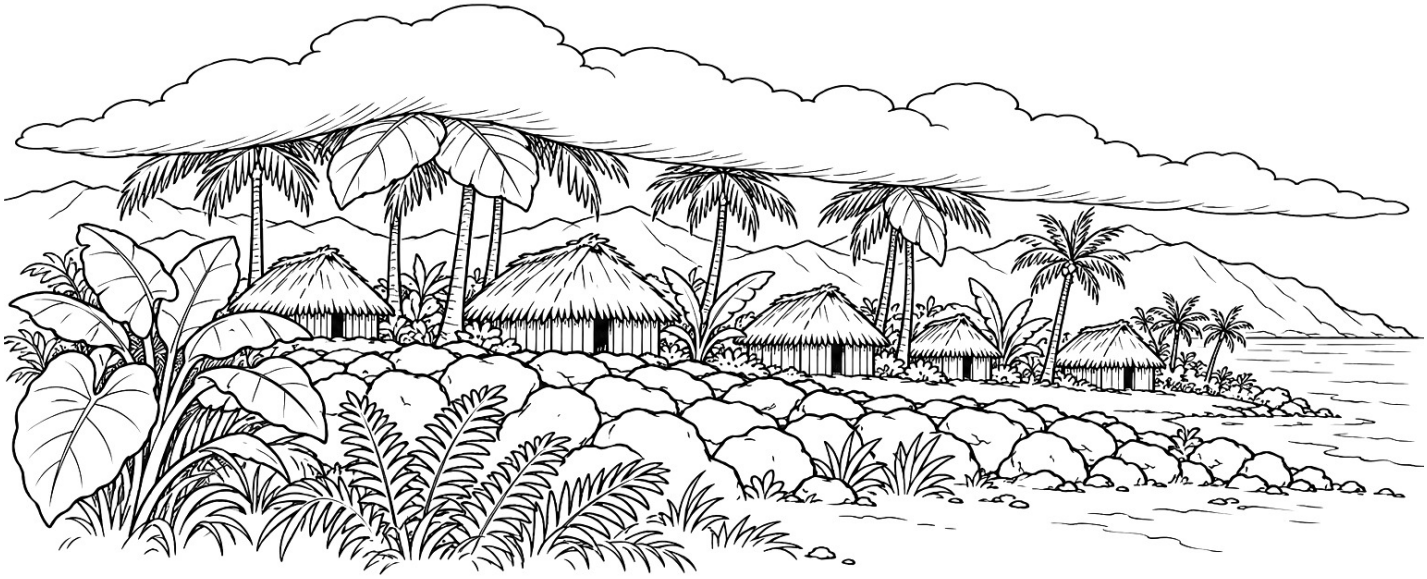
Māui

A Coloring Book



Pictures from the story in verse by Jay Fowler, for my son



But long ago, so long ago
That no one knows the day,
The sky above Hawai'i hung
Too low for work or play.

It sat on every roof and hill.
It leaned on every tree,
And pressed its great gray belly down
From mountaintop to sea.

The plants pushed back with all their might.
Each leaf pressed up so hard
It flattened out. They're flat today
In every field and yard.



The people could not stand up straight.
They crawled on hands and knees.
To visit friends next door, they crept
Beneath the squashed-down trees.

If someone stood too quickly, bonk!
The sky would knock him flat.
He'd rub his head and crawl again,
And that, he thought, was that.



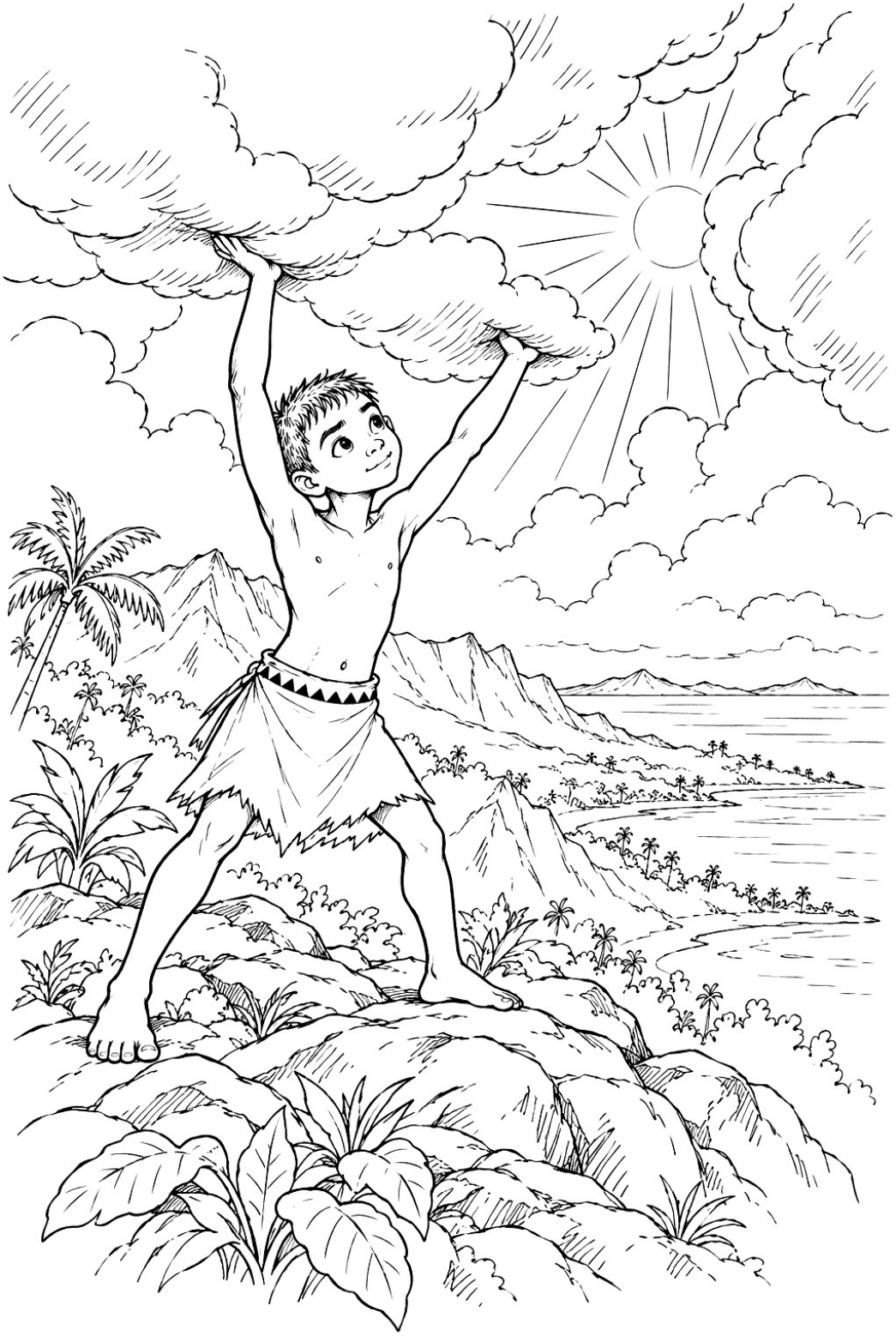
Behind a roaring waterfall,
Inside a cave of stone,
Lived Hina, making kapa cloth,
The finest ever known.

She soaked the bark of wauke trees
And pounded out a beat:
Thump, thump, till soft white kapa lay
In folds about her feet.



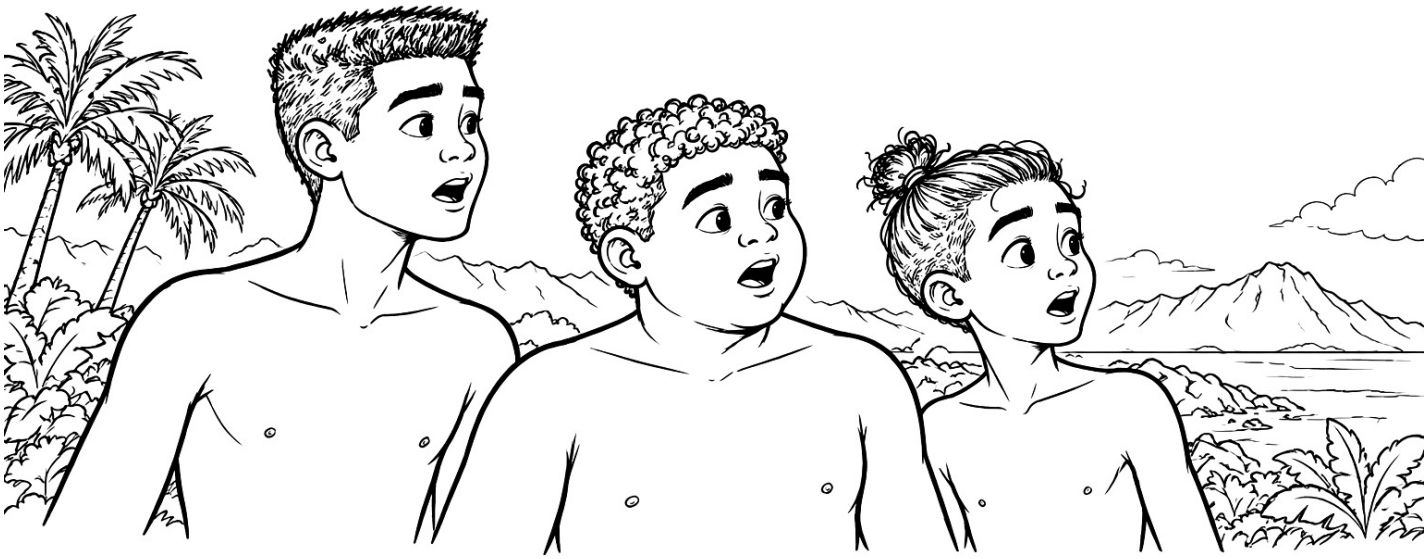
One day he lay down on his back
Beneath a leaf, to spy
On how a little hand of green
Could lift the heavy sky.

It pushed, then braced against its stem
And held the sky in place.
It rested. Then it pushed again
And won a little space.



