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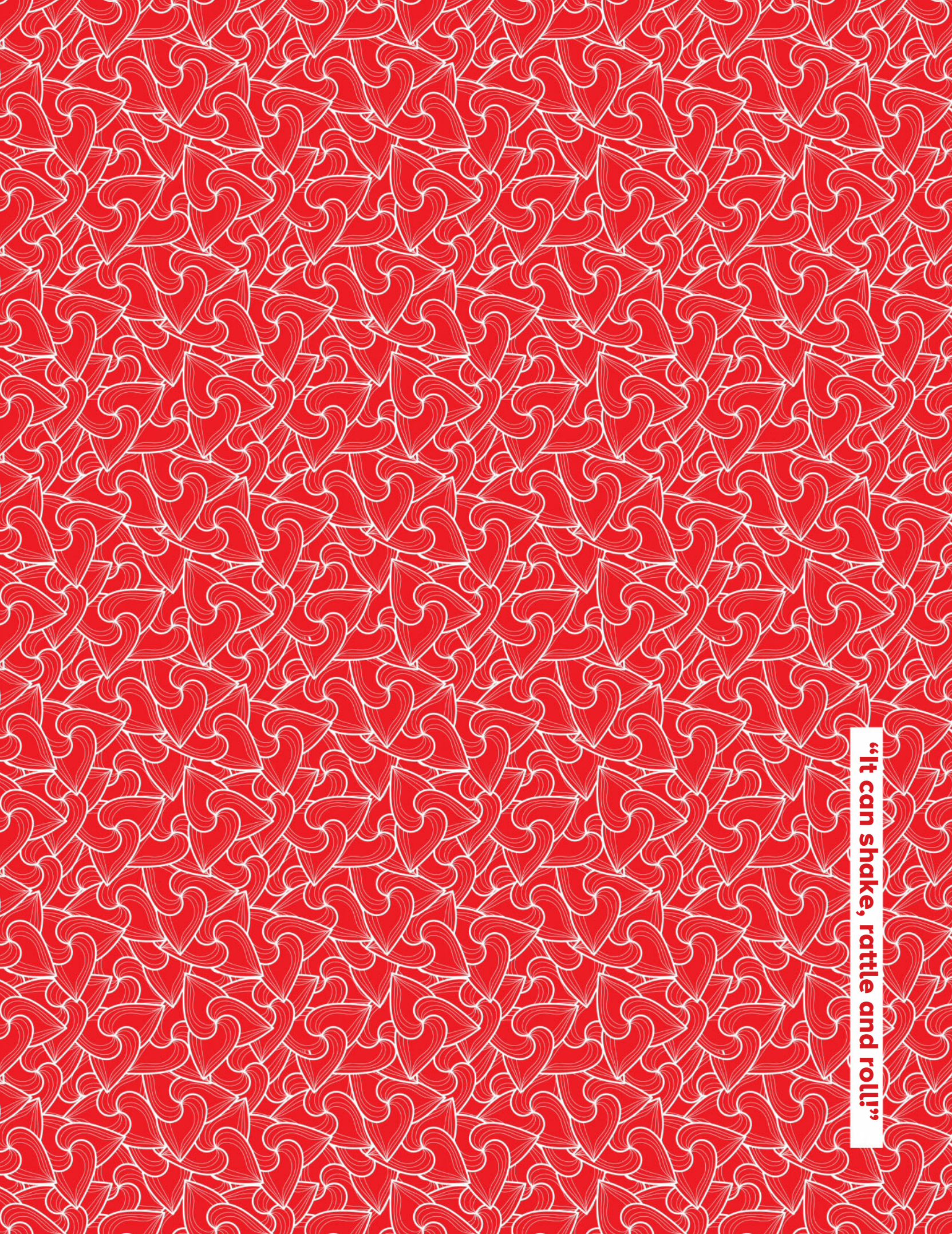
Storytime™



RACE A TIGER! Discover the legend of the Chinese zodiac

**SNOW WHITE
and ROSE RED**

**The Shark God,
King of the Frogs,
Alphabet Zoo and
PUZZLES TOO!**



“It can shake, rattle and roll!”

Feed your imagination!

From bewitched bears and baby elephants to awesome shark battles and foolish frogs, anything is possible in Storytime!
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The Months

By Christina Rossetti


January cold desolate;
February all dripping wet.

March wind ranges;
April changes.

Birds sing in tune
To flowers of May,

And sunny June
Brings longest day.





In scorched **July**
The storm clouds fly
Lightning torn.

August bears corn,
September fruit.

In rough **October**
Earth must disrobe her.

Stars fall and shoot
In keen **November**.

And night is long
And cold is strong
In bleak **December**.

Baby Elephant

By Christine Kelly

Tilly and her mum were at the doctors. Mum was going to have a baby and Tilly couldn't wait.

"That's a big bump." The doctor patted her mum's tummy. "Looks like there's a baby elephant in there."

Tilly could hardly contain her excitement. Her mum had told her there was going to be a new baby in the family, but not that it would be a baby elephant. That would be so much more fun!

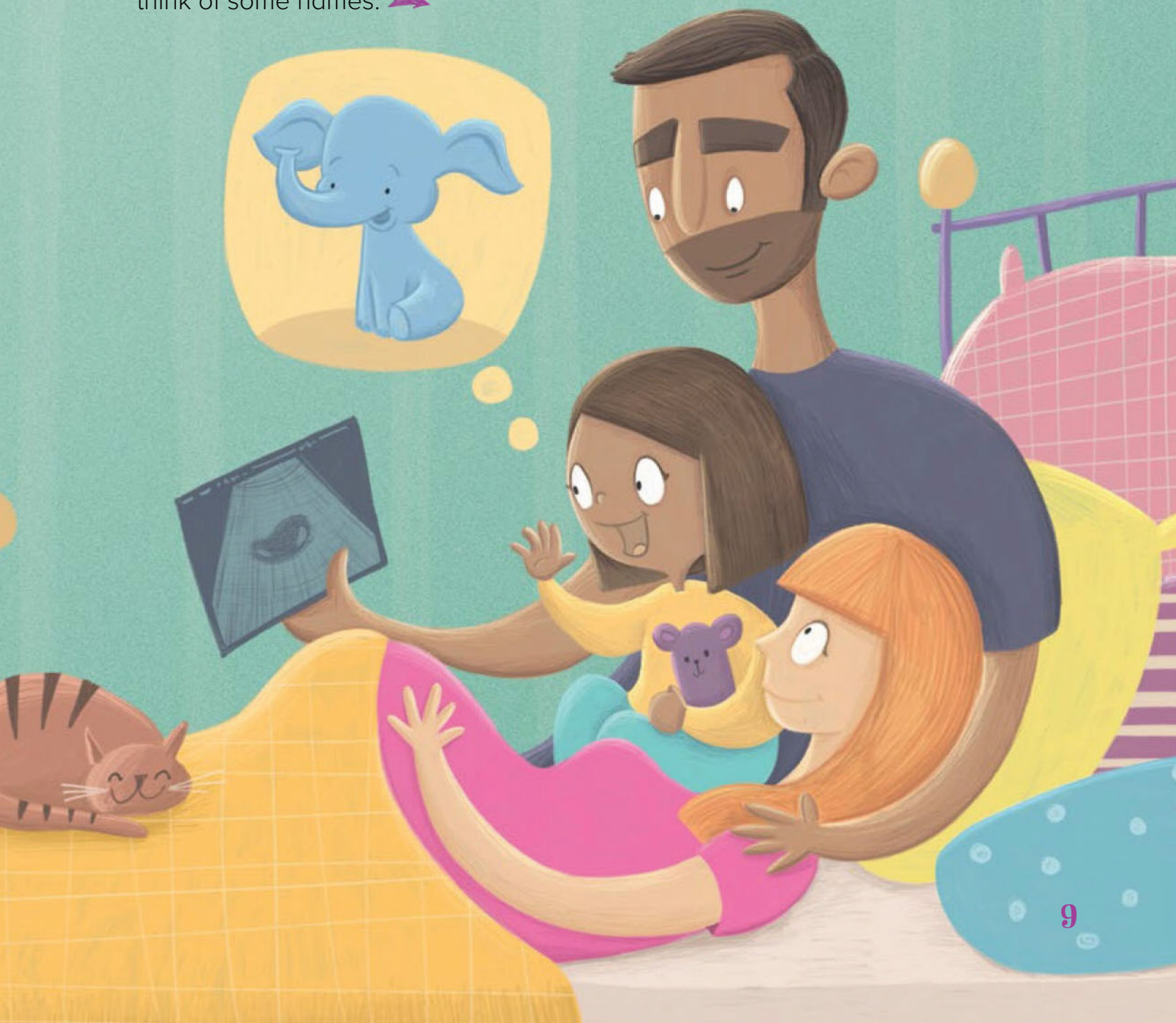
At school the next day Tilly told her friends Priya and Lucas. Priya had a baby brother and tried to imagine the size of the cot and changing mat that a baby elephant would need. She asked Tilly where the elephant would sleep. Tilly explained that they had a big shed in the garden. Once it was tidied up, there would be plenty of room.



