Name_____Date_____

Adapted from "The Goose Who Tried to Keep the Summer"

by Carolyn Sherwin Bailey

There was once an old Wild Goose who had led the flock of other wild geese every fall for years and years on their way south. He had a thick coat of white feathers, he wore orange-colored boots, and his bill was like a gold trumpet when he opened it to call,

Honk, honk, honk!

That was the signal for the others to rise from the meadows and the marshes. He flew in front, and the rest followed, one line on one side and one line on the other. He thought himself most important.

Over the woods and the fields and the waters, everyone looked for the old Wild Goose in the fall.

Honk, honk, honk!

That was the Wild Goose telling them that it was time to get ready for the winter in the woods, and in the fields, and over the waters. He knew they waited for him, so he had grown to feel very proud of himself. He lived in a marsh that was sheltered on both sides by trees and was comfortable, even if there was a frost

now and then. A robin had once stayed in those trees all winter and he sang proudly about it.

"Why do I trouble to go south?" the old Wild Goose thought to himself. "The weather here will not grow cold if I stay. *Honk, honk,* I shall not trouble myself to migrate this fall and then we shall see what will happen! Very likely I shall keep the summer!"

No one knew what the goose had decided, and they listened for him.

The dandelion* looked up from her home in the field and bobbed her little head as she waited to hear the call of the Wild Goose. Every fall she had sent a flock of winged seeds flying along with him as far as they could go. Then they would drop in other fields and begin making more dandelions for next year. She knew she must not wait too long. She listened, but she did not hear his *honk, honk, honk*!

*__dandelion__: wild plant with bright yellow flowers

Puff, whirr; off she sent her tiny winged seed without the call of the old Wild Goose.

The farmer buttoned his coat tightly and looked up among the gray clouds to see the goose. Every fall he listened to hear the call of the Wild Goose as he gathered his harvest. He knew, though, that he must not wait too long. He took his grain to the mill and filled his barn with red apples, and orange pumpkins, and yellow corn. He made warmer beds for the cows and horses, and cut logs to burn in his fireplace. He was soon ready for winter without the help of the old Wild Goose.

The brook called and called for the goose. Every fall she waited for him to fly over and then she built her winter roof, for she knew then that no other wild bird would need to drink from her waters. She must not wait long, though. There were her fish, and the water spider, and the beaver to shelter all winter. So the brook forgot, at last, about the old Wild Goose and built a smooth ice roof to keep her children warm until spring.

Honk, honk, cried all the other wild geese. "It is time to travel! Come with us!"

Honk, honk, honk, cried the old Wild Goose, from the sheltered marsh where he did not know what was going on. "I am not flying south this year. I am staying north to keep the summer."

Honk, honk, "What a terrible time it will be!" cried all the other geese. They talked among themselves, saying that no good could come of turning the seasons about, and of how he would probably be eaten in the end. Then they selected a wise young goose who had flown near the back the year before, and they made him their leader. His boots were quite as orange and his bill as golden as those of the old goose, and he could *honk* very well indeed. They went south with the new leader.

Soon Winter came. He wore a crown of snowflakes, and his cloak was covered with frost. Everyone was ready for him. The dandelion bowed her bare head as Winter passed. The barn doors were closed, and the cattle stood, safe and warm, in their stalls.

But the Wild Goose felt Winter coming. An icy wind blew through his feathers. His throat was so stiff with cold that he could not blow his trumpet. His orange boots froze stiff as the marsh turned to ice.

"It must be the winter coming in spite of me," he thought to himself. "It seems that I have not kept him away after all. I shall die, for he will freeze me. What shall I do?"

Then a sunbeam, that was still strong enough to help a little, heard the faint cries of the old Wild Goose and was sorry for him. She melted the ice so that the goose could pull out his feet, first one, and then the other. She stood for a moment in Winter's path as the goose rose and stretched his stiff wings and then started south.

The chilly air was like a blast on his head. He was forced to fly slowly, but he managed to call as he went.

"*Honk, honk*, Here I am. I fly to tell you that Winter is coming."
He looked down at the woods, and the fields, and the waters. How strange! They had

known it. They had not waited for the call of the old Wild Goose.

1. What is the central message of the selection?
   A. The seasons keep changing even when plants and animals grow old or die.
   B. The winter will come late if the old Wild Goose stays behind in the meadow.
   C. The old Wild Goose lost his job because he did not keep track of time.
   D. The farmer lost money on his crops because he waited to hear the goose.

2. Which sentence from the selection supports the central message of the story?

A. "Then they selected a wise young goose who had flown near the back the year before."
B. "The barn doors were closed, and the cattle stood, safe and warm, in their stalls."
C. " 'It seems that I have not kept him away after all. I shall die, for he will freeze me.' "
D. "He was forced to fly slowly, but he managed to call as he went."

3. What is the moral of the story?

A. Always keep your promises.

B. Things are not always as they seem.

C. Treat people with kindness when they are kind.

D. A person who is proud is not always right.

4.What lesson does the old Wild Goose learn by the end of the selection?

A. It is hard to fly in the winter.

B. He cannot stop a season from coming.

C. The other geese found a new leader.

D. The winter weather is freezing.

5. Which quote supports the lesson of the selection?

A. "He flew in front, and the rest followed, one line on one side and one line on the other. He thought himself most important."

B. "Every fall she had sent a flock of winged seeds flying along with him as far as they could go."

C. " 'It must be the winter coming in spite of me,' he thought to himself. 'It seems that I have not kept him away after all.' "

D. "Then a sunbeam, that was still strong enough to help a little, heard the faint cries of the old Wild Goose."