

whole. The weight of the hump dropped off his back, and he stood tall and straight for the first time in his life. He seized the diamond, and with renewed energy and vigor, raced back down the mountain, sure-footed and strong.

The young man ran all the way to the palace, bursting into the courtyard just as the peasant girl was being dragged out to be fed to the Snake King. He held up the diamond, triumphantly shouting, "I found it! Leave the girl be! I have paid her fine!"

The Snake King turned his face eagerly to see the diamond, and as his eyes fell upon it, an amazing thing happened. Where there had been a giant snake there was now a little rat, scurrying about on the ground. The tax collector came running to see what had happened. As he stared at the wondrous diamond, he suddenly turned into a vulture. Swooping down on the rat, he grabbed it in his sharp beak and flew away, never to be seen again.

As the young man turned to the peasant girl, he found instead the most beautiful princess, smiling at him with joy and love. He was overcome with embarrassment, and bowed low before her. Here he was, a dirty, barefoot son of a country farmer . . . in the presence of a princess! As he bowed low, his eyes fell on his feet, and he saw that he was wearing shiny new boots of the finest leather. He stood, and looked into the eyes of the smiling princess. There, as in a mirror, he saw a tall, handsome prince, with a straight and strong back. He recognized himself. The wondrous diamond had done its job well.

The prince and princess were wed that very day. All of the town came to their joyous wedding feast and asked them to live in the palace and be their king and queen. They agreed, and ruled for many years with wisdom and compassion—well beloved by their people.

Lesson 6

Stone Soup

Adapted from an old tale

One day long, long ago an old man was wandering through the mountains. He was tired and hungry, for he had been walking all day with nothing to eat. Finally he came to a small village, and knocked at the door of a farmhouse. A woman came to the door and said rudely, "I can't let you in, for my husband is not at home. And I haven't a thing to give you to eat. You'll have to go somewhere else." She was scornful toward the man she thought was a beggar.

"If you have no food in the house, then you would probably be very happy to know about my soup stone," the old man replied. And from his pocket, he removed a very ordinary-looking stone.

"Soup stone?" said the woman, with an eager look on her face. "You have a stone that can make soup?"

"Oh yes," he said. "If I just had a big pot of water heating over a fire, I could show you how it works. This stone and boiling water make the best soup you've ever eaten."

"Why don't you show me?" said the woman, her curiosity and desire for an easy meal overcoming her suspicious nature. "I have a big pot and it will only take a moment to build a roaring fire in my cooking stove. Let me just fill the pot with water and then you can put the stone in."

Soon the pot of water was boiling merrily. The old man dropped in his stone and stirred it around with the woman's big soup ladle. Then he tasted the hot water. "The stone is working quickly, and the soup is already delicious. But it would be even better if it had a little salt and a handful of barley," he said. "And some butter would make it truly tasty." So the woman brought salt, barley, and butter, and he added them to the pot, stirring them well with the big ladle.

The crafty old man tasted the soup again. "Much better!" he cried. "You are going to love this soup. Do you like it very thick and hearty? Then all we need is a few vegetables. Of course the stone can make it thick without the vegetables, but the vegetables will help the stone to make a perfect soup. Perhaps carrots, onions, and potatoes would be the right thing. Do you not have any of these in your larder? Turnips and beans would bring a wonderful flavor to the soup, too."

"Let me see what I can find," said the woman. She was becoming very excited about the miracle soup that could be made from only a stone in a pot of boiling water. As the

old man stirred the big pot with the ladle, the woman ran down to her cellar to get the vegetables he had mentioned.

After the mixture had boiled for some time with all the vegetables in it, the man put the ladle in and stirred it once again. "The soup is coming along very well. It is nearly as good as I've ever tasted it," he said. "The stone is working just as it should. The only thing I can think of that could possibly make it any better would be some chunks of meat or chicken, and a little meat broth."

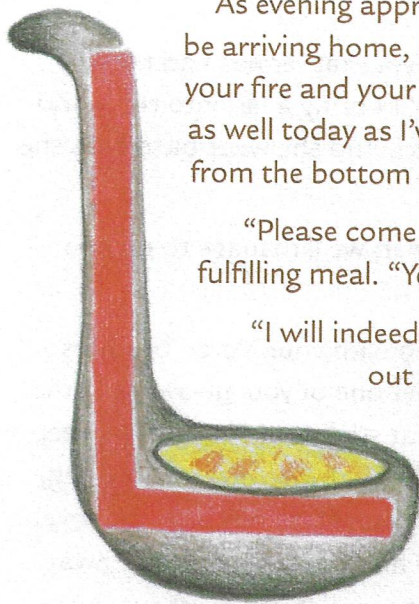
The woman loved good thick soup, and she was eager to see just what the stone could do when given the chance. So she ran to get some meat broth and chunks of chicken, and the old man stirred them into the soup pot with the big ladle. "Soup stone, do your magic!" said the man. And he and the woman sniffed the savory smell of the soup and could hardly wait for it to be finished.

When the old man finally said the soup was ready, he ladled it out into big bowls. The woman ate greedily, slurping and gulping the soup. "I declare that this is the best soup I have ever had!" she cried. "And all from your soup stone. I can hardly believe it!" The old man just smiled, and ate his soup contentedly. The two ate their fill, and—thanks to the magic stone—there was still enough left over for the woman's husband's supper.

As evening approached and the old man knew the husband would soon be arriving home, he prepared to depart. "Many thanks to you for the use of your fire and your pot. My soup stone never lets me down, and it performed as well today as I've ever seen it." Using the ladle, he fished the stone up from the bottom of the soup pot, licked it clean, and put it into his pocket.

"Please come again," said the woman, thankful for such a delicious and fulfilling meal. "You are welcome here any time."

"I will indeed," said the old man, and he walked down the road and out of the village.



Lesson 10

The Story of Twelve Brothers

Adapted from an old tale

There were once upon a time a King and a Queen who lived happily together. They had twelve children, all of whom were boys. One day the King said to his wife, "If our thirteenth child is a girl, all her twelve brothers must be locked into a dungeon forever, so that she may be very rich and the kingdom hers alone."

Then he ordered twelve dungeons to be dug deep in the earth under the palace, and giving the keys to his wife, he bade her tell no one of it.

The Queen grieved over the sad fate of her sons and refused to be comforted, so much so that Benjamin, the youngest boy, who was often with her, said to her one day, "Dear mother, why are you so sad?"

"My child," she answered, "I may not tell you the reason." But he left her no peace, and finally she took him to the place under the castle where the twelve dungeons were, and unlocked one of them to show him.

Then she said weeping bitterly, "My dearest Benjamin, your father has had these dungeons made for you and your eleven brothers, because if I bring a girl into the world you are all to be locked up in them for the rest of your lives." And she wept bitterly as she spoke.

Her son comforted her and said, "Don't cry, dear mother; we'll manage to escape somehow, and will fly for our lives."

"Yes," replied his mother, "that is what you must do. Go with your eleven brothers out into the wood on the day the baby is to be born, and let one of you always sit at the top of the highest tree you can find, on a strong branch that sticks out like an arm, keeping watch on the tower of the castle. If I give birth to a little son I will wave a white flag, and then you may safely return; but if I give birth to a little daughter I will have the royal trumpeters blow the trumpets as loudly as ever they can. This will warn you to fly away as quickly as you can, and may the kind Heaven have pity on you. If you must run away, every night I will get up and pray for you. In winter I shall pray that you may always have a fire to warm yourselves by, and in summer that you may not languish in the heat—and that you shall always have food and water and all else you need."

On the day that babe was to be born, the mother blessed her sons and they set out into the wood. They found a very high oak tree, and there they sat at the very top on one of its strong branches that reached out like an arm, taking turns and keeping their eyes always fixed on the castle tower. Late in the afternoon, when the turn came to Benjamin,

he heard the royal trumpeters sound their trumpets loud and clear—the sign which told the brothers they must all be locked up forever in the dungeons or run away from their home and never be seen there again.

When the brothers heard the trumpets they were very angry, and said, “Shall we risk death for the sake of a wretched girl? Let us swear vengeance, and vow that wherever and whenever we shall meet one of her sex, she shall be cruelly punished at our hands, as we have been punished.”

Then they went their way deeper into the wood, and in the middle of it, where it was thickest and darkest, they came upon a little enchanted house which stood empty.

“Here,” they said, “let us take up our abode. You, Benjamin, are the youngest and weakest, so you shall stay at home and keep house for us; we others will go out and fetch food.”

So they went forth into the wood, and shot hares and deer, birds and wood-pigeons, and any other game they came across. They always brought their spoils home to Benjamin, who soon learnt to make them into dainty dishes. So they lived for ten years in this little house, and the time slipped merrily away.

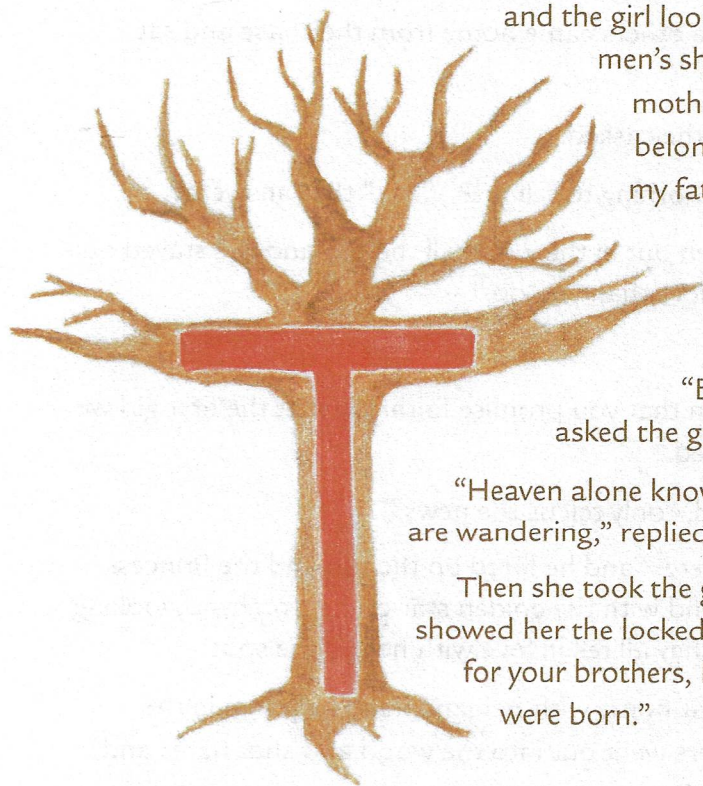
In the meantime their little sister at home was growing up quickly. She was kind-hearted and of a fair countenance, and she had a gold star right in the middle of her forehead. One day a big washing was going on at the palace, and the girl looking down from her window saw twelve men’s shirts hanging up to dry, and asked her mother, “Who in the world do these shirts belong to? Surely they are far too small for my father?”

And the Queen answered sadly: “Dear child, they belong to your twelve brothers.”

“But where are my twelve brothers?” asked the girl. “I have never even heard of them.”

“Heaven alone knows in what part of the wide world they are wandering,” replied her mother.

Then she took the girl and took her below the castle and showed her the locked-up dungeons. “These were intended for your brothers, but they stole secretly away before you were born.”



Then she told her all that had happened, and when she had finished her daughter said, "Do not cry, dearest mother; I will go and seek my brothers until I find them."

So she took the twelve shirts and went on straight into the middle of the big wood. She walked all day long, and came in the evening to the little enchanted house. She stepped in and found a youth who, marveling at her beauty, at the royal robes she wore, and at the golden star on her forehead, asked her where she came from and whither she was going.

"I am a Princess," she answered, "and am seeking for my twelve brothers. I mean to wander as far as the blue sky stretches over the earth until I find them."