Lucas studied the apple in his hand. “Elephants eat their own weight in food. I saw it on the telly. You are going to need lots of straw. And there is going to be a lot of poo.” He held his nose. “Big piles of stinky...”

Priya stopped him. “All right. We know.” She turned to Tilly. “You are going to need some very big nappies.”

After school, Tilly’s mum showed her a special picture of the baby inside her tummy and told Tilly she was going to have a sister. Tilly looked at the picture. She could just make out the body and the trunk. Her mum said the baby would take a few more weeks to grow, so Tilly had plenty of time to help her and Dad think of some names. ➡



The next day, Tilly began tidying the shed for her new sister. She thought of how she could help out when she was born. She could take her to the playground. The slide might be a bit tricky, but there was a roundabout and a seesaw. They could feed the ducks in the park. She could teach her how to skip and trampoline. They could even try ice skating, but her sister would need four skates.

In the morning, Tilly asked Priya and Lucas what they thought about having an elephant round for a sleepover. “Hmm... we might need some extra nail polish,” said Priya.

“And we’ll need a bigger midnight feast,” added Lucas.

As the weeks went on, the shed was almost ready. Tilly had found some pillows, and she put some of her soft toys on the floor ready for the baby.

It was almost time for her sister to be born when Mum asked Tilly if she had come up with any names yet.

“Yes,” said Tilly. “Nelly.”

Mum explained to Tilly that her baby sister would be sleeping in Mum and Dad’s room at the beginning, then she would share a bedroom with Tilly. They would have to get bunk beds. Tilly couldn’t see how that was going to work. Her mum and dad would be so pleased to see the special room she had made in the garden.



It was a few days later when Dad picked Tilly up from school and took her to stay at Gran's house. He said there would be a surprise when she got home.

It seemed ages before her dad came to collect her. When they got home, she grabbed him by the hand and raced down the garden. She wanted to show him her surprise first. She opened the shed door and shouted, "Ta-dah!"

Her dad just stood there with his mouth open, so she explained it was

for the baby. Dad looked a bit cross. "Babies don't sleep in sheds, Tilly. What were you thinking?"

He walked towards the house. Tilly wanted to cry. She didn't understand. She ran after him. "I was only trying to help. I've got plenty of straw for her to eat."

Dad looked at her in amazement. "Straw? Which babies eat straw?"

Tilly was surprised that he didn't know. "Elephants! It's for the baby elephant." ➔



Her dad laughed and led her towards the house. “There is something you need to see.”

Mum was sitting up in bed and right beside her were two babies – two actual human babies! Two little girls who were almost the same in every way. Mum called Tilly over. “Say hello to your new sisters. This is Nell and this is Lee. Girls, this is your very special big sister, Tilly.”

Tilly looked at her sisters and already knew how much fun they were going to have. As much fun as playing with a baby elephant? No... much more. 🌀



Write It!
Imagine you're having a sleepover party for an elephant. Write a list of the food you'll need for your midnight feast.

The Emperor's Race

Long ago, the Jade Emperor who lived in the heavens and ruled over China decided to challenge all the animals to a race.

“The first twelve animals to cross the raging river and reach me will be forever remembered as a sign of the Chinese zodiac,” he announced. “Each animal will represent a different year.”

When the cat heard about the race, she felt sure she would win. She boasted about it to her neighbour, the rat, who she often teased and bullied.

“Of course I will be the first and most important animal in the zodiac,” she purred. “The Emperor would never welcome a smelly little rat like you.” →



But on the morning of the race, the rat got his revenge. As the cat slept soundly, curled up in a ball, the rat sneaked away to the river and didn't wake her up.

By the time the cat awoke, it was too late – she had missed the race. They say cats have never forgiven rats for this deed, and that's why they still chase them today!



When the rat reached the riverbank, there were eleven more animals lined up and ready to race. There was a big brown horse, a small goat, a slow pig, a slippery snake, a fierce tiger, a fire-breathing dragon, a strong ox, a lively rabbit, an excited dog, a crowing rooster and a fidgety monkey.

The Jade Emperor signalled the start of the race, and the animals leapt into the freezing water. The current was so strong, the little rat was swept down the river. No matter how much he struggled, he couldn't move forward. The water sent him crashing into the side of the strong ox and, seeing his opportunity, the rat grabbed the ox's tail and scrambled onto his back.

The strong ox powered through the water with ease and was the first to reach the other side of the river. He thundered towards the finish line, sure that he would come first. However, seconds before he reached it, the rat leapt from his shoulder and scurried over the line. The cunning rat became the first sign of the Chinese zodiac, and the ox was second.

"Congratulations, rat!" cried the Jade Emperor, clapping loudly.



Just behind them, pounding over the line, came the fierce tiger. She was an excellent swimmer, but her heavy fur had slowed her down, and she roared with disappointment.

