

Folktale

Why the Sea Is Salty

A Scandinavian Folktale

retold by Lana Jones • illustrated by Alvaro Fernandez



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PAIRED
READ

All About Salt

STRATEGIES & SKILLS

Comprehension

Strategy: Ask and Answer Questions

Skill: Point of View

Vocabulary

aroma, expect, flavorful, graceful, healthful, interrupted, luscious, variety

Vocabulary Strategy

Root Words

Word count: 1,219**

**The total word count is based on words in the running text and headings only. Numerals and words in captions, labels, diagrams, charts, and sidebars are not included.



Education

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Send all inquiries to:
McGraw-Hill Education
Two Penn Plaza
New York, New York 10121

ISBN: 978-0-02-119009-6
MHID: 0-02-119009-7

Printed in the United States.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 DOC 15 14 13 12 11 10

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Genre

Folktale



Essential Question

What choices are good for us?

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Into the Forest

Once, there were two brothers, one rich and one poor. The rich man was mean and greedy. The poor man was kind and generous. The poor man had never asked his brother for anything. Still, the rich man was worried that his brother wanted a share of his riches.

Then, one year, the weather was very bad and the poor man's crops failed. He and his wife ran out of food. The poor man knew that he would have to ask his brother for help.

"Brother," the poor man said, "we have finished our last loaf of bread. We have no money left to buy more food. Please, will you give us something to eat?"

The rich man was annoyed. Why should he share his food? "Don't come begging to me," he said. "I have nothing to spare." Then the rich man smiled to himself. He had thought of a way to teach his brother a lesson.



The rich man wanted to scare his brother, to discourage him from asking for food again. He gave the poor man some delicious meat and said, “This isn’t for you. You must take it to Hiysi, the creature that lives in the forest. When you return, I will give you some food.”

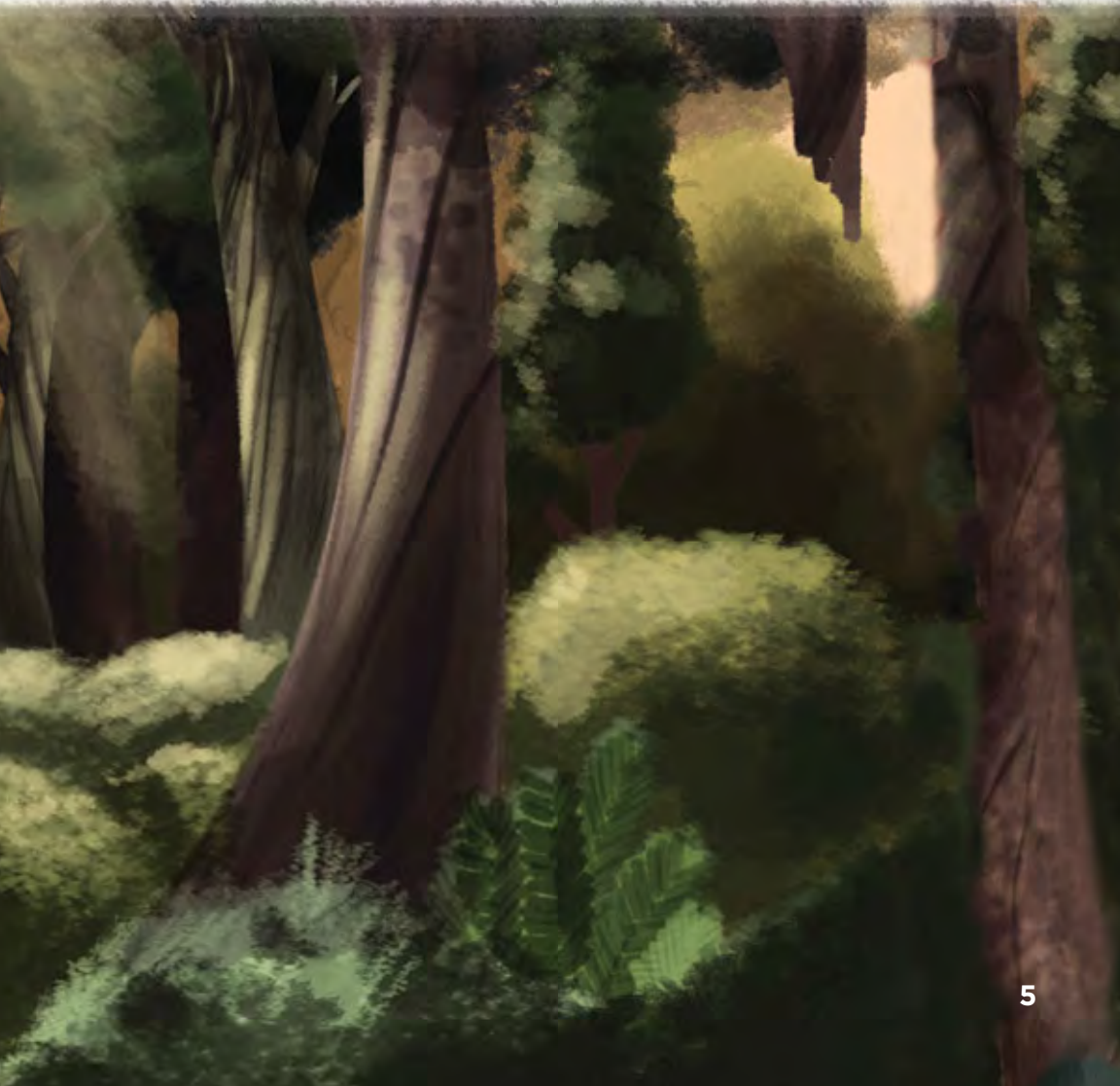
The poor man was very hungry. He wanted to eat the meat. He'd heard stories about Hiysi and he didn't want to go into the forest alone. Still, he had agreed to his brother's request, so he set off into the forest to find the creature.