Then she showed him the twelve shirts which she had taken with her, and Benjamin saw that it must be his sister, and said, "I am Benjamin, your youngest brother." The two wept for joy, and kissed and hugged each other again and again. After a time Benjamin said, "Dear sister, there is still a little difficulty, for we had all agreed that any girl we met should be punished at our hands, because it was for the sake of a girl that we had to leave our kingdom."

"But," she replied, "I will gladly be punished and even die if by that means I can restore my twelve brothers to their own."

"No," he answered, "there is no need for that; only go and hide under that tub until our eleven brothers come in, and I'll soon make matters right with them."

She did as she was bid, and soon the others came home from the chase and sat down to supper.

"Well, Benjamin, what's the news?" they asked.

But he replied, "I like that; have you nothing to tell me?" "No," they answered.

Then he said, "Well, now, you've been out in the wood all the day and I've stayed quietly at home, and all the same I know more than you do."

"Then tell us!" they cried.

But he answered, "Only on condition that you promise faithfully that the first girl we meet shall not be either punished or killed."

"She shall be spared," they promised, "only tell us the news."

Then Benjamin said, "Our sister is here!" and he lifted up the tub and the Princess stepped forward, with her royal robes and with the golden star on her forehead, looking so lovely and sweet and charming that they all fell in love with her on the spot.

They arranged that she should stay at home with Benjamin and help him in the house work, while the rest of the brothers went out into the wood and shot hares and roe-deer, birds and wood-pigeons. And Benjamin and his sister cooked their meals for

them. She gathered herbs to cook the vegetables in, fetched the wood, and watched the pots on the fire, and always when her eleven brothers returned she had their supper ready for them. Besides this, she kept the house in order, tidied all the rooms, and made herself so generally useful that her brothers were delighted, and they all lived happily together.

One day the two at home prepared a fine feast, and when they were all assembled they sat down and ate and drank and made merry. Now there was a little garden round the enchanted house, in which grew twelve tall lilies. The girl, wishing to please her brothers, plucked the twelve flowers, meaning to present one to each of them as they sat at supper. But hardly had she plucked the flowers when her brothers were turned into twelve ravens, who flew croaking over the wood, and the house and garden vanished also.

So the poor girl found herself left all alone in the wood, and as she looked round her she noticed an old woman standing close beside her, who said, "My child, what have you done? Why didn't you leave the flowers alone? They were your twelve brothers. Now they are changed forever into ravens."

The girl asked, sobbing, "Is there no means of setting them free?"

"Yes," said the old woman, "there is only one way in the whole world, and that is so difficult that you won't free them by it, for you would have to be dumb and not laugh for seven years. If you spoke a single word, though but an hour were wanting to the time, your silence would all have been in vain, and that one word would slay your brothers."

Then the girl said to herself, "If that is all I am quite sure I can free my brothers." So she searched for a small cave in which to live, and when she had found one she entered it and sat and spun all day long, day after day, never laughing or speaking one word.

Now it happened one day that a King who was hunting in the wood had a large greyhound, who ran sniffing to the cave where the girl sat, yelping and barking furiously, dashing in and out and around the girl. The King's attention was attracted, and when he looked into the dark cave and beheld the beautiful Princess with the golden star on her forehead, he was so enchanted by her beauty that he asked her on the spot to be his wife. She gave no answer, but nodded slightly with her head.

Then he carried her out and put her on his horse and bore her home to his palace. The marriage was celebrated with much pomp and ceremony, but the bride neither spoke nor laughed.

When they had lived a few years happily together, the King's mother, who was a wicked old woman, began to slander the young Queen, and said to the King, "She is only a low-born beggar maid that you have married; who knows what mischief she is up to? If she is deaf and can't speak, she might at least laugh. Depend upon it, those who don't laugh have a bad conscience."

At first the King paid no heed to her words, but the old woman harped so long on the subject, and accused the young Queen of so many bad things, that at last he let himself be talked over, and condemned his kind and beautiful wife to be locked in a tall tower where she would live alone for the rest of her life.

So a great tower was built on a hill behind the palace, where she was to be locked up, and the King watched the proceedings from an upper window, crying bitterly the while, for he still loved his wife dearly. But just as she had been carried into the tower, the very last moment of the seven years had come. Then a sudden rushing sound was heard in the air, and twelve ravens were seen flying overhead. They swooped downwards, and as soon as they touched the ground they turned into her twelve brothers, and she knew that she had freed them.

They ran into the tower and carried their sister out joyfully, kissing and hugging her again and again. And now that she was able to open her mouth and speak, she told the King why she had not been able to speak or laugh for seven long years.

The King rejoiced greatly when he heard she was innocent, and they all lived happily ever afterwards.

Lesson 4



The Three Dwarves

Adapted from an old tale

There was once upon a time a man who had lost his wife, and a woman who had lost her husband. Each of them had a daughter. The two girls were friends and used to play together from time to time, although one girl was kind hearted and the other cruel. One day the woman turned to the man's daughter and said, "Go and tell your father that I will marry him, and then you shall wash in milk and drink sweet juice, but my own daughter shall wash in water and drink it too."

The girl went straight home and told her father what the woman had said.

"What am I to do?" he answered. "Marriage is either a success or it is a failure." At last, being of an undecided character and not being able to make up his mind, he took off his boot, and handing it to his daughter, said, "Take this boot which has a hole in

the sole, hang it up on a nail in the hayloft, and pour water into it. If it holds water I will marry again, but if it doesn't I won't."

The girl did as she was told, but the water drew the hole together and the boot filled up to the very top. So she went and told her father the result. He got up and went to see for himself, and when he saw that it was true and no mistake, he accepted his fate, proposed marriage to the widow, and they were married at once.

On the morning after the wedding, when the two girls awoke, milk was standing for the man's daughter to wash in and sweet juice for her to drink, but for the woman's daughter, there was only water to wash in and only water to drink. On the second morning, water to wash in and water to drink was standing for the man's daughter as well. And on the third morning, water to wash in and water to drink was standing for the man's daughter, and milk to wash in and sweet juice to drink for the woman's daughter; and so it continued ever after.

The woman hated her stepdaughter from the bottom of her heart, and did all she could to make her life miserable. She was as jealous as she could possibly be, because the girl was so charming and kind, although her face was plain, while her own daughter was repulsive of character in spite of her beautiful face.

One winter's day when there was a hard frost, and mountain and valley were covered with snow, the woman made a dress of paper, and calling the girl to her said, "There, put on this dress and go out into the wood and fetch me a basket of strawberries!"

"Now Heaven help us," replied her stepdaughter, "strawberries don't grow in winter. The earth is all frozen and the snow has covered up everything...and why send me outside in a paper dress? It is so cold outside that one's very breath freezes. The wind will whistle through my dress, and the brambles tear it from my body."

"How dare you contradict me!" said her stepmother. "Be off with you at once, and don't show your face again until you have filled the basket with strawberries." Then she gave her a hard crust of bread, saying, "That will be enough for you today," and she thought to herself, "The girl will certainly perish of hunger and cold outside, and I shan't be bothered with her anymore."

The girl was so obedient that she put on the paper dress and set out with her little basket. There was nothing but snow far and near, and not a green blade of grass to be seen anywhere. When she came to the wood she saw a little house, and out of it peeped three little dwarfs. She wished them good day, and knocked politely at the door. They called out to her to enter, so she stepped in and sat down on a seat by the fire, wishing to warm herself and eat her breakfast. The dwarfs said at once, "Give us some of your food!"

"Gladly," she said, and breaking her crust in four pieces, she gave each a bite. They asked her what she was doing in the depths of winter in her thin dress.

"Oh," she answered, "I have been sent to get a basketful of strawberries, and I dare not show my face again at home until I bring them with me."

When she had finished her bread they gave her a broom and told her to sweep away the snow from the back door. As soon as she left the room to do so, the three little men consulted about what they should give her as a reward for being so sweet and good, and for sharing her last crust with them.

The first said, "Every day she shall grow prettier."

The second said, "Every time she opens her mouth a piece of gold shall fall out." And the third added, "A King shall come and marry her."

The girl, in the meantime, was doing as the dwarfs had bidden her, and was sweeping the snow away from the back door, and what do you think she found there? Heaps of fine ripe strawberries that showed out dark red against the white snow! She joyfully asked the dwarfs if she might have them, and then picked enough to fill her basket, thanked the little men for their kindness, shook hands with them, and ran home to bring her stepmother what she had asked for.

When she walked in and said, "Good evening," a piece of gold fell out of her mouth. Then she told what had happened to her in the wood, and at every word pieces of gold dropped from her mouth, so that the room was soon covered with them.

"She's surely not thinking clearly to throw gold about like that," said her stepsister, but in her secret heart she was very jealous, and determined that she too would go to the wood and look for strawberries. But her mother refused to let her go, saying, "My dear child, it is far too cold. You might freeze to death."

The girl, however, left her no peace, so she was forced at last to give in. Her mother he insisted on the girl putting on a beautiful fur cloak, and she gave her bread and butter and cakes to eat on the way.

The girl went straight to the little house in the wood, and as before the three little men were looking out of the window. She took no notice of them, and without as much as 'By your leave,' or 'Please may I come in,' she flounced into the room, sat herself down at the fire, and began to eat her bread and butter and cakes. "Give us some!" cried the dwarfs.

But she answered, "No, I won't, it's hardly enough for myself, so you won't catch me giving you any."

When she had finished eating they said, "There's a broom for you, go and clear up our back door as payment for sitting by our warm fire."

"I'll see myself further," she answered rudely. "Do it yourselves—I'm not your servant."

When she saw that they did not mean to give her anything, she left the house in no amiable frame of mind. Then the three little men consulted what they should do to her, because she was so unkind and had such an evil, covetous heart that she grudged everybody their good fortune.

The first said, "She shall grow uglier every day."

The second said, "Every time she speaks a toad shall jump out of her mouth." And the third added, "She shall have many lonely and unfortunate times."

The girl searched for strawberries, but she found none, and returned home in a very bad temper. When she opened her mouth to tell her mother what had befallen her in the wood, a toad jumped out, so that everyone was quite disgusted with her.

Then the stepmother was more furious than ever, and did nothing but plot mischief against the man's daughter, who was daily becoming quite beautiful—each day a little more than the last. At last, one day the wicked woman took a large pot, put it on the fire and boiled some yarn in it. When it was well scalded she hung it round the poor girl's shoulder, and giving her an ax, told her to break a hole in the frozen river, and rinse the yarn in it. Her stepdaughter obeyed as usual, and went and broke a hole in the ice. When she was in the middle of wringing out the yarn a magnificent carriage passed, and a young King sat inside.

The carriage stood still, and the King asked, "Young woman, who are you, and what in the wide world are you doing here in the ice and snow on this winter day?"

"I am only a poor country girl," she answered, "and I am rinsing out my stepmother's yarn in the river." Then the King was sorry for her, and when he saw her kind smile and glowing face, he asked, "Will you come away with me and be my Queen?"

"Most gladly," she replied, for she knew how willingly she would leave her stepmother and sister, and how glad they would be to be rid of her.

So she stepped into the carriage and drove away with the King, and when they reached his palace the wedding was celebrated with much splendor. So all turned out just as the three little dwarfs had said. After a year the new Queen gave birth to a little son. When her stepmother heard of her good fortune she came to the palace with her daughter to see if the news was really true, and decided to stay for a long visit.

Now one day when the King was out and nobody else near, the bad woman took the Queen by her head, and the daughter took her by her heels, and they dragged her from her bed, and flung her out of the window into the stream which flowed beneath it. Then the stepmother laid her ugly hard-hearted daughter in the Queen's place, and covered her up with the blankets, so that nothing of her was seen.

When the King came home and wished to speak to his wife the evil woman called out, "Quietly, quietly! This will never do! Your wife is very ill, and you must let her rest all today."

