

# The Toy Soldier

## Summary of the story

Peter, who is seven, is given some toy soldiers for his birthday. One soldier has only one leg. He falls in love with a one-legged dancer but is blown out into the street. Some boys find him, make a paper boat for him and he floats away down the sewers and into the river. He is frightened by rats and swallowed by a fish. The fish is caught, bought in a market and prepared for cooking, in Peter's home. Peter returns him to where he can see the dancer but Peter's brother throws them into the fire. The following morning they have melted into one metal heart, on which there is a star from the dancer's dress.



## Background to the story

The original story from Hans Christian Andersen, called *The Brave Tin Soldier*, was first published in Danish in 1838, making it one of the earliest of his 168 stories. Contemporary translations of the stories are available in many editions.

## Topics and themes

**Animals.** Fish and rats could make the start to the topic of animals connected with water.

**Celebrations.** The story starts with a birthday.

**Colours.** The colours of the toys are in the text and illustrated.

**Food.** The fish is caught, bought in a market, and prepared at home. This could lead to a discussion on where food comes from.

**Hobbies.** Historical toys, castles, trains, war games.

**Numbers:** Peter counts soldiers and the clock later chimes up to twelve.

**My town.** From house to street and down the sewers. What happens to water that comes into our homes and to rain water.

**Toys.** There are many toys mentioned here.

## Making use of the Reader

**Ask** pupils to describe their favourite birthday presents or their dream birthday present. They may need some help with vocabulary or descriptive language to do this. They could then draw and label these. Create a display of all these pictures or create a big book and put all the drawings into the book.

**Brainstorm** all the ages and birthdays of the pupils in the class, e.g. create a box for all the months on the board (or you could make this into a train and each carriage is a month) and then ask the pupils to write in their name if that is when they have a birthday.

**Identify** all the toys on pages 6 and 7. You may need to introduce some new vocabulary here.

**Make paper boats.** Fold a piece of paper into half and turn up one corner. Turn over and turn up the opposite corner. Turn over each top. The paper will look like a paper hat or boat. But, first pull out gently and flatten it the other way. Then turn down each top. Put fingers in the middle and open it out the other way. Now take hold of the outer parts of the paper and again pull gently. You should have a boat (it is also a paper hat the other way up).



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## Using the accompanying video or audio cassette

**Before watching or listening to the cassette if the pupils have already read the book.**

Make a list of the main events 1. Finding the soldier with one leg. 2. The soldier meets the dancer. 3. His adventures (from falling out of the window, going in a boat, being swallowed by a fish, thrown in a fire) to help remember the story itself.

**During watching and listening – whole class prediction.** Play the video or audio cassette story through in its entirety. The second time through, stop just before a dramatic event in the story (as listed above) and ask the pupils what happens next.

**Split** the class into seven groups. Give each of the groups a noise they must make when it is in the story: 1. splish, splosh! Splish, splosh! 2. scratch, scratch! Scratch, scratch! 3. drip drip

drip drip 4. glug glug glug glug 5. cut cut cut cut! 6. ouch! Ouch! Ouch! Ouch! 7. crackle crackle! Crackle crackle!

**Make copies** of some of the pictures from the story, for example, page 5, holding soldier, page 13, meeting dancer, page 15 in the gutter, page 20 in the sewers, page 27 onto the fire. Some pupils might like to concentrate just on the dancer and the soldier. Give each group a set of these pictures and as they listen to the story they should put the pictures in order.

**Record the pupils.** Introduce the song 'Happy Birthday' and sing it with the pupils. If they know the song ask them to sing it for Peter and put his name into the song. At the beginning of the story the whole class can sing Happy Birthday, you tell the story and when it is time for each group to make their sound point to the group.

## Notes on the activities in the factsheet

**Activity 1.** Practise the sounds first with the pupils and then ask them what makes which sound. They can then find the page in the Reader where the sound is written. The activity can then be done individually or in pairs.

**Activity 2.** You can revise these words from the story before pupils do the activity. Once they have matched the word to the picture, they can colour in the pictures.

**Activity 3.** This activity could become a class game. Pupils can either answer the questions for themselves or for their partner. To make sure what they say is true you should get them to demonstrate each one. The answers to this will be different for different pupils. They could check in pairs if what they have said is true.

**Activity 4.** This activity might follow discussion of birthdays and what pupils think their best present might be. Pupils might need to be given a model for the writing such as: This is my dream present because ..... The amount of help pupils need with the writing will depend on the class and the individuals you have.

## Answers to the activities

### In the back of the Reader

#### Before you read

1. This is a prediction activity without correct answers but encourage the pupils to look at the illustrations and talk about what they can see.
2. If the pupils follow the numbers correctly they will have drawn a jack-in-the-box. (the picture of the jack-in-the-box is on page 12 of the Reader.)

#### After you read

1. Pupils should be able to find (across) ball, train, boat, jack-in-the-box, dancer, soldier and (downwards) castle, clown, rabbit, teddy bear, doll, horse.
2. This is not really an activity with 'correct' answers as pupils may not like/dislike the same characters, but ask them why they have put the answer they have. Favourite sounds are of course an absolutely personal choice.
3. a. tick; b. cross; c. tick; d. cross; e. tick; f. cross

### In the factsheet

**Activity 1** 1b, 2c, 3i, 4f, 5g, 6d, 7h, 8a, 9e

**Activity 2** 1e, 2d, 3c, 4b, 5a, 6f



**The Toy Soldier**

Name.....

**Activity 1**

Match the noises to the sentences. The first one is done for you.

1. The wind through the door goes
2. The clock in the night goes
3. The Jack-in-the-box goes
4. The people in the streets go
5. The rats go
6. The water in the boats goes
7. The fish in the river goes
8. The cook in the kitchen goes
9. The hot, hot fire goes

- a. Cut, cut, cut!
- b. Woo, woo, woo, woo!
- c. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
- d. Drip, drip, drip, drip!
- e. Crackle, crackle, crackle!
- f. Splish, splosh! Splish, splosh!
- g. Scratch, scratch, scratch, scratch!
- h. Glug, glug, glug, glug!
- i. Ha ha, ha, ha!

**Activity 2**

Match the toys in the picture with the words:

1. Soldier
2. Jack-in-the-box
3. Dancer
4. Teddy
5. Elephant
6. Rabbit



a.



b.



c.



d.

e.



f.



## The Toy Soldier

Name.....

### Activity 3

Can you..?

Tick the box if you can do these things or put a cross in the box if you can't.

- a. Can you stand on one leg?
- b. Can you stand one leg and put both arms above your head?
- c. Can you stand on one leg and sing 'Happy Birthday'?
- d. Can you stand on one leg and lift a bag?
- e. Can you stand on one leg and jump up and down?
- f. Can you stand on one leg and close your eyes?

### Activity 4

Draw your dream present and then write about it.



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