Giant step back a pace and put the suitcase down on the pavement. He bent over and opened the suitcase. He took something out of it.

It looked like a glass jar, one of those square ones with a screw top. He unscrewed the top of the jar and poured what was in it into the end of the long trumpet thing.

Sophie watched, trembling.

She saw the Giant straighten up again and she saw him poke the trumpet in through the open upstairs window of the room where the Goochey children were sleeping. She saw the Giant take a deep breath and whoof, he blew through the trumpet.

No noise came out, but it was obvious to Sophie that whatever had been in the jar had now been blown through the trumpet into the Goochey children's bedroom.

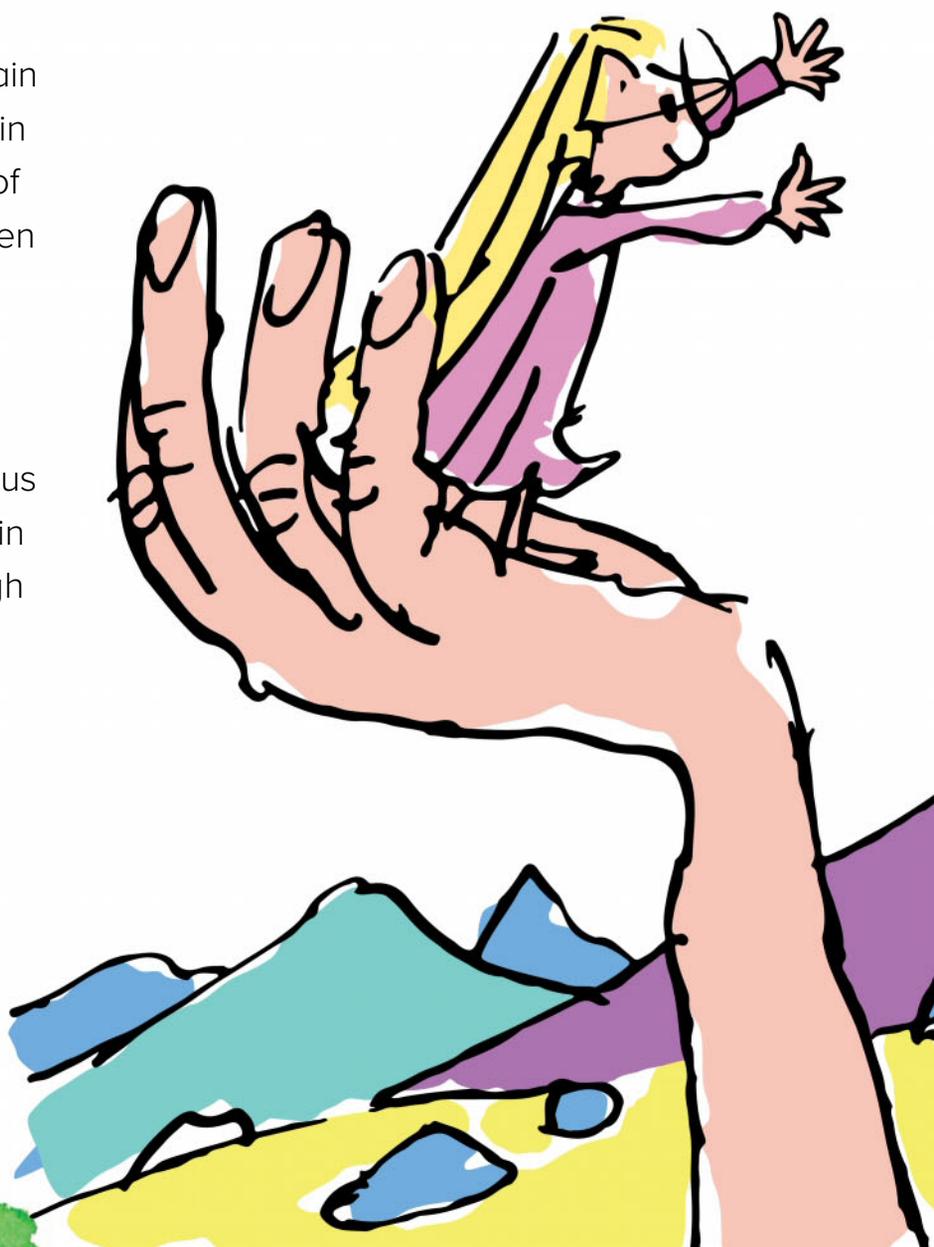
What could it be?