The King suspected nothing amiss, but was concerned about his wife's illness, so he let her rest quietly and didn't come to see her again until next morning. When he spoke to his wife and the false wife answered him, instead of the usual piece of gold, a toad jumped out of her mouth. Then he asked what it meant, and the old woman told him it was nothing but part of her sickness, and that she would soon be all right again.

But that same evening the maid servant noticed a beautiful white goose swimming up the gutter, saying as it passed, "What does the King, I pray you tell. Is he awake or sleeps he well?" And receiving no reply, the goose continued, "And all my guests, are they asleep?"

And the maid servant replied, "Yes, one and all they slumber deep."

Then the goose poked its head under the water. When it looked up again, it asked, "And what about my baby dear?"

And the servant answered, "Oh, it sleeps soundly, never fear."

Then the goose assumed her usual shape as the Queen, went up to the child's room, tucked him up comfortably in his cradle and kissed him gently, and then swam back down the gutter again, in the likeness of a goose. This was repeated for two nights, and on the third the white goose said to the maid servant, "Go and tell the King to swing his sword three times over me on the threshold."

The maidservant did as the creature asked her, and the King came with his sword and swung it three times over the bird, and lo and behold! His wife stood before him once more, as alive and healthy as ever.

The King rejoiced greatly, but he kept the Queen in hiding until the Sunday on which the child was to be christened. After the christening he said, "What punishment does that person deserve who drags another out of bed, and throws him or her, as the case may be, into the water?"

Then the wicked old stepmother answered, "No better fate than to be rolled down the hill into the water and nevermore be allowed to return to the castle!"

"You have pronounced your own doom," said the King, and he ordered that the bad old woman and her daughter be rolled down the hill into the water to float away out of the kingdom, nevermore to return.

And so it was done, and the King and his Queen lived happily with their child for a good many years.

Lesson 11

The Valley of the Weavers

An adaptation of a story by Lynnae McConaha

There once was a little village nestled in a valley high in the mountains. A crystal-clear brook passed neatly through the middle of town, and this was where the women of the town came to collect water for cooking and drinking. The children gathered there later in the day when school was over to talk and play. It was a time to share dreams and aspirations, a time to plan and a time to frolic. The wonderful times they had were held dear in young Martha's memory, for now times had changed.

With the sudden death of Martha's father, mother had to go to work to support the family. The only position she could find was in a nearby city. A wealthy family needed a nanny for their daughter, and Martha's mother would live with the family in their home in the city. She was allowed to take her baby, Thomas, with her, but Martha had to stay behind in the village with her grandmother.

On the day her mother was to leave, Martha felt very sad. She would miss Mother and Thomas more than she could imagine, and worried about what she would do while they were gone. She had no ideas and when Mother came to say good-bye, Martha was crying.

"I'll write to you every day," Mother said tenderly. "And I'll be home again in the spring. I know this will not be easy for any of us, but Grandmother will look after you. She has many interesting stories to tell and precious gifts to give if you watch for them." With that, Mother kissed her, said good-bye, and left for the city.

Martha sat wondering what her mother meant about Grandmother's precious gifts. As far as she knew, Grandmother was as poor as she and her mother and little brother



were. She sat at the window and watched her mother disappear into the distance, and her tears flowed.

The first days were filled with emptiness, and Martha tried to busy herself around the house and be helpful to Grandmother. She cleaned and straightened everything, cooked and baked, read a book, and still could not rid herself of the deep sadness she felt.

One night after dinner, they sat in front of the fireplace and Grandmother told Martha about the old days, when Grandfather was alive. "We came to the mountains many years ago," Grandmother began, "to raise sheep for their wool, which we hoped to weave into useful items. We had a large herd of sheep which was tended by your grandfather and eventually he built a loom and we started weaving. I had a knack for spinning fine yarn and dying it with flowers and berries that grew wild in the mountains. It took both of us together to operate the huge loom on which we made blankets and bedspreads. Word spread and soon people came from far and wide to buy our woven goods. Our little village became known as the "Valley of the Weavers."

Here, Grandmother stopped and looked into the fire for a long time before she continued. "It was a good life, Martha. I wish you could have known your grandfather...he was a wonderful man!"

"What happened to him, Grandmother?" questioned Martha.

"He was out tending the sheep one day in a high mountain meadow, when a sudden storm blew up. He herded the sheep into a sheltered area and then noticed that one lamb had gotten separated from the rest and was missing, so he went back to find her. We don't know for sure, but we think he was struck by lightning and killed instantly. He was found the next day, in the middle of the meadow, with the sheep he loved nibbling grass all around him."

Grandmother's eyes were misty as she went on. "Things were very difficult for awhile. Your mother was born just a month after her father died, so I had my hands full. The sheep were tended by a local boy and I closed down the loom. In fact, it hasn't been used much since then, and is still out back in the weaving house." Grandmother paused, looked at Martha, and smiled, her eyes twinkling as if she had just had a wonderful idea.

Just then, they heard the tinkling of the bells around the necks of the sheep. They were coming home late tonight! The shepherd poked his head in the door to say, "The girls wanted to stay out after dark tonight, but they're all home safe and sound now." He was holding his staff in one hand, and his hat in the other. Saying good-night, he closed the door and left. Grandmother and Martha sat quietly and stared into the dancing flames of the fire, lost in a world of their own imaginations.

The next day, Grandmother suggested that Martha might like to go out with the shepherd as he tended the sheep. It sounded like fun, so she packed a lunch and grabbed Grandfather's old staff from the corner as she ran out the door. It felt good to

be out in the clean, mountain air, walking among fields of wildflowers and daydreaming. Martha remembered Grandmother telling her about how she would collect the wool the sheep left behind on bushes and fences, and turn it into yarn, so she decided to collect some for herself. When she returned home that evening, she proudly showed Grandmother the wool she had gathered.

“That’s enough to make a warm pair of mittens and a long, woolen scarf for you this winter,” Grandmother said.

“You mean, I could make my own scarf and mittens myself?” Martha asked excitedly. “Will you show me how?”

Grandmother agreed, and together, they washed and carded the wool, turning it into the biggest pile of fleece Martha had ever seen. Then Grandmother showed her how to spin a fine thread of yarn on the spinning wheel. Martha especially loved learning how to dye the yarn different colors by using plants from the mountains. Finally Grandmother taught her how to thread the small, wooden loom used to make the scarf. Martha learned quickly and in no time at all, she had made a beautiful, warm scarf of many colors! Next she knitted herself a pair of mittens from the remaining yarn, and couldn’t wait for winter to come so she could wear her handmade treasures!

Fall eventually turned into winter, and one day, Martha was awakened early by the sound of voices downstairs. It sounded like Mother and Thomas! She almost flew down the stairs and straight into Mother’s arms. What a wonderful surprise it was to see them again! After many joyful tears and hugs, Mother introduced Martha and Grandmother to Elsie. She explained that Elsie’s parents had to go on a trip and they had agreed that Mother could return home for a few days and bring Elsie with her. As Mother and Grandmother sat by the fire talking, Martha, Thomas, and Elsie played together. Elsie was a few years younger than Martha, but when she saw the scarf and mittens Martha had made, she wanted some too. Martha agreed to make them for her. She was sorry to see Mother leave again, but it didn’t feel as bad as the first time, now that she had something to keep her busy. She wanted to make the scarf and mittens for Elsie and send them to her as quickly as possible.

Soon after Elsie received Martha’s handmade gifts, she sent her a letter saying that all her friends wanted scarves and mittens and even hats, if Martha thought she could make them. They wanted to pay her, too! Martha talked to Grandmother about it and she agreed to help. For the next several weeks, they were very busy making all the items that people had ordered. After they had been sent out, another letter came. This letter was from a shop in the city that carried handcrafted items. They had seen Martha’s work and wanted to carry it in the shop! As word spread, more and more requests came in and soon Grandmother and Martha had more work than they could handle. They asked some of their neighbors if they would like to help, and eventually, almost everyone in the village was working.

One day in early spring, Grandmother decided to open the weaving house and show Martha the old loom. It was very dusty and full of cobwebs, but Martha could see the immense old loom, sitting there, and got an idea. "Grandmother," she asked, "do you think this old loom still works?"

"Well, I suppose it does," Grandmother replied. "There's only one way to find out!" she said, her eyes twinkling. Together, they cleaned up the loom and finally got it ready to weave. It was exciting for Grandmother to see the old loom back in operation, and it was exciting for Martha, because now she could weave bigger things, like blankets and bedspreads and woolen material for clothing. This was just what she had dreamed! Now she knew that her mother had been right when she told her Grandmother had precious gifts to give!

Mother and Thomas came home that spring and never had to leave again to work in the city. The weaving business was very profitable, and as word spread far and wide, the little village once again became known as the "Valley of the Weavers."

Lesson 11

The Wreath of Birds

Adapted from an old tale

Once upon a time, on the edge of a forest, there lived a man and his wife and two daughters. One of the girls was the man's daughter, and she was loving and beautiful. The other girl was the woman's daughter, and although she was sweet to look at, her heart was cold and hard. Her mother loved her fiercely, and didn't see that her heart was not kind, but thought she was the most wonderful daughter in the world.

One day the man's daughter went with him to the forest to chop wood. As they worked, he chopping and she gathering and stacking the wood, it began to rain. When they became too cold and wet to work any longer, they scampered home, arriving before they realized the axe had been left behind. The man knew the rain and mud would ruin the axe, so he asked his wife's daughter to go into the forest to fetch it, saying, "My daughter and I have worked all day chopping wood, and we are tired, cold, and wet. As you have been home quietly sewing by the fire instead of working in the rain, would you fetch my axe for me?"

The woman's daughter responded rudely, "You expect me to go into the cold rain to get your axe? A little rain won't hurt your daughter, because she's already wet. Why should I get wet too? I might catch a cold! Besides, she's stronger than I am, and the extra work will do her good!"

The man knew there was no use in arguing, so he asked his daughter to return to the woods to fetch the axe. By then it was dark, and it was hard to see her way. The mud sucked at her shoes and made her uncomfortable, but she was happy to help her father. She sang to herself as she walked, to keep herself company so she wasn't scared of the nighttime sounds and the branches that caught at her when she strayed from the path. She finally arrived at the clearing in the woods and found the axe, but to her surprise, there were three doves sitting on the handle, looking sad and bedraggled in the rain.

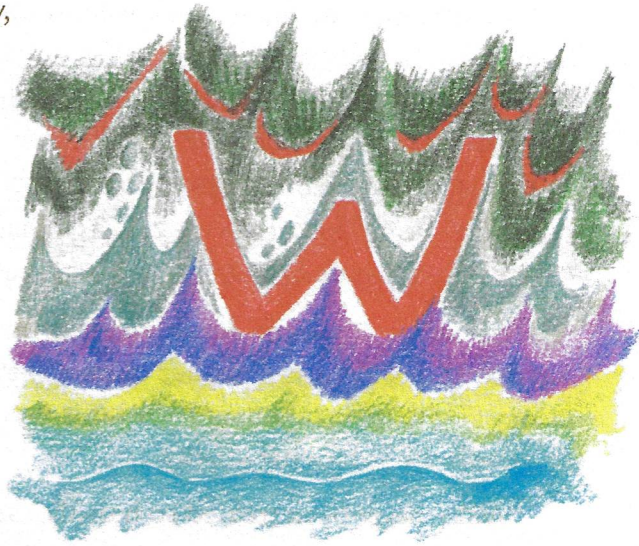
"Poor little doves, why do you sit here in the rain?" said the girl, as she petted them gently. "Before you fly home to your cozy nests, have a little bite of bread saved from my supper. Then I must take this axe you are sitting on, and quickly return home so my father's wife doesn't scold me," and she crumbled her bread for the birds to eat. The birds happily ate the bread, chirping and singing their thanks to the girl.

"Goodbye, my friends," she called as she picked up the axe and started for home.

