

storytime™

WE ARE HEROES



STORIES AND ACTIVITIES

This resource pack was produced to accompany
the British Academy Summer Showcase 2021 event:
'We can be heroes: classical stories for wellbeing today'

What can you learn about kindness from a lion? Could a mouse show you how to help a friend in need? Classical stories have a lot to teach us, from how to help others to showing kindness even when we are afraid.



Join our storyteller Wendy Shearer to hear tales from the Ancient Greek and Roman worlds and learn to make your very own origami lion.

Together with Storytime Magazine, researchers from Queen Mary University of London have been exploring how classical stories like Aesop's Fables can help children's wellbeing. Find more stories in the free **We Are Heroes** series.

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ILLUSTRATORS:

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Oliver Lake  The Lion and the Mouse

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www.storytimemagazine.com

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. ★



Slaves were workers who 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?

STORY QUEST

What do you love about making friends and spending time with them?

The Friendly Lion is a story about friendship, kindness, and overcoming fear. Can you answer these questions about the story and the lessons that can be learned from it?

1

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 stuck?

2

In the story, Androcles is trapped twice – once as a slave and once when he is a prisoner in the Colosseum. Can you think of a time when you felt stuck? What did you do to feel better?

3

Imagine that the story was written from the lion's point of view, rather than from Androcles'. What do you think would be a good title for that version of the tale?

4

Androcles and the lion look very different from each other, but what do they have in common? Do you think this helped them decide to work together?

5

What do you think the lesson or moral of this story is? Do you think it is still an important message today?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS: 1. Friends and loved ones may be able to help by getting you out of a tricky situation, giving you comfort, or giving you advice or encouragement, for example. 3. A possible title could be *The Slave Who Saved Me!* 4. They were both scared and in difficult situations, and needed help. 5. The moral could be something like, 'It is good to help others – and they could end up helping you.'

THE LION AND THE MOUSE

It was a hot, dry day in the forest – a lazy, ‘stretch out long and yawn’ type of day. This was just what the lion was doing when a little mouse came scampering towards him.

She was on her way home, but the sun’s rays were shining so brightly in her eyes that she didn’t see the lion in the clearing ahead of her. Before she knew it, she was running up his leg, along his back, through his majestic golden mane and all the way to the tip of his long lion nose.



The snoozing lion was annoyed to be disturbed by the ticklish pitter-patter of the mouse's feet, so he swiped his great paw at his nose and grabbed the mouse in his long sharp claws.

"Who dares to walk over me – the King of the Jungle?" growled the hot and bothered lion.

He was just about to open his huge jaws and swallow the mouse whole, when he heard her squeak in a trembling voice, "Oh please, mighty lion, please let me go. My children are waiting for me at home. If you let me live now, then one day, I may be

able to repay your kindness. Perhaps I will be able to help you?"

With that, the lion roared loudly – not with anger, but with laughter.

"You? A little mouse like you, helping me... the strongest and fiercest animal in the land? That's the funniest thing I've ever heard!"

The lion was so amused at the idea, he loosened his grip on the mouse and she escaped. She ran and ran as fast as she could, all the way home.

Later that week, some hunters visited the forest and left behind a big trap.



'The Lion and the Mouse' is one of many fables written by an Ancient Greek storyteller called Aesop. Aesop's fables often have a lesson or 'moral' – this story is about how kindness is often repaid with kindness.

They wanted to impress the leader of their tribe by capturing the lion for him. The lion didn't see the trap and, while proudly prowling through the undergrowth, swishing his long tail, he walked straight into a net of ropes and became entangled in it.

The lion roared and thrashed and clawed and lashed that tail of his, but he couldn't break free. He just became more and more tied up. In frustration, he let out a roar so loud that it shook the forest floor.

The little mouse heard the lion's desperate cry and scurried off in its direction. When she arrived, she saw the lion entwined in the net. His magnificent mane was flat against his head and his eyes were closed.

Quickly, before the hunters returned, the mouse used her sharp teeth to nibble at a thick rope until it snapped in two. Then she nibbled another and another, until all the ropes came loose.

The lion opened his eyes and was surprised to see the mouse gnawing on a rope by his paws.

"I was wrong," growled the lion, as he shook away the last few ropes. "I should never have laughed at you. Even though you are small, you have helped me, just as you said you would. Thank you, dear mouse."

And from that day on, the lion and the mouse were friends. The lion was glad that he had helped the mouse – for his kindness had been repaid by his little friend setting him free. 🌀



STORY QUEST

Can you think of a time when you did something kind and were very glad that you did?

The Mouse and the Lion is a fun fable about animals, but it also makes us think about the way we treat others. Can you answer all of the questions below?

