

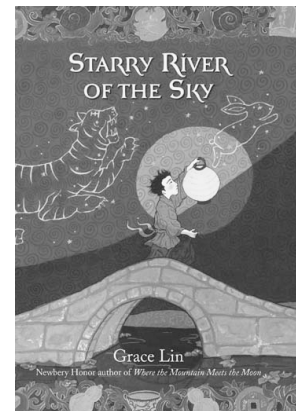


THE NOXIOUS TOAD

A Lantern Craft Activity for the Book, *The Starry River of the Sky* by Grace Lin

ABOUT THE BOOK

The Starry River of the Sky by Grace Lin (Little, Brown Books for Young Readers) is the story of the boy Rendi, who runs away from his family only to find himself in a village where the moon has disappeared. Each night, instead of seeing the moon, Rendi is troubled by mournful moans that only he can hear. The only thing that distracts Rendi are the stories of Madame Chang, many which feature mysterious stories of tadpoles, toads, and the moon. Do these stories hold hints to what has become of the moon and how to save *The Village of Clear Sky*?



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

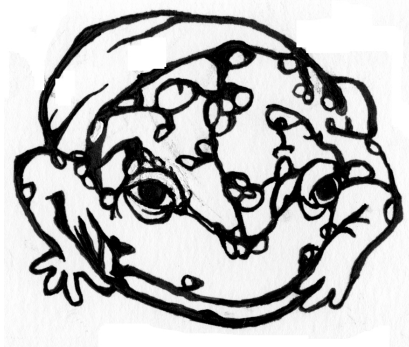
Grace Lin is the author and illustrator of picture books, early readers and middle grade novels. Grace's 2010 Newbery Honor book *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon* was chosen for the Today Show Kid's Book Club and was a NYT's Bestseller. *Ling & Ting*, Grace's first early reader, was honored with the Theodor Geisel Honor in 2011. An Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award nominee for the US, most of Grace's books are about the Asian-American experience because she believes, "Books erase bias, they make the uncommon everyday, and the mundane exotic. A book makes all cultures universal." More at www.GraceLin.com.

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Rendi is as confused as the reader when the toad he has found in the well is welcomed by old Mr. Shan and Madame Chang like an old friend. The sweet and clever toad proves to be a friend to Rendi as well when he is kidnapped. The kidnapers believe the small toad to be the Noxious Toad--a glowing creature that fills the air with its deadly poison. The kidnapers are tricked because Mr. Shan's toad has been fed fireflies and glows from within (pages 171-184). The idea for feeding the toad the fireflies must have come from Madame Chang's wonderful trick of gathering fireflies in silk to make glowing lanterns on a dark night.

Toad Lantern

Lanterns are important in the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival to celebrate the moon and all the things that symbolize it. As you might imagine after reading *The Starry River of the Sky*, rabbits and toads often symbolize the moon. Remember how Wang Yi's wife turned into a toad and leaped to the moon and what happened to Jiming when he swallowed the moon's reflection?





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Toad Lantern (cont.)

To celebrate her book, **Thanking the Moon: Celebrating the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival**, Grace Lin designed a Bunny Lantern. Search her blog for "Bunny Lantern Craft" to make this softer representation of the moon.

If, however, you want to scare your neighbors with the sight of the Noxious Toad or charm them with the sweet toad of Mr. Shan whose belly is filled with fireflies, you can follow these suggested instructions. Look for a step-by-step photographic guide to the craft at: <http://tinyurl.com/9akc9gp>. (This is the Flickr photo site of Curious City who adapted this craft and the site is perfectly safe.)

What You Might Gather:

- ___ 2 Toad Lantern Templates (Printed on regular 8.5" x 11" paper)
- ___ Scissors
- ___ Scotch Tape
- ___ Black Marker or Sharpie
- ___ 4-6 inch Light Stick Necklace, any color (yellow or green is best)
- ___ Cord or String (should come with your Light Stick Necklace)
- ___ Chopstick, Pencil, or Stick
- ___ Hole Punch (not essential, you can use a pencil or scissors to poke a hole)

What You Might Do:

Steps 1-3: Fold along the three lines indicated on the Toad Lantern Template. Fold so the flaps are on the blank side of the Toad Lantern Template.

Steps 4-5: Snip a short piece on either side of the Toad Lantern Template. Refold the flaps.