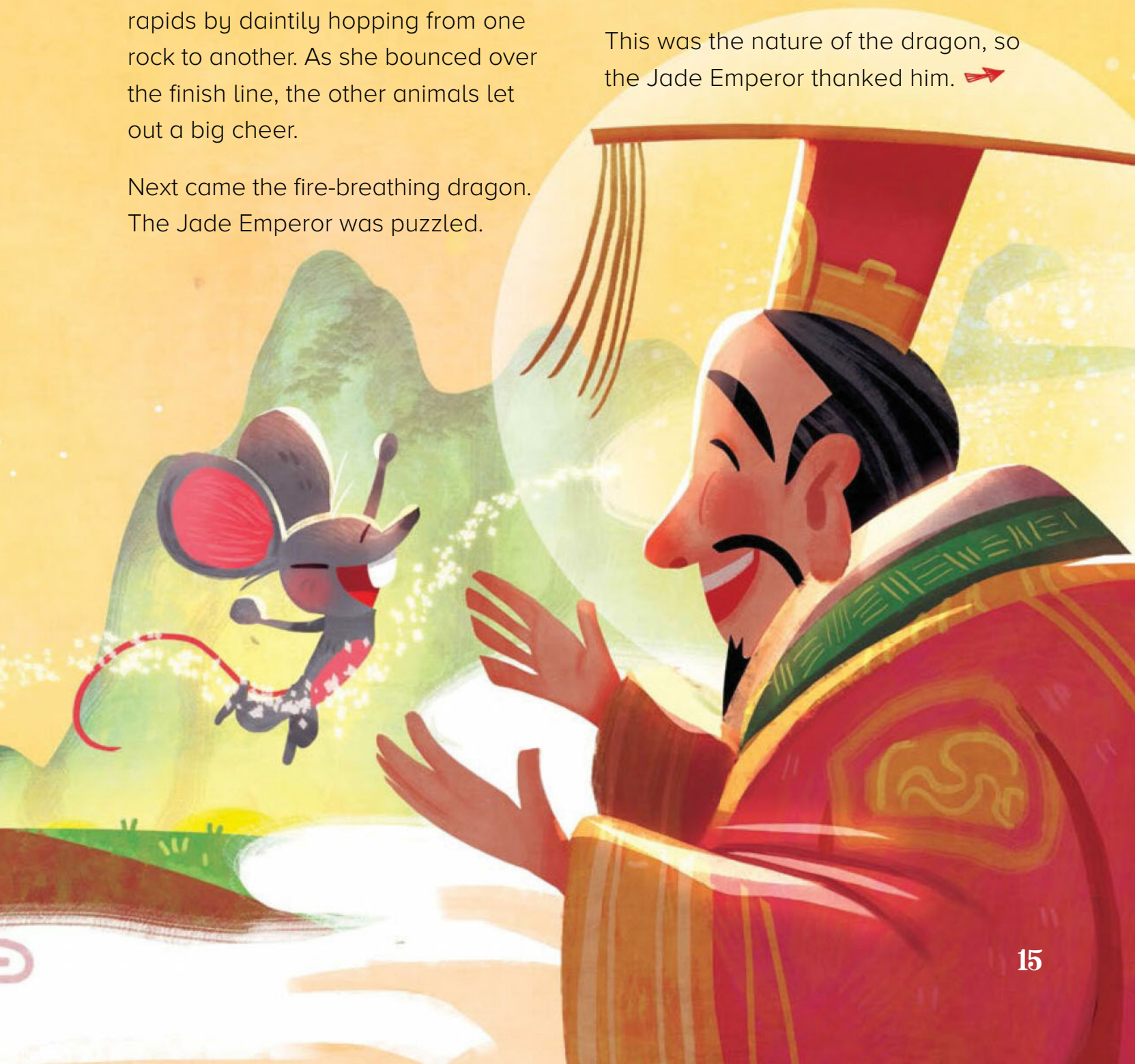
To the Jade Emperor's surprise, the lively rabbit came fourth. She had cleverly made her way across the rapids by daintily hopping from one rock to another. As she bounced over the finish line, the other animals let out a big cheer.

Next came the fire-breathing dragon. The Jade Emperor was puzzled.

He had expected the dragon to come first, as he was the only animal in the race who could fly.

As the dragon soared across the line, he said, "I am sorry to be late, Jade Emperor. I heard cries for help as the race began, and rushed to assist some nearby villagers."

This was the nature of the dragon, so the Jade Emperor thanked him. ➡



Moments later, the big brown horse galloped towards them, shaking the water from his mane. However, when he was just metres away from the finish line, he bucked. The slippery snake slithered around his feet and rushed ahead, coming in sixth place.

Close behind the snake and the horse was an unlikely trio of friends – the little goat, the fidgety monkey and the crowing rooster. Fearing they would never get across the river, the three had worked together to build a raft.

The little goat's horns had been so useful for nudging the heavy raft into the river, his two friends decided that he should cross the line first.

The rooster let the monkey go ahead of him, so he was the last of the trio.

Just as the rooster crossed the line, the excited dog came padding across the field looking happy with herself.

"I thought you would get here sooner," said the Jade Emperor.

"Yes, but there were so many new and interesting scents to sniff, I forgot I was in a race!" said the dog.

The Jade Emperor laughed and patted the dog.

There was a long wait before the slow pig finally crossed the line, squealing and oinking all the way.

It turned out that she had stopped to graze on the riverbank and had taken a quick nap!

DISCOVER IT!

Chinese astrology has 12 zodiac signs – one for each year of the moon's cycle. Each sign is represented by a different animal. Some people believe you are like the animal of the year in which you were born. Which animal are you? Download our **Chinese Zodiac Sheet** to find out: storytimemagazine.com/free



And so, the Emperor's great race was over and the pig became the twelfth and final animal in the Chinese zodiac. Everyone cheered!

From that day on, the twelve animals took it in turns to guard the gates of the Jade Emperor's heavenly home. Each one still looks after a different year of the Chinese zodiac, bringing good fortune and surprises. 🌀



Strong Jack

Jack knew something was different when he woke up. When he put his foot out of bed, the cold nipped his toes, and when he breathed out, a cloud hung in the air.

He wrapped a blanket around his shoulders and peeped through the curtains. There was a thick layer of snow outside and everything was white.

Jack went downstairs to warm himself by the fire, but it had gone out.

“That’s why I feel so cold,” said Jack. His teeth chattered as he went out to get some firewood, but there were no logs left. Jack shivered. He would have to go and chop a tree down. He remembered seeing a fine tree at the top of the hill.

“That’s what I’ll do,” said Jack. “I’ll go up the hill, chop down the tree and cut it into logs. It will make a grand fire.”

Wrapped in a thick hat and scarf, Jack took his axe and set off for the hill.





It was so cold, Jack decided to think cosy thoughts as he trudged through the snow. “I’ll soon have that tree chopped down and cut into logs, and then I’ll make a roaring fire. I’ll sit by the fire and warm my hands, and I’ll enjoy a nice cup of cocoa.”

Jack was so lost in his cosy thoughts, he didn’t notice a large patch of ice on the path, and he slipped and fell head over heels, hitting the cold hard ground.

“Ouch!” cried Jack. He was so cross with the ice, he said, “I bet you think you’re so strong, don’t you, tripping me over and making me fall like that?”

“Yes,” said the ice. “You’re right. I do think I’m strong, Jack.”

“Well, you’re not as strong as the sun, are you?” said Jack. “The moment the sun comes out, you’ll melt away.”

“Good point, Jack,” agreed the ice. “I’m not as strong as the sun.”



Jack looked up at the sun, which was weak and pale in the cloudy sky, and he shouted, “Sun! I bet you think you’re so strong up there, don’t you, beating down on us?”

“Yes,” said the sun. “You’re right. I do think I’m strong, Jack.” ➡

“You’re not as strong as the clouds, though,” called Jack. “The moment they pass in front of you, you lose your strength.”

“Good point, Jack,” agreed the sun. “I’m not as strong as the clouds.”

