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# Storytime™



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Man versus snail – who will win?



## DWARF LONGNOSE

Loki the Trickster, The Jobless Giant, A Fairy Dog, Awesome Orangutans and THE MOON!

“Yoo-hoo!”



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nose, a magical pup, a jolly giant,  
and a super-powered snail?  
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# The Lion and the Rabbit

**T**he king of the jungle was a fierce lion, who scared everyone with his loud roar and his huge appetite. He roamed the forest eating any animal that took his fancy.

None of the animals knew when the greedy lion might attack and they grew so tired of living in fear, they got together and came up with a plan. With knees quaking, they set off for the lion's den.

The brave zebra stepped forward. "Oh, mighty King of the Jungle," she said. "We have come to offer you a deal. Instead of tiring yourself out hunting in this terrible





heat, if you can agree to eat just one animal every day, then we promise that, every morning, one of us will come to your den to be your dinner.”

The lion thought this was a good plan. He liked the idea of lazing around all day. “Very well,” he agreed. “But if I don’t get my meal by noon, the deal is off and I will hunt down every single one of you.” To show he was serious, he roared very loudly.

The animals left the clearing feeling sad. Truly, none of them wanted to be the lion’s dinner.

From that day on, they agreed to put their names into a hat and, every

morning, the animal whose name was drawn would go to the lion’s den.



On the first morning, they all put their names into the hat and the rabbit was chosen. Now, the rabbit was the most timid creature of them all, but he was also the smartest.

He waved goodbye to his friends and hopped to the lion’s den as slowly as he could, trying to come up with a clever plan on the way. By the time he reached the clearing, noon had been and gone. ➡







“Why are you so late?” growled the lion, impatiently. He was very hungry by now. “You broke the deal and you’re a pathetic, puny meal. I will have to eat your friends anyway.”

“I’m sorry,” said the rabbit. “It wasn’t my fault. It was the other lion.”

“What other lion?”

“Well, on the way here, I came upon another lion and he began to chase me. I begged for my life and explained that I was going to be dinner for the King of the Jungle, but he wouldn’t listen. He said that *he* was the King

of the Jungle and carried on hunting me! I managed to escape, but I was very far away from your den and that’s why it has taken me so long to get here.”

As the rabbit told the story, the lion grew furious. “There is only one King of the Jungle!” he sneered. “Show me this other lion’s den.”

The rabbit bowed to the lion and led the way. He took the lion on a long and winding path through the trees to another clearing, where there stood a deep natural well.



“He was hiding in here, mighty king,”  
said the rabbit.

The lion snarled and peered down  
the well. When he spotted his own  
reflection, baring its teeth at him, he  
let out a deafening roar, and the roar  
echoed right back at him.

“How dare you wear a crown! I am the  
King of the Jungle,” he growled.

“I am the King of the Jungle,” the echo  
growled back at him.

“No, I am the King of the Jungle,”  
thundered the lion.

“No, I am the King of the Jungle,” said  
his enemy.

With that, the lion became so enraged  
he leapt into the bottomless well to  
fight his own reflection. The last thing  
the rabbit ever heard of him was a  
great, noisy splash!

The clever little rabbit hopped away,  
eager to tell his friends the good news. 6



# The Moon

By Oliver Herford

**T**he moon is like a big round cheese  
That shines above the garden trees,  
And, like a cheese, grows less each night,  
As though someone had had a bite.

The mouse delights to nibble cheese,  
The dog bites anything he sees –  
But how could they bite off the moon  
Unless they went in a balloon?

And human people, when they eat  
They think it rude to bite their meat,  
They use a knife or fork or spoon;  
Who is it then that bites the moon?





## LEARN ABOUT IT!

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Worksheet to find out who  
really 'eats' the moon! Visit:  
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# The Fairy Dog

**I**t's a little known fact that fairies love pets too – and if you ever pass a stray dog or cat, it might not be abandoned. It might just belong to a fairy who is hiding from you.

Bronwen Jones knew this because her cousin Rhiannon was on her way home one night when she found a strange dog crying for some food. Instead of taking it home and caring for it, Rhiannon told the dog to “Shoo”. The next day, she was on her way home again when three little fairies appeared before her.

“Hello, Rhiannon,” they tinkled. “How would you like to travel home tonight – above wind, mid wind or below wind?”

Thinking she was being clever, Rhiannon answered, “Below wind, please.”

But that was the worst answer she could have given. You see, above wind would have been a breathtaking flight through the clouds, mid wind would have been a pleasant ride along the breeze, but below wind... well! Rhiannon was lifted off her feet and dragged through brambles and mud, fields and bogs, until her clothes were torn, her legs were scratched and she was covered in dirt! When she got home, Rhiannon vowed never to be mean to a stray dog again.





## Name It!

Give Bronwen's fairy puppy a name.  
Write it here:

Bronwen Jones remembered her cousin's tale when, one evening, she found a tired little pup collapsed on the lane near her farm. She picked it up, cuddled it and carried it home, where she fed it well and made it a soft bed by the fire.

She stroked it and spoke soothing words to it and the puppy wagged its tail. Partly, Bronwen feared the fairies, but mainly she cared for it out of the goodness of her heart.

The next morning, there was a gentle tap on the door. When she opened it, she found three fairies fluttering about.

"Good day to you, Bronwen," they tinkled. "We think you might have our puppy. She's a curious little creature – always going on adventures."

"I have," smiled Bronwen. "She's safe and sound here, but you are welcome to take her home again."

The puppy came running to the door, wagging its tail happily. When the fairies saw how kind Bronwen had been to their pet, they thanked her.

"Tell us, Bronwen. Would you rather have a clean barnyard or a messy barnyard?" they asked. ➡



Bronwen thought about it carefully and she realised that the only way to have a barnyard that was perfectly spick and span would mean having no animals in it at all.

“A messy barnyard,” she answered. The fairies nodded and smiled.

“And so it shall be,” they chuckled, and they took their little puppy and disappeared in an instant.

When Bronwen checked her barnyard, she was delighted to find that her animals had doubled in number, the troughs were overflowing with food, and even the hay bales were bigger.

It was a perfectly messy barnyard – just as it should be. From that day on, there was no finer milk, butter or eggs than those from Bronwen’s fairy-blessed farm! 🌀





# The Jobless Giant

By Jennifer Moore

**T**he first time the giant caught the bus, Isabella Rockersteller hid behind her mother's shoulder.

"I'm off to look for a job," boomed the giant, crushing four rows of seats with his bottom. "How about you?"

"We're going to the beach," whispered Isabella, peeping out at him. "We're going to build sandcastles."





“Ooh, I love sandcastles,” said the giant. “Can I come? I’ll look for a job tomorrow instead.”

“Of course,” said Mrs Rockersteller. “But we’ve only got one bucket and spade. You’ll have to share.”

The giant was a brilliant sandcastle builder. He made a big sand palace, with twisting turrets and a swimming pool the size of a small lake. Isabella floated in the salty water while the giant paddled his toes.

At home time, he held out a huge hairy hand for her to shake.

“Thank you for a lovely day,” he said.

“Thank you,” said Isabella. “And good luck finding a job tomorrow.”



There was no hiding the next morning when the giant got on the bus. Isabella was delighted to see him.

“Hello,” he roared, climbing on board. The wheels wobbled and wheezed under his enormous weight. “I’m off to find a job today. How about you?”

“We’re going to the zoo,” Isabella told him. “To see the elephants.”





"That sounds wonderful," said the giant. "Can I come? I'll look for a job tomorrow instead."

"Of course," said Mrs Rockersteller. "But we've only packed one picnic. You'll have to share."

The zoo was twice as much fun with the giant. He lifted Isabella high above the crowds to see the animals. They had a roaring competition with the lion and made so much noise, the ostrich buried its head in the sand.

"That was brilliant," said Isabella when it was time to go. She waved goodbye to her gigantic friend, whose

head was still covered with parrots. "I hope you find a job tomorrow."

