

# The SWAN MAIDEN:

## Comparing Stories

3<sup>RD</sup>  
Grade

### COMPARE THE STORIES

Which story seems more like a fairy tale? Which one seems more like a folk tale?  
Why?

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How are the endings different?

[ 2 ]  
Swan Maiden



[ 4 ]  
Goose Food



He had been walking for a long time, so he stopped to rest by the trunk of a tree. As he sat and rested, he heard a strange voice behind him say, "The chief woman asks you to come in." Curious, he turned around and peeked behind the ferns where he had seen the mouse hide. He saw behind them a big house. He entered to find a chief woman was steaming sanberries. "Please, sit down and have something to eat," she said to him. "You helped me when I could not make it over that tree. To thank you, I will lend you a special garment I wore when I was young."

She brought out a box. Inside was a tiny mouse skin with small, bent claws. "Practice wearing this." Although it was small, he entered it easily. He was able to go anywhere! He was climbing up the walls, on furniture, and even on the roof. The woman said to him, "Now you know how to use it. Go on and find your wife."

Again he set out upon the trail. After he had gone on for a while, he heard someone grunting. Up ahead, he saw a woman was trying to carry a pile of large stones. He helped her. She thanked him and said, "I am doing it."

He had been at her for a while he went out to her. "Say, what are you doing?" Then the woman said, "My people are having me build a mountain off the island. I am doing it."

He took out his leather straps and said to her, "Here, let me help you."

### THE SWAN MAIDEN'S TALE

as written by Joseph Jacobs

Once there was a hunter, who lived in a faraway land. He used to spend his nights searching for wild beasts and setting traps for other wild beasts. One night, he was walking silently in a clump of bushes near the lake, watching for wild ducks that he wished to trap. Suddenly he heard a loud ringing of wings and thought the ducks were coming. He drew his bow and readied his arrows.

Instead of ducks, there appeared seven maidens in robes made of feathers, and they alighted on the lake. Taking off their robes, they plunged into the water and swam peacefully in the lake. They were all beautiful, but the fairest and daintiest pleased the hunter's eyes. He crept towards the place where their robes lay. Carefully, he stole the smallest maiden's robe and hid it with him into the bushes.

He gave her his cloak but would not give her her robe, fearing she would fly away once she had it. "Dear maiden," the hunter said. "You are so beautiful, and I fear I will never see you again after tonight. Please, take my robe and come back to my village with me. I can give you everything you have ever dreamed of." She agreed, and she went with him back to his village. When he arrived home, he found her robe where she could not find it. They were married and lived happily together and had two fine children, a boy and a girl, who grew up strong and beautiful; and their father loved them with all her heart.

One day, the maiden's little daughter was playing hide-and-seek with her brother, and she went behind the dresser to hide herself, and found there a robe all made of feathers. She hid it to her mother. As soon as she saw it, she put it on and showed it to her father. He said, "If he wishes to see you, let him bring this robe."

### GOOSE FOOD

as told by Ghandi

There once was a man who had a wife and a child. One time he went along an open space behind the house. Then he went to the well. He saw that the men were bathing in a lake. He hung over a stick. After he saw a man, he went back. When they came out, he asked the best-looking man for a wife. "I'm sorry," the man said to him. "You don't want my sister." Now, she agreed. "You caught us swimming. Give me my skin and I will let you transform into a goose and fly around for a moment above her for a moment. I will be rough the sky. I will be his bride-to-be."

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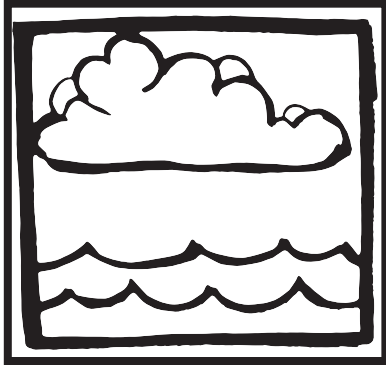
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Compare the Stories

*Certificate of Completion*



**B**efore books were read, in towns and villages around the world, children and adults would sit around a fire late at night and listen to storytellers weave tales of adventure and romance. Sometimes the stories would last for hours and hours. Everyone would pay attention, and the stories would help them understand the world they lived in. Every culture had its own stories, and they all took place before anyone in the room or anyone they knew was born, in a time when gods and humans lived together. Sometimes these stories are called fairy tales, sometimes folk tales and sometimes they are called myths. Many of them are forgotten now, but some are remembered and some are written down.

One of these stories, told in Europe, is called the Swan Maiden's Tale. It is about a hunter who falls in love with a swan that has turned into a woman. When she leaves him to become a swan again, he follows her to a kingdom in the sky to get her back.