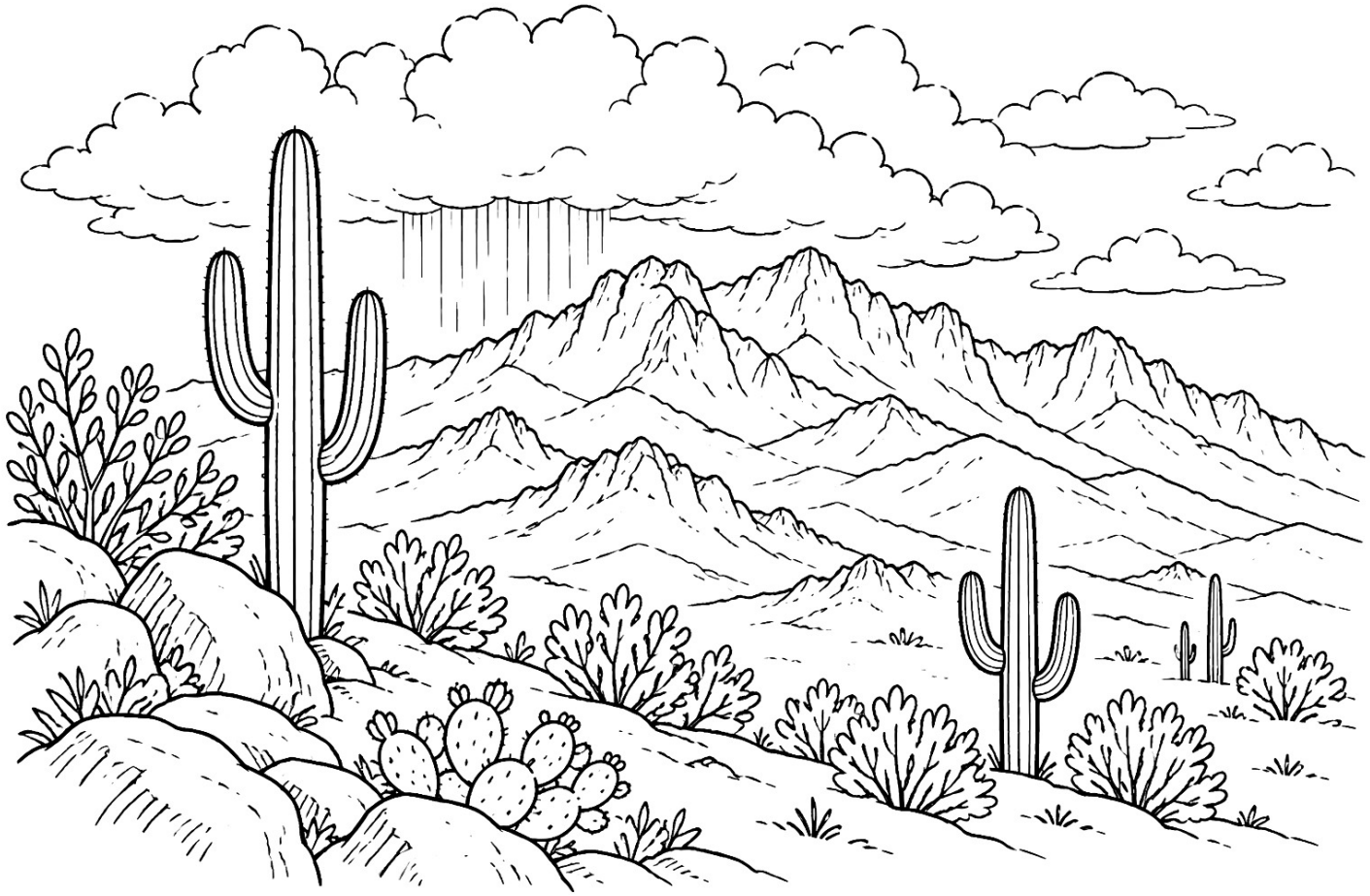
He climbed the peak and took a breath,
The biggest ever drawn.
Then, one, two, THREE! He shoved, and whoosh:
The low gray sky was gone.

Up, up it flew! The heavy gray
Unfolded into blue.
And there it stays, with room for birds
And trees, and me, and you.



His brothers ran to where he stood.
(They ran! They didn't crawl!)
They asked him, "How?" "The leaves," he said.
"I watched them. That was all."

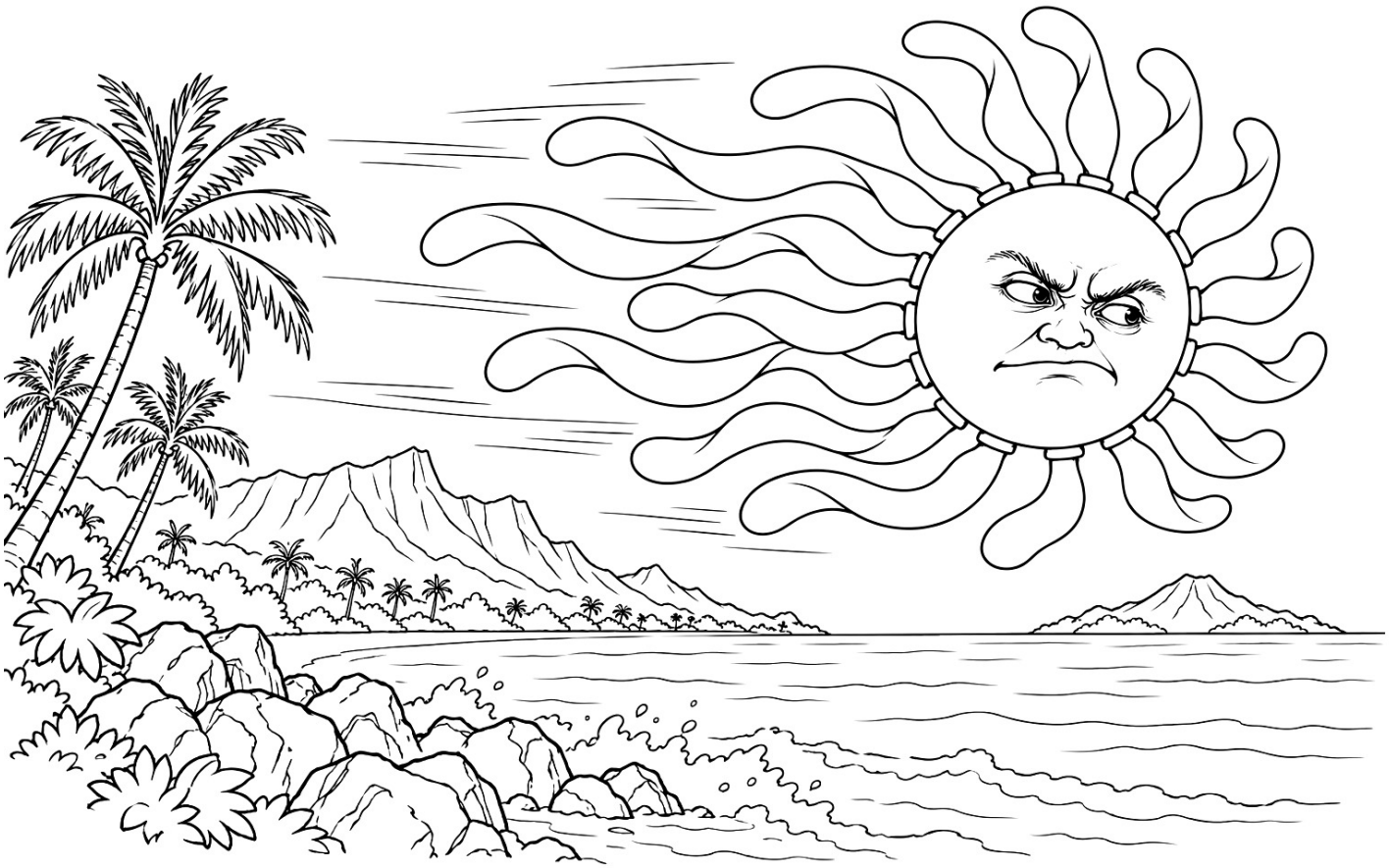
They looked at him. They looked up high.
They looked at him once more.
And not one brother said the word
That they'd all said before.



Still, sometimes clouds come drifting down
To rest on mountaintops,
And rain on everything below
In big, fat, heavy drops.

You've seen the Catalinas wear
Their summer caps of gray.
But not for long. The rain comes down;
The clouds must drift away.

For clouds remember Māui's hands
And know that he just might
Come back and give another shove
And toss them out of sight.



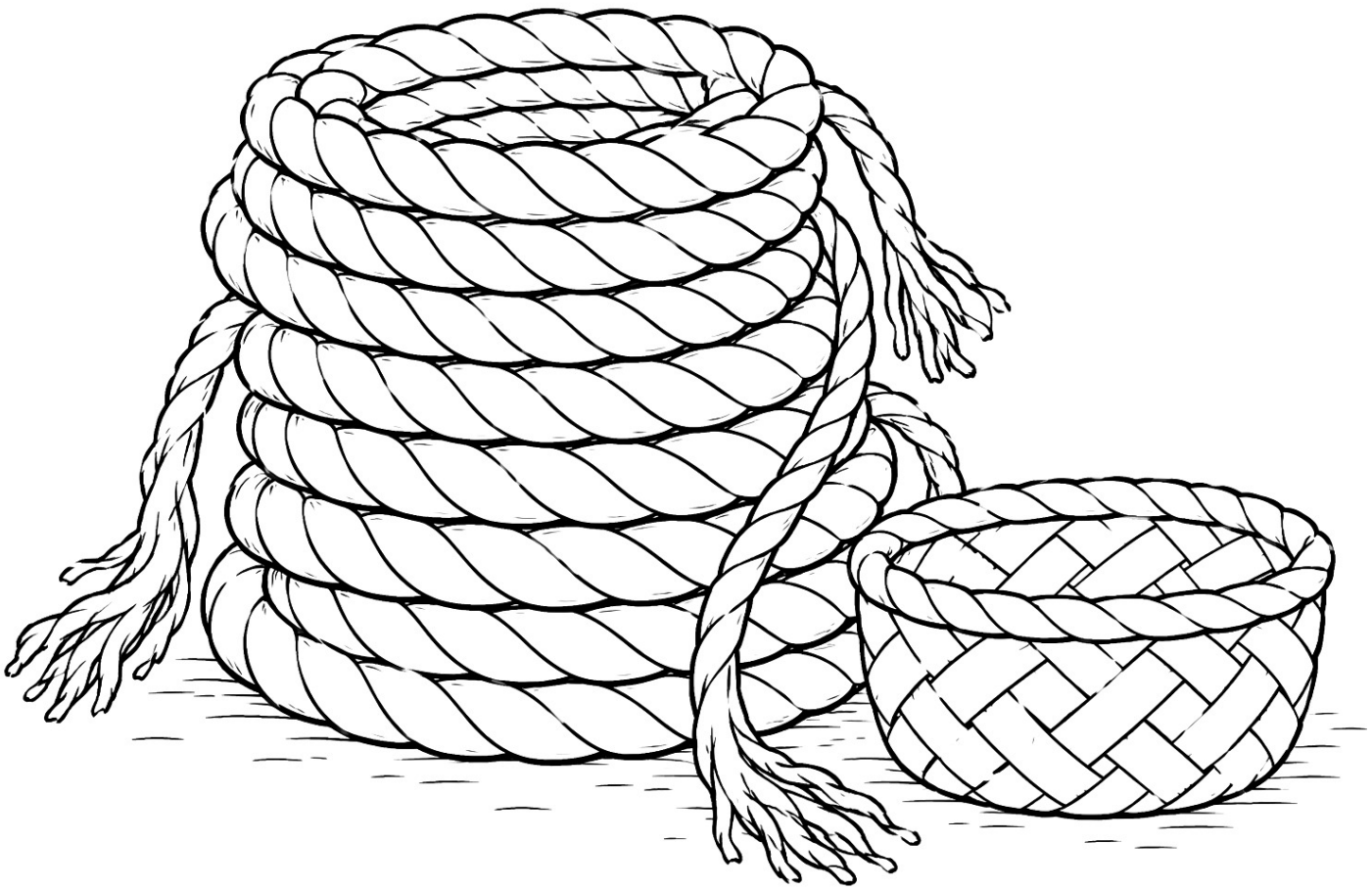
Now that the sky was high and blue,
The sun had room to run.
He took the morning in one stride,
The afternoon in one.