1

What was the lion's reaction to the mouse when he first met her? Was it positive or negative?

2

The lion's feelings about the mouse changed after the rodent freed him! Can you think of a time when a person's actions changed the way you thought about them?

3

In the story, the lion felt angry and a little scared when he was trapped in the net. Have you ever needed help when you were facing difficulties? Did someone help you, just like the mouse helped the lion?

4

After the lion was freed from the net, he thanked the mouse and admitted that he had been wrong. Why do you think it was a good thing for him to do this?

5

What words would you use to fill in the gaps in these sentences?

A. The lion felt _____ when he was trapped.

B. He felt _____ when the mouse freed him.

6

The mouse helped the lion when he was trapped. Can you think of anyone you know who has been feeling stuck or facing challenges? How could you help them?

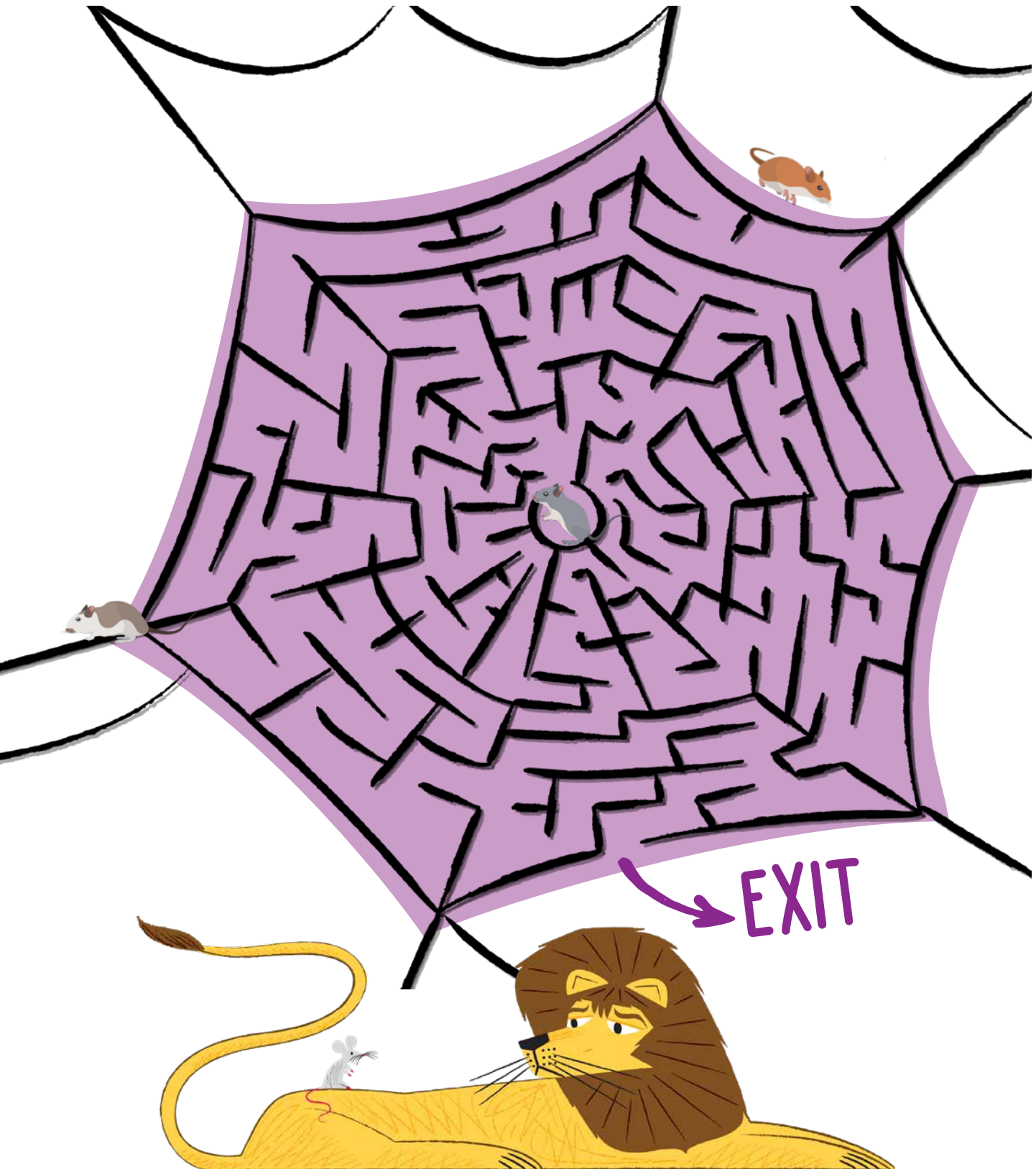
SUGGESTED ANSWERS: 1. When the mouse first scampered onto the lion, the lion was annoyed by her. The lion was rude to the mouse, but was grateful after the little animal helped him! 4. It showed that the lion had learned from the experience, and it made the mouse feel appreciated. 5. The lion felt *angry* or *scared* when he was trapped, and *grateful* or *thankful* when he was set free. 6. You might ask them about how they are feeling, listen to them carefully, and then suggest what they might do.