Then Jack called out to the clouds that covered the sky. “Clouds! I bet you think you’re so strong, don’t you, blocking the sun’s rays?”

“Yes,” said the clouds. “You’re right. We do think we’re strong, Jack.”

“You’re not as strong as the wind,” said Jack. “As soon as it blows, it scatters you everywhere.”

“Good point, Jack,” agreed the clouds. “We’re not as strong as the wind.”



Jack carried on trudging towards the hill ahead of him. “Hey, wind! I bet you think you’re so strong, don’t you, blowing the clouds and the leaves around like you do?”

“Yes,” said the wind. “You’re right. I do think I’m strong, Jack.”

“Well, you’re not as strong as this hill,” said Jack. “You can blow over it and around it, but you can’t blow through it. It’s solid.”

“Good point, Jack,” agreed the wind. “I’m not as strong as the hill.”

Jack walked all the way up the hill to the tree. “Hill! I bet you think you’re so strong, don’t you, supporting this tree?”

“Yes,” said the hill. “You’re right. I do think I’m strong, Jack.”



COMPARE IT!

Can you list three things that are stronger than you and three things that are weaker than you?
Write them down.



“Well, you’re not as strong as this tree,” said Jack. “It uses its roots to stand on your head and you could never stand on the tree’s head.”

“Good point, Jack,” agreed the hill. “I’m not as strong as the tree.”

Then Jack said to the tree, “Tree! I bet you think you’re so strong, don’t you, standing on this hill?”

“Yes,” said the tree. “You’re right. I do think I’m strong, Jack.”

“Well, you’re not as strong as me,” said Jack, “because I’m going to chop you down and turn you into logs for my fire!” ➡



Jack swung his axe back as far as he could, and said:

**“I’m stronger than a tree,
I’m stronger than a hill,
I’m stronger than the
wind, I’m stronger than
the clouds, I’m stronger
than the sun, and I’m
stronger than the ice!”**

But as he finished speaking, a gust of wind blew the tree’s branches. They swung towards Jack and, at the same time, the clouds parted to let the sun shine down brightly. Jack shielded his eyes from the sun and stepped out of the way of the swinging branches. As he did so, he lost his footing and tumbled backwards down the hill. At the bottom, he skidded across the icy puddle and landed with a thud.

Feeling embarrassed, Jack got up and walked home – and he never did cut down that tree. 🌀

Snow White and Rose Red

Once upon a time, a poor widow lived in a little cottage with a beautiful rose garden. There were two bushes outside her window – one with white roses and the other with red roses.

She loved the roses so much, she named her daughters after them, and they even grew up to look like their flowers. Snow White had fair skin, blonde hair and blossom pink lips, and Rose Red had dark skin, black hair and ruby red lips.

The two sisters adored their mother. In summer, Rose Red picked a posy of red roses for her every day and, in winter, Snow White picked a posy of white roses. ➔



The two sisters loved animals too and would often go for walks in the woods. The animals came to know the girls well, and hares, stags and badgers would walk by their sides, feeding from their hands.

One winter's night, when the snow was falling heavily outside, the two girls were huddling by the fire. They were surprised by a knock at the door.

"Answer quickly," said the mother to Snow White. "It might be a traveller looking for shelter."

Snow White unlocked the door and leapt back. There was a big brown bear looming before her. The sisters had never met a bear in the woods.

Teeth chattering, the bear said, "Don't be afraid. I would never harm you. I am half frozen and looking for somewhere to warm myself."

"Poor bear!" cried Snow White and Rose Red. "Come and sit by the fire."

The bear settled down by the fire. "Girls, could you sweep the snow from my coat, please?"

Snow White and Rose Red brushed off the bear's coat, and soon forgot their fears. Before long, they were snuggling up to him, reading stories.



When it was time for bed, their mother said to the bear, "You can sleep by the fire, if you wish."

At the break of dawn the next day, the bear returned to the woods, but he came back that evening and every evening all winter long.

Snow White, Rose Red and the bear became such good friends, he even allowed them to ride on his back.



When spring came round, the bear looked sad. "I must leave now and I won't see you again until winter."

The sisters were sad too. "Why do you have to go, dear bear?"

"I have to travel deep into the woods to find my treasure. It was stolen by a wicked dwarf," said the bear. "As soon as the snow thaws, he's sure to come out of his hiding place."

"Can we visit you?" asked the girls.

"No, it's too dangerous," said the bear.

"You will see me again. I promise." →



Snow White and Rose Red hugged their
new friend and said goodbye to him.



Find It!

Can you find these five objects hidden in the picture? Tick the boxes when you spot them.



As he left, some of his fur snagged on the door frame. Rose Red was certain she spotted a glint of gold beneath it but, before she could say anything, the bear had disappeared into the woods.



That day, Snow White and Rose Red also walked into the woods to collect firewood, but a fallen tree was blocking their path. When they reached it, they heard a scuffling noise and found an angry-looking dwarf. His long beard was trapped under the tree and he was hopping about, red in the face with frustration.

When he spotted the sisters, he cried, “Well, don’t just stand there! Help me!”

“What are you doing, little fellow?” asked Rose Red.

“If you must ask, you nosy goose, I was trying to chop wood and my beard got caught. Now, are you going to just stand there – or help me?”

Snow White and Rose Red rushed to help the little man, but they could not lift the heavy trunk. The dwarf moaned and raged and stamped his feet.

“I know! I have just the thing,” said Snow White, and reached into her pocket and pulled out some scissors. **Snip, snip, snip!** She cut along his beard and released the dwarf from his trap.

The sisters smiled, expecting the dwarf to be happy too, but instead he shouted, “You clumsy oafs! You’ve ruined my lovely beard!”





Then the dwarf grabbed a sack of gold coins from the roots of the tree, and ran into the woods.



The next day, Snow White and Rose Red decided to go fishing. When they reached the stream, they heard a yelp. It was the grumpy dwarf again and, this time, he looked like he was about to fall in the water.

“What are you doing, little fellow?” asked Rose Red.

“Can’t you see?” squealed the dwarf. “A fish has caught my beard and it’s trying to pull me in!” As he said it, the fish wrenched him forward. “Are you going to help me or not?” he wailed.

Rose Red ran towards him and took out her fishing knife. **Snip, snip, snip!** She cut all the way across the dwarf’s beard to release him.

When the dwarf realised what she had done, he yelled, “You cut my beard again, you oafs. I wish I had never seen you!”

Before the girls could tell him off for being so ungrateful, he grabbed a sack of pearls from the riverbank and ran into the woods.

The next day, Snow White and Rose Red were on their way to market when they saw an eagle circling in the sky. As they drew closer, the bird pounced and seized the grumpy dwarf in its claws. “Help!” he cried, batting away the eagle. “Save me!”

The girls ran over and held his legs, so he couldn’t be carried away. ➤➤➤

The eagle gave up but, as it flew off, it ripped a hole in the dwarf's jacket. "Now look what you've done, you oafs!" cried the dwarf. "You've ruined my beard and my best jacket!"

Snow White sighed and Rose Red rolled her eyes. "Have you ever met anyone with such terrible manners?" asked Rose Red, but they decided to ignore him and carry on to market.

However, as they left, they saw the dwarf cram a huge sack of jewels into a little hole in a nearby rock.

"What are you staring at, you nosy geese?" shouted the grumpy dwarf.

Just then, from behind the rock, there came a growl so loud that it shook the ground. A great brown bear stepped out and snarled at the dwarf.