As the Giant withdrew the trumpet from the window and bent down to pick up the suitcase he

happened to turn his head and glance across the street.

In the moonlight, Sophie caught a glimpse of an enormous long pale wrinkly face with the most enormous ears. The nose was as sharp as a knife, and above the nose there were two bright flashing eyes, and the eyes were staring straight at Sophie. There was a fierce and devilish look about them.

Sophie gave a yelp and pulled back from the window.



She flew across the dormitory and jumped into her bed and hid under the blanket.

And there she crouched, still as a mouse, and tingling all over.

Under the blanket, Sophie waited.

After a minute or so, she lifted a corner of the blanket and peeped out.

For the second time that night her blood froze to ice and she wanted to scream, but no sound came out.

There at the window, with the curtains pushed aside, was the enormous long pale wrinkly face of the Giant Person, staring in. The flashing black eyes were fixed on Sophie's bed.

The next moment, a huge hand with pale fingers came snaking in through the window. This was followed by an arm, an arm as thick as a tree-trunk, and the arm, the hand, the fingers were reaching out across the room towards Sophie's bed.

This time, Sophie really did scream, but only for a second because very quickly the huge hand clamped down over her blanket and the scream was smothered by the bedclothes.

Sophie, crouching underneath the blanket, felt strong fingers grasping hold of her, and then she was lifted up from her bed, blanket and all, and whisked out of the window... 🌀

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www.roalddahl.com



SHORT & SWEET

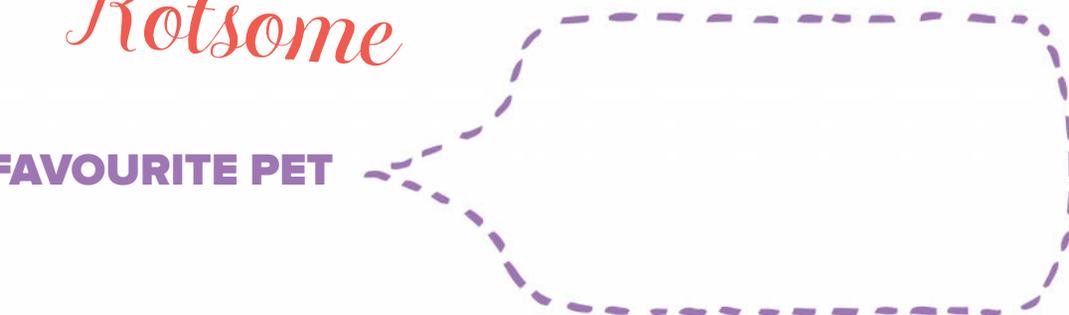
BFG stands for 'Big Friendly Giant'. Can you think up some three-letter abbreviations to describe your best friend, a family member or pet? Can you use BFG-style words? Write them here!



Delumptious

Rotsome

FAVOURITE PET



Catasterous

FAMILY



Whoopsey-splunkers

Storytime playbox

Invent a wacky wild animal, be a puzzle-buster, make a fabulous fox, and search for Sif's golden hair!

1 QUICK CROSSWORD

Minnie and Winnie have set you a seaside crossword challenge – can you solve it?

Across

1. You use it to build castles on the beach.
2. You can drink it or splash it.
3. It's the salty version of 2 across.
4. They swim in rivers or the sea.

Down

1. Minnie and Winnie slept in one. They can be big or small.
3. A sport involving a board and the sea.

2 SILVER Snake

In *The Money Snake*, the farmer got one silver coin for each milk bowl he gave to the snake. How many silver coins would he get if he gave the snake...