He popped up in the east. A flash!
Then streaked across the sky,
And dropped behind the western waves
Before you blinked an eye.



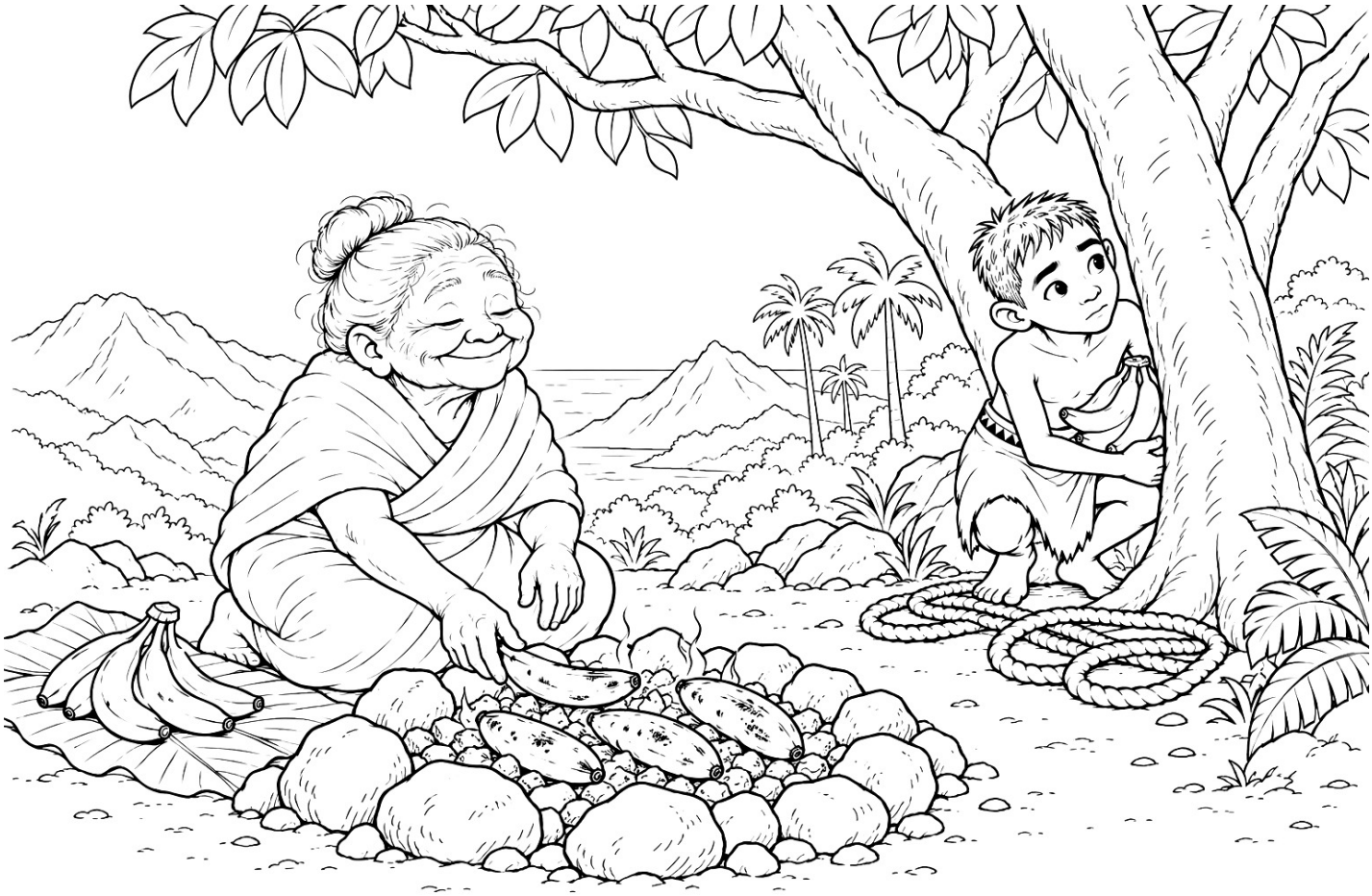
He paddled through the flying spray
And crests of curling foam,
And found an island with his name,
Far off from Hina's home.

He climbed a high green ridge, and watched
The dawn come, day by day,
And every dawn the sun came up
Along the same old way:



"Are you that strong?" "I am." She smiled,
And brought out from the back
Fifteen long ropes of coconut,
All coiled up in a stack.

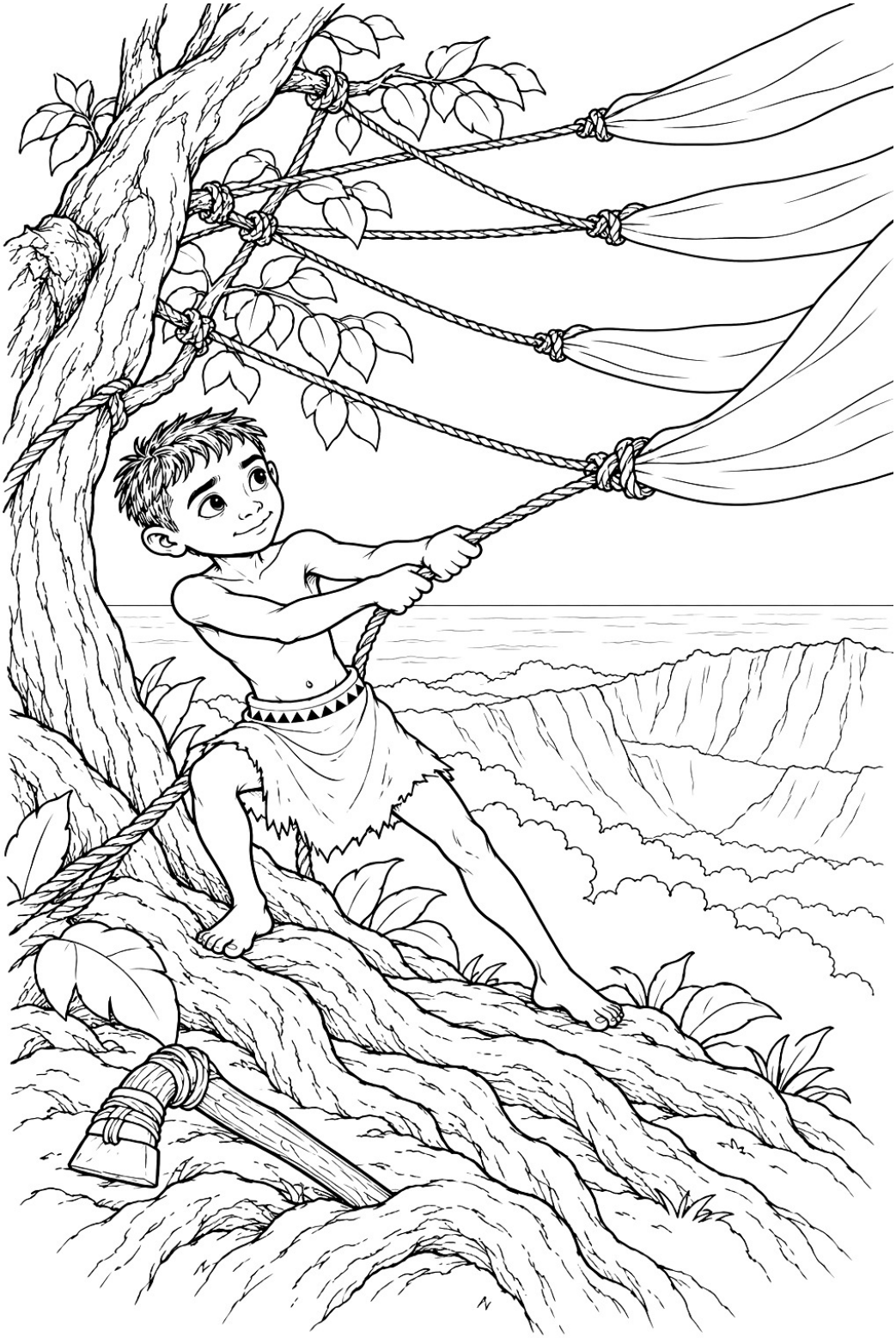
"That's fifteen," Māui said. "He has
Sixteen. I need one more."
"Your grandma," Hina said, "has just
The rope you're looking for.



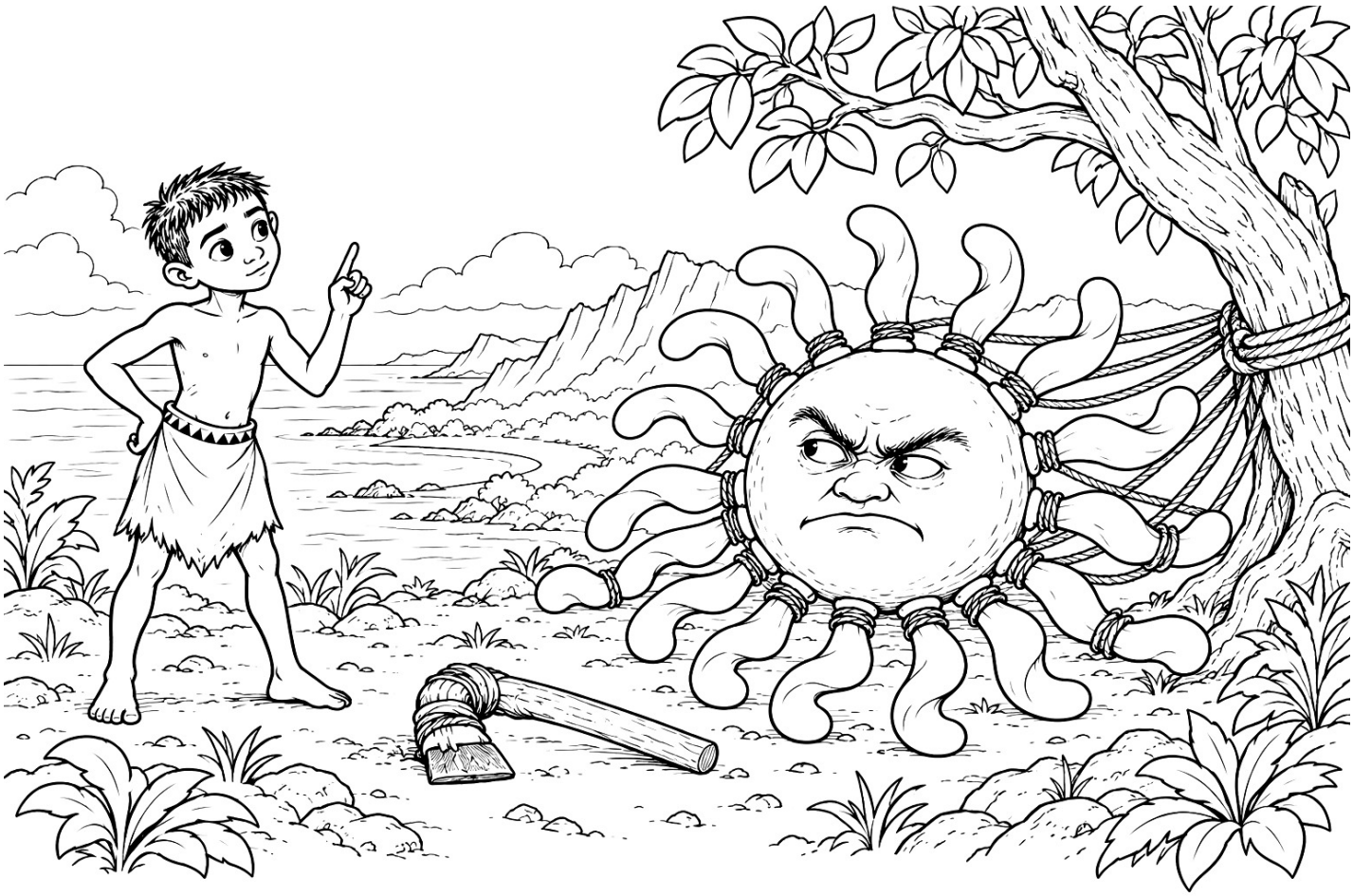
She was so old she couldn't see
Much more than dark and light.
She set bananas down to cook;
He whisked them out of sight.

