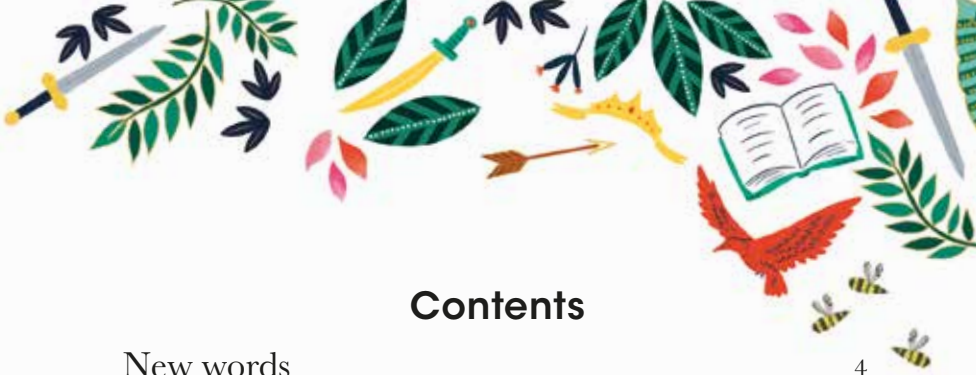




MULAN
AND OTHER
TALES
OF
HEROES

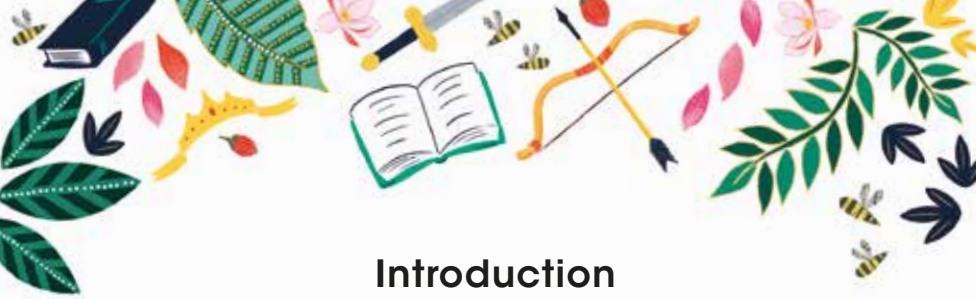




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Introduction

Every hero is very special. These are the stories for the four heroes in this book.

Hua Mulan comes from China, and many people know her from books and films. Someone first wrote about Mulan on paper in about 600 CE, but her story is older than that. Mulan's special **power*** is fighting.

Hanuman the monkey **god** comes from a long Indian story – the Ramayana. He is a very good friend to Rama. Hanuman's special power is changing from one thing to another. He is not always a monkey but he can be a man, or different animals. He is sometimes very big and sometimes very small.

Shahrazad's story comes from many countries, from India to Iran, Iraq and Egypt, and many people know her famous 1,001 stories. Shahrazad's special power is telling stories. She is **brave** and intelligent, and she likes to help other people.

Anansi comes from Ghana, and many people in that country tell stories about him. Anansi is often a spider and his special power is making spider webs. He is also very intelligent.

*Definitions of words in **bold** can be found in the glossary on pages 63–64.

Hua Mulan – a story from China

A very special girl lived in a village in China. This is her story.

After many years at **war**, a soldier came back home to his village. His name was Hua, and he put a young tree in his front garden. The tree grew tall, and after ten years there was a beautiful white and pink flower on it. That same year, Hua's wife had a baby girl. They gave the girl the name Mulan. That is the name of the beautiful flower in Chinese.

Mulan grew from a baby to a strong and brave young woman. She helped her mother in the house, but she loved to be with her father, too. She was wonderful with horses. She learned to fight, and she was very good with a sword.

“Fighting is important for you and your family, Mulan,” said her father. “You’re a girl, I know. But maybe you will need to fight one day.”



One day, Mulan saw a lot of people in the middle of the village. There was a big notice there. The people read it, and they talked about it. Mulan read the notice, too.

“The king is going to war,” she read. “One man from every house must be a soldier and he will fight for the king.”

The names of a lot of men in the village were on the notice, and one name was Mulan’s father. She was very sad. “My father was a fine soldier, but he’s an old man now,” she thought. “He can’t fight. He can’t go to war. He’ll die before the first fight.”

Mulan stopped for a minute. “But I’m young and strong,” she thought, “and my father taught me well. I can fight with my eyes closed and with one hand behind my back. I’m good with a sword, and I can ride a horse very well.”

Mulan talked to her younger sister. “I’ll go to war for father. I can fight as well as a man.”

“But father will not want you to go,” said her sister.



張亦 花弧 趙常

劉起 李二文

王貴 茂二公

“I’m not going to tell him,” said Mulan. “It’s a **secret**.”

“But you’re a girl!” said her sister. “People will see your long hair. And they’ll see the pretty **make-up** on your face.”

“It’s OK,” said Mulan. “I can change that.”

Mulan put her long hair on the top of her head, and she took off all the make-up from her face. She took off her clothes. Then she wore her father’s old armour, and she held his sword. Her sister watched. Mulan was now a different person.

“You’re a man, now,” said her sister.

“Yes,” said Mulan. “But that’s not important. Clothes tell you nothing. The important thing is inside me.” She put her hand on her body. “Inside this armour there’s a true soldier. But remember! It’s a secret. Father must not know.”

Mulan’s little sister said goodbye to Mulan. “You’ll come home a famous soldier. I know that,” she told her.