In 1915, a long time after most people stopped telling these stories in Europe, Joseph Jacobs wrote down his own version of this story, using the parts people still remembered. Around the same time, on an island off the Pacific coast of Canada, villagers from a tribe of Native Americans called the Haida were listening to a story very much like the Swan Maiden's Tale. It was being told the old way: not from any book, but by

a mythteller named Ghandl, in a way that only he knew how to tell it. A visitor from the U.S. was in the room and he wrote it down, and that is why we can read it today.

These two myths were told in two very different cultures very far away from each other, but they still have a lot in common. Read them and see what they have in common and what is different. Answer the questions along the way.

✘ ✘ ✘



# THE SWAN MAIDEN'S TALE

as written by Joseph Jacobs

[ 1 ]

*Swan Maiden*

Once there was a hunter, who lived in a faraway land. He used to spend his nights searching for deer and setting traps for other wild beasts. One night, he waited silently in a clump of bushes near the lake, watching some wild ducks that he wished to trap. Suddenly he heard a whirring of wings and thought the ducks were coming. He strung his bow and readied his arrows.

Instead of ducks, there appeared seven maidens all *clad* in robes made of feathers, and they *alighted* on the banks of the lake. Taking off their robes, they *plunged* into the waters and swam peacefully in the lake. They were all beautiful, but the fairest and daintiest pleased the hunter's eye the most. He crept towards the place where their robes were laying. Carefully, he stole the smallest maiden's robe and took it back with him into the bushes.

After the swan maidens had swam and played to their hearts' delight, they came back to the bank wishing to put on their feather robes again. The six oldest sisters found theirs, but the youngest could not. They searched and searched until at last the dawn began to appear, and the six sisters called out to her, "We must go; it is morning. You meet your fate whatever it be." And with that, they put on their robes and flew away.

When the hunter saw them fly away, he came forward with the feather robe in his hand. The last swan maiden

begged him to give it back. He gave her his cloak but would not give her her robe, fearing she would fly away once she had it again. "Dear maiden," the hunter said. "You are so beautiful, and I fear I will never see you again after tonight. Please, marry me and come back to my village with me. I can give you everything you have ever dreamed of." She agreed, and he took her with him back to his village. When he arrived home, he hid her robe where she could not find it. They were married and lived happily together and had two fine children, a boy and a girl, who grew up strong and beautiful; and their mother loved them with all her heart.

One day, the maiden's little daughter was playing hide-and-seek with her brother, and she went behind the dresser to hide herself, and found there a robe all made of feathers, and took it to her mother. As soon as she saw it, she put it on and said to her daughter, "Tell father that if he wishes to see me again he must find me in the Land East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon," and with that she flew away.

When the hunter came home next morning, his little daughter told him what had happened and what her mother said. So he set out to find his wife in the Land East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon. He wandered for many days until he came across an old man who had fallen on the ground, and he lifted him up and helped him to a seat and tended him until he felt better.

Then the old man asked him what he was doing and where he was going. And he told him all about the swan maidens and his wife, and he asked the old man if he had heard of the Land East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon.

And the old man said, "No, but I can ask."

Then he uttered a *shrill* whistle and soon all the plain in front of them was filled with all of the beasts of the world, for the old man turned out to be the King of the Beasts!

He called out to them: "Who is there here that knows where the Land is East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon?" But none of the beasts knew.

The old man said to the hunter, "You must go seek my brother who is the King of the Birds," and told him how to find his brother. ◇

Now, when you see this ◇ symbol take a break to answer the comprehension questions on the next pages.

[ 2 ]

*Swan Maiden*



# SWAN MAIDEN QUESTIONS

*for pages 1 and 2*

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Who are the main characters in this story?

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Why wouldn't the hunter give the maiden her robe back?

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Why did the maiden fly away?

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# SWAN MAIDEN QUESTIONS

*for pages 1 and 2 – Vocab*

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Circle the word that defines each word from the text:

*Clad:*

Giving , Wearing *or* Singing

*Alighted:*

Ate , Ran *or* Rested

*Plunged:*

Sat , Dove *or* Kicked

*Shrill:*

Quiet , High-Pitched *or* Pleasant



After a time, he found the King of the Birds, and told him what he wanted. So the King of the Birds whistled loud and shrill, and soon the sky was darkened with all the birds of the air, who came around him. Then he asked, "Which of you knows where is the Land East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon?"

When none answered, the King of the Birds said, "Then you must *consult* my brother the King of the Fishes," and he told him how to find him.

And the hunter went on and on and on until he came to the King of the Fishes, and he told him what he wanted. The King of the Fishes went to the shore of the sea and summoned all the fishes in it. When they came to him he called out, "Which of you knows where is the Land East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon?"