WE ARE HEROES: THE MOUSE AND THE LION



WHICH PATH?

Can you help the grey mouse find her way out of the net?



CAT CARE!

Oh no! Androcles' lion has some grooming problems and needs your help!
Can you match each problem with the right solution?

1: TWIG IN MANE



2: MUD ON TAIL



3: CUT ON LEG



A. SCRUBBING BRUSH



B. COMB

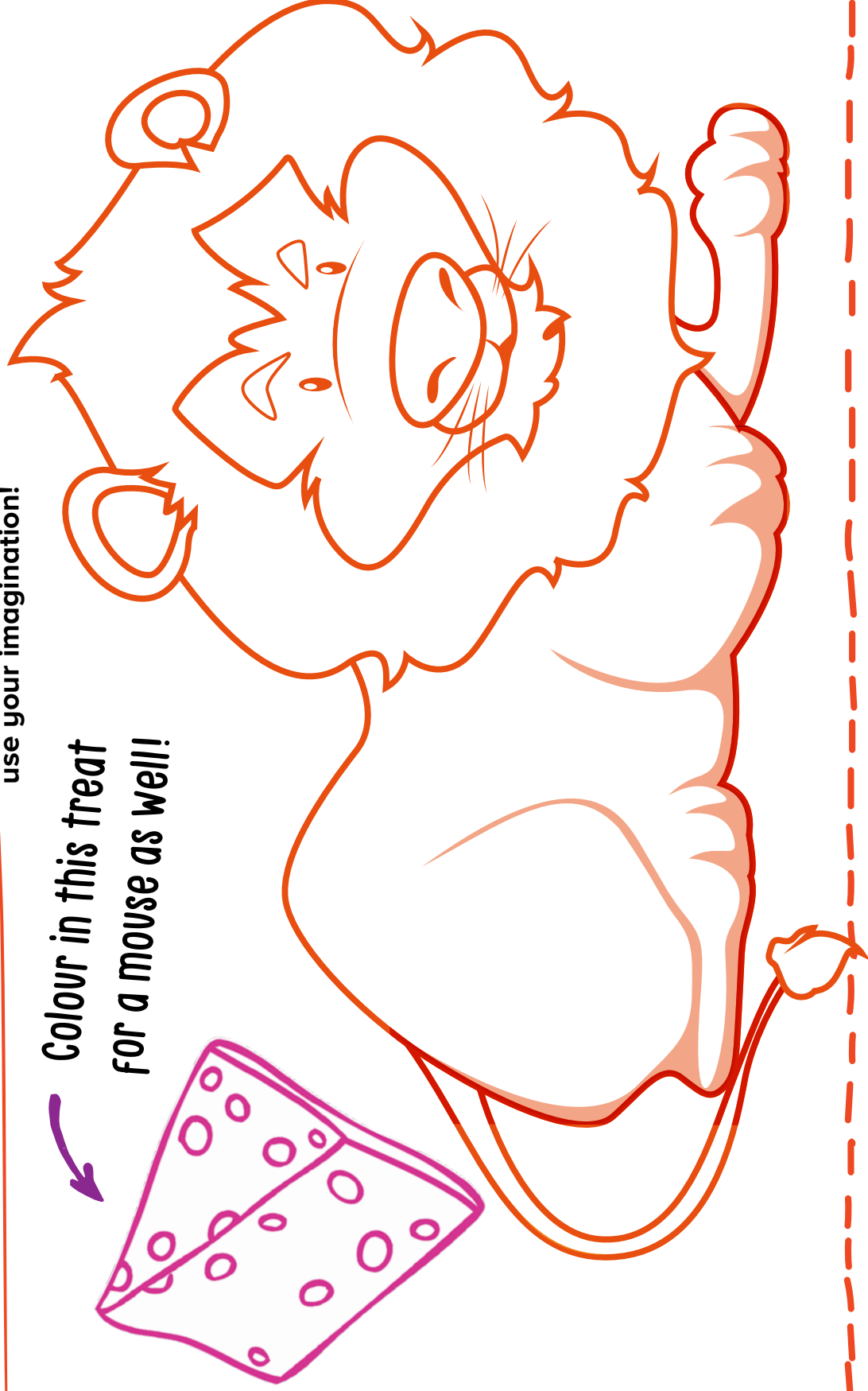
C. STICKING PLASTER



MANE ATTRACTION

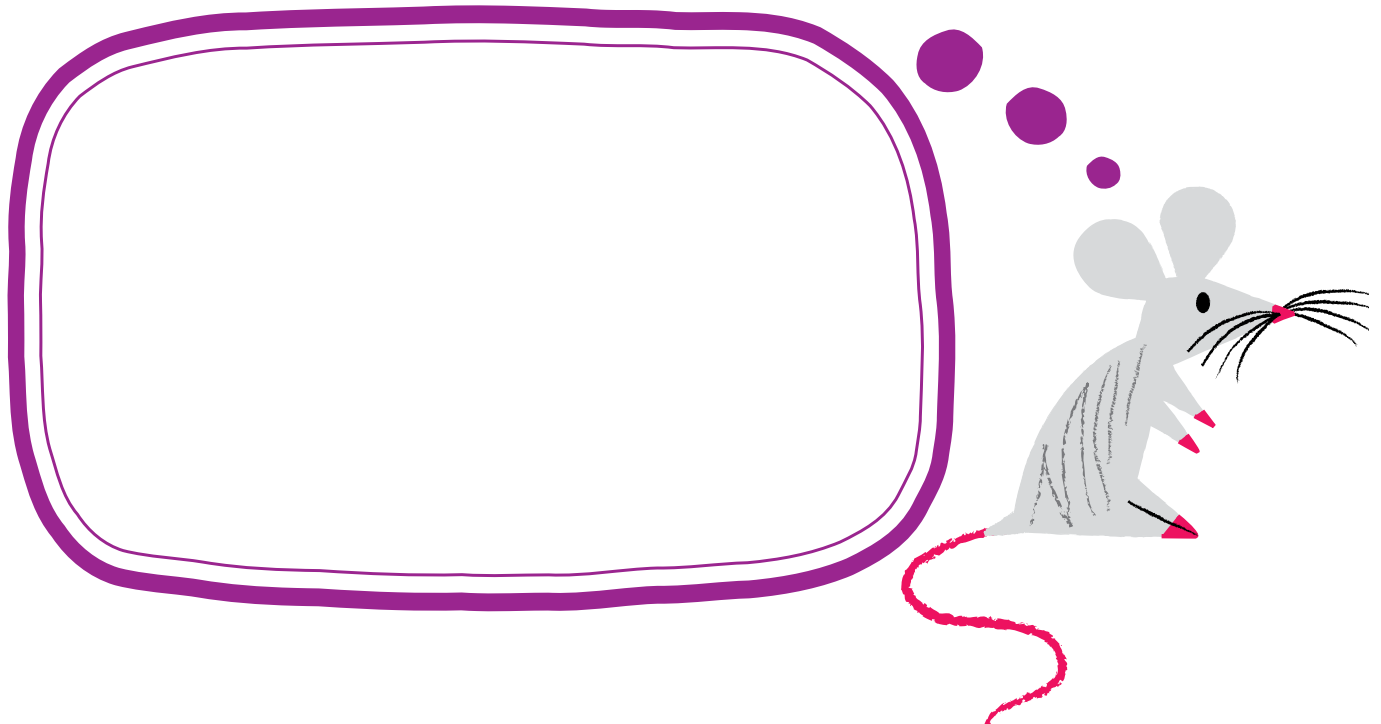
Colour in this picture of the lion! A lion's fur and mane can be orange, brown, tan or yellow – use your imagination!

Colour in this treat
for a mouse as well!



WRITE IT!

The Friendly Lion and The Lion and the Mouse both feature lions – but they are quite different beasts! Can you think of three adjectives (describing words) that Androcles and the mouse would use to talk about the lions they met?



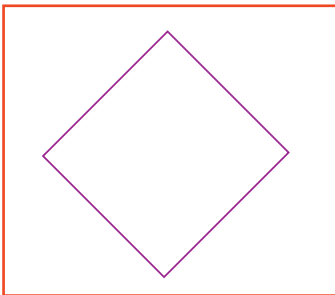
DRAWING A FRIEND!

Androcles was lucky to have a lion for a companion, and the lion in the net was happy to have a mouse friend to help him out! What kind of animal friend would you want to have? Draw it below – it could be a real-life animal or even a made-up creature!