Steps 6-9: With flaps folded in, cut out the four gray triangles.

Step 10: Unfold the flaps and draw eyes and a mouth on your toad with a black marker. You might even draw some legs on the right and left (outside of the dotted lines.) The eyes go best in the rounded shapes at the top and the mouth fits best between the triangles. We wouldn't suggest coloring your toad because the color will shine through the paper from the Light Stick better without coloring.

Step 11: With flaps folded in, cut along the lines of the rounded shapes at the top that make up the toad's eye shapes.

Step 12: Punch a hole right between the toad's eyes on the gray dot. (Sorry, toad.)





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Toad Lantern (cont.)

Step 13: This is a little tricky. Freshen up your folds so that the flaps stand up perpendicular to the paper (perpendicular = how the two lines that make up the letter "L" look). Make sure the small flaps that you snipped in Steps 4-5 are tucked inside what should almost look like a shoe box top. Tape the inside corners of the "box top" so they are secure. Is your toad face on the opposite side? Good!

REPEAT Steps 1-13 on your second Toad Lantern Template.

Step 14: Put the two "box tops" back to back and wiggle one inside the other. You should have something that looks like an open cereal box now (albeit with a toad's head!).

Step 15: Tape around the outside anywhere that helps the two sections stay together.

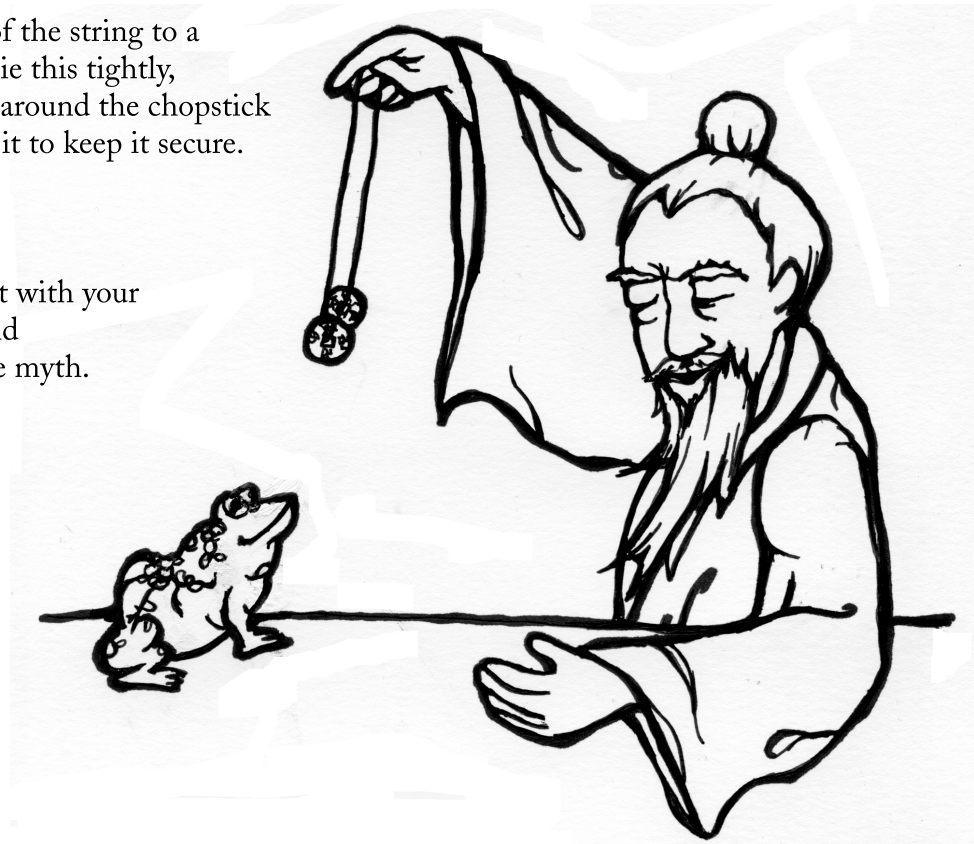
Step 16: Place the Light Stick (without the string) into the toad box.

Step 17: Take your string and thread it through one hole in the toad's head, through the light stick, and through the other hole in the toad's head.

Step 18: Tie the other end of the string to a chopstick, pencil, or stick. Tie this tightly, perhaps wrapping the string around the chopstick a couple of times and taping it to keep it secure.

