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opening extract from

StoryWorld: Quests & Adventures

written by

John Matthews and Caitlín Matthews

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"'Many and wondrous things have you seen', said the Carlin Queen, 'But I shall show you things that will be the most wonderful of all.'"

From 'The Carlins of Cairnsmore', Scottish Folk Tale

ONCE UPON A TIME... when people still lived in caves and would sit around the fire every night, storytellers used their magic to keep the vast and silent darkness at bay. Their tales hopped off the tongue and into the ear, taking root in the imaginations of their listeners. There, each tale grew wide and tall, put flesh on its bones, and then walked about in the world.

The Quests and Adventures pack is part of StoryWorld, a wonderful toolkit to inspire storytellers. In this pack you will discover some of the people, places, creatures and special objects that can be found when you set out on a quest or an adventure. By taking just a few cards and looking at their pictures or reading their titles, descriptions and questions, even those who are new to storytelling will be inspired to create their own tales.

Stories about quests and adventures are as old as human beings. Back in the time of Mesopotamia, the hero Gilgamesh went in search of the Flower of Immortality. Later came the tales of King Arthur and his knights, adventuring in search of wrongs to right and going on the quest for the Holy Grail. If you have ever thought of setting out on your own adventure, you will know how excited you felt. By using the Quests and Adventures cards, you can go on exciting quests and daring rescues, and encounter strange and magical people along the way... all without leaving your own home!



PICTURE YOUR STORY

Take out all of the Quests and Adventures cards and look at them. Which ones seem to jump into your hands right away and demand to have their stories told? Lay these cards down in front of you. The pictures tell their own stories, so look carefully at each card – what ideas for tales are they whispering to you? Every time you place two cards side by side, a different tale will spring to life in your mind.

The picture on each card also contains a hidden visual link to another card in your Quests and Adventures pack. Take out a few cards now and see if you can spot one. Every card is connected to another in the pack, creating a circle of hidden links. Try playing a game where you arrange all of your cards in the order of their links, then use that order to tell a story. (If you need help spotting all the links, go to page 23 for the full list.)

FREE YOUR IMAGINATION

There are a huge number of ways in which the cards can be used to spark story ideas. The suggestions we give you here are just a starting place – using your imagination and inventiveness, you will find a limitless number of new ways to create your stories. The names and pictures of four or five cards can inspire a whole adventure. Try randomly picking a few cards to see where you can take those characters. Look at the questions on each card – they might take your tale in an unexpected direction.

There is no right or wrong way to use the StoryWorld Cards. Free yourself from that idea and you will discover millions of untold stories. There are more StoryWorld Cards to collect, available in separate packs with themes such as faeries, sea adventures and animals.

TELL THE TALE

There are many ways to tell a story: you can tell it out loud to someone else, write it down in pictures or words, or act it out with a whole group of friends – each of you can be a character or you can take turns telling different parts of the story.

The great thing about telling a tale with the StoryWorld Cards is that you create a new tale every time you lay the cards down. Try choosing your favourite cards to make a story or, if you like a challenge, pick cards randomly and see what kind of tale unfolds!

Remember, you are the storyteller and you have the power to bring to life the millions of untold tales that are in your imagination. If you want to include an interesting character, place or object that isn't in your StoryWorld Cards, why not create a card of your own? Take a piece of blank cardboard, lay a StoryWorld Card on top of it and draw around it. Cut out your new blank card, draw or stick a picture on it, give it a title and some questions, then add the new StoryWorld Card to your pack.

STORYTELLING GAMES

You can play games with your StoryWorld Cards, alone or with friends, to discover new tales. With a friend, try taking a card each and pretending to be that card. For example, what happens if The Page meets The Ancient Sorcerer? What does it feel like to be those characters and what do they say to each other? If you get stuck, try asking the questions on the back of the cards. Pick another card to end your story.

If you are alone, or on a long journey, choose three cards to be the beginning, middle and end of your story. For a special game to play with your Quests and Adventures cards, go to page 22.

KEEP ASKING QUESTIONS

Questions are the key to great storytelling. If your story gets stuck, ask questions about the character, place or object on the card. Where are they travelling to and what will happen next? Who might be watching them? If you ask enough questions, you'll find there is a story to be told about everyone and everything.

Once you are familar with your Quests and Adventures cards, read the yellow section of this book to discover more ideas about each card in the pack. Use the Keywords in your storytelling.

A NOTE FOR THOSE WORKING WITH YOUNG STORYTELLERS

StoryWorld is first and foremost intended to be inspiring and exciting, but this also makes it a very useful educational tool.

Storytelling is a vital way to stimulate the imagination and is a cornerstone in the development of literacy and communication skills, like listening, speaking, reading and writing. It also builds vocabulary and the understanding of key concepts such as comprehension and sequencing (deciding the correct order of things) – vital knowledge for storytellers of all ages.