They were silent, until at last a dolphin called out, "I have heard that at the top of the Crystal Mountain lies the Land East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon; but how to get there I know not, except that it is near the Wild Forest."

The hunter thanked the King of the Fishes and went to the Wild Forest. And as he got near there he found two men *quarreling*, and as he came near they came towards him and asked him to settle their dispute.

"Now what is it?" said the hunter.

"Our father has just died and he has left but two things, this cap which, whenever you wear it, nobody can see you, and these shoes, which will carry you through the air to whatever place you will. Now I being the *elder*, say I should be able to choose; and he declares that, as the younger, he has the right to the shoes. Which do you think is right?"

So the hunter thought and thought, and at last he said, "It is difficult to decide, but the best thing I can think of is for you to race from here to that tree yonder, and whoever gets back to me first I will hand him either the shoes or the cap, whichever he wishes." ♦

[ 3 ]

*Swan Maiden*



# SWAN MAIDEN QUESTIONS

*for page 3*

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Choose three adjectives to describe the hunter:

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Why did you choose these words?

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What new problem is the hunter facing?

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How do you think he will solve it?

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# SWAN MAIDEN QUESTIONS

*for page 3*

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Which of the animals was able to help the hunter?

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Circle the word that defines each word from the text:

*Consult:*

Make fun of , Talk to *or* Play with

*Quarreling:*

Dancing , Eating *or* Fighting

*Elder:*

Older , Younger *or* Grandparent

So he took the shoes in one hand and the cap in the other, and waited until they had started off running towards the tree. And as soon as they had started running towards the tree he put on the shoes of swiftness and placed the invisible cap on his head and wished himself in the Land East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon. And he flew, and he flew, and he flew, over seven Bends, and seven Glens, and seven Mountain Moors, until at last he came to the Crystal Mountain. And on the top of that, as the dolphin had said, there was the Land East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon.

When he got there, he took off his invisible cap and shoes of swiftness and asked who ruled over the Land. He was told that there was a king who had seven daughters who dressed in swans' feathers and flew wherever they wished.

Then the hunter knew that he was in his wife's homeland. He went boldly to the king and said, "Hail, oh king, I have come to find my wife."

"Who is she?" the king said.

"Your youngest daughter," the hunter replied. Then he told him how they had met.

Then the king said, "If you can tell her from her sisters then I know that what you say is true." And he summoned his seven daughters to him, and there they all were, dressed in their robes of feathers and looking each like all the rest.

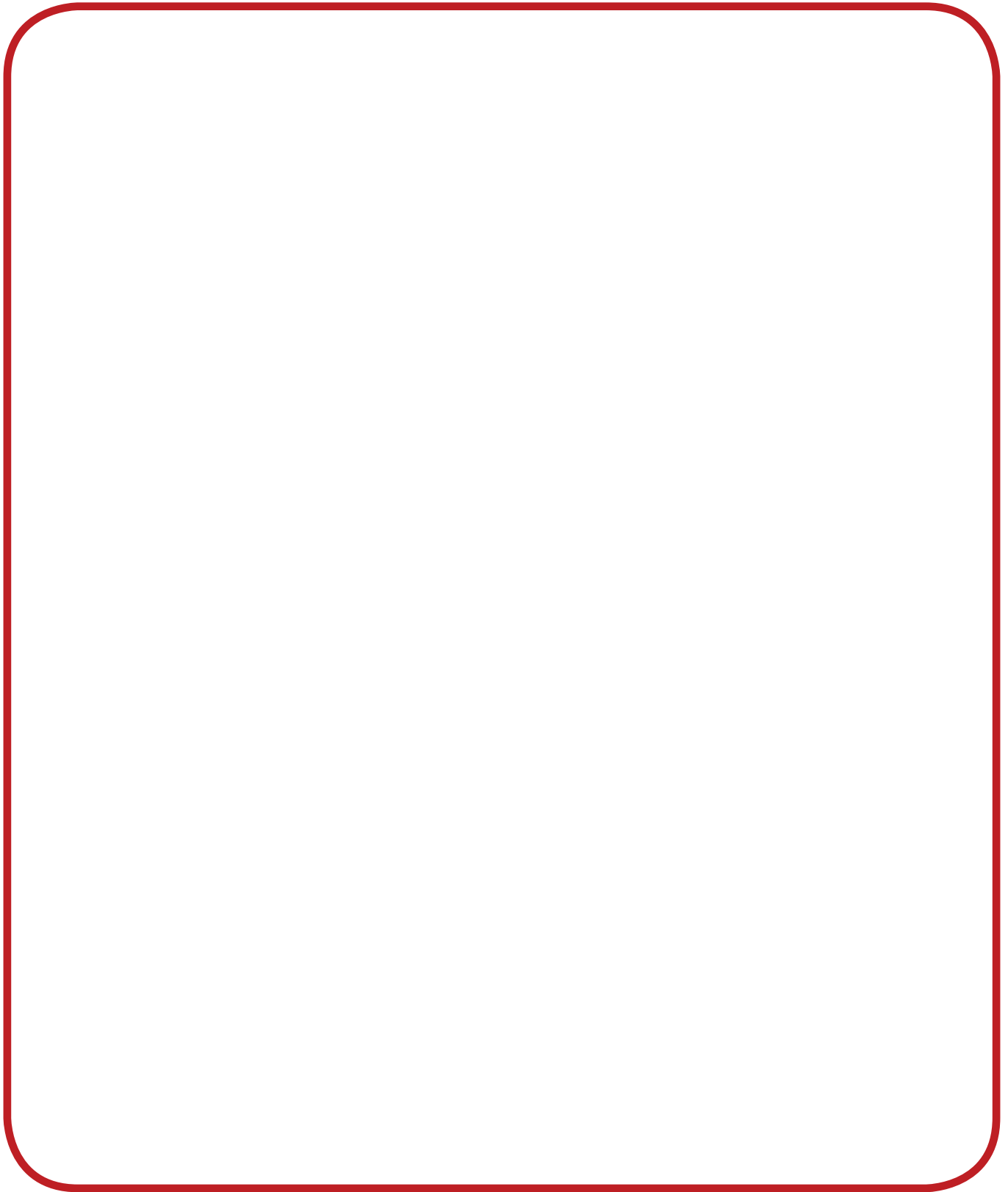
So the hunter said, "If I may take each of them by the hand I will surely know my wife"; for when she had lived with him she had sewn the clothing for their children, and the forefinger of her right hand had the marks of the needle.