The birds chattered among themselves, saying, "What a kind and sweet girl! I feel so much better after eating that bread. Why, I don't think I could have even lifted my wing to fly if she not come along!" The birds decided to make her a special gift. When she arrived home, she was wearing it—a beautiful wreath of flowers that would never fade, with a cluster of tiny singing birds inside it.

When the girl stepped into the cottage, her father saw how radiant and beautiful she looked, in spite of her muddy, wet clothing and bedraggled hair. But his wife and her daughter cried, "Where did you get that wreath? How stupid of you to wear such a precious thing in the rain!" And the wife grabbed it, to place it on the head of her own daughter. As she did, the flowers faded and crumbled, and the birds flew away. "It's all your fault," said the woman. "Now go to bed, it's late!"

The girl sadly reached for her faded wreath. As she touched it, it came back to life and the birds returned joyfully. She quickly carried it to her room, and went to bed.



The next day, the father again went to the forest to chop wood, and again came home without his axe. This time, when he asked his own daughter to go get it, the wife interrupted, saying, "No, this time my daughter will go." And the girl angrily walked off into the woods to find the axe. She became more and more angry as she walked, talking to herself about the unfairness of the task before her, and telling herself that she deserved the beautiful wreath the other girl had received the day before. When she arrived at the clearing to find the axe, she saw three wet, sad doves sitting on the handle.

"Get off of there, you nasty creatures, or I will throw stones at you!" she shouted. "I am taking this axe away, get out of my sight!" And she grabbed the axe and set off for home. Frightened and hungry, the birds flew up into the tree and angrily discussed how to punish the girl for her cruelty.

"We've never been treated so harshly," said one bird. "We must find a way to revenge ourselves."

"Let us make it so she can say nothing except 'nasty creatures' for the rest of her life!" suggested another bird.

"Perfect," said the third dove, "So it shall be."

The hard-hearted girl made her way home through the darkness, eagerly imagining that a beautiful flowered wreath waited for her there. Her irritation at the birds grew as she stumbled off the path and lost her shoe in the mud, and she was in a high temper when she arrived at the cottage. Her mother flung open the door, asking, "Did you get your wreath?"

"Nasty creatures!" said the daughter.

"What? Don't speak to me like that!" answered the mother.

"Nasty creatures!" said the daughter, no matter how she tried to tell her mother what had happened. For that is all she could say.

The mother realized a spell had been put on her daughter, and she ran to her husband's child and cried, "This is your fault! What have you done to my daughter?" And she made the poor girl go to bed without any supper.

Things went from bad to worse, as the woman and her daughter scorned the kind-hearted girl and teased her whenever the father wasn't looking. They made her do all the unpleasant work, treating her as a servant in her own home. It made them especially angry to see the beautiful flowered wreath upon her head, and to hear the tiny birds singing.

After many weeks, the king's son was riding through the forest when he heard beautiful singing, a sweet bird song he had never heard before. He stopped to listen, and looked around. He was surprised to see a lovely young woman chopping wood, wearing

an unusual flowered wreath upon her head. The wreath seemed to be singing. After watching her and listening for a few moments, he approached her.

“Fair maiden, who are you, and what are you doing here? How do you come to have such an amazing wreath of flowers and birds upon your head?”

“I live in a cottage by the forest, with my father and his wife, and her daughter. I am a simple girl, and often help my father chop wood.” She spoke politely, and was a little bit shy, because she had never even seen a prince before. “The wreath appeared one day after I fed some doves who were starving and cold. I believe it was their gift of thanks, but I do not know for sure.”

The prince was charmed by her polite way of speaking. He could see she had a kind and loving heart. She recognized him as a kind and gentle man, too. He fell in love with her, and she with him. He asked her to be his bride, and she agreed.

The king was a little disappointed, because he had hoped his son would marry a princess. But even more, he had hoped his son would marry a woman with a good heart, so he gave them his blessing and they were wed.

The girl’s father was overjoyed at her good fortune, although he was sorry that she no longer lived under his own roof. His wife and her daughter, however, were jealous and angry, and could not believe what had happened. They determined to take revenge.

They set out to visit an old witch in a neighboring town, and asked her to make a mask of the new princess’s face. Using her magic powers, the witch did so. The mask was so lifelike that nearly no one could have told the difference between the mask and the girl. Still, to be sure, the witch told the hard-hearted daughter that when she wore the mask, she should wear a scarf and pretend to have a toothache, in order to be left alone to preserve her secret.

And so it happened. When the princess invited her old family to visit, her hard-hearted stepsister brought the mask along in her coat pocket. While the princess was standing on a rock by the sea, showing them the beautiful scenery around the palace, the stepmother pushed her off into the water, and she immediately sank in the waves. The woman quickly tied the mask onto her own daughter, and wrapped the princess’s scarf around her daughter’s neck, saying, “We must return to the palace. When you see the prince, rest your cheek on your hand and act as if you are in pain. But above all, do not speak to him! Now, I will return to the witch to ask her to take the spell off so you can once again speak normally.”

When the prince returned to the palace, he found his wife in great pain, holding her cheek in her hand. “My dearest wife,” he said, “Whatever is wrong? You must be in terrible pain. Tell me!”

But the girl only muttered under her breath, pointing at her cheek and shaking her head.

"Let me fetch the court physicians. Surely they can help you with their balms and cures. I cannot bear to see you in such pain!" And the prince leapt to his feet and turned toward the door.

In a panic, knowing the physicians would discover the mask, the girl cried out, "Nasty creatures!" forgetting the spell that prevented her from saying anything else.

"What do you mean?" gasped the prince, shocked at the way his usually sweet wife had spoken. "You must truly be feeling terrible. Lie down and rest, and perhaps later you will feel better."

Late that night, the prince was standing on the balcony gazing out to sea, enjoying the moonlight dancing on the waves. As he watched, a form rose from the water, wearing a wreath upon her head. The woman, for so it appeared to be, stood upon the sand and stretched her arms toward the palace.

"How strange," thought the prince. "She looks like my wife, who is sleeping in the other room." And he ran out of the palace and onto the beach, but there was no one there. "I must have imagined it," he thought to himself, as he stared curiously at the waves tossing and shining in the moonlight.

The next day, the princess appeared to be no better. She held her face in her hand and moaned, but would not speak. The prince decided to send the doctors to her without her permission, for he loved his wife too much to allow her to suffer any longer. When they arrived to help the princess, however, she screamed at them over and over, "Nasty creatures! Nasty creatures!" and they were so shocked they left without examining her.

The prince was confused and upset. "I must have misjudged my wife," he thought. "Perhaps I was wrong in marrying a simple girl from the forest. I thought she had a tender heart, but she must have only been pretending so she should marry a prince. I should have married the princess my father had already chosen for me."

His heart was heavy, and the next night he couldn't sleep. He stood on his balcony, sadly gazing out to sea. He noticed that the waves moved wildly although there was no wind, when again he saw a figure like his wife, standing on the sand and stretching her arms out toward the palace. Again he ran down to the beach, only to find it empty.

The next day the prince had to attend a royal function in another city, and rode away without seeing how his wife was feeling. "Perhaps she will be well when I see her again," he thought, "and will once again be the sweet tempered, kind-hearted girl I married."

When he returned at midnight, instead of going into the palace, he went to take a stroll on the beach. As he gazed out at the moonlight dancing on the waves, which to-

night were raging nearly as if in a storm although the night was perfectly clear, he saw a familiar figure rise from the water and walk up onto the sand. Quickly, he grabbed her, crying, "You ARE my wife! My own dear wife! I will never let you go!" But as he held her, she turned into a crow that he was holding by the wing. He held fast, and the crow became a rabbit. He held fast, and the rabbit became a fish, and then a snake. He drew his sword and chopped off its head, and suddenly, before him, stood his own true wife, with the flowered wreath on her head, full of tiny birds singing for joy.

In the morning, the false princess's mother arrived with a potion from the witch, to put on her daughter's tongue to remove the spell. The potion would only work if the true princess was gone forever, drowned in the sea. If she was still alive, the potion would do nothing. Eagerly, the mother roused her daughter from sleep, and placed the potion on her tongue. The girl shouted, "Nasty creatures!"

At that very moment, the prince and his true bride entered the room.

"You both deserve terrible punishment," he said to the wicked woman and her cold-hearted daughter. "But I think you have been punished enough by your own actions. Now, be gone from here and never be seen in this kingdom again."

The two troublemakers left the room and were never seen again. And the wise prince and his gentle princess ruled the kingdom with loving kindness, and lived happily ever after.

Lesson 12

The Y in the Road

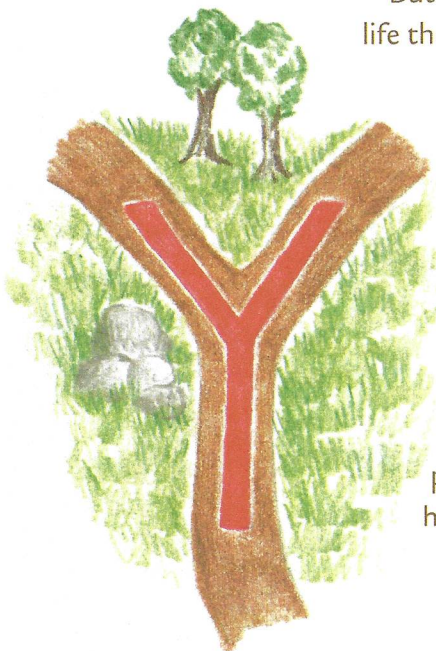
There were once three brothers who had fallen deeper and deeper into poverty, and at last their need was so great that they decided to go out into the world to seek their fortune. On the road they met an old woman who told them their fortune.

Good luck will come to you in your own way,
If your heart is pure and you watch what you say.
Wishes are powerful at the fork in the road,
Be careful what you wish for, and don't kiss a toad!

On they walked, wondering what the old woman meant. They had already gone quite a distance, but had not yet met with any good luck. Later that day they entered a great forest, and just inside it, they came to a "y" in the road, with one path heading off to the right, and the other path heading off to the left. The three brothers stopped to consider which path to take, and while they were thinking, they sat down to rest their tired feet.

"I would give anything," said one brother, "to have enough silver to build a new house. It would be so grand, and we could all live there together!" Just then he looked down the road to the right and saw a mound that appeared to be silver. He ran to it, and silver it was! He filled his pockets with as much as he could manage to carry, saying, "Now I have found the good luck I wished for, and I desire nothing more." He then turned back and went home.

But the other two brothers said, "We want something more from life than silver," and hurried on down the road to the left.



After they had walked for two days, they came to another "y" in the road. While they stopped to consider which path to take, one of them said, "Our brother was happy with his pockets full of silver. I would only be happy if my pockets were filled with gold! Why, I would buy beautiful furnishings for the house our brother is building with his silver!" Just then he spotted a shiny mound down the road to the right. He ran to it, and sure enough, it was gold! He cried, "Now I have found what will bring me good luck in my life!" He filled his pockets with as much gold as he could carry, said good-bye to his brother, and went home.

The last brother thought to himself, "Silver and gold do not make me happy, but I will not give up the search." And off he went down the path to the left.

When he had walked for three days, he came to a forest which was larger than the one before, and it seemed endless. He was exhausted and getting very hungry. Soon he found himself at another "y" in the road. He decided to climb up a tree to see if he could tell what was down each road, but all he could see was trees, trees, and more trees. As he was descending from the tree, hunger overtook him and he said to himself, "I wish I could eat my fill at a table fit for a king!" When he climbed down, he saw with astonishment, a table beneath the tree, covered with a lovely, white tablecloth and richly spread with food. The wonderful smells drifted up to greet his nose.

"My wish has been fulfilled at just the right moment!" he said. Without caring where it had come from, he sat down and ate and ate and ate, until his hunger was gone. He was very grateful.