FOR 5 DAYS =



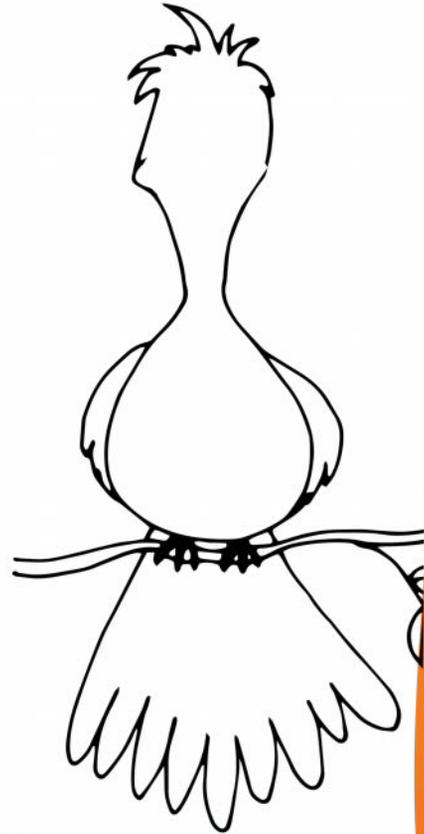
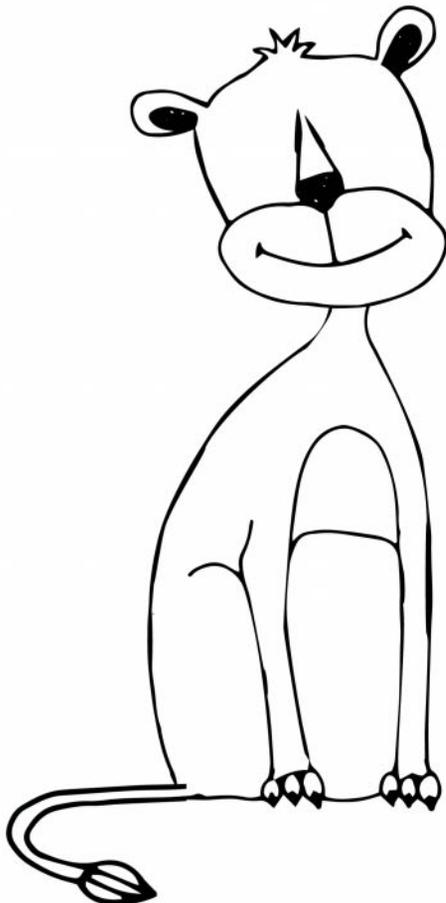
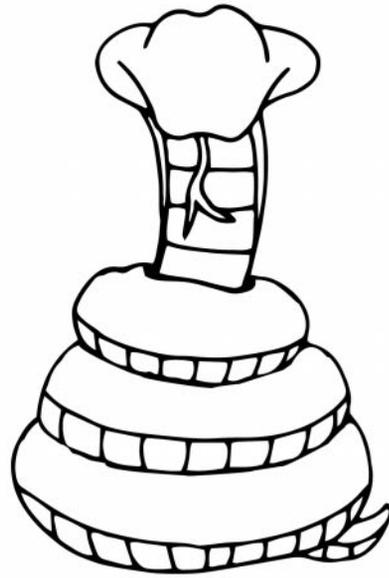
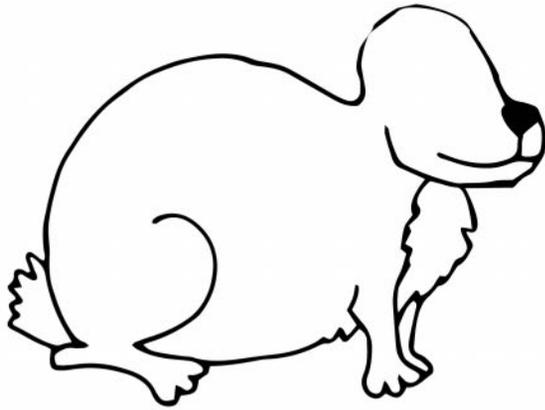
FOR 6 DAYS =