After several hours of walking, the poor man met a woodsman. "What are you doing so deep in the forest?" the woodsman asked.



“I’m looking for Hiysi,” the poor man said. “I have something to give him. Do you know where he lives?”

“It is that way,” said the woodsman, pointing deeper into the forest. “But let me give you some advice. Hiysi will offer you something in return for your gift. Tell him you want his old millstone. Accept nothing else.”



Meeting Hiysi

The poor man walked deeper and deeper into the forest. Eventually, he came to a small clearing. He walked up the path to an old hut and knocked on the wooden door.

Hiysi opened the door. “What have you brought me?” Hiysi asked the stranger. He snatched the bundle from the poor man’s hands, unwrapped it, and immediately gobbled up all the tasty meat.

Then he seemed to remember his manners. “I never get visitors,” Hiysi said. “Everyone is afraid of me. You brought me a gift. I must give you something in return. Would you like a handful of gold?”

“No,” the poor man replied.

“Well, would you like some valuable jewels instead?” Hiysi asked.



The poor man stopped to think. He could buy a lot of food with gold coins or jewels. Surely they would be worth more than an old millstone? However, the woodsman had seemed a wise and truthful man. So the poor man decided to take his advice. “No,” he said firmly. “The only payment that I will accept is your millstone.”





Hiysi looked surprised, but then he smiled. “That’s a wise choice, my friend, for it is no ordinary millstone. It can do magic! It will give you any food that your heart desires, and it is easy to use. To make it start grinding, just say ‘Grind, my millstone.’ Then, to make it stop grinding, say ‘Enough, my millstone.’”

The Millstone at Work

The next morning, the man returned from the forest. His wife had grown worried, and was relieved to see him. The poor man set the millstone down on the table in front of her. “Grind, my millstone! Give us good things to eat!” he commanded. The poor man’s wife watched in amazement as the millstone did as he had asked.

It was not long before the rich man discovered his brother’s good fortune. He went to visit the poor man. When the rich man arrived, he smelled a luscious aroma coming from inside the house. He peered in the window, and he saw that the poor man had many good things to eat. “Brother!” said the rich man. “Yesterday, you had no food. Today, you have plenty. What happened?”



The poor man showed his brother the millstone. He tried to explain how it worked. “All I do is say ‘Grind, my millstone’ and—”

“Sell me the millstone, brother,” the rich man interrupted. “I must have it. I will give you all the money you want.”

The poor man refused. “I’m sorry,” he said, “but the millstone is not for sale.”

