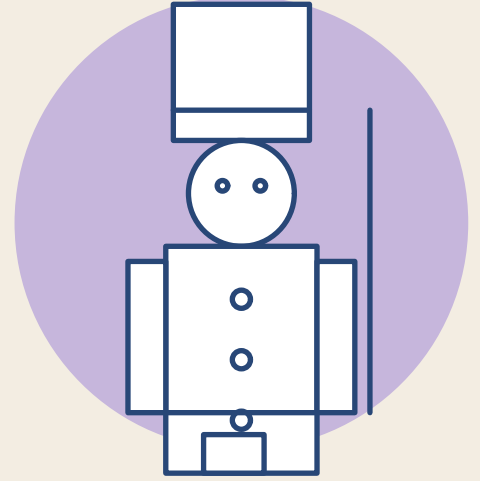


The Steadfast Tin Soldier

A short retelling you can read in five minutes. Then turn a shoebox into the story's stage, and let your child be the storyteller this time.



Once upon a time a boy was given a box for his birthday. Inside were twenty-five tin soldiers. They had all been cast from the same old spoon, and they all wore red and blue uniforms. Only the last one had a leg missing, because there hadn't been quite enough tin left. But he stood just as straight on his one leg as the others did on two.

There were other toys on the table too. The loveliest was a castle made of paper. In its doorway stood a little paper ballerina. She held her arms out wide and lifted one leg so high that the soldier thought she had only one leg, just like him. "She's the friend for me," he thought.

At night the toys began to play. The lid of a jack-in-the-box flew open, and out sprang a grumpy goblin. "Stop staring at the ballerina, soldier!" he shouted. The soldier pretended not to hear.

In the morning the boy put the soldier on the windowsill. Whether it was the wind or the goblin, nobody knows, but the window burst open and the soldier fell three floors down to the street. His helmet pointed down and his bayonet stuck between the cobblestones. But he didn't move, and he wasn't afraid.

It began to rain. When the rain stopped, two boys found him. They folded a boat out of newspaper, put the soldier inside and set it sailing down the gutter. The boat spun and rocked, and the soldier stood straight.

The boat sailed into a dark tunnel under a bridge. A water rat who lived there called out, "Have you got a ticket? Show me!" The soldier said nothing, and the boat sailed on.

Then the gutter poured into a wide canal. The boat got wet and soft, and it sank. At that very moment a big fish swallowed the soldier whole! It was even darker inside the fish than in the tunnel, but the soldier lay straight and thought of the ballerina.

The fish was caught, taken to market and carried into a kitchen. When the cook opened it, what did she find? The tin soldier! He was back in the very same house, in the very same room, on the very same table. The castle was there, and the ballerina stood in the doorway.

That evening the boy put the soldier at the castle door, right next to the ballerina. The wind blew in through the window again, but this time nobody fell. They both stood straight on their one leg, side by side. And from that day on, the castle always had two guards at its door.

Talk about it afterwards

- Why wasn't the soldier afraid? Would you have been?
- Where would you sail in a paper boat?
- Can you tell the story with a different ending?

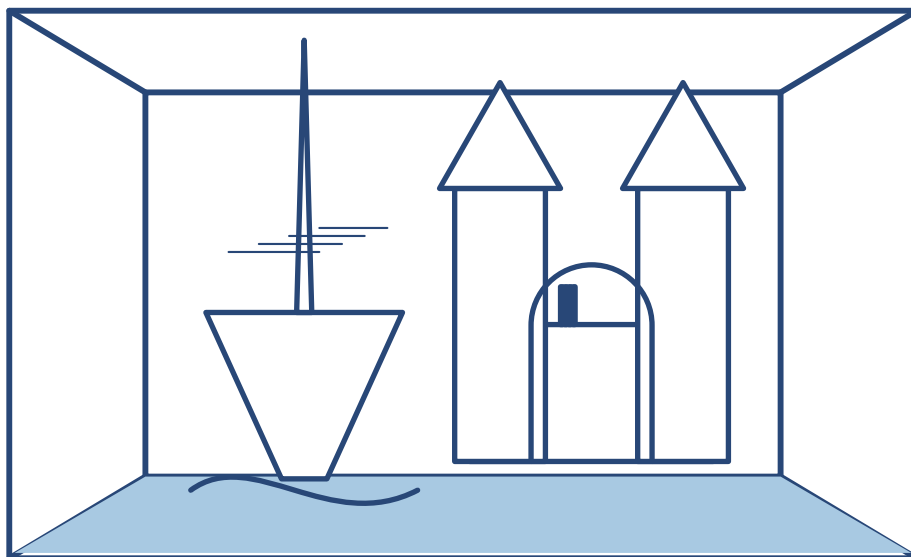
Shortened and adapted from Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale, first published in 1838. In this retelling the ending has been changed for little ones.