As he was preparing to leave, he thought to himself, "It would not be right to leave this pretty tablecloth here in the forest to get spoiled," so he folded it up and put it in his pocket. Then he headed homeward. When evening approached and his hunger once again returned, he decided to test the little tablecloth again. He spread it out on the ground, and said, "I wish you to be covered with good food once again." Scarcely had the wish crossed his lips than many dishes with the most wonderful food in them appeared on the tablecloth. "Now I see," said he, "in what kitchen my cooking is done. You shall be dearer to me than the mountains of silver and gold."

When the last brother returned home, he discovered that his brothers were in dire straits once again. The first brother had used all his silver to build a house, and the second brother had furnished it grandly with all the finest objects his gold could buy. But after the gold and silver had been spent, they had nothing with which to buy food, so they were very hungry. When the third brother arrived home, he led them to the dining room, where he spread out the little white tablecloth. He requested that a feast fit for a king be laid out, and lo, there appeared the most magnificent array of food that any of them had ever seen! They fell upon it eagerly and ate until they could eat no more. Now the brothers had everything they wished for and were content all the rest of their days.

Stories: Social Studies

Lesson 24

Clara Barton and Her Work with Those in Need

The day was hot and steamy, and Clara looked around for a cup of water for her patient. All of her patients needed more water than usual today, and it was scarce to begin with. Clara called to another nurse on the field, "Have you seen the men from supplies?" "No Clara, they haven't arrived. I will call you when I see them!" Clara nodded and wiped her brow. Everyone had been working very hard. Clara had always loved caring for the sick, and she did it well. But sometimes, when supplies, like medicine and bandages, were in short supply, her job was very difficult. How was Clara to care for those who needed her if she did not have the goods she needed?

Clara walked down the row of soldiers, felt their foreheads and looked at their wounds. Once in a while one of her patients would call out her name joyfully when they saw her coming. She was well loved. Clara not only helped the men get well, but she sang to them and told them stories as well. She loved to tell them about her life when she was a little girl, like the time she was caught bandaging her pet's legs and feeding her dolls medicine. Clara had always wanted to be a nurse and now she was! She loved to serve others, to care for them and make them well again. But she was quickly discovering that in order to really help, she needed supplies!

All at once she heard her friend calling, "Clara, come quickly! The supplies have come!"

Clara quickly ran to the end of the tent that had been made into a hospital.

"Thank you for coming!" Clara looked over the box of goods that the man from the hospital in town brought her. There were medicines of all kinds, bandages and, thankfully, bottles of cool fresh water! Clara looked at the man who was carrying these goods into the tent. As he walked, he rubbed his back

as though in pain. Concerned, Clara asked him, "What is the matter, friend? Are you in pain?" The man looked up at her gratefully. "It is my back, dear lady. I don't wish to speak of it as I see the men in here need more care from you than I."

"Nonsense," Clara scolded the man. "Come, let me take a look. Perhaps there is something we may do for you." Clara motioned the man into the tent. Inside she looked him over and found that he had developed a wound that had not healed properly. She cleaned the wound and put a strong medicine on it. "This should help, my friend. Please, remember to care well for yourself!"

The man thanked her and hurried away.

Days later the man returned. Clara heard the men in the tent rejoicing and singing and she rushed in as they called her name. There, before her eyes, was a table set with lovely treats, fresh fruits and juices, and bottles of medicine that had been hard to get! The nurses were running about, giving the sick a taste of the delicious fruits, and Clara cried out to see the joy in their faces. Times had been hard and even bandages were scarce. Fruits were almost impossible to find, and Clara had not seen these kinds of medicines, even though she needed them, for months. Clara clapped her hands. "How did these come to be here?" she asked. The man whom she had helped days before stepped out and bowed politely to her. "We have heard far and wide of a kind woman who gives of herself and asks for nothing in return. You are she. Your care helped me greatly and so I bring you the goods to care for those others you serve!"

Clara smiled. And so it was, "goods for service," just as she had learned.

Lesson 34**“The Fish, the Dove,
and the Woodcutter’s Son”**

There was once a wise king who ruled over a fine and wealthy kingdom. Though he had all the goods one could wish for, the one he most prized was his beloved daughter, Lena. The queen had died in childbirth and so the king had raised his daughter alone with the gentlest care. He loved his daughter dearly, for she reminded him of his wife of long ago.

It came to pass one day that the princess was of age to marry. The king thought to himself, “The one who marries my beloved Lena must be of such grand qualities that no one could ever stand above them. For only one such as this deserves the hand of my dear Lena!” And so the king sent out a proclamation that whoever could complete the tasks set before him should have both Lena’s hand in marriage and half of his kingdom as well. The only catch was that if the suitor failed he would be banished in shame forever.

Many suitors came. Again and again, the stout-hearted men tried their best to complete all the tasks set before them. But each one failed and each was sent with heads hanging into the woods beyond the kingdom with nothing in their pockets. Finally, the suitors stopped coming, for it was said that to try to win the hand of the princess was to beg for banishment—so difficult and unreasonable were the tasks of the king.

One day a woodcutter’s son was standing by the side of the road chopping wood. The king’s procession rode by and the lad looked up just as the princess rode by. So great was her beauty and her kind smile, that the woodcutter’s son feared his heart would stop. She turned her head and glanced at him again as she rode around the corner, for indeed the princess was equally smitten. “Oh my,” she sighed, “If only I could marry a soul such as that one, for the heart of that man was bright!” But she knew such a thing could never be, for her father would never set before such a man a task that could possibly be met.

The woodcutter’s son ran to his father’s cottage. “Father,” he called, “I am off to win the hand of the princess!” His father only shook his head, while his mother begged him to reconsider. But the woodcutter’s son would only reply, “It is the path I must take, dear Mother.” And with that, he was off to the palace.

Being of little means, however, the woodcutter’s son was forced to walk the long dusty road to the palace gates. On the way he saw a fish gasping for breath in the stream by the side of the road. He had a hook in his mouth and was unable to swim back into the safety of the water. “Oh please help me!” the fish called. “I must get back to my family in the river. Please do not let me die!” The lad ran to the stream’s edge and said with compassion, “Of course friend, I will do all that I can.” And he sat by the edge

of the water until the hook was released. He set the fish back in the stream. Before it swam away, the fish said, "I will never forget your kindness. Any time I or any of my kind can help, please call on me." With that, the fish swam happily away and the lad continued on his way.

Soon he saw a dove lying in the middle of the road. It had a thorn in its wing and could not fly. "Oh please help me!" cried the dove. "The horses are bound to run over me as they pass, please help!" The lad stopped and said, "Certainly, I will do all I can to help." He carried the dove over to the side of the road and removed the thorn, and then he placed a healing ointment on the wound. In no time the wing had healed, and the bird began to happily flap its wings. "Hooray, and thank you my friend." The dove turned to the woodcutter's son before it flew away. "Any way that I or any of my kind may help, please call on me, for we will answer your call, kind stranger." With that, the dove flew away.

It was not long before the lad finally reached the palace. He knocked upon its gates and asked to have audience with the king. The guards laughed but brought the dusty, wet lad before the king, who called out angrily, "Who is this wretch that stands before me?" The king was angry, you see, for he guessed why the lad had come. The woodcutter's son glanced at the princess standing breathlessly beside the king and knelt before her father. "I have come to ask for your daughter's hand in marriage, sire. I will do whatever you ask, but I love her dearly and know in my heart that we are one." The king was horrified by the man before him. "What insolence!" he yelled. "How dare you stand before my beloved daughter? What right have you to ask for her hand?" "None, sire," the lad answered honestly, "None but the love in my heart and the devotion I have to her every happiness. It is said that anyone may try, might I?"

The king paused at this as the princess cried out, "Oh father, please, let him try. Please father, an easy task for this one!" The king looked in disbelief at his daughter. He turned to the young man before him, "You may try," he said. "But know this: For your insolence, if you fail this test, you shall be sentenced to death. If you pass, however, you may marry my daughter and win half of my kingdom." "No!" called the princess and she ran to the lad, "Do not try it. You will not pass!" The woodcutter's son smiled gently at her, "My heart is brave even at the sight of you, princess." He turned to the king, "Give me my test. I accept your condition." The king replied, "Three days' ride from here lies a great lake. In the middle of this lake I tossed my beloved wife's ring in a moment of sorrow. The water is many leagues deep, dark, and cold. I have missed her ring and wished my daughter should wear it on the day of her wedding. Bring this ring to me in one hour." He turned sadly, and walked away. The princess, weeping, followed him. The guards, laughing, threw the lad outside the palace gates. "Well," they said, "It seems your love will be the death of you!"

The lad stood alone in the dusty road once again. He walked to the side of the road and sat by the river's edge. "Oh, what have I done," he said to himself. All at once a voice called out to him from the river. "Young lad! What is it that saddens you so?" The lad looked up and saw the fish he had helped. The woodcutter's son told him of his sorrows. "This is no problem. I told you I would repay your kindness towards me. I know of the ring of which you speak and I shall call to my family to get it for you. Only I fear we cannot bring it back in time." The two sat thinking for a moment. Just then another voice spoke from the top of a nearby branch, "I shall bring it to you, kind sir!" The woodcutter's son looked up and saw the dove he had rescued looking down at him. The fish and the dove agreed and off they went. In no time, the dove returned with a golden ring in its beak and placed it in the hand of the woodcutter's son. "I am grateful to return the favor of your kindness." He flew off as the woodcutter's son joyfully ran to the palace gate.

When the king saw that the woodcutter's son had not only brought the ring, but even before the hour he had requested, he was amazed. He turned and saw the longing in his beloved daughter's eyes. "Truly you are such a man as I have never seen. I grant you my daughter's hand!" The princess and the woodcutter's son were married that very day amongst great rejoicing. When it came time for the woodcutter's son to rule, he did so with a just and wise heart, full of compassion and concern for others. So it was that the princess and the woodcutter's son lived happily ever after.

Lesson 25**George and the Big Storm**

George stood bravely at the gates of the plantation that was his home. His mother and father had left on business this morning and, for the first time in his young life, George was in charge. He turned confidently to face his home. The fields of grain waved happily back and forth in the breeze. Surely he could manage the farm for two days!

Just then, rain began to fall on his face. He looked up at the dark clouds rolling toward him. He turned to his home and hurried to prepare the farm for a storm.

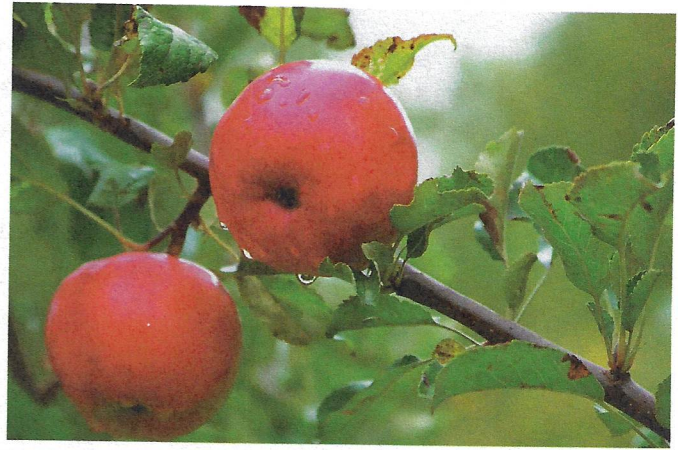
Once the rain began to fall, it seemed to believe that it must keep coming! George called to his servants and gave them orders to steady the animals and board the windows. He had seen his father telling the servants what to do all his life but somehow, it did not feel quite right to him now. "I must do my part," George thought to himself. "I must help to keep the animals and the people of this plantation safe and dry." And so George took off his fancy coat, rolled up his sleeves and went to work with those around him.

The rain fell and fell. It fell so fast and so thick that it appeared as a blanket in the sky. In the morning George went to inspect the fields. Many of the crops had been washed away and needed to be replanted. Fences were broken and trees lay on the ground. The people of the plantation looked to George. They were weary, as he was, from the night's labor. "Well," he called to them with all the cheer he could muster, "It seems I have some work ahead of me!" And he bent down and began to clear the grounds of trees, bushes and plants that were thrown about. The people laughed quietly, and followed his lead. All that day and the next George and the people of his plantation worked hard to repair what had been damaged from the storm. George made sure that everyone had lots of food and water. He never rested but worked harder than anyone and soon the work was done.

