

# Mother GOOSE



Mother Goose has become a familiar part of many of our childhoods, whether as a book of fairy tales, a collection of nursery rhymes or a traditional Christmas pantomime. And yet those people who are not familiar with the books or the shows are still confused by them, usually assuming that Mother Goose herself is the lead character in the original *Tales of Mother Goose*, instead of being the mythical storyteller. So how exactly did the *Tales of Mother Goose* come into being and who was Mother Goose herself?

## Who was Mother GOOSE?

For those who don't know, Mother Goose began life not as a character in a fairy tale, but as a mythical narrator of the many tales and rhymes that were said to be by her. In other words, countless folk tales, and later rhymes, invented by lots of different people were for years referred to by the phrase 'Mother Goose stories', because they were supposedly told by a marvellous individual known only as 'Mother Goose'.

Some of these stories were set down in print as early as 1637 in an Italian collection of stories entitled *The Pentamerone*; others can be traced back to another Italian collection of 73 folk tales which were later used by Shakespeare as a source for some of his plays!

Whether anyone really existed named Mother Goose, who told stories, is unclear. Most people will say not, but there are claims that the real Mother Goose has been identified. The earliest use of the phrase 'Mother Goose' dates back to 1650 in France, when a man called Jean Loret mentioned her in a work called *La Muse Historique*.

Then, in 1697, Charles Perrault used the phrase in a published collection of eight fairy tales entitled *Histoires et Tales of Long Ago, with Morals*. The frontispiece of this famous book showed an old woman spinning and telling stories, with a placard on the page bearing the words *Tales of My Mother the Goose*. It is thanks to Perrault that the name 'Mother Goose' became well known outside of France. The book was published in England in 1790 under the title *Mother Goose's Fairy Tales*.

Charles Perrault's book featured eight fairy stories, most of which have gone on to become world-famous. They are: *Sleeping Beauty (in the Wood)*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Blue Beard*, *Puss in Boots (or The Master Cat)*, *The Fairies*, *Cinderella (or The Little Glass Slipper)*, *Ricky with the Tuft* and *Little Thumb*.

Perrault didn't invent these stories as, even in his day, they were well-known tales. Instead, he chose and recorded them with wit and style, ensuring that they became famous and loved around the world.



So much for the *Tales of Mother Goose*, but what about her association with nursery rhymes? This began sometime between the 1760s and the 1780s, when an Englishman, John Newbery, now known as the 'father of children's books', and his stepson John Carnan published several collections of traditional rhymes, including *Mother Goose's Melody: or Sonnets for the Cradle*. So popular were these books that 'Mother Goose' became even more identified with nursery rhymes than with fairy tales. Since then, the term *Mother Goose* has become widely used for many different collections of nursery rhymes or tales.

# Was there a real Mother Goose?

We said earlier that Mother Goose was just a made-up storyteller who never really existed, and that is what most people still believe. However, there are others who think that a real, historical Mother Goose did exist and there are several contenders for the title!

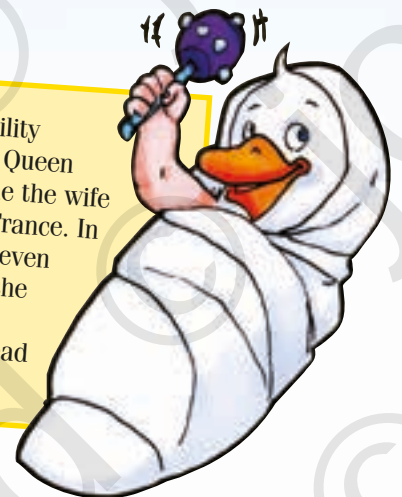
The most likely candidate is an 8th century French queen named Bertrada II of Laon who, in 740, married Pepin the Short, King of the Franks, and in 742 bore his son Charles, known to us today as Charlemagne, the founder of the Holy Roman Empire.