When he had taken the hand of each of the swan maidens he soon found which was his wife and claimed her for his own. Then the king gave them great gifts and sent them by a sure way down the Crystal Mountain.

And after a while they reached home, and lived happily together ever afterwards.



DRAW A PICTURE OF THE HUNTER AND SWAN MAIDEN  
IN THE BOX BELOW!



# SWAN MAIDEN QUESTIONS

*What Happened?*

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What happened at the beginning of the story

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The middle of the story

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The end of the story

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What is the main idea of the story?

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# GOOSE FOOD

as told by Ghandl

[ 1 ]

*Goose Food*

**T**here once was a chief's son. He wore two marten-skin blankets, one over the other. After he had shot birds for some time he went along among some bull pines, which stood in an open space behind the town and presently heard geese calling. Then he went *thither*.

Two women were bathing in a lake. On the other shore, two goose skins hung over a stick. After he had looked a while he ran to them. He sat down on the skins so that they could not take them back. When they came out of the water and asked him for them, he asked the best-looking sister to marry him. The other said to him, "You don't want to marry her! I am smarter, marry me." "I'm sorry," the hunter replied, "But I am in love with your sister." Now, she agreed. "Go ahead and marry her," she said. "You caught us swimming in the lake our father owns. Give me my skin and I will leave you be." He gave it to her. She put her head into it and swam into the lake. The hunter watched her transform into a goose before his very eyes. She swam around for a moment, then flew over to her sister. She lingered above her for a moment, sad to leave her, then *vanished* through the sky.

The hunter gave his bride-to-be the other marten-skin blanket and went home with her. He put his wife's skin between the two heads of a cedar standing at one end of his town. He entered his father's house with her. ◇

# GOOSE FOOD QUESTIONS

*for page 1*

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Who are the main characters in this story?

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After reading the page, what do you think a marten is?

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Why did he give the one sister her skin back, but not the other?

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# GOOSE FOOD QUESTIONS

*for page 1*

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How is the beginning of this story different from the Swan Maiden's tale?  
How is it similar?

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Circle the word that defines this word from the text:

*Thither:*

Toward something , Into something or On top of something

*Vanished:*

Disappeared , Sang or Cried

When the chief heard his son was married, he called the people together for a marriage feast. They gave her food, but instead of eating it, she merely smelled it. She would not eat human food.

Then, her mother-in-law steamed some pine bark. When it was put before her, she ate it all. Then they began giving her only that to eat.

One day, when he was asleep, he was surprised to find that his wife's skin, when she lay down to go to bed, was cold. And when the same thing happened again, he began watching her. He lay as if asleep. He felt her get up quietly. Then she went out, and he almost went out after her. She walked to the place where her skin was kept, then put it on and flew away. When she landed, it was on the far side of town, near the beach.