How does it look?

Head outside on a dark night with your family to honor the moon and all the great toads of Chinese myth.

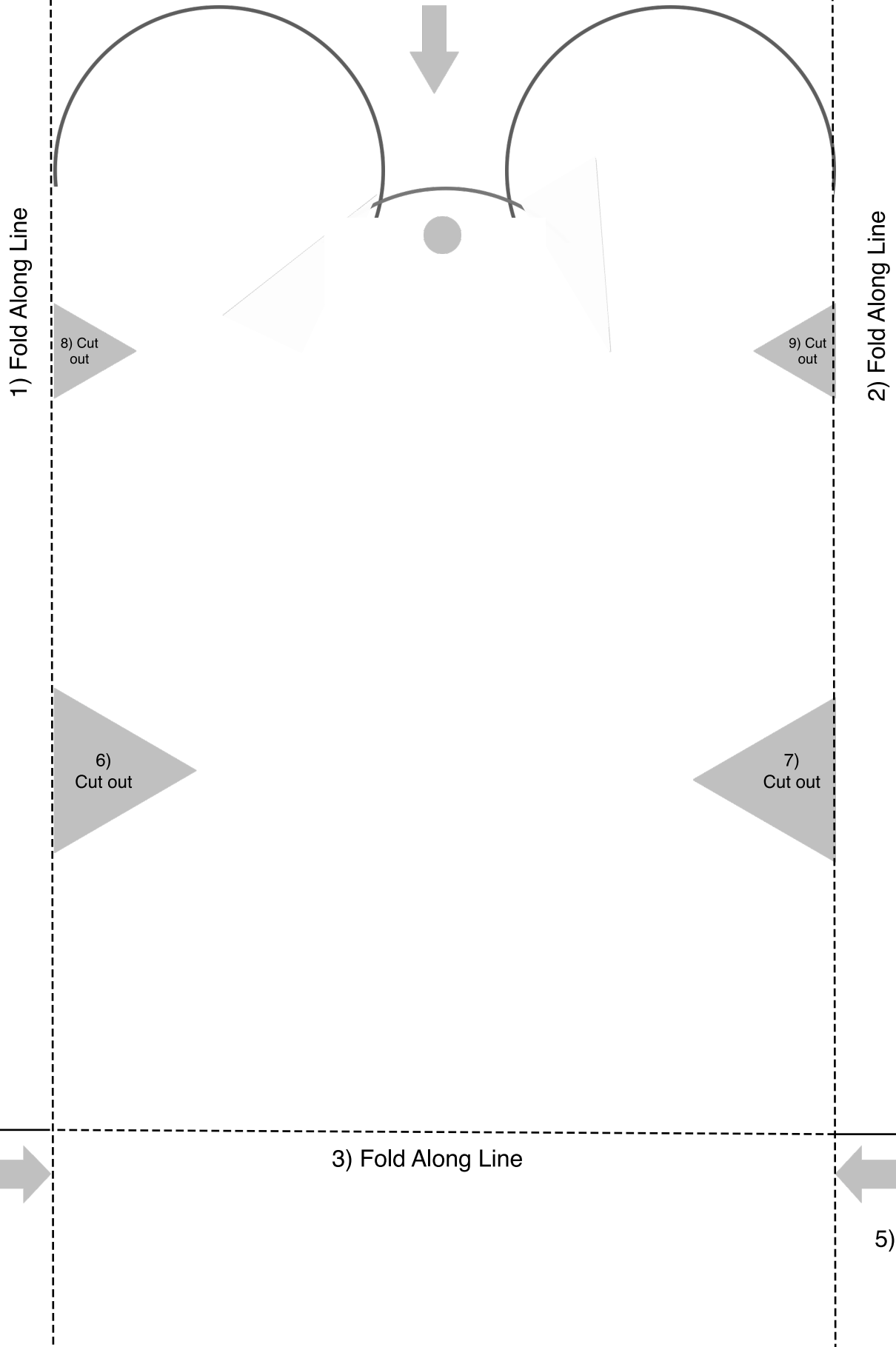


TOAD LANTERN TEMPLATE

10) Illustrate your Toad with Solid lines (no coloring)

11) Cut Along the Curved Lines

12) Punch out hole below



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