

CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE®

Chinese Dragons

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Choose from
14 ENDINGS!

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You are an adventurer.

The year is A.D. 620. For the past three years, you have been traveling across China by yourself. It's a simple life, but you are happy.

When you travel, you like to stop for a month or two in different villages. You live and work there, save as much money as you can, then move to another village.

You learn many things by living this way. You listen to the stories of the local people, and you learn about their beliefs and their history. You often learn to speak their local Chinese dialects too.

Your life of traveling from place to place is full of fun and adventure—but it can be dangerous too. Sometimes, the villages are attacked by the Eastern Turks, who come down from their camps in Mongolia. So far, you have been lucky to escape their deadly attacks.

In the future, you hope to travel to the great city of Luoyang. People say that everyone has a good life inside this walled city. They say that in Luoyang it is easy to find a good job, and there is a lot of food for everyone.

It is also safe from the Eastern Turks.

However, Luoyang is just a dream for you now.

Times are hard in the villages, and it is difficult for you to find work. There was little rain this year, so farmers cannot grow much food. Many people are leaving their homes to look for food and work. This makes it hard for you to continue on your adventure.

So, last month, you decided to stop and work on your uncle's farm. Your uncle lives with his wife, eight children, and their friendly pet dog, Black Moon. Your uncle is very poor, and can't pay you any money. He gives you food and a place to sleep, but you know it is not easy. You hope that soon you can continue on your travels.

The room where you sleep is small. In one corner are the bags of seed for planting. However, without rain, you will not be able to plant the seeds, and the family will go hungry.

Everyone hopes that the Chinese Dragons will help. The Chinese Dragons are good spirits, who bring rain for the farmers. You hope the Dragons will bring rain to your uncle's farm this year. Then, there will be lots of food for everyone, and you will be able to save money and go to Luoyang.

Today, however, you must work. You get out of your cold, hard bed and get ready. Today will be a long day. You must dig the fields, to make them ready for planting.

You put on your shoes and enter the main house. The rest of the family is already there, eating breakfast.



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"Today, you dig the large field," your uncle says to you. "That one must be ready by tomorrow."

Before you can answer him, he is telling your cousins their work for the day. Everyone must work hard here, even the little ones.

"More!" says one of the youngest boys, holding up his empty bowl. Your aunt gives him an angry look. You never ask for more because you know the answer will be "no." In hard times, one bowl a day is all you get.

"Did you hear about the sacrifice?" the middle daughter asks everyone. Her name is Shining Face.

Suddenly, everyone is quiet.

Continue to the next page.



Everyone knows that these are dangerous times in China. A sacrifice means that the Turks are attacking again, and the people must ask the warrior spirits to help.

The Turks are tough warriors. When they attack a village, they take all the food and they burn the houses. Usually, that means the end of the village.

"This sacrifice is for a hard battle to come," Shining Face continues. "Maybe we should go and—"

"No," your uncle says. "We have work to do here."

"But, Father, the sacrifice!" Shining Face says, excitedly. "It will be a white horse! And Li Shimin will be there!"

"Who's that?" asks the youngest son.

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You smile. Everyone knows Prince Li Shimin. He is the son of the new Tang emperor, and China's great hope. He is young, but a brave and wise warrior. He is tough, but he also understands the needs of all the people—the people in the city and in the villages.

For you and many other Chinese, the name Li Shimin means a chance for a better future.

"The sacrifice will be at the bridge over the Wei River," Shining Face continues. "That's not so far away, Father."

"Nobody is going," your uncle says. "And that is final. We have to plant the fields, or we will have no food. So finish eating and get to work."

You and your cousins walk outside. You each head for the field you must dig. However, all you can think about is the sacrifice—and Li Shimin. You would give anything to see him just one time.

As you work, you see many people walking along the road. They are all excited as they walk towards the Wei River. You know they are going to the sacrifice.

What do you want to do?

You are about to make your first choice!
Make your choice before you turn the page.



If you join the people on the road, turn to page 10.

If you stay and work in the field, turn to page 8.

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You decide to go on the road. It feels exciting and scary at the same time. It's exciting because maybe you will see Li Shimin. It's scary because you know your uncle will be very angry.

"But so what?" you ask yourself. "Maybe I'll never return! Goodbye, Black Moon," you shout to your uncle's dog. "Adventure is calling!"

Once you are on the road, you feel great. The sun warms your back, and your feet feel good. You did the right thing.

"Hey, you there!" comes a voice. You turn around and you see a man and his wife walking behind you.

"Sir? Are you talking to me?" you ask.

"Are you going to the sacrifice?" the man asks.

"Yes," you answer. "I want to see Li Shimin!"

"We're on our way to Luoyang," the man says. "We're going to start a new life there."

You like these two already. You talk for a while as you walk together. Their names are Han and Flower. When they hear that you would like to live in Luoyang some day, Han makes you an offer.

"I'm a shoemaker," he tells you. "I will need someone to help me in Luoyang. Would you like to work for me?"



If you go with Han and Flower to Luoyang, turn to page 15.

If you continue to the sacrifice, turn to page 22.

For teachers' inspection ONLY