STORY BOX · ANDERSEN

A shoebox story stage

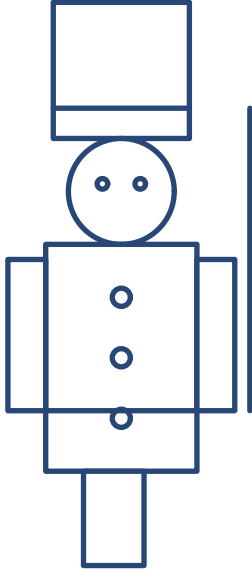
You'll need: a shoebox, scissors, glue, colouring pencils, blue paper, and a few lolly sticks or straws.

- 1 Turn the box on its side; the open side is your stage.
- 2 Colour the back wall or cover it with coloured paper: one half the boy's bedroom, the other half the canal.
- 3 Glue a strip of blue paper along the floor for the canal.
- 4 Colour and cut out the figures on the next page, and fold the tab at the bottom backwards so they stand up on their own.
- 5 If you like, glue the figures to sticks and use them as puppets.
- 6 Tell the story again. This time your child is the storyteller, and you play the goblin or the water rat.

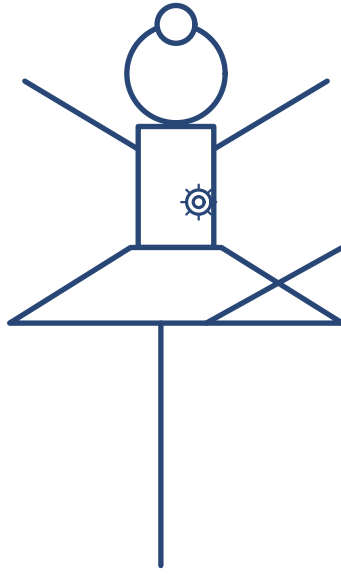


Cut, colour, fold

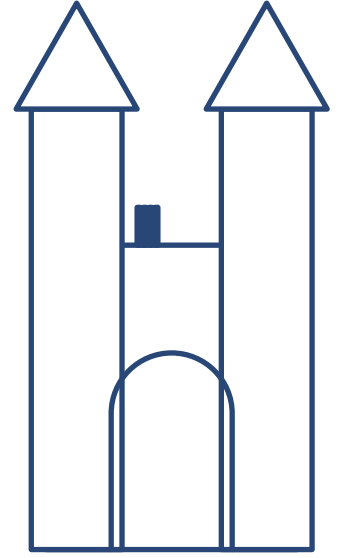
Cut along the dashed lines and fold the tab at the bottom.



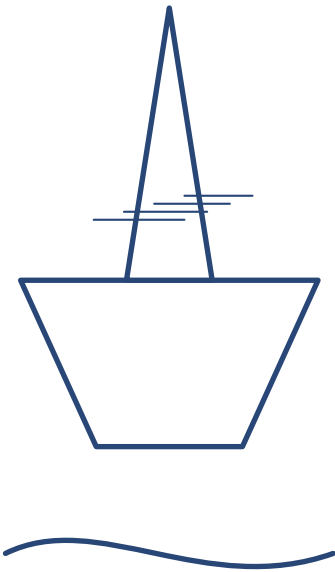
Tin soldier



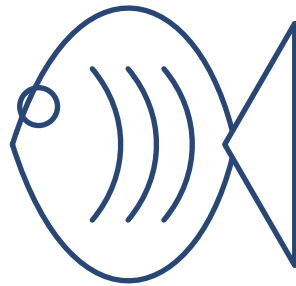
Ballerina



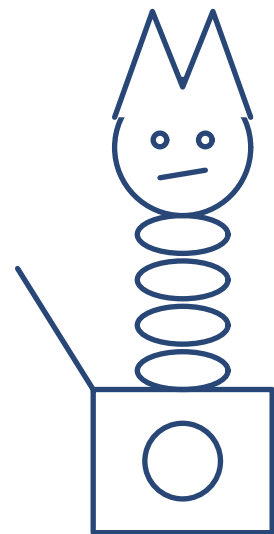
Paper castle



Newspaper boat



Fish



Jack-in-the-box