

storytime™

3

WE ARE HEROES

STAYING HOME & STAYING SAFE

IN THIS ISSUE

**PERSEPHONE
TOWN MOUSE
AND COUNTRY
MOUSE**

PLUS!

Fun games,
puzzles and a
wordsearch!

At a time when many of us are having to practise social distancing and 'sheltering in place', homes are more important than ever! This **Storytime: We Are Heroes issue is about homes and where people belong.**

In 'Town Mouse and Country Mouse', two rodents are taken out of their comfort zones and learn to appreciate the good things about their homes. At the moment many of us have to spend a lot of time at home, and this story could be used to start a discussion about the things we appreciate about where we live.

'Persephone and the Seasons' is the tale of a girl who goes to live far away from her mother, and how they deal with being apart. How do you and your family members cope when you cannot get together like you used to?

We Are Heroes is a set of six special supplements that is being published monthly from October 2020 to March 2021 by **Storytime**, Studio 2B18, Southbank Technopark, 90 London Rd, London, SE1 6LN.

© Storytime Magazine Ltd, 2020. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be used or reproduced without prior written permission of the publisher. **Storytime** is a trademark of Storytime Magazine Ltd. Printed by Warners Group.

ILLUSTRATORS:

Sid Meireles 🐭 **Town Mouse and Country Mouse**
Conrad Roset 🌸 **Persephone and the Seasons**



Storytime and its paper suppliers have been independently certified in accordance with the rules of the FSC® (Forest Stewardship Council)®.

This supplement is produced as part of a research project based at Queen Mary University of London and funded by the British Academy, *Childhood heroes: storytelling survival strategies and role models of resilience to COVID-19 in the UK* (BA COV19\201444 PI: Dr Rachel Bryant Davies) You can contact us at: **childheroes@qmul.ac.uk**

Background IPR including copyright shall remain the property of the respective Parties. This collaboration between researchers at QMUL and Storytime magazine funded by the British Academy does not constitute a blanket endorsement of each individual organisation.



www.storytimemagazine.com

TOWN MOUSE AND COUNTRY MOUSE

Once, there were two mice who were cousins – one lived in a large house in a big town and the other lived in a tiny cottage in the countryside. They hadn't seen each other for a long time, so Country Mouse invited Town Mouse to come and stay with her.

When Town Mouse arrived, Country Mouse was very excited – she had worked hard to make things as nice as possible for her cousin. She said, “You must be hungry after your long journey. I have been out in the fields this morning and I have gathered us a fine feast!” ➡



Town Mouse sat on a small wooden stool, while Country Mouse emptied out her secret store and laid the table with nuts, berries and a hearty bean soup.

“Oh!” exclaimed Town Mouse, “Is this what you eat in the countryside? I’m really not used to plain food like this. In town, we dine on fancy dishes, like pastries and cakes, and other delights.”

Town Mouse’s words made Country Mouse feel sad, but Town Mouse

didn’t notice. She looked around Country Mouse’s small cottage, which was just one room with a bed in the corner. “In my house, there are many rooms and stairs that lead up to even more rooms!” Town Mouse said.

“There is a grand dining room and a large kitchen with cupboards, bursting with food. We can eat and drink whenever we like and we never have to go out in the fields to gather it. Town life is so much easier than country life,” she sighed.





Country Mouse showed Town Mouse the lovely fields of wild flowers around her cottage and took her to the pretty babbling brook, but Town Mouse never stopped talking about how life was so much more exciting in the big town.

At the end of the weekend, Town Mouse said, “I don’t understand how you put up with living here! Come and stay with me for a few days and I will show you the high life. You’ll soon wonder how you ever lived in the countryside!”

Country Mouse took Town Mouse up on her offer. She packed a small case and set off with her cousin to the town.

When they arrived, the buildings were so tall and so close together that Country Mouse could barely see the sky – and it was so noisy, she covered her poor ears. But when Town Mouse showed Country Mouse her house, she thought it a very splendid sight indeed.

“Let’s eat after our long journey!” said Town Mouse, and she led Country Mouse to the dining room. Country Mouse was amazed! There on the table were the leftovers of a huge feast. There were cakes, tarts, jellies, and piles of glistening fruit. There was fresh bread, slices of cheese and all kinds of tasty treats! ➡



THINK ABOUT IT!