The dwarf looked terrified. "Oh, no! You found me! Spare my life and you can have your treasure back. You can even eat these two tasty girls."

But the bear gave a deep growl and swooped down a paw. With one strong blow, he knocked the dwarf out cold.

Did You Know?

This story is over 200 years old and used to be called **The Ungrateful Dwarf**. The Snow White in this fairy tale isn't the same character as the princess in **Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs**, which you can read in **Storytime Issue 16**.



The sisters turned and ran from the bear, but a familiar voice called after them, “Snow White, Rose Red! Don’t be scared. I am your friend!”

The bear raced towards them carrying three sacks in his paws – one filled with gold, one filled with pearls and the last one filled with jewels. As he neared them, his heavy bearskin fell away and out stepped a young man, dressed in a magnificent outfit of gold.

“Who are you?” cried Snow White and Rose Red. “Where is the bear?”

“I am a prince,” said the young man. “Last summer, that greedy dwarf put a spell on me and stole my treasure. The only way I could break his curse was to find him. I owe you my life – for keeping me warm all winter and for leading me to him.”

The prince gave the three sacks of treasure to the sisters to thank them for their kindness.

From that day on, Snow White, Rose Red and their mother lived happily in their little cottage with the rose garden, and were never bothered by grumpy dwarfs again. 🌀

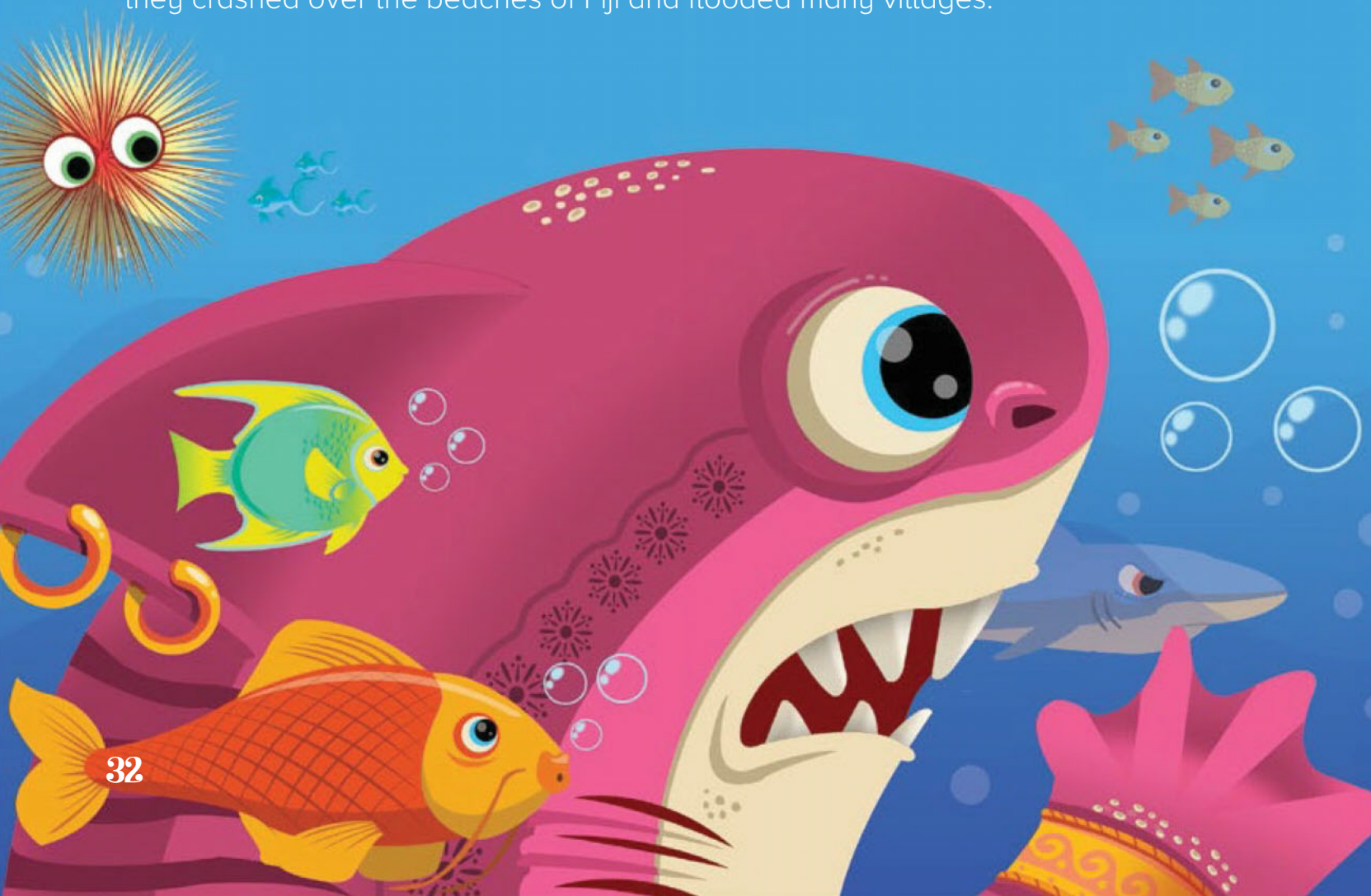


The Shark God

Long ago, the ocean around Fiji was terrorised by an angry shark god who went by the name of Dakuwaqa.

At that time, the ocean was full of guardian gods. Some guarded the fish, some guarded the eels and some guarded the turtles, but Dakuwaqa guarded the coral reefs. He was a greedy god – greedy for power – and he loved to show off his strength.

“There is no ocean god stronger than I am!” he boasted, and he took pleasure in challenging any god who crossed his path to a fight. His first battle was with the barracuda god, who was famous for his sharp teeth. When the two gods fought, they thrashed about fiercely. The waves they created were so huge, they crashed over the beaches of Fiji and flooded many villages.



The shark god won this battle and many more and, soon, the other gods feared him so much they swam away when they saw him coming. Humans were so scared of him, they no longer swam in the ocean and fishermen stopped going to sea.

“Ha!” bragged Dakuwaqa. “Everyone fears me. I am all-powerful!”



One day, Dakuwaqa was visited by a lesser shark god called Masilaca.

“Good day, Dakuwaqa. I do not wish to fight – I know you are the strongest. I thought I would tell you of a god you might like to challenge.”

“I have already challenged everyone who is worth fighting,” said Dakuwaqa, full of arrogance. “But who is this god?”

“It is a deadly giant with many arms and it guards a small island to the east of Fiji. They say it is the most powerful god in the ocean.”

“Nonsense!” sneered Dakuwaqa. “I am the strongest and I will prove it.”

Masilaca was hoping Dakuwaqa would have this reaction. →



SAY IT!

Pronounce the names in this story before you read it. For Dakuwaqa say ‘Da-koo-wa-ka’ and for Rokobakaniceva say ‘Rock-o-back-a-nick-ev-a’.

Dakuwaqa set off straight away, eager to meet this new challenger. He swam to the island mentioned by the shark Masilaca. On the beach, an old man was fishing.

“Old man!” called the shark god. “Where is the puny god that guards your island?”

“He lives on the south side, where he guards a difficult passage between the rocks, but he is not puny. He is bold and brave. He looks after our people and you will find him hard to beat.” The old man was not afraid of Dakuwaqa, and this angered the shark god.

