Mulan had saved China.

How many pink flags can you count on the battlefield? Write your answer here.
When the Emperor heard the news, he rode to Mulan’s camp, eager to reward the general who had crushed his enemies. He planned a grand ceremony in Mulan’s honour.

When she emerged from her tent, she was wearing a robe instead of armour and her hair was long and loose.

“Where is the warrior Mulan?” asked the Emperor.

“I am Mulan,” she answered and bowed.

“It cannot be!” cried the Emperor. The soldiers gasped, but when they looked closely at Mulan’s eyes, they could see she was speaking the truth. They had been led by a woman for years and had never guessed.

One by one the soldiers stood up and saluted Mulan. They had nothing but respect and admiration for her skills. When the Emperor had stopped muttering in disbelief, he saluted Mulan too.

“How can I reward you? I can give you an official post in the Imperial Court.”

“All I ask is for a horse so I can go home,” said Mulan. “And for you to allow women to fight alongside men.”

The Emperor agreed to her request and insisted on giving her the finest steed from his stables.

Mulan then retired from the army and was reunited with her family. They were overjoyed to see she was safe and well. She passed on her armour and sword to her younger brother, who dreamed of being a warrior as great as his sister.
Long ago, two men set out to travel around the world. One of the men always spoke the truth, and the other often told lies.

One day the men came to the land of the apes, which was ruled over by the Ape King. They had heard much about this country, and were curious to see it for themselves. However, when the Ape King heard humans were intruding on his land, he ordered his soldiers to capture them.

The Ape King was proud and vain, so before the men were brought before him, he demanded the other apes kneel down and bow to him.
And though he usually spent his days in the trees, he decided to sit on a throne so he could look more important.

When everything looked just right, the Ape King summoned his prisoners. “Greetings, strangers. What brings you to my land?”

“We are travelling the world,” said the lying traveller. “We had heard a lot about your land and we were interested to see what it was like.”

Feeling flattered that humans had heard of him, the Ape King asked, “What do you think of what you see? What sort of a king do you think I am?”

“Oh, a most mighty king, Your Majesty,” said the lying traveller. “I can tell from the way your subjects are bowing at your feet that you are a respected and powerful ruler. Equal to any human.”

The Ape King was so delighted, he said, “Guards, escort our guest to lodgings with the best view in the land and serve him only the finest and freshest fruit.”
Next, the Ape King turned to the honest traveller and asked, “And what sort of a ruler do you think I am?”

The honest traveller studied the Ape King’s subjects who were still bowing before him and replied, “I think you must be a powerful ape to get your subjects to bow like this, but I suspect they are bowing because you told them to, not because they want to. They have no choice.”

The Ape King leapt out of his throne. He was furious. “How dare you!” he shrieked. “Guards! Get him and throw him in the pit!”

But the guards were too busy chuckling to pay any attention. The honest traveller picked up his rucksack and ran away.

That day the Ape King discovered how much the truth hurts.

**THINK ABOUT IT!**

Is it always best to tell the truth? Can you think of examples when being honest is good and when it might cause problems?
Once upon a time, the son of a rich baron was riding along when he came to a meadow filled with beautiful purple flowers. He decided to take a shortcut through the field, but within moments he fell asleep.

The horse stayed grazing in the meadow while the rider slept in the saddle. At last a crow flew down and pecked the horse. It reared up so suddenly, the rider was jolted awake. “What’s happening?” he cried.

“I pecked your horse to wake you up,” squawked the crow. “This field is enchanted and you have been asleep here for three years!”

The rider realised his beard was over a metre long, so he knew the crow was telling the truth.

“How can I thank you, crow?” asked the rider.

“You can ask one of your three sisters to marry me. Take this picture of me with you and I will join you soon.” The crow gave the rider a little picture of himself and flew off.
When the rider returned home, his family was delighted to see him as they thought they had lost him forever. However, when he told his sisters about the crow and its strange request, his parents weren’t happy. He showed his sisters the picture of the bird. The eldest wrinkled her nose in disgust, the second sister shrieked in horror, but the youngest sister smiled. She thought she saw something special in the crow’s eyes.

The following day, a splendid carriage drawn by four horses pulled up outside their house. The sisters were filled with curiosity. Sure that a prince must be calling upon them, they raced to the door. When a black crow stepped out of the carriage, the two older sisters ran back into the house and hid. Only the youngest sister was polite enough to invite him in. Still, the crow invited all three sisters to come and stay with him in his castle.

Their parents didn’t want to offend the crow as they had much to thank him for, so they encouraged the sisters to travel with the strange bird. That evening, they set off together.
The two older sisters scowled as the carriage carried them into a dark, gloomy forest. But after a while it grew light again and they went through a grove of lemon trees before reaching a beautiful castle.