The next day, it was raining. Isabella was very pleased to see the giant waiting at the bus stop.

"Where are you off to this time?" he asked, swinging her on board. *Whee!*

"We're going to feed the ducks in the park," Isabella said. "They don't mind the rain."

"That sounds perfect," said the giant. "Can I come? I'll look for a job tomorrow instead." ↗





"Of course," said Mrs Rockersteller.  
"But we've only got two umbrellas.  
You'll have to share."

By the time they got off the bus, the  
rain was pouring down.

"Oh dear," said Mrs Rockersteller.  
"We're going to get soaked. And the  
bread will get soggy."

The giant grinned. "Don't worry. I've  
got just the thing." He picked up the  
bus shelter and carried it over their  
heads like a massive umbrella.



The next day was bright and sunny  
again. The giant joined Isabella and  
her mother on a fruit-picking trip, and  
afterwards Mrs Rockersteller invited  
him back for homemade fruit pie.

"Thank you for having me," he said,  
after his eighth slice. "It's been the  
best week ever." Then he frowned.  
"But I still haven't found a job. I'd  
better look for one tomorrow."

"I've had an idea about that,"  
said Isabella. She whispered in  
his enormous ear.

The giant's frown turned into a  
big grin. "That's brilliant!" he said.  
"I'll get started straight away."

He wasn't on the bus the next day  
when Isabella and Mrs Rockersteller  
went to the cinema. And he wasn't  
there when they went to the museum.  
Or the day after that when they went  
to the supermarket.

But the following week they found a  
brand-new bus waiting right outside  
their house. It was a massive triple-  
decker with extra-big wheels and a  
special pull-out rain shelter. There was  
a sign painted across the side in large  
red letters:

**THE GIANT BUS COMPANY.  
HOP ON BOARD FOR BIG FUN  
AND ENORMOUS ADVENTURES!**





The top deck was already full of excited children and their parents, and the queue snaked all the way back down the road.

“Hello,” boomed the bus driver to Isabella and her mother. “We’re off to the fair. Would you like to come?”

“Yes please,” said Isabella.

The driver reached out over the heads of the waiting passengers and swung Isabella and her mother on board.

“I’m afraid I’ve only got one bus,” he said, with a giant wink. “You’ll have to share!” 🌀



## SPOT IT!

Can you spot these three objects in the picture? **Tick the boxes** when you find them.





# Dwarf Longnose

**O**nce upon a time, there was a poor, hardworking couple who made their living selling vegetables at the market. They had one young son called Jem, who helped them out.

One day, a hunched-over old lady came hobbling towards their stall. She had a sharp, pointed chin and the longest, most bulbous nose anyone had ever seen.

“How can I help you, madam?” asked Jem.

“We’ll see,” said the old lady, and she started to dig her bony fingers through their herbs, scrunching and tearing them, and sniffing them with her long nose.

“No, these are bad,” grumbled the old lady. “Very bad indeed.”

Jem was annoyed by how rude she was. “Our herbs are freshly picked, and now we can’t sell them because you’ve torn them with your dirty fingers and stuck your great long nose into them!”

“You don’t like my nose, eh?” cackled the old lady, looking sharply at Jem.





"I'm sorry. He didn't mean it, madam," said Jem's mother. "But maybe you could buy something today, as we can no longer sell our herbs?"

"Very well," sighed the old lady. "I'll buy six cabbages, but your boy has to carry them home for me."

Jem didn't like this idea at all, but his mother insisted, so he gathered the cabbages in his arms and glumly followed the hobbling old lady.



Eventually, she stopped at an old, tumbledown cottage. She opened the door and beckoned Jem to follow her.

Once inside, the old lady took out a whistle. When she blew it, to Jem's surprise, a group of guinea pigs came

running over! They were dressed in smart waistcoats and dickie bows, and they carried a pair of fur-lined slippers. The old lady slipped them on and, at once, she stood up straight and walked briskly across the room.

"Follow me!" she called to Jem, and they went into the kitchen. Jem put the cabbages on the table and turned to leave, but the old lady said kindly, "Take a seat, dear. You've walked a long way. I will make soup for you."

She whistled again and the guinea pigs hurried into the kitchen wearing aprons. They were followed by squirrels wearing little chef's hats.

The squirrels scuttled around quickly, fetching pots and pans, while the guinea pigs chopped and stirred. ➡





The old lady sniffed the soup and sprinkled on some herbs, while Jem looked on in wonder.

When the soup was ready, she ladled it into a silver bowl and set it down before him. “There,” said the old lady. “Eat this – you deserve it.”

Jem was so hungry, he gulped down the soup. It was the most delicious thing he had ever eaten and it had an aroma he had never smelt before. “What is it?” he asked.

“Something with a special herb your mother doesn’t sell,” said the old lady.

Jem ate it all up and felt so full and tired, he rested his head on the table. He soon fell into a deep sleep and dreamt that he was a squirrel – and that he worked with the guinea pigs, waiting on the old lady.

In his dream, he became a brilliant cook who could master anything from dainty pastries to roast dinners. After seven years of serving the old lady, he was searching for an ingredient, when he found a dusty old bottle with an unusual herb in it.

It was a bright red flower, and smelt exactly like the soup he had eaten. As he sniffed the flower, it tickled his nose and he sneezed so loudly that he woke up.

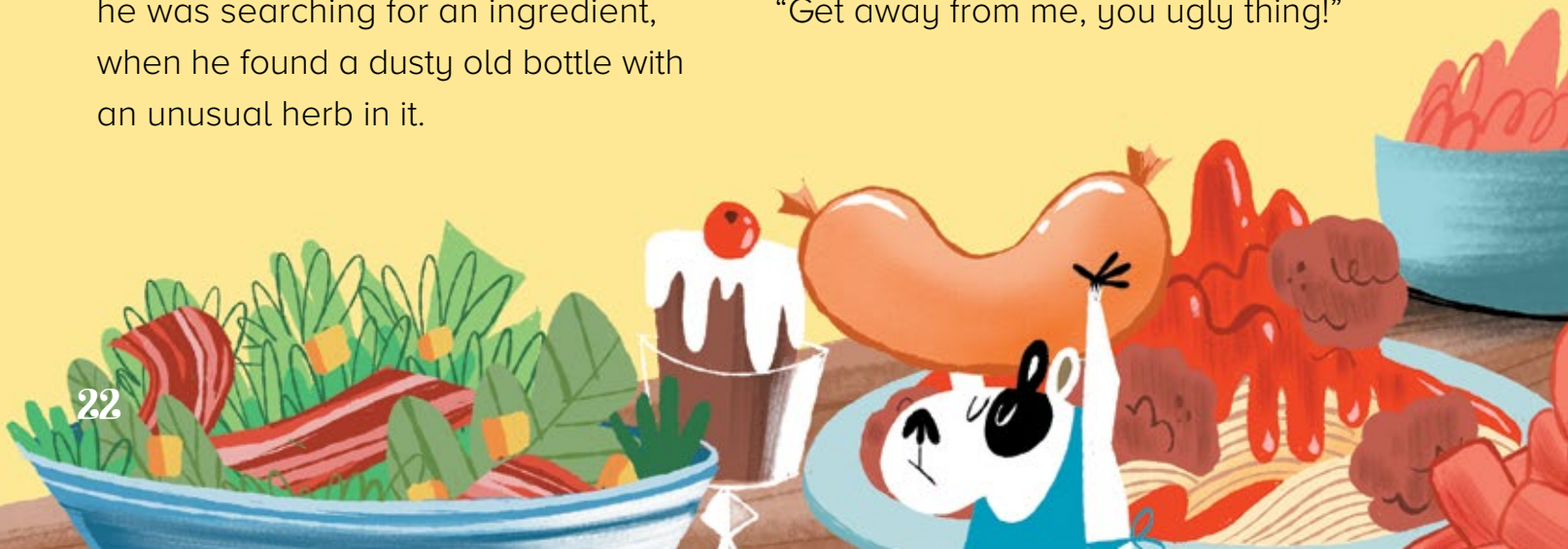
“What a funny dream,” he said. Jem jumped up, eager to get back to the market stall, but his body felt stiff and sore and, when he turned around, he knocked his nose against the door. Jem laughed at his own clumsiness, and he left the old lady’s cottage wondering where everyone was.