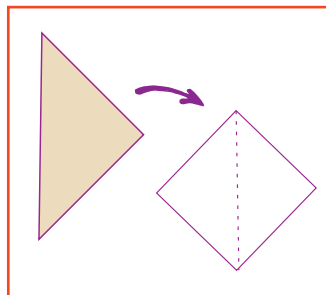
My animal friend is called: _____
It is a: _____ and lives in: _____
It helps me by: _____
and also: _____

LION ORIGAMI

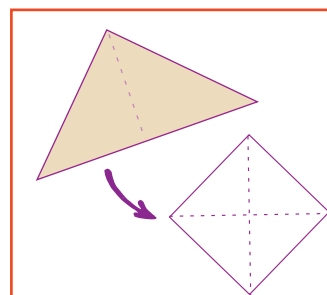
Just follow these instructions to fold a square of paper into an origami lion!



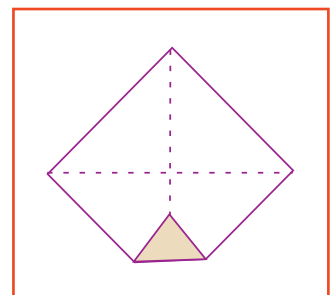
Step 1: First, get a square sheet of paper (or ask a grown-up to trim a rectangular sheet into a square shape).



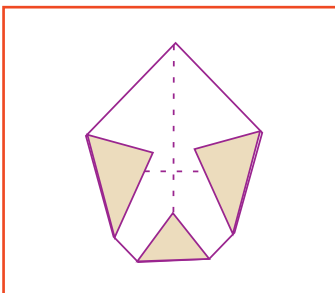
Step 2: Fold the left half to the right, corner to corner, then unfold.



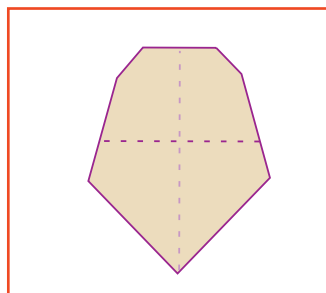
Step 3: Fold the top half down, then unfold again.



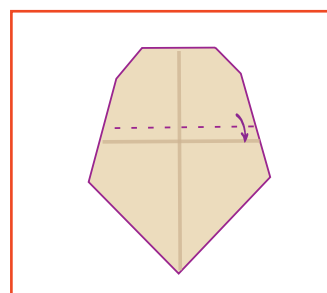
Step 4: Fold a bit of the bottom corner up, as shown in the picture.



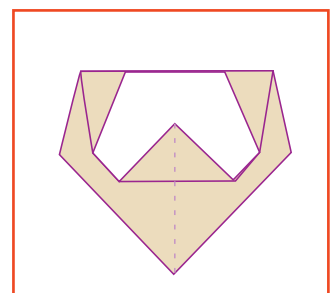
Step 5: Fold the left and right corners in above the horizontal crease, as shown in the picture.



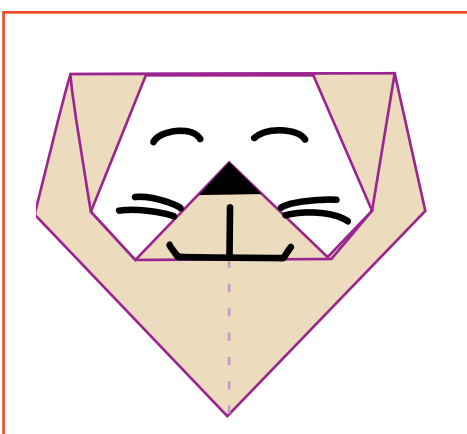
Step 6: Flip the paper over, and turn it so the pointy bit at the bottom points towards you.



Step 7: Fold the top part of the paper down just above the middle crease.



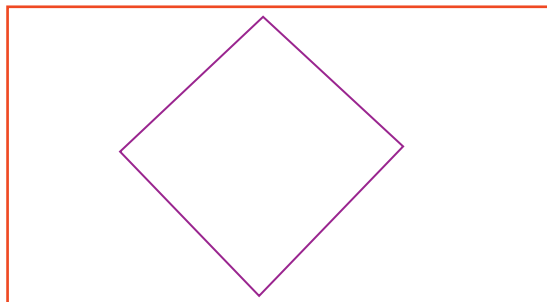
Step 8: You have created the lion's face. Well done!



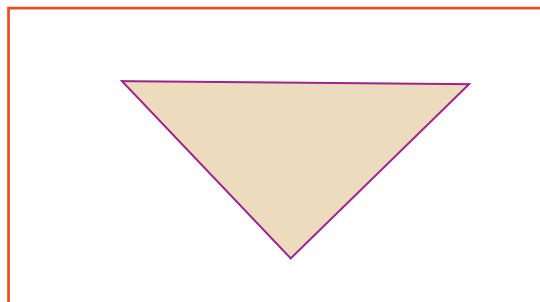
Step 9: Draw eyes, whiskers, a nose and a mouth onto the lion. You can also colour it in, using crayons, pencils or felt tip pens!