We can't always go where we want these days – but that makes it even more important to appreciate the good things about where we are! Sit and think about what you see, hear and feel! What are three good things about where you are now?

When they had eaten, Town Mouse led the way to the kitchen for a drink, but they then heard a loud and terrifying *miaow*. The pair turned just in time to see a giant paw with sharp claws swipe at them. Country Mouse was terrified and dashed away as quickly as she could, but the cat was close behind her.

Country Mouse quickly leapt into a small hole and found Town Mouse hiding there too.

"Who is that?" asked Country Mouse, trembling with fright.

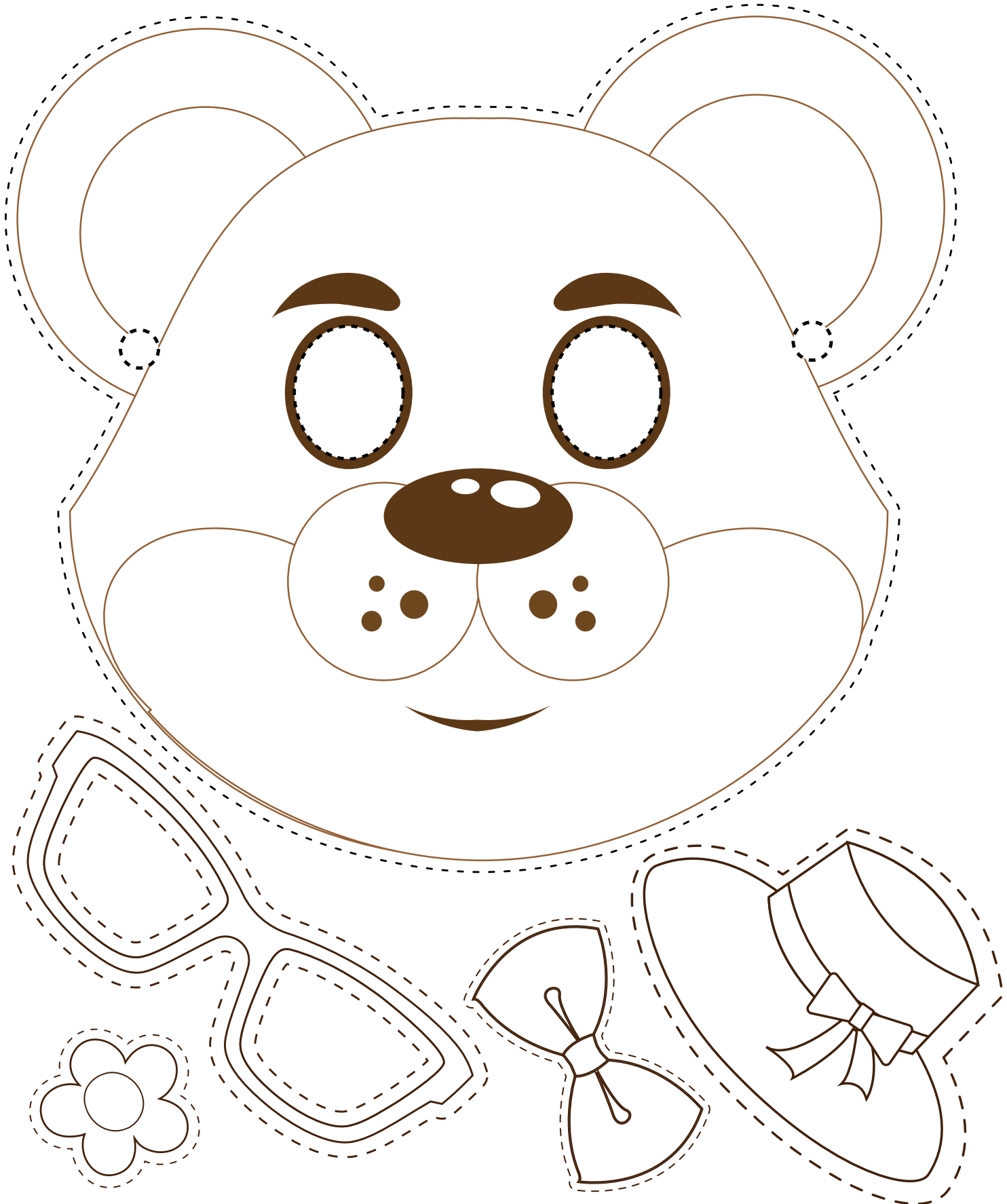
"Oh, that's just one of the cats we share the house with," said Town Mouse. "It's okay, as long as you can run very quickly and dodge their sharp claws!"