Everyone stepped out of the carriage. The two older sisters rushed to the front door, eager to see inside the castle, but the younger sister stayed with the crow. He warned the others, “Be patient and don’t be too curious.”

But the older sisters ignored him and peeked through the keyhole. They were most surprised to see a handsome young man in black robes laughing and talking to their younger sister, who they thought was still by the carriage.

All at once, everything changed. The castle and the carriage disappeared, and the three young women found themselves dressed in rags and standing beneath a tall tree. The older sisters were horrified.

The crow flew up to the branches. “Didn’t I warn you? Now the only way to save us all and bring back my castle is if the youngest of you walks to the city and accepts whatever work she is offered.”

So the youngest sister walked to the city to look for work.
She was turned away by almost everyone because of her ragged appearance, but the palace cook was desperate for help. “Can you cook and clean?” she asked. “We urgently need someone to take care of the prince and princess.”

The youngest sister nodded hesitantly, as truthfully she didn’t have much experience of either. Nevertheless, the cook agreed to take her on. It was a decision she quickly came to regret. The prince and princess’s food was burned and their chambers were messier than ever.

Soon the cook and the servants began to make fun of the youngest sister. It hurt her feelings and she was weeping one day when the crow suddenly appeared at her window. He lifted his wing and said, “Pull out one of my feathers. Use it like a quill to write down a wish and the wish will come true.”

With a heavy heart she pulled a feather out and the crow flew away. Before lunch, she wrote down the names of the most delicious dishes she could think of and wished for them to appear. In a flash of sparkling light, the food appeared on the table ready to be served.
The prince and the princess were thrilled, and gave the youngest sister a wardrobe of fine clothes as a reward. Now everyone saw the ragged young lady in a different light, and several of the palace staff fell quite in love with her.

The head of the royal guard was so enamoured, he tiptoed to her room and tried to peek in. She chased him down the hallway but he kept coming back, so she wrote down with the feather quill, “Let him spend all night running up and down the hallway.” And that is exactly what happened. In the morning the guard was so exhausted, he limped away.

The next evening, the head butler came to her room to see her. She chased him to the door at the end of the hallway and said, “Shut the door and stay away!” But he didn’t listen, so she wrote down with the feather quill, “Let him spend all night opening and shutting the door.”

MAKE A WISH!

What would you wish for if you had an enchanted quill? Write it down in ink on our Make A Wish Scroll. Download it from storytimemagazine.com/free.
And that’s what he did. At daybreak, he staggered home feeling foolish.

On the third evening, a knight visited her room and tried to woo her with an enormous bunch of roses. “Please let me sleep!” she cried, but he wouldn’t listen, so she wrote down with the feather quill, “Let him spend all night planting rose bushes.”

And that’s how he spent the night. By dawn he was worn out from digging – and in huge trouble for planting roses all over the royal garden.

On the fourth evening, the youngest sister was so annoyed to hear a knock at her door that she opened it with her feather quill at the ready.

However, this time, it was the crow. As he stepped into her room, he turned into a prince in sweeping black robes and took her hands in his.

“You saved me,” he cried, “and my castle has returned too! Will you come with me?”

The youngest sister said yes and they rode away together to his beautiful castle where they lived long and happy lives. ★
A poor seamstress lived in the dark basement of a big townhouse. She had to work long hours to make enough money to support her family, but she was happy, and she sang all day.

A very rich man lived in the house above. His rooms were large and sunny. He wore fine clothes, and he always had plenty of good things to eat, but still he was never happy. All night long he lay awake worrying about money – how to make more, or how to keep what he had safe. Often he didn’t fall asleep until dawn.
Now as soon as it was light, the poor seamstress began to work. She sat at her sewing machine and sang loudly. Her song floated up to the rooms of the rich man and woke him.

One morning, the rich man cried, “Enough! I can’t stand the singing of that silly seamstress any longer. If she had something to worry about like I do, she wouldn’t sing so much.”

The rich man tried to come up with a plan to stop the seamstress singing. “Let me see,” he thought, “what worries people most? Why, money, of course! Some people worry they have too little, but not the seamstress. She is always singing!

In fact, she’s the happiest person I know. Perhaps if she had too much money, she would finally worry and be quiet. That’s it!”

That morning the rich man knocked on the seamstress’s door. “I have a gift for you,” he said, and he gave the seamstress a heavy bag.

She opened it and it was full of shining gold pieces. “I can’t take this!” she cried. “I haven’t earned it.”

“Yes, you have,” answered the rich man. “You earned it by singing every day. You are the happiest person I know.”
The rich man left before the seamstress could argue with him.

