

storytime^{JD}

WE ARE

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HEROES

CARING FOR OTHERS

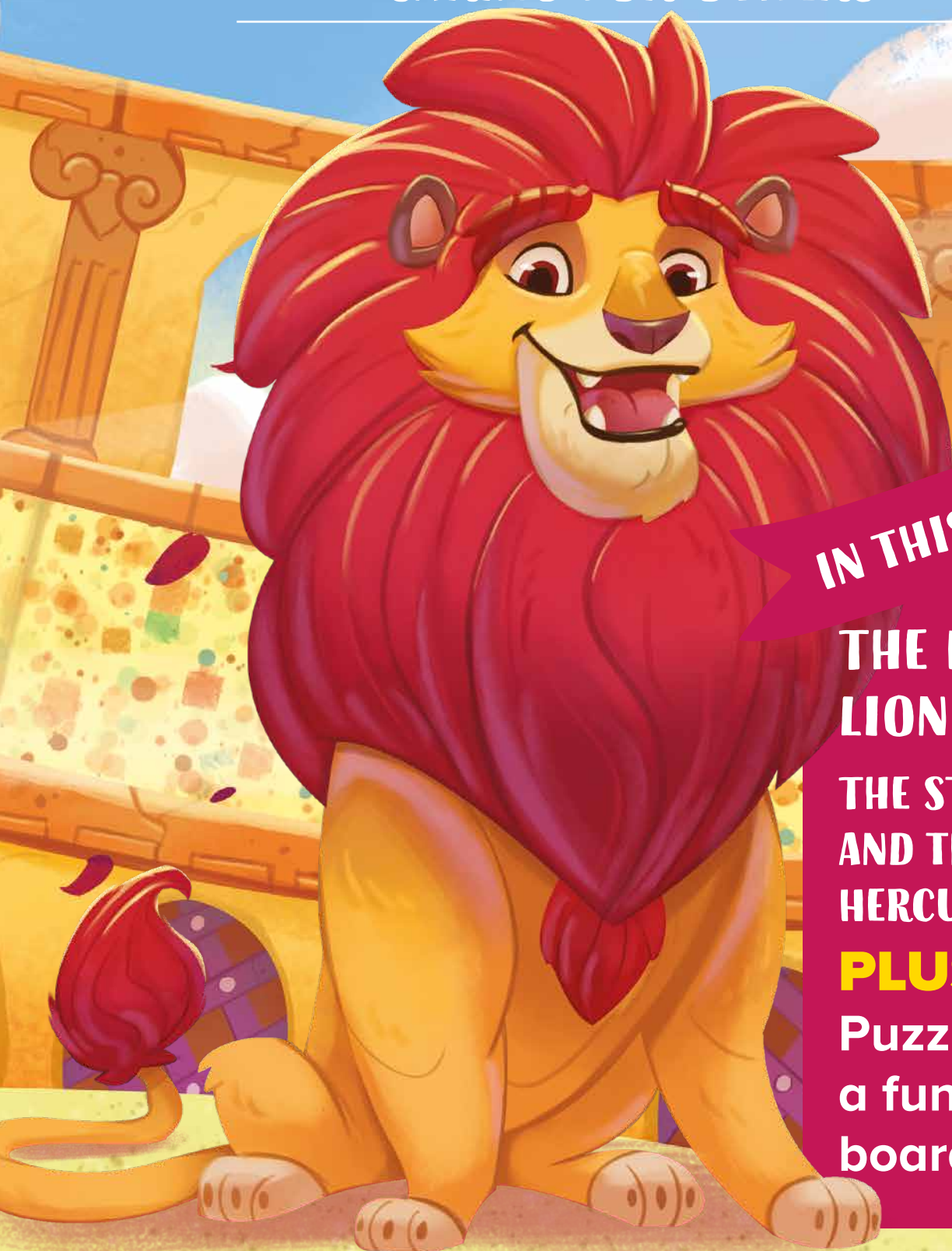
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PLUS!