Americans, meanwhile, believe that one Elizabeth Goose who lived in Boston, Massachusetts, during the 17th century was the original Mother Goose, although no evidence has been discovered to support this claim. According to the legend, one of her daughters married a printer who collected all of her stories and published them as a book. On the front he is supposed to have put a picture of a goose-like creature with a long neck and wide-open mouth, to make fun of his mother-in-law! To this day, nursery rhymes are known as 'Mother Goose songs' in America!



Bertrada, who was very fond of children, was sometimes known as Bertha Greatfoot, or Queen Goosefoot, probably because she had large goose-like feet, and was often portrayed in French legends sitting at a spinning wheel telling stories to children as she wove.

Another possibility was a different Queen Bertha, this time the wife of Robert II of France. In her case it was even rumoured that she gave birth to a child with the head of a goose!



# Geese

The widespread belief that geese are just big ducks is partly true, as the two types of bird are closely related biologically. However, there is a lot more to geese than meets the eye, making them one of the most interesting of all birds and a group with a very rich history!

## Some fascinating facts about

## geese...

Geese are among the few creatures whose group name changes depending on whether they are flying or on the ground. A group of geese is called a *gaggle* on the ground but a *skein* when in the air.

Geese have been domesticated for almost 5,000 years.

Many varieties of geese were bred in ancient India, Egypt and China. Over the years, geese have been raised for food, eggs, feathers (for quill pens) and their down (for quilts and pillows). Domesticated geese make good watchdogs, hissing and honking loudly when strangers come around!

Geese can be very aggressive when protecting their young.

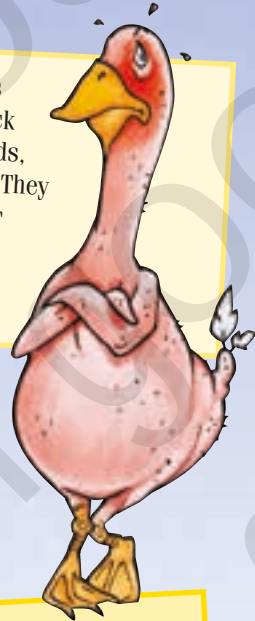
All geese eggs in a single clutch hatch on approximately the same day.

The baby geese are called *goslings*.

Geese are devoted parents and never leave their goslings unguarded.

Geese have many natural predators including foxes, raccoons, owls and even snapping turtles, but they are strong, aggressive, and quick to defend themselves.

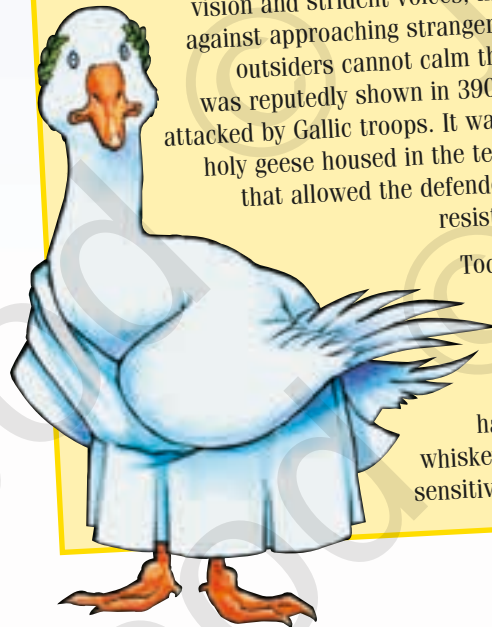
Every year, geese lose their flying feathers when they moult. This means they are stuck on the ground for a while. Unlike other birds, geese lose all their flight feathers at once! They can fly again approximately six weeks after moulting (usually by early August). During moulting, geese need to be near water to escape from their predators.