The seamstress stood in the doorway counting out the gold pieces. As she reached fifty, she looked up and saw a man passing by and watching her with curiosity. She quickly hid the bag under her apron and went into the bedroom where nobody could see her. She piled the coins up on the bed.

How golden they were! How bright! She had never seen so much money. She counted it out slowly until she reached one hundred.

“One hundred pieces of gold! How rich we are! But I probably shouldn’t tell my family – they might tell someone else who might try to steal it. Where shall I hide it for safe keeping?”

First, she hid it under the bedcovers.

**WRITE IT!**

Can you write a song for the seamstress to sing when she’s making and mending clothes? Use words like ‘stitch’, ‘thread’ and ‘sew’ if you can.
“No, it makes a lump,” she said. “A thief might see it.”

As she was hiding it under the pillow, her husband came into the room. “Why is that pillow so high?” he asked.

The seamstress glared at her husband and said, “Mind your own business and get out!” They were the first angry words she had ever spoken to him.

When it was time for lunch, the seamstress couldn’t eat a mouthful. She was afraid somebody would steal her gold while she was at the table.

By dinner, she felt worse. She was so anxious about the gold, she snapped at her husband and children and didn’t sing a note all day long. She went to bed sick with worry and couldn’t sleep because her pillow was so high and uncomfortable.

The days passed by and the seamstress grew more and more unhappy. She thought about the gold all day and all night. She no longer sang at work, and she was constantly irritable from lack of sleep.
But upstairs the rich man was happier than ever before. “That was a clever plan,” he thought. “Now I can sleep all morning without being woken by that seamstress’s annoying song.”

For a month the seamstress fretted over what to do with the hundred gold coins. She grew thin and pale, and her husband and children were unhappy too – they hated how quiet and sad the house had become.

At last, one night, the seamstress couldn’t bear the worry any longer and told her family the whole story. Without hesitation her husband said, “Dear wife, give him back the gold. All the money in the world is not worth as much to us as hearing you sing your happy song.”

The seamstress felt like a huge burden had been lifted off her shoulders. Relieved, she grabbed the bag of gold and ran up to the rich man’s house. When he answered the door, she thrust it into his arms and cried, “Here’s your gold. Take it back. I can live without money, sir, but I cannot live without happiness.”

She sang every day after that as loudly as she could. ★
Fly away with an enchanted crow, invent something awesome, give Daddy Bear new hair and complete our Big Quiz!

1. APE JAPES

Look at this picture of the Ape King and circle **only the sentences that are true.**

A. His crown is silver.
B. He looks bored.
C. He isn’t wearing a tie.

2. ODD SOCKS

A gust of wind has blown **6 socks** off the washing line. Colour in this odd sock when you’ve spotted them all.
Before the seamstress returned the bag of 100 gold coins, some of the coins fell out. How many were left? Write it here.
Unscramble the letters on each shield to work out which knights they belong to.

MAKE A FLYING CROW

Bring the Incredible Crow from our fairy tale to life and act out the story!

- Copy the body shape and wings on the right onto black paper or card and cut them out. Alternatively, print out our Crow Template from storytimemagazine.com/free and colour it in.
- Fold the wings in half down the centre if you’re using our template.
- Now fold the other two dotted lines in the opposite direction (up), so the folded area sits upright in a triangle shape in the centre.
- Glue or tape the triangle part of the wings to your crow’s body.
- Punch a small hole in the top centre of the body and tie a length of string or elastic through it.
- Bounce the string up and down to see the crow’s wings flap.

Why not stick black craft feathers to your crow’s wings, just in case somebody needs an enchanted quill?
Complete the picture of **Daddy Bear** and give him a funny hairstyle!

**HA HA!**

Q. What do you call a cold bear?
A. A brrrrr!

**DID YOU KNOW?**

In the wild, grizzly brown bears pong because they roll in rotten materials or food to hide their own scent!
Were you paying attention? Take our quiz and find out!

1. What did the Ape King sit on when he met the travellers?
   a) A branch
   b) The ground
   c) A throne

2. In our poem, what blew off the clothes line?
   a) Shirt
   b) Handkerchief
   c) Socks

3. In The Singing Seamstress, what did the rich man worry about?
   a) Money
   b) Singing
   c) Lack of sleep

4. How long did the baron’s son sleep for in The Incredible Crow?
   a) 3 months
   b) 3 years
   c) 3 weeks

5. Which hairstyle worked best on Daddy Bear?
   a) Ponytail
   b) Bun
   c) Plaits

6. What colour is Sir Lancelot’s horse?
   a) White
   b) Brown
   c) Black

7. Which of these skills was Mulan trained in before she went to war?
   a) Rodeo
   b) Acrobatics
   c) Martial arts

8. Which story features a helmet with a light on it?
   a) Mulan
   b) Sir Lancelot’s Quest
   c) Edith the Inventor

Answers: 1c, 2b, 3a, 4b, 6a, 7c, 8c.
Can you help the warrior Mulan defeat her enemy? Play our game of luck and skill.