When Jem reached the market, he was surprised to see people pointing and staring at him. He thought he must be in trouble with his parents.

He saw his mother and rushed over. “I’m sorry, Mother! That old lady gave me a strange soup to thank me, and I fell asleep. I didn’t mean to leave you alone for so long.”

Jem’s mother leapt back in horror. “Get away from me, you ugly thing!”





“What do you mean?” asked Jem.  
“Why would you be so cruel to your own son?”

“Son? You’re not my son,” sobbed his mother. “My son went missing seven years ago, and I haven’t heard from him since.”

“Seven years!” cried Jem. All of a sudden, he realised that he hadn’t been dreaming at all. He really had served the old lady for seven years. She must have been a witch!

His father rushed over to comfort his mother. “What do you mean by upsetting my dear wife, you strange little creature – leave us alone!”

“But I am your son!” Jem protested.

His father wouldn’t hear it. “Do you think I wouldn’t know my own son? He didn’t have a horrible big nose like yours – and he wasn’t a dwarf!”

Jem felt his nose and was horrified to find that it was as long and bulbous as the old lady’s. ➡





He ran to the well and, when he saw



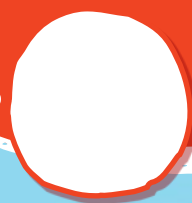


his reflection, tears came to his eyes.



**FIND IT!**

Can you find this little fellow hiding in the picture? **Tick the box when you do!**





“No wonder my own parents don’t recognise me,” he wept.

Hurt and confused, Jem ran away from the market. He set off for the palace of the grand duke, who was well known for his love of food. “Perhaps I can find work there as a cook.”

He walked for a day and a night until, at last, he reached the palace. When he entered the courtyard, the guards made fun of his big nose, but marched him to the head cook.

When Jem bowed before the cook, his nose almost touched the floor.

“Did someone send you here for a joke?” chuckled the cook.

“No,” said Jem, bravely. “Name any dish and I will cook it for you – and it will be the best you have ever tasted.”

Amused, the head cook agreed to give him a trial. Just then, the butler arrived with the duke’s lunch order. “Today, his highness demands Danish dumplings,” said the butler.

“I doubt you can handle that,” said the head cook. “Danish dumplings have a secret recipe.”

“That’s easy!” said Jem. He listed the ingredients, and added, “Plus a herb called heal-well.”

“We never use that,” said the cook, but Jem insisted and set to work straight away. He was careful not to dip his nose in the pan as it bubbled away.

Before lunch was served, the head cook tasted the dumplings, and was amazed by how good they were.





The grand duke himself declared it the best lunch he had ever had, and made Jem the assistant head cook.

Jem became known to everybody in the palace as Dwarf Longnose and, in time, the duke grew plump from five delicious meals a day.



One day, the duke received a surprise visitor – the prince had come to stay. The duke warned Dwarf Longnose, “The prince likes fine food even more than I do, so you must serve him the very best dishes – something different at every meal.”

“I will, Your Highness,” promised Dwarf Longnose and, for the next two weeks, he did nothing but cook.

One evening, the prince asked to meet the cook who had treated him to such wonderful dishes. Dwarf Longnose bowed deeply before him.

“You are a wonderful cook, but you haven’t served me the queen of all desserts. Tomorrow, I would like a Suzeraine pastry, please.”

“Of course, Your Majesty,” said the dwarf, but he was worried. He had never heard of a Suzeraine pastry, and neither had the head cook.

That afternoon, Dwarf Longnose hurried to the market, looking for ingredients to give him a clue. He found a plump white goose to serve for dinner, but he could find nothing for the mystery pastry. ➡





On his way back to the kitchens, he moaned, “What am I to do? The prince will have my head if I can’t make the Suzeraine pastry.”

At that moment, the goose piped up, “I know what it is. I can help you!”

“A talking goose!” laughed Dwarf Longnose. “I suppose I have seen stranger things. How can you talk?”

“I am Mimi, the daughter of Wizard Weatherbold. A wicked witch turned me into a goose. If you promise not to cook me, I will help you. We used to eat this pastry a lot.”

Dwarf Longnose agreed to look after the enchanted goose, and she listed the ingredients he needed. That night, he began work on the pastry.

When it was served to the prince at lunch, he said to the duke, “It’s nice, but it’s not perfect. It’s missing a

special herb called relish, as I knew it would be. Your cook isn’t so clever after all.”

The duke was outraged. He rushed to the kitchens and shouted at Dwarf Longnose, “How dare you make a fool of me before the prince – you served him something unfinished!”

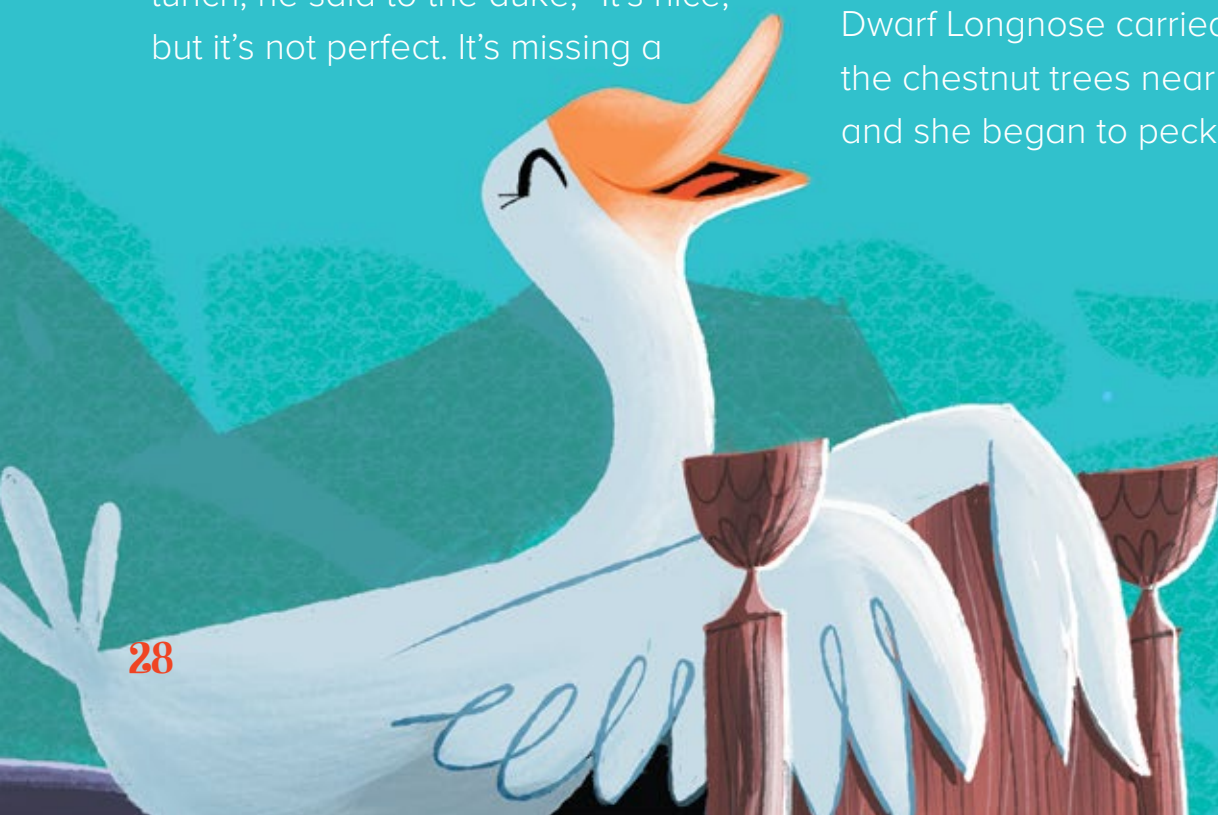
“Please, Your Highness,” cried Dwarf Longnose. “I followed the recipe.”