She set down more. They vanished, too.
She set down more. All gone!
"Who's taking breakfast from the sun
Before the break of dawn?"

She sniffed the air, and sniffed, and smiled.
"Somebody's here," she said.
"Come out, come out! Whose child are you?"
And Māui raised his head.



The last leg scraped the crater's side.
It shook and strained and slipped.
At last it hooked across the rim.
Swish! Grandma's rope. It gripped!



"I'll let you go," said Māui, "if
You promise to go slow."
"But I'm a runner!" cried the sun.
"Why, running's all I know!"

So Māui thought. "In summer, walk
And take a slower pace.
But when the winter comes around,
You'll have your turn to race."



Then Hina spread her kapa out,
And long before the night
It all was dry, and warm, and stiff,
Like paper, crisp and white.

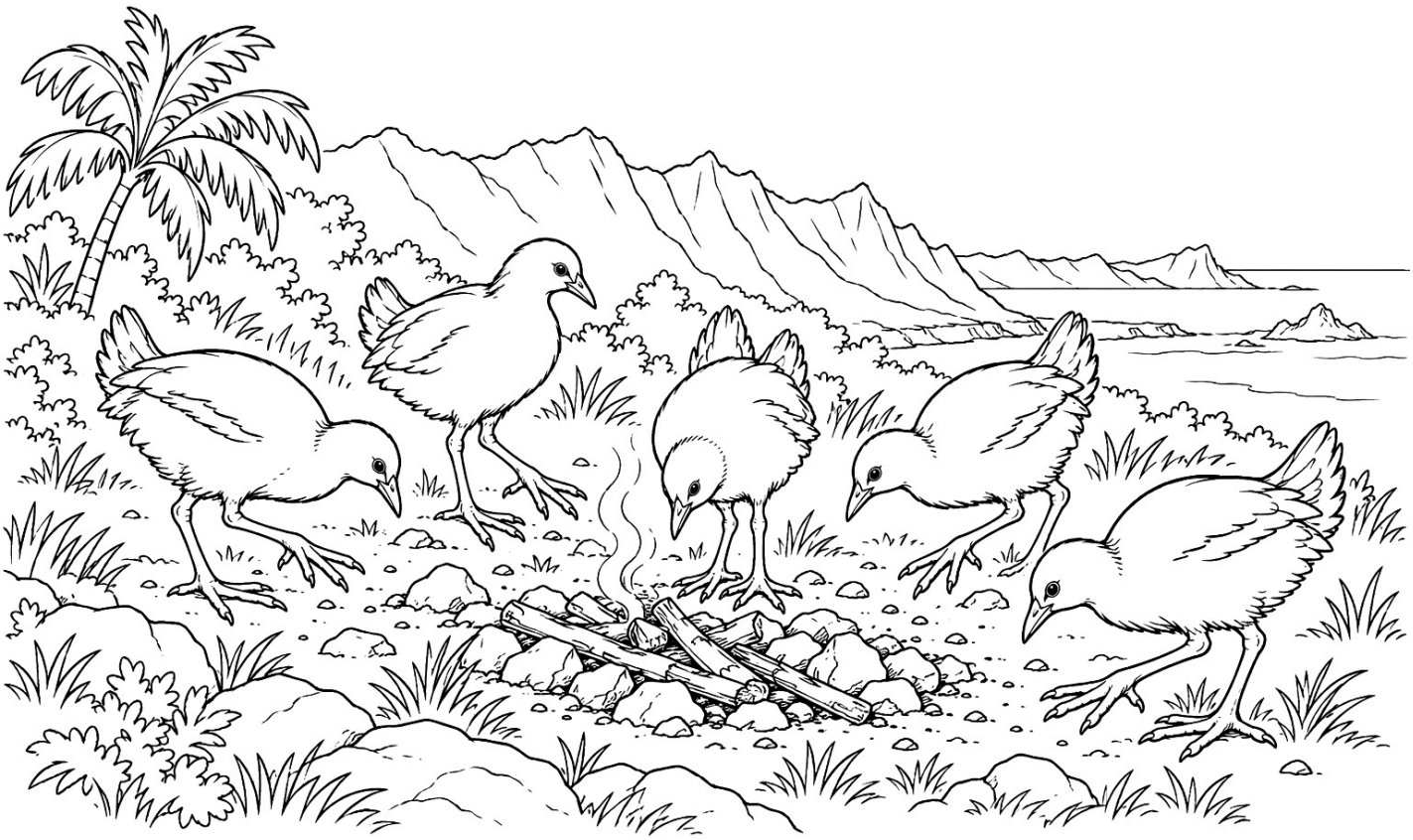


That mountain's Haleakalā:
"House of the Sun." And now
The sun peeks out before he dares
To climb its rocky brow.



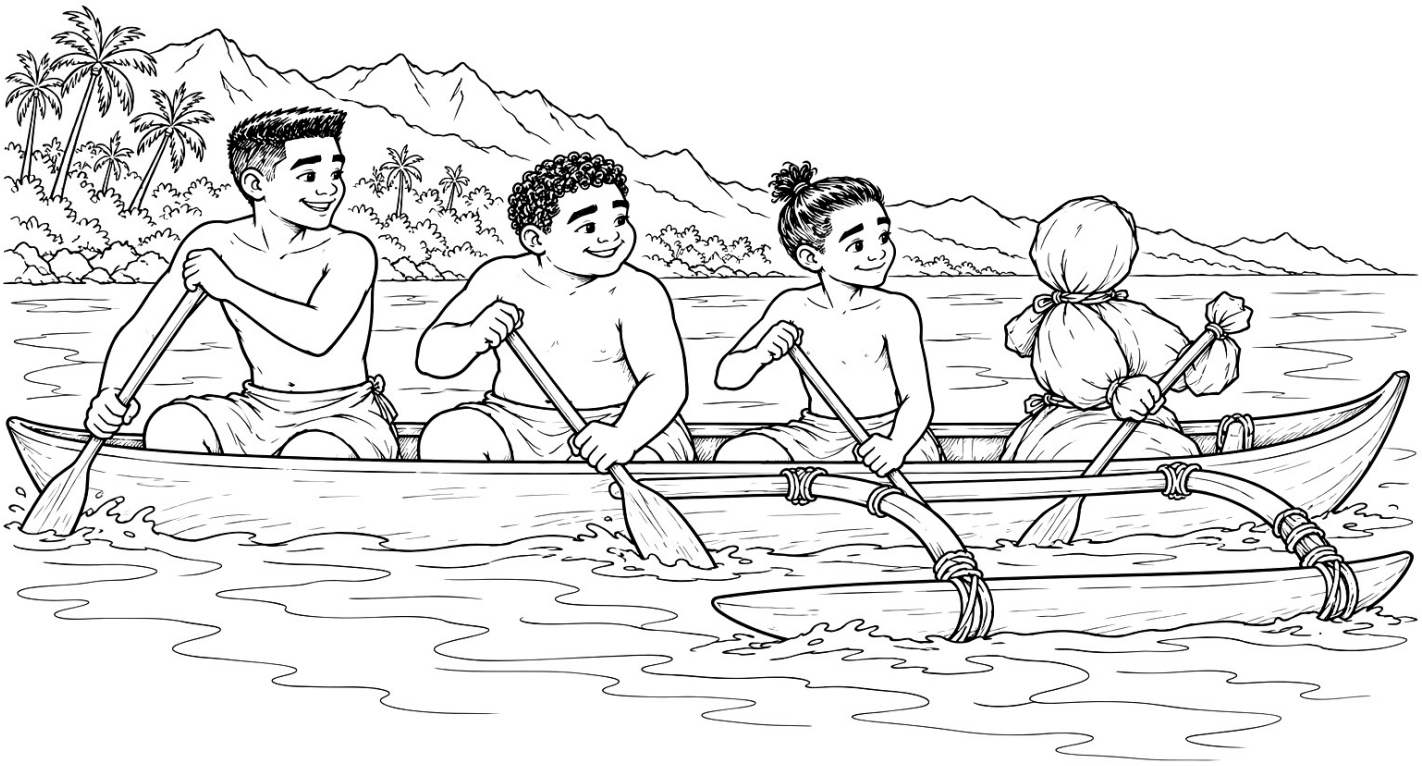
One dawn, the brothers paddled out,
All four, to fish at sea,
When Māui pointed back to land.
“Look there! What can that be?”

Up on the mountainside, a thread
Of smoke rose, thin and gray,
And at its foot, a little fire
Was flickering away.



He found a flock of mudhens there,
Their feathers black as soot.
They kicked dirt on the fire, scratch, scratch,
With every busy foot.