3

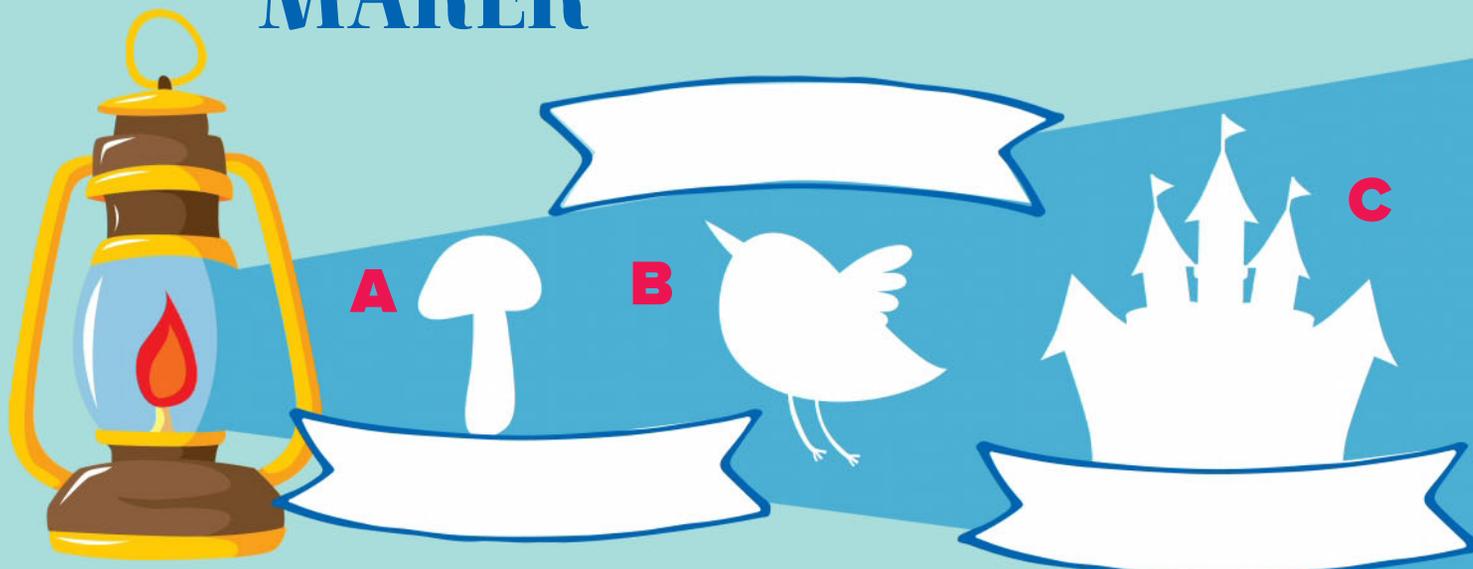
MIXED-UP Mammals

In our **Around the World Tale**, Goos the whale had legs. Give the four animals below weird features like human hands, bunny ears, lips or wings!



4 Shadow MAKER

The Lantern Man from *The Laughing Pixie* is making shadows. Can you write their names in the boxes and decorate each one?

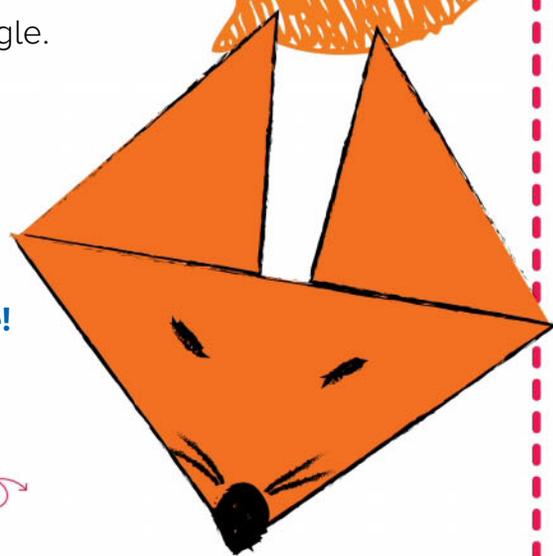
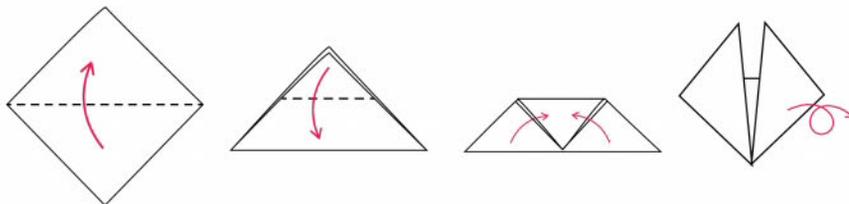


5 EASY ORIGAMI FOX!

Ask a grown-up!