MOUSE ORIGAMI

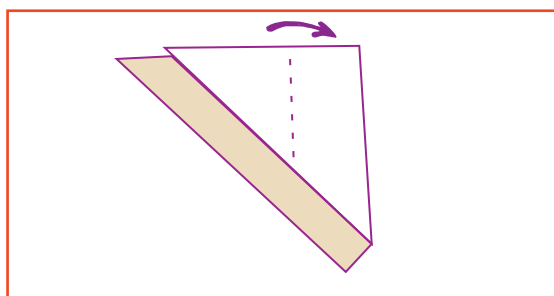
Make a mousey friend for your origami lion by following these instructions!



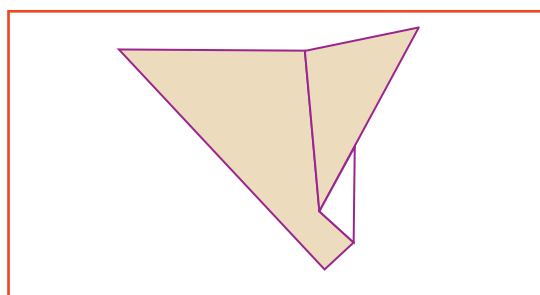
Step 1: Get a square sheet of paper – if you only have rectangular paper, ask a grown-up to trim it into a square shape with scissors.



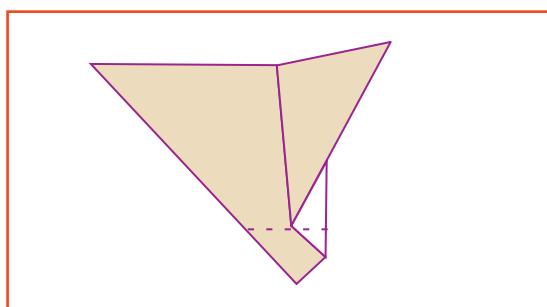
Step 2: Fold your paper in half diagonally.



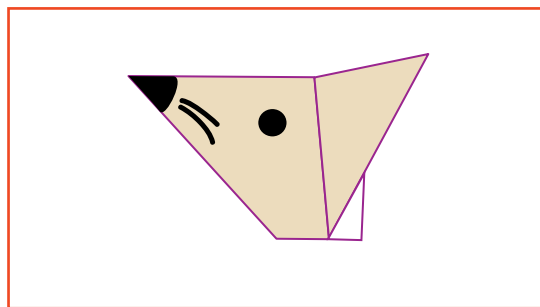
Step 3: From a little bit to the right of the centre, fold the right side to the left, as in the picture.



Step 4: Bend part of that flap back, angling it slightly upward to form the ear.



Step 5: Fold the bottom point of the paper underneath where indicated by the dotted line.



Step 6: Draw in an eye, whiskers and a nose with a black marker pen!

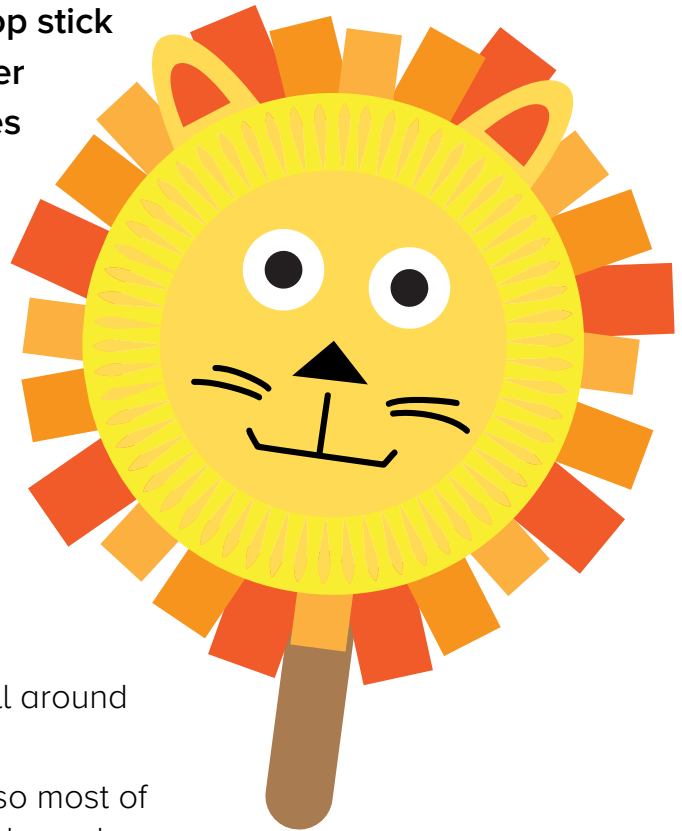
CRAFT A LION!

