

# Compare the Fairy Tales

Read the two fairy tales below. Each is from a different culture. What are the similarities between the two tales? What are the differences? Use the Venn diagram on the last page to list three similarities and three things that are different about each tale.

## Fairy Tale #1

**Long ago**, in the land now known as Canada, there lived two native children, a sister and brother. They were orphans and had to care for themselves. This was especially difficult since the boy never grew bigger than a baby, no matter how old he got.

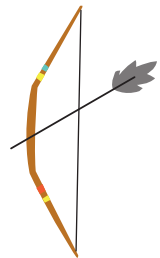
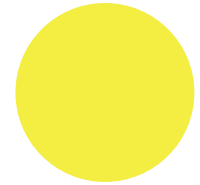
The sister loved her brother very much, and she made a bow and arrow especially for him to shoot. He learned to hunt wild snow birds for food, and soon he had enough bird skins to make himself a coat. It was a fine coat and the boy wore it with pride.

One day, the boy asked his sister, "Are there other people in the world? Mother told stories of people just like us, but I've never seen them." For as long as they had been on their own, the girl and boy had never met another soul. "Mother told me the same," said the girl. "She was born to faraway people, who raised her up when she was a girl like me." The boy decided to seek his mother's people.

He set off for his journey wearing his beloved coat of bird skins. But the sun was high and hot, and the boy's coat began to shrink. Soon, it was so tight that when the boy moved, the coat tore into pieces.

"I'll get you for this, sun!" said the boy. His sister fashioned a snare out of a lock of her long, strong hair, and the boy snuck out before dawn to trap the sun. He placed his snare at the point on the horizon where the sun would rise and sat down to wait. Sure enough, as the sun began to rise, it was caught in the boy's trap.

"Who will free me from my bindings?" the sun implored the world's animals. First, Woodpecker tried, but its head grew red from the heat. To this day, woodpeckers have red heads. Finally the task fell to the mouse, who was the biggest and strongest creature of them all. The mouse began to gnaw at the snare and slowly, hair by hair, the mouse began to cut through it. Though its back was singed to ash, the mouse kept at its task. Finally, the mouse freed the sun from its bondage, but not before the heat shrunk it to a fraction of its former size. When it began its task, the mouse was the largest of all animals. By the time it finished, it was the smallest. To this day, the mouse remains one of the tiniest animals, and its coat is still the color of ashes.



## Fairy Tale #2

**Once upon a time**, before the continent of Europe was given that name, there lived a couple who had no children. They wished every day for a child, even if he were no bigger than a hazelnut. At last, their wish was granted, and they had a child who was the size of a hazelnut, just as they had said. They loved the child very much and they took excellent care of him.

When the hazelnut child turned fifteen, his parents asked him what he would become, as he was of an age to work. "I would like to be a messenger," said the child. His mother laughed and asked, "How can you possibly be a messenger? Your tiny feet would take an hour to carry you the distance anyone else could cover in a minute."

"Give me a message to carry," said the boy, "and see how quickly I return." So his mother told him to go to the house of his aunt in the neighboring village and bring back a comb. "I'll be back before you know," said the boy. His mother held the front door open for her son, and off he went on his journey. He found a man on horseback who was headed for the next town. The boy crept up the horse's leg, crawled under the saddle, and began to pinch the horse's back. Rearing up, the horse took off at breakneck speed and wouldn't slow down, no matter how hard the rider pulled at its reins. When they reached the neighboring village, the hazelnut child quit pinching the horse, and it slowed enough that the boy was able to climb back down its leg. His aunt was delighted to see him and gave him the comb he asked for.

The hazelnut child returned home on the back of another horse and presented his mother with the comb. "But how did you get home so quickly?" she asked. He did not answer her question, but only said, "You see, I told you messenger was the profession for me."

Using his newfound skill, the hazelnut child hitched a ride with a stork that was flying south for the winter and landed in a faraway country. There, he met the king, who was astonished at this tiny creature who rode storks as if they were horses. The king was so taken with the hazelnut child that he gave the boy a diamond bigger than himself. The boy hitched the diamond to his stork and flew home, and he and his parents lived in peace and prosperity for the rest of their lives.



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Use the Venn diagram to list three similarities and three things that are different about each tale.

