



Fiction

Group 2

Huangshan

Canadian International School, Chen, Heather – 9

Oh mountains grow!
For what we know,
there might be gods and goddesses?
or simply nothingness!

Long Long ago there was a beautiful demigoddess living in a little house on Huangshan, the demigoddess was called Chynna, and she was rather lonely because no one lived on the mountains with her, years ago she lived on the heavens just like any other demigod or demigoddess. But one day she got cursed by The Wicked Witch Gizem to live alone on Huangshan. Because Gizem loathed Chynna's mother and father, now if you ask why, it's because long before Chynna was born Gizem and Chynna's mother were fighting for Qiang's (Chynna's father) love, Qiang picked Hua (Chynna's mother) for his wife, from that day on Gizem started loathing Qiang and Hua.

Her mother and father were very upset they couldn't break the curse because they were human, so they reluctantly let her live there.

One day, Chynna was admiring Huangshan when she saw a handsome young man walking by, Chynna caught his eye and the two immediately became friends. Chynna asked "Would you like to live with me in Huangshan for a few months? I'll show you around." Sure." Answered Hui, which was the boy's name. They found delicious Chinese delicacies by going down to the village, they found water in the waterfalls and they bathed in the hot springs in different sections near their little house when it was too cold, when it was summer, they bathed in the different waterfalls near the little house, they often went sightseeing. Peering at the beautiful sunrise every morning at 5 'o'clock, watching the beautiful cloud of sea just after seeing the sunrise, lastly visiting the greeting pine at noon.

Months flew by, The Wicked Witch Gizem, the same witch who cursed Chynna couldn't believe she was happy, Gizem had a magical crystal ball that told the future and it said Chynna and Hui would fall in love, she flew into a rage because it was, she who wanted Hui's love. But she had an evil plan, at midnight she crept into Hui's tiny room in Chynna's little house and dropped tiny bits of coloured love potion into his water so he would barely see the colour. The next day, early in the morning Hui woke up and drank his water, after that he started walking out of Chynna's little house made of the strange rocks that were there, and started walking to the witches cave! Only to stop when looking at the sea of clouds. When he arrived at the evil witch's cave, he kissed the witch!

When Chynna found out, she was very upset because she had a secret crush on Hui, she knew she wouldn't see him again. A few months later, Chynna just couldn't take it anymore, she walked to the witches' cave to see Hui proposing to the witty Gizem! Suddenly, Chynna saw an invisibility potion on Gizem's shelf! Quick as a flash, she stole the potion! Then she smelled it, and thought: this is the most disgusting thing I had ever smelt. Then she gulped it down and started walking tear blinded until she was so close to Hui that her tears went into his eyes and he went back to normal, suddenly, he started feeling a soft body then picked Chynna up and kissed her!

Since Gizem couldn't see Chynna, she was very confused to see Hui kissing the air, then she put on some magical glasses, and saw that Hui was kissing Chynna!" Nooooo!" screamed the evil witch.

It echoed through the mountains so loudly that even the Jade Emperor and all the other Chinese gods and goddesses heard her. A moment later, the clouds in the sky parted as The Jade Emperor appeared! The Jade Emperor uncursed poor Chynna and put Gizem in jail, lastly, he turned Chynna into a regular goddess and Hui into a god! The Jade Emperor was also Chynna's long-lost uncle! He helped them arrange their wedding ceremony and gladly gave up his throne for them since he didn't have any children. "Hooray for King Hui and Queen Chynna!"

Everyone except the evil witch cheered, as for the terrible evil witch Gizem, she died in prison because she was heartbroken that Hui didn't love her, King Hui and Queen Chynna even had a child, a girl called Princess Mingmei,

they loved her very much and designed her very own room and playground for her. When times were tough down on earth, the king and queen are always here to help whether you are: sick, lost. Too poor, hungry, thirsty or homeless. But no matter how busy they were, they always found some sort of way to spend quality time with their precious daughter. So if you get: sick, lost, too poor, hungry, thirsty or homeless in Huangshan, the king and queen of the Chinese gods and will always be here to lend a helping hand.

The Tale of the Yellow Mountain

Canadian International School, Cheng, Matthias – 10

In a small town in the United Kingdom, there was a 10-year-old girl in her geography class, failing miserably. "Today, we are going to learn about the national natural landmarks of China! Now, who knows some facts about the Tibetan Plateau. Silas? No? Ah yes, Theodore! Share one! That's a nice fact! Anyone else? No? Okay then....." The teacher droned on and on, the girl was almost asleep. "Good! Now, who knows about the Yellow Mountain?" Almost the whole class' hands shot up like a rocket, other than one. "Let's pick someone without their hand up, How about Lilly?" The girl, who's name was Lilly rose up from her position. Everyone stared at Lilly, exasperated that she didn't know the answer. Lilly felt as though the temperature had raised 100°C. A human spotlight has been placed on her eyes, blinding her. "Um.....Ah.....Miss, Can I go to the restroom?" Ms Isla winced "Go Ahead. Anyone else knows Anything?" Off Lilly went, and she came back a couple of minutes later, with her head hanged low and her shoulders drooping. She slumped into her seat and stayed in that position until the bell rang for dismissal. She had a pang of guilt in her stomach and had lots of questions eating up inside her. She was a curious yet feisty learner.

Once she got home, Lilly immediately flopped on the beanbag and sulked. She was not very happy. After her sulking session, she then propped up her Laptop and typed in the Google search engine "What is the Yellow Mountain in China?" She found the Wikipedia page for the Yellow Mountain, only to be abruptly startled by her dad when she was halfway finished.

Dad pondered "So you are learning about the Yellow Mountain in Geography Class huh?" "Uh Huh, so what?" Lilly replied sassily, "Oh, it's nothing. I just know a lot of the facts on the yellow mountain." Dad replied. "Please tell me some Dad. Please?" "Ok Honey. So firstly, the Yellow Mountain is located in Southern Anhui Province, in Eastern China. Secondly, it is called the Yellow Mountain not because it was yellow, but because after Huangshan (Yellow Mountain)'s ascent to fame, they renamed it after the legendary Chinese Emperor Huang Di (Yellow Emperor.) Thirdly," Lilly was surely going to fall asleep. "Lilly, wake up! I knew you'd sleep!" "Ah! Sorry, Dad, I'm just tired today." "No problem my girl. You take a nap now, and your Mom and I will tell you some facts over dinner okay?" "Sure Dad. I'll be in my room." "Have a nice nap Lilly!"

2 hours later, Lilly awoke from her slumber, and was surprised to hear her Mom's voice earlier than 7:00 clock. She bounded down the stairs and saw Mom and Dad talking about the Yellow Mountain. "We were big fact nerds right honey?" "Yes, we were. Not that I'm proud of it, but we were." Lilly had her mouth wide open in shock. "Oh, hi Lilly! Look who decided to come home early!" "Did you just say you were Yellow Mountain nerds?" They replied "Yes!" "Please tell me some facts I can share tomorrow?" Dad chuckled "Of course! Now you slept and are energized, you can listen!" "Let's carry on. Fourthly, Yellow Mountain was made a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1990. Fifthly, It is classified as a sacred mountain in Chinese culture. Sixth, there are various rock formations on the mountain. Seventh, The mountains were formed in the Mesozoic, approximately 100 million years ago, when an ancient sea disappeared due to uplift. Later, in the Quaternary Period, the landscape was shaped by the influence of glaciers. The vegetation of the area fluctuates with elevation. Mesic forests cover the landscape below 1,100 meters..." "Whoa whoa whoa. I lost you when you said Quarternary." "It means that during the period of 2.588 – 0.005 million years ago, glaciers affected the landscape, causing the plant life to be different across different altitudes. Forests cover the area below 1,100 metres above sea level." Mom explained patiently. "Oh. Got it. Thank you!" Lilly exclaimed. "Please... do continue." "Sure. Eighth, the region it's in is very moist, causing mist. Finally, the average high temperature yearly is 11.5 degree celsius, 52.8 degrees fahrenheit. The average low temperature yearly is 5.6 degrees celsius or exactly 42.0 fahrenheit." Mom finished. "Alright! Thanks Mom and Dad!" Lilly exclaimed, "Now I can prove I'm not that bad at geography!" "No problem sweetie!" Mom and Dad encouraged. Little did they know, Lilly had been taking notes the entire time! "I wonder if she can remember all that tomorrow." Mom fretted. Dad calmed her down, "Relax, its Lilly, she'll find some way to remember that. Remember, even if she doesn't remember, we can always remind her again tomorrow." "Very true. I really think Lilly can do this now." Mom seemed a lot calmer now. "Let's help her the best we could."

The next day at school, Lilly told all her facts to her classmates. The classmates and even the teacher, were blown off their feet. "Wow! Let's hear it for Lilly Pearson!" A huge burst of applause rippled around the room. It was the first time Lilly felt proud of something involving Geography class. As for the classmates that teased her, would never tease her again.

Tales of China's Magical Mountains

Canadian International School, Choy, Leanne – 9

“Hyah! Hyah! Hyah!” The shouting of tons of students in rows and formation punching, kicking and doing flips made. “Hello.” Said a dark figure that slunk in front of me out of the shadows when I was hypnotised by the punches and kicks of the other students over and over and over repetitive never ending routines. “Let me guess, Mia Tung Vietnam.” He said creepily. “Yes.” I said bowing down. He glanced at me in disapproval like it was the wrong culture and I was being a weirdo and pushed me back up. “Now I understand you came late to our boarding school, but there’s much to learn so I’ll show you everything and by me I mean a student. “小胖胖！快點來！（xiao pang pang (little fat) Kuai dian lai (hurry up and come)” “Show this girl,””Mia.” I whispered” around this place.””Yes master.” He said worriedly. I was guessing he was frightened of him. It was a fat little boy around 11, 2 years older than me with a ragged haircut and a set of traditional Chinese clothes.

“So——, how long have you been here?” I asked as he didn’t talk and just whispered where we were at where we were. “2 years” he said shyly. “I talked to him some more as he went, he got more comfortable speaking to me.

At last, the tour was over, me and 小胖胖 finally made it to my dorm. There was my new roommate Alisha, she was a first year like me. We talked and talked and talked through the night. Our schedules were given to us and we were both in the same classes. Alisha was really smart and wore round glasses along with her braids and her freckles under her eyes.

“Hey Mia!” she said whispering with excitement. “What?!” I asked her eagerly. “Do you know the legend?” she asked in an intriguing voice. “No.” I said having no idea what she was talking about. “Well, legend is that somewhere in a hidden cave somewhere here in the Huangshan mountain, there was a hidden door that could only be opened by someone with the blood of a dragon trainer. Hidden behind the door is a luscious land full of tiny little traditional Chinese houses on stilts full of dragon trainers, surrounded by dragons swarming around the area. Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple and pink, all the colours of the rainbow. Their linings of silver and gold, their bold jade eyes and their scales the shiniest glimmer, the dragons were the most spectacular, extraordinary, exquisite, magnificent, creatures in all the land. Everyone knew about them. Many explorers had come trying to find these dragons, but they never succeeded, or they managed to get video of the place and the dragons, said to be smart and witty, managed to take out the film and destroy them so that their sacred village would be protected, and the explorers would be dead.” she said with a very narrative voice that just lured you in. “Then what are we doing sitting here!” I said full of colour. “Let’s find the city!” I exclaimed. “Are you crazy?!” shouted Alisha. “You don’t know what might happen to you.” she said full of worry and being extravagant. “Well, you’re coming with me so don’t even try to argue because there’s nothing you can do about it!” I said being proud of myself for being very intimidating in a good way because then we could go and try to find the mountain. “Now when is our next holiday” I asked Alisha running my finger through the schedule looking for a big fat red box that said holiday! In big fat bold lettering. “Ah Ha!” I said in relief after searching. “On Sunday we search for the cave.”

Nearly a week had passed and they were ready to go, well Mia was, Alisha was still scared. Their bags had food, water, walkie-talkies, rope and other things. As they rushed down the stairs of their cottage house, they dashed down the stairs watching students pass by, swarming around, rushing to do their things. We carefully, sneakily slunk out of all the havoc and managed to trick the guards to leave their stations at the gate so that they could escape telling the guards that the master had sent for them and asked us to tell them.

Once we left the gates, we walked around for a bit. But we knew we had to hurry because sooner or later the master would find out we were missing. When we realized we started dashing around the area trying to find the cave staring at the mountainous views of its slightly moss draped mountains.

“I found a cave!” Alisha screamed full of excitement. I rushed towards the sound of her voice dashing through the trees and foliage until I finally found her. There before our eyes lay a magnificent giant cave full of crystals and stalagmites.

We slowly ventured in and found hand imprints. Ontop lay a sign that said cave door. Alisha first tried to open the door placing her hands on the imprints, but no matter how hard she tried, the door still wouldn't open. Next it was my turn. I put my hands on the imprints, closed my eyes and took a deep breath and concentrated on opening the cave door, to my relief I suddenly felt rock glide against my hand, when I opened my eyes to find the cave door opening. At first it was pitch black, then when me and Alisha entered the blackhole suddenly became a joyous land full of happiness, colour and enjoyment. All those things that Alisha had said about the hidden city were true, there were dragons of all colours of the rainbow and they had gold and silver lining. The tiny little traditional cottages like the “dorms” where we slept at. It really was the most spectacular, magnificent, splendid, extraordinary, wonderful thing I had ever seen.

Mountain Magic

Canadian International School, Derman, Elise – 9

Fei had always thought of the mountain as a friend. The mountain had many amazing resources: fresh water, food and thriving animals. But even though the mountain's generosity was more than noticeable, Fei did not value the mountain just for that. She did not think of the mountain as a friend because of its great beauty, or even its warm aura. It was because she never ceased to be amazed by how much life bloomed from its sturdy peaks and valleys. The Yellow Mountain was its name.

There was a poem that was popular among Fei's people, which praised the mountain for its finery and natural supplies. The poem was called "Efefat", for every line began with a different letter that eventually spelled out the word Efefat. Efefat meant "yellow mountain" in the mountain's ancient codes.

Ever laughing and providing homes
For the homeless,
Ever thriving and producing food
For empty bellies,
And ever breathing and giving safety
To us all, this is our mountain and we adore it.

Fei's village was small but prosperous because of all the marvelous people that lived upon the mountain peak. Some of them were tradesmen but most of them pursued the dream of writing poems, songs and stories, or were farmers. Fei had no care for all these riches but for the adventures that the mountain provided. She had never thought of becoming one of the mountain's farmers or poets herself, for she was always too busy galloping across warm green prairies, catching fireflies and frolicking down by the river.

Fei was an indescribable child. Everything about her, from the expression on her face to the lace on her sandals, was joyful and longing for new experiences. Fei had long, straight, black hair that fell to her shoulders. Her skin was pale, with a tint of raspberry in her cheeks and she had deep emerald eyes that were unusual and unique, which made her look even wilder but never serious or unhappy. Fortunately, she had all the time she could ever want to go roaming back at the edge of her hut and beyond, although she had to return in time for dinner. On this particular occasion a group of close family friends who lived in the neighboring village was staying for the night and Fei's playtime outdoors was to be cut short. Fei did not mind in the least, but she was a forgetful child. She could easily lose track of time! Fei was barely twelve, and she still had a lot to learn about the woods.

Fei had been wandering across a piece of land at the edge of her family's vast field. She had never gone very deep into this part of her parents' property and was eager to explore it more carefully that afternoon. She quickly pulled on her hanfu which was trailing and billowing in the breeze. It had a blue and white flower pattern. She bolted across her brother's herb garden and was a blur of blue and white as she practically flew across her father's crops and her mother's orchard full of smooth ripe mangoes, cherries, apples, pears and golden mandarins that sparkled with rainwater and dew.

When she arrived at the edge of the unknown farming land, she stopped to stare at the forest of green. As she took her first steps across the margin she could feel the moss tickling her feet and hear the faint noise of two birds squabbling. She could hear the rush of clear, cool water as she advanced deeper into the woods and the ripple of it sloshing over rocks and hills. Fei was mesmerized as she took in all the nature around her and listened to everything that could possibly be heard.