## Guard geese

Geese, with their exceptional eyesight, wide field of vision and strident voices, make excellent guards against approaching strangers or predators, since outsiders cannot calm them into silence. This was reputedly shown in 390 BC, when Rome was attacked by Gallic troops. It was the alertness of the holy geese housed in the temple of the city's fort that allowed the defenders to wake in time to resist the attacking enemy.

Today, in the high Andes, Southeast Asia and many other places, geese replace guard dogs. In Europe, they have been used to guard whiskey warehouses and even sensitive military installations!



# Long-distance

## Geese

Migrating geese, with their spectacular 'V' formations, are one of the wonders of the natural world. But why do they do it?

Apparently, by flying in a 'V' group formation, the whole skein find it easier to fly than if they were on their own. As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird following. 'V' formation flying means a group can travel 71 per cent further than they could if flying alone or in a normal flock!

If a goose falls out of the 'V' formation, it suddenly feels the extra drag and resistance of flying alone, and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front. When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into formation and another goose flies at the point position.

Why do flying geese honk all the time? Apparently, it's to encourage those up front to keep their speed up!

When a goose gets sick, wounded or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with it until it flies again or dies; afterwards, they catch up with their original flock or join another group.

Migrating geese in Canada have been known to allow hitchhikers – smaller birds have been found on their backs!



In Egyptian mythology, the earth-god Geb (also called Seb, or Keb) was sometimes depicted with a goose surmounting his head. He was also described as a goose called *The Great Cackler*, whose female laid an egg every day, from which the Sun hatched each morning.



**In ancient Egypt, as well as in ancient China, the goose was considered a messenger between Heaven and Earth. In China, geese are still a symbol of marriage, because they bond for life with one mate. In the Roman empire, the goose was the sacred animal of Juno, a goddess of light, marriage and childbirth, who was later considered adviser and protector of the Roman people.**

# Geese in history

Throughout their history, geese have inspired artists and writers, and appear in many fairy tales, such as *The Goose Girl*, *The Golden Goose*, *The Goose Girl at the Well*, *The Fox and the Geese* and *The Goose that Laid the Golden Egg*, as well as the nursery rhyme *Goosey Goosey Gander*.



Archaeological excavations in ancient Egypt have proved that geese were kept as early as the third millennium BC. Romans dedicated geese to Juno, their highest goddess, and authors such as Plinius and Horace described goose husbandry techniques and delicious goose recipes. The Chinese were familiar with goose husbandry at the time of the Tai dynasty in the 14th century. Charlemagne encouraged goose husbandry in his empire, and it became common practice all over Europe during the ensuing centuries.

# Geese mythology

The Celts associated the goose with war, possibly because of its watchful nature and aggressive temperament. Warrior gods were sometimes depicted with geese as companions. Remains of geese have been found in warriors' graves. The ancient Britons kept geese, but did not eat them. They were, however, sometimes used as sacrificial offerings.



# Mother Goose's



**R** is for the **R**awful day faced by our sprightly dame  
Her rent is due—she sees no chance of fortune or of fame.

The **R**ailiffs from the **R**addie will not be very sweet,  
It seems poor Mother Goose may be thrown out in the street!

In a time of **R**e for **R**ecession, our heroine needs **R**ash,  
Or her **R**ent for **R**evolution will evict her in a flash.

Perhaps this is the **R**e for **R**end—whatever will she do?

She has no proper savings or a nest **R**egg in the Pru!  
Then by way of **R**e for **R**eason there comes a **R**ead in need,

A **R**eautiful **R**oose to comfort her—a feathered friend indeed!

But this is not a common **R**oose, as well as lovely legs,  
Priscilla (that's the goose's name) lays **R**eautiful **R**eggs!

**R** is for the **R**eady situation that ensues:

Mother Goose has golden eggs to sell to pay her dues.

**R** is the **R**eady Priscilla in her prime,  
Who comes up with the golden goodies every single time.

**R** is Mother Goose's **R**eady joy that she can pay her rent,  
So grateful for the **R**eady Priscilla's help for her **R**eady lament.