He followed her to find her on the shore, eating the sea grass that grew there. When she was finished, she began to fly back to where her skin was kept to put it away. Quickly, the hunter returned to the house to get in bed before her. Once he was back in bed, his wife came in and lay down cold beside him.

As time went on, food became *scarce*. They became nearly starved in the town. One day the woman said to him from the place where she was sitting, "My father has sent down food to me." Behind the town geese were coming down making a great noise, and she went toward it, with the townsfolk following. When they reached the geese, they found all kinds of good food laying there, such as pine bark and wild clover roots. They brought it back to town with them, and the chief called a feast. They ate and drank all night.

When that food was gone, she said the same thing: "Now my father is bringing food down to me." Geese again made a great noise and they followed her toward it. Again, heaps of food of all kinds lay around. For that, too, her father-in-law called together the people for a celebration.

Then, someone in town said, "Wow, you people sure love to eat this strange food. Why, this type of food is only fit for a goose." The woman heard it, and immediately she ran off, embarrassed. Her husband tried to stop her, but he could

not catch up to her. She went to the place where her skin was, then put it on and flew away. She didn't want to leave her husband behind, but up she went, and soon she vanished through the sky.

Her husband began to walk around the town, *lamenting* the loss of his wife. He entered the house of an old man at one end of town and asked him: "Do you know the trail that leads to my wife?"

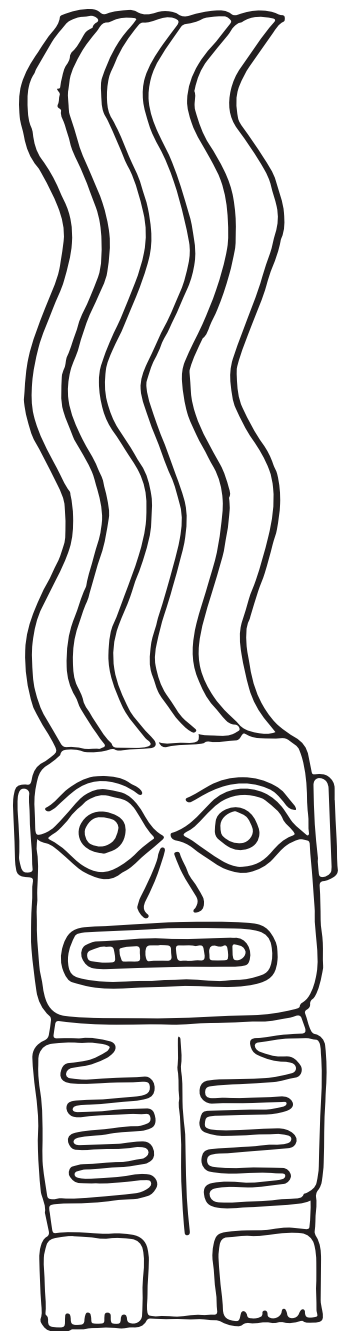
"Why, brave man, you are married to the daughter of a being too great for people even to think of." At once he began bringing over all sorts of things to the chief's son. After he had given him cedar branches, a gimlet and bones, he said to him, "Take some oil with you. Take two wooden wedges also. Then take a comb, leather straps, boxes of salmon eggs, the skin of a silver salmon, and the point of a spear." After he got all these, he went back to the old man. "Excellent," he said. "Follow the trail that runs behind my house and you will find her."

The hunter started along the trail. After he had gone on for a while he came upon someone who was checking himself for lice. The hunter looked on for a while until the man saw him. "Can you help me?" the man pleaded. "Might you have anything with you that can help get rid of these awful pests?" The hunter got out his comb and oil, went over to him and poured oil in the man's hair. As he ran his comb through the man's hair, the lice fell out, until they were all gone. He gave the comb and the hair oil to the man, and the man said to him: "Thank you, kind sir. Keep following this trail and you will find your wife."

After he had gone on for a while he saw a mouse with cranberries in its mouth. The mouse soon came upon a fallen tree but she was too small to climb over it. Feeling sorry for the tiny creature, he took her by the back with his fingers and put her across. Happily, she scurried away from him and darted into a clump of ferns. ♦

[ 3 ]

*Goose Food*



# GOOSE FOOD QUESTIONS

*for pages 2 and 3*

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Write three words that best describe the swan woman.

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Why did you choose these words?

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In the previous passage, why was the swan woman embarrassed by the villager's comment?

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# GOOSE FOOD QUESTIONS

*for pages 2 and 3*

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Why do you think the man wants the hunter to bring so many items with him?

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What do you think the hunter will find at the end of the trail?