Fei got so absorbed in her newfound excitement that she did not notice when the light began to fade and the stars started to peep out from behind the clouds. She did not even notice when darkness fell and she could no longer make out her path. Then she heard something coming from behind her. A dark shadow was looming over her. She could feel warm breath on the back of her neck and she sensed its presence. Fei did not dare turn around. Terrified, she sped towards the first sign of light. Fei ran and ran, her breathing was ragged and her feet were bleeding and covered with cuts and blisters. She had been running so fast she had injured herself countless times!

Finally, at the edge of the dense dark wood, she found her mother searching with a torch, and weeping. “Mama! Mama! I’m here! I got lost! I am so so sorry! I was really frightened...” Fei fell into a heap at her mother’s feet. She was exhausted and relieved. She was guilty and sobbing. She was a sorry sight to behold. Fei’s mother gently scooped her up and lay Fei’s head on her shoulder.

When her parents asked her to tell them what had happened, she started to cry again. “Do you know what was chasing me papa?” Fei asked. “I think it was a forest spirit.” Her papa said, “It was probably curious about the strange girl he’d never seen in the forest before.”

In the years that followed, Fei discovered all sorts of mythical creatures in the forest, learned about all the amazing abilities they had, and became a caring young adult. But she would never forget her first encounter with a spirit creature. For the rest of Fei’s lifetime and until now, the Yellow Mountain has stayed the same mysterious, magical place it once was and the people of the mountain love it with the same passion as Fei did to this day.

The Rings of Huang Shan

Canadian International School, Doo, Damian – 11

“The old legend says: there are three magical rings in the best-known peaks in Huang Shan: the Lotus Peak, the Bright Peak and the Celestial Peak. The gods hid the rings in the peaks.” The old man spoke in a low voice. “If someone collect them all, they wield the power of the gods to do good or evil.”

Jack was a 12-year old boy. He was a good runner and he always wore his favorite running shoes. Jack’s best friend was Leo. Leo was the same age as Jack. Leo was rich and he loved to show off. They were both from Hong Kong and wanted to find adventures in China.

They flew to China in the morning. The boys’ tummies were grumbling like a monster roaring. They ran into a restaurant. When they finished breakfast, an old man appeared.

“Have you heard of the rings of Huang Shan?”

“Who are you?” the boys startled.

“I am the last man who knows the legend.”

The old man told them about the legend and handed them a map to the peaks of Huang Shan. The boys were excited about their new adventure. Although the map was old and crumpled, the boys studied it as if it was a MAP test. They did not notice that the old man disappeared.

There were a lotus, a beam of light and a building on the map. There was a “1” next to the lotus. “We need to go to Lotus Peak first,” Jack said confidently.

There were a lot of tourists at the entrance of the mountains. The boys queued up and had to climb the stairs carefully. There was a wooden sign that said, “Huang Shan was formed approximately 100 million years ago”. “I knew it,” said Leo cockily.

When the boys arrived at the Lotus Peak, they followed the map to a temple. Inside the temple, they walked into a corridor leading to a dead end. Leo scanned for any secret compartment and found a button on the wall.

“I knew it,” said Leo cockily.

A humongous stumped-tailed monkey sat in the middle of the room behind the wall. Its brows were furrowed with its teeth showing. It was ready for battle. The ape clenched its fists and slammed the floor. Jack saw a ring on one of its fingers.

“We need to get the ring off its finger!”

The monkey started chasing the boys. It crawled on all fours but it was slower than the adventurers.

Jack saw a flower poking out of the floor. He picked it up. It was a red azalea.

“Maybe this is useful!” Jack held the flower over his head.

“Let it smell it!” Leo shouted.

Without hesitation, Jack passed Leo the flower. When the monkey was close to Leo, he jumped with all his might to the ape’s face. Leo’s heart was racing. Time seemed to slow down. The nervous boy put the flower near the ape’s nose. The animal smelt it. Thud! The monkey tumbled to the ground.

Gasping for breath, the boys high-fived each other.

It was getting dark when Jack and Leo arrived at the Bright Peak. They saw the sea of cloud. Its beauty astonished them. It felt like heaven!

“To enjoy the magnificence of a mountain, you have to look upwards in most cases. To enjoy Huang Shan, however, you have got to look downwards.” Leo quoted an ancient Chinese writer.

When they look down, Jack saw a temple. This time, there was no corridor. There were appealing yellow chrysanthemums. In a split second, the floor opened. The boys fell and landed on something soft. They found themselves on top of the sea of clouds.

“How is this possible?”

“It must be the power of the ring.” Jack guessed.

The clouds shifted and formed a man. There was a green glow inside the cloudman’s chest. Jack thought that it had to be the second ring! Jack launched on the cloud but nothing happened.

“Hey, that’s not very nice,” the cloudman spoke, “I will give you the second ring if you answer my riddle. How many letters are there in the alphabet?”

“Twenty six!” Leo blurted out.

“Wrong!” The cloudman giggled.

“Eleven.” Jack said after minutes of thinking.

“Correct!”

The cloudman and the sea of cloud disappeared and the ring was in Jack’s hand. The boys found themselves in the temple of the Celestial Peak. There was a rock that says “Fo Guang”.

“Fo Guang is something special about Huang Shan. A light shines on you, then it makes a circle with the rainbow colors.” Jack explained.

Suddenly, a beam of light shone on Jack’s body. The circle shone on a huge pine tree! The circle was beautiful. Jack and Leo thought that the last ring was inside the tree. Leo went inside the tree and he found the last ring!

They were leaving the Celestial Peak. Leo snatched the first two rings from Jack.

“Leo, give it back!” Jack said playfully.

“No. I want the rings!” Leo roared.

“But that is not the right thing to do!” Jack was confused.

“I don’t care.” Leo cackled.

There was a bead of tear coming down Jack’s cheek.

“You are my best friend...”

Leo started to run away. Jack caught up with him because of his favorite running shoes.

With the power of the rings, Leo flew up to the sky.

Jack held Leo’s foot and tried to pull him down. It was no use and they kept flying higher! Jack grabbed Leo’s hand and got the rings.

Jack let himself fall. When he almost hit the ground, he floated back up. He saw Leo falling to the ground. Jack swooped in and saved him in the last second.

“Thank you for saving my life. I’m sorry.” Leo regretted his actions.

“I accept your apology.”

“Jack, let’s go find something to eat. My tummy is grumbling.”

“Let’s have dumplings! I heard that the dumplings here are better than the ones in Hong Kong.”

Huangshan's Treasure

Canadian International School, Hadi, Zayna – 9

In China, every ancient mountain has something magical about it. *Huangshan* is no different. In the southern part of Anhui Province, rocky and bare, *Huangshan* stands tall, with its peak hidden mysteriously in the mist.

One cool autumn afternoon, while all the animals were asleep in the warm sun, something unusual happened at the foot of this magical mountain. For thirty-six long years, Li Bai's statue had stood guard over the valley and the village that lay in the shadow of the mountain. Suddenly, the statue stirred, opened his eyes, and began to stretch and yawn creakily as he looked around.

All the animals on the mountain had been waiting anxiously for this very day. This was because when Li Bai, the old poet, had made the statue and placed it by the stone steps on the mountain, he had foretold that if the mountain's secret treasure was ever in danger, the statue would come to life and protect it. Ever since the evil king's soldiers had started searching the mountainside for its powerful treasure, the people of the village were worried about the treasure and were waiting for the statue to help them. They remembered Li Bai's warning that if the evil king got his hands on the treasure, its magic would make him invincible.

As the statue looked around, out of the corner of his eye, he saw his loyal old horse eating the fallen fruit from an apple tree. He walked over to the horse, stroked his back and gathered some fruit for himself to prepare for the long journey. He mounted his horse and set off. He remembered what Li Bai had told him, "First, you must go to Unicorn Falls where you will find a magic potion that will protect you from danger", so he headed towards the waterfall.

When he arrived, he was amazed by the beautiful waterfall, as its crystal-clear water seemed to be singing to him. "Come in, come in, we know why you're here", it seemed to say. So that is what he did. The statue simply walked right through the water, and there it was, the mythical unicorn. Its golden horn and colorful mane sparkled in the sunlight. It neighed softly and handed the statue a light purple potion. It smelled delicious, but he didn't dare drink it. "Don't forget the potion will only work if you pour it on the monster's tail", the unicorn warned him. "Now you must go to the Silver Tail Cave to find what you are looking for", the unicorn added mysteriously.

The statue whistled for his horse and they began their journey to the Silver Tail Cave. The statue was expecting this to be a long journey, but as if by the unicorn's magic, within the blink of an eye, he found himself standing outside the cold, gloomy cave. He tiptoed inside, and heard a faint snoring sound. As he crept deeper through the darkness, the snores got louder and the ground started to shake. The walls of the cave whispered to him. "Get it", they whispered, "At the back of the cave. The key to the chest". Then, he saw the dragon. Oh. It was GIGANTIC. And its tail was stretched out behind it. Careful not to wake it, he tiptoed around the monster. He saw the key. It hung on a hook. As he reached for it, a gust of wind blew through the cave and the key rattled. The dragon stirred, yawned as if it was going to wake up. The statue quickly grabbed the key with one hand, and reached into his satchel for the potion. Hurriedly, he pulled out the potion and poured it onto the dragon's tail. Immediately, the dragon fell back into a deep sleep.

The statue ran out of the cave, hopped quickly onto his horse and set off for the Seven Rose Garden, where Li Bai had told him the treasure was hidden. It was his longest journey so far. The statue and his horse crossed muddy swamps and climbed steep and rocky mountains. Finally, they reached Seven Rose Garden. It was just how the poet had described it. Many different kinds of beautiful flowers grew all around, and pools of water reflected the clouds in the sky. In the middle of the garden stood seven short but strikingly beautiful roses. Suddenly, the statue remembered something else Li Bai had warned him about, "In the garden, by the tall trees, beware of the seven red dwarfs", he had said. On the seven roses sat the treasure chest. He had wondered what Li Bai meant by the dwarfs, because he couldn't see any, but then it hit him. Li Bai was talking about the roses in code!

Excitedly, he reached out to lift the chest – but then he saw it was covered with spiky black thorns and he stopped. Suddenly, he heard a deep voice, “find the spell and recite it, then you shall be able to lift me without harm”. He remembered that when he had grabbed the key, something had glinted in the darkness. He looked at the key and saw the spell. He recited the words and, believe it or not, it worked, and he lifted the treasure chest out safely.

After such a long adventure, the statue was exhausted. Tired but happy, he rushed to Li Bai’s house. The statue bowed and presented the treasure chest to Li Bai, who was overjoyed and relieved that finally, the treasure was safe again and the people of the village could live happily and in piece once again.

Tales from China's Magical Mountain

Canadian International School, Lam, Jacob – 10

On one hot sunny day, my friend Jim came over to my house to play with my dog. My dog's name is Huangshan. He is named after the famous beautiful mountain in China.

Jim asked: "why did you name him Huangshan? Did you name it after your great-grandpa or something?"

Then my face became very serious. I decided to tell him the secret story of Huangshan.

Once upon a time, in a heavenly kingdom. There was an angel prince called Joe. He has golden wavy hair, a buff body, and a beautiful pair of wings. He was walking a super camel that he won in a game of Uno. A super camel is a type of camel that is very valuable because it has many superpowers. But it is most famous for the power to DESTROY THE WORLD! The legend is that its tears if poured into a volcano, can trigger some massive eruptions that will destroy the galaxy.

Meanwhile, in a dark, creepy cave with cobwebs everywhere, a bunch of ninja demons, known as Shadow Ninjas, were discussing how to destroy the galaxy. They knew that Joe had the super camel. All they needed to do was to steal it to achieve their goal. They packed their weapons and went to follow Joe.

Joe was almost at his house walking his camel; the Shadow Ninjas were right behind him in a tree brainstorming ideas. Bing! A light bulb went on.

"Look, there is a shop giving away super camel!" a Shadow Ninja yelled.

"What!" Joe shouted. "Move, let me get there first!" And he left the super camel unattended.

When they could not see him anymore, the Shadow Ninjas grabbed the camel and took off. Joe came back mumbling and empty-handed, he saw the escaping Shadow Ninjas and shouted: "NOOOO!!!! My super camel!" Suddenly it all went black, a Shadow Ninja threw a rock and hit Joe right on the head.

When Joe woke up, he called for the imperial soldiers. He ordered them to track down those Shadow Ninjas and save his camel. After hours of searching with their mind power, the imperial soldiers finally located their lair. The soldiers got to the Shadow Ninjas's lair. The lair was so freaky that they all shivered with fear.

"Freeze and do not move!" they shouted when they saw the Shadow Ninjas.

However, the Shadow Ninjas were smart.

"Look! There is a pile of gold!" they shouted and pointed.

The imperial soldiers were surprised and turned around. Then the Shadow Ninjas threw a net and captured them.

When Joe found out what happened, he yelled and cried. He was so mad. So he ordered even more imperial soldiers to go and save his camel and the soldiers. When the angels got there, the same thing happened. The Shadow Ninjas tricked the angels by saying, "oh my god, LOOK! A MERCHANT IS SELLING SUPER CAMEL FOR FREE!! The angels shouted: "WHAT?!" and turned around." Then, the Shadow Ninjas threw a net on the angels. When Joe found out, he was so mad that he could have killed a million angry dinosaurs with his bare hands.

That anger suddenly triggered some kind of switch in his body, causing him to glow. But he did not know he could do that, and he was like: "if those Shadow Ninjas were right here, they would have to kiss my bloody fist!" Bam! He punched! However, it was not what he expected. An energy ball had just hit a servant in the face. "Oh, who cares? That was my worst servant. "He was so surprised that he could do that, but there was no time to waste. He combined all the new powers and created a giant energy ball. When he got outside, he threw the energy ball at the Shadow Ninjas hideout and flew to find his camel.

However, the explosion made from the energy ball made a hole in the floor, and the camel fell into it. When the camel landed on earth. It got hurt, and he knew that he would not last. So, he wanted to transform into something. These were the options he considered turning into a golden temple to worship himself, turn into a golden statue of himself, or turn into a mountain that no one recognizes. He thought about it when he was younger people everywhere were trying to hunt him down to destroy the world, and he liked the galaxy. He liked it enough to marry it.

In the end, he chose the mountain because that way, no one would ever try to hunt him down again.

Joe looked all over for the super camel but never found it. He grows more anxious with every search because he thought he killed it with the energy ball. In the end, he gave up. Well, you all know the reason why Joe could not find the super camel because it transformed into a mountain.

The camel's humps became the peaks, the camel's hair became the grass, its ears became the caves, and its head got buried underground and became the tunnels. Nevertheless, now it is known as the mountain Huangshan. The camel could be anything, but it chooses to be a mountain. So he can let people enjoy him and let them know that even when your dead, you can still make people happy.

So that is why we named him Huangshan because he can be anything, but he chooses to be a dog so we can enjoy and play with him."

Jim was like, tsk no way that's true. I'm like it is so, and he's like are not. And we argued for 5 hours. In the end, Jim gave in and believed me and left. Once he left, I took off my glasses, and if you look carefully, you can see a small glow in my eyes.

Home

Canadian International School, Waters, Juliette – 10

I sit up in bed as the cool air wraps around me. Yawning, I step onto the cold floor, it sends shivers through my body. Slipping on my socks I go over to the mist covered window, open it and stick my head out. The cold hits me like an anvil. I see faint outlines of the mountain shrouded in mist. I wonder if I'll ever go outside again.

A memory flashes through my mind but before I can catch it someone whispers "Heather". I jump but luckily it's just Naomi and not one of the mistresses. "What?" I whisper, though it is more a whisper-shout to make myself heard over the elephant-like snoring of the others. "The Mistress is coming!" Naomi replied. A terrified look spread across my face and I sprinted back into my bed. Crawling under the dull blankets I hear the door squeak open.

I notice my socks are still on as I had no time to yank them off. A shadow approaches...I hold my breath, my heart is beating so fast I think it has flown out of me. Suddenly I feel a sharp tug of my hair – I sit up to the glowering of the mistress. Her stone-like face is dominated by a large flat nose that takes up half her face.

I try to gulp but it seems impossible as her face comes closer to me...she has noticed my socks and shouts something in Cantonese that I can't understand. After stripping my socks off she rips them in half. For some strange reason the orphanage doesn't allow socks. Naomi suspects the mistresses believe orphans are more grateful if we're cold.