George looked around his plantation. The new fences stood sturdy in the evening sun, the fields were freshly turned and replanted, hopeful for the harvest that would one day come. The grounds were fresh and clear. "Now," he thought, "Now is the time for celebration and thanksgiving." The people were still singing when George's parents returned late that night. As they rode through the gates they were astounded by the joy and good cheer that greeted them, for they had heard of the terrible storm and expected the plantation to be ruined, their crops gone. Instead, they were met by the sounds of people proud of the work they had done and grateful for the home they had saved—together.

Lesson 23

Johnny Appleseed and His Choice



Johnny Appleseed always loved the forest and everything in it. Every day he could be found climbing his favorite apple tree, rubbing his face against the rough bark and breathing in the scent of apple blossom nectar. Johnny was a dreamy child. He was a kind soul with always a word of cheer. The animals of the forest knew him well and delighted to hear the pounding of his footsteps as he ran, the moment his chores were done, to the woods and his friends that lived there.

Johnny was not just a friend of the forest though. He cared deeply for the children of his town and could always be counted on to play a game of hide and seek or swing from the branches of the trees that grew in the apple orchard. His parents were proud of his love for his family and Johnny never failed to help his mother with the little ones. Winters were sometimes hard and Johnny found himself indoors a great deal. But spring always found him in the orchard once again, cradled in his beloved trees.

One winter the cold wind blew and blew and blew. Johnny's trees bent down low to brace themselves from the icy frost and Johnny's family curled up inside their home for weeks and months. Johnny did all he could to help his family. He sang to the little ones and told stories of warm times and days of play in the sun. Sometimes his stories did help, but more and more the children would only shiver and listen to the wind howl as it blew snow up against the walls of their home.

Finally it happened: Johnny's family used the very last log in their fire. Johnny's mother looked at his father and nodded to the door. "No!" said Johnny, as he saw his father reach for his ax. He ran to his mother. "Isn't there another way? We can't cut down my trees! Perhaps the cold will break; surely spring will come tomorrow, for it has been months and months!" His parents exchanged glances and his father put down his ax. "Johnny," his mother said softly, "I know you want the trees to last forever and be your playground for always. But sometimes we have to make hard choices. We can't always have what we want, but it does seem that we receive whatever it is we need. Even if it's hard to tell sometimes." Johnny thought for a moment. He looked at his family huddled together against the cold. Suddenly, he knew what he must do. Johnny walked to the door and handed his father the ax. Then he went and picked up his own. "We will do it together if we must do it at all." And he smiled at his mother weakly.

That night Johnny and his father came home with many armloads of freshly cut wood. The stove blazed merrily and the smoky smell of wood fire filled the small cottage. His family warmed themselves gratefully by the fire and Johnny told them stories of the orchard and the animals that lived there.

Soon spring came at last. Johnny walked outside and greeted the sun. "Well," he thought to himself, "It will be time to plant the fields soon." He looked over to where the orchard lay. "Hmm, I wonder, perhaps I could plant a new apple tree or two..."

Lesson 29

The Kingdom of Light

Once, long ago, there was a beautiful palace all of gold and silver. When the sun rose, its rays danced off the palace walls and sent a rosy glow throughout the land. Because the kingdom was ever adorned in the light that shone from the palace walls, the kingdom was known throughout the land as "The Kingdom of Light." The king and queen who ruled the kingdom were wise and good and their people were happy and feared nothing. They knew that if trouble would come, their king would do his best to care for them equally and well.

The rules of the kingdom were few, for the people delighted in caring for one another. It was known that each member of the kingdom was required to always do their best, work hard and be kind and respectful to one another. The people gladly did so and the kingdom was at peace for many years.

It came to pass that the king and queen's daughter grew of age to marry. She was a lovely soul, with hair as golden as the palace walls and a heart just as fair. All the knights, lords, and men of valor came from far and wide to ask the king for her hand. But she would have none. For the princess had been told by her grandmother to wait for the one whose heart was as golden as her own. She would recognize this heart, her grandmother said, by the light that shone from within the man. Many men came to woo her, but all were turned sadly away, for none bore the light that she longed for. Her suitors were not angry, however, for the princess was so kind and gentle in her reproach, that they could only love her the more, and each vowed their allegiance to The Kingdom of Light, even as they were turned away. All but one.

Far in another kingdom lived an old witch. She loathed all that was light and hated the golden city. She sent her son, a hard and handsome man, to win the princess's hand, for she wanted to turn the city into darkness when her son ruled. The princess, in her

wisdom, knew immediately that this hard man was not her beloved. But instead of responding in kind to her sweet reproach, the handsome man only glared at her and said, "You and all that live in this kingdom will pay this day! If I cannot rule this Kingdom of Light, your subjects shall only know darkness!" And with that, he turned and was gone.

The witch made a terrible spell and the next morning, all the people of the land awoke in blindness. No longer could they see the rosy glow of the sun as it played off the walls, no longer could they remember the faces of their neighbors. The people grew angry and began to whisper that the princess in her selfishness had done this to them. The people stumbled to the palace and demanded the princess be banished; hoping that then the spell would be broken. The king demanded that they return to their homes, but the people only became angrier and began to push and shove at one another. "Remember our laws! They exist for the good of all!" The king said. But the people only yelled louder for the princess to be brought before them and punished. The princess came running from the palace and stood before the crowd. "I will go," she said. The crowd pushed forward in anger, and the king called out to his guards.

Suddenly there was a voice in the crowd that sounded clearly above the rest, "Stop!" A farmer's son walked through the crowd. He alone was not blind. As he walked, the crowd separated, for they could feel his strength and his purpose. He climbed up the palace steps and knelt before the king. "Sire," he said, "May I speak?" The king nodded in wonder as the crowd quieted before this gentle lad. "My friends," he began, "It is not only your sight that you have lost, but it is the love of one another as well. The witch cannot take that away from you, only your sight. You must give up the love in your hearts on your own. The princess is not to blame, for she cared not for herself, but only for the well-being of her people. Would you have the dark son of the witch rule?" The crowd began to murmur slightly and shake their heads as if in a dream. "Wake now, my friends; remember the love you share with one another, for it is then that you may see your neighbors' faces again." With that, the lad laughed out loud. It was as if a thousand birds began to sing. At once the people began to reach for one another and . . . The spell was broken. The golden light of the palace shone so brightly once more, the people again feared for their sight. The people were ashamed. But see they could and there finally was great rejoicing in the street.

The farmer's son knelt before the king once again. "If it pleases you, my lord, I ask for the hand of your daughter in marriage. For it is our destiny and I love her with all my heart." The king turned to his daughter who said, "Turn to me, farmer's son." And she looked into his eyes. There it was! The light within this man was bright and clear and she embraced him gladly, with all her heart. And so it was that the farmer's son and the princess were wed that very evening.

The people asked for the king's forgiveness, and he begged them to forgive one another. And they all, the king, the queen, the princess and her beloved, lived happily in the

Kingdom of Light, for all their days. Although, what became of the witch and her son? I cannot say. They were never heard of again.

Lesson 22

Life on the Kentucky Frontier

When Abe was young, his family moved to the Kentucky frontier. It was winter when they arrived. Abe helped his Pa cut the trees they would need to build their little three-sided shelter. Their only warmth was a small fire built at the open end, and there they nestled in until the time would come when the family would build their own log cabin.

Abe was a strong lad. He woke early each morning to hunt and fish for food. Though he had little time for play, Abe loved to swing his axe and the family never lacked for firewood. The family worked hard to clear the forest for their new home. The animals watched silently as Abe made his way through the woods, and when they saw the quiet strength in his face, coupled with the twinkle in his eye—they knew that this boy would be a fine friend to all the creatures that lived there.

And so he was. Abe was always certain to take only what he needed from the forest, and as he helped his father build their log home, Abe kept a watchful eye for the trees that were homes for his friends and made sure that they found new places to live, just as his own family had.

There was a cluster of homes and a small store not too far away. Although Abe and his family farmed, fished, or hunted for most of their food, his mother longed for real sugar for her sweet cakes and Abe wished for a book to someday call his own. They knew that the little store held the items the family needed. Abe and his family went to bed each night dreaming of the soft cloth, new axes, books, and cooking pots that lay waiting at the little store only one day's march away.

Abe and his family began to save what little they had to barter for the things they needed. When he wasn't chopping firewood or logs for the home, Abe whittled small toys to sell and set them aside in a piece of cloth under his straw mattress. Abe's mother baked molasses cakes and made jars of maple syrup when the spring came.

Finally, the day came. All the months of waiting, saving and preparing were over! Abe's father collected the goods and prepared for the day's journey. He had to leave early and he would not return until late that night. Abe begged to come along and finally

his father relented. Together they began their journey before the sun rose in the sky. The air was cool and wet on Abe's face, but he was too excited to notice. Neither Abe nor his father spoke much, but every so often Abe's father would point out a whippoorwill in the tree tops or a chipmunk nibbling at a root. Finally, as the sun beamed down upon them from the top of the sky, Abe could see the homes ahead. He whooped with joy and ran quickly before his father.

Inside the store it was cool and dark. Abe breathed in the scents of ginger, tobacco, and flour. His father moved to do business with the store's owner. When they finally agreed on a price for the goods Abe and his father had brought, the fun really began. Abe was allowed to choose one piece of hard candy as a treat for the journey home while his father measured out sugar, flour, gunpowder, and a small bolt of cloth for Abe's mother. But his greatest joy was the small book that found its way into his father's bundle. Abe was to learn to read at last!

On the way home, Abe smiled to himself. The months of preparing and waiting were hard, but made all the sweeter this day. For this was the day he had dreamed of. All his hard work and saving had brought him to this moment. Abe never forgot that day, and years later, when he was a grown man, Abe knew that if only he waited and worked hard, he might find his reward at last.



Lesson 21**Martin Alonso: Sailor of the *Santa Maria***

October 11, 1492

I, Martin Alonso, keep this log so that my children's children will never forget the things I have seen. We have been aboard the *Santa Maria* for 35 days now. It seems so long ago when I was asked to join this journey of exploration and discovery. Christopher Columbus promised "new lands" filled with sights no one from Spain had ever known. My family has always known me as one with a thirst for adventure, and so I signed on.

Santa Maria is a beautiful boat. She is not as fast as one of our sister ships, the *Pinta*, but she is bigger and is the flagship for this journey. Columbus swears it will be soon. We have brought many items with us for trade. At night we tell stories of our adventures. Some say the clear sky tonight speaks well for discovery tomorrow. All I know is that I tire of dried fish and I long for solid land under my feet!

October 12, 1492

We have landed at last! The water is blue and clear and the sun is shining. Early this morning we saw the natives of this land rowing out to greet us. They are very friendly, with dark skin and gold rings in their noses. The natives seem happy to trade. They peer carefully at our guns while we look at the spearheads they show us. We give them glass beads, brass rings, knitted caps, gold, silver, pearls and spices. It seems, though, our guns are of great interest as well. In return, they give us parrots, balls of spun cloth, and spears as well as other goods. Their food is delicious, but it is the land itself that I love! We will stay here for a few weeks and rest up. Then it is on to further adventures!

Lesson 20

Nagamo: A Day in the Life of an Algonquin Girl

My name is Nagamo. In our language this means “to sing.” It is said that my mother, who is slow to speak, sang out loud the day I was born. She has not stopped singing since that day. Together we sing songs of thanksgiving for each day’s work, for our loving family and the safety of our tribe. Though my mother still does not speak often, she smiles with the dawn and I have always known what is on her mind—though she chooses to keep her silence.