Make a smart little paper fox inspired by this issue's fairy tale!

- Fold a square of orange paper in half to make a triangle.
- Fold over the tip of the triangle to touch the centre of the long edge at the bottom.
- Fold up one pointed corner to make a fox ear, then the other – try to make them roughly the same size.
- **Flip it over and use a black felt-tip pen to draw eyes, a nose and whiskers on the fox's face. Simple!**



TIP! Are there any other animals you can make using this technique? Why not try a black and white badger, a dog or a cat?



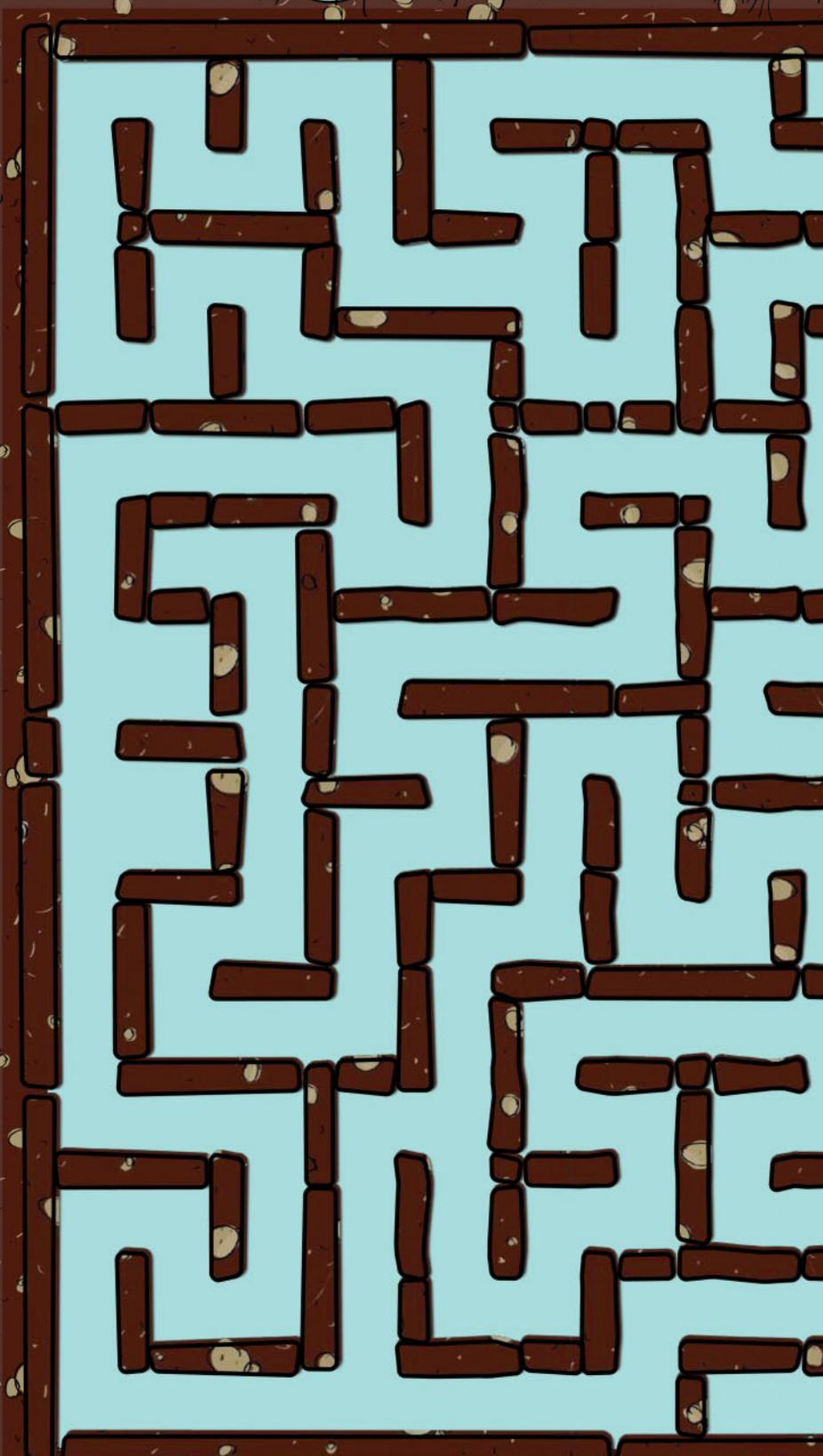
ANSWERS: 1. Quick Crossword – See right; 2. Silver Snake – 2 x 5 = 10 coins; 3 x 6 = 18 coins; 4. Shadow Maker – A. Toadstool, B. Bird, C. Castle.

