



7 Clever Grethel

an old tale

Before You Read

Before you read "Clever Grethel," study the words below. Make sure you know what each word means. This will help you understand the story.

clever: bright; smart

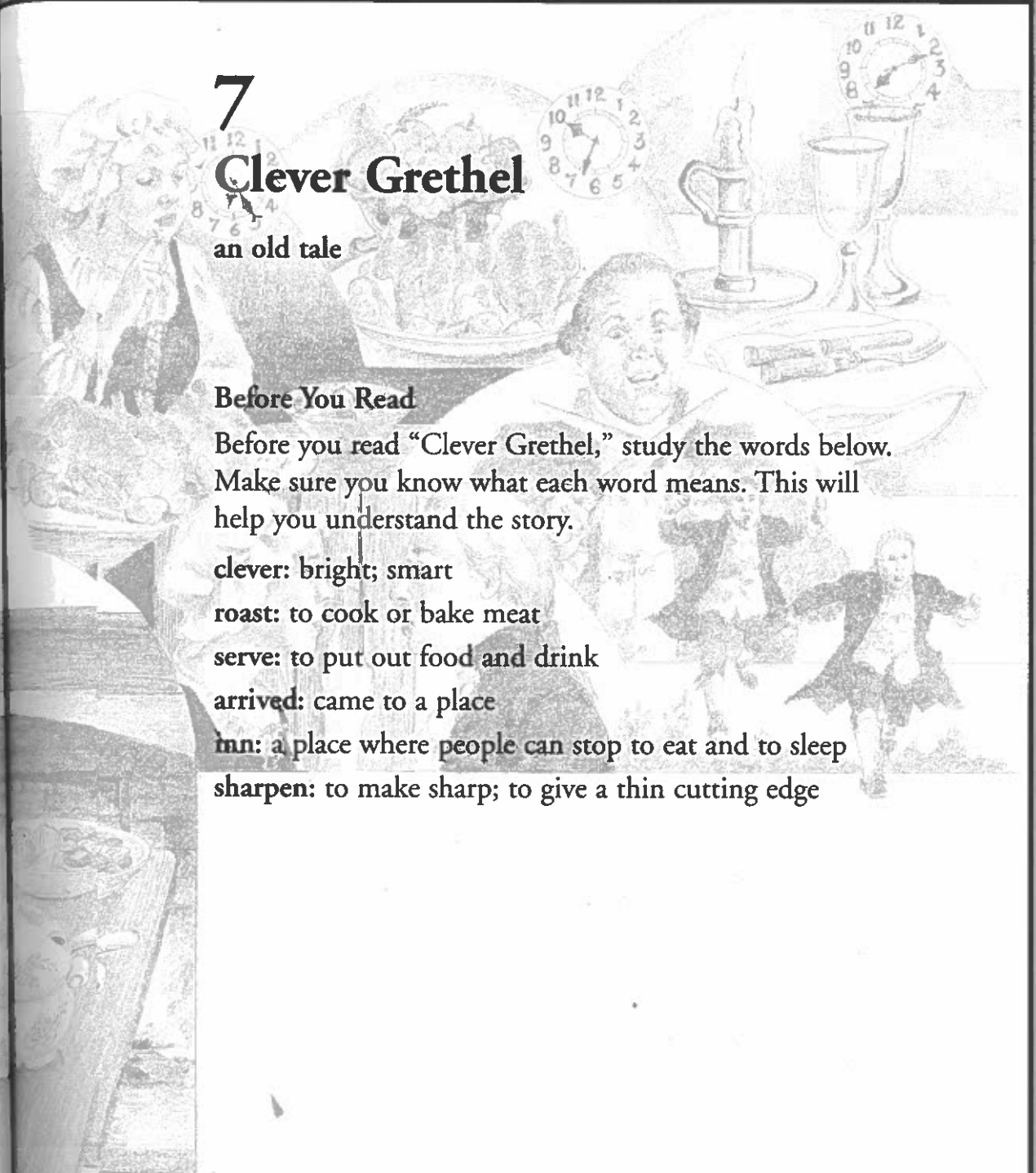
roast: to cook or bake meat

serve: to put out food and drink

arrived: came to a place

inn: a place where people can stop to eat and to sleep

sharpen: to make sharp; to give a thin cutting edge



Clever Grethel

an old tale

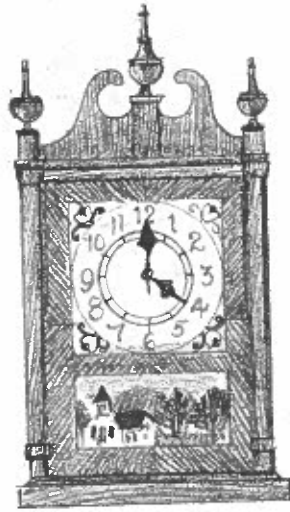


There once was a cook. Her name was Grethel. She was so clever that everyone called her Clever Grethel.