I can't believe I'm still here. I was abandoned at the orphanage eight years ago, and haven't left since. I guess I'm lucky...most of these kids were left since birth. The mistress wakes everybody instructing us to go to the schoolroom. School...but really you could call it torture.

The buzz of girls getting ready for the morning doesn't register much over the activity of my brain. After breakfast and a couple of hours of lessons my brain is wandering to other subjects. Questions pop into my brain. What is it like in the village? Who were my parents? Will I ever get out of here?

Then I hear the unmistakable sound of Cantonese. The teacher never speaks a word of English in the class. You have to pretend you understand everything she is rambling on about. The teacher says something about homework and the other kids in the room reach into their faded, leather satchels. Each child produces a piece of crumpled, yellow paper. My brain starts to panic. I had no idea there was homework. The teacher calls on people one by one to read something aloud. If she gets to me, I'm toast.

She calls my name but just at that moment, another mistress pokes her head in the door and whispers to her quietly. The class starts muttering to one another but I stay stock still. Two minutes later we are being led to dorms. Everyone breaks into chatter once we're inside. I slip through the crowd to find Naomi. Before we can ponder the situation, a mistress appears...trailing her is a girl wrapped in a cloak. The mistress roughly hands her a stack of thin, grey clothes. At that point it was already 3 pm.

After another couple of hours of class, we march to the canteen to eat cold, sloppy gruel. What we haven't finished ends up as dinner tomorrow. After our unappetizing dinner we all slink back to our rooms and slip into our night clothes. After a few minutes the mistress comes in to shout "lights out!". I ruled out reading another page of my book...it didn't seem worth the trouble. I awaken to the sound of feet. It's pitch black...I must have drifted off. I was about to fall asleep, but a shadow flickered and I cautiously crept out of my bed.

The new girl is by the window and turns round as if she knew I was there. "What's your name?" I ask. "Zelda" she replies. "And I need your help."

I nudge Naomi on the arm. She awakens grumpily. I quietly drag her over to Zelda. We quickly exchange names and I tell her "We're escaping." When the news sinks in, she says "No way!" I smile and Zelda explains the plan.

Personally I think my part of the plan is the hardest. To get out we need to grab the main key which the mistress

keeps on a strap of her belt. My job is to get it while Naomi distracts her. After that Zelda meets us and leads us out.

I woke up excited and ate my breakfast quickly. After lessons and dinner we're led back to the dorms. Naomi corners the mistress. I peer around the corner of my bed and silently creep behind the mistress, spying the leather belt and five keys jangling in the wind. I squat and fumble to undo the clip. I struggle for a moment but unclip it. I celebrate, but the keys drop onto the smooth floor, making a clang as they land. The room goes silent...I gulp. The mistress turns around, anger rising on her face. I grab the keys and dive through her legs. Zelda runs to Naomi and I roll toward the door. Zelda snatches the keys and opens the door. We bolt down the hallway followed by the mistress – clawing at me. We kept dodging mistresses until arriving at the big green front door. Zelda jams a key in the door and turns the lock. The door flings open and slammed shut behind us. Panting we gather rocks and stack them against the door. By the time they find the backup key we'll be gone. We clamber up a boulder gulping for air. I am outside again...and this is my home.

A Trip to the Mountains

Canadian International School, Yau, Jasmine – 10

It was the middle of summer in HuangShan, China. Beneath the Yellow mountains in their village lived twin brothers. Ping was a mild-mannered pig farmer while Bing was a blacksmith with big bulging arms. Life was good under the mountains but the young men had recently become very troubled.

Ping and Bing's mother had become very ill and was getting weaker and weaker every day. Her face was as white as a sheet and she was thin because she hadn't eaten in days. The brothers had tried to tempt her with roast pork from Bing's herd of pigs and dumplings made by Ping, but they were always turned down with a gentle smile. They were at their wits' end.

No doctors lived in their remote province so they asked their neighbours for help. One of them, Grandma Yung, told them "Somewhere in the Yellow Mountains, there is a temple dragon which can give you herbs to heal your mother by bringing back her appetite. It is a legend so I don't know if it is true."

Ping and Bing were dismayed. The mountains were so high and they had never heard of anyone climbing them before. The sides were so steep! The tops of the mountains were so high and obscured by mist.

The brothers had to think of a way to get up. Ping looked around and saw two doves in a tree. It gave him an idea – they would fly up! They collected fallen feathers from birds all around their village, then they took big sticks of birch wood and stuck the feathers on them. Once the wings had dried, they decided to do a test run. They set up a wooden plank against a barrel for a runway. But not being actual birds, they just dropped to the ground.

A young boy, Holong, laughed at the sprawled brothers. Holong was playing with a slingshot. A new idea popped up right into Ping's head which he shared with Bing. Bing went to grab some leftover wood from building some finish touches in his pig sty while Ping brought a length of rubber from their home given to him by a trader from Yunnan and stretched it with his bulging arms.

By the time Ping got back, Bing had finished stretching the rubber. They brothers then made the first human slingshot. They put the slingshot next to the pond for safety.

The twins decided for Ping to launch Bing first, as Bing was the lightest. Bing soared through the gentle breeze for only a few seconds before he plummeted into the pond with a loud splash.

All the ducks swam away with a chorus of quacking.

As Bing climbed out of the pond, gasping for air with duck weed stuck to his body, Ping wept. He was out of ideas.

Later that evening their mum asked them why they both looked so downcast. The brothers shared the legend and their failure to get the cure. Their mother indicated that they should look underneath her bed. They found a box containing ropes, crampons and picks. Their mother explained that their father had been a mountain climber. He used to climb the highest mountains to collect bird eggs to sell in the market. With his equipment, the twins had hope.

They set out at dawn. They climbed for hours and hours under the hot sun. Higher and higher they went, gripping tightly to the side of the mountain. Bing was very tired but his brother kept urging him to keep going.

Bing started to lose his grip while climbing up the last steps of the mountain.

Bing's cry of "HELP!" brought Ping, who was already up the mountain admiring the scene, immediately to his brother's aid, reaching down and hauling him up.

Once they were both on the top, they saw an old red temple that was a ruin, only half of its pagoda still intact. Beautiful centuries-old green pine trees surrounded it like a ring of ancient guards. Clouds of mist were draped over the mountains.

As they walked inside the temple, a mysterious glow oozed up from the ground. Suddenly, a booming voice filled their ears. "You have entered the temple of death, if you don't give me a reason not to kill you instantly, I will, so speak up!"

Ping shivered "Who are you?"

A humongous dragon with red flaming eyes emerged.

Most people would have just run, but these twins were very observant.

They noticed that the dragon was scratching his head with his talons more and more every second. Suddenly, he scratched so much that sparks bounced off his head!

"Arggghh! Itchy!" he growled.

Ping had an idea. The dragon had lice. Ping knew that because his pigs often had lice so he always carried around a bottle of tea tree oil. This was a good reason to spare them! "I have some tea tree oil for your lice," he said, holding out the bottle. But before the dragon could grasp it Ping demanded a trade. "I've heard that you have some herbs to make sick people eat again. I will give you the tea tree oil if you give us the herbs."

The dragon stomped into the far corner of the temple and came back carrying a bag of herbs. He held it out towards Ping eagerly eyeing the tea tree oil. The two exchanged their cures.

Bowing to the dragon, the twins descended the Yellow Mountains. They were so relieved to have succeeded. They just hoped they were in time to save their mother.

Going down was much easier and much quicker than going up.

They ran towards their village, they ran to their home, and they boiled the herbs and gave them to their mother.

Their mother gulped them down and before you could say "Food!" she was asking her sons for food,

The twins wept for joy and happily cooked their mother a bowl of pork dumplings.

The Yellow Mountain

Canadian International School, Yin, Jessie – 10

Every night I lay in bed waiting for the sun to set, I repeat reading the magical stories of the Yellow Mountain.

On one New Year, while I was reading I saw a Red dragon blinking from inside my mysterious book. I looked and stared, just then the dragon jumped out there. He slowly surrounded me. Suddenly I felt a big gust of wind blowing on my face, then a thundering swish blew around me and all was gone. That moment I woke up and blinked, I was up at the Yellow Mountain.

I glanced around and saw a sloped hill surrounded by big round fluffy clouds. They all danced and twirl around the hill. I decided to walk up to the top of the Yellow Mountain. When I finally reached the top, I saw a little deer sitting by a long lake, licking the fresh water. While baby birds started their morning songs, little rabbits started to wake up and ate the fresh carrots. Down I looked at the velvety clouds surrounding the peaks, Up I looked the sun bowed and the wind blew. That moment I saw Li bai walking into a small pavilion and then sipped his morning tea.

Just then I listened carefully to him express about his poems. I surely did not want to miss any of the amazing poems. So I decided to disguise as a tree nearby. When I was about to change I looked up at the old trees and sighed, I realized the youngest tree was over 100 years old!

I had no choice but chose to become a big bush when I came close to him. I heard Li bai recite, “Seven thousand meters with Thirty-six peaks, the little lotus plays hide and seek when golden hibiscus spies and peeks” When I heard his poem, I loved it at once. But since I was shy, I did not greet him. At the same time, I slowly walked backward not knowing that a big hole was right behind me, BAM I tumbled right into it...

Tai Lin's Magical Adventure at the Yellow Mountain

Canadian International School, Zhang, Damon – 9

“(Pant Pant) HELP ME! (Pant Pant).” 18-year-old Tai Lin was running down a steep mountain followed by 2 monsters each with two pairs of red glowing eyes, claws so sharp it could break metal in seconds, muscular body and razor-sharp teeth. Tai Lin was fast but not enough to escape from the monsters to warn the other villagers. He ran at top speed, the monsters ran faster too! Tai Lin had always wanted to be a Kung Fu Master so he turned around and stood in a fighting position. The monsters screeched into a halt and tilted their heads, then he started to swing his arms back and forth to imitate that if they came one step closer, they would be dead. But the monsters would not listen to him and started to charge at him again, Tai Lin thought for strategies, but it was too late, the monsters pounced at him: “AHHH!”

Ding! The alarm went off and Tai Lin sat bolt upright, breathing heavily from what he saw in his dream. There was no monsters or steep mountain and he wasn't running, it was just another ordinary day.

“Hurry up Tai Lin or you'll be late for training; you've got breakfast to eat too.” said one of his friends whose name was Ho Yi.

“Got that.” replied Tai Lin. He jumped out of the bed, got changed and then went down to join his friends Ho Yi, Shelly and Franklyn. The four friends had a great breakfast with Chinese dim sum.

“Good morning students, it's time for training.” said their master, in a forest located on the Yellow Mountain: “Hopefully you all had a wonderful breakfast and are awake from your sleep. Now let's start.”

Meanwhile on the very top of the Mountain the monsters Tai Lin saw in his dream were making a plan to attack the villagers so they may take back their homeland. This is how it all began: Long Long ago the Yellow Mountain was the tallest mountain in China and the most magical one. There was the first psycho shift five billion years ago in the Mountain which affected a few rocks to become monster eggs. The eggs hatched, came the monsters. They decided to build their nests on the Yellow Mountain. But soon, they got found by the villagers, who overrun them. So they built their nests up higher to keep a good distance from humans. A few years before Tai Lin had come to the village, there was an asteroid landed on the Yellow Mountain, creating the second psycho shift after five billion years. Unfortunately, the power was so strong, it turned the asteroid into a big crystal, and it also affected the inside, and created an immortal human, Tai Lin.

The impact also blew some energy from the crystal which the monsters managed to absorb. Therefore, the monsters became what they look like now: big and muscular. It also made the monsters savage and that's why they want to kill everybody

“Grunt, Groan” roared the monsters as they discussed. After discussion, they finally came up with a plan that sounds pretty good.

“Alright students, that's for today! Adiós amigos! I hope you have a wonderful rest.” waved their master as they packed their belongings and set off home. Tai Lin and his friends walked home dripping with sweat on the floor.

Among the four, Tai Lin was the only one who knew every move when their master demonstrated. Everybody wondered how Tai Lin had learned all those moves in seconds.

That night, at the village, when they were eating at a ceremony, suddenly the table shook and soon the villagers found themselves in mock combat with the monsters Tai Lin dreamed of. The people were no match for the huge muscular monsters who just swatted them like bees on the floor. Just within a second, the monsters found only Tai Lin and his Kung Fu friends still standing.

“Hah...haiyah...” Tai Lin and his friends punched, dodged and kicked, trying to fend off the monsters. However, the monsters were just too strong and many to be pushed off. Suddenly, Tai Lin felt a great tug in his gut and his eyes turned yellow, a burst of energy exploded from his body, he yelled out loudly, as fast as a cobra he lunged at the monsters and beat them up badly. The monsters got scared and ran back to the mountain.

Tai Lin and Ho Yi followed the monsters to figure out what was going to happen. The two friends chased after the monsters all the way up to the top of the mountain, where the monsters’ home was. Tai Lin and Ho Yi found dozens of them. Tai Lin felt stronger in the Mountain, they beat the monsters up until all of them lost conscious. The boys were dripping with sweat and panting.

A few minutes later they regained energy and started to march deeper into the Mountain, to figure out where and how those monsters appeared. Soon they came to a special room where there was a giant crystal, inside the crystal it was a pouring yellow energy. Suddenly, Tai Lin became as stiff as a stone. He was having a vision about how he was born and what happened in the past. He realized how to bring back the balance between the villagers and monsters. Destroy the crystal! He punched the crystal, but it didn’t flinch, so he tried at a different angle, and it cracked this time. That was the weak spot! He then started punching the spot quickly and it exploded. Tai Lin suddenly felt tired, because the connection between him and the crystal broke.

The monsters that were unconscious starting to move and become as small as a regular human, not so muscular. Tai Lin and Ho Yi went over to check what was happening to them. Just as they thought the monsters were going to attack them again, but this time they moaned and groaned. Then they all turned their attention from their pain into the guys.

“Humans!” said all the monsters. They all panicked but Tai Lin boomed: “SILENCE! We mean no harm to you monsters!”

“We mean no harm as well.” said a monster

“Good, follow me, we will take you to our village, the other villagers won’t have harm.” said Tai Lin.

When they arrived at the village, people started screaming because they thought the monsters were going to kill them! But Tai Lin explained the whole story, and he also announced that from now on the monsters were going to help them, so the villagers can also treat the monsters like family. So the villagers and monsters can both co-exist with peace. The crowd exploded into cheers!!!

Tai Lin and Ho Yi exchanged glances and managed a smile!

The Mystical Creature of Huangshan

Chinese International School, Cheng, Isabella – 10

Lily gasped at the sight before her. As her feet reached the tip of the rock, she looked down at the twisted path that she had climbed from. It was stunning: the moss-covered stone steps wound around the jagged peak and the clouds made the mountains seem to be floating above them. The cold air breathed through the caves and the hollows in the mountain. Determined, the sunrise broke through the clouds and highlighted the sharp features of the peak.

Breathing heavily, her two friends, Aster and Cori, clambered up the hill behind her. Aster's shirt was wet with sweat, and he and Cori collapsed on the floor, panting and gulping down water like they were going to die. Cori shook himself up and went to stand with Lily, where he saw the spectacular landscape! He stared at the endless mountain range with his mouth open wide. Even though they had been hiking for so long, the view was definitely worth it.

"Finally!" Lily exclaimed. "You guys are always so slow! I wanted to show you something!" She glanced at Aster, still drinking water, "I found this!"

Lily took a bright orange feather out of her bag. It was soft but scaly. The feather had rough edges and glinted in the bright sunlight.

"Wow! This could belong to the creature!" Joe cried. "I've never seen anything like this before!"

The three students had come to the majestic mountains of Huangshan to try to locate a new species. They had heard the mountains were famous for being the most mystical place on earth, with many undiscovered creatures there. If they found one, that would almost guarantee them a first class degree and fame!

Their search had begun in the Huangshan village, where they had questioned the residents. One villager had said that he had seen a bird as big as a human and when it's wings were expanded you could see a variety of colored feathers, mostly orange. Moving close to the creature, he had spotted giant talons and a feathery tail that was forked at the tip! They had listened to the story open mouthed in amazement and they were determined to find this creature that he had described.

