

# Other Story Titles on the Theme of *Courage*

*To Supplement the Story:  
“A Caterpillar's Voice”*

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## **Story Title:** “The Twelve Wild Ducks” (*Norway*)

**Recommended Source, Internet:** Web Site: “Absolutely Whootie: Stories to Grow By”  
[http://hazel.forest.net/whootie/stories/wild\\_ducks\\_norway.html](http://hazel.forest.net/whootie/stories/wild_ducks_norway.html)

**Recommended Source, Book:**

*East O' the Sun and West O' the Moon*

Written by Peter Christen Asbjornsen, retold by Gudrun Thorne-Thomsen

Published by Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1946

**Synopsis:**

A princess searches for her 12 older brothers, who years ago were enchanted by an evil witch and turned into wild ducks. After three years of searching she finds them in a remote land. They tell her the only way their curse can be broken is if she weaves for them 12 shirts from thistledown, one for each brother. The thistledown must be plucked at midnight from the witches' moor and she must say nothing until the shirts are completed.

Determinedly, she sets about her task. One day, a King who is lost in the woods sees her in the moor, falls in love with her and marries her. An old woman at the castle, jealous of the King's new bride, follows the Queen at night and discovers that she goes to the witches' moor. She takes the King to see for himself her doings at midnight. She convinces him his new bride must be a witch. Sadly, he arranges for the queen to be burned alive on a pile of wood. Before she is led out to the pile, the Queen lays out her 12 shirts, though one is unfinished and has only one sleeve. At once, 12 wild ducks swoop down and pick up their shirts.

The old woman urges the King to burn the Queen at once, but he is intrigued by what happened and decides to wait. Soon 12 handsome young men ride up, though one has a wild duck's wing instead of an arm. The princes tell their sister she can now speak. She explains the whole story. The King orders the fire quenched and takes his wife in his arms. The old woman is banished forever.

## **Story Title:** “The Young Head of the Family” (*China*)

**Recommended Source, Internet:** Web Site: “Absolutely Whootie: Stories to Grow By”  
[http://hazel.forest.net/whootie/stories/young\\_head\\_family\\_china.html](http://hazel.forest.net/whootie/stories/young_head_family_china.html)

**Synopsis:**

A father allows his three daughters-in-law to visit their home village, on the condition that they complete three tasks: They must find fire wrapped in paper, wind in a paper, and music in the wind. They quickly agree, but soon regret the difficult if not impossible nature of the tasks. Along the road, they meet a young woman on a water buffalo and tell her

of their dilemma. She cleverly proposes a solution to each task. The father is so impressed that not only does he allow the three women to visit, but also arranges for the girl on the water buffalo to marry his fourth and youngest son. In later years, in a move unusual for the time, the father turns over the running of the entire household to her.

### **Story Title:** "The Prince & His Three Fates" (*Egypt*)

#### **Recommended Source, Book:**

*Tatterhood and Other Tales*  
Written by Ethel Johnston Phelps  
Published by The Feminist Press

#### **Synopsis:**

A Prince is doomed to die by a serpent, a crocodile, or a dog. Protected night and day as a boy, when he is grown the Prince, anxious for adventure, travels to a distant kingdom. There he falls in love with a Princess and marries her.

One night while the Prince is sleeping, his wife kills a serpent that she notices slithering toward him. Several days later, the Prince meets a crocodile at the river who tells him he is the Prince's fate, and that the only chance he has to escape is if the Prince can pour water into a hole in the sand that will hold the water.

The Prince's wife takes a dangerous journey. She returns with a magic four-leaf herb that can keep water from seeping through sand. Just as the crocodile is stepping toward the Prince, she throws the herb into a hole in the sand. After 30 minutes, the crocodile turns away.

At that moment, the Prince's dog takes chase after a wild duck. The dog, in a hurry, knocks over the Prince. The Prince falls into the mud and weeds and becomes stuck. Quickly, the Princess rushes forward with rope and pulls him out.

"My wife," he says fondly after the third of his dangerous fates is safely past, "you have been stronger than my fate."

**Note:** If your listeners find the scene where the princess chops off the serpent's head too graphic, replace it with the following text:

*After that, the snake dropped on the ground and slept heavily. This was what the princess had been waiting for. Summoning her guards, she ordered the serpent to be captured in a large basket with a tight-fitting lid, and sent the basket to a very far distant land.*

<sup>nd</sup> **Note:** This story is narrated to music on the audiocassette, "Whootie Owl's Stories to Grow By," available on Amazon.com. Keyword: "Whootie Owl."

### **Story Title:** "Three Strong Women" (*Japan*)

#### **Recommended Source, Book:**

*Three Strong Women*  
Written by Claus Stamm  
Published by Viking Penguin, 1962

#### **Synopsis:**

When the famous wrestler Forever Mountain tickles a plump little girl, the consequence is that he must be trained by the girl, her mother and her grandmother. The three women utterly overwhelm Forever Mountain with their superior strength. In three months he comes to learn a great deal from them.