GOING UNDERGROUND

Loki has got lost in this underground maze and he needs to find Sif's golden hair... or else! Can you help him find it as quickly as possible? Play against your friends and time yourself. The quickest person to get in and out of the maze with Sif's hair is the winner!

Maze Rule!

If you hit three dead ends in a row, go back to the beginning and start again!



Start
here!



Free Downloads!

Print out Loki, Sif and Thor
to travel through the maze:
storytimemagazine.com/free



STORY MAGIC

Win a mega Roald Dahl book bundle, join in the Summer Reading Challenge fun and don't miss our Book of the Month!

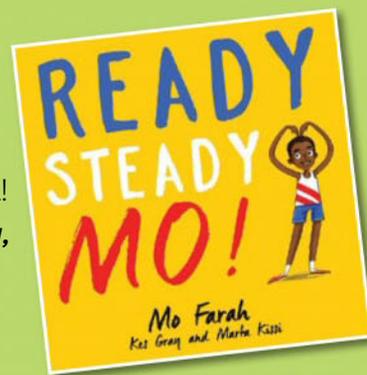


Reading together needn't end when the summer holidays begin. In fact, the Summer Reading Challenge makes reading even more fun! Here are five good reasons to take part this year...

1. The **Summer Reading Challenge** asks you to read six books of your choice over the holidays. That's six awesome adventures, without even leaving home!
2. If you can't decide what to read, there are 72 recommended books for readers aged 4 to 7 or 8 to 11, ranging from much-loved classics to newer titles.
3. As you read and return books, your child will earn special reward stickers and a certificate. Join in the fun on the website, summerreadingchallenge.org.uk, and you'll get special badges too!
4. Because you're loaning the books from your library, the **Summer Reading Challenge** is **completely free!**
5. Finally, **The BFG** is on this summer's **Big Friendly Read** list, so you can read our extract, then loan it from your library and earn a sticker!

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Get into the Olympics spirit this summer with a fun new picture book by gold medallist distance runner Mo Farah, the brilliant Kes Gray and illustrator Marta Kissi. If this doesn't inspire you to put on your running shoes and do the Mobot, we don't know what will! Grab **Ready, Steady, Mo!** while you can. (Hodder Children's Books)



WIN a BFG Bundle!

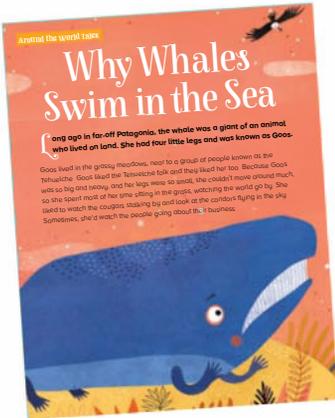
It's one big BFG celebration here this month and we have a wonderful bundle of Roald Dahl books for one lucky winner! It includes **The BFG** with DIY giant ears, **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory**, **Matilda**, and the new **BFG Sticker Book**, **Activity Book** and **Whizzpopping Joke Book!** To enter, visit: storytimemagazine.com/win



WIN



It's a GIANT of an issue!



Did whales used to have legs? Find out!



Watch Loki get up to no good again



Join a brave prince on a foxy adventure to win a golden bird and a golden horse!



READ HAPPILY EVER AFTER AT:
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Super Summer Special!

Pop it in your suitcase and give your holiday journeys a sprinkle of story magic!



The Little Mermaid
 Hercules and the Lion, Not-So-Silly Sam,
 What Katy Did & a fun animal poem!