Would you like to act out the story of The Lion and the Mouse? You can craft your own lion and mouse puppets out of paper plates and put on your own little show!

You will need:

- paper plate
- yellow craft paint
- paint brush
- sticky tape
- scissors
- brown, yellow and orange paper
- glue stick
- large lollipop stick
- black marker
- googly eyes

1. Paint the front of the paper plate yellow. Wait for it to dry.
2. Cut out several long rectangular pieces of brown, yellow and orange paper. Also, make two ears as shown by cutting out two curved pieces of yellow paper and gluing a smaller curved piece of orange paper on top of each one.
3. Turn the paper plate over and put glue all around the ridged rim section.
4. Stick the ears onto the back of the plate so most of each ear sticks out. Stick rectangles of coloured paper onto the rim so that part of the paper hangs over the edge of the plate. This will make the lion's bright mane!
5. Stick the lollipop stick onto the back of the plate so part of it goes over the edge. This is the handle, which you can use to move the puppet around!
6. Turn the plate over and draw a triangular nose in the middle. Then add a mouth below and whiskers to either side as shown in the picture.
7. Stick googly eyes onto the lion's face to finish your puppet!



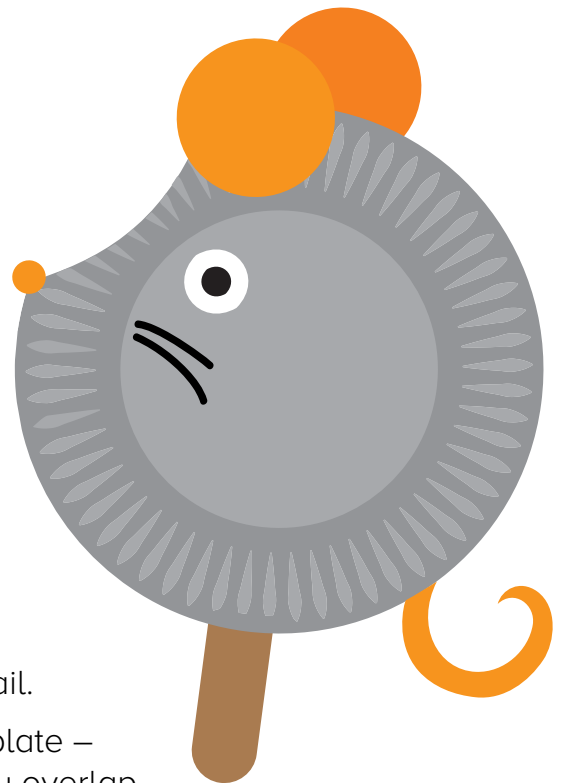
CRAFT A MOUSE!

Once you have made your paper-plate lion, it's time to make him a little friend! Follow these instructions to make a mouse!

You will need:

- large lollipop stick
- tape
- paper plate
- grey craft paint
- paint brush
- orange paper
- scissors
- glue stick
- black marker
- a googly eye

1. Paint the front of the paper plate grey. Wait for it to dry before doing the next step!
2. Cut two large circles and one small circle out of the orange paper. Also, cut out one long, curved piece of orange paper for the mouse's tail.
3. Glue the two large circles onto the edge of the plate – one on the front and one behind. Make sure they overlap a bit! On the opposite edge of the plate, glue on the mouse's tail.
4. Glue the lollipop stick onto the back of the plate near where you attached the tail, so most of it sticks over the edge.
5. Turn the plate back over. Stick the small circle of paper onto the edge of the plate, about a quarter of the way around the edge from where the ears are.
6. Cut out a curved piece from the edge of the plate, between the nose and ear pieces.
7. Draw whiskers onto the plate, near the nose.
8. Glue on a googly eye just above the whiskers. Your mouse puppet is ready to use!