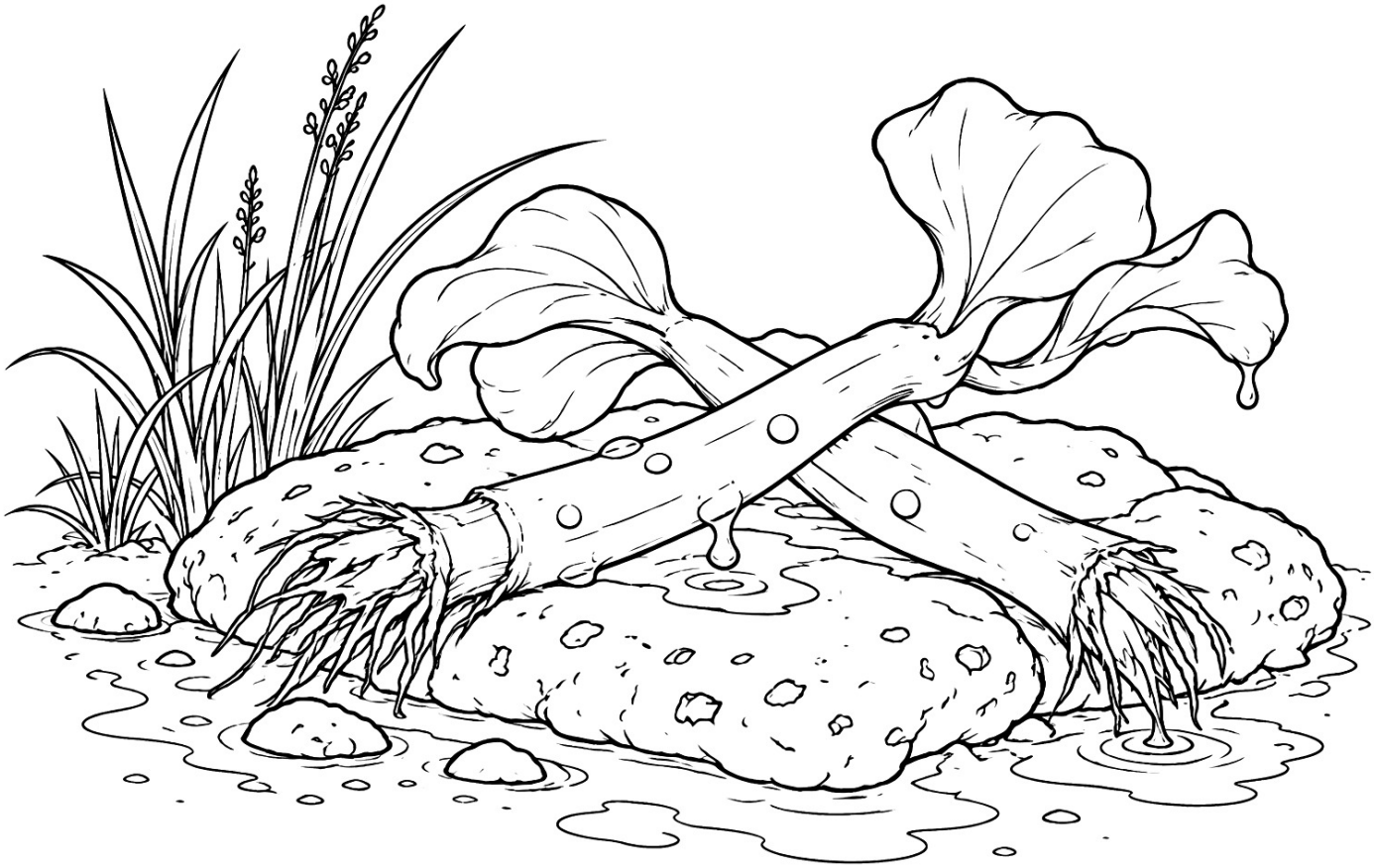
The last smoke drifted off. The birds
Flapped up and flew away,
And Māui stared at trampled ash.
No fire for him that day.



He sat it up in the canoe.
His brothers stared. "Who's that?"
"That's Māui Number Four," he said,
And gave its head a pat.

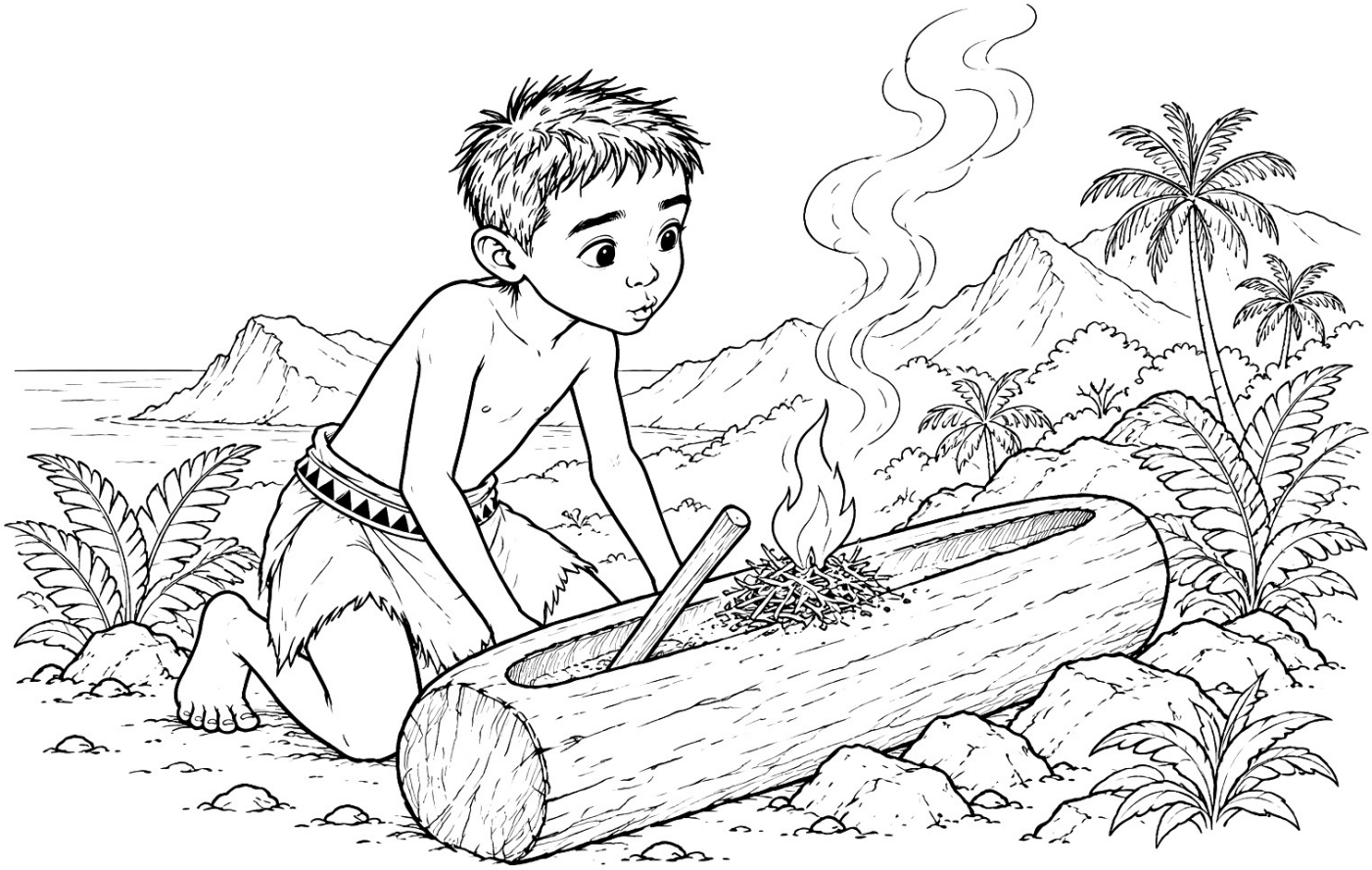
"Now paddle out, all three of you.
Take Number Four along.
They'll count four heads. I'll hide right here.
It simply can't go wrong!"

The brothers paddled out. The birds
Peered down. "One, two, and three…
And four! All four are out at sea!"
"Now, fire!" they clucked with glee.



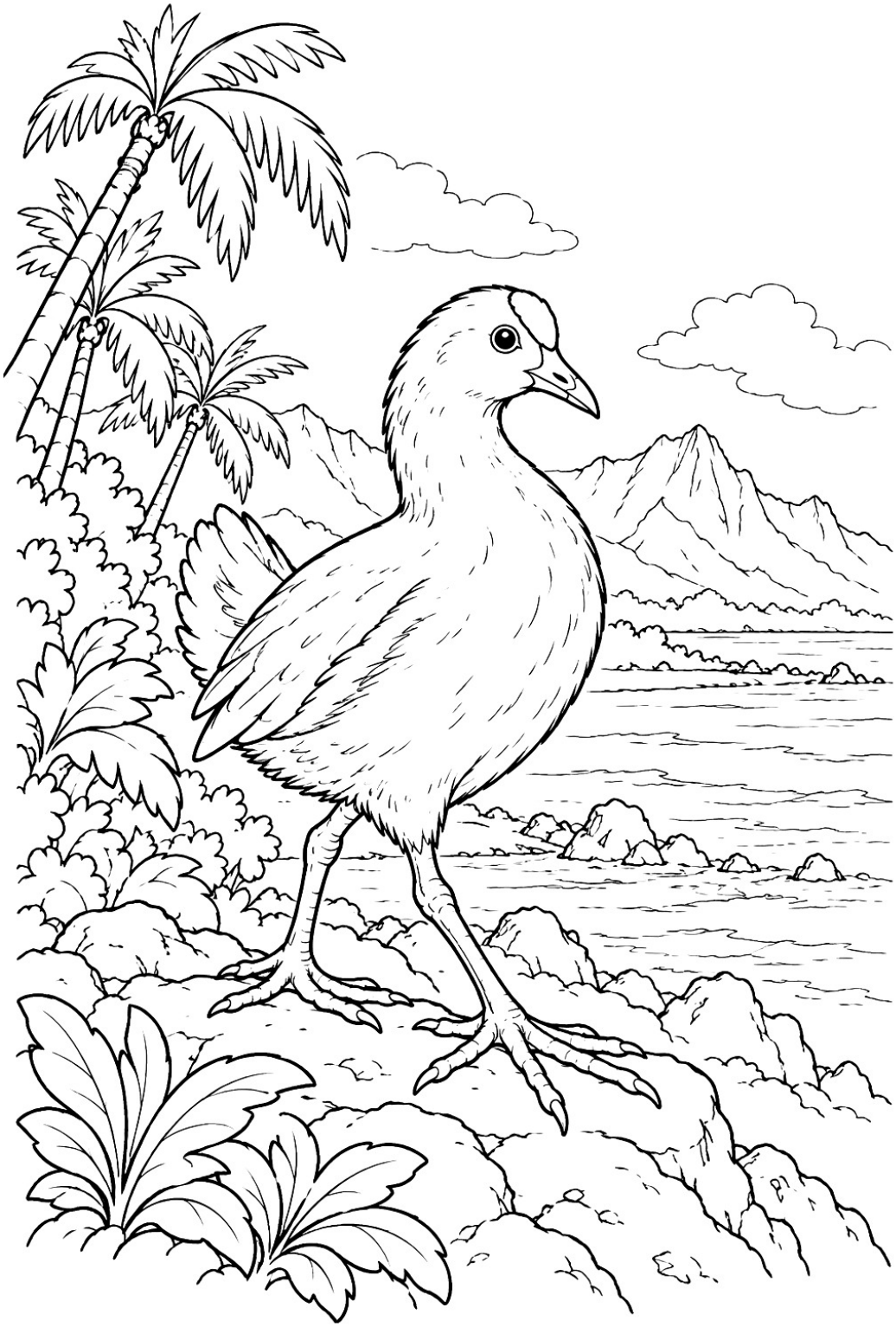
"Then tell the truth, and you'll go free,"
Said Māui. "That's my word."
"Rub stems of water plants," she said.
(She was a tricky bird.)

He rubbed two stems. They squished and dripped,
And water trickled out.
He gave her neck a twist. "Try reeds!"
She squawked, "They'll smoke! Watch out!"