At that, Country Mouse grabbed her case and scurried to the front door.

"Goodbye, cousin!" said Country Mouse. "I would rather live a simple country life in peace than a life of feasts and fear!" Town Mouse replied, "I did find the country a bit too peaceful, and I *do* prefer the excitement of the city – but it's not for everybody!" With that, Country Mouse set off back to the countryside. 🌀

WHICH MOUSE?

What kind of mouse are you? Colour in the mask below and decorate it with the accessories to show whether you are a Town Mouse or a Country Mouse!



PERSEPHONE AND THE SEASONS



It was a wonderful summer's day – the sun's rays were beating down on the lush green meadows and the sound of laughter was ringing out across the hillside. It came from the beautiful maiden Persephone, who spent many a carefree afternoon there.

Persephone was the daughter of the great god Zeus and Demeter, the goddess of nature. She was the goddess of spring flowers, and wherever she walked, no matter how bare the earth, it blossomed beneath her feet.

Because of the joy and beauty she brought to people's lives, Persephone was worshipped and adored by all who met her. Persephone's own mother, Demeter, thought she was so precious that no god or man would ever be good enough for her. Demeter always made sure that any potential boyfriends were quickly sent away.

One suitor, however, was determined not to be frightened off. He was Hades, God of the Underworld. Hades was one of the most powerful gods, and he had fallen deeply in love with Persephone. When Demeter refused to let him marry her daughter, Hades did not give up.



One day, as Persephone gathered a posy of flowers for her mother, she noticed a radiant and lovely flower she had never seen before. It was an enchanted narcissus and, as she reached down to pluck it, the earth ripped in two and a great crack appeared in the ground. ➡



Up from the depths galloped Hades on a gem-encrusted golden chariot led by four black horses. He asked Persephone to run away with him and, as quickly as he had appeared, he vanished into the Underworld with the young goddess by his side. The rift in the earth sealed behind him.