As the students discussed the feather, they didn't notice a beautiful figure fly gracefully past them. Quickly, the figure disappeared into the dense forest, singing a call. It was like a hymn blended with a lullaby. "Did you hear that?" Back at the cliff face, Aster looked up at the sky, trying to locate the mysterious sound.

"What sound?" Lily asked.

Confused, Cori walked over and said, "I did hear something!"

Lily thought for a second. "Do you think it might be the creature?" She asked excitedly.

"Maybe, I think it might have come from that direction!" Cori added. He pointed towards a thickly forested area on one of the mountains in the distance.

Lily picked up her backpack. "Well? What are we waiting for? Let's go!"

After a few hours of scrambling up and down stone steps, and not seeing anything, Aster yawned with dark circles under his eyes. Sluggishly, he sat down on the steps and took out his map. They were closer, he could feel it, but still not close enough. He glared at the map. The trail still had many hours of climbing until they would reach the bird call. He sighed.

"Can we take a break here?" Aster glanced at his watch. "I need to go to the bathroom." He then disappeared into the trees.

Cori sat down on a rock and rooted through her bag to find a snack. Finally, she pulled out three packs of potato chips and a red apple. She handed them out. Suddenly, a powerful gust of wind took her by surprise and she dropped the apple! It rolled close to the cliff edge. Cori held her breath then watched as it fell off.

Disappointed, Cori dashed to where the apple had fallen and looked down. “Um, guys? I think I found something...”

Over the edge, a mysterious crowd of leaves and grass was perched on the side of the cliff. Softly, a bright orange feather fell down. “Yeah! I think I have found the nest!” Cori shouted.

“Wait, really?” Lily gasped and ran over to her with her eyes wide and shining.

“Yeah! Look, I can see a feather! It matches with the one that you found earlier. This is definitely the same bird!” Cori smiled, and they hugged each other in happiness.

Swiftly, another gust of wind blew the leaves on the tree apart, revealing a fascinating sight: the exact bird that they were searching for. Peacefully, the magnificent beast snuggled in its nest, with its colorful wings folded up in place beside it. Cori and Lily ducked down, laid on the floor and silently watched the creature.

Cori reached into her pocket and carefully took out her phone. With trembling fingers, she positioned the camera to zoom in on the striking bird. This was it. When she took the picture, she would have proof that this creature existed! Her finger reached out and hit the button. Yes! Cori smiled.

“Hey, guys!” Aster shouted as he returned back. Abruptly, the bird's emerald eyes snapped open and it swung its head upwards and spotted them. It glared at them menacingly. They froze and waited to see what would happen next. Opening up its vast wings, the figure gave one last glance at the three students, screeched and launched itself into the sky.

They watched in silence as the graceful bird flew up into the setting sun and the silhouette melted into the clouds. Lily smiled and took a picture. Suddenly, she noticed a trail of feathers. Standing there, with Cori and Aster behind her, She didn't know what to say, but in their hearts, all of them knew that more adventure would come. And she couldn't wait for the next one!

Dragons

Chinese International School, Tsang, Tyla – 10

High above the great, big clouds, an old village sat upon the highest point on the tallest mountain. In one of the houses, I was eating a small bowl of rice, vegetables, and a sliver of lamb. I took one bite of the lamb and spat it out onto the floor right away. It tasted horrible! I glanced out the window and saw a dragon swoop by with wheat tied to his back. I quickly looked back at Mother to get the thought of dragons out of my head.

"Lin, you know that food is scarce here in *Long Jia* because we have limited resources and few people to trade with, so you mustn't waste!" my father, *Yong*, said.

Sometimes, I felt extremely bored here in the village. My mother had always said that I was a very curious little girl, but it seemed like no one else in our village was willing to look for a new world down below the clouds. I sometimes dreamed about bright green grass fields and a road without a cliff, though it seemed like there was no such thing possible.

Our village, *Long Jia*, meant Dragon's Home. Dragons great and small roamed the mountaintop! The whole purpose of living in *Long Jia* was to find your dragon match. Finding and raising a dragon symbolized a villager reaching maturity. Being mature meant that people could trust you with things and that you would have the freedom to do whatever you'd like, such as exploring the world, which was my dream. Everyone in the village had found their dragons at a young age except for me. Without a dragon, I couldn't travel below the clouds, and I longed to do so!

"Mother, Father, please tell me how to find a dragon!" I begged my mother and father.

"Everyone finds their dragon differently, but when they find it, it becomes part of them," my father told me wisely. "Although there is nothing below the clouds. Other villagers have tried but there isn't even a point of searching anymore."

But I couldn't believe that there were no other people below the clouds. If we found other civilizations, we could trade and become more prosperous. There *had* to be other people!

That Sunday, I played in the village square on my wooden board. Suddenly, I lost my balance and started sliding down the hill that led to the mountain's cliff. I couldn't stop!

Just then, I bumped into something hard but smooth. My board flew out from beneath my feet and I stumbled onto a rocky path.

I looked around. I was a bit confused about where I was, so I looked back at what I had tripped on and noticed that an egg had rolled onto the path.

The egg was white as the moon, shone as bright as the sun, and whenever I put my hands on it, I would feel an energizing burn inside my heart that would make me feel brave. The only problem was, I had no idea what was inside the egg, but I still took it back up the mountain along with my board.

When I got home, I quickly wrapped the egg in my blanket, tucked it under my bed, and got cleaned up.

One night, I was woken up by the sound of the egg cracking! Eagerly, I rolled off my bed and dove underneath. I pulled out the egg from under my bed, unwrapped the clean warm towel, and noticed that a wavy, thin line was appearing right through the middle. It grew bigger and bigger until a huge piece broke off and the egg cracked completely.

Inside, a frightened creature peeked its head out, ready to start its life. I pulled it out carefully and examined it. It had a blue head, but the blue turned into purple at its cute little tail. Big, wide wings spread out from its sides. This creature had a bright glow surrounding it. Looking at it made me feel strength and courage! Although I didn't know what this creature was, I named it *Jin*. I thought that I couldn't keep it in our poor village, since it needed a good family.

The next day, *Jin* learned how to fly in circles above me while I was doing work. Now that it knew how to fly, it could survive by itself. That was why that night, I brought *Jin* outside to set him free.

"Lin?" Mother's voice came out from the doorway. She stepped out from the shadows with a confused look on her face.

"I...was trying to rescue this creature...and..." I lost my voice.

Father came out and said sleepily, "*Xin...Lin...*What are you doing here at this time of night?"

I eagerly showed them *Jin* and said, "I found an unknown creature..."

"This is a dragon! You've found yourself a dragon!" Father exclaimed.

My eyes widened in shock. I smiled my biggest smile.

"*Can I go down below the clouds now?*" I asked eagerly.

Epilogue

High above the great, big clouds, a poor village sits majestically upon the highest point on the tallest mountain. Outside, I am being strapped to a blue-and-purple dragon, which I have spent years training to ride and searching for other civilizations with.

"*Jin!* Let's go!" I yell.

Jin starts flapping his wings. We soar into the air and I see the Mayor's dragon, the village carpenter's dragon, and my teacher's dragon. *Jin* dives down swiftly and I feel the cotton candy clouds fly past my face. We keep on flying. Finally, I see a village. No. A city. A kingdom. An entire world to be explored.

Sounds of children, merchants beckoning customers, and women just like my mother, yelling at their children can be heard from 100 feet above the ground. Except, I realize that there aren't any dragons around. Why?

Dozens of questions flood my head. But it doesn't matter — *Jin* and I are already on our way down.

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

Ching Chung Hau Po Woon Primary School, Chan, Ho Hang Aden – 11

A loud voice Star Hed a pair of poets awake, and they bolted up in fright, finding themselves in darkness. They squeezed their eyes shut. Wherever they were, they did not want to know. Suddenly, they opened their eyes and discovered that they lived in a Yellow Mountain high above the clouds.

‘Why are you two looking so panicked?’ the mountain asked. ‘Because we are afraid of darkness,’ said Li Bai and Du Fu. ‘Then you shall be afraid no more,’ said the mountain.’ ‘When you want to light up China, just say to me, ‘lights on!’ I will light up you both then the whole country will turn to day. ‘When you want me to turn off the light, you must say, ‘Off, off!’ said the mountain.

Towards the evening, they said to the mountain ‘Light up, China!’ It did as it was told and the whole country became gorgeous.

They could not believe their eyes. They began to climb the Yellow Mountain. They climbed and climbed, but whenever they looked up, the top of the mountain still stretched upwards, out of sight.

After many hours of climbing, they reached the top of the mountain and stopped at the sight of a wild, bare country – China. A long road led away into the distance.

Li Bai and Du Fu set off along the road and soon they met a beautiful fairy. ‘Good evening, Li Bai and Du Fu,’ she said. They were amazed that she knew their names. ‘This land will bring you magic,’ she said.

At that, the beautiful fairy disappeared, and they went forward along the lonely road. They saw three big doors along the road. At the first door they opened, they saw a big jar of wine. They felt excited especially Li Bai. They drank cup after cup. Li Bai started to get a little drunk, but, he wrote poems that were more beautiful with his magic pen.

After writing so many awesome poems, they opened the second door. They were more amazed as they saw a huge dragon. ‘Who are you?’ asked Li Bai and Du Fu. ‘My name is Jumbo and I am the biggest in the world.’ said the dragon.

They thought to themselves, ‘Can Jumbo help us to publicize our poems around China so that many people can read our poems?’

Jumbo heard what they discussed. ‘You can put all your poems on my back and I can publicize them for you both. I can fly everywhere.’ Jumbo said. ‘How great!’ said Li Bai and Du Fu.

Another evening, they approached the last door but they could not open it themselves. They knocked on it and a woman opened it. ‘We are tired,’ said Li Bai and Du Fu. ‘Please can you let us in and stay for the night?’ ‘Oh! There is nothing here but a giant. They felt afraid again when they heard this, but they were too exhausted to go another step, so they pleaded with the woman to take them in.

At last, the woman agreed and she led them into the temple. Scarcely had they started to lay down when the ground was shaken by heavy, stamping feet. Three loud knocks were heard at the door. It was the giant returning to the temple.

Li Bai and Du Fu’s heart began to thump. The woman began to shake. She grabbed them and pushed them into another small room that was next to the temple. Then she let the giant in. The old man stomped into the temple and roared. ‘I sensed somebody inside the temple. I will snatch their magic pens.’ ‘Nonsense!’ said the woman.

They set off running along the road, as fast as they could. On and on they ran, until at last they came to the top of the mountain. They climbed down quickly back to their city with their jar of wine.

Nevertheless, after a while, they longed for another adventure. They were determined to visit the temple again. They disguised themselves so that the woman would not know them.

Just as before, they climbed the mountain and reached it towards evening. When the woman opened the door they said, 'We are hungry. Can we eat something?'

'You cannot stay here,' replied the woman. 'The giant will frighten you and snatch your magic pen.' However, the two of them chatted so pleasantly that eventually the woman let them in.

They were nearly discovered by the giant again. However, the giant fell asleep. When they heard his snores, they crept out of the small room. They ran out of the temple as quietly as possible.

They reached the top of the mountain safely. They saw there was a long stairway suddenly appear in front of them. They walked down step by step and then saw that many villagers were overjoyed to see them, and when they showed them their beautiful poems, they were astonished. But soon Li Ba and Du Fu began to long for more adventures. They were determined to visit the temple once more. Once again, they climbed the mountain, followed the same path and arrived at the temple door. The woman didn't recognize them and they begged for a night's lodging. 'No, no! You both can't come in here. An old man is here! You can't come in.'

Finally, they hid in the small room again. The giant roared, 'I see their magic pens.'

'Nonsense!' said the woman then she was away. 'Stop running, you two!' roared the giant. As soon as they heard the loud snores of the giant they ran faster and faster. 'You are the two who have a magic pen.' Then he staggered to his feet and set off after them.

They were terrified. They ran for their life towards the mountain. Looking over their shoulders, they saw the old man and ran as fast as they had ever run before in their life. They reached the top of the mountain safely, but the giant was close behind him. They scrambled and slid down the mountain, shouting, 'Villagers, bring us more magic pens quickly. The old man is following us.'

Their friends brought them more magic pens. By then, the man was climbing rapidly down the mountain. They swung the magic pens with all their strength. The mountain toppled down and the giant was thrown headlong to the ground. The giant fell dead and so big was he that he filled the city from end to end.

Pointing at the man, Li Ba and Du Fu said to their villagers, 'It snatched our magic pens, but fortunately it did not discover our poems. 'Your troubles are over now,' said the fairy. 'What an adventure!' said Li Ba and Du Fu.

And so it was. Li Ba and Du Fu lived safely forever on the mountain.

The Legend of Monkey Stone

Ching Chung Hau Po Woon Primary School, Chong, Leigh Anne – 10

Long before you or I were born – or even our great-great-grandparents were born, there lived a smart naughty monkey called Tom. He had a very famous uncle called Monkey King. Tom always wished he could be as powerful as his uncle.

One day, he decided to go to the Magical Yellow Mountains to learn the power of magic. He heard the Yellow Mountains were breathtaking and beautiful like heaven. He believed there were some gods living over there.

After years of travelling, Tom finally arrived at the Yellow Mountains. He looked around the place, and wondered where the god lived. Suddenly, a friendly voice from the sky said, “Welcome to the Yellow Mountain, Little Monkey!”. Tom saw an umbrella-like pine tree, the Greeting Tree waved his hand and talked to him.

“I am looking for a master to teach me the power of magic! Can you tell me where I can find him?” asked Tom.

“Hmm...let me think... Well, there is an ancient temple in Lotus Peak. You can try to go there.” the Greeting Pine replied.

“Thank you!” Tom said happily and continued his journey. He crossed the waterfall, went up and down the hills. Finally, he reached the Cloud Valley Temple.

Tom found his master, Jiang the Great at last. Jiang the Great was one of the most powerful gods. He had been in Yellow Mountains for thousands of years. However, he came up with a set of rules and asked Tom to follow them strictly. Tom would get punished if he broke the rule.

Tom had started his life of magic power learning. He woke up before sunrise every day. He practiced the magic spells day in and day out. He learned how to ride on the cloud and forty-nine ways of changes. At the same time, he made friends with flowers, trees, stones, birds and other creatures. It looked like he enjoyed everything here. He thought he could be as strong as Monkey King soon.

One day, Tom passed Master Jiang’s room and smelled something strange. He peeked inside the room and saw some Magic Mao Tofu in a dish. This was Master Jiang’s favorite food. Tom was curious how it tasted “Maybe, I can try to have a bite. I think Master Jiang won’t notice it”. Tom thought. Then, he ate a piece of Magic Mao Tofu. He found it was so delicious! He couldn’t control himself and kept on eating it until the dish was empty. Tom was afraid that Master Jiang would scold him. He ran out and hid among the Seas of Clouds. The place was so beautiful! The sunrise and sunset view were gorgeous. While Tom was enjoying the view, Jiang the Great found him. Jiang was very angry with Tom because he thought Tom was lazy! Tom was regretted and begged for his master’s pardon. Master Jiang punished him to stay there for three hundred years.

It was then that Tom became a stone. People called it Monkey Gazing at the Sea.

Unexpected Venture into the Unknown and Bravery

Ching Chung Hau Po Woon Primary School, Hui, Hoi Ka – 12

Today was finally the trip Jenna has been waiting for - she was going to explore Huang Shan in China with her friends. It has been her dream since she was in middle school. She made some friends who wanted to do the same with her.

Jenna has been traveling with her group for a while now. Maddie is the nerd who loves taking notes about where she has been to. While her twin sister, Maggie is the photographer in the group. Brooke is the joyful one. Annie is the goth girl. She does love travelling and looking at views.

‘Wake u-u-u-p!’ Brooke said shaking Jenna. ‘W-what?’ Jenna opened her eye lids and saw everybody surrounding her bed looking down at her. ‘AH! OKAY! I’LL WAKE UP,’ Jenna rubbed her eyes.