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Circle the word that defines this word from the text:

*Scarce:*

Not a lot of , Too much of or Just enough of

*Lamenting:*

Feeling hungry , Feeling sad or Feeling happy

He had been walking for a long time, so he stopped to rest by the trunk of a tree. As he sat and rested, he heard a strange voice behind him say, "The chief woman asks you to come in." Curious, he turned around and peeked behind the ferns where he had seen the mouse hide. He saw behind them a big house. He entered to find a chief woman was steaming cranberries. "Please, sit down and have something to eat," she said to him. "You helped me when I could not make it over that tree. To thank you, I will lend you a special garment I wore when I was young."

She brought out a box. Inside was a tiny mouse skin with small, bent claws. "Practice wearing this." Although it was small, he entered it easily. He was able to go anywhere! He tried climbing up the walls, on furniture, and even on the ceiling. The woman said to him, "Now you know how to use it. Go on and find your wife."

Again he set out upon the trail. After he had gone on along for a while, he heard someone grunting. Up ahead, he saw a woman was trying to carry a pile of large stones. The twisted cedar limbs she had kept breaking. After he had looked at her for a while he went out to her. "Say, what are you doing?" Then the woman said, "My people are having me carry the mountains off the island. I am doing it."

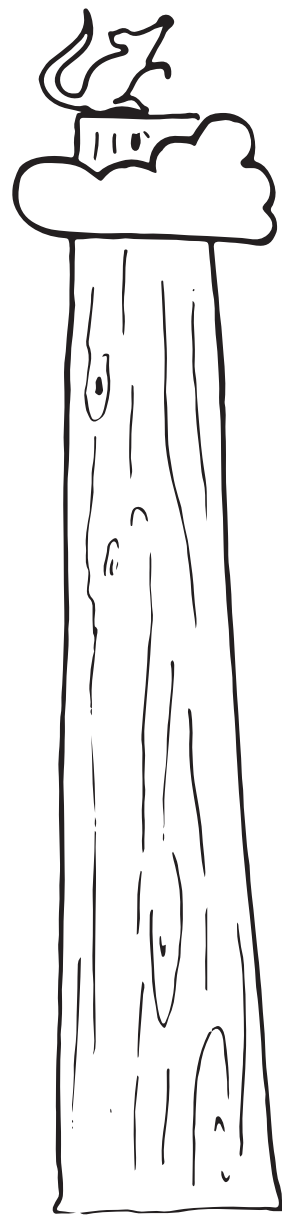
He took out his leather straps and said to her, "Here, let me help you." He wrapped the straps around the rocks. "Try carrying them on your back," he said. She did, and they stayed in place. "Thank you very much!" the woman said to him. "Continue on the trail and you shall find your wife. You are getting very close to her home."

Soon after, he came to a hill on top of which rose a pole. As he approached it, he saw that around the bottom of it were bones. There was no way in which one could go up. Then, he remembered he had the magical mouse skin. He put it on and rubbed salmon eggs on the pole. Up he went, and when he got to the top of the pole he found he was in the sky.

There, too, ran a trail, and he walked upon it as he had done before. After he had gone on for a while he heard the noise of laughter and singing. He came to a big stream, on the banks of which sat an eagle, a heron, a kingfisher and a black bear. ♦

[ 4 ]

*Goose Food*



# GOOSE FOOD QUESTIONS

*for page 4*

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What new character trait is the hunter showing as he walks the trail?

Laziness , Kindness or Sadness

What has happened in the story where the hunter shows this trait?

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Who did the mouse turn out to be?

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How do you know?

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If you could wear the magical mouse-skin, where would you go?

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After he had sat there for a while a man came along. He watched as the man speared salmon in the river. As he speared one fish, the tip of his spear broke off and floated away. Though his spear was broken, he continued to try to catch fish, but could not. Then, he saw the hunter. "Can you help me? My spear has broken and I must catch food for my family."

The hunter went over to him and gave him the one he had. "Thank you so much," said the man. "You are very close to your wife's home; keep walking and you will find her."

He continued to find two old men searching for firewood. They were cutting at the trunks of rotten trees and throwing the chips into the water. He could see that the wedges they were using to cut the wood were broken off.

"Here, let me help you," said the hunter as he gave them his two stone wedges. "Thank you," one of them said. "You have done well on your journey. Look over there. That is your wife's house."

The hunter ran to it, and his wife came out to greet him. He went inside to find that she was the chief's daughter. Her family accepted him as one of their own and he lived with them for a long time.

After a while, he began to dislike the place. When the chief found out, he called the people together. In the house he asked them: "Who will take my son-in-law down to his homeland?" A loon said, "I will take your son-in-law down." "How will you do it?" asked the chief. "I will put him near my tail, dive into the water right in front with him, come up at the end of his father's village and let him off," replied the loon. Though they appreciated his idea, the villagers worried that the loon was not strong enough to carry the man.