Not long ago my little brother was born into our tribe. My mother carries him on a cradleboard on her back as we go out to work in the fields. This morning brought the sun, bright and golden, into our wigwam. It was not long before my mother softly spoke and I rose to begin the day’s chores. We cooked a sturdy breakfast for my father, for he joined many other men on a long hunt that would keep him far in the hills until nightfall.

When we finished our chores, my mother and I went to the fields to help with the village harvest. We will bring in many baskets of squash and beans, as well as corn for our bread. It is said that some of the men of our tribe caught many fish in their nets this day. When this happens the village will share in their good fortune. My mother will trade her finely decorated leather skins for dried meat and fish when my father has brought home less than he wished. Often, though, my father comes home with meat for the entire village! On those days, my mother sings even louder than usual.

My moccasins softly meet with the Earth as we walk. I am no longer afraid of the coming of winter. My family stays warm in our wigwam and this summer has been fruitful. We have already stored much food for the colder months. I know that I will be cared for in our tribe, for we are all one family.

There are rumors now from the men who have come back from fishing. They say that they have seen strange boats, not like our dugout canoes, but giant ones with clouds that catch the wind. The men say they have seen people living on these boats, men who look pale and wide-eyed. I have heard from my wise sister-friend, Pocahontas, and she intends on visiting these boats and seeing for herself. She says that I should not be afraid of new things—we may learn much from these newcomers.

I must be going home now, there is meal to grind and food to prepare, for my father will be coming home tonight! If I have time, I may play with the others this evening when it is cool. We will pretend to be great warriors and princess maidens. Inside our wigwam my mother will sing to my little brother and night time will fall softly on our tribe.

Lesson 31

Young George and the Cherry Tree

—adapted from a story of old

When George was young he longed for one thing only. A hatchet of his own. He had seen his father and other helpers on the farm cutting wood for their fire. But time and time again, George was told he was just too young. “Someday son, when the time is right, you shall have a hatchet of your own.” George would sadly walk away, wondering how he could possibly prove to his father that the time was now!

Finally, the day did come. George awoke on his birthday and at the foot of his bed, there lay his very own hatchet. He let out a whoop of joy, dressed as quickly as he could, and rushed outside to greet the day. First George ran to the woodpile and chopped wood for the fire. “Surely my father will be proud!” he thought to himself. After a while, though, chopping wood blocks was no longer satisfying. His eye caught a cherry tree in the field beside his home.

George could not resist. He ran to the cherry tree and, with all his might, chopped and chopped. Splinters of wood flew and George still chopped. Finally, the tree fell to the ground. George stood and looked at what he’d done. He had chopped down his father’s favorite cherry tree! A lump formed in his throat when he thought of the months he had begged and pleaded for his hatchet, reassuring his father over and over how ready he was. How responsible he would be! George held back a sob. He must run away, he thought. That is the only thing to be done. With that, George turned and ran off into the woods.

That night George’s father returned home. When he saw his favorite cherry tree lying on the ground by the house, he called the whole family together. “Who chopped down my tree!” he bellowed loudly. He demanded again, “I ask again, who chopped down my cherry tree!” Everyone looked to the other in fear and shook their heads.

All at once, George came in from the other room. He hung his head with sorrow. “Father,” he said, “Father. I cannot tell a lie. It was I. I chopped down your cherry tree. And I am sorry.” All was silent. Not a word was spoken, nor a body moved. George’s father cleared his throat. “George, come here to me,” he said sternly. George walked towards him; his head hung low, his eyes to the ground. “Look at me, George,” his father said. George raised his eyes to meet his father’s.

To everyone’s surprise, George’s father broke out in a smile as he reached for him. “George,” he said, “I am glad my cherry tree was chopped down, for it has taught me an important lesson. I now know that you will always tell the truth and take responsibility.”

ity for your actions—no matter how hard it may be to do so. You have proved yourself worthy this day, son; worthy of my trust, and worthy of that hatchet as well.” With that, George’s father embraced him, turned, and left the room. From that day forward, word spread throughout the land that this young George Washington was a man to be trusted, a man who would own up to his deeds—no matter what the cost.

Stories: Math

Lesson 10

Jester Times

As you may know, Jester Times can be quite a tricky fellow. His job in the castle is to bring joy and laughter to everyone. Jester Times was very observant and knew all the special places around the castle and the grounds.

One day, Jester Times came upon a group of children in the castle. They were sad. The children were circled around a brilliant bluebird, lying cold and motionless on the ground. The children were saying kind things about the bluebird, and were going off to bury the bird in the yard. Jester Times watched patiently as the children reverently buried the bird, shedding tears of sorrow.

Part of Jester Times' magic was that he could turn tears to smiles. So after the children had buried the bird, and were quietly walking away, Jester Times crept quietly amongst the children and asked if they would like to see something magnificent. The children were so sad that they shook their heads and continued walking. But one child took an interest, and convinced the others to go and see what Jester Times had in mind.

The children followed Jester Times. They went across the courtyard, through the apple orchard, and into the forest. Here in the forest, Jester Times turned summersaults around three particular trees. The children watched to see what Jester Times was up to. Then Jester Times shook his head, making the bells on his hat tinkle merrily, and pointed up to a low branch on one of the trees.

The children looked, and there on the low branch was a nest. The nest was too high to look into, so one of the children climbed up on Jester Times' shoulders to take a peek. Sure enough, in the nest, the child saw three small, light blue eggs.

Now the other children were very curious. They looked up at the other two trees that Jester Times had turned somersaults around. The littlest girl found the

next nest. This one was a bit higher so two children, one on top of the other, stood on Jester Times' shoulders. In this nest, they found another three shiny eggs.

Now one of the children saw a third nest. This one was so high that three children stood on Jester Times' shoulders to see in. Indeed there were three more eggs in this nest. The children were so excited at this magnificent gift from Jester Times that they sang and danced around the trees. For many days the children came to the forest and watched those nests. They saw mother birds come and check the nests and sit on the eggs for long stretches of time.

One day, the littlest girl was out in the forest by herself. She was sitting quietly and waiting and watching. The mama birds were all out of the nests. The girl heard a crack, and then silence. She sat stiller than ever. Over the course of the afternoon, the girl heard cracking and movement in the nests. She didn't go and look, for she didn't want to disturb the eggs.

As the sun was setting in the west that evening, the little girl saw small heads peeking out from the edge of the nest. She could hear peeps and cries from the little birds as they hatched from the eggs. The mama birds came back and snuggled with their little baby birds to keep them warm.

The next day, all the children came running out into the forest to see the little birds. In each nest, they saw three little bluebirds with their beaks stretched up to the sky waiting for mama bird to come and feed them. The children were joyous of this magnificent treat that Jester Times had shown them on that day not so long ago.

Lesson 11

King Divide

King Divide was a very fair king. One day, his two children were arguing, for there was only one muffin left and they both wanted it. King Divide swiftly took out his sword and cut the muffin in two, leaving one half for each child.

On another day, the queen was in a tizzy because she had six tins of tea, but only three people to give them to. Queen Minus was crying because she didn't want to be unfair. The king came into the queen's room, heard her dilemma, and looked at the tins of tea. He quickly put them into three equal piles.

"There", said the king, "now each person will get two tins of tea. That's even."

The next day, there was a shipment of grains that came on the barge to the harbor. Sir Plus diligently began to carry each bag of grain from the barge to the castle. Jester Times looked on with a smile before going out to the stable, saddling up one of the horses and attaching the cart. Sir Plus waved at Jester Times as Jester Times drove by in the cart.

When Jester Times arrived at the harbor, he loaded not one, not two, but ten big bags of grains into the cart and drove back to the castle. Sir Plus continued making trips, carrying one bag of grain each time, making four trips in all. Jester Times made only two trips with his cart full of ten bags each trip.

When all of the bags had been unloaded and put in the storeroom, they were counted to make sure none had been left behind. Sir Plus went about counting each bag: one, two, three, four, all the way up to 24.

Jester Times watched with a smile, and then leapt around singing, "I can do it faster, I can do it faster! Two trips of ten bags, that's a quick matter—it's twenty. Twenty plus four more make twenty-four!"

Sir Plus watched in amazement as Jester Times so quickly calculated all of the bags of grain, and smiled at the jester's quick tricks.

King Divide came by to check the grain, and then sent out a message to all the people. Anyone who needed grain could come and the bags would be evenly divided amongst the families who needed them.

That afternoon, twelve families came to the chambers of the king. The king looked around and evenly divided all of the sacks of grain amongst all of the people who needed them. Everyone went away happy and the smell of fresh baked bread and sweet treats filled the kingdom that evening.

Lesson 7

The Kingdom of Mathematics

Once upon a time, in a land far away, there lived a king and a queen. The king was a fair king and all the people of the kingdom loved him. He always divided things equally amongst his people. He provided for all the people in his kingdom. He gave seeds to the farmers and sheep to the shepherd. He gave warm clothes and delicious food to the children. He even spread the extra crumbs from dinner evenly for the squirrels, birds, and rabbits to eat. The queen, however, was sad. Although the king provided all the things she could need, she continuously lost them.

One day the king gave her a beautiful ring with a sparkling red ruby. The queen was delighted, she jumped up and down with happiness and she showed everyone her new ring. The queen walked tall and proud, joyous about the gift from her husband. After two days, however, the queen looked upon her finger and the ring was gone. Her joy turned to tears and then to rage.

The queen stormed into the chambers of the king where he was hearing a dispute amongst neighbors. Puffy-eyed from crying and red-faced with rage, the queen insisted the king replace her ring. Not only that, she insisted the king buy her a necklace, too. The king, hating to see anyone suffer, reassured the queen that he would do as she wished.

The queen moped away, still sad about her lost ring, and spent the next days with her head bent down. No one could bring the queen out of her melancholy, not even to see the brilliant colors of the autumn leaves or the squirrels scampering about. It wasn't until the next lovely gift came from the king that the queen was once again elated. But, alas, this elation only lasted until the queen, as usual, lost her most recent prized possession. Each time the queen lost something, the king's most faithful knight, Sir Plus, scoured the lands far and wide to add a new gift to the queen's collection to ease her sadness and calm her temper.

This went on for many years. Little by little, the king gave more and more things to the queen and had less and less to give the people of the kingdom. Over the years, the farmers had fewer seeds to sow and the children had to wear their warm coats until they were threadbare. Life in the kingdom became unbalanced with the queen getting more and more and the people getting less and less. The king, who always wanted to divide things fairly, was not happy with the situation.

Now it came to pass that the king's treasury was almost empty when the queen lost her newest gift, a sweet-voiced, yellow songbird. The queen came stomping into the king's chambers demanding a new bird and also an elephant, for she had heard stories

of lavishly ornamented elephants with rubies, emeralds, pearls, and topaz jewels covering their bodies.

The king lowered his head and said, "No, there is no more money to buy a song bird, let alone an elephant. The people are going hungry and the children are cold."

The queen replied, "What!? I don't care about them. I must have my elephant!"

The king again replied, "No."

The queen shouted and stomped and scowled and howled until finally she cried. She cried, and cried, and cried. The king hated seeing his queen suffer, but he didn't know how to appease the queen this time.

It happened that someone else had been watching the scene from the hallway: the court jester. The jester had been watching the queen for many years. He'd follow her and as she lost items. He found them and stored them under his bed and in hidden passages in the castle, according to his secret plan. When the jester saw the queen's tantrum turn to tears, he knew it was the right time to implement his plan.

There was to be a feast in three nights, and the jester had a lot of preparing to do. For the next three days, the queen's voice could be heard crying and wailing all throughout the castle, but the jester paid no mind to the cries. He was too busy preparing his surprise.

On the night of the feast, everyone in the kingdom was invited and assembled in the great hall. The tables were set for a great feast, but the food was a thin soup and hard bread, for the king had only a little to give now. The people, however, were grateful for even a simple meal.