After a while of dealing with Jenna the sleepy head, they finally got their heads moving. ‘Here we are! Huang Shan!’ said Brooke. ‘These sharp peaks are amazing!’ said Maggie while snapping a picture. ‘All the floating clouds are not land. HAHA!’ Brooke said, ‘Plus, did you know these trees are told to be 1500 years old?’

‘Guys? Where’s Brooke?!’ asked Jenna looking around. ‘I’m pretty sure she’s over th-’ ‘OMG GUYS!’ shouted Brooke, ‘I FOUND SOMETHING! I’m going in!’ Said Brooke. ‘No! Don’t-’ before Annie could finish her sentence, Brooke rushed into the cave. ‘Great. So I guess we are all going in.’ Annie was annoyed.

They all tumbled into a whole new world. ‘Well from my explanation we travelled through a portal. With magic. Look! The cave we came through is gone,’ said Brooke.

‘Shh! Don’t be so loud!’ A soldier in armour swooped in and pushed them behind a tall wall. ‘You’re in Huang kingdom. I’m Asher,’ said Asher while taking off his helmet.

‘You’re in the middle of a forest. I hate to say but a while ago, an army with some sort of thing that shoots rocks out of a stick wearing suits appeared out of nowhere, forcing villagers to give their yellow stone necklaces to them.’ said Asher.

‘You mean guns? And why do they even need yellow junk stones anyway?’ asked Brooke.

‘The yellow stones are very precious. A long time ago a king stumbled into a cave that found a giant yellow rock. He found out that it was magical and decided to name it the Huang rock. Just a little piece of that rock can make people have a happy and magical life. It was very powerful all by itself. He didn’t want to get rid of it so he kindly shared it with the villagers. Eventually he named the kingdom the Huang kingdom,’ Said Asher. ‘And now a bunch of soldiers found this place and wanted the rocks for themselves?’ Asked Jenna. ‘Pretty much,’ replied Asher.

Annie pushed them to aside, ‘We need to talk. We still need to find a way home! Guys!’ ‘Well I’m sure we came from the same place the army came from and we need to get home!’ said Jenna. ‘Oh, I might know somebody who can help. Come with me,’ the group shrugged and followed Asher down the cave.

‘We need your help. These people tumbled into this world and they need to get home, lady crystal,’ said Asher. ‘You need to do a courageous act. Then the fox genie would be summoned,’ Lady crystal said and faded away.

Suddenly it became all dark. The group ended up getting tied up in a small room. ‘Where am I?’ Asked Jenna. ‘The army took us,’ said Asher.

‘Hey! I have figured it out! There are so many people tied up here and everything. Maybe what we need to be are HEROS!’ Said Jenna. ‘Okay! There MUST be something here!’ ‘I have a hair pin!’ said Brooke. ‘Unchain us!’ Said Jenna.

After they all got freed, they went to their hideouts and found the rocks. They floated and it all went back to their owners. ‘There’s five left! Who could it be?’ asked Jenna. The rocks started to glow, floated and formed into a piece

of golden-yellow necklaces, with a special shape on each of them. Then they floated to Jenna, Brooke, Annie, Maddie and Maggie. 'Are these what can bring us home?' asked Maddie. 'They look like friendship necklaces!' said Jenna. 'Lets go back to the cave and ask what it is!'

'Lady crystal?' asked Maggie. 'Yes, my dear?' she replied. 'What are these?' asked Brooke. 'The key to home, and the key to new mysteries. No, you can't be alone, and your future will soon be everybody's histories. Then she faded away. 'I mean she did say its the key to home. But I don't think I understand what she means afterwards.' Said Maddie. 'Lets go home then.' Said Annie. They put all of their necklaces together and opened a golden shimmering portal. They stopped in one by one.. and..

'Jenna! Wake up! We have to get of the plane now.' Said Brooke. 'What?' Fought Jenna. 'Everything felt like a.. dream' she thought. She looked at her chest and found those necklaces. 'Guys what are these?' Jenna asked. 'Oh! Its the gifts we brought remember?' Answered Brooke. 'Yea.. right..' Said Jenna. she felt weird but she couldn't care less. She was finally home.

The Princess of Yellow Mountain Palace

Ching Chung Hau Po Woon Primary School, Fok, Zi Yan Jane – 11

On a nice sunny day, the happy laughing sound of children could be heard on the playground and a 10 year old lovely girl, Jane, was playing around.

‘This is my magic wand. MANIMANIHOME! I’m the beautiful princess that will make the world happy!’ she picked it up and spoke the spell.

Suddenly, a little ‘Monkey’ man with short golden hair in a pink shirt, appeared in front of her. He was Mr. Monkey Libai, the elf of Jane’s life protector, the famous poet from a thousand years ago.

Jane originally was the princess of the Yellow Mountain Palace in Huangshan. She performed magic to share happiness with the people. Unfortunately, she drank the polluted water from the human factory, so she lost her memories and magic, and also became a newborn baby.

Monkey Libai wanted to go to Huangshan with Jane to restore her memories, and make the people happy again.

They had to collect the four treasures called the Kindness Stone, the Harmony Branch, the Beautiful cloud and Hope of Spring Water, that were being kept by the elves of Strange Rocks, Old Pine Trees, Miss Beautiful White and Mr. Hot Spring.

Jane was excited to go together with Monkey Libai.

The Four Magic Treasures

Monkey Libai performed the magic. They suddenly arrived at the bottom of the prettiest mountain place, Huangshan in China.

‘Let’s take the cable car to the top,’ Monkey Libai said.

The vast view of the Huangshan mountains that Jane saw for the first time in the cable car was nice. She felt like she was on a spaceship and looking down at beautiful earth.

On the top of the mountain, the famous Strange Rocks appeared. It was unbelievable that they could move. The names of the Rocks were: Watching Ocean Monkey, Looking Moon Dog, Catching Ball Lion, Playing Piano Lady, Playing Chess Fairy, Singing Cock, Mirroring Pig and Swimming Fish.

They were very kind and happy to see Jane. They handed over the treasure, the Kindness Stone.

Then, they went to the next mountain to meet the Old Pine Trees for the second treasure, the Harmony Branch.

But there was no cable car. The walking paths were long and narrow, winding steeply up and down and all around. They were sweating and tired. They went to the middle of the mountain where could see all the Old Pine Trees far away clearly. One of the Old Pine Tree, Mr. Welcome Pine was living right there.

It was amazing that the Old Pine Trees were exactly what their names described; Deep Ocean Pine, Harp Pine, Black Tiger Pine, Futon Pine, Dragon Claw Pine, Unicorn Pine, Connection Pine, Tour Leader Pine and Goodbye Pine.

They were 300–400 years old. They could not move freely but they could talk “heart-to-heart”. Jane could hear them too. People could feel the sense of harmony among them, like old grandparents looking after their grandsons and granddaughters. ‘My dear daughter, Jane. Our pleasure to give you the treasure,’ the Old Pine Trees said.

Monkey Libai and Jane got two treasures and went for the third one. However, they didn’t know how to go as it was in the sky.

Welcome Pine told them to climb onto its strongest arm and the tree pushed them powerfully. They lifted off immediately, like a rocket shooting into the sky.

They passed above the clouds. Then they rebounded gently on them, like lying on the bed.

The sun was hanging in the sky like an orange. It was so beautiful and warm.

A ‘Cotton’ lady, Miss Beautiful White, welcomed them.

Jane was fully attracted to the beautiful sky view. She didn’t know what was happening around her. The floating clouds were just like the ocean but white, like the downward river but floating up, like the night bed but with sunshine, like the heaven but a planet, like the waterfall but of air, like the winter snow but warm, and a picture by a greatest Chinese painter, but not a painting.

‘What a beautiful world!’ Jane praised.

Eventually they got the third treasure, the Beautiful Cloud. They rode on it, flying to Mr. Hot Spring’s home directly. Mr. Hot Spring’s home was nice with the traditional Chinese design, where they were comfortably hot with a slight steam. Jane was not tired anymore.

Mr. Hot Spring was a ‘water’ man by the ‘Hot Spring Water’.

However, Mr. Hot Spring didn’t want to give the treasure because the people polluted the water. He didn’t want people coming to Huangshan.

Jane told Mr. Hot Spring a story about the time she was a baby.

‘When I was a baby, I carelessly broke my mum’s lovely glasses. She was sad as it was a gift from my dad. My mum didn’t get angry with me and forgave me because she loved me very much. She knew I was young, I had no idea about right or wrong. She hoped I could learn from this matter to make a better future,’ said Jane.

Mr. Hot Spring understood that Jane was right. He forgave the people and welcomed them again. He hopes he could educate people to not pollute the environment.

Finally, Mr. Hot Spring gave the last treasure, the hope of Spring Water.

Happiness in Huangshan Again

Monkey Libai put the treasures together in a circle and Jane was inside. The bright colorful magic storm rose over Jane.

Jane became a beautiful young princess in the Chinese Princess dress. The Princess of Yellow Mountain Palace was back! ‘Thank you very much, Monkey Libai and everyone. Let’s share our happiness with all the people with magic,’ Princess Jane said.

Princess Jane chanted the spell with her magic wand. Feelings of Kindness, Harmony, Beautiful and Hope were spreading to everyone in Huangshan. All the people were enjoying their lives with a lovely smile.

Mr. Hot Spring was happy again. He was educating the people to protect the environment, not to pollute the world anymore.

Monkey Libai was happily writing poems to admire his lovely home, Huangshan.

All the people in the world loved to visit the Palace of the Yellow Mountain, Huangshan.

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

Ching Chung Hau Po Woon Primary School, Jia, Rouxi – 12

Once upon a time, there was a man who liked to explore interesting things on different hills. His name was Mr. Buckingham. Mr. Buckingham was a fan of hiking as he really enjoyed the beautiful views of those hills. When he was climbing hills, he found that all the hills have their mysterious parts. So, he became an explorer.

His dream was to explore the famous mountain — Huangshan. Although he enjoyed hiking, he was poor. He didn't even have enough money to buy a ticket for a visit to Mountain Huang.

Once, his friend told him an exciting news: Everyone could buy a chocolate with one dollar and if there was a golden paper, it must be the ticket to visit Mountain Huang for free! Mr. Buckingham was so excited and went to the place where his friend told him. When it was his turn, he took out one dollar from his pocket. Then, the shop assistant gave him a bar of chocolate. He held the chocolate carefully and went to a quiet place with nobody. He opened the chocolate's cover and saw something was shining under the chocolate. He took it out and was shocked. It was the ticket! He can go to Huangshan for free! The excitement came too suddenly that he immediately told his friend and family. They were all very happy about this.

The next day, Mr. Buckingham went to Mountain Huang. He was shocked by the spectacular views. There were lots of twisted pine trees all over the mountain. They let Huangshan wear a beautiful green clothe. The wonderful scenes also included granite peaks and sunrises. But Mr. Buckingham's favorite was the cloud views—sea of clouds. The clouds were playing hide-and-seek with Mr. Buckingham. They were hiding at the back of peaks and sometimes they even disappeared! Mr. Buckingham really enjoyed playing with those naughty clouds.

He had an amazing idea when he was walking up some peaks: "If I am the first person who finds this mountain and tells the Yellow Emperor about Huangshan's beautiful scene... It will be great!" He was thinking excitedly and didn't notice that there was a big dark hole! He slipped into the dark hole and 'went' on the 'slide'. The 'slide' was so scary because it was straight! He screamed loudly but the speed went faster and faster! At the end, the speed was just like lightning! When it at the end of the 'slide', Mr. Buckingham bumped onto the ground, but the ground was soft and sticky. When he woke up, he found himself on the ground. He looked around and was shocked by the beautiful view surrounding him. He found an old man and asked him about where they were. The old man said, "We are on Mountain Yi and it is 747 A.D. now." He thanked the old man and thought, "Mountain Yi? 747 A.D.? I remembered that I have read this on something. Let me think... Oh! I remember now, Mountain Yi is the original name of Huangshan. And at 747 A.D., the emperor will change this mountain's name! There's also a post on the wall that said who can find a good mountain for the Yellow Emperor to gather herbal medicine, who will get rewards. I can tell the Yellow emperor about Mountain Yi and he can gather herbal medicines from Huangshan to make pills of immortality." He thought with excitement and went to the palace.

When he arrived at the entrance of the palace, Mr. Buckingham told the guards about the reason he came and the guards were very happy. They reported this to the Yellow Emperor. The emperor was so excited about this news and let Mr. Buckingham go to the palace hall. Mr. Buckingham told the emperor about what he saw, "The mountain has pleasant environment and also rich biodiversity, spectacular views and different landscapes. That mountain — Mountain Yi is also appreciating the beauty and force of nature that are shown there.' The emperor was so happy that he immediately told the ministers that he would go to Mountain Yi tomorrow and would gather herbal medicines over there. The Yellow Emperor also told Mr. Buckingham to go together so that Mr. Buckingham could introduce Mountain Yi to him.

The next day, they set off. When they arrived, the emperor descended from his sedan chair and looked at the wonderful views around him. Mr. Buckingham then introduced Mountain Yi to the emperor. The emperor was really impressed by the twisted pines, absurd stones, sea of clouds and amazing hot springs, as well as high peaks, strange pines and glacial landforms.

"What a wonderful place! It's like Shangri-la!" said the emperor with excitement. The Yellow Emperor really loved the scenery of Mountain Yi so he wanted to change its name, "Let me think... I would like to change it to Huangshan. And Mr. Buckingham, you will get two thousand tales of gold and you will also become the owner of

Huangshan from now on.” “Your majesty, I am very happy with your present and I will protect Huangshan well.” The emperor went back to the palace and Huangshan became very famous. To avoid Huangshan’s ‘huang’ would be as same as Yellow Emperor’s ‘huang’, Mr. Buckingham set Huangshan’s ‘huang’ to the one whose meaning is yellow. Every day, many tourists went to Huangshan to see the spectacular views.

Mr. Buckingham became really rich and famous. Every day, many tourists went to Huangshan to see the spectacular views. The famous movie Avatar even took place at Huangshan!

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

Ching Chung Hau Po Woon Primary School, Lam, Sophie – 12

Mei set her sick baby brother Shu down and dipped her hands into the cold stream.

A face was in the stream, eyes closed but staring at her, and Mei felt like she was being pulled into the stream, the porcelain features of the thing marred by a wide smile, seemingly splitting its face in half, and as if moving of their own accord, Mei's eyes flickered to the creatures' closed lids, and they opened, a black expanse behind them, and Mei was pulled into the quiet of the Deep.

Mei stumbled away from the Shueigui (mother had told her about them before she went up the mountains; "Don't look in their eyes, don't look in their eyes, don't look in their eyes...") , As Shu sat quietly by the stream, the spirit rose from the icy water, black eyes staring into her soul, tendrils of fear creeping into her heart—

Something bolted out from the undergrowth, tackling the Shueigui into the water and turning to Mei, wide black eyes staring at her, and it held out a hand and beckoned her, its voice echoing through her head.

Mei couldn't make out the words, but a certainty that it was here to help seeped into her, The creatures eyes were a black as dark as the night sky, far darker than the Shueigui's, but emitted a feeling of warmth, and now that Mei thought about it, its eyes were more of a dark brown like tea.

As Mei was about to get up and follow it, it fell apart to dust and drifted with the wind, a smile carving itself into the air.

Despair tugged at Mei, and she reached over to tug Shu back onto her back numbly, certain that she and her brother would die alone on this living hell of a mountain, and as the icy fingers of hopelessness dragged her deeper into the quiet space in her head, a figure flickered into existence in the creature's place.

Mei twisted round to see it better, and saw gnarled hands resting on a cane, a simple copper brooch resting in gray hair, and a kind smile set in a wrinkled face. Shu stopped crying, as a babyish gurgle made its way out of his mouth, and a memory tugged at her ('She's a beautiful baby, just look at her!' 'No doubt about that, mother, she gets it from you, and she'll grow up to be just as beautiful.' 'Oh, I don't think I'll be there to see it...')

'Grandmother...?'breathed Mei, memories of wizened old hands rocking her back and forth assaulting her mind.

The silhouette of her grandmother smiled and reached out to brush a gentle finger over Shu's forehead, and Shu's sickly pallor instantly became rosy and healthy, and he started to giggle, grabbing at the brittle fingers lingering near his face.