Clever Grethel was a very fine cook. She made turkey pie. She made pumpkin soup. She made apple cake.

There was nothing that she could not make. And everything she made was very, very good.

Clever Grethel worked for Mr. James. One day Mr. James said to Clever Grethel, "I have invited a friend to dinner tonight. I know what he likes. Can you roast two chickens for us?"



"I can and I will," said Clever Grethel.

"Will you make sure the birds are fat and sweet?"

"I can and I will," said Clever Grethel.

"And can you serve the meal at six o'clock?"

"I can and I will," said Clever Grethel.

Clever Grethel went to the store. She found two fine chickens. They were large and fat. She paid for the birds. Then she took them home.



Clever Grethel cleaned the birds. She stuffed them with fruits and nuts and pieces of bread. She put them on the fire. After a while they began to get brown.

Before long it was nearly six o'clock. But Mr. James's friend had not arrived.

Clever Grethel said to Mr. James, "Your friend is late. He is not here. I must take the birds off the fire soon. If I do not, they will surely burn."

Mr. James went to the window. He looked outside. "I do not see my friend," he said.

Clever Grethel shook her head. She said, "The birds are almost ready now."

Mr. James said, "My friend may be coming up the path. I will go outside to see." He went to look.

Clever Grethel took the chickens off the fire. "My," she thought. "Don't these birds look good! They look good enough to eat!"

Clever Grethel sat down on a chair. She waited and waited and waited some more. Then she thought to herself, "These poor birds are getting cold." She rubbed some butter on the birds. Then she put them back on the fire again. Soon they smelled so good that her mouth began to water.



She said, "These chickens should be eaten *now!* Someone should eat them. Someone really should!"

She looked around. Of course, no one was there.

Clever Grethel ran to the door. She looked outside. She did not see Mr. James. She did not see his friend.

Clever Grethel went back to the kitchen. "Oh, dear!" she exclaimed, "This bird's wing is beginning to burn."

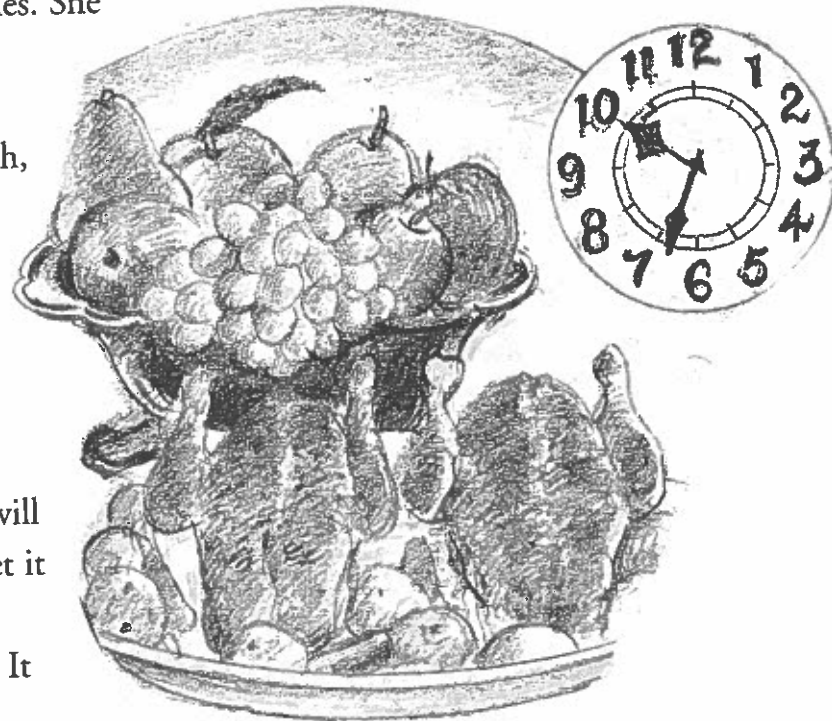
She cut off the wing with her kitchen knife. Then she thought, "I better eat this wing. I will eat it now. That will get it out of the way."

So she ate the wing. It tasted very good.

Clever Grethel looked at the bird again. "Dear me," she sighed, "how strange this chicken looks. It has one wing off. It has one wing on. Did you ever see such a funny thing? I better cut off the other wing." So she cut the wing off. Then she ate it up.

Clever Grethel went to the door again. She looked outside.