The chief asked again. A grebe said the same thing. Him, too, they thought not strong enough to do it. Then, a raven said that he would do it. "I will put him under my wing and fly with him from the edge of the village, and when I am tired I will let myself tumble and fall with him," he said. They were all happy with this answer and came to the edge of the village to watch.

[ 5 ]

*Goose Food*





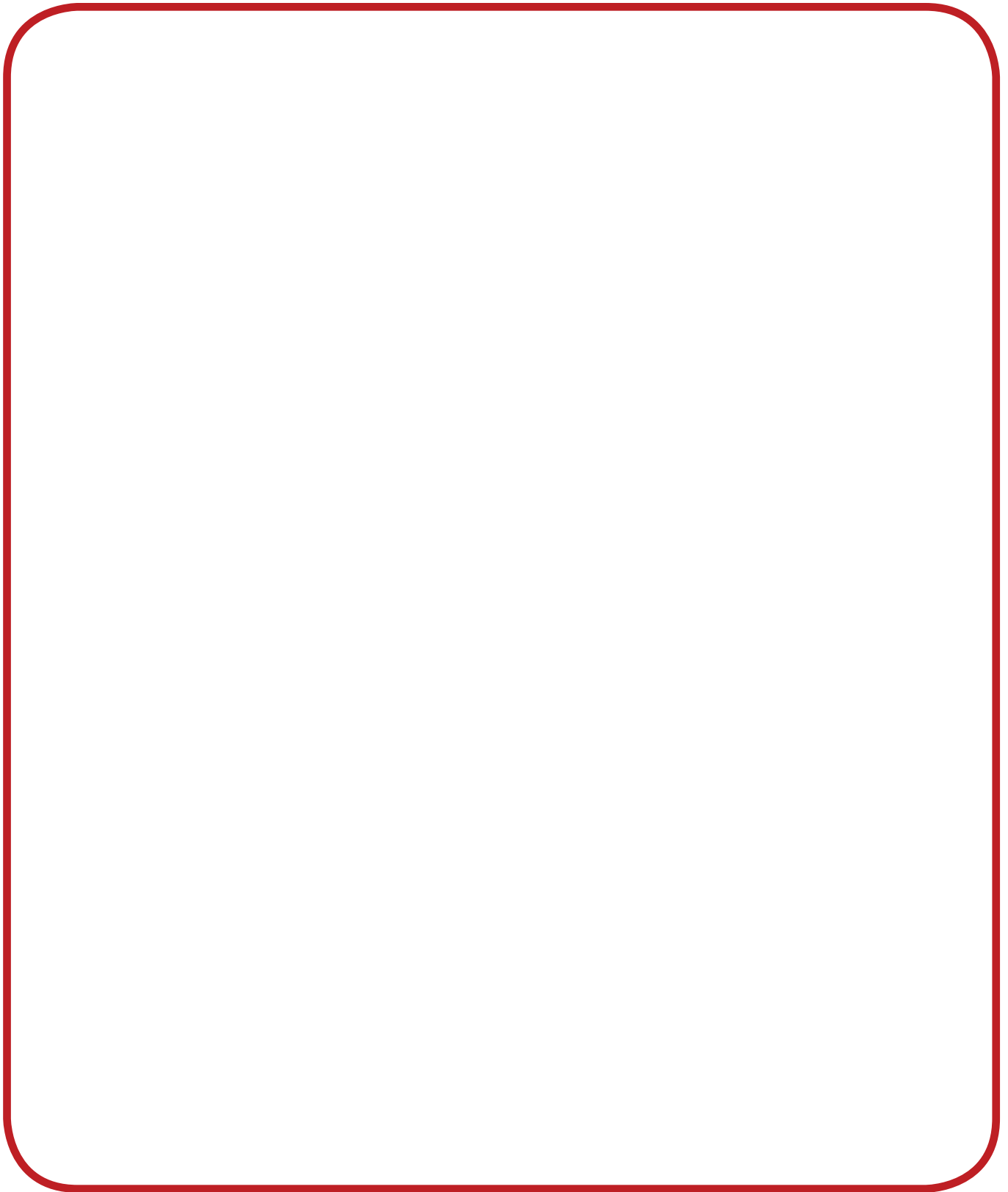
Raven did as he said. When he grew tired, he let himself fall down through the clouds with him and dropped him onto a shoal exposed by the tide. But as he fell, the man slowly transformed into a seagull. Off he went, squawking wildly as he flew into the sky.