“No you didn’t! You missed out a herb called relish,” spat the duke. “Serve the pastry as it should be tomorrow, or you will lose your head!”



When Dwarf Longnose told Mimi what had happened, she cried, “Oh, I know that herb! Do you have any chestnut trees nearby? It grows by their roots.”

Dwarf Longnose carried the goose to the chestnut trees near the palace, and she began to peck around.





The dwarf followed her anxiously, and suddenly she flapped her wings excitedly. “Here it is!” she said.

Dwarf Longnose was astonished to see that the herb was the same red flower he had sniffed in the witch’s kitchen – the herb that had broken his enchantment, but left him with an enormous nose. He told Mimi the goose everything.

“Grab a handful,” said Mimi, “and let’s go back to your room.”

Once there, Dwarf Longnose sniffed the red flower, and as he did so, his sore, stiff limbs began to stretch and grow, and he felt his long, bulbous nose shrink. Moments later, he had returned to his true form. He was Jem again – a young man with a perfectly boring, normal nose.

“Look at you!” laughed Mimi.

Quickly, Jem took Mimi under his arm, left the duke’s palace and set off for the home of Wizard Weatherbold. Of course, nobody stopped him, because nobody recognised him!

When he reached the wizard’s house, the old man transformed the goose into his daughter again. He was so happy to see her, he gave Jem a handsome reward – and Mimi swore she would always be Jem’s friend. ➔



## BAKE IT!

What ingredients would you put in a Suzeraine pastry or enchanted soup? **Make a pretend magical lunch** – but don’t end up with an enormous nose!



The wizard used his magic to return Jem to his parents' house, where the young man told his mother and father all that had happened to him over the years.

“We’re so sorry we didn’t recognise you,” they cried, and Jem forgave them.

The very next day, he used his reward from the wizard to open a café in the market square – and his speciality was the Suzeraine pastry.

Jem lived a long and happy life there – unlike the greedy bad-tempered duke, who argued with the prince over the pastry and lost his entire fortune. 🌀





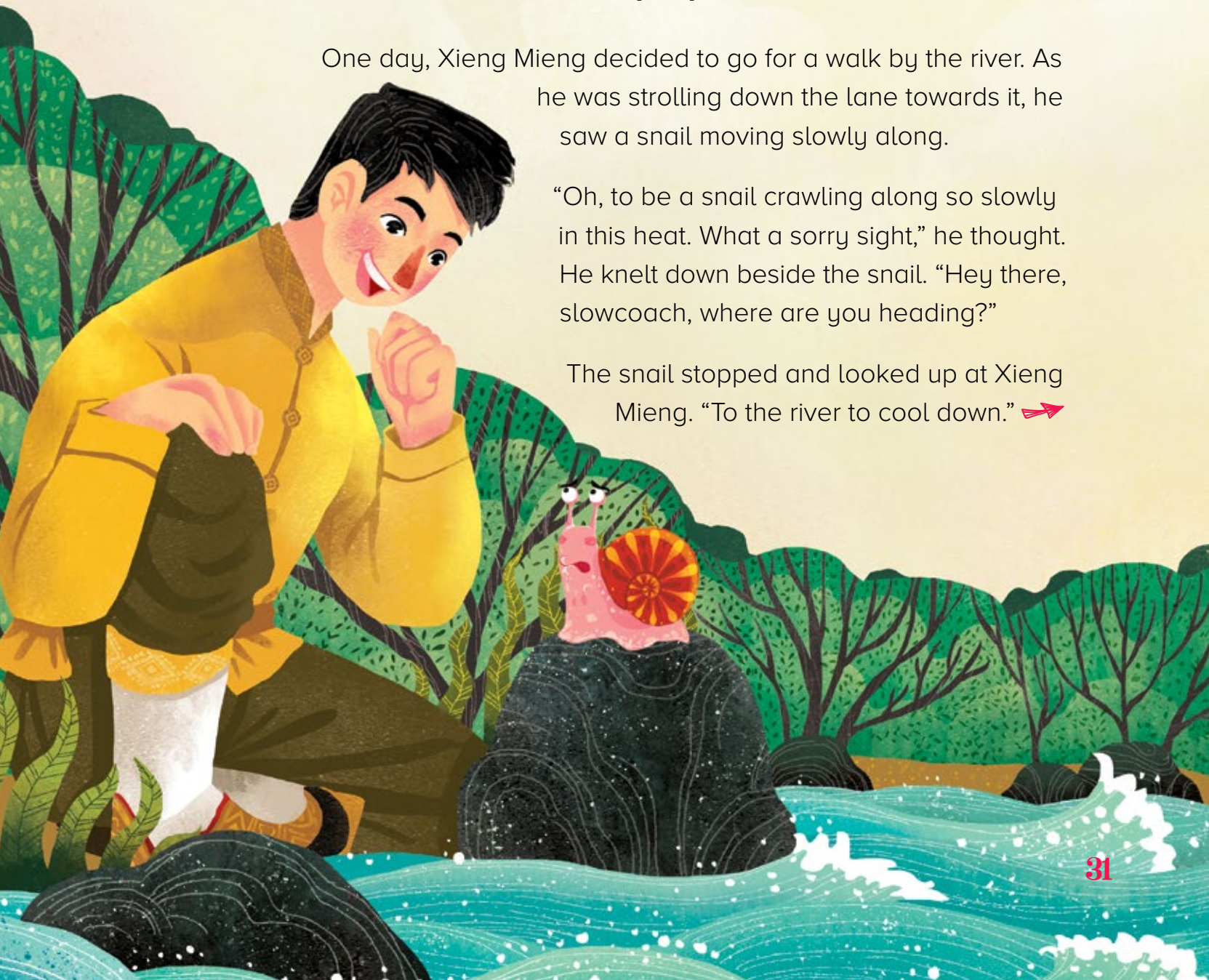
# The Great Snail Race

**I**n Laos, there was one person who was well known for being smarter than everyone else and he was called Xieng Mieng. But sometimes, even the smartest people meet their match.


One day, Xieng Mieng decided to go for a walk by the river. As he was strolling down the lane towards it, he saw a snail moving slowly along.

“Oh, to be a snail crawling along so slowly in this heat. What a sorry sight,” he thought. He knelt down beside the snail. “Hey there, slowcoach, where are you heading?”

The snail stopped and looked up at Xieng Mieng. “To the river to cool down.” ➡







Xieng Mieng laughed.  
“How long will that take? A month? Maybe more! It will be winter by the time you get there. Better to give up and go home now.”

The snail was offended by Xieng Mieng’s teasing. “Well,” it said, “if you think you’re so fast, why don’t have we have a race?”

The snail’s suggestion made Xieng Mieng laugh even harder. “Sure! Let’s start now. Ready... steady...”

“No!” said the snail, realising how silly it had been to challenge a human. “I’ll need some time to prepare. Let’s meet here at the same time tomorrow.”

“Fine,” said Xieng Mieng, still grinning. “I’ll see you here tomorrow.” And he walked away chuckling to himself.

The snail headed for home. When it told its family and friends about the race, they were all shocked. “But how can a snail win a race against a human?” they asked.

“I have an idea,” said the snail, “but I need your help.” It shared its plan and everyone was more than happy to be involved. The snails loved the idea of outwitting a human – especially one as clever as Xieng Mieng.



When it was time for the race, Xieng Mieng arrived and found his slimy competitor waiting for him.

“Xieng Mieng, I had a thought,” said the snail. “Because I am so small and the path is so overgrown, you might not see me racing along beside you. Why don’t you call out my name now and again and I will answer you? Let’s see if it works.”