**Puzzles and
a fun Roman
board game!**



Sometimes we can feel trapped and alone, but it is important to realise that we can get help by reaching out to others. This issue of **Storytime: We Are Heroes features two tales about characters who are trapped – and how they cope with it!**

‘The Friendly Lion’ is a classic myth about Androcles, who is trapped twice – first as a slave and then as a prisoner! However, he is set free, thanks to his friendship with a certain big cat! ‘The Stinky Foot and the Bow of Hercules’, on the other hand, is about a warrior who is left behind on an island when his foot is bitten by a snake and begins to smell bad! Why not read the stories and then answer the *Story Quest* questions about times you might have felt sick, trapped or alone?

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THE FRIENDLY LION

In Ancient Rome, there was once a young slave called Androcles, who served a cruel master. His master was so unkind to him that Androcles decided to escape.

At that time, masters owned their slaves, so running away was a serious crime – there were even slave-catchers who hunted runaway slaves. The poor slave was so miserable, he thought, “I’d rather take my chances in the forest than be bullied and beaten here.”

One morning, when his master had left their villa, Androcles fled to the forest, where he hid in dense undergrowth and slept huddled against fallen tree trunks. It felt good to be free, but Androcles soon became hungry. He didn’t know which berries and mushrooms were safe to eat and he felt himself growing weak. One cold evening, famished and exhausted, he crawled inside a cave to sleep.

In the middle of the night, a thunderous roar disturbed his dreams. Androcles was startled to find a great hulking lion stalking towards him. He had fallen asleep in a lion’s den! He leapt to his feet to look for a weapon, but the lion surprised him by slumping to the ground. It let out an agonised growl and licked its paw. ➡



Androcles spotted a large thorn sticking out of the soft flesh below the lion's claws. The lion whined and looked at Androcles sorrowfully.

The slave was still frightened of the lion – but he wanted to help it.

Androcles carefully ventured towards the lion. As he knelt by the lion's paw, his hands began to tremble. He steadied himself and tugged the thorn hard. The lion groaned, but in one swift move, the thorn came out.

Androcles tore off the end of his tunic and made a bandage around the lion's paw. The lion purred softly, then Androcles and the lion fell asleep side by side.

That was the beginning of an unusual but wonderful friendship. From that day, the loyal lion didn't leave Androcles' side. It even shared its food with him. Meanwhile, Androcles nursed the lion's paw back to full health.

One day, while the lion was hunting, Androcles went to fetch some water.



Suddenly, slave-catchers crashed through the bushes and arrested him. They dragged him to Rome, where his master decreed that Androcles should face the most frightening punishment of all – fighting a wild animal in an arena, just like the gladiators did.

Androcles was imprisoned for several weeks until, one morning, the guards came for him. “I hope you’re feeling brave today, slave,” said one. “I hear the beast you’re about to fight hasn’t eaten for some time. The emperor is looking forward to his entertainment.”

Androcles felt weak at the knees. He knew he was about to face his doom. As he stepped into the huge arena,

the crowd roared with excitement, but the noise was nothing compared to the deafening roars of the beast he was about to face.

The guards opened a cage on the far side of the arena and a majestic lion leapt out, snarling with rage. It raced towards Androcles, who readied his sword – but as the lion got closer, he realised this was no enemy at all. “It’s you, my old friend!” he cried.

The lion stopped in its tracks, then nuzzled Androcles playfully and licked him. Androcles threw his arms around the lion’s mane. “I’m so glad to see you again,” he said joyfully. ➡




The crowd sat in stunned silence – they had never seen a man tame a lion before. “Free the slave!” cried someone, and the emperor was so intrigued, he asked Androcles to come forward and speak.

“Why didn’t this lion attack you?” asked the puzzled emperor.

“Because we know each other,” said Androcles, and he explained how he had helped the lion when it had been injured.

The emperor was so impressed, he decided to pardon Androcles for running away from his master, and he set him free, along with the lion.

Afterwards, Androcles and the friendly lion were often seen walking through the streets of Rome – and wherever they went, they were showered with money, food and gifts. ★



The illustration depicts a scene from the story of Androcles and the lion. In the foreground, a young boy with brown hair and a green eye, wearing a blue tunic, is smiling and hugging a lion. The lion has a large red mane and a pink nose. In the background, a Roman emperor with a laurel wreath and a red tunic is standing on a raised platform, waving his hand. The setting is the Colosseum, with its iconic arches and a crowd of people visible in the distance. The sky is blue with white clouds, and there are red petals or leaves falling around the scene.