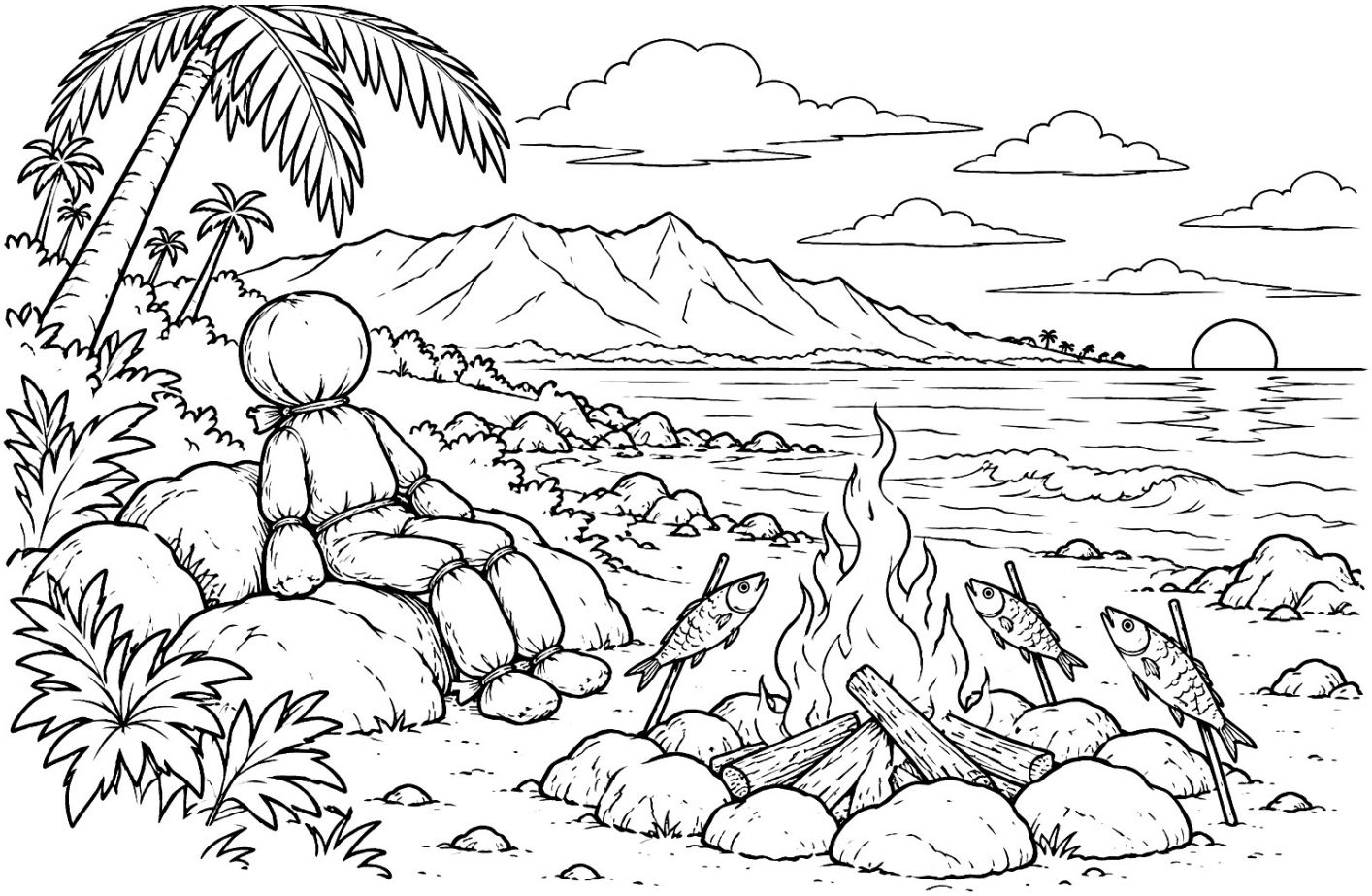
He pinned the hau beneath his feet
And plowed, and plowed, and plowed.
The dust piled up. It smoked! It glowed!
He whooped and laughed out loud.

He blew on it, so soft, so soft,
And fed it grass until
A flame sprang up, all gold and red,
And crackled on the hill.



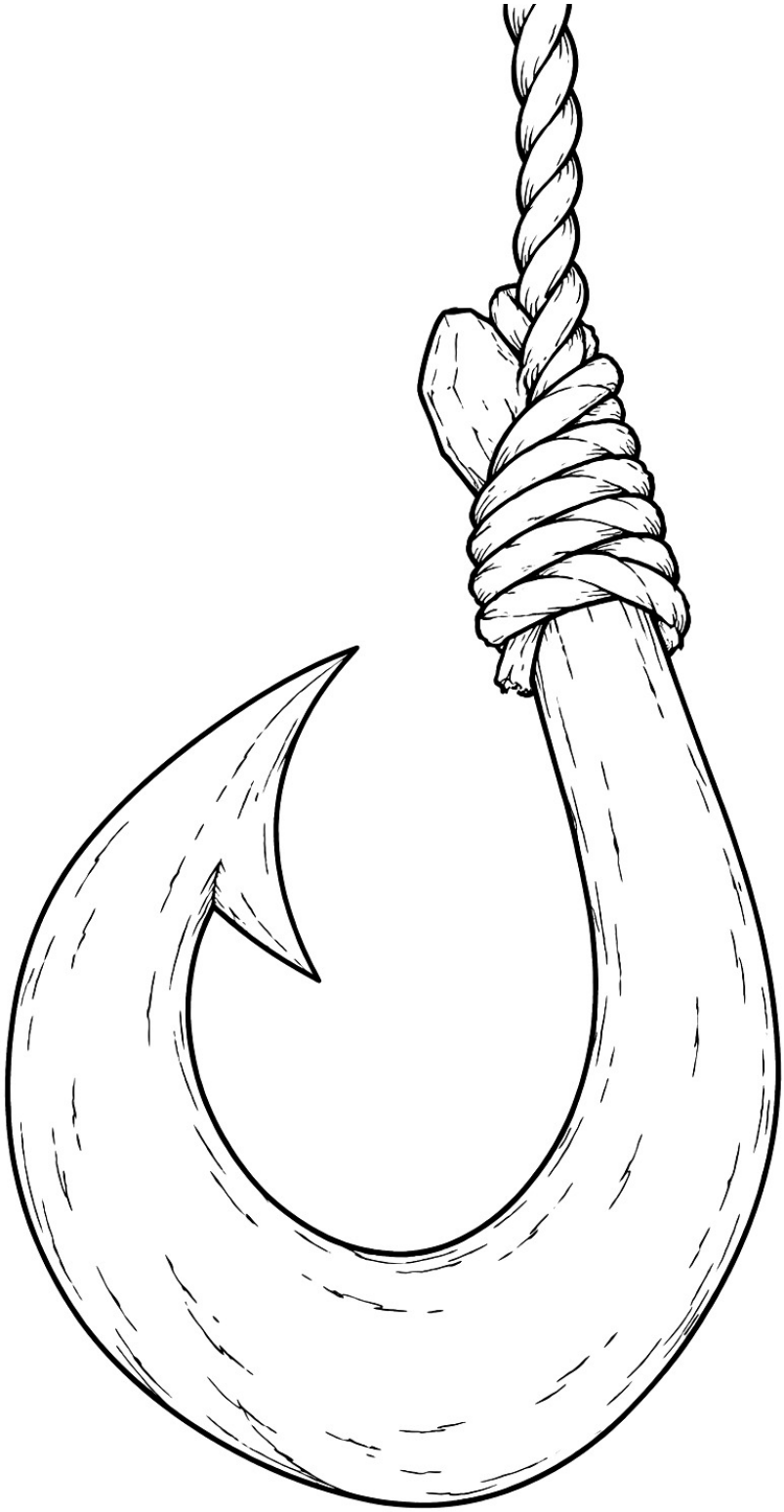
He rubbed until her forehead turned
As red as fire could be.
And though she'd fibbed and fibbed and fibbed,
He set the mudhen free.

That's why the mudhen wears a patch
As red as coals that glow.
At Sweetwater her cousins swim,
And wear it, too, you know.



That first night, every fish was cooked,
All smoky, hot, and sweet,
And everybody gathered round
The fire to warm their feet.

And Māui Number Four? He sat
Beside them, propped up tall,
Well back from flying sparks, of course.
He never talked at all.



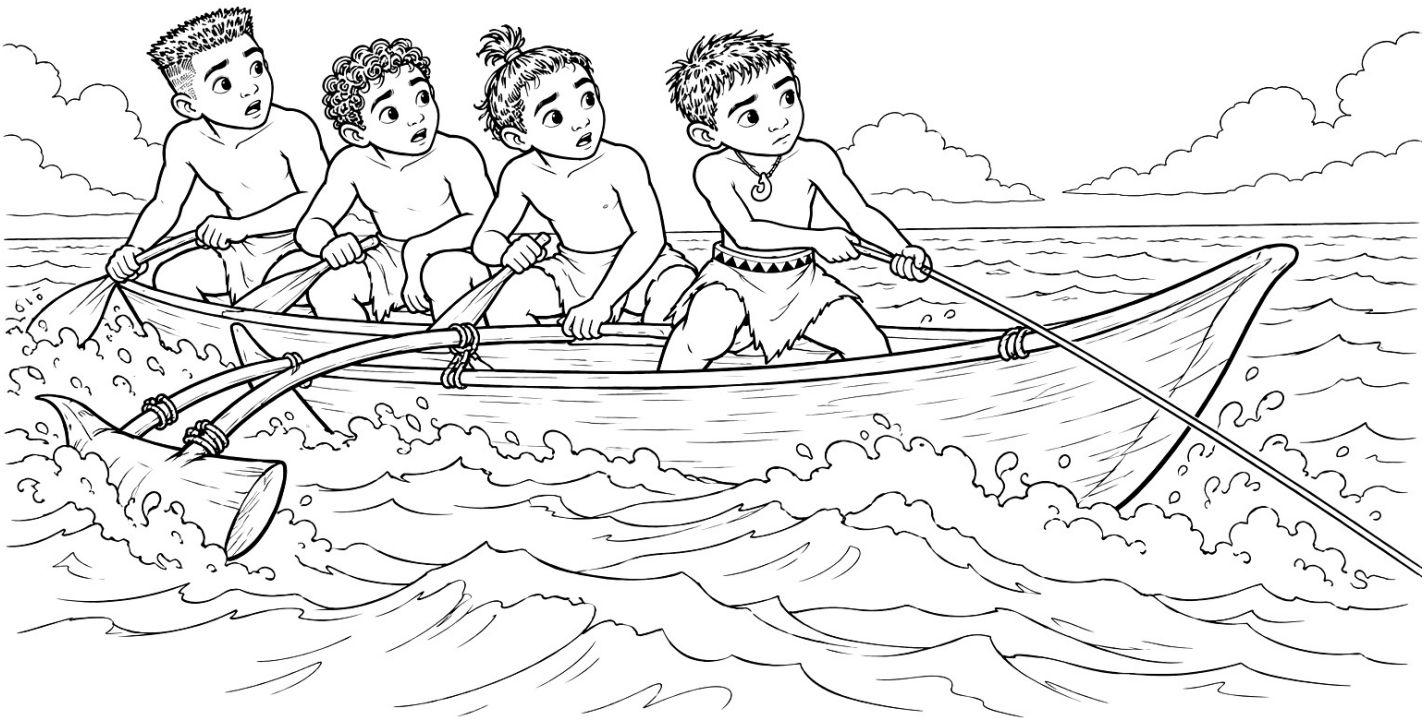
His father brought it out: a hook
Of bone, its barb bent back.
"What bites on this stays on," he said.
"Don't let the line go slack.