“Okay,” said Xieng Mieng, greatly amused that the snail was taking the race so seriously. “Snail!” he called.

“Yoo-hoo!” replied the snail.

“Perfect!” said Xieng Mieng. “Let’s begin!” After a “Ready, steady, go!” the race was underway. ➡





## READ IT!

This is a rare Xieng Mieng story, because he usually outwits everyone. Why not read our free bonus story: **Xieng Mieng Outwits the King?** Download it here: [storytimemagazine.com/free](http://storytimemagazine.com/free)



Xieng Mieng pelted ahead, leaving the snail slowly slithering behind him. After a while, he couldn't see his tiny competitor. He thought it was because the snail was so far behind, so he decided to call out, "Snail!"

He was very surprised when he heard a "Yoo-hoo!" far ahead of him.

"How can the snail have got in front of me?" thought Xieng Mieng. "I'd better speed up." So he began to sprint and, because he still couldn't see the snail, he called out again, "Snail!"

Again, the snail's "Yoo-hoo!" came from somewhere far ahead.

"Impossible!" thought Xieng Mieng. "This snail is fast, but I am sure I can catch up." So he started to run even faster. He was quite out of breath when he next called out, "Snail!"

Once more, the snail replied with a "Yoo-hoo!" and this time it sounded even further ahead.

"I can't believe it," thought Xieng Mieng. Now he was starting to get worried. Not only worried, but tired.

## COUNT IT!

Are you more observant than Xieng Mieng? How many snails can you spot hiding in the undergrowth? Write your answer here:





His heart was beating hard in his chest and sweat was pouring from his brow, but he carried on pushing himself to run as fast as he could.

As the river came into sight, he called out, "Snail!" and, again, somewhere up ahead, he heard, "Yoo-hoo!"

Xieng Mieng ran and ran until his legs could no longer carry him and they finally gave way. He collapsed in a heap and, in the distance, he spotted the snail crossing the line.

"Snail!" Xieng Mieng called weakly, and the smiling snail turned round and said, "Yoo-hoo!"

That was the first and last time that Xieng Mieng was ever outwitted and he never did work out how the snail managed to beat him. If only he had bothered to look, he would have seen every single member of the snail's family lined up along the path ready to shout out "Yoo-hoo" to fool him! 🐌

Answer: There are six snails.



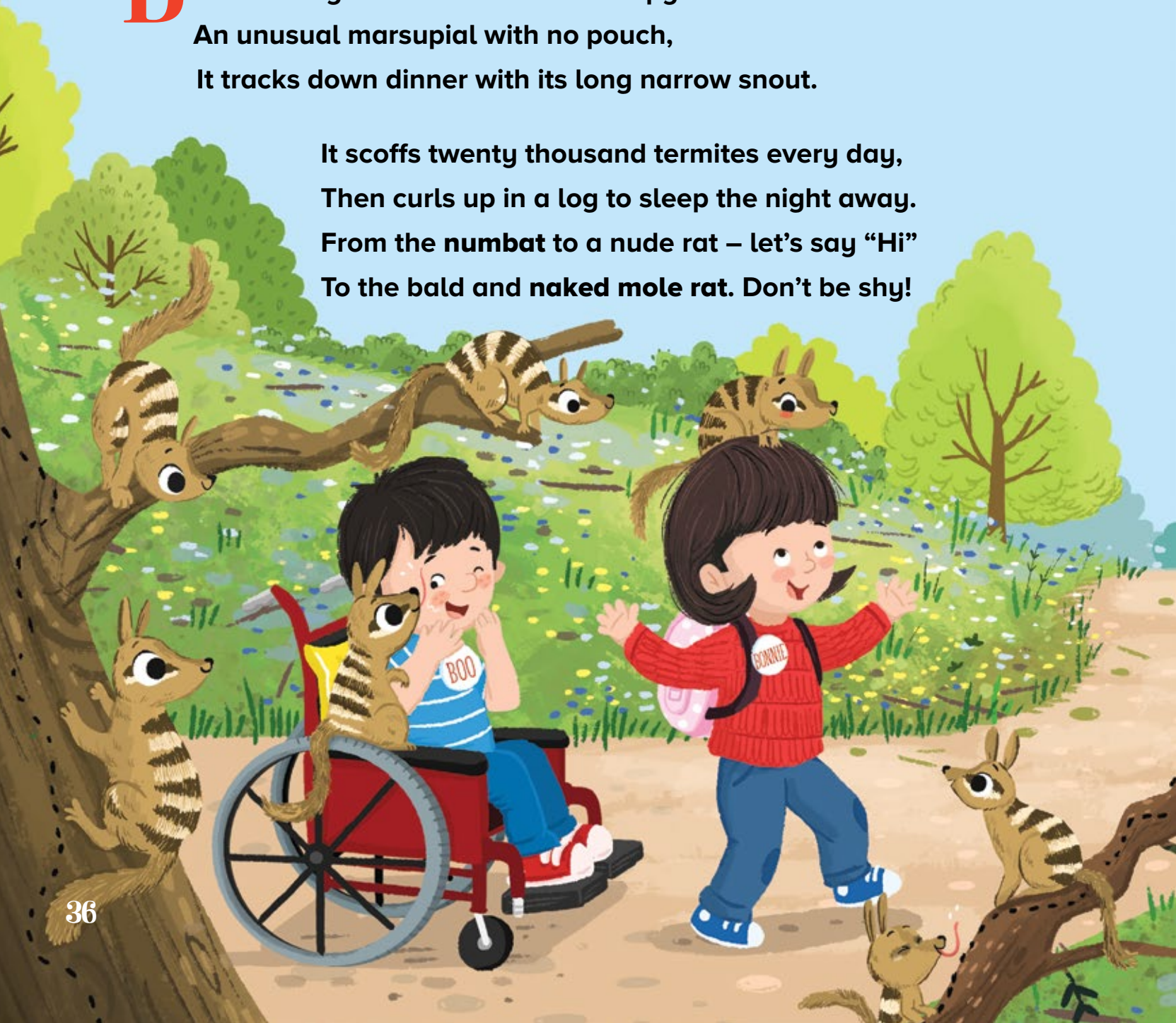


# Alphabet Zoo

We love our zoo, so off we go...  
Let's meet animals for letters **N** and **O**!

**B**oo and Bonnie head for the woodland habitat  
Where they take us to meet the stripy numbat.  
An unusual marsupial with no pouch,  
It tracks down dinner with its long narrow snout.