“Nonsense!” he snapped. “There is no ocean god stronger than I am!”

He sped through the water towards the rocky passage. When he drew near, he shouted a warning. “Make way, guardian, I am coming through!”

A deep, booming voice answered. “Not without my permission.”

Dakuwaqa charged ahead, but slammed into the body of a giant octopus, which towered above him.

“I am Rokobakaniceva,” said the octopus. “I am the god of this island reef. You will not pass and cause trouble for the creatures here.”

Dakuwaqa was so enraged, he rushed at Rokobakaniceva again, baring his deadly teeth. But the octopus god blocked the passage



with his huge body and used four of his tentacles to grip the rocks around him. He coiled his remaining tentacles around the shark god and squeezed as tightly as he could.

Dakuwaqa wriggled and writhed. He gnashed and snapped his teeth, but the octopus had him in a stronghold. He could not escape. He thought his lungs might cave in from the pressure.

“Please, let me go!” he gasped. “I promise I will leave and never return.”

“You must promise more than that,” said the octopus god, tightening his grip some more.

Dakuwaqa struggled for breath. “I promise you I will never harm the creatures or humans who live here.”

“Good,” said the octopus god. “You must keep this promise or I will hunt you and punish you.” At last, he released his grip on Dakuwaqa.

The shark god was so scared and so ashamed he had been beaten, he swam away at great speed, leaving the octopus god chuckling to himself.

To this day, Dakuwaqa keeps his word and the people of Fiji can fish and swim without coming to harm. 🌀



Alphabet Zoo

Friends, you don't have to travel very far,
To meet animals beginning with **Q** and **R**!

“Quick! Let's go quicker! We might miss the **quokka!**”
We crawl through the grass, marsupial spotters.
“There!” cries Bonnie, and we see a quirky smile.
It's the happiest animal in the wild!

Sometimes mistaken for a baby wallaby,
It bounds and it hops – it can even climb a tree.
The Australian **quokka** loves juicy leaves,
And when its tum is full, it grins at you and me!

Another herbivore, its rusty-coloured chum,
The furry **red panda** has a special thumb
To grip bamboo – its favourite food,
Just like the giant panda, a much bigger dude!

This panda's not a bear, a raccoon or a cat,
It's one of a kind, hard to find, an acrobat.
High in Asian forests it dons its mask of white
With a bushy tail for balance, it scales heady heights.



We charge to the **rhino**, famous for its horn.
This one has two – is it Africa's unicorn?
Its horns can break up branches or dig up roots,
As this massive mammal lives on shrubs and fruit.

It grazes through the night and lazes in the day,
And rolls in mud or dust to keep the bugs away.
Its armour-plated skin must give it extra power,
This **rhino** can stampede at 30 miles per hour!



ANIMAL FACT!

The rattle of a rattlesnake and the horns of a rhinoceros are both made from keratin – the same stuff your nails and hair are made from! Get more cool facts from our **Alphabet Zoo Factsheet**.
Download it here: storytimemagazine.com/free

Wait! What was that? Did you hear that funny sound?
It shook and it hissed somewhere near the ground.
Slithering and sliding, it's the **rattlesnake**.
It's named after the sound its bottom can make!

Made from the same stuff as a rhino's horn,
It uses its rattle to scare away and warn.
This venomous serpent has a keen sense of smell,
And detects the body heat of its prey as well.

The fang-tastic **rattlesnake** gulps its dinner whole,
Cold-blooded reptile, it can *shake, rattle and roll!*



What's next?
Yes! It's animals
beginning with
S

The King of the Frogs

The sky was clear, the moon was bright, and the frogs were idling about on lily pads in the village pond, but they weren't happy – they were bored.

“All we ever do is hop from one lily pad to another and catch flies. It's so dull,” moaned one frog.

“Yes,” his friend grumbled. “We could do with a bit of excitement in our lives. We need someone to entertain us.”

A big fat bullfrog joined in. “No. What we need is someone to be in charge. Someone who can tell us what to do when we get bored. Someone with big plans! We have so much time, we just don't know what to do with ourselves.”



The frogs in the pond croaked in agreement. “Great idea!” said the first frog, imagining the grand times they would have with their new leader. “Why don’t you hop along to Jupiter and ask him if he will give us a king or a queen?”

So the big bullfrog set off. He jumped all the way to see the great god Jupiter, and he begged for a leader. “Please, Jupiter, we need someone to organise us. We need a ruler.”


Jupiter was busy being the King of the Gods and dealing with real problems. He didn’t have time for the frogs’ request, but the bullfrog kept croaking and ribbiting and bothering him. He wasn’t going to leave until Jupiter gave in.

“Very well,” sighed the god. “You’ll have a new ruler by tonight.”



The bullfrog returned to the pond and, moments later, something big and dark dropped from the heavens and plopped into the middle of the pond. It bobbed around for a while and then sat still and quiet.

“What is it?” whispered the frogs.

“It must be our new ruler!” said the bullfrog. 



“It’s huge!” cried the frogs.

They waited for their ruler to speak, but it didn’t say a word. So they waited and waited. Still nothing happened.

“Maybe we need to swim over and say hello?” one frog suggested, so they paddled across the pond with the bullfrog leading the way.

“Your Majesty,” said the bullfrog in his finest croak. “It is an honour and a privilege to meet you.”

But the big dark thing didn’t reply. One brave little frog paddled closer and gently poked the new ruler, but still nothing happened.

“It looks just like a log,” she said, but the other frogs told her off and warned her to keep away.

Eventually, the frogs gave up and climbed onto their lily pads. By the morning, the new ruler still hadn’t moved or spoken.

The bold little frog who had prodded the mysterious new ruler grew tired of waiting. She hopped on top of it, and took a big dive into the water. It looked like such fun, the other frogs joined in.

A week later, even the bullfrog was using the new ruler as a diving board or to laze about on. But many of the frogs still weren’t happy.

“This new ruler is useless,” they complained. “It doesn’t talk to us or lead us. It doesn’t give us any ideas or plans to follow. In fact, it doesn’t seem to do anything!”

“I’ll go and speak to Jupiter again,” sighed the bullfrog. “You’re right. Our new ruler isn’t doing its job.”



So the bullfrog hopped all the way to Jupiter. “Who is this lazy ruler you sent to us? It never speaks or moves. It sits in the pond and does nothing all day. We want a king or a queen to lead us and tell us what to do!”

The bullfrog croaked on and on until Jupiter couldn’t stand it any more.

“Fine!” cried Jupiter, eager to get on with his work. “You will have a new ruler by tonight.”

By the time the bullfrog got back to the pond, the old ruler had gone, but it was soon replaced by a large long-legged heron who swooped down to the pond and landed with a splash.

“Greetings, frogs! Jupiter has sent me to be your king,” explained the heron. “But, if I were you, I’d hop it, because frogs’ legs are my favourite food.”

The heron wasted no time. It began to peck at the frogs with its sharp pointy beak. Frightened for their lives, the frogs hopped away as quickly as they could and hid among the reeds.

The bullfrog looked up at the heavens and croaked in despair.

“Jupiter! Oh, Jupiter! Why would you send us such a fearsome ruler?” →



Jupiter called down, “To teach you a lesson for wasting my time with your foolish wishes!”