Slaves were workers that were owned by other people. There were millions of slaves in the Roman Empire – some were treated well, but others were kept imprisoned and had to work very hard, and live in their work places. Some were gladiators and had to fight animals in the Colosseum like Androcles did! How important do you think freedom would be to a slave like Androcles?

ROME SWEET ROME!

Androcles and the lion have been set free from the Colosseum, but now they need to find their way out of Rome! In this board game, one player is Androcles and the other is the lion – **which one will win by getting out of the city first?**



How to Play

What you need: two players, a dice, and two small things to use as counters. Coins or buttons are great!

★ Each player places their counter on the **START** space. The youngest player then rolls the dice and moves their counter that many spaces.

★ The players then take turns rolling the dice and moving their pieces. The first to reach the **FINISH** square wins!

★ If a player lands on a square with a guard on it, they miss a turn.

THE STINKY FOOT AND THE BOW OF HERCULES

Many long centuries ago, in the age of heroes, the Greek king Agamemnon declared war on the city of Troy. He called for all the other kings of Greece to join him in this great battle.

Cunning Odysseus and young Philoctetes were two of the Greek warrior-kings who answered the call to war. They sailed for Troy in a fleet of seven black ships.

HOW DO YOU SAY IT?

Agamemnon: ag-a-**mem**-non

Odysseus: oh-**diss**-e-is

Philoctetes: phil-**loc**-te-tees

Hercules: **her**-cue-lees

Olympus: oh-**limp**-us

Lemnos: **lem**-nos

Ithaca: **ith**-uh-cuh

Odysseus: uh-**diss**-ee-uhs



Odysseus was impatient to get the war over with quickly so he could go home to his wife, but Philoctetes was keen to take part in his first battle. He carried a powerful weapon: a bow that he had inherited from his friend Hercules.

Hercules had been a mighty hero, and when he died, the Greek gods had taken him to live with them on Mount Olympus.



After several days of sailing, the fleet went past the island of Lemnos. Philoctetes called out: “Look! There’s an island where we can rest tonight!” The rowers cheered, looking forward to a barbecue on the beach and a chance to sleep on dry land.

When they landed, Philoctetes took his treasured bow and went into the woods, hunting for dinner. As he was

walking through the rocks and bushes, though, he suddenly felt a fiery pain stab through his foot. Philoctetes screamed in agony – he had stepped on a poisonous snake!

The other soldiers found him and took him back to the beach. His foot was in agony – hot to the touch and swelling painfully. His companions tried to use medicine to cure him, but they could do nothing to stop the poison.

By morning, Philoctetes’ foot was three times its usual size and smelled horrible! Despite the fresh sea breeze, even the bravest warriors struggled to come near him because of the stink. ➡



His friends stayed on that island for several days, hoping that his foot would get better. In the end, though, Odysseus persuaded the others that they should leave Philoctetes behind. The king of Ithaca was impatient to get to Troy, and nobody wanted to be stuck on a small ship with Philoctetes' stinky foot!



The next day, Philoctetes awoke to find that the fleet had sailed off without him. He felt angry about being abandoned.

He found a cave to shelter in and hunted for food, but his poisoned foot did not get better and made life very difficult for him. He lived by himself on that island for many years, miserable and alone.

Meanwhile, across the sea, the battle against Troy was not going well for the Greeks. The war had been dragging on for almost a decade with no victory in sight. That was when Odysseus and the other Greek leaders learned about a prophecy: they would never capture Troy without Hercules' bow. Unfortunately, the bow was still on Lemnos with Philoctetes!

Odysseus realised that he had made a horrible mistake and felt guilty for leaving his warrior friend behind.





He volunteered to sail back to Lemnos to search for Philoctetes and bring Hercules' precious bow back to the Greek army.

Philoctetes was looking out to sea and trying to ignore the throbbing pain in his foot, when he saw a sail on the horizon. Was he about to be rescued after so many years?

As soon as the crew of the ship landed on the island, he went down to meet them. The Greek sailors were surprised to see a wild-looking figure with uncombed hair and a bushy beard come out of the bushes.