To play, you need two players, a dice, two sheets of paper, two pencils and our Mulan’s Battle Counters. Print them off at storytimemagazine.com/free.

Roll a dice to decide who will be Mulan and who will be the enemy. The highest number is Mulan. Also roll a dice to see who will move first – the player with the highest roll takes the first turn.

Now each player must decide where they are going to place four of their warriors on the grid. They are in hiding, so don’t actually put them there and don’t let your opponent know! Secretly write down the grid references on your piece of paper.

Player 1 chooses a square from the grid and places a warrior on it in plain sight. If the square is completely free, stay there. If the square has one of player 1 warriors hiding on it, then you must battle each other. Roll the dice.

If you roll a 1, 2 or 3, you win
If you roll a 4, 5 or 6, your opponent wins

The player who wins the battle stays put.

The defeated player removes his or her warrior from the board and plays with fewer warriors from now on.

Take it in turns to play. You can put your warrior on a square where you can see your opponent or on an empty square where an opponent might be hiding. It’s up to you.

If you reach a point where you only have hidden warriors left, you’ll have to bring one of them out of hiding to fight.

The winner of the game is the player with the most living warriors at the end.

You can either play with a time limit or with a limited number of turns – twenty for each player, for example. Alternatively, you can keep playing and battling until you’ve wiped your opponent off the board.

SPECIAL RULE!
If you take control of square F6, roll a dice. If you roll a 6, a soldier arrives by boat – get an extra warrior!
You may have won last time, Mulan – but this time we will win!
STORY MAGIC

Check out the winner of our Design A Playground competition and find out about two new must-read picture books!

★ BOB GOES POP by Marion Denchars (Laurence King) is a wonderfully illustrated story about two bird artists, a painter named Bob and a sculptor named Roy, and how they get into a battle over who can create the most amazing art. This tale has important lessons to teach about how cooperation can be better (and more fun!) than competition.

★ THE PROBLEM WITH PROBLEMS by Rachel Rooney and Zehra Hicks (Andersen Press) is about something we all face – the titular Problems! Zehra Hicks’ colourful artwork presents us with vivid images of the monsterlike problems we might encounter, while Rachel Rooney’s bouncy verse gives sage advice on how to deal with them. An ideal book to read and discuss with your children!

CONGRATULATIONS to Luther Dalton-Dale, who is aged 6, for winning our Design A Playground competition, from Storytime Issue 55. Luther’s playground design has many of our favourite things, including a pond, a sandpit, a catapult and even a FORTRESS! Great job, Luther – we’re sending you a set of beautiful Storytime prints!

WIN BOOKS!

Have you spotted which story the little dog on page 3 is from? To send us your answer and get the chance to win these awesome books, just go to: storytimemagazine.com/win

IT’S A WINNER!

MEET ME IN YOUR NEXT STORYTIME ISSUE!
Long ago, two men set out to travel around the world. One of the men always spoke the truth, and the other often told lies. One day the men came to the land of the apes, which was ruled over by the Ape King. They had heard much about this country, and were curious to see it for themselves. However, when the Ape King heard humans were intruding on his land, he ordered his soldiers to capture them.

The Ape King was proud and vain, so before the men were brought before him, he demanded the other apes kneel down and bow to him.

The rider realised his beard was over a metre long, so he knew the crow was telling the truth. “How can I thank you, crow?” asked the rider. “You can ask one of your three sisters to marry me. Take this picture of me with you and I will join you soon.” The crow gave the rider a little picture of himself and flew off.

A very rich man lived in the house above. His rooms were large and sunny. He wore fine clothes, and he always had plenty of good things to eat, but still he was never happy. All night long he lay awake worrying about money – how to make more, or how to keep what he had safe. Often he didn’t fall asleep until dawn.

Hand in hand they dance in a row, Hither and thither, and to and fro, Flip! Flap! Flop! And away they go – Fluttering creatures as white as snow. Like restive horses they caper and prance; Like fairy-tale witches they wildly dance; Rounded in front, but hollow behind, They shiver and skip in the merry March wind.

I saw one dancing excitedly, Struggling so wildly till she was free, Then, leaving pegs and clothes line behind her, She flew like a bird, and no one can find her. I saw her gleam, like a sail, in the sun, Flipping and flapping and flopping for fun. Nobody knows where she can now be, Hid in a ditch, or drowned in the sea. She was my handkerchief not long ago, But she’ll never come back to my pocket, I know.