Tsuru no Ongaeshi

Long, long ago in a far off land there lived a young man. One day, while working on his farm, a brilliant white crane came swooping down and crashed to the ground at his feet. The man noticed an arrow pierced through one of its wings. Taking pity on the crane, he pulled out the arrow and cleaned the wound. Thanks to his care the bird was soon able to fly again. The young man sent the crane back to the sky, saying, "Be careful to avoid hunters." The crane circled three times over his head, let out a cry as if in thanks, and then flew away.
As the day grew dark the young man made his way home. When he arrived, he was surprised by the sight of a beautiful woman whom he had never seen before standing at the doorway. "Welcome home. I am your wife," said the woman. The young man was surprised and said, "I am very poor, and cannot support you." The woman answered, pointing to a small sack, "Don't worry, I have plenty of rice," and began preparing dinner. The young man was puzzled, but the two began a happy life together. And the rice sack, mysteriously, remained full always.
One day the wife asked the young man to build her a weaving room. When it was completed, she said, "You must promise never to peek inside." With that, she shut herself up in the room. The young man waited patiently for her to come out. Finally, after seven days, the sound of the weaving machine stopped and his wife, who had become very thin, stepped out of the room holding the most beautiful cloth he had ever seen. "Take this cloth to the marketplace and it will sell for a high price," said the wife. The next day the young man brought it to town and, just as she said, it sold for many coins. Happy, he returned home.
The wife then returned to the room and resumed weaving. Curiosity began to overtake the man, who wondered, "How can she weave such beautiful cloth with no thread?" Soon he could stand it no longer and, desperate to know his wife's secret, peeked into the room. To his great shock, his wife was gone. Instead, a crane sat intently at the loom weaving a cloth, plucking out its own feathers for thread.
The bird then noticed the young man peeking in and said, "I am the crane that you saved. I wanted to repay you so I became your wife, but now that you have seen my true form I can stay here no longer." Then, handing the man the finished cloth, it said, "I leave you this to remember me by." The crane then quickly flew off into the sky and disappeared forever.
The Grateful Crane

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