However, they recognised that he must be Philoctetes, because he still had a swollen and smelly foot. They gave him some food and a place by the fire.

When Philoctetes saw Odysseus, who had left him alone so many years before, he was furious!

"Odysseus! You are a traitor – how could you leave a sick friend behind?" he yelled.

Odysseus felt ashamed and tried to apologise. "My dear friend! I am so sorry for abandoning you, but now we need you and your bow to win the war!" Philoctetes did not know what to say. ➡

He wanted to leave the island and help his friends, but he still could not forgive Odysseus for deserting him on the island...

Just then, a bright light shone out of the sky, and Philoctetes recognised the voice of his friend Hercules, who the gods had taken to live with them on Mount Olympus.

“My dear friend, listen to me!”, the voice said. “If you help the Greeks, you will be healed and return home safely. The Greeks need you, and you need their help to return home. If you go to Troy, the doctors will heal your stinky foot. And with my bow and arrows, you will soon end the war.”

Philoctetes was happy to hear Hercules’ voice. He forgave Odysseus and they set sail together for Troy while the stars twinkled down. ★

LEARN FROM THE LEGEND!

We can learn lessons from the Greek heroes about how to resolve arguments!



BE LIKE ODYSSEUS!

Admit when you are wrong and apologise for what you have done.



BE LIKE HERCULES!

Help your friends to resolve their quarrels – it’s better for everyone.



BE LIKE PHILOCTETES!

When somebody apologises to you, it is usually a good idea to accept it and forgive them!3



STORY QUEST!

In this issue's stories, both Androcles and Philoctetes feel trapped and alone. Can you answer these questions about what the characters went through? Can you identify with the way they felt?

1

In 'The Friendly Lion', Androcles is trapped twice – once as a slave and once when he was a prisoner in the Colosseum. Can you think of a recent time that you felt like you were trapped in a place? What did you do to feel better?

2

At the end of the story, Androcles is set free partly because he made friends with the lion. How do you think that friends or loved ones can help you when you feel trapped?

3

The snake bite made Philoctetes feel extremely ill! Can you write down three words that describe how you felt the last time you were sick? What helped you to feel better?

4

What makes things worse for Philoctetes is that when he is ill there is nobody to help him! If you are ill or alone, who are three people you could get in touch with? How would you contact them?

5

At the moment lots of people are sick and have to stay in isolation, just like Philoctetes! You shouldn't visit or hug people who are sick – but what are some other ways that you can help them feel better?

DID YOU KNOW?

When he arrived at Troy, Philoctetes had an important part to play in the Trojan War! He defeated Paris, the Trojan prince who had started the war, by shooting him with a poisoned arrow from Hercules' bow.



storytime PLAYBOX

See if you can spot the hiding animals, work out the mixed-up words, and add up some sums – with Ancient Roman money!




1 IT'S GREEK TO ME!

Odysseus, Philoctetes and Hercules are talking together, but three of the words are mixed up! **Can you work out what they are?**





2 MONEY MATHS!



Androcles and the lion are adding up all the money they were given by the Colosseum! Can you work out how many asses (small copper Roman coins) each pile is worth? Use the table to work it out!