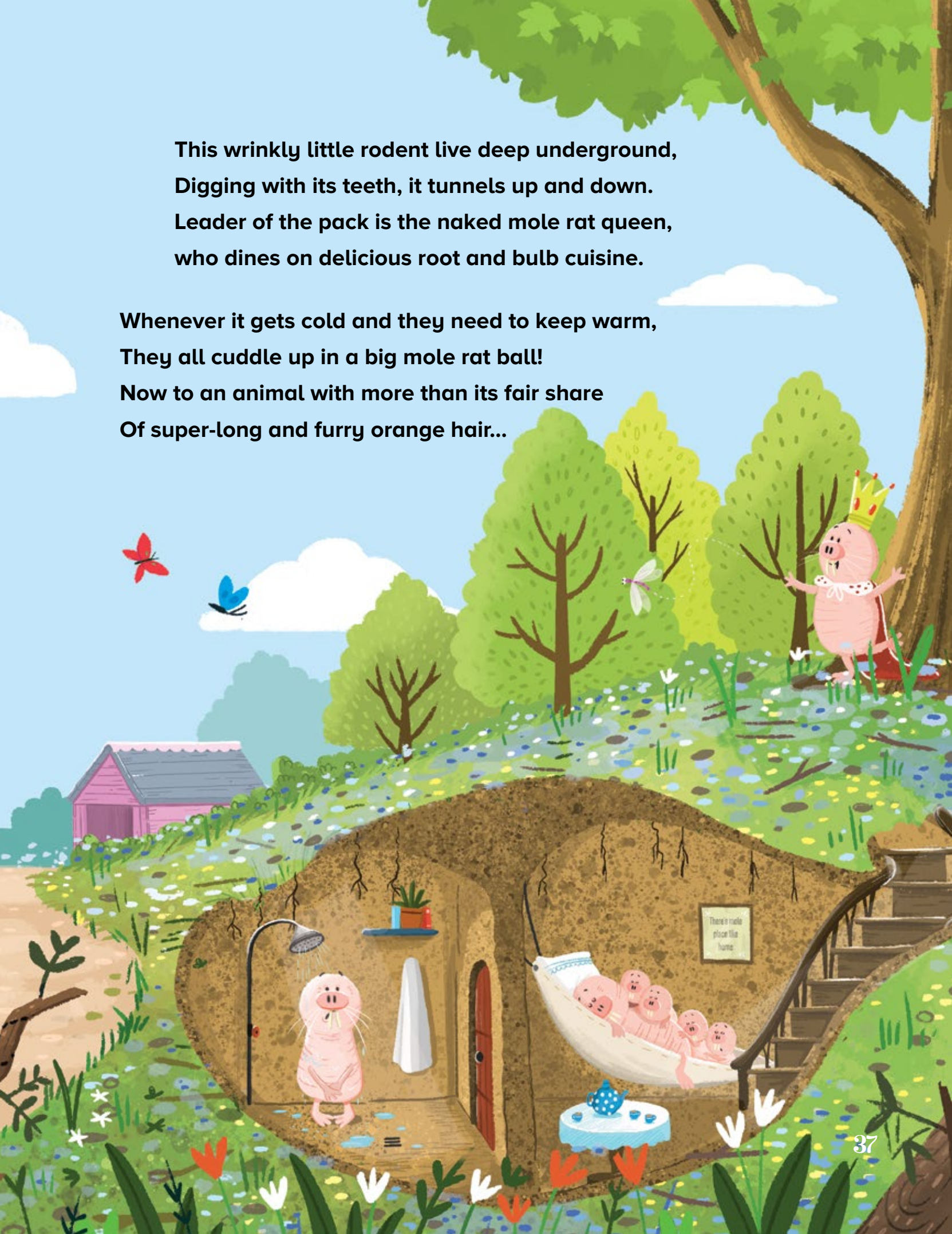
It scoffs twenty thousand termites every day,  
Then curls up in a log to sleep the night away.  
From the numbat to a nude rat – let's say "Hi"  
To the bald and naked mole rat. Don't be shy!





This wrinkly little rodent live deep underground,  
Digging with its teeth, it tunnels up and down.  
Leader of the pack is the naked mole rat queen,  
who dines on delicious root and bulb cuisine.

Whenever it gets cold and they need to keep warm,  
They all cuddle up in a big mole rat ball!  
Now to an animal with more than its fair share  
Of super-long and furry orange hair...






The orangutan of Asia – a real great ape,  
He's king of the swingers, make no mistake.  
With his long, strong arms, he moves from tree to tree,  
Eating figs and mangoes and spreading their seeds.

A gardener of the forest, such a smart fella,  
He stays dry in the rain with his leaf umbrella.  
At night he makes a nest with a pillow of leaves,  
A bedroom in the sky, the place for jungle dreams.



Don't miss our  
next Alphabet Zoo  
for animals beginning  
with the letter P,  
including penguins  
and polar bears!



An illustration of two okapis in a lush green forest. One okapi is standing on the left, facing right, with its long neck extended upwards. The other okapi is on the right, facing left, with its head down as if grazing. Both animals have brown bodies and distinctive black and white striped legs. The background is filled with various green plants, trees, and pink flowers, with rain falling diagonally across the scene.

But on the forest floor, from deepest Africa,  
A most bizarre beast, a bit like a zebra.  
It's the okapi – a crazy mixed-up creature,  
Striped legs, white socks and a brown tum feature.

Related to the giraffe, not a horse or deer,  
With its curly tongue, it can strip branches clear.  
Its big round ears pick up sounds far and near,  
But its calls are so low, we humans can't hear.

Secretive okapi – don't be a mystery,  
Come out from your hiding place and say hello to me!

## ANIMAL FACT!

The okapi is so secretive, scientists didn't even know it existed until 1901! Find out more fun facts about the animals featured here, plus free puzzles and posters in our **Alphabet Zoo Factsheet**. Download it from [storytimemagazine.com/free](http://storytimemagazine.com/free)



# Loki's Greatest Trick

**T**he Norse god Loki was a trickster, but not all his tricks were bad ones. When Asgard – the home of the gods – was first created, Loki's tricks came in very handy.

Odin had found the perfect place for the gods to live on a vast plain at the top of a mountain. They all set about building a great city and each god had his or her own magnificent palace, decorated with precious metals. When the city of Asgard was finished, Odin stood back to admire it.

“Our enemies will envy this place and they will try to overthrow it,” he warned. The other gods agreed and they decided to take it in turns to guard the city, but it was a boring and difficult job.

One day, a stranger arrived in Asgard. He was taller and stronger than any of the gods, and Thor, who was on guard, refused to let him pass.

“What is your business here?” asked Thor.

“I am a builder, looking for work,” said the stranger.  
“I think your great city needs a wall.”

One of the most famous buildings in the realm of Asgard was Valhalla, which was ruled over by Odin. It was said to have a ceiling made from thousands of golden shields and it was the home of brave soldiers who had died in battle.



Odin joined Thor and the builder.  
“It would have to be a high wall to protect us from our enemies,” he said.

“I can do that,” said the builder. “In fact, I can build a wall so high and so strong that no enemy will ever get in.”

Odin and Thor looked impressed.

“And how quickly can you build it?” asked Odin.

“In three seasons,” said the builder.

“And what do you seek as payment?”

“The sun and the moon, and the goddess Freya for my bride.”

Odin furrowed his brow. To give away the sun and the moon would plunge Asgard into eternal coldness and darkness, but persuading Freya to marry this builder would be even more of a challenge.

“Let me discuss it with the other gods and I will return with an answer.”

Thor and Odin went to their meeting place and called for the other gods. When they told them about the builder’s offer, Freya was furious. ➡





"I will not marry a complete stranger for the sake of a wall," she raged.

But Loki came up with a plan to calm her down. "He asks far too much, Odin. Why don't you agree that if he can build the wall in two seasons instead of three, he can have what he asks for? It will be impossible to do it in that time, so we won't have to pay."

All the gods agreed that Loki's idea was good, so Odin returned to the builder and told him their terms.

"I agree," said the builder. "I will return tomorrow to get started – but you must promise to keep your bargain."

Odin vowed he would.

The next day, the builder turned up with a big and powerful stallion.

"He'll probably just use the horse to pull stones," said Loki. But the gods were surprised to find that the horse did a lot more than that. It pulled the stones, it lifted them onto the wall and it even spread mortar between them.

In just one day, the builder and his horse had made great progress. In the coming seasons, the wall grew stronger and taller every day.

The gods began to worry, but Loki reassured them. "Don't panic! There's no way he'll finish the wall on time."





The seasons flew by and, soon, it was the eve of the builder's deadline. He only had a few more stones to add to the grand archway he had built at the entrance to Asgard.

The gods were angry with Loki for giving them such bad advice.

"You must think of a way to delay the builder," said Odin, "or Freya will wreak revenge on you."

That evening, the builder and his horse descended the mountain to search for more stones in the forest. In a clearing, they found a beautiful, healthy mare which whinnied at the builder's horse, asking it to follow it – tempting it to come and play.

The mare was none other than Loki in disguise! He galloped into the trees, neighing all the way. ➡






Longing for some time away from its heavy workload, the stallion broke loose from the builder and chased after Loki the mare. Loki ran through the forest all night long and all through the next day with the stallion close behind him.

Without his strong horse to help him, the builder couldn't pull any of the stones up the mountain. His deadline passed, and the wall remained unfinished, so Odin didn't have to keep his promise after all.