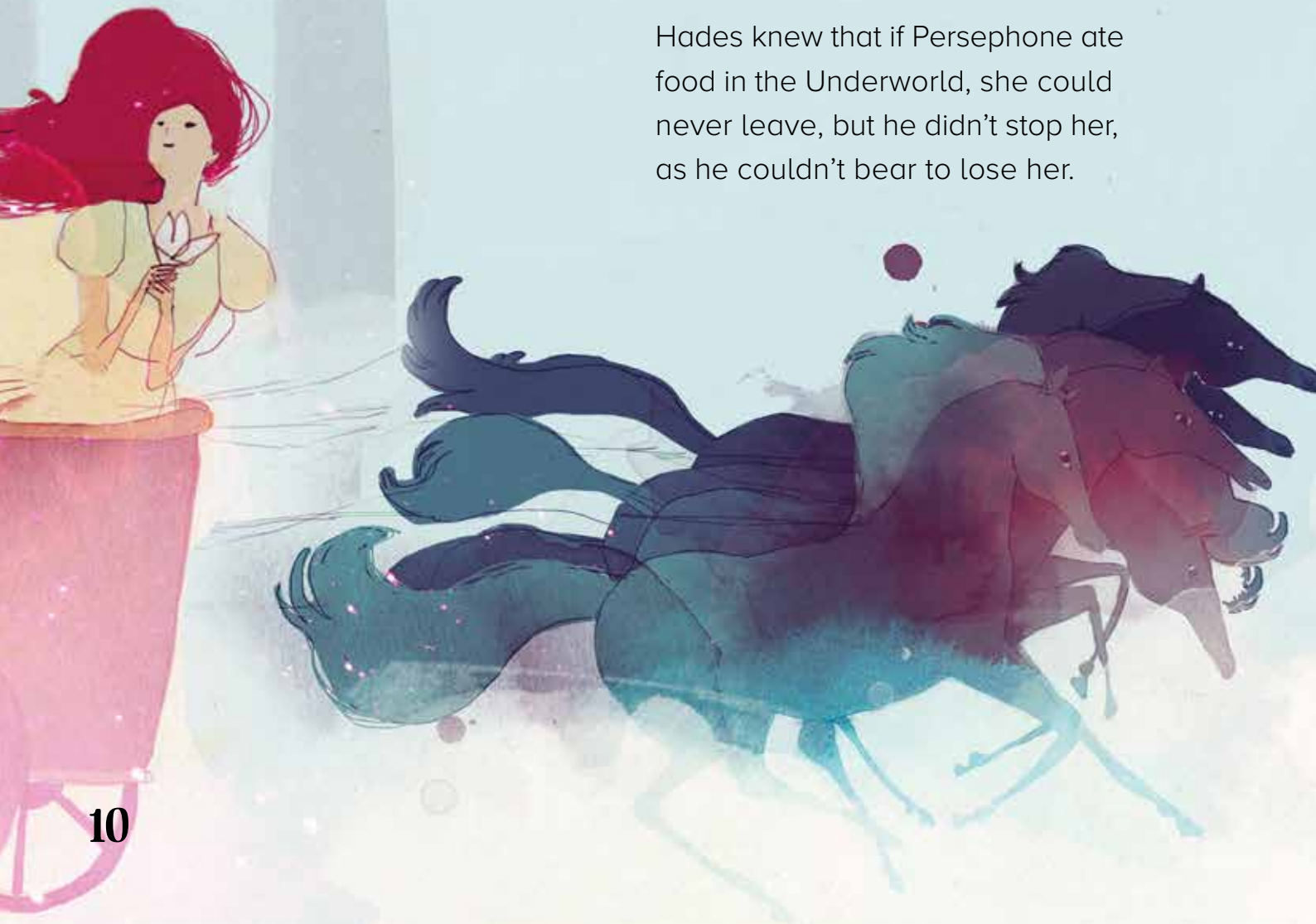
When Demeter discovered that her daughter had gone, she was heartbroken. She searched far and wide for Persephone and, when she couldn't find her, she became so full of grief that she gave up her duties as the goddess of nature.

All that was green and good withered, harvests failed, and everyone – both humans and animals – went hungry.

Meanwhile, down in the Underworld, Hades had fallen even more in love with Persephone and she had grown to love him too. However, though she was very happy with Hades, she often wished she could feel the sun on her skin or the grass beneath her feet again, and she missed her mother greatly. Persephone was torn between two very different worlds.

One day, feeling homesick for the beautiful orchards of the Earth above, Persephone plucked a pomegranate from an Underworld tree and scooped out six seeds to eat.

Hades knew that if Persephone ate food in the Underworld, she could never leave, but he didn't stop her, as he couldn't bear to lose her.



Eventually, on Earth, Persephone's mother, Demeter, visited the gods and begged for their help in finding her missing daughter. By this time, the earth was barren and Zeus knew that the humans would soon starve. He needed Demeter to perform her duties as a goddess again, so he sent Hermes, the messenger god, to visit Persephone in the Underworld and tell her of Demeter's great sadness.

When Persephone heard the news, she was desperate to go home. Hades couldn't stand to see her so unhappy, so he let her travel home with Hermes, hoping that she would return to him.

Demeter's heart was filled with joy to see her daughter again, and the

earth bloomed and blossomed once more.

Soon, fruit hung heavy on the trees and the crops grew tall and strong. The humans and the gods were very thankful.

However, Demeter could see that her daughter had changed – she had grown into a powerful Queen of the Underworld and was clearly in love with Hades. In fact, the longer Persephone stayed with her mother, the more she longed to return to Hades and the Underworld, until she became quite ill. ➡



BEING TOGETHER AND APART

It is difficult being apart from people you love – as Demeter discovers when her daughter goes to live with Hades! Luckily, we have lots of ways to stay in touch with people. See if you can do all of these with someone you care about!


☐ **Have an 'internet dinner party'!**
Set up a video call at dinner time!