ROMAN COINS	
	400 asses
	16 asses
	1 as



A

 +  =

B

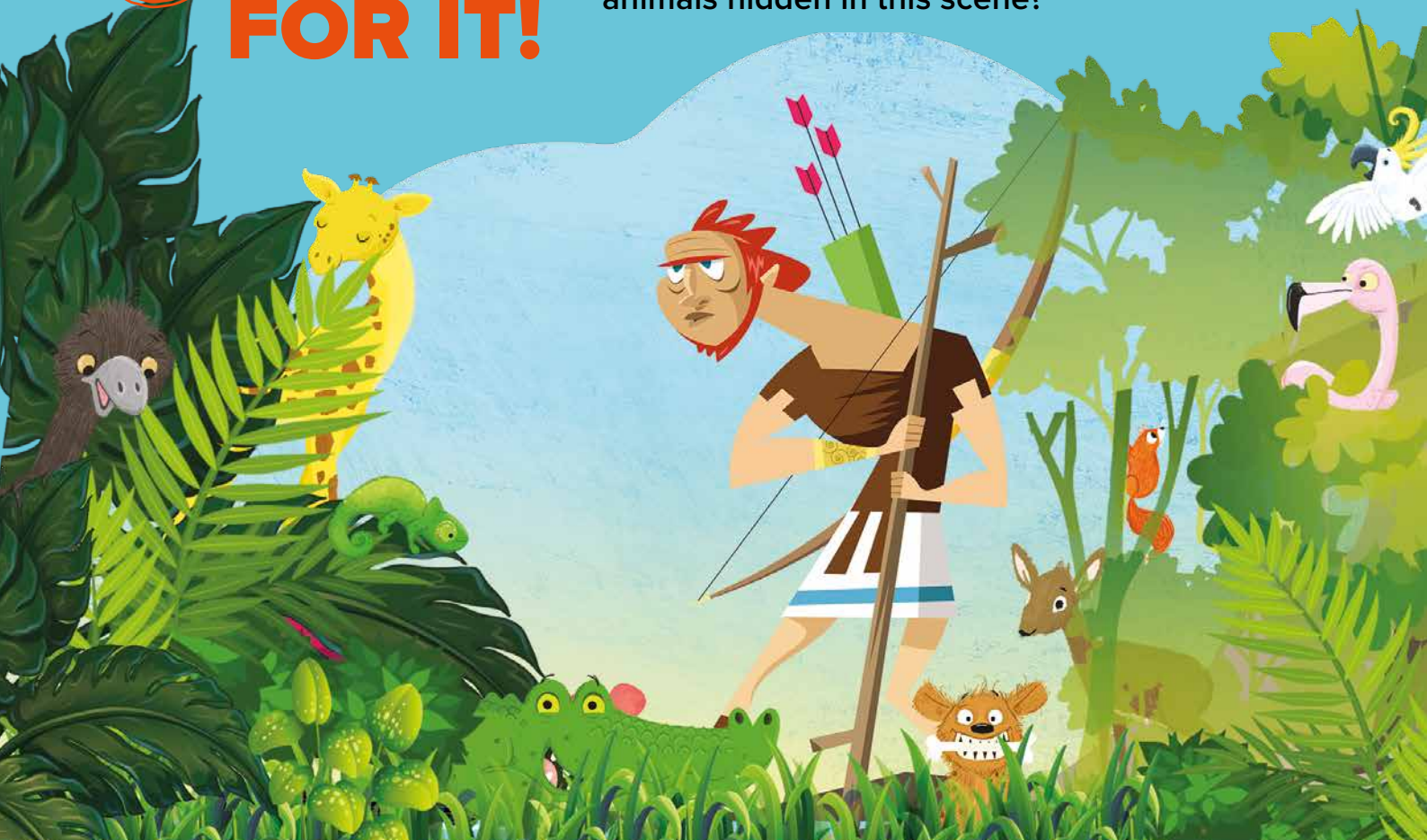
 +  =

C

 +  =

3 HUNT FOR IT!

Philoctetes is hunting for his dinner – but all the animals are hiding! Can you find all nine animals hidden in this scene?



4 CAT CARE!

Oh no! Androcles' lion has some problems and needs your help! Can you choose the right solutions?



B: CUT ON LEG

Can you work out which story character this is from our clues? **Bonus points if you can get it from just one clue!**

1. I am kind to animals.
2. I lived in ancient times.
3. My best friend is a lion.

WE ARE HEROES WORDSEARCH

Ten people, places and things from this month's story are hidden in this wordsearch – can you spot them all?



ANDROCLES
LION
ODYSSEUS
THORN
TROY

FOOT
EMPEROR
PAW
SNAKE
PHILOCTETES

WHO IS IT?

Can you find the name of another famous hero hidden in there too? **(Clue: he was a friend of Philoctetes!)**



ANSWERS: 1. It's Greek to Me! A. Odysseus is SORRY, B. Hercules is HAPPY, C. Philoctetes FORGIVES. **2. Money Maths!** A. 131 asses, B. 496 asses, C. 804 asses; **3. Hunt for It!** See right; **4. Cat Care!** A. 2, B. 3, C. 1; **Who Am I? Androcles.** Wordsearch: see right. **Who is It?** – Hercules.