Mei's breath caught as she stared amazed at her grandmother, and she stretched two trembling arms out to her, weak with age but Mei knew that they would cling to her strongly, unyielding to wind and storm.

Tossing all thoughts of caution to the wind, Mei tumbled into her grandmother's embrace, whose gentle arms wrapped around Mei and her brother.

'How—'

Her grandmother lifted her gaze to the slowly darkening sky, and Mei remembered with a jolt that spirits could only speak after sundown.

As the last vestiges of sunlight faded from the sky, Mei's grandmother hacked out a cough and grinned at her.

'Well, I see your mother was right, you have grown into a beautiful young woman indeed,' Mei's grandmother rasped, smiling at her cheekily, 'Exactly like I was when I was young!'

Mei laughed, and gave her grandmother another hug before stepping away.

‘How are you here?’

‘Well...’

She waved her hand around her, her cane nearly whacking Mei in the face, and a village appeared around them, blooming with life, and Mei caught glimpses of old relations that she had fuzzy memories of meeting when she was young.

‘What...’

‘I’m sure there’s an entire lengthy description floating around, but the gist is that when people from our family die, they go here!’ Mei’s grandmother said, ‘It all has to do with this brooch...’

Mei stared at the brooch in her grandmother’s hair, the red glass gem set in the cloudy copper gleaming unnaturally and fingered the identical (if a little more worn) brooch resting against her throat.

Her grandmother caught the movement and smiled, ‘If I’m not mistaken, one of the women in our family a few generations back was bonded to a spirit, more specifically, the spirit of this mountain.’

Mei (and Shu, who was still strapped to her back) looked up at Mei’s grandmother in confusion.

‘If Jin is to be believed, his grandmother Jen (the woman who bonded to the spirit of this mountain) merged with the spirit after her death, and tied the family to this brooch, and it is “destined” to drag us all here by the ankles after we get stabbed to death or something. I assume we pass it down just for the sentiment, but it could be a creepy spirit thing.’

Mei grimaced at her grandmother’s choice of words’ ...Alright.’

Her grandmother shrugged.

‘Hey, do you know what that thing that got rid of the Shueigui for me was?’

‘Oh, that was Jen,’ Mei’s grandmother waved absently at a passing man with Mei’s nose, ‘I was actually chatting with Yun before I popped up. Then Jen sent me to you. She does that when something big happens.’

Mei’s grandmother frowned ‘What are you still doing here young lady? You better get back home before your mother gets worried. Mai was always a worrier. Shoo! Shoo!’

She nudged Mei down the mountain, calling after her ‘Visit often!’

‘I will!’ shouted Mei, Shu gurgling happily on her back.

As Mei headed down the mountain, she laughed to herself, ‘To think that there was an entire village of family spirits up the mountain!’

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

Ching Chung Hau Po Woon Primary School, Li, Juan Yi Jason – 11

Li Bai was a famous poet in China, but being a poet was never what he wanted. He wished to do something big and influential as it was a time when there were unceasing wars in different parts of the country and people suffered from hunger, terror of war, and death of their family members. Li Bai was upset about the situation, he wished to help, but facing the situation that time, he felt powerless. One day, while he was reading, he found a big box at the corner of the library located at the top of the bookshelf. He opened the big box and slowly scratched off the layers of dust. He took a glance at a book – The Magic of Huangshan.

He was hooked to the book, he turned every page, and what was written in the book awed him. In the book, he was told that there were some magical dragon eggs hidden and the dragon eggs had magical power to make people's dreams come true. Li Bai felt like there was a voice inside him asking him to find the dragon eggs and use the power of the dragon eggs to stop the war and save people from suffering. Li Bai told Du Fu about the book and the dragon eggs. Du Fu grinned and the next minute he packed his bag and was ready to go.

Over mountains and along the endless road, there lay the beautiful mountain – Huangshan. Li Bai and Du Fu were at the foot of Huangshan. Huangshan looked mysterious, covered with a sea of clouds floating around the mountain. Very occasionally, they could see the tip and the mountain in a flash, but never lasted long. Li Bai and Du Fu looked at each other. Du Fu nodded his head and signaled that it was another start of their journey.

The road to the mountain top was scary. To be honest, there was no proper road to the mountain top. All over the mountain grew bushes and trees, and it was not the kind of mountain that people would go to. On the way up the mountain, they needed to use their daggers and swords to cut the branches that blocked the road to go on. It also required them to do a lot of climbing on the rocky mountain surface with their bare hands. It hurt when they touched the shaped and blade-like rocks under the cold weather in the mountain. Food, clothes, and water supply were scarce. They collected fruit to eat, drank the dew on the leaves and hunted wild animals to fulfill their needs and build strength. They followed the directions of the map in the book.

After a month of searching, they still had a hard time finding the cave's entrance where the gold dragon eggs were located. When they were getting closer to the top of the mountain, it snowed. Cold, tired, and hungry, they never lost hope. They did not talk because neither of them had the strength to make conversation. Fortunately, Li Bai and Du Fu found a small cave as their temporary shelter. They hid inside the small cave. Leaves and branches became their most useful resources to build a barrier to block the wind from the mountain. They lit a fire in the cave to keep them warm. They saw hopes and dreams in the fire, but they could not control themselves falling asleep after all that they went through on the journey. Both slept like a log in the cave where they were finally able to take a break from the journey of searching.

'Growl~', Li Bai and Du Fu heard a loud sound deep inside the cave. A wave of warm air wafted to them with the growl. They got out of their sleep and looked up. Then looked into each other's eyes with a smile and made their move walking towards where the sound was from. They walked carefully and slowly with their swords holding in their hands tightly. The cave was dark, and they could not see what was in front of them. They were walking towards the cave because they had faith that where the sound was coming from was the place where the dragons and the eggs were.

Finally, they were able to find the cave where the dragon was locked and there was a chest next to the dragon. When they opened the chest, they found the magnificent golden eggs with a note inside. Inside the note, it was written, 'You are a worthy man, I know you will find me. Here are the golden dragon eggs with magical power to help you make one of your wishes come true, only for the righteous purpose'. Li Bai and Du Fu made a wish, they wished the war would end and people would be able to enjoy some peace with their family and friends. They both shed some tears while they were making the wish. With the magical power of the dragon eggs, their happy tears turned into beautiful glitters. The glitters were floating around and made the space sparkly. Their wrinkles and wound were disappearing. The lock that was holding the dragon started to vanish. The dragon came to Li Bai and

Du Fu and lowered his head, signaling them to climb onto his back and wanting to give them a ride home. The two accepted the invitation and rode on the dragon to their hometown.

Back to their hometown, everyone looked so welcoming, they were so excited that Li Bai and Du Fu were finally back there. In the end, the war had really ended, and people were slowly recovering from the trauma after the war. Yes, there's magic for those who believe in it and there's magic in China's Magical Mountains – Huangshan.

The Tale of the Dragon's Fire Breath

Chiu Sheung School, Hong Kong, Abasolo, Gabriel Cedric Bugarin – 10

Once upon a time, there was a young naughty boy who lived with his dad and mom at the foot of the mountain. He loved to play so that he sometimes forgot to do his chores. One day, while playing at their backyard, he noticed an ant hill. He picked a wooden twig near the tree and used it to poke the holes of the ant hill because he wanted to disturb the ants inside it. He couldn't stop poking each hole until the ant hill was completely destroyed. All of a sudden, all the ants kept on crawling out of the soil. What he didn't imagine was, it was also the home of an elf. The elf was so mad that he cursed the boy's father. The boy begged the elf to free his father from the curse. He also promised that he wouldn't do it again and would be a good boy. The elf agreed to lift the curse, but in return, the boy should give him a dragon's fire breath, which would improve his magic so that he could rebuild his home. The elf told the boy that he could find the dragon in a cave on the peak of the Misty Mountain, but also warned him of the danger he might face along the way.

And so the boy went on an adventure on the Misty Mountains to look for the dragon. On his way, he came across an ogre who wanted to eat him. The ogre tried to grab him with his big arms and hands, but the boy quickly passed through the ogre's legs and ran away.

He continued to walk and after a while, he felt thirsty. At that moment, he saw a lake and a unicorn was drinking from it. Therefore, he went to the lake to drink, and noticed that the unicorn was staring at him. He tried to talk to this creature and asked for the direction to the peak of the mountain. The unicorn moved up and pointed his horn on a path. Then he realized that the unicorn was showing him the way.

After walking for a long time, he noticed he was halfway to the peak. He kept on walking until a big wall was blocking his way. He tried to climb but he failed. The wall was made from small rocks, so he pulled the rocks out one by one until the wall broke. And so he continued to walk to the top of the mountain.

He was almost there. It was so exciting to see the cave! So he ran, but the path in front of him suddenly collapsed. The gap wasn't that big, so he retreated a bit, started to run and made a big jump. He made it!

Finally he arrived there, but he couldn't find the dragon. By looking around, he saw that the dragon was flying in the sky. He yelled and yelled until the dragon came down. "What do you want?" the dragon asked. The boy said that elf cursed his father because he destroyed his home. Therefore, he needed a fire breath of the dragon to cure his father. The dragon was glad to breathe the fire into his container.

The boy brought the dragon's breath to the elf. The elf was impressed and happy, so he uncursed his father. The boy decided to be more responsible and listen to his parents. What's more, he promised to be nice to everyone and everything around him.

The Cloud Village of Bright Peak

Chiu Sheung School, Hong Kong, Chong, Xin Alethea Kelmin – 10

My grandma likes telling me stories about a magical mountain in China called Huangshan. She said there was a small hidden village high above the clouds with special villagers.

I asked grandma if she knew anyone who has been there before and she said no. Moreover, she has also heard about secret caves in the mountains that not many people knew existed. These caves have some icicle-like rocks hanging from the caves ceiling and rising up from the ground. There are also some clear blue crystal with specs of white in them around the caves. Some of the magical creatures liked to live in these secret caves. Then I thought about what grandma had said for a little while and asked her, “Where did you hear the stories about the mountains you talked about?” Grandma replied, “When I was little, I often visited my grandma, who is your great great grandma, in the summer. She always cooked delicious food and shared stories about the magical mountain Huangshan. That is how I heard about the stories of Huangshan.”

“Could you tell me more about these mountains?” I asked. Grandma replied, “Of course. Did you know that there is a place in Huangshan called Bright Peak? It got that name because it is the brightest peak in Huangshan and there are a lot of peculiar pines, rocks and stones.” I said, “No, could you tell me more, please? This is interesting.” Then she continued talking about the stories of the mountains, “There are peculiar rocks and stones that form into rock giants. When there is a full moon, the rock giants will come alive to patrol the mountains. The magical creatures and animals like to stay hidden in the day because they are afraid of humans.” “I know, if the whole world knew about the magical creatures, it would attract a lot of tourists and this might disturb the magical creatures and their living environment,” I added. Grandma smiled and continued, “Every once a century, the dragons will fly over the mountains to swim in the sea of clouds around Huangshan.”

Grandma also told me a story about a lost girl. It goes like this, “Once upon a time, a teen girl named Huahua went to the Huangshan mountain with her family. They were walking on the rock path towards Bright Peak. When they stopped to rest, Huahua accidentally put her hand on a rock that turned and opened a secret passageway. She saw some stairs in a spiral heading up towards somewhere. Out of curiosity, she left her family behind and followed the stairs on her own and kept walking until the very top. From a corner of her eyes, she discovered a small village on the sea of clouds. Huahua wanted to investigate what was going on but she dared not go to the small village because clouds are made out of water, she would fall all the way down to the valley. She decided to go back down the stairs but the stairs were gone!”

Grandma suddenly stopped, she picked up a cup of tea, slowly drinking it before continuing, “Huahua panicked, tripped and fell onto the sea of clouds but surprisingly, she did not fall. She realized that she could walk on the clouds! Very carefully, she walked across the cloud that felt like cotton candy and arrived at the small village. There were about 20 odd-looking cottages made from unknown materials surrounded by peculiar pines. She walked into the village and was greeted by some creatures that she had not seen before. Turns out, those creatures are magical creatures that she had read from fantasy stories like the phoenix, the Chinese unicorn called the Qilin, the dragons and much more. She was frightened and fainted. When she woke up, a phoenix was staring at her. The phoenix started talking and she fainted again. When she woke up, it handed her an apple pie and a cup of fresh peach juice. Amazed by the magical creatures, she became curious and decided to stay with them. The creature welcomed her warmly and helped her build a treehouse. It had all the things a home needed, a bed, food, water and a lamp for her to see in the dark. On nice days, she enjoyed flying on the dragons’ back to admire the beauty of mountains, soaring through the seas of clouds; she played hide-and-seek with the Qilin in the secret caves, and baked pies and cookies with the phoenix. She had lots of fun with the magical creatures. But, a few months later, Huahua started to miss her family – her mother, father, sister and her hamster, and wished to return home. However, the magical creatures wanted to erase her memory so that she would not expose them. After Huahua knew about their plan, she sneakily left without saying goodbye.”

“Did Huahua return home safely?” I asked. “Yes,” grandma nodded and gently replied. “When she returned home, her family was overjoyed to see her alive and healthy after missing for months. She told her family about her adventures at Huangshan, they were amazed but disbelieve at the same time.” Although I have forgotten some plots of the story, I think it is very nice. After my grandma died, I received a jade bracelet reserved for me. There is an engraving on the bracelet and it reads, “Huahua.”

China' Haungshan Mountain

Chiu Sheung School, Hong Kong, Drummond, Hannah Martinez – 10

HuangShan is known for its beauty. Once there was a very famous poet named Lai Bai. He was known for making poems about nature and they were his top sellers. One day he went to HuangShan Mountain to use it for "inspiration". When he got there, he thought to himself "This place is outstanding!" "I can use this place to make a new poem and I will definitely make tons of money from it!" said Lai Bai. He took out a pencil and paper from his backpack and started to write, but he could not concentrate because someone was tapping on his shoulder it was very annoying.

When he turned around, he saw a figure its face was not clear he was standing there. Then Lai Bai Screamed "Who are you and what do you want from me?" as soon as Lai Bai said that the figure vanished. Lai Bai was scared but walked it off easily because he kept thinking about how much would his new poem would be. Then the same thing happened again but this time when he looked behind, he felt something weird then all he saw was pitch darkness and he fainted. When he woke up, he was in a really dark and weird house. "Looks like someone has woken up" said by a mysterious voice from the creaks of the walls. "What the—where am I and who are you?" Lai Bai was so scared but he saw an exit and ran towards it but when he reached the end, he just banged into it. It was like there was some sort of invisible wall. Lai Bai kept trying but he could not go through "Is this some sort of witchcraft or something?" Shouted Lai Bai "It's not witchcraft my dear friend, it's my talent" said the mysterious voice. "Well, your talent is not letting me go!" "Ok, I will tell you why I brought you here but you have to go through different challenges at HuangShan Mountain." said the mysterious voice "Yes please!" Shouted Lai Bai, then suddenly a big crack appeared on the floor.

Then Lai Bai fell straight down to the tunnel. he was scared at first but the tunnel was not completely dark. There were different creatures in see through glasses, like flying worm and glowing cow "awe my butt, wait where am I now?" Said Lai Bai. "Now on to your first challenge" Suddenly the mysterious voice appeared. There were 2 doors, one of them said use and one of them said appreciate "Now which door are you going in?" Lai Bai chose the door which said use. He thought that using things is better than Appreciation. "Wrong answer!" said the mysterious voice "Always appreciate things and never just use them because of the appearance." Then Lai Bai felt something sharp in his arm he saw 3 lines and 1 line started to slowly fade away. "Are—are these my life?" "Of course they are! Next question!" Then Lai Bai fell through the floor again to the next challenge.

The next challenge was a maze. He had to go through different questions to open the door to the next part of the maze. Suddenly Lai bai realised he was being selfish all this time. He never grew up, he was very kind and giving, his father died when he was little. The person he looked up to the most was his mother. His mother worked hard every single day to make him and his sister have a good childhood and at the same time she would give to the poor. They were not even close to rich but she still gave poor people food and money. Lai Bai's sister was 1 year older than him, she was like his father, she has an anger issues but worked really hard. Lai Bai was devastated when his mom passed away when he was 15 at the time, he couldn't even eat. His sister tried her best to make him smile again but he never did. His sister started working for money because they both had to eat and needed more clothes so he was often left alone. He had one friend but he lived very far away and there were no mobile phones back then so he was all alone for most of his teenage years. When he was in his grown up years he started getting into writing poems.