The rich man pretended he had been trying to help his brother all along. “I’m the one who sent you to Hysi,” the rich man said. “Now, I expect you to give me the millstone.”

“Well, I have plenty to eat right now,” said the poor man. “So I will gladly lend it to you for a while.”

Out of Control



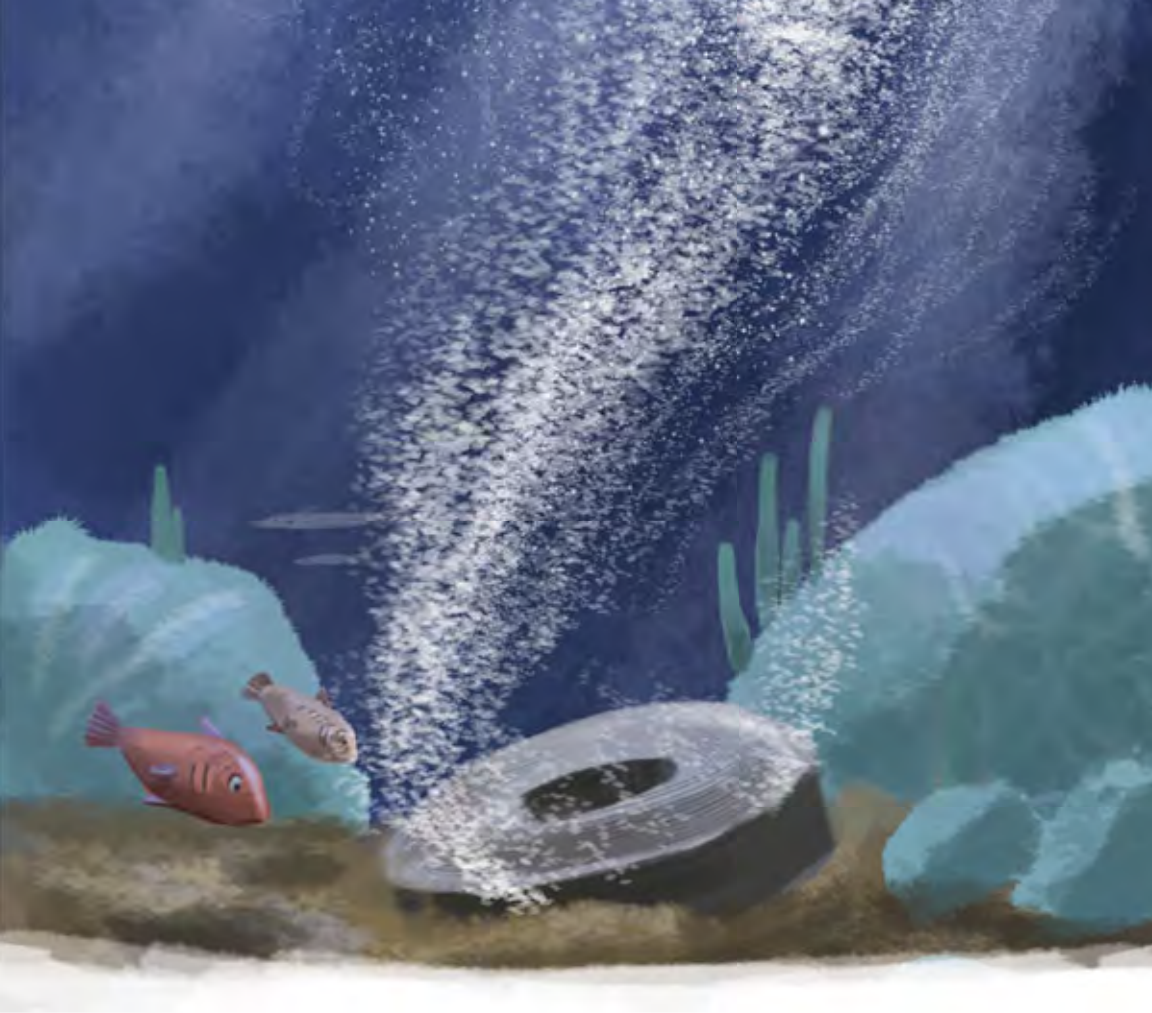
The rich man hurried off with the millstone. He had an idea. The village fishermen needed salt for the fish they caught. Salt made the fish more flavorful. The fishermen would pay well for fine salt. The rich man went to the harbor. He lifted the millstone into his boat.