But Mother Goose begins to wish she could be young and fair,

And hopes some **R**eady for **R**eady magic will the ravages repair.



It's **N**ow the **N**asty villain comes creeping back on stage,  
To make our dame an **O**ffer to **O**ffset the signs of age:  
Give him her dear **P**riscilla and her **P**rize will be a trip  
To the famous **P**ool of Beauty where she'll take a little dip!  
Though we can see at once this could maybe do great harm,  
Deluded Mother Goose soon agrees without a **Q**ualm.  
**R**eturning home ecstatic, she can really only see  
That she is **S** for **S**tunning—as gorgeous as can be!  
Without her rosy spectacles, is this the **T** for **T**ruth?  
That she has just gone swimming and reclaimed her long-lost youth?  
Her friends are truly **U**nderwhelmed and tell her to her face  
Now she is **V**ain, their Mother Goose has **V**anished without trace.  
She's looked for **W**orth and **W**isdom where they really don't belong.  
They're in herself, not just skin deep—she knew it all along.  
And now she must **e**rt herself to make all turn out right,  
She gets her sweet Priscilla back (but not without a fight).  
For riches and for beauty Mother Goose no longer **l**earns,  
She has learnt a special lesson we hope everybody learns:  
Our **B**est for life comes from within, and so we end our tale,  
Be true to who you really are, and then you cannot fail!



# Mother Goose mayhem!



FEELIN' BORED  
OR IN A TIZZY?  
MOTHER GOOSE MAYHEM  
WILL KEEP YOU BUSY!

TO PLAY THE GAME,  
TAKE MY ADVICE,  
YOU'LL NEED SOME BUTTONS  
(and some dice)!



HELLO,  
MY DARLINGS!

START  
HERE!



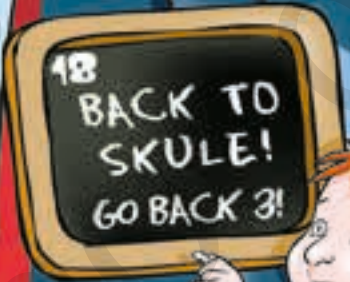
honk!



I'm eric-  
no-derek-  
er-ang on...



booooo!  
and his henchman!  
aah...  
GO BACK 2  
ANYWAY...  
drat!



'ANG ON A SEC!  
'ALT A MO!  
WITH NO RENT,  
T'SCHOOL WILL  
GO!



BUT I KNOW  
'OW T'MAKE THINGS  
WELL - all I  
need's one  
simple spell.



honk!

44  
BILLY KILLS  
THE DEMON  
**ROLL  
AGAIN!**

44 **ALMOST  
THERE!**  
MARCHING HOME TO  
(name of venue)  
**GO ON !!**

WE'LL SAY  
TA-RA - IT'S  
TIME TO GO -  
YOU'VE PLAYED THE  
GAME, NOW WATCH  
T'SHOW!

**FINISH!**

34  
*Gooseland*

**ROLL  
AGAIN!**

38 **OO-ER!**  
LOOK OUT, BILLY!  
**GO BACK S!**

25 **OH NO!**  
THE **SQUIRE**  
Is wooing  
**MOTHER  
GOOSE!**

28  
THE  
DEMON  
OFFERS  
BEAUTY...  
**GO ON  
2!**

MISS  
A GO!

NOW YER'S A WEIRD  
THING TO BEHOLD -  
THIS YER EGG IS  
MADE FROM  
**GOLD!**

hooOonk?!