"It's Mānaiakalani, son.
That means 'tied to the sky.'
For bait, use Hina's red-billed bird.
Then let it down and try."



He swam to shore. And that same night,
The brothers paddled in
With just one skinny little shark,
All teeth and tail and fin.

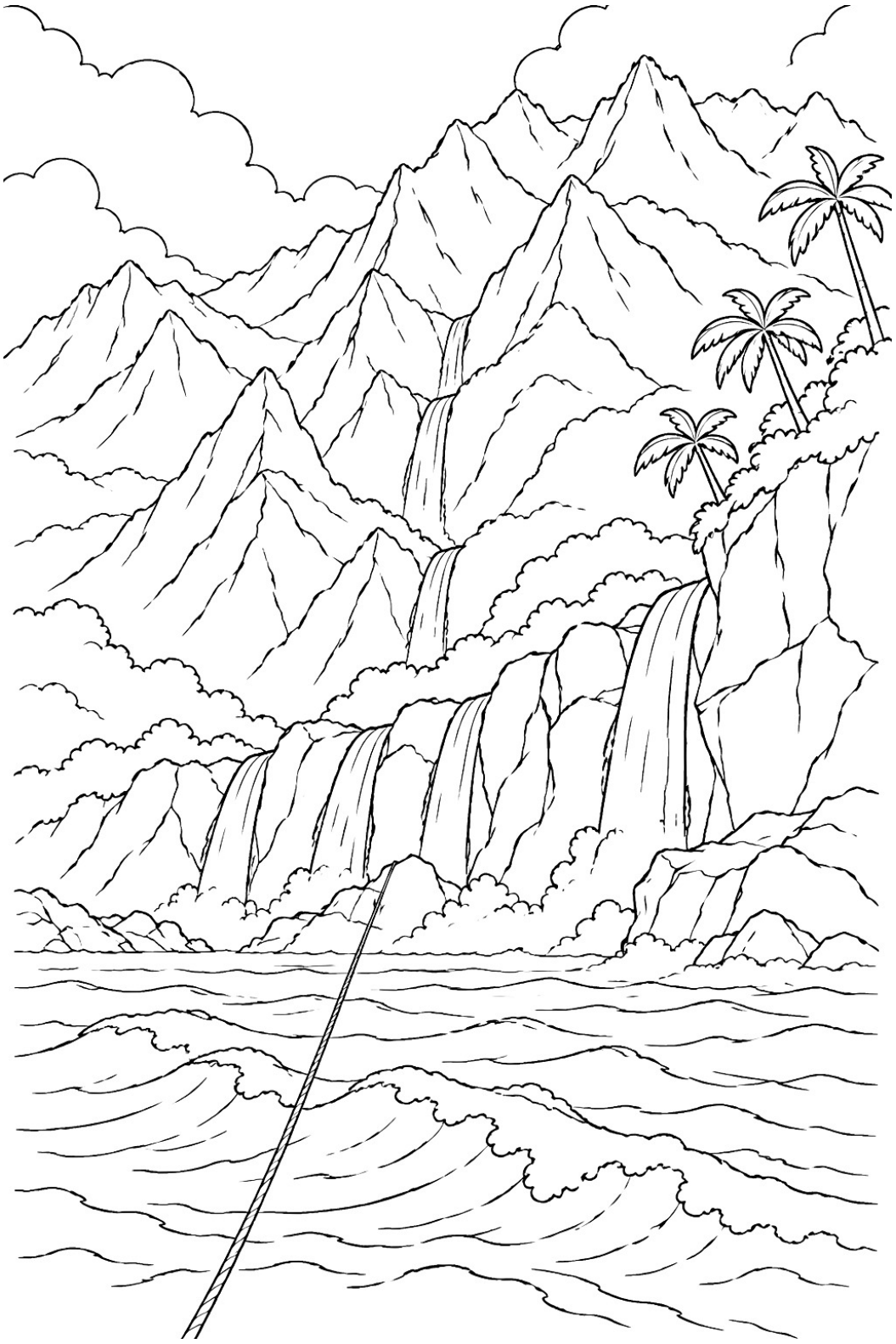
"Take me tomorrow," Māui said,
"And I will catch a fish
As big as anything you've seen,
As big as you could wish."



The ocean heaved. Great waves reared up
And crashed and roared and splashed.
Then something hauled the whole canoe.
Away! Away it dashed!

It towed them all that day and night,
And all the next day, too.
"Pull in! Pull in!" his brothers begged.
But Māui held. He knew.

"Pull now, and it will pull back hard
And snap the line," he said.
"We'll let it run until it tires.
Then we'll pull in, instead."



They paddled hard. Behind them swelled
A deep and grinding roar:
The sound of mountains breaking free,
The sea becoming shore.

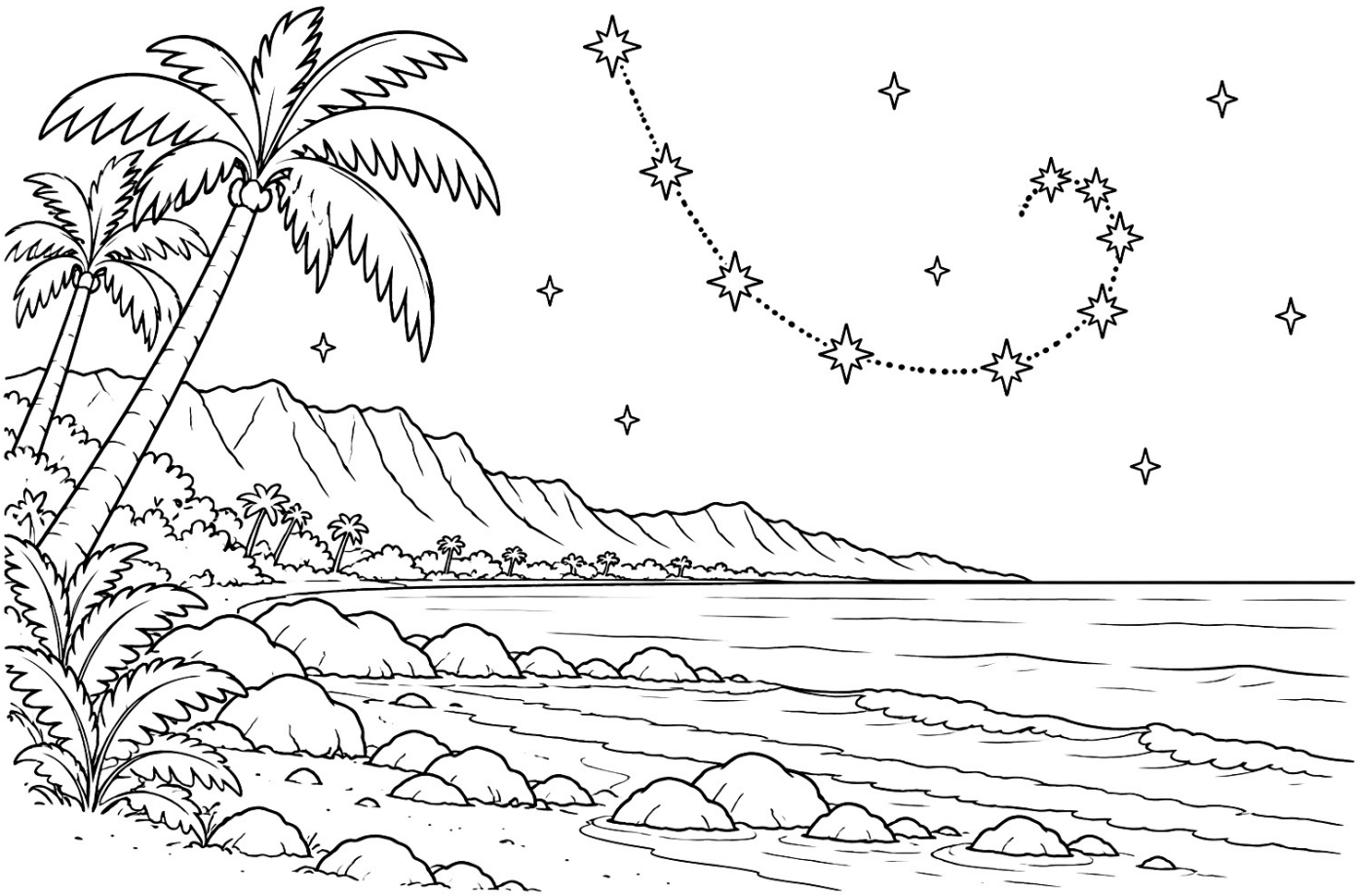
Up rose the mountains, wet and steep,
Between the isles they knew.
Up heaved the valleys, ridges, cliffs,
And still the new land grew.



What might have been one stretch of land,
All joined from side to side,
Was now a chain of islands, split
By channels deep and wide.

Hawai‘i, home, was there before,
And Maui, with his name.
But all along the broken line,
Four brand-new islands came:

First Moloka‘i broke the waves.
Lāna‘i rose in view.
O‘ahu rose. Kaua‘i rose.
And each was green and new.



And Mānaiakalani? When
The line snapped, up it flew,
And caught the sky and held on fast,
As hooks like that will do.

On summer nights, look south and low,
And there, in stars, you'll spy
The hook that hauled the mountains up,
Still fastened to the sky.



But up the river, in the pools,
Lived Kuna, long and gray,
A giant lizard, thick with scales,
Who snapped and splashed all day.

One stormy day, mean Kuna shoved
A boulder from the top.
It crashed and jammed below the falls
And made the river stop.