“Grind, my millstone,” the rich man commanded. “Give me all the salt you possibly can!” The millstone began to turn around and around. It ground the finest white salt the rich man had ever seen.

The rich man wanted to sail out to meet the fishermen. He rowed out to sea, pulling at the oars with wide, graceful strokes. Soon, the millstone had ground enough salt to fill three large baskets.

“Stop grinding, millstone,” the rich man said. But the millstone did not stop. “Stop now!” he shouted, but the millstone still would not stop. Then the rich man realized his mistake. He had rushed away from his brother too quickly. He did not know the exact words he must speak to make the millstone stop grinding!





The rich man decided to get rid of the millstone. He tried to push it overboard, but it had become too heavy. The salt made the boat heavy, too. Soon, it filled with water and began to sink. The rich man leaped out of the boat, and was carried away by the waves. The magic millstone sank to the bottom of the ocean, but it did not stop grinding. It went on making salt for a very, very long time. Believe it or not, that is how the sea became salty!

Respond to Reading

Summarize

Summarize the story *Why the Sea Is Salty*. Use the chart to help you.

Details

↓

Point of View

Text Evidence

1. How can you tell *Why the Sea Is Salty* is a folktale? Identify one feature that tells you this. **GENRE**
2. How does the narrator feel about the rich brother? Look at page 2 for clues. **POINT OF VIEW**
3. Find the word *valuable* on page 6. How can you use the root word to figure out its meaning? **ROOT WORDS**
4. Write about how this story would be different if it was told from the point of view of another character. **WRITE ABOUT READING**

Compare Texts

Read about how to make decorative colored salt.

All About Salt

A long time ago, salt was worth as much as gold. In the past, people added it to food to stop the food from going bad. They used it to preserve meat, fish, and vegetables. Back then, salt wasn't available everywhere like it is today. So it became very valuable. In ancient Rome, soldiers were even paid partly in salt!

Today, salt is easy to find, and it doesn't cost a lot of money. But people still use it to add flavor to food. Try to remember that too much salt can be bad for you. Healthful food has only a small amount of salt in it.

Healthy meals do not contain a lot of salt.



How to Make Colored Salt

Did you know that you can use colored salt to decorate the dinner table?


What You Will Need:

- a sealable plastic bag
- food coloring
- 3 tablespoons of rock salt or coarse crystal sea salt
- a small glass jar





What to Do:

- 1 Put the salt into the plastic bag.
 - 2 Add two drops of food coloring to the plastic bag.
 - 3 Seal the plastic bag. Shake the plastic bag and squeeze the salt about inside it. This will help the food coloring to coat the salt.
 - 4 Unseal the plastic bag. Leave the salt to dry inside the plastic bag for about eight hours.
 - 5 Repeat the first four steps with a variety of different shades of food coloring. Then pour layers of differently colored salt into the glass jar, and place the jar on the dinner table.
- 



Make Connections

What is a good choice to make when salting your food? **ESSENTIAL QUESTION**

Why the Sea Is Salty is an old story. The rich man said salt made the fish more flavorful. Why else would people have salted the fish? **TEXT TO TEXT**

Focus on Genre

Folktales Folktales are stories passed on from one person to the next by word of mouth. Folktales are not realistic. Sometimes, they can include magical objects and mysterious or made-up creatures.

Read and Find *Why the Sea Is Salty* is a folktale with a larger-than-life character and a magical millstone that can produce food from nowhere.

Your Turn

Think of some of the qualities you possess. What would happen if those qualities were “larger than life”? Write a story in which you are the hero and you have one or more superpowers.

Fiction

Thinkmark

Characters

Who are the main characters in
Why the Sea Is Salty?

How are the brothers different from
each other?

Plot

What good or bad choices did each
brother make?

What was the result of each choice?

Author's Purpose

Why do you think the author told
this story?

Make Connections

How is this folktale like other folktales
you have read?

How is it different from other folktales
you have read?

Choices

GR O • Benchmark 34 • Lexile [t/k]

Grade 3 • Unit 4 Week 1

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ISBN-13 978-0-02-119009-6
MHID 0-02-119009-7

EAN



9 780021 190096



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