[ 6 ]

*Goose Food*



DRAW A PICTURE OF THE HUNTER AND GOOSE MAIDEN  
IN THE BOX BELOW!



# GOOSE FOOD QUESTIONS

*Sum It Up!*

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What happened at the beginning of the story?

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The middle of the story

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The end of the story

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# GOOSE FOOD QUESTIONS

*Sum It Up!*

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What type of problem was the hunter faced with in this story?

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How did he solve it?

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Does the story have a lesson? What is it?

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# COMPARE THE STORIES

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Which story seems more like a fairy tale? Which one seems more like a folk tale?  
Why?

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How are the endings different?

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Which ending do you like better?

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# COMPARE THE STORIES

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Which story is more exciting to read?

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Look at your drawings of the characters from each story. How are they different?

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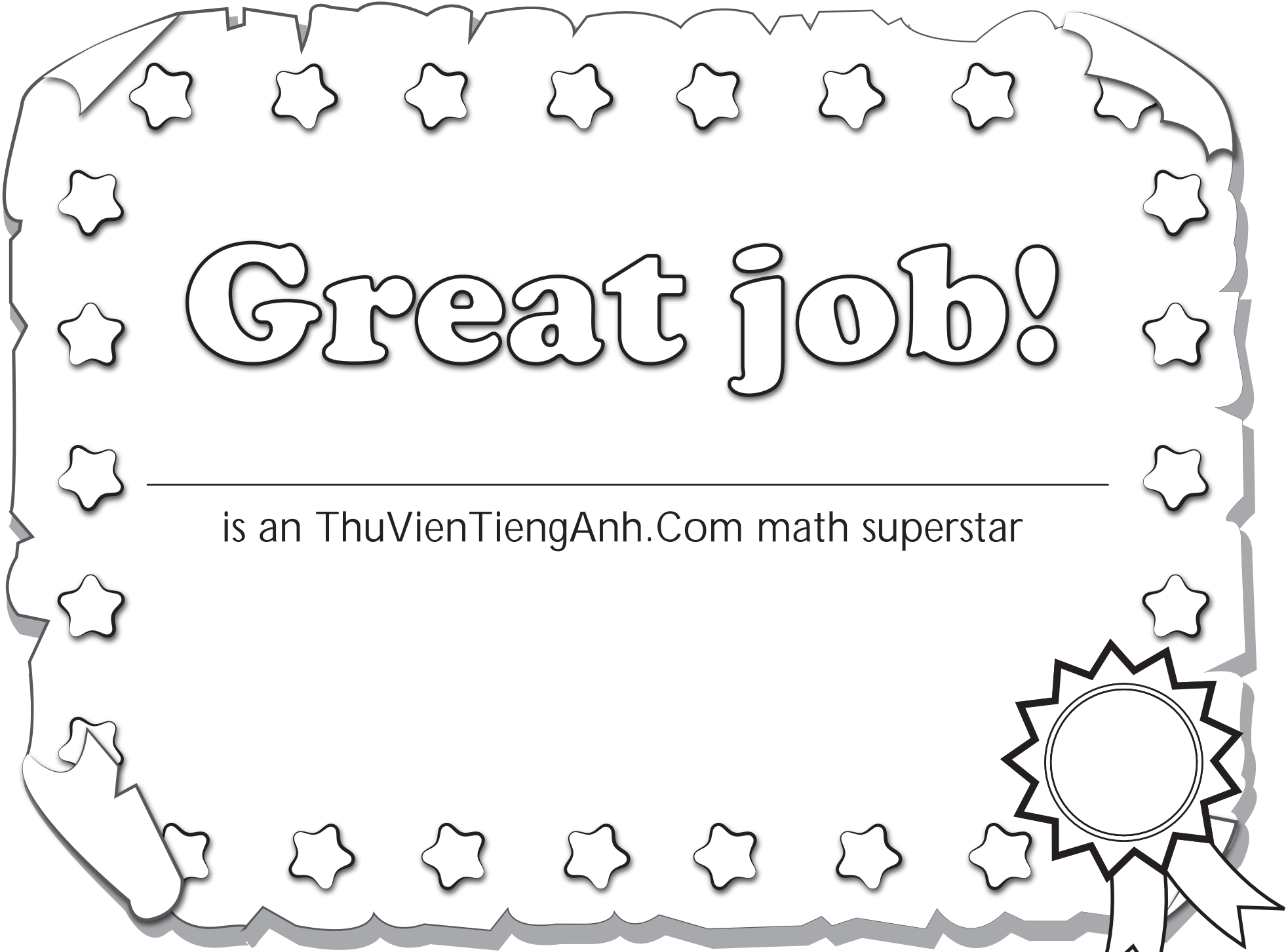
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**Great job!**

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