

Other Stories

with a Theme of Creative Thinking

Story Title: Weighing the Elephant (China)

Book: More Folk Tales from China

Author: Sian Tek-Lim

Publisher: The John Day Company, NY, 1948

Page(s): 135-136

Synopsis: A general is given a magnificent gift from a foreign leader—an elephant! Yet how can the beast be weighed? Certainly an elephant cannot stand on any scale! At last the general's six-year-old son speaks up. He suggests that they lead the elephant onto a large boat and mark the waterline. After leading the elephant off, they fill the boat with stones until it sinks to the same waterline. Last, each stone on the boat is weighed and added together.

Story Title: Borrowing the Enemy's Arrows (China)

Book: More Folk Tales from China

Author: Sian Tek-Lim

Publisher: The John Day Company, NY, 1948

Page(s): 56-57

Synopsis: The leader of an army desperately needs 100,000 arrows, but there isn't enough time to make so many. So he assembles a "crew" of straw dummies and positions them to look as if they crowd the deck of 20 ships. At dusk, he send the fleet up the Yangtze River into enemy territory. As the ships approach, the enemy releases a volley of arrows against the shadowy ships. Thousands of arrows become stuck in the straw dummies, and the leader has what he needs!

Story Title: The Faithful Wives (Germany)

Book: Clever Folk Tales of Wisdom, Wit, and Wonder

Author: Euthilde M. Kronberg

Publisher: Libraries Unlimited, 1993

Page(s): 5-6

Synopsis: (*Legend*) A king surrounds the castle of a rebellious duke. The people inside the castle, facing starvation, believe they must surrender. However the duke's wife, the Lady Elizabeth, has a different idea. She delivers a petition to the king: "We, the sad and distraught wives of the conquered, humbly beg you to let us and our offspring leave the castle with what we can carry on our backs." The king—not an unjust man—agrees. Imagine his surprise when the next morning, a long row of wives awkwardly make their way out of the castle with their husbands on their backs! Laughing, the king allows the men to leave, renaming the castle: "The Castle of the Faithful Wives."