When the food had been shared, the king called for the jester to entertain. The queen's eyes were still wet with tears and at first, she refused to look at the jester. The jester came out with bells on his hat and began juggling two diamonds, then four, then six, eight, ten, and twelve. The queen stared in surprise.

With all of the jewels in the air, the jester turned a somersault and tossed each diamond to someone in the great hall. The people sitting were amazed and shouted with delight. Then the jester made three rabbits appear, then six songbirds, nine turtles, and finally twelve monkeys. He called the children to come and choose one each, and they scampered after the animals happily. The king was overjoyed to see his people delighted.

The queen, however, was shocked. These were her diamonds, her rabbits, and her monkeys! How could the jester give them away?

Then she saw the face of a small girl, with thin rags for a dress, pick up a white rabbit. The queen had never seen the joy on another's face when receiving gifts of kindness. The joy that rose in the queen at that moment was greater than all the delight she'd ever experienced when receiving something for herself.

The jester kept multiplying gifts for the people, but after a while, it wasn't the jester who gave them away, but rather the queen, who stood with a smile and took each gift the jester materialized and gave it away.

The queen realized that instead of keeping these things for her only to lose them, which brought her sadness, she could give them away, thus multiplying not only her happiness but also the happiness of others. This was the gift that the jester gave the queen that night.

By the end of the night, all went home happy, and the queen, with joy in her heart, took the arm of the king. As the happy couple passed the jester, the king gave him a hearty thank you. The jester replied with a wink and a jingle of the bells on his hat.

Lesson 13

The Merchant and the King

One day in the Kingdom of Mathematics, there was a dispute in the market. What a ruckus was coming from the stall of the salt seller! Shouting, and crashing and clanging could be heard from far and wide.

Sir Plus ran down to see what that racket was about. The customer told Sir Plus that the merchant was trying to take too much money from him. The merchant said that he filled each bag with salt and sold it for the same amount of coins. He was only being fair. Sir Plus, unable to solve the dispute himself, brought the customer and the merchant to see King Divide.

King Divide calmly heard each side of the story and then there was silence. The customer was still red with rage, and the merchant pouted with his arms crossed. The king asked to hold the sack of salt and the coins. The king took the sack of salt in one hand and the coins in the other. Then he added and took away coins and salt until the sack of salt equaled the weight of the coins.

"There!" the king declared. "A sack of salt will always weight this many coins."

"But," the customer asked, "what if the merchant thinks his sack weighs more than that many coins? How will we tell how much the salt and the coins weigh?"

"Well," said the king, "I appoint you to build a device to balance it all out."

With those words, the king dismissed the merchant and the customer. The customer went away baffled. How would he ever design such a device?

For many weeks the customer walked around the castle, and the market, and the forest searching for the answer. Then, he remembered King Divide with his arms outstretched. That was it! He would build a device with two sides, and each side would have a shallow bowl, like the king's hands. In the middle would be a pillar, like the king standing straight and tall. The device would hold something in each side, and only when these two things were even would the device be balanced straight across, like the king with his outstretched arms.

So, the customer set to work building this device. He enlisted the help of the carpenter and the blacksmith and soon it was finished.

One bright morning, the customer brought the device to the king. The customer explained to the king how his device worked, that if you put something on each side, only when the arms were even would the two amounts be balanced and fair.

The king smiled at this device, for he loved when things were even and fair. The king said, "So, once the device is balanced, each side will be equal?"

"Yes," said the customer.

The king introduced the balance to all of the merchants and all were happy to see this device of fairness. Soon, every stall in the market was equipped with one.

Lesson 28

Mother Squirrel and the Tree

There was once a tree that grew in a meadow in the Kingdom of Mathematics. This tree was big and beautiful, and had many branches that spread out in all directions. People came from miles around to see this tree and marvel at its lovely shape. One thing they didn't know, however, was that this tree was also well known by the squirrels.

One day, as the squirrel children were climbing on the branches, they suddenly noticed a new branch, one that had never been there before. This was very exciting to them and they ran to tell their parents. Mother Squirrel laughed and told them that was how the tree grows, by spreading out new branches, and each time a new branch formed, a new root would reach underground. But they didn't understand what a root was; all they knew of a tree was the branches. She tried to explain to them that a tree also grew under the ground, but they just didn't understand.

So Mother Squirrel took them to the base of the tree. She led them into a tunnel and deep underground. At first they couldn't see very well in the dark tunnel, but soon their eyes adjusted to the dim light and they could see the beautiful spreading roots of the tree. They were all amazed at the dark, strong roots.

Then Winky, the smallest of the squirrel children said, "It looks just like a tree, only it is upside down!"

Mother Squirrel began to laugh for she saw that it was true. The branches of the tree that they saw above the earth looked just like the roots of the tree below the earth. All the squirrels began talking at once, for they began to recognize separate roots that looked exactly like the branches that they knew so well.

"There's the one our swing is on," said Boffo.

"There's the one Boffo knocked his head on," said Zippy, the oldest.

"There's the one we like to sit on, all in a row," said Winky.

"And there's the new one," said Zippy.

And it was true. There, newly sprouted, was a tiny root just like the new branch they had seen above the ground.

"Children," Mother Squirrel said, "I think we've discovered something very important. This must be a very special tree, for every branch has a root just like it and every root has a branch just like it."

"So there are just as many roots as branches!" said Zippy.

"And there are just as many branches as roots!" said Boffo.

"Well, that certainly appears to be true for this special tree," said Mother Squirrel, "but let me try something."

She walked down the tunnel and reached out for an old dried-up root that was growing next to the new root. "Excuse me, Grandmother Tree," said she, "I don't think you need this anymore."

Then she broke off the old branch and walked back to her children. "Now," she said, "let's go back home." They walked together up out of the dim tunnel and into the sunlight.

"Look!" said Boffo. Just beside the new branch, in the same place that Mother Squirrel had broken off the old root, was a broken branch. It was an old dried-up branch, just as the root had been, and was lying on the ground where it had fallen when it broke.

"So every time a new root grows, a new branch grows," said Winky.

"And every time an old branch falls, an old root falls," said Boffo.

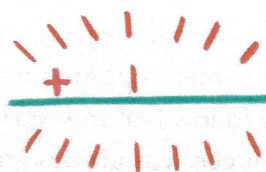
"So if we want to know how many roots are on the tree, we can count the branches," said Mother Squirrel.

"Or count the roots to find out how many branches there are," said Zippy.

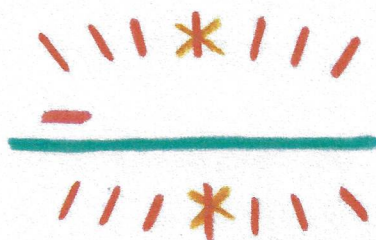
And that is what they did. They made drawings in the sand like this:



Every time another branch grew they would draw this (using the sign Sir Plus taught them, for Sir Plus loved the animals of the forest).



And every time a branch fell, they drew this (using the sign Queen Minus taught them, for Queen Minus also loved the animals).



So the squirrels were always able to keep track of all the branches and roots on that special tree. When they grew older, they taught their children how to do this and their children continued to count the branches and roots, too.

The tree grew so big they could no longer count with marks, so they began to use numbers. But they still kept the same picture that was drawn in the sand that first day.

Lesson 9**Queen Minus**

As you know, Queen Minus used to be very sad, for she was always losing things. Now, however, the queen didn't throw temper tantrums whenever she lost things, but rather enjoyed giving things away.

One day the queen left the bakery with four loaves of bread, but she arrived at the castle with only two. On another day, Queen Minus decided to bring toys to the children of the village. She packed up her sack with twelve toy trucks from the castle stores. Once she arrived at the village square, she opened her sack and found there were only eight toy trucks in her sack.

The people now loved Queen Minus for her generosity, and they watched her wherever she went, ready to help if she lost something. Anytime Queen Minus went about giving things away, the children would follow her and retrieve the lost items and return them to the queen to distribute. The queen was always grateful for her little helpers and thanked them kindly. The children loved the game of finding and retrieving whatever the queen had lost.

Lesson 8

Sir Plus

Sir Plus is the king's most faithful knight. Whenever the king needs him, Sir Plus is always ready to serve. Sir Plus is a plump and reliable knight. His favorite color is green, and this is the color of his cloak.

One day, the castle was running out of coal to feed the fires. the king sent Sir Plus out to get ten bags of coal. Sir Plus put on his green cloak and went straight to the coal mines. He told the foreman that he needed 10 bags of coal. The foreman set aside 10 bags for the knight. Sir Plus looked at the pile of ten large and heavy bags. He picked up one bag and it was heavy. With his other hand, he picked up another bag, bending under the weight. He realized that he could only carry two bags each trip. So Sir Plus started trotting back to the castle with the two bags. He tossed them down the stairs, into the cellar and went back for another trip. Two by two, Sir Plus brought bags of coal for the castle. After each trip the cook gave him a sweet treat, for the cook knew that Sir Plus loved to eat. Sir Plus happily made each trip from the coal mine to the castle, carrying two big bags of coal each time.

When the last bag of coal had been dumped in the cellar, the castle was getting warm from the freshly stoked fires. Sir Plus smiled at a job well done, and he felt a little bit stronger from all his hard work. It was supper time, and Sir Plus cleaned up, put on a freshly washed green cloak, and joined the king and queen for a supper of fluffy white mashed potatoes, roasted duck, bright green Brussels sprouts drizzled with butter, and soft dumplings. Sir Plus enjoyed every bit of this scrumptious dinner in the warm castle.



Math Gnome Stories

The following stories are included to provide another option for creating a continuing storyline around math operations. These stories provide a jumping-off point for you to create multiple word problems to help your child envision and practice math concepts.

The Gnome King's Treasure

In a deep, deep cave under a mountain, the gnomes are always busy working to gather jewels for the Gnome King's treasure cave. All of the gnomes bring in 12 jewels each and every day. They know how many they have by counting their ten fingers and two ears. When they have just as many jewels as that, they know that their day's work is done, and they can take their jewels to the king. The king is very kind to them, and always sees to it that they have warm beds for sleeping and plenty to eat and drink. The king was the one who showed them how to count to twelve using their fingers and ears, because he knew they couldn't count very well.

However, there are four gnomes who are very different—they never bring in the 12 jewels. Sometimes they bring fewer and sometimes more, but the king understands them and loves them, for he knows they do the very best they can. These four gnomes are the most interesting of all the gnomes that work for the king. The four gnomes are called Plus, Minus, Times, and Divide.

PLUS is a very fat, green, greedy gnome. He is always thinking, "3 plus 3 plus 3 plus 3 are 12." When he begins filling his pockets with jewels for the king, he often can't stop and stuffs more in for himself. When he comes to the king and gives him 12 jewels, the king always hears Plus's pants rattling with extra stones and turns him upside down to shake out all the extra jewels, so they can be given to the other gnomes that don't have enough.

MINUS is a sad, blue, ragged gnome who carries a sack to hold the jewels he gathers for the King. However, he has holes in his pockets and in his sack, so when he comes to the king to give his jewels, he never has as many as he thought he had.

TIMES is a quick little gnome, yellow as a candle flame. He lights up the dark, hidden places in the caves and finds more jewels than all the rest. He loves the king very much and tries to bring him at least two times more than 12 jewels every day. To do this, he often has to make two trips, but he enjoys the chance to show the others how much he is doing for the king.

DIVIDE is the fourth gnome. He is a deep red in color, and is always thinking of how he can help others. When he hears other gnomes crying because they can't find enough jewels, DIVIDE rushes right away and gives half of his jewels so that they will have enough to give the king.

The king understands these four gnomes very well. He knows that MINUS will always be losing most of his jewels, but that PLUS will find them to add to his pile. He also knows that DIVIDE will never have enough because he is kind enough to share what he has. However, TIMES will always bring in extra jewels. So, in the end, everyone will have all the jewels that they need.