Whether a child is pre-literate, learning to read or already a confident reader, he or she can benefit from playing with different aspects of the cards. If you are using the StoryWorld Cards with a child or a group of children, you will discover new ways to stimulate their imaginations through sharing the magic of storytelling.



THE SOLDIER AND THE LITTLE DOG

Cards used in this story:
THE STEADFAST TIN SOLDIER, THE ENDLESS FOREST,
THE CAVE OF WONDERS, THE SEVEN LEAGUE BOOTS,
THE ANCIENT SORCERER

One day the Steadfast Tin Soldier decided to go on an adventure. He said goodbye to his friends and set out along the road. After a while, a small dog came bounding up, barking excitedly.

"What's up, little fellow?" asked the Tin Soldier.

"Woof!" barked the dog. Then he ran off, stopping and looking back until the Tin Soldier realised he wanted to be followed.

Off they went, until they came to the Endless Forest. The Tin Soldier had heard about this place – it was full of monsters and other nasty things. But the little dog led the way, and the Tin Soldier followed him.

It was very dark among the trees. The Tin Soldier heard rustling in the bushes and every now and then he turned around because he thought there was someone behind him. But he never saw anyone.

Soon they came to the entrance to a cave. It looked even darker inside, and the Tin Soldier hesitated. Then he heard the little dog barking and decided to follow.

It wasn't as dark inside as he had expected. The walls glowed and the Tin Soldier found he could see quite well. At first he thought the cave was empty. Then he noticed there were things stuck all over the walls. Really odd things, like a cup and saucer, a horse's bridle and a pair of tongs.

The little dog ran up, dragging something behind him. The Tin Soldier saw it was a pair of old, worn-looking boots.

"I already have shoes, little dog," said the Tin Soldier. "They are painted on and they never wear out!"

But the little dog kept barking and nudging him until the Tin Soldier pulled the boots on. At once two things happened: the little dog jumped into his arms and the Tin Soldier found he was flying through the air at a tremendous speed.

Next minute he was in a strange room where a very tall man stood, staring at the Tin Soldier and the dog with a surprised look on his face. Then he smiled.

"There you are, you little scamp!" he said, addressing the dog. Then he picked up a glowing orb and waved it in the air.

"That's better," said the dog.

"Oh my," said the Tin Soldier. "You can talk!"

"Sometimes he talks too much," laughed the Ancient Sorcerer. "Then I take away his 'even League Boots, you can go anywhere. Maybe my dog would like to go along?"

"Yes please!" said the dog. "Can we go now?"

"I think that's enough adventuring for one day," said the Steadfast Tin Soldier. "Tomorrow we will begin the best adventure ever." But that's another story.



THE EMPEROR

KEYWORDS: strength, power, authority, law.

I AM the most powerful person in the world. Depending on my whim, I can be kind and generous, or fierce and demanding. Kings and princes bow before me and do my bidding. Wherever you are in my empire, my laws will hold true and those who disobey them had better take care. Before you set out on your great journey in search of adventure, knowledge or wisdom, you should ask for my permission. If you have it, you may travel safely through my realm and my subjects will always be there to help you in times of need.



THE EMPRESS

KEYWORDS: kindness, advice, protection, wisdom.

I AM the one who rules alongside my husband. I love my subjects dearly and those who are afraid to approach the Emperor will always find a kindly welcome when they come before me. I help my husband to make important decisions and just laws and to care for the lands that we rule over. If you are about to begin a quest, I will have wise advice to offer and perhaps a secret, magical gift that will help you on your way.



THE QUEST KNIGHT

KEYWORDS: bravery, honour, experience, help.

I AM the bravest of all the knights. Clad in my bright armour and riding my powerful steed, I travel through the land in search of adventures and of wrongs that I can right. I help those in distress, especially women and children. If I see a law being broken, I uphold it and punish those who break it. Though noble and strong, I protect the poor and the weak and am generous with whatever I have to give. I am always looking for the greatest challenge and the mightiest foe. I strive with all my heart and soul to be worthy of my knighthood.



THE SQUIRE

KEYWORDS: willingness, honesty, adventure, skill.

I AM the one who serves my master, the Quest Knight. I ride with him on adventures and take care of his horse and weapons. I have to clean his armour, and keep his sword sharp and his lance straight. Sometimes I am caught up in one of his adventures and I have to be rescued by him! He is a kind and generous master, and very brave. My dearest wish is to become a knight just like him. Perhaps one day I will rescue a fine lady held captive by an ogre or save some children who are being chased by wolves. Sometimes, when my master isn't looking, I like to practise with his sword.