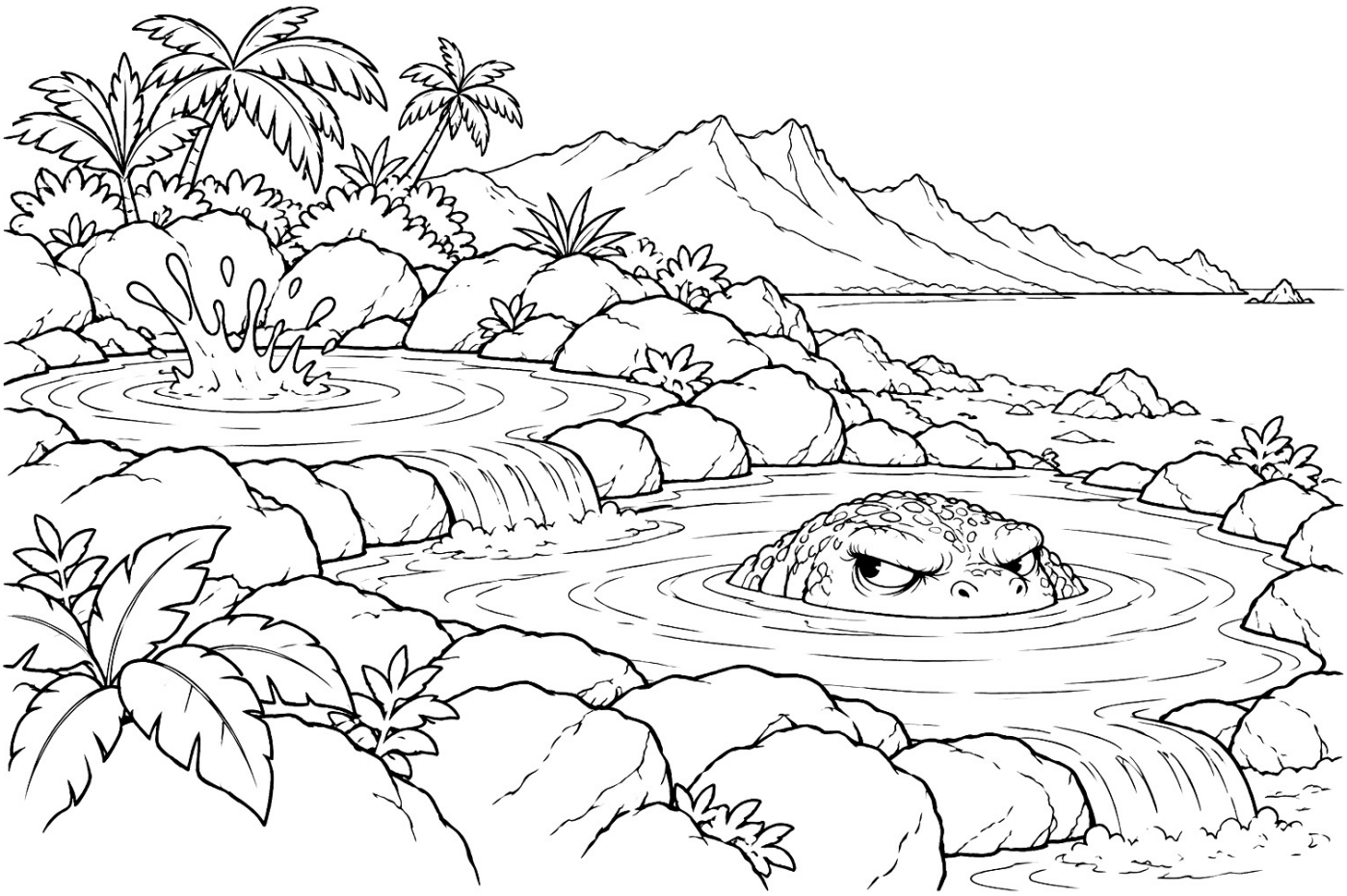


Far off on Maui, Māui heard.
He grabbed his paddle. Swish!
One stroke! Two strokes! Across the sea
He skimmed like a flying fish!



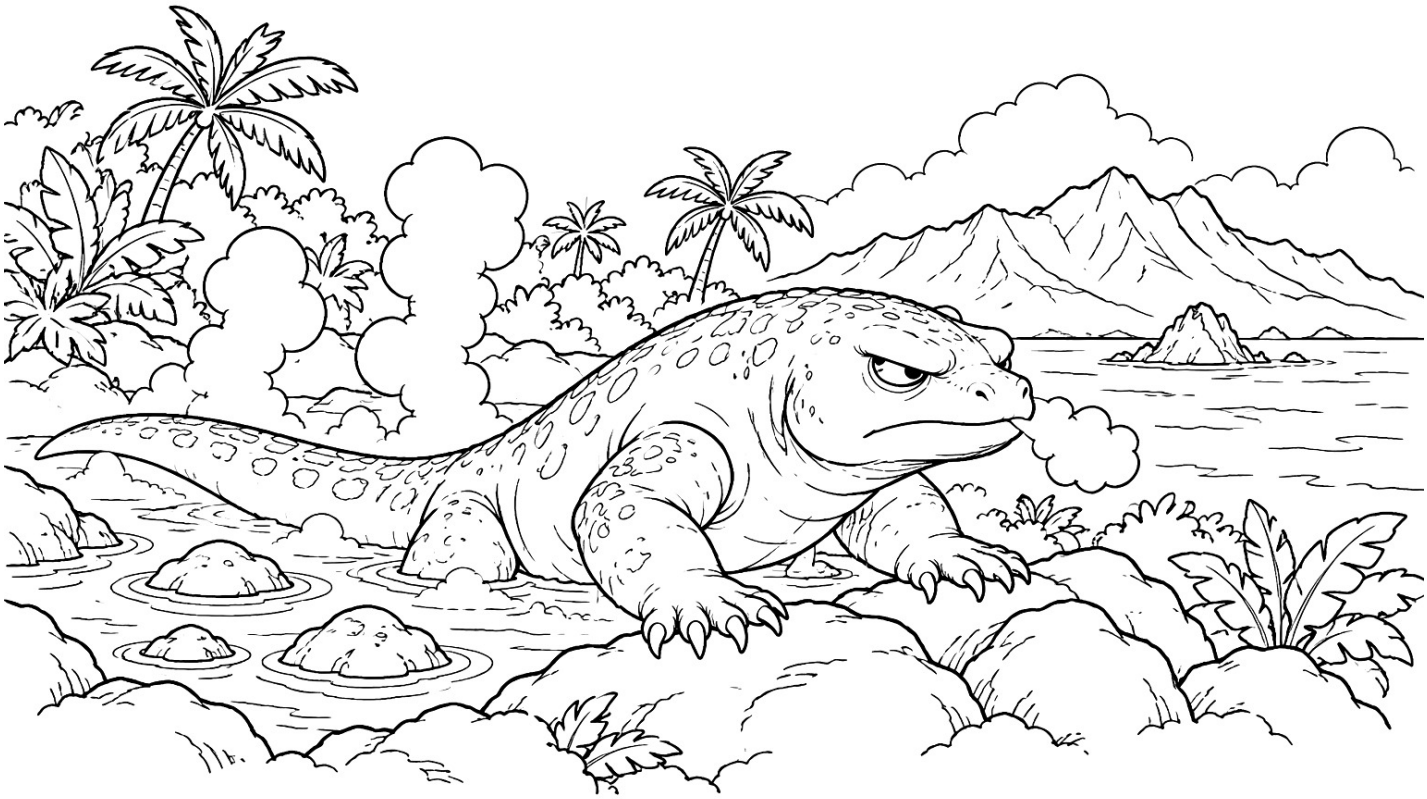
He climbed the bank beside the rock
And SMASH! One mighty blow!
The bank split open. Now the stream
Had somewhere new to go.

Whoosh! Through the gap the river rushed
And tumbled on its way.
The water drained from Hina's cave.
She stepped out through the spray.



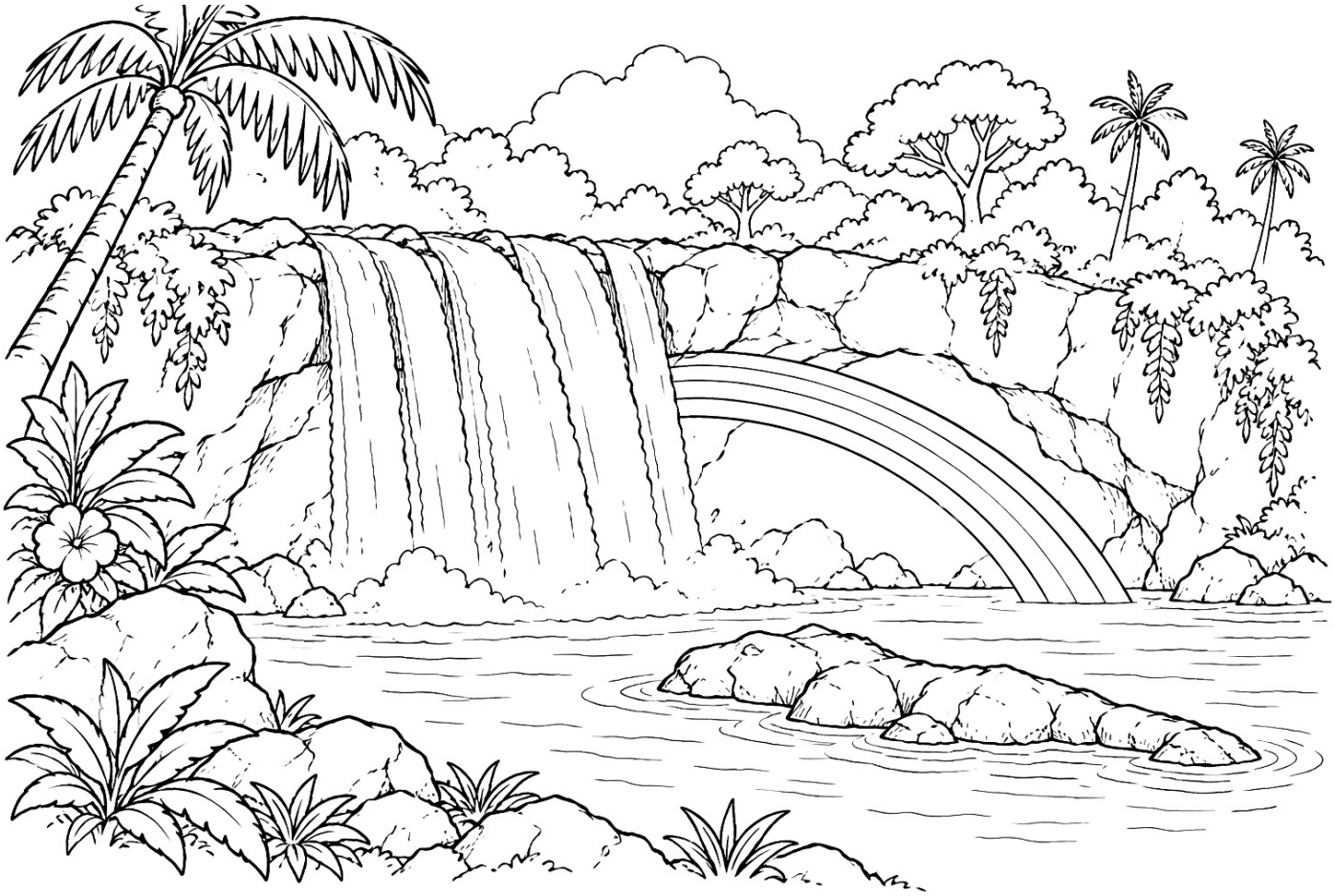
He jabbed his spear down. Splash! Too deep!
He couldn't reach the floor.
And Kuna slithered out and hid
Inside the pool next door.

He'd find him, jab, and miss, and off
Old Kuna slid again.
From pool to pool, the same old game,
Through eight, through nine, through ten!



He called to Pele, queen of fire.
"Hot stones, please!" Māui said.
She sent them tumbling to his feet,
All glowing orange-red.

He tossed them in. Hsss! Blub! Blub! Blub!
The water churned and steamed.
The pools all bubbled up and boiled,
And Kuna leaped and screamed!



He landed in the pool below,
In front of Hina's cave,
And there he turned to solid stone:
A rock that must behave.

And if you go to Hilo now,
To Rainbow Falls, you'll see
That rock still sitting in the pool,
As still as still can be.

Upriver, those round pools still foam
And churn and bubble so
That they've been called the Boiling Pots
Since long, long, long ago.



And Māui? Some days, by the falls,
He'd lie back in the dew
And watch a leaf, a root, a stone,
And wonder what they knew.