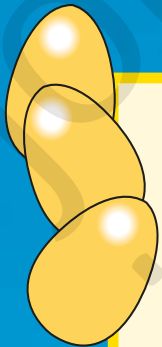
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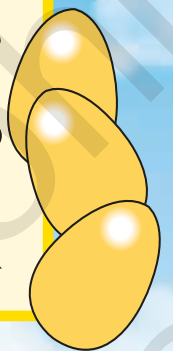


geese

# Wordsearch



b a d a n a c k n o h  
g a g g l e d o w n g  
b o r n e l k c a c r  
n r s n a i t p y g e  
e g e l a i e t a o y  
n o l n i c i g l l l  
e o t n t n l a g d a  
a s a b e g g e w s g  
l e s e n i h c e a s  
b t a l e n i e k s h



Can you find all the words below hidden in the wordsearch? They may run up, down, backwards, forwards and even diagonally! When you have found all the words, there will be nine letters left over, which will spell out something Mother Goose likes to tell!

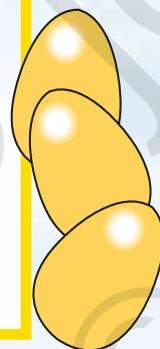
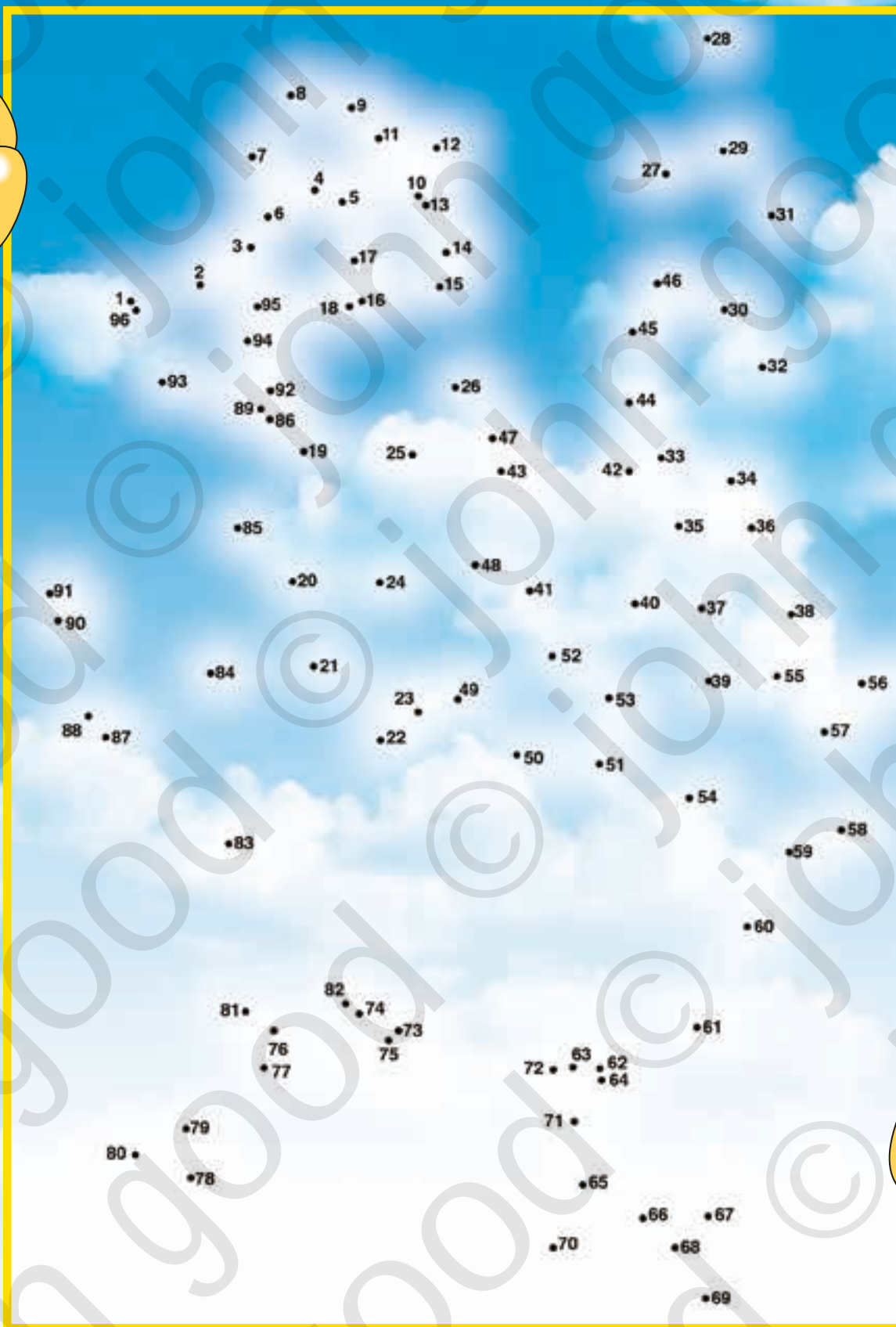
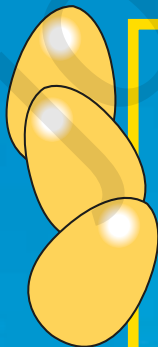
goose  
nene  
egyptian  
chinese  
eggs