☐ **Send friends and family photos of what you are doing. Bonus points if you are doing something funny!**

☐ **Phone someone you haven't seen in a while who might be lonely!**

☐ **Draw or paint a picture and send it to somebody special in your life. Make it cheery and colourful to brighten up their day!**

☐ **Don't forget birthdays or special events! Sending a handmade gift or a card can really make someone feel special!**



Zeus heard Demeter's threat and he knew that the humans would not survive. In his wisdom, he decided that, because Persephone had eaten six seeds from the pomegranate, she should spend six months of the year with Hades in the Underworld and the other six months on Earth with Demeter. Persephone was delighted at this idea.

So every spring, Persephone leaves the Underworld, and Demeter's joy at seeing her daughter causes the earth to spring to life again. Persephone spreads spring buds and blossoms wherever she goes, and Demeter makes the crops grow and the fruits ripen. Then, later in the year, Persephone returns to Hades in the Underworld, causing the flowers to fade and the leaves to fall, bringing on autumn and winter.

**And this, according to
Greek legend, is how the
seasons came to be.**

**HOW DO
YOU SAY IT?**

Persephone: pur-**sef**-oh-knee

Zeus: **zoos**

Demeter: deuh-**mee**-tuh

Hades: **hay**-deez

Hermes: **her**-meez

STORY QUEST!

'Town Mouse and Country Mouse' and 'Persephone and the Seasons' are both about characters who have to deal with living in different places. Can you answer these questions related to the stories?

1

Country Mouse likes green outdoor spaces. What are three things that you like about parks and other outdoor places?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

2

Life can be very different in different places, as our stories show. Below are some adjectives that can be used to talk about places. Can you think of the words that mean the opposite of each of these adjectives?

A. Quiet B. Small C. Warm

3

In 'Persephone and the Seasons', the main character likes being in the Underworld and on Earth. Have you lived in (or visited) a different place? What did you like best about being there, and what do you like best about living where you do now?

The best thing about the place I was before is: _____

The best thing about where I live now is: _____

4

When Demeter cannot be with her daughter Persephone, she brings winter to the Earth! In the modern day we have many ways to stay in touch with people if we cannot visit them. What are some ways you stay in touch with others?

RIDDLE

Q: Why did Town Mouse decide to stay indoors?

A: Because it was raining cats and dogs!

ANSWERS: 2. A. loud or noisy; B. large or big; C. cool or cold.

storytime PLAYBOX



Can you sort out the Town Mouse and the Country Mouse's mixed-up lunches, work out what Persephone is saying, and count the flowers in her garden?

1 MENU MUDDLE!

Town Mouse and Country Mouse's lunches have got mixed up. Draw lines to show which food belongs on which plate!



2 MIXED-UP FEELINGS!

Work out how Persephone is feeling by unscrambling the mixed-up words!



When I am in
the sun I feel
YHPHA!

When it is
cloudy I feel
DAS.

When I am in
the park I feel
MALC.

3

TOWN OR COUNTRY

Town Mouse and Country Mouse like where they live for different reasons! Can you sort out which words describe town life and which ones describe country life?



PEACEFUL

EXCITING

BUSY

QUIET

GREEN

MODERN

GLAMOROUS

EMPTY

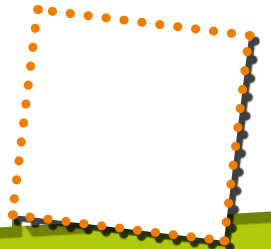
NOISY

SIMPLE

SPOT IT!

The town cat from page 6 is prowling the Playbox – find it before it pounces!

Tick this box when you find it!



4

PERSEPHONE'S FLOWERS

Persephone always feels better when she sees her favourite flowers! Can you count how many she has of each?



yellow daffodils



pink roses



purple tulips



QUICK QUIZ!

Which flower is YOUR favourite?

Answers on next page...

WE ARE HEROES WORDSEARCH

Find all the places in
this issue's stories –
and then write a good
thing about each place
in the space provided!

Underworld

Dining room

Meadow

Orchard



Country

Town

Fields

Earth

ANSWERS: 1. The nuts, fruit bowl and soup are on Country Mouses' menu – the other things are Town Mouses'; 2. HAPPY, SAD and CALM; 3. The country is PEACEFUL, QUIET, GREEN, EMPTY and SIMPLE, and the town is EXCITING, BUSY, MODERN, GLAMOROUS and NOISY; 4. There are 5 daffodils, 6 tulips and 8 roses. Wordsearch – see right.