"Well," she said, "I still do not see Mr. James or his friend. I do not see them anywhere. It is getting late. Perhaps they stopped at an inn. Perhaps they are eating



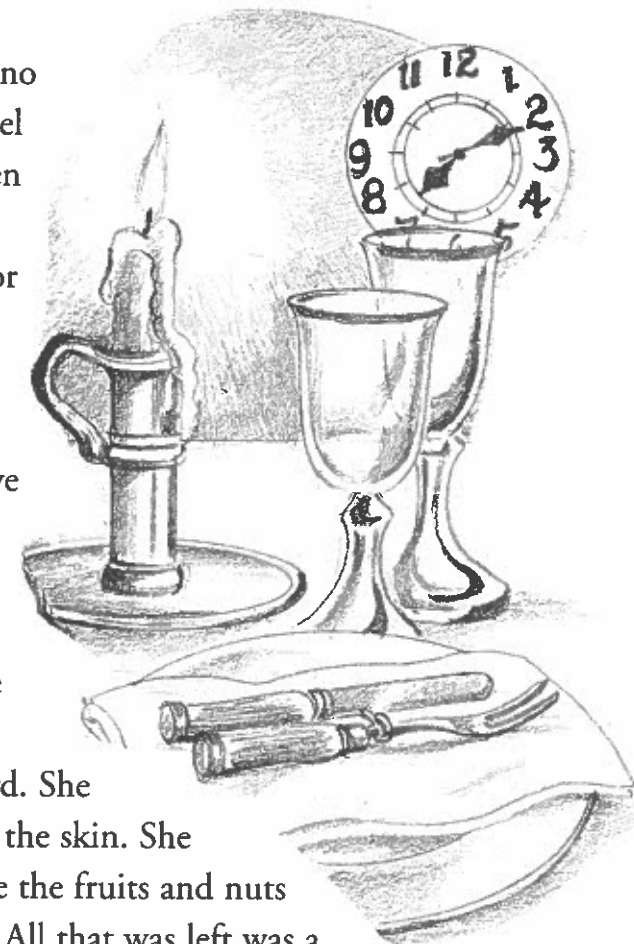
dinner there. I wonder if they are coming back. Who knows? Not me."

She looked at the birds. "Dear me," she said. "Once these two chickens looked the same. It was not possible to tell them apart. But look at them now! One has *two* wings. The other has *none*. That is not right! That is not fair! What is good for one is good for the other!"

So she cut the wings off the *other* bird. Then she quickly ate them up.

She looked at the chickens. They had no wings. Clever Grethel began to worry. Then she said to herself, "There is nothing for me to worry about. It is very late. It is too late for Mr. James's friend to have dinner here. I might as well finish eating his chicken."

That did not take Clever Grethel very long. She ate the bird. She ate it all up. She ate the skin. She ate the meat. She ate the fruits and nuts and pieces of bread. All that was left was a little hill of bones.



"Ah, well, Grethel," she said to herself. "You are a very good cook. That was a very fine meal. It surely was!"

Clever Grethel looked at the other bird. It seemed so lonely by itself. It did not even have its wings! She said, "What is fair is fair! What is good for one is good for the other!" And so she began to eat the second bird.

She ate half that chicken. Then Mr. James ran in.

"Hurry!" he called. "Hurry! Serve the food! My friend will be here in a minute or two. I see him walking up the path."

Mr. James did not stop to look around. He grabbed a large kitchen knife to carve the birds. He grabbed a little knife to sharpen the big one.

Mr. James rushed out. As he did, he yelled, "Hurry! Hurry! Bring out the dinner!"

"I can and I will," answered Clever Grethel. But she did not move. She just stood there. She thought about what to do.

Mr. James's friend knocked softly on the front door. Clever Grethel hurried to the door. She opened it. She stepped outside. She put a finger to her lips.

"*Ssshhhh!*" she told Mr. James's friend. "Do not say a word! You must listen to me. You must save yourself! Mr. James is wild with anger because you are late. The poor man has gone out of his mind. He is mad! He is *mad!* He has two knives. And he is waiting for you. He said he was going to cut off both of your ears!"



The friend turned pale. He did not move. Then he heard a sound. It came from inside the house. It was the sound of knives being sharpened against each other.

The friend turned. He ran. He ran as fast as he could go.

Clever Grethel closed the door. She went inside. "Well, Mr. James!" she cried. "That was a fine friend you invited to dinner tonight!"

"Why? What do you mean?" asked Mr. James. He was still holding the knives in his hand.

"What do I mean?" said Clever Grethel. "Just listen to this! Your friend knocked on the door. I opened it. He stepped inside. He put his nose up in the air. 'Is that roast chicken I smell?' said he. He did not say another word. He dashed into the kitchen. He grabbed the two beautiful birds that I had there. Then he ran off down the street with them!"

“Ran off down the street with them!” said Mr., James.
“Ran off down the street with *both* of the birds!”

“Ran off down the street with *both* of the birds!” said
Clever Grethel.