WE ARE HEROES: THE FRIENDLY LION MASK



WE ARE HEROES: ANDROCLES MASK

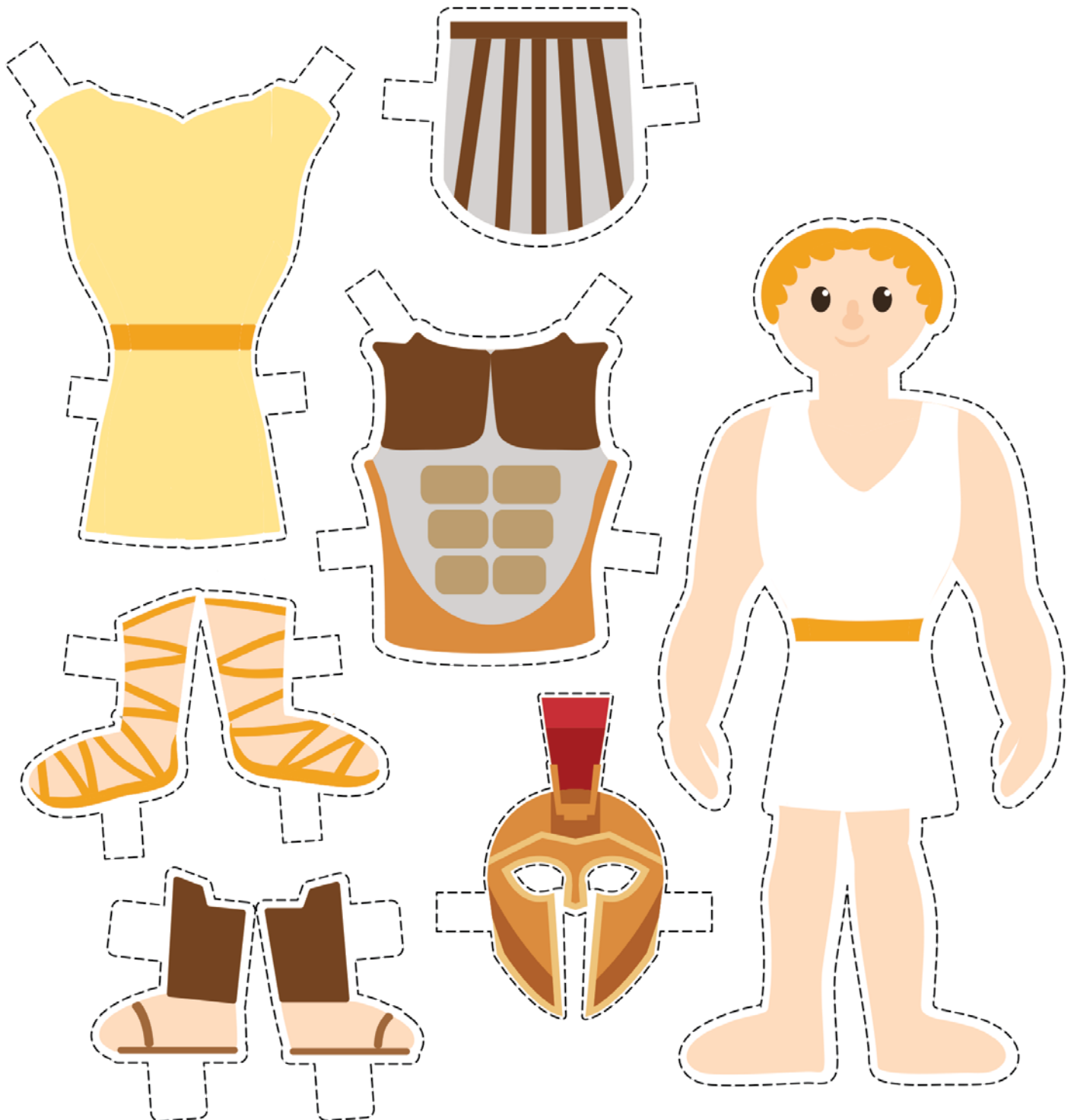


WE ARE HEROES: MOUSE MASK



ROMAN FASHION!

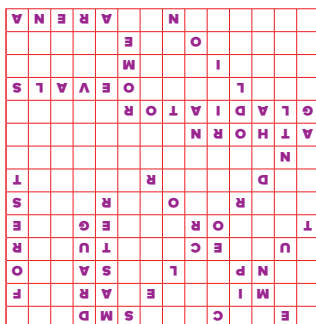
Cut out the Androcles figure and the Roman slave and gladiator costumes! You can dress him by folding the tabs over his body.



WE ARE HEROES: THE FRIENDLY LION & THE MOUSE AND THE LION

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TEACHING RESOURCES

WORD SEARCH



ANSWER:

Find these words in the grid. They run up, down, forwards, backwards and diagonally.

Androcles	Forest	Lion	Slave
Arena	Gladiator	Master	Thorn
Emperor	Guard	Rome	Tunic

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?**

FINISH

24

18

19

20



22

23

17

16

15

14



12

2

3

4

11

1
START

5

10

6

9



8

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.