One day he decided to share a poem with his teacher Miss Lau, she was shocked on how good it was she shared it to all the teachers then the teachers told their friends and it was a cycle of the Lai Bai made tons of money. When he moved out of the farm where he was raised then he started being selfish. He only wrote poems for money but one day he realised that his mother would be so disappointed. He loved her dearly so he finally came in. It was like he was in a selfish shell and broke out of it to be free. He got all the questions right from there and it was like a miracle. He suddenly changed his attitude. He realised that what he was doing for the past was wrong. He will not use poems for money then he dropped back to HuangShan Mountain but the last thing Lai Bai said was "Now please tell me who are you." The voice revealed itself. "KIKI!?" Shouted Lai Bai "Yes it's me Kiki, I know it's been a while but I know what you have been doing so I wanted to make you that good old Lai Bai again. They hugged for the longest time. From that day forward, Lai Bai never used things for money again.

An Amazing Dragon Adventure

Chiu Sheung School, Hong Kong, Ho, Ying Yan – 11

It's the start of the Christmas holidays! I feel so happy and relaxed. I took a deep breath of fresh air. Ah, I couldn't wait to spend time with my family! My parents were always busy at work. We rarely had time together. I turned my attention to the book I was reading. My family had brought it for me as a Christmas present. It was called, 'Tales from China's Magical Mountains'. 'Misty Mountains are presented as magical places in stories..... Scientists regularly find new species of animals here, and dinosaur bones found in these Chinese mountains are the reason that so many stories feature dragons living in secret caves.....' I read. I was intrigued. Were there really dragons? What was the secret of China's Magical Mountains?

My older brother Daniel was reading over my shoulder. He looked thoughtfully at me and said, 'Why don't we give it a go? It's the Christmas holidays. We have all the time in the world. Let's convince Mum and Dad to bring us there!' I jumped up and down with excitement. 'Yes! Why didn't I think of that? It's a brilliant idea!' I said eagerly. We were so excited!

We went to tell our parents. Yay! They had agreed to go! 'It sounds delightful!' Mum exclaimed. 'I think you deserve a holiday after a week of stressful exams. We need a break from work too. Let's go!' Dad agreed. 'Now, have a good night's sleep and we will set off tomorrow!' Mum decided. 'Do you think there will be dragons?' I enquired. Daniel curiously when we were getting ready for bed. 'Nah, of course not!' He scoffed. 'Do you seriously believe in all those fairy tales?' Ah, he didn't know how wrong he was then!

After packing our luggage, 'Yay! Let's go!'

We sang all the way to the train station. 'Tickets to the Magical Mountains, please.' Dad said. 'Can Grace and I go exploring for a bit?' Daniel asked. 'Fine by me.' Dad said.

So we went exploring. There were so many things to look and see! Soon, we heard our parents calling us. 'Grace! Daniel! There you are. This is Eddie Weston. He is our guide to Misty Mountains!' Eddie had twinkling blue eyes and chestnut brown hair. He also had a warm smile. 'Hello there! It's a pleasure to meet you!' He greeted us and shook our hands. 'Are there really dragons in Misty Mountains, Eddie?' I asked curiously. 'Why, of course!' He replied. 'There are definitely dragons. They are shy and sweet creatures and wouldn't harm a person at all! They are misunderstood because they are rather large.' His eyes twinkled. 'Would you like to meet them? They love making new friends.' Daniel and I were so excited! We couldn't wait to find out more about them.

Soon, we arrived in a couple of hours. 'Wow!!' The mountains looked so beautiful and majestic. Clouds of mist surrounded the mountains. It was like a magnificent piece of art! I gazed at it in wonder. I couldn't wait to explore right away! The mountain wasn't too hard to climb. Daniel and I took ahead while Mum, Dad and Eddie chatted at the back. The view was breathtaking. The mist was pink with wisps of purple, and the beautiful sunset was orangey yellow. With the emerald green of the trees, they combined into a breathtakingly beautiful masterpiece! Admiring the view, I marveled at the beauty of nature.

The sky was getting dark. We set up the tents and made a blazing fire. We warmed our hands and toasted marshmallows. Mmm.. The sweet and gooey marshmallows tasted so good! We sang campfire songs and went to sleep under the stars. The stars looked like diamonds sparkling in the dark blue sky, winking at me before I fell asleep.

At around midnight, Eddie woke me up. 'Wake up! Let's go meet the dragons. They only come out at night!' My heart beat with excitement. We woke Daniel up and off we went, dressed up warmly.

Eddie led us to a mysterious cave. After he whispered 'Dragons', the large stone door crashed open. 'Eddie! You're here!' A dragon rushed out happily to meet him. She was buttercup yellow with aqua blue eyes. 'Buttercup! Hello! It's great to see you again.' Eddie grinned. Daniel and I were both staring speechlessly at the dragon. She stared curiously back. 'Hello there!' She chirped cheerfully and grabbed us in a hug. 'I'm Buttercup! What are your names?' We smiled shyly. 'Hi! I am Grace! This is my older brother, Daniel.' 'Welcome, Daniel and Grace! Let's me show you our lovely village!' Buttercup said. Eddie chuckled. 'Go check out the village! I'll meet you here later. Bye!'

We went off with our new friend. She introduced us to the whole village. Eddie was right. They were all so outgoing and friendly! We became close friends in no time. 'I expect you are hungry?' Buttercup asked. 'I know the best restaurant!' Tummies rumbling, we went to Misty Restaurant. Each snack we tried was more delicious than the next! There were Cherry Cloud cookies. Wow! The sweet and light taste of crunchy cookies spread from our tongues, with little bursts of cherries. Then there was Golden Starbread. It was deliciously chewy yet delicately soft, and once you bite into it, you feel full of energy! After that we tried Mist Apple Cakes. They melted the moment you put one in your mouth! Sweet and savory, they tasted so good with the soft and chewy bits of caramelized apples

that we couldn't get enough! Then, we chatted and laughed and even had a food fight! It was great to make new friends!

Soon, the sun was rising. We have to go back to the tents. We were really sad to leave. 'Don't be sad! We can come again someday!' Eddie said comfortingly. 'Yeah, I have a feeling that we will see each other again!' Buttercup said. Waving our goodbyes, we hurried back to our tent. 'My! Up already? Taken a walk, too?' Mum and Dad had just woken up yawning, and rubbing their eyes. We winked at each other and grinned. Although I was sad about leaving my dragon friends, I was sure that one day, we would see each other again! After all, we have a great holiday to look forward to!

What an unforgettable adventure!

A Magical Fruit

Chiu Sheung School, Hong Kong, Mohamed, Manar Ahmed Hussieny Hamad – 12

Once upon a time, there was a family called the Huang Family. This family consisted of eight members. The mother Mrs. Huan, the father Mr. Huang, the oldest brother Yongi, the oldest sister Rosie, the two middle brothers Soekjin, Ming and the youngest sister Mulan. They lived up on the mountains of Huangshan. The father had to work as a farmer, while his kids helped him with the animals, he would grow the vegetables and fruits.

One day, while the father was working, he found a weird looking fruit that has grown out of the ground. The father thought to himself 'What is this fruit, it looks suspicious. 'So, he wanted to taste it. He then found a knife and cut the fruit open, and took a bite out of the fruit. He liked the fruit so much that he finished it all.

Later that day his wife made dinner. The wife called out in a loud voice 'Kids dinner is done; Huang dinner is done come eat.' All the children came running to eat but their father did not. So, the mother told Mulan to go call her dad and tell him that food was done. Mulan went to her parents' room to find that her dad was on the floor unconscious. Mulan then screamed in a loud voice 'Help! Dad is on the floor mum!' Everyone hurried and ran to the room. Their father was unconscious laying on the floor. Their mother then told Soekjin to call the village doctor, Mr. Yip.

After a while doctor Yip came to the house and checked on Mr. Huang to find him in a coma. He said, 'I am glad to say that he is alive but he is in a coma.'

The wife was devastated and cried, while Yogi was comforting the other kids.

Then the mother asked the doctor how they can cure him, the doctor then answered, 'There is no official cure for him.'

Later that night the kids went out to have some fresh air. 'I miss dad.' said Rosie in a sad voice to everyone. They all answered that he would be fine, but then Ming pointed to the floor and shouted, 'Look what is this?' It was the leftovers of the fruit their father ate. The kids where all shocked and confused. They have never seen such a fruit before so they took the fruit home and showed it to their mother.

The mother then remembered the myth of a magical fruit she had learned from books a long time ago. Later on, she told the kids all about it. One of the kids went to go get some books from a librarian that lived near them. When the kid returned home, he gave the books to their mother to read the books about the magical fruit.

After reading 13 books the mother finally found a cure for her husband, but it was a really rare item. 'Kids, this item is really hard to find, it is from the oldest pine tree on the highest point of the mountain.' said the mother in a hopeless voice. 'Pack your bags everybody except mum and Mulan. Mulan, you stay here with mum to comfort and take care of her and the rest of us are going on a one-week trip.' Yongi said in a brave voice.

The next morning the kids got up early and left for the long trip to find the cure for their father. All the kids where really worried and scared but thankfully Rosie had a map. They all followed Rosie and it took them three days to reach the top.

When they finally reached the top 'Everybody lay on the ground now!' yelled Soekjin loudly. Flash! A dragon flew from the top of all of them they all screamed and got scared. The dragon would not let them get the magical pinecone from the oldest pine tree as the dragon kept on guarding it at night.

They only had one choice which was to wait until the next morning to take the pinecone. The next morning arrived, and they finally got the pinecone and went back down the mountain which took three more days.

When they arrived home, their mother was happy to see all the kids were safe. Ming gave his mum the magical pinecone. She smiled and said, 'I am the proudest mother there can ever be, I love you kids so much.' The mother then told Mulan to bring a bowl and a hammer. Then she smashed the pinecone into little pieces, mixed it with some water and gave it to her husband through a syringe.

The next morning their father woke up and was completely fine. The family returned back to normal. From this story you should learn that if you are devoted to doing something so much, nothing will be impossible.

China's Magical Mountain

Chiu Sheung School, Hong Kong, Narag, Jennica Ariana Maree Gammad – 11

I'm going to tell you about this tales which is called the China's Magical Mountain.

Once upon a time there was a pair of poets. Their name was Lai bai and Du fu. They were excellent at poetry. In their village, they had no more things to poet about so they decided to go and have a walk to see if there were anything interesting. They finally stepped foot on a very beautiful mountain which was called "The Huangshan Mountain". The scenery was so beautiful that I don't think you would want to go to any other mountain ever again. So Lai bai and Du fu decided to move in and live there. Therefore, everyday they do poetry and hiking. One day Lai bai went to explore to get some new fresh ideas for poetry. He was gone for so long that Du fu got so worried and started to search the whole mountain until he saw that he was welcomed by creatures that were half human and half creatures which were extinct about 1 thousand years ago. They were really shocked, after welcoming them, they started floating and leading them to a cave where there were 2 headed dragon. Lai bai said "they were supposed to be extinct 10 thousand years ago but the little creatures have been helping them live for so long, they just didn't want them to be shown to the world so they won't harm them' 'But since Lai bai and Du fu are very nice human beings that every day they would take care of the 2 headed dragon since it was only 1 that survived.

But one day the Yellow Emperor decided to go on see if Lai Bai and Da fu were honored to go and write a poet for the Yellow Emperor. But since the Yellow Emperor didn't see Lai bai and Da fu in their houses, there were footprints that led to a place that kept the 2 headed dragons. He hid behind a rock and spied behind the rock and just listened ,Lai bai said "We have to hide the dragon before anyone comes since it's the most busiest day of the year". The Yellow Emperor declared that they searched the Huangshan Mountain for any 2 headed dragon but there was nothing to be seen, the Yellow Emperor said "they are very luck and good at hiding." Little did the Yellow Emperor know that the little creatures had magic powers. The next day the little creatures tried bringing the 2 headed dragon to another dimension as well as Lai bai and Du fu, but they couldn't bring Lai bai and Da Fu, until the little creatures tried their best and Lai bai and Da fu made it.

2 years later, the Yellow Emperor gave up and gave his position to his son, the 2 headed dragon and the little creatures and Lai bai and Da fu were about to leave the dimension and they were getting ready. They made another 2 headed dragon so they were about 100 on the 2 headed dragon since the little creatures made duplicates of the 2 headed dragon. As soon as they arrived, they never knew it was the busiest day of the Huangshan Mountain. So, they arrived at earth and they hid inside the woods until it was the next day. Little did they know that the new yellow emperor was staying at Lai bai and Du Fu's house. They met each other and the new yellow emperor captured Lai bai and Du Fu. The new yellow Emperor said "Hahaha now I have you, I can treat you like slaves now, go get me my drink servants." The 2 headed dragon and the little creatures had been waiting for so long and they got suspicious so they saw the Yellow Emperor. So they started the war with the Yellow Emperor and the little creatures fought with the 2 headed dragons.

It took them 2 hours to fight and finally the little creatures and the 2 headed dragon won. Finally, the little creatures and the 2 headed dragon and Lai bai and Du fu are the kings of the Yellow kingdom. After 4 years, the kingdom had 2 headed yellow dragons and 2 headed dragon and the little creatures were called dwarfs now, "Lai bai and Da fu are good kings" the dwarfs said. Lai bai had a wife called Queen Amy and 2 kids called Issie and Ell and Da fu had a wife called Queen Ariana but Du fu has no kids. 1 year later Lai bai had a wonderful life and Da fu was happy because his wife was happy and they adopted a child name Cho now Cho,Issie and Ell were best friends. The 2 headed dragon sadly did go extinct and so did the lovely and kind dwarfs that saved Lai bai and Da fu from the Yellow Emperor. They died because the dwarfs couldn't survive in the cold season and the 2 headed dragon couldn't survive because they were getting weaker and weaker by every single day.

Lai bai and his family was very happy. Their kids are 13 years old and Da fu and his family was very happy. Their child was as same age as Lai bai's daughter. One day they all went on a trip to a different country when they came back, terrible things happened. Everything was dirty and disgusting, they had to work hard to clean the place up since the Yellow kingdoms and the palace was huge. At last, the kingdom and the palace were clean and nice "Looks very fancy. "said Da fu, but there was one spot at the palace that was almost impossible to clean. it was filled with paint and other unknown substances so they called up some friends and they managed to finish cleaning the area with a little help and at last the pace was squeaky.

The Magical Mountains

Chiu Sheung School, Hong Kong, Quibel, Kayci Claire Jadulco – 11

Once there was a poet, called Fa Huan. He wished to create a new poetry that captivates and inspires. So, he decided to travel to the Yellow Mountains, a mysterious place that hardly anybody knows its existence.

He voyaged to the South of Huangshan village. He was not well acquainted with the city, so he asked the villagers but got unsatisfying responses... Fortunately, some villagers stepped up and claimed that they have been to Huangshan and could lead the way. Finally, Fa Huan reached the starting point of the long hike and began his journey there.

When he reached around a quarter of his hike, his knees felt like noodles and he was breathing heavily. He could not call for help because there was no sign of human beings on that mountain. It was ghostly quiet, until the silence was broken by a rustling noise near the bushes.

He saw a scintillating green light glistening in his eyes. "A Locurroux!" said Fa Huan. The Locurroux looked like a stag with a glowing green light around it. The mysterious creature saw Fa Huan's problems and said, "Whenever there are problems, we will come. But you must prove yourself worthy. You will receive a riddle every time you see one of us." And so, the Locurroux said, "Journey without it; you will never prevail, but if you have too much of it, you will surely fail." Fa Huan hesitated and pondered for a moment. Fa Huan's final answer was "Confidence".

The Locurroux responded, "Different people have different answers. The one you chose was one of a kind, which is why I choose to help you." The Locurroux gave Fa Huan water, a bed for the night and cured his legs.