When Loki was sure it was safe, he changed back into his true form and was applauded by the gods for his cleverness. They said it was his greatest trick yet.

Because the builder hadn't met his part of the bargain, he didn't receive any payment at all for building the wall.

This, however, might have been Odin's biggest mistake. The builder was actually a giant and, from that day on, the giants of Jotunheim and the gods of Asgard were enemies forever. 🌀



In Norse mythology, Loki often used his shapeshifting powers. In various stories, he changes himself into a flying insect, a seal, a salmon, a bird, an old lady and a horse! **What would you shapeshift into?**



# storytime playbox

Climb aboard the giant's bus, race a snail, uncover a secret recipe, and make your own moon sand! We show you how.

## 1 FARMYARD MATHS!

The fairies are so happy, they are going to triple the number of animals in this picture. **How many will there be?**

HORSES   
CHICKENS

COWS   
PIGS



## 2 SECRET RECIPES

What is Dwarf Longnose cooking? **Unscramble each anagram** to find the ingredients – the letters in the highlighted squares will reveal what's for lunch!

HE IS MAKING...

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1. LATS

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2. ROTCAR

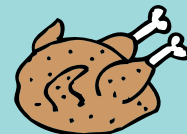
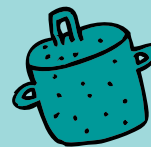
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3. YUKERT

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4. OATTOP

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3

# BUSY BUS

Draw all the faces of the children on the Jobless Giant's bus. Don't forget to draw Isabella and her mum – and you too!

**TIP!**

See our story illustrations for inspiration.

4

## QUICK QUIZ!

Which animal from Alphabet Zoo is a rodent?

a. Okapi

b.

Numbat

c.

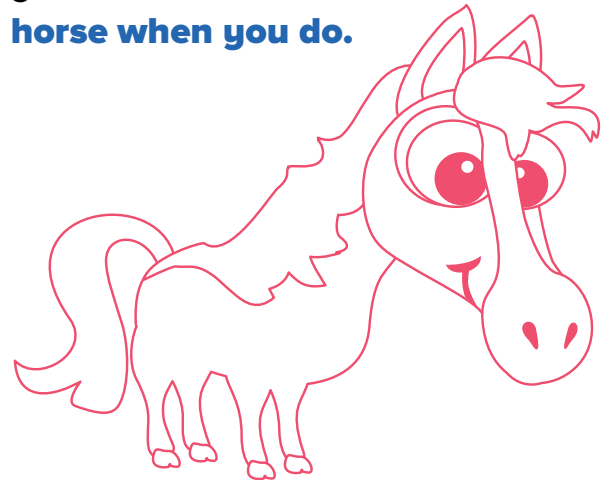
Orangutan

d. Naked Mole Rat

5

## STONE GONE

Loki has hidden the last three stones for Asgard's wall. Can you find them? **Colour in the horse when you do.**



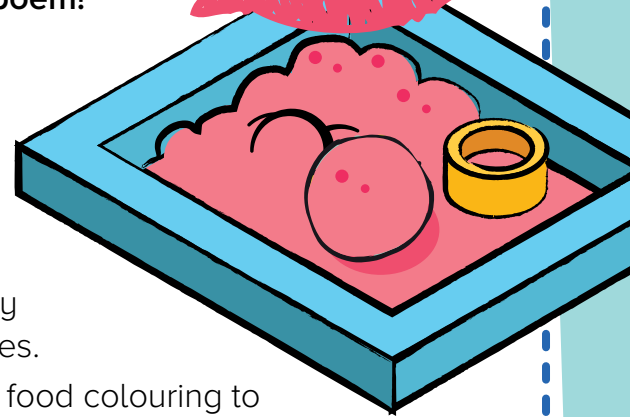


## ⑥ MAKE MOON SAND

Crumbly but easy to mould, moon sand is great fun to model. Make your own and then make a moon, inspired by our poem!

- Sieve 8 cups (a medium-sized cup is best) of plain white flour into a large mixing bowl.
- Pour in 1 cup of baby oil (or coconut oil). Make sure you use the same cup size as for the flour.
- Using the dough hook of a food mixer, a fork or your hands, blend the ingredients together until the oil is fully incorporated in the flour. This can take around 10 minutes.
- If you want to make coloured moon sand, add 1 to 2 tsp food colouring to the oil and stir it in well before adding it to the flour. (It won't mix in entirely, as it's oil and not water.) Alternatively, add 2 tbsp powdered paint to your sifted flour and stir it in before pouring in the baby oil.
- If you're making the moon, add a sprinkle of glitter to the dry flour before you pour in the oil to make it look more space-like.
- When it's finished, you should be able to mould it, form it, use cutters with it and make impressions in it, but when you press it, it should crumble. If it doesn't do this, add a little more oil to make it slightly damp rather than wet.

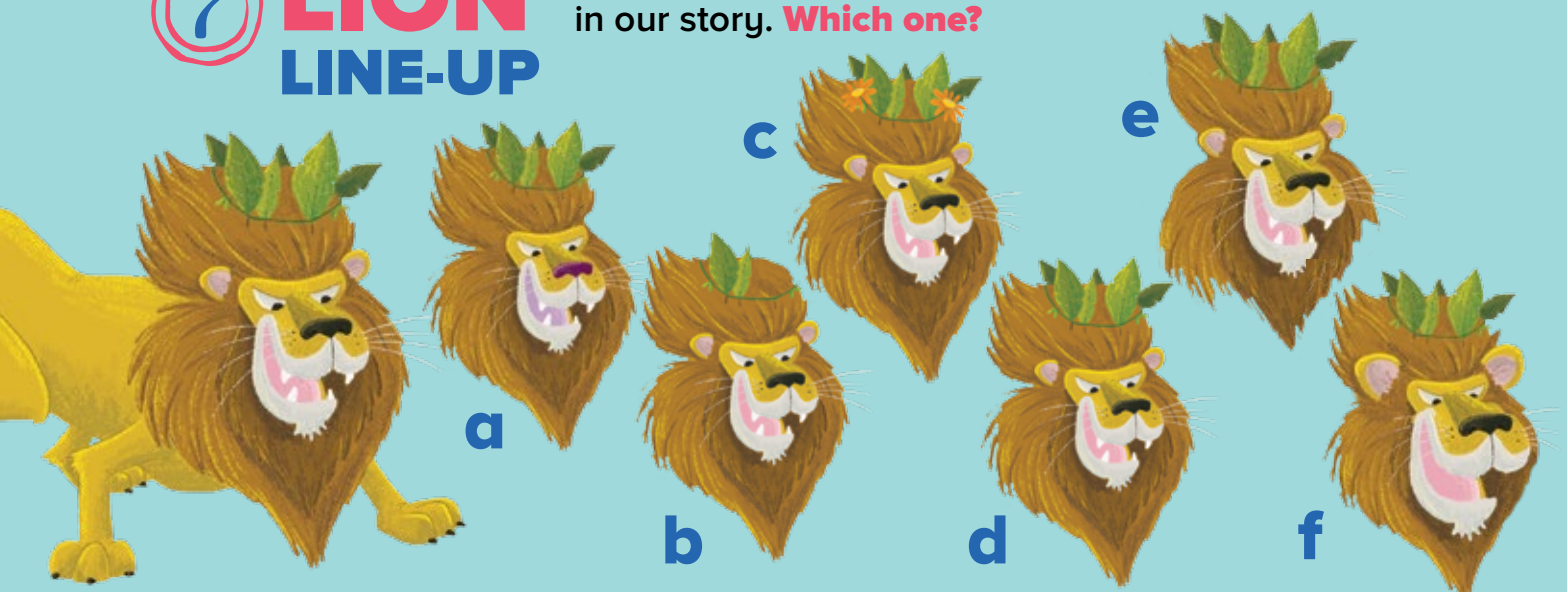
Ask a grown-up!