gosling  
brent  
greylag  
cackle  
geb

skein  
canada  
bean  
honk  
gold

gaggle  
barnacle  
hawaiian  
down  
tale

# DOT to DOT



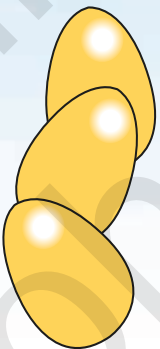
Can you tell what is in this picture by joining up the dots?

# SPOT

## the Difference



Can you spot the ten differences between these two pictures?



# COLOUR ME IN



# Silly SuDoku!



Priscilla the goose has laid lots of golden eggs and Mother Goose has quite a few left over—so she has decided to set you a sudoku puzzle to solve!

She has written numbers on the sides of the eggs and drawn a grid made up of 16 squares, divided into four smaller boxes of four squares each. The idea is to fill it so that every row and column of the large grid and every smaller 2 x 2 box contains each number. Can you solve it?

3			1
	2	3	
	1	4	
4			2

Now try this harder one! Mother Goose has added another two eggs and made the grid bigger, so that each row, column and box has six squares. See if you can do this one!

4					5
5		6	3		2
		1	2		
	3				1
3		4	6		1
1					4

# ANSWERS

## DOT to DOT



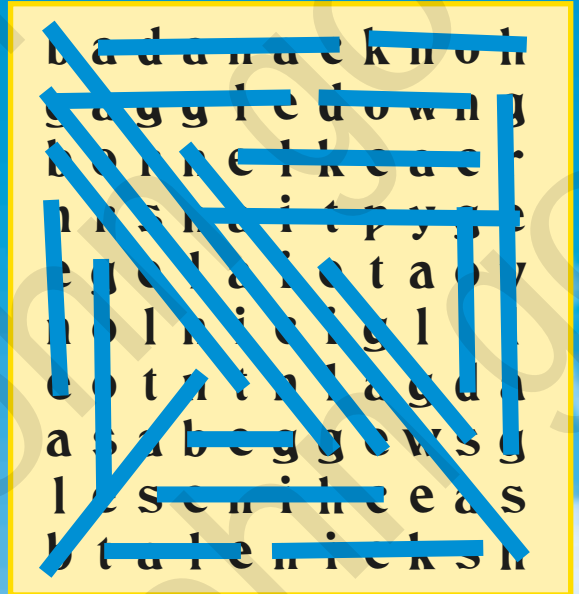
## SPOT

the Difference



## Geese

## Wordsearch



TALL TALES

## SILLY

## SuDoku!

3	4	2	1
1	2	3	4
2	1	4	3
4	3	1	2

4	2	3	1	6	5
5	1	6	3	4	2
6	4	1	2	5	3
2	3	5	4	1	6
3	5	4	6	2	1
1	6	2	5	3	4