“He might have left me *one* for dinner,” said Mr. James.
“I only want one! I only want *one*!”

Mr. James rushed out of the house. He started running
after his friend. As he ran, Mr. James called out, “Stop! I
only want one! I only want one!”

The friend looked back. He saw Mr. James running after
him. He saw that Mr. James had two knives in his hands.
Mr. James was calling, “I only want one!”

The friend thought to himself, “He wants one of my
ears! He only wants *one*!”

This made the friend run
even faster.

At the house Clever
Grethel went into the
kitchen. There was still
half a chicken there. She
looked at it. Then she
said, “I must finish
eating this bird. I must
eat it all before Mr. James
comes back. I can and
I will.”

And Clever
Grethel did!



TELL ABOUT THE STORY.

Put an *x* in the box next to the right
answer. Each sentence tells a *fact*
about the story.

- Mr. James asked Clever Grethel
to make sure the chickens were
 a. fat and sweet.
 b. very small.
 c. ready at five o'clock
- Mr. James's friend came to the
house
 a. on time.
 b. a few minutes late.
 c. very late.
- Grethel told the friend that Mr.
James was
 a. too tired to see him.
 b. glad he was there.
 c. wild with anger.
- The friend thought that Mr.
James wanted
 a. one of his chickens.
 b. one of his ears.
 c. him to come back to the
house for dinner.

NUMBER
CORRECT

x 5 =

YOUR
SCORE

ADD WORDS TO SENTENCES.

Complete the sentences below. Fill in
each blank with one of the words in
the box. Each word can be found in
the story. There are five words and
four blanks. This means that one
word in the box will not be used.

The kitchen may be the most
important room in the _____₁.
Some families spend more time
together in the _____₂ than in
any other room. It is often the place
where the family _____₃. And
many people use the kitchen table as
a desk for _____₄.

kitchen	work
	eats
finish	house

NUMBER
CORRECT

x 5 =

YOUR
SCORE

LEARN NEW WORDS.

The vocabulary words are printed in **dark type** in the story. You may look back at the words before you answer these questions. Put an *x* in the box next to the right answer.

1. Mr. James invited a friend to dinner. The word *invited* means
 a. asked.
 b. sent.
 c. forgot.
2. She stuffed the birds with fruit and nuts. The word *stuffed* means
 a. bought.
 b. killed.
 c. filled.
3. He grabbed a kitchen knife to carve the birds. The word *carve* means
 a. fight.
 b. cut.
 c. push.
4. Grethel said that he dashed into the kitchen and took the birds. The word *dashed* means
 a. ran quickly.
 b. stayed away.
 c. looked up.

x 5 =
NUMBER CORRECT YOUR SCORE

EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED.

Here is how to answer these questions. First think about what happened in the story. Then *figure out* (work out) the right answer. This is called *critical thinking*.

1. Clever Grethel ate the birds because
 a. they were hers.
 b. she knew that Mr. James would not come back.
 c. they made her very hungry.
2. Clever Grethel probably did not
 a. enjoy eating the chickens.
 b. know how to cook well.
 c. plan to eat both birds.
3. Which sentence is true?
 a. The friend ran away with the birds.
 b. Mr. James and his friend believed Clever Grethel.
 c. Grethel left one of the chickens for Mr. James.
4. The story shows that Clever Grethel was good at
 a. making up stories.
 b. writing stories.
 c. running fast.

x 5 =
NUMBER CORRECT YOUR SCORE

SPOT STORY ELEMENTS.

Some story elements are **plot**, **character**, and **setting**. (See page 3.) Put an *x* in the box next to the right answer.

1. What happened first in the *plot*?
 a. Grethel cut off a wing.
 b. Grethel bought chickens.
 c. Mr. James ran after his friend.
2. Who is the *main character* in the story?
 a. Mr. James
 b. Clever Grethel
 c. the friend
3. Which sentence best describes (tells about) the *character* of Clever Grethel?
 a. She was a good cook who was very clever.
 b. Although she was a good cook, she was not clever.
 c. She was not clever.
4. The story is *set*
 a. in a store.
 b. at an inn.
 c. in and around Mr. James's house.

x 5 =
NUMBER CORRECT YOUR SCORE

THINK SOME MORE ABOUT THE STORY.

Your teacher might want you to write your answers.

- How did Clever Grethel get her name? Was it a good name for her? Why?
- Explain why the friend believed Clever Grethel's story.
- Why did Grethel have to finish eating the chicken before Mr. James came home?

Write your scores in the boxes below. Then write your scores on pages 138 and 139.

TELL ABOUT THE STORY
+
 ADD WORDS TO SENTENCES
+
 LEARN NEW WORDS
+
 EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED
+
 SPOT STORY ELEMENTS
=
 TOTAL SCORE: Story 7