

Puzzle Stories

Story Starters

Puzzles are little stories. As well as being good exercise for the brain, they paint pictures in your head. As you are trying to solve the puzzle, your imagination makes up lots of different endings to the story. You become a storyteller without realising it.

See if you can work out the solution before checking the answer!

Last Gets All

An old farmer called his two sons to his bedside. "I shall die soon," he said, "and I plan to leave the farm to one of you only. This is how it will be decided. On the day after I'm buried, I want you to take your horses to the gate, ride round the far edge of the farm and back to the gate again. Whoever's horse comes in last will get the farm." The boys couldn't believe what their father had said. "Whoever's horse comes in **last!**"

It wasn't long before the old farmer died. On the day after his funeral, the two boys saddled up their horses, took them to the gate and mounted. And they sat there all day without moving. By teatime their tummies had started to rumble. They looked at each other and agreed that they would have to go and ask for help. So they climbed down from their horses, walked into the village and through to the far end, to the house of the Wise Woman. The Wise Woman invited them in and gave them tea and biscuits. Then she listened to their problem.

"The old man said that whoever's horse comes in **last** will get the farm. What shall we do?"

The Wise Woman pondered for a couple of seconds, then she said two words to the boys. When they heard these words, the boys dashed out of the house, raced down the street, leapt on to their horses, and were off like the wind.

What were the Wise Woman's two words?

*A: Her words were, "Change Horses". The father said whoever's **horse** came in last would get the farm. So if your brother is riding your horse and you beat him, your horse will come in last.*

How Many Children?

As I was walking down the street, a woman with lots of children was coming towards me.

"You must have about twenty children," I said.

She replied, "If I had twice as many as I **have** got, and half as many again, I *would* have twenty."

How many children did she have?

A: eight

The Tale of the Legs

Four legs comes into the room, and takes one leg off three legs.

Two legs comes in, picks up three legs, and throws it at five legs.

Four legs drops one leg and runs away.

What on earth is going on?

Answer: a dog (four legs), comes in and takes a leg of meat (one leg) from an old-fashioned three-legged stool. A man or woman (two legs) comes in and throws the stool at the dog (who has the leg of meat in his mouth, and so becomes five legs). The dog drops the leg of meat and runs away.

The Great Escape

A man is in a room which has walls, floor and ceiling made entirely out of concrete. There are no doors or windows, and the only object in it is a table.

How does he escape?

Answer: the man bangs his head on the concrete wall until it's sore (saw). He takes the saw and cuts the table in half. Two halves make a whole (hole). He climbs out through the hole and shouts until he's hoarse (horse), jumps on the horse and rides away. (You need to say this aloud to make it work.)

A Fisherman's Tale

Two fathers and two sons went out fishing. They caught three fish. How did they divide them up equally?

Answer: they get one fish each. There are only three fishermen – a boy, his father, and his grandfather. So two of them are fathers, and two of them are sons.

How many balls of string does it take to reach the moon?

Answer: one – if the string is long enough.

How far can you walk into a wood?

Answer: half way – then you're walking out of it.

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