“Oh, please make him go away,” begged the bullfrog. “We’ve changed our minds. We made a mistake. We don’t need a ruler. We’re happy with our freedom. We’re happy as we are.”

“And so you should be!” said Jupiter.

Satisfied that the frogs had learnt a lesson, Jupiter did as they asked and the heron flew away. The frogs never bothered Jupiter again, and if you hear them croak, they’re not complaining – they’re just singing a song for you. 🌀

THINK ABOUT IT!

In this fable, the frogs learn a lesson about being grateful for what they have. Can you think of three things you’re grateful for? It could be pets, people, places, hobbies or things you own.



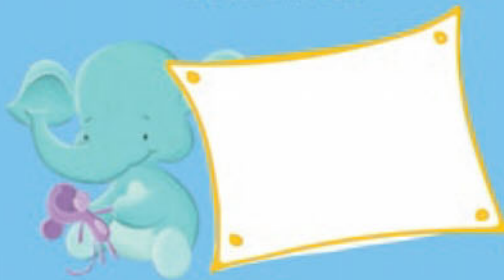
storytime

playbox

Test your skills with our story-themed brainteasers, make a snake, and take on the mighty shark god in a brand-new game!

1 FROGS ON A LOG

How many frogs are sitting on the log?
Write your answer in the box.



2 SUPER STRONG

Read Strong Jack again. What or who was the strongest?
Number the pictures from 1 to 7 making 1 the weakest and 7 the strongest.



3 ANIMAL ARTIST

Draw your favourite Chinese horoscope animal here – perhaps you could choose the animal from your year of birth.



4 COLOUR CLEVER



Snow White and Rose Red are named after the colours of flowers. **How many white and red things can you list here?**



5

QUICK QUIZ!

In our poem, **The Months**, in which month of the year do the stars fall and shoot?

- a. June
- b. November
- c. December
- d. September

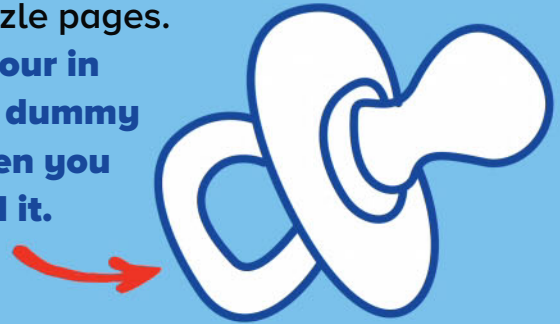


6

WHERE'S NELLY?

There really is a baby elephant hiding somewhere on our puzzle pages.

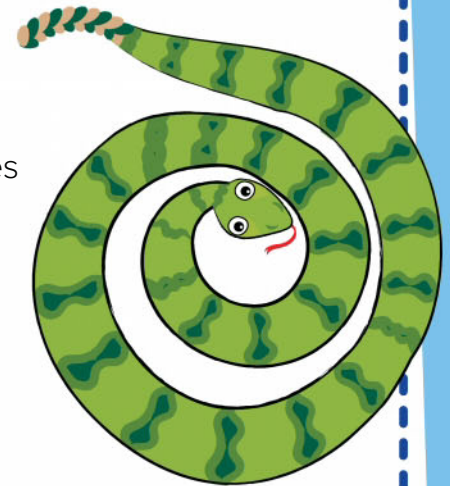
Colour in the dummy when you find it.



7 MAKE A SNAKE!

Make your own Alphabet Zoo animal in easy-to-follow steps.

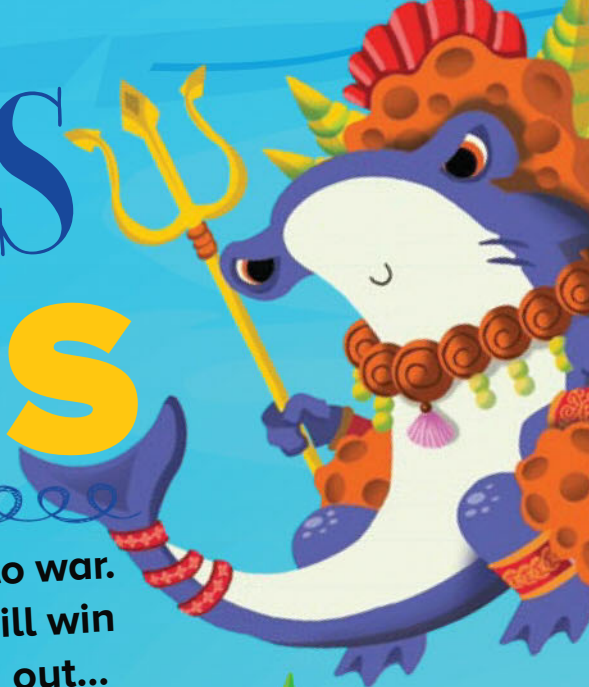
- Take an A4 (or A3) sheet of thick paper, place a large plate on it and draw around it.
- Starting at the outside edge of the circle, draw a spiral into the centre. End the spiral with a curvy loop – this will be the snake's head.
- Draw patterns all the way along the snake's body. Rattlesnakes are famous for their diamond-shaped camouflage.
- Colour in or paint your snake. To get a cool snakeskin effect, paint bubble wrap and then press it onto your snake.
- Now cut along the spiral line.
- Cut a small forked tongue out of red or brown paper and stick it to the snake's head. Add googly eyes too.
- To make your snake rattle, pour tiny beads or dried pulses into a small sealable plastic bag and tape it to the underside of your snake's tail.
- Now use thread to hang the snake from the tail or head, and pull it down. When it bobs up and down, it should rattle!



TIP! Skip the first two steps and print out our **Spiral Snake Template** from storytimemagazine.com/free

ANSWERS: 1. Frogs on a Log – 17; 2. Super Strong – From weakest to strongest: Jack, Ice, Sun, Cloud, Wind, Hill, Tree. The Tree is the strongest; 5. Quick Quiz – B.

SHARK VS OCTOPUS

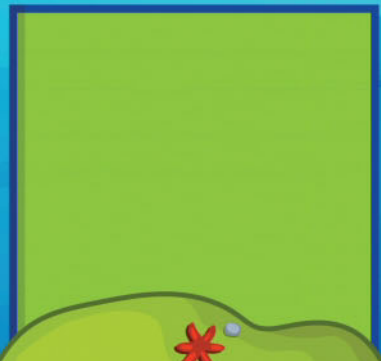


The Shark God and the Octopus God are going to war. This time, they're battling for the ocean! Who will win the most territory? There's only one way to find out...

How to Play

To play, you need two dice and two players. Print out our Shark God and Octopus God Game Counters from storytimemagazine.com/free.

- ★ Before you begin, decide whether you will be the Shark God or the Octopus God, then decide who will go first.
- ★ If you're the Shark God, when you roll the two dice and add up your score, it needs to add up to 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6.
- ★ If you succeed, claim one square on the board by putting one of your shark counters on it. If you fail, better luck next time. Pass the dice to your opponent.
- ★ If you're the Octopus God, when you throw the two dice and add up your score, it needs to add up to 7, 8, 9, 10 or 11.
- ★ If you succeed, put an octopus counter on one of the board squares. If not, pass the dice to your opponent.
- ★ Players take it in turns to throw the dice.
- ★ If either player – Shark God or Octopus God – throws a double 6, then you get to claim a square on the board.
- ★ Keep playing until you've claimed every square.
- ★ The winner and the ruler of the ocean is the god who ends up with the most squares on the board!