**TIP!** Moon sand is messy, so play with it in a large tray. When you've finished, store it in an airtight container, where it will keep for weeks.

## ⑦ LION LINE-UP

Only one of these pictures is identical to the lion in our story. Which one?



Answers: 1. Farmyard Maths: 6 horses, 9 chickens, 3 cows and 6 pigs; 2. Secret Recipes: Salt, Carrot, Turkey, Potatoes – He is making SOUP; 4. Quick Quiz: d. Naked mole rat; 7. Lion Line-Up: d



# THE GREAT SNAIL RACE




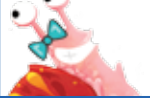
The snails have decided to have their own race. Who will slither to the line first? Compete against your friends to find out.

## How to Play

To play, you need a dice and to print out our Speedy Snail Counters from [www.storytimemagazine.com/free](http://www.storytimemagazine.com/free).

- ★ Line up your snails on the start lines and choose a player to go first.
- ★ Player 1 rolls the dice and moves their snail forward the correct number of spaces.
- ★ If you land on a square with an instruction, make sure you follow it.
- ★ Players take it in turns to roll the dice.
- ★ The first snail to reach the finish line is the champion!

Print out our Speedy Snails to use as counters in your game from [www.storytimemagazine.com/free](http://www.storytimemagazine.com/free)

| COMPETITORS   | KNOWN AS...  | TOP SPEED | SPECIAL SKILLS      |
|---|--------------|-----------|---------------------|
|  | THE FLASH    | 1 SPH*    | IMPENETRABLE SHELL  |
|  | SUPERSONIC   | 1.2 SPH   | LASER VISION        |
|  | SPEEDSTER    | 0.98 SPH  | BUILT-IN SKATEBOARD |
|  | ROCKET RACER | 11 SPH    | TOXIC SLIME         |

\*SLIME PER HOUR







CURL UP IN  
SHELL FOR AN  
EXTRA ROLL.

TOXIC SLIME  
ATTACK!  
MISS A TURN.

TURBO BOOST!  
FORWARD  
TWO SPACES.

SLIDE AROUND  
IN SLIPPERY SLIME!  
MISS A TURN.

CATCH UP  
WITH PLAYER  
IN 1ST POSITION.

SLIME TANK  
EMPTY! MISS  
A TURN.

FINISH



# STORY MAGIC

★ This month, we're focusing on one of our favourite picture book authors, Oliver Jeffers, and celebrating his amazing new book!

## BOOK OF THE MONTH!

**HERE WE ARE** by award-winning illustrator and author Oliver Jeffers (HarperCollins Children's Books) is a truly special book. Subtitled 'Notes for Living on Planet Earth', Jeffers got the idea for this book when his own son was born and he wanted to explain what the world, life and humanity are all about. It's an ambitious concept, beautifully executed with lots of inspiring thoughts. It's not a non-fiction book, so it's not scientifically accurate, but it is a heartfelt lovesong and humorous guide to our planet – and a plea for us all to take care of it and use our time here well. This should be a must-read for any child aged three to eight and would make a fantastic new baby or Christmas gift too. Pure loveliness.



## TOP 3 OLIVER JEFFERS BOOKS

With so many brilliant books under his belt, it's hard to pick a favourite, but here are three fantastic Jeffers titles you really shouldn't miss!

**1. HOW TO CATCH A STAR** The whimsical and wonderful story of a boy who sets out to catch a star of his own, but it isn't quite as straightforward as he hoped.

**2. LOST AND FOUND** When a penguin appears on a boy's doorstep, the boy decides to return it to where it belongs. What follows is an incredible adventure to the South Pole and a thought-provoking ending which touches on loss.

**3. THE DAY THE CRAYONS QUIT** by Drew Daywalt and illustrated by Oliver Jeffers. Duncan's crayons aren't happy with how they're being used, so they decide to tell him how they feel. Full of humour and energy – a must for creative kids.

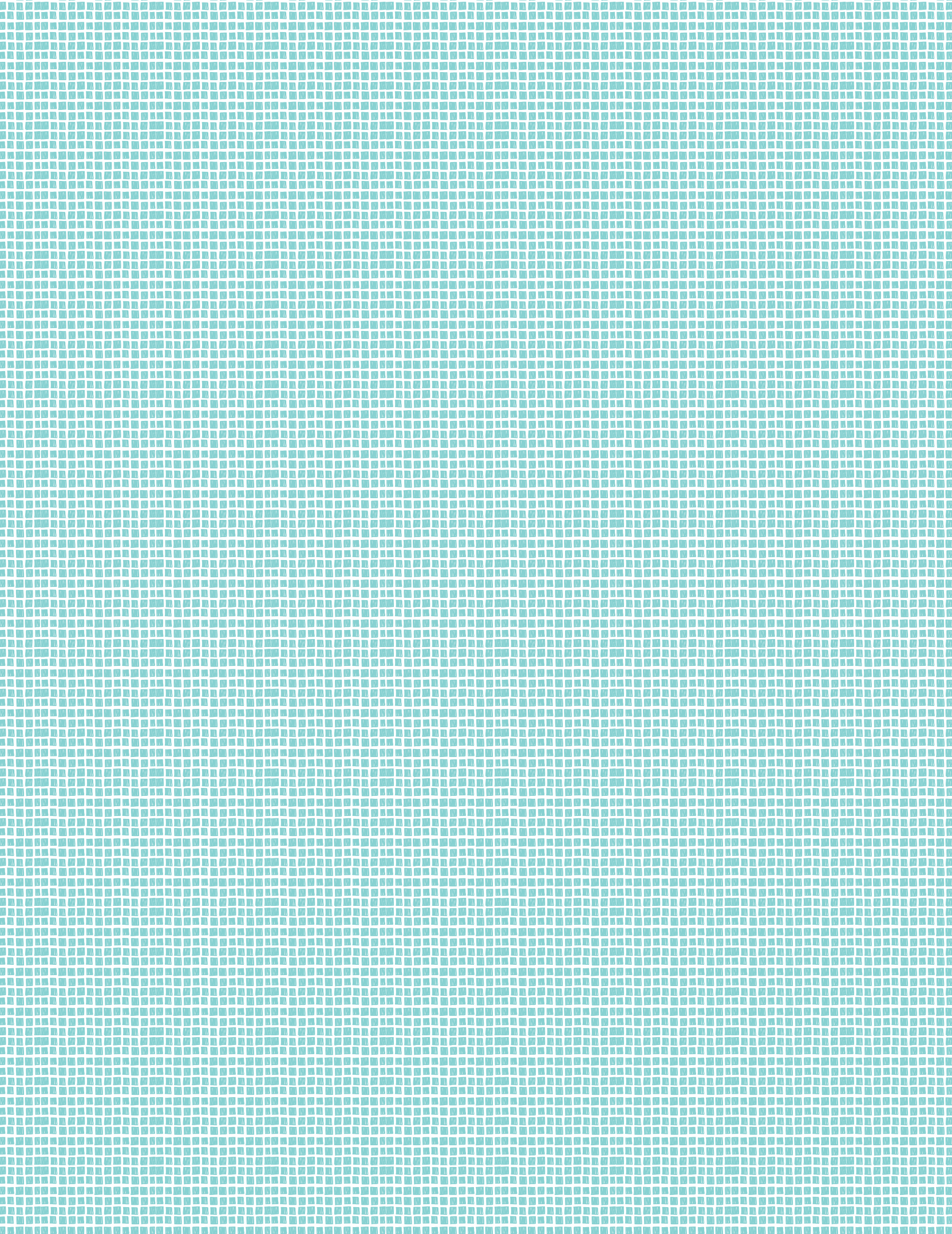
## COMPETITION!

To be in with a chance of winning the wonderful **Here We Are** by Oliver Jeffers, email us with the answer to our Storytime spine question. You'll find it here:

[storytimemagazine.com/win](http://storytimemagazine.com/win)

**WIN!**







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