STORY MAGIC

The happiest way to start a year is with stories and we think these brilliant new picture books complement Storytime perfectly.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH!



THE NEW BABY AND ME!

by Christine Kidney with collage illustrations by Hoda Haddadi (Tiny Owl) makes a perfect gift for

brothers or sisters-to-be and the ideal companion to our **Baby Elephant** story. Five children can't wait to meet their new baby brother and they all have their own ideas on what he will be when he grows up, but when baby arrives, they get a surprise.

THE LAST CHIP by author and illustrator Duncan Beedie (Templar Books). Percy is a hungry little pigeon, but no matter how far he flies, the other birds don't want to share their food. Things are looking bleak, until Percy finds kindness where he least expects it. There's an important message in this story and, if you buy a copy, you'll also be supporting The Trussell Trust, the foodbank network offering support to people in crisis across the UK.

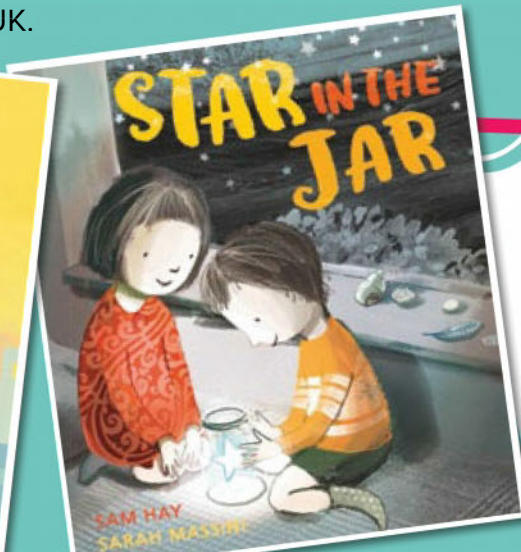
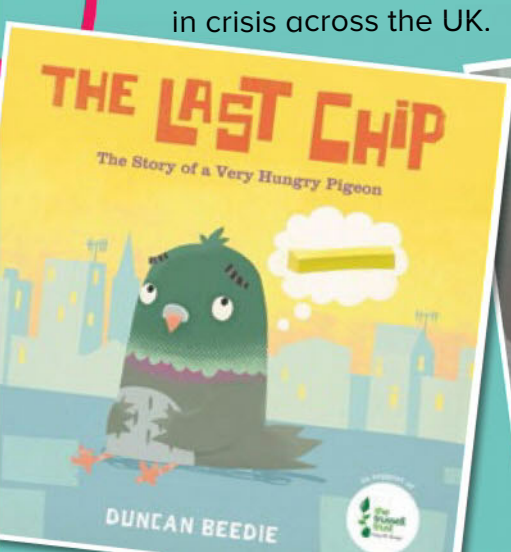


BLUE MONSTER WANTS IT

ALL by award-winning author Jeanne Willis and illustrated by Jenni Desmond (Little Tiger Press) will also give

you food for thought after the excesses of Christmas. Blue Monster is never happy – he wants new things all the time, even his own funfair, racing car and paradise island! When will he learn there are some things money can't buy?

STAR IN THE JAR by Sam Hay with illustrations by Sarah Massini (Egmont Books) is the perfect antidote to gloomy January. Imagine you found a fallen star. That's exactly what happens to the little brother in this lovely story. But when the star's twinkly friends make a plea for its return, the children decide they have to help it get home again. Magical.

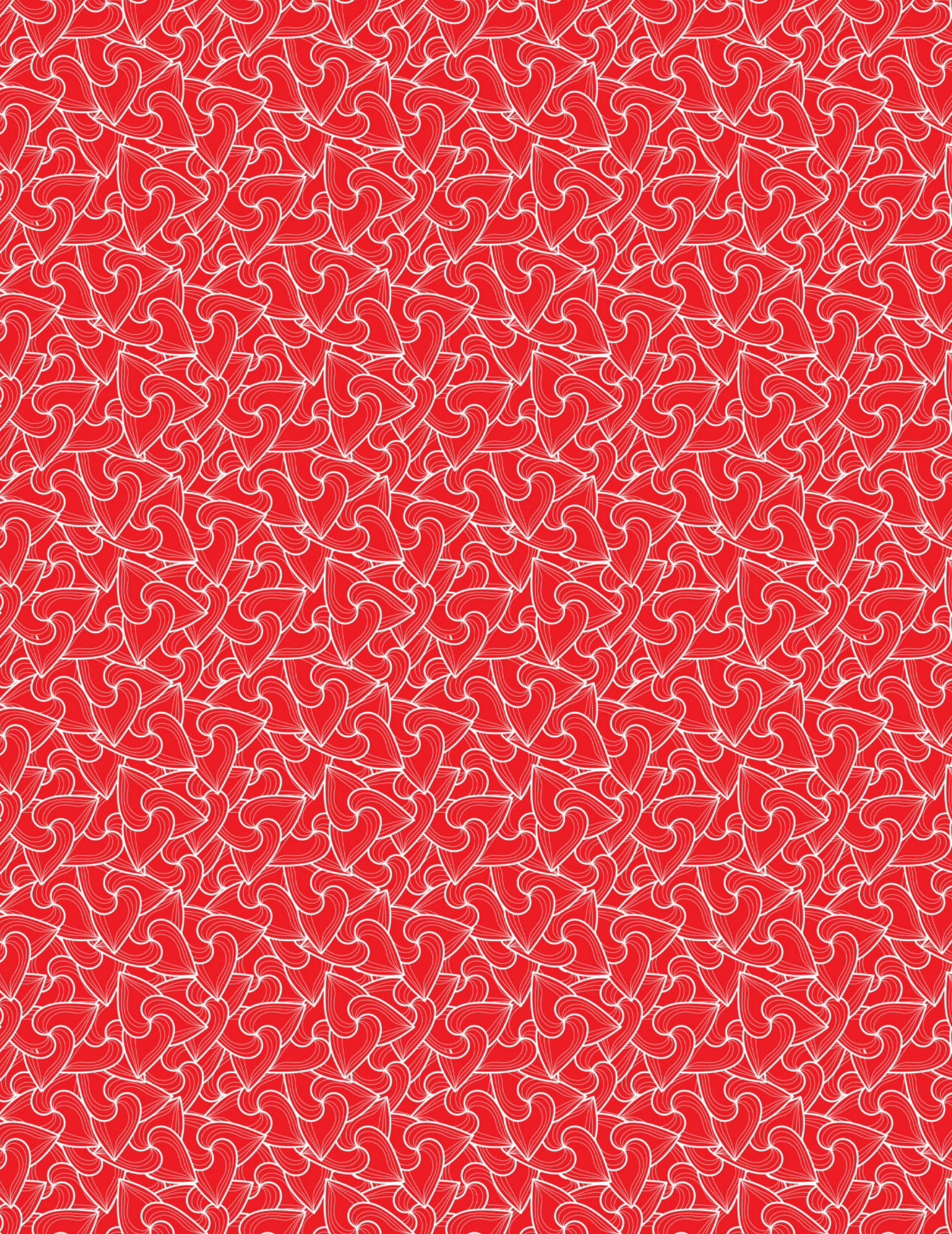


WIN!

COMPETITION!

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Coming
in issue
42