The next morning, Fa Huan saw a decent amount of bread in his bag. All he requested was water from the Locurroux. So, it must be a human! He mounted a few steps and saw a small hut. He excitedly knocked on the door. He heard footsteps and his heart was pounding quickly, sweat was flowing through his head. The door opened and he saw a small-looking man. "Hello, you must be a poet coming here to make a new poem. Would you like to have some tea?" the man asked gently. Fa Huan was amazed that this little man knew the reason why he travelled to the Yellow Mountains and he was also delighted to see a human being here!

The small man's name was Ran Li Shu. He was a poet, too, and he has lived on that mountain for several years. He wanted to live in the Yellow Mountains as it was quiet, phenomenal and celestial. He'd write new poetry about that mountain. And if he was short of materials, he would politely ask the creatures to obtain new materials for him. Fa Huan was inspired that Ran Li Shu also had the same ambitions as him. When they had finished tea in the afternoon, Fa Huan continued his trekking.

Fa Huan was in the two-fourth of the trek and soon was getting tired again. He had this thought until he heard something flying in the air. The aura of that creature certainly was not like the Locurroux. The Locurroux made Fa Huan feel particularly lucky but this creature made him feel scared and weak. He tried to get a closer glimpse of what the creature looked like and found that it was a Valnihawk! It looked like a black hawk with ten wings and sharp feathers. Fa Huan knew that he could not get past this creature because it was more powerful than him. So, he picked up some bushes and twigs to avoid getting caught. He tried to blend in with the bushes, but he knew he couldn't stay that way much longer. Thirty minutes went by, the Valnihawk still had not departed. He was really worried...

At this moment, Fa Huan saw a tiny white light floating towards him. The little white light said in a gentle murmur, but loud enough for Fa Huan to hear, "Hello, I'm here to give you a helping hand." He was relieved and was ready to answer a riddle. The shining light whispered, "Over time and dedication, you will find this. Learn to have it will relieve the stress in your life." Fa Huan began to wonder if these creatures wanted to give him advice for the real world because these riddles had a deeper meaning within them. His definitive response was 'Patience'. The small light transformed into a powerful Falcolion! It had a lion body with falcon wings and it had a beak. It started dashing towards the Valnihawk; with immense strength, it took down the Valnihawk like it was a worm. The Valnihawk flew away and was gone.

"Ahh... I see you have found the Falcolion. Let us ride on your back, Falcolion." a deep voice said. Indeed, the Falcolion brought them to a cave and they saw a big dragon sleeping soundly. The man gently tapped on the dragon's forehead and asked, "Would you mind taking us to a nicer location with a view?" A simple nod told them that they could ride on its back. They reached the top.

“It’s breathtaking, isn’t it?” The man said. “I’ve never got your name. What is your name?” Fa Huan asked. The man said, “Look at the scenery, what does it look like?” Fa Huan immediately thought of one word: ‘Heavenly.’ “Then that is what you may call me. My name is Tian Shang.” Smiling, the man transformed into a mandarin tree. It appeared like a tall and magnificent mandarin tree. Fa Huan was speechless by its beauty. Tian Shang continued, “You are one unique man down there. Your answers were simple but very pleasant. Fa Huan, you get one of the highest mountains to live on. If you prove yourself worthy, you will get more majestic sceneries. You have proven yourself worthy and I am your guardian now.” The tree grew his branches and welcomed Fa Huan to use the wood to make a cottage. After he built his cottage, Fa Huan placed all his poetry materials on a table. He took it outside and began to write. He remembered why he came to Huangshan, he wanted to put all his experience and passion into the poem and he started writing.

“What lies within these mountains? Its daytime seems so heavenly, but its nights seem so deadly. But I would gladly stay here. Every day its beauty will mesmerize me. The mountains surpass the clouds and it feels like you’re in heaven. When the night falls, its darkness will intimidate me. But when I look into the moonlight, there is a dynamite in my heart that won’t make me feel afraid. What lies in these mountains? Heaven.”

The Missing Mountain of Huangshan

Chiu Sheung School, Hong Kong, Rubio, Tyler Caden – 11

It was Friday and a group of Primary 6 students were in the library selecting a book for their individual book report. Most of them had already chosen a book except Clifford. It was nearly 5pm and starting to get dark outside since it was in the middle of winter.

“Hurry up! The library’s closing soon,” Jack said, one of Clifford’s friends.

“I just don’t see anything I like,” Clifford responded, pulling out one book after another. “Wait, what’s that?” He pointed at a lone book sitting on top of the bookshelf. He tried to reach for it but was surprised to find that it was rather heavy.

“Can you help me out?” Clifford asked Jack. “It’s *really* heavy.”

Together, they tried to bring the book down but the book would not budge.

“I think we need more people,” Jack suggested.

John joined them but with no luck. They called another friend, and another, and another, until there were 10 of them.

“Why is this book so heavy?” John complained just as they wanted to give up.

Suddenly, the book fell onto the floor on its own. It was unusually big and covered in dust.

“This book is a monster!” Kelly remarked.

“Is it just me, or did the book look smaller when it was up there?” Clifford asked as he knelt to the floor and wiped the dust away.

“The Missing Mountain of Huangshan,” he read in Mandarin. He opened the book and he and his friends started reading aloud.

On January 23rd, 499, one of the mountains of Huangshan mysteriously disappeared, never to be seen again. No one knows what and why it happened. On the same day, Mao Lang Shen, a young boy, got lost in the woods and was never found.

“Woah! There’s a missing mountain in Huangshan?” Jack exclaimed.

“It’s just a fiction,” said Kiefer. “How could an entire mountain disappear?”

Clifford turned to the next page.

But the next page only had this warning.

Do not read beyond this point.

But he ignored this and flipped the page. What they saw next was a drawing of a mountain that looked insanely real. Without warning, the ground started to tremble until the entire room was shaking violently. Books fell everywhere while the lights flickered in and out.

“What’s happening?” The students screamed in fright.

The mysterious book was glowing brightly now that it was almost blinding, and something seemed to be emerging from the book.

“Is that what I think it is?” Fiona asked as a bird flew out of the book, followed by more birds. Soon, tree branches to full-grown trees were coming out of the book. But that was not all. Solid oddly-shaped granite rocks came out as well. The missing mountain of Huangshan was magically and uncontrollably sprouting from the mysterious book! The terrified students clung onto tree branches as the mountain grew bigger and taller, destroying the school building.

After what seemed like an eternity, the trembling stopped. The students climbed down from the trees and stood speechlessly as they looked around.

“Where are we?” Lily asked.

“I think we’re on the missing mountain of Huangshan,” Clifford said.

“But why?” Kiefer asked but no one knew the answer.

“I want to go home!” Fiona cried.

“Let’s figure it out together,” Kelly said and they all nodded in agreement.

The students began to explore the mountain for clues, carefully walking down the narrow stone steps. They were so high up the mountain that clouds covered the long and treacherous path they were on.

“We don’t even know what we’re looking for!” Simon exclaimed in frustration.

“In the book, there was a mention of a boy,” Jack pointed out.

“He was never found,” Clifford said.

“Plus, he’d be dead by now. It’s been more than 1,500 years ago,” Becca said.

“Are you talking about me?” a voice said from behind. They all turned around and saw a shadow approaching until a frail old Chinese man with kind eyes, silvery white hair and beard, appeared in front of them. The man wore a long brown tunic and there were ancient markings on his bare skin. “I’m the boy in the book,” Mao Lang Shen explained. “It’s been almost a hundred years since the last time someone found my book.”

“How are you still alive after all these years?” Chris asked.

“As you may have already realized, there is nothing normal in this place that is blanketed in mystery.”

“Please help us go back to our world,” Becca pleaded.

“Follow me,” he simply said.

The students hesitated at first but decided to follow him. They passed several granite peaks and gasped collectively when they ended up in a cave filled with human skeletons.

“They were the people who found the book before you,” he told the frightened children. “They never made it out because they made foolish choices. The mountain needs a human sacrifice for the rest to go back. You must decide among yourselves who will stay behind. Remember, there is strength in numbers.”

Nobody dared to speak after hearing this until Clifford bravely stepped forward.

“I’ll do it. It’s my fault that we’re here. I’ll stay,” he said to everyone’s astonishment.

“No. We’re not leaving you behind. I’ll do it,” Lily said.

“Me too,” Jack said.

“Me too,” Simon said until everyone had volunteered.

Mao Lang Shen beamed with satisfaction.

“You all passed the test. Thank you for visiting,” he said.

Their world began to spin rapidly and they lost consciousness.

“Why are you sleeping here?” The librarian angrily shouted and the students awoke with a start, confused. They were back in the school library, sprawled across the floor. Surprisingly, the school was in one piece like nothing had happened.

“We made it out,” they all said in amazement.

“Thank you all for having my back,” Clifford said.

“You had ours first,” Jack said.

That day, they learned that true friends can help you overcome anything, even the impossible.

The Heat of the Gods

Chiu Sheung School, Hong Kong, Siu, Natalie – 13

The world was beautiful. The forest full of poppies and dandelions, under the peaks of the wispy fog and snow-covered mountains. Yet living in this world had a catch. The first dawn till dusk of your stay, perhaps even two to three days, is just a free and beautiful time. The sun will shine, the plants will flourish, and the caves underground thrive.

But when the final hour comes, and the gods get bored, they will start their fun. Maybe they'll make the seas rise, maybe they'll cause the monsters to appear and spawn in the midst of the night. The travelers that are able to leave alive warn the next people wanting to experience freedom and beauty yet not many take heed the warning.

One day, two travelers that co-owned a company, a ram named J. Schlatt and a human named Wilbur S. decided to visit this wonderful world. Wilbur took no heed to the travelers' warnings, but Schlatt took notice of the signs, the whispers that the gods spoke in. There was a day of peace, that the duo spent relaxing, but only the smart and cunning of them, the ram, made preparations for the flood to come.

Dusk fell, and in the dawn of the first day, a Watcher deity appeared at the top of the mountain. The god warned them of a flood of lava, rising until they died, then in a flurry of purple, vanished. Wilbur, the innocent and naive one, stood at the lava's edge, waiting for it to rise, and wasting time. Schlatt, however, started gathering iron.

Yet the lava rose at a unfortunate time, when Schlatt was still underground, gathering iron. He was submerged, but the ram managed to hide and cover the lava, and Wilbur, his partner, dug him out just before the lava rose once more, flooding the forest and burning most trees.

Schlatt and Wilbur climbed up the peak of one of the wispy mountains, Schlatt making two buckets along the way, and filled one with water, and the other with the plentiful lava around the duo.

But Schlatt got greedy. The small tower they built was not enough for both of them, and he announced 'Wilbur, its time for us to go our separate ways. If you know anything about the accumulation of wealth, having what you have is never enough.' And the broken-souled Wilbur just had to leave. Schlatt took the ladders from the now broken and looted tower atop the mountain, and started the build upwards, making his way to the highest point, then building a safe and shaky path upwards.

Wilbur was forced to leave to the side, and as he ran out of resources, his former business partner and friend now a traitor, laughed high above him. Wilbur knew he could climb no further upwards, and so he made a deal with the gods of the mountain, to slow the lava after his demise, so his former friend that he still trusted could survive a bit longer. But as Wilbur made the dangerous climb to Schlatt so that Schlatt could know of the deal, the now greedy ram pushed Wilbur off the edge, off the edge of the rocks into the lava. Wilbur Soot died a slow and painful death, but one of the two was still alive.

The gods of the mountain had slowed the lava, but Schlatt was still climbing. He knew that the mountain would be ruined, that this would be the finale of this world, and no more travelers would come here. He built a wood shack around himself, and placed two ladders inside, and waited, a small window just large enough for him left open.

And as Wilbur, now a ghost, phased through the walls, he desperately tried to reason with the ram. 'Let me in, and I'll tell the gods to slow the lava.' he said. But the ram paid no attention to Wilbur. He just laughed, and declared himself Ladder Man, for he would survive, survival of the fittest.

That laugh, the laugh he did so long ago echoed in his memory. Ladderman didn't remember much anymore. Was his name even Ladderman? His thoughts would whisper to him there and there, he remembered one person in the midst of it all, though. Wilbur. His...His friend. What had happened to Wilbur? He heard Wilbur, yet no body was seen. Well, he didn't see anything besides stone, a ladder and a sea of lava. He remembered when he won. But what did he even win? Ladderman had no clue. That euphoric feeling when he succeeded in surviving, having cheated the system. He hadn't felt that feeling in days...months...How long had he been stuck there? He was a broken man now, wasn't he? How had Wilbur died? What had happened? ...What did Ladderman do? The thought alone brought tears to his eyes. And he looked to the sea of lava and walked past the ladders that had granted him life beyond death. Past the ladders that allowed him to cheat the system, and into the lava surrounding him.

Legends of The Ladder Man aren't uncommon, although the tragedy of Wilbur Soot and Jonathan Schlatt was centuries ago. The elders speak of an insatiable lust for survival and wealth that had taken over a man. They say that he is haunted forever by the souls he betrayed, forever tormented by another's last moments. They say that there is a land of lava, with The Ladder Man in the core, protected solely by his ladders, waiting until he can be freed.

Although, sometimes, if you listen to the mountains, climb up to a pool of lava up above, you swear that you can hear the whispers of the poor soul Wilbur Soot, having sold his soul to the gods for his friend, and the laughs of a madman, undying, unending, only paused for the slightest of moments, to say, "*Cheating is the only way forward.*"

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

Creative Primary School, Fung, Tsz Kei Michelle – 10

In the 8th century, there was a man named Li Bai who lived on the cryptic mountains of China. He had a friend named Du Fu, and they were both poets. Their mothers had to leave them when they were ten because of new marriages, so the friends were really close to each other.

The pair of poets lived in a casual life. They loved exploring and sight-seeing. It was entertaining writing poetry, but they got tired of doing it and wanted something new.

That night, it was chilly, Li Bai went to the attic to find his scarf when he noticed a piece of paper hiding in the dark corners, he reached his hand to grab it, the note wrote “*Legend of the Youzi village on the mountain*”. Below the words, there was a map focusing on the mountain Li Bai was living in, and an arrow pointing to the top of the mountain and labeled “Youzi Village”. Li Bai was delighted by his new discovery. The next day, Li Bai immediately shared what happened last night with Du Fu, Du Fu felt very curious about this Youzi Village and he decided to do some research about this. He found out that the “Youzi” villagers lived over the clouds and the mountain he was living in was 1860 meters tall! He was amazed by all the interesting facts he had found.

Du Fu never stopped studying Youzi Village with his full attention. Unfortunately, he got really ill and his sickness was not likely to go away, he knew he had not much time left. He hoped Li Bai could do him a favor by keeping on his research about Youzi Village, and after that word, he died. Li Bai was very sad that he had lost his best friend. He was miserable, and he did not eat much nor sleep too in those days. He was very lonely.

One day, Li Bai met a teenager wandering around in the mountains. Her name was Yuet Ying. She was trying to find a place to stay since she could not afford the houses in town. Li Bai allowed her to stay with him, but she had to do some housework, Yuet Ying quickly agreed.

Through the days, Li Bai found out that Yuet Ying was a very kind and clever girl. She was very good at Kungfu and was knowledgeable. There was nothing she could not do. Yuet Ying became curious about the studies Li Bai did about Youzi Village. She offered to hike up the mountains to investigate the village. Li Bai was worried about Yuet Ying, he said it was too dangerous. Yuet Ying assured him that she would be just fine, Li Bai had no choice but to agree. After packing everything up, Yuet Ying was ready. Before she left, Li Bai warned Yuet Ying about the wild people living around the mountains. They were very sensitive to invaders who went into their territory, and the best way was to run as fast as she could to get away from them. Yuet Ying thanked Li Bai then went off.

After three days of hiking, Yuet Ying was halfway through the mountain. She was desperate to finish her mission. On the way, she saw many weird and fascinating creatures. There was one that looked like a squirrel but had antlers and a body shaped like a rabbit with tiger stripes all over! And one that looked like a cat but had peacock feathers and a very long tail! Yuet Ying had never seen anything like that and quickly jotted some notes. There were also many captivating sights she saw.

Yuet Ying kept on hiking and hiking. Soon, she was out of food and energy. She found a spot to rest. She had already lost track of time but there was literally nothing she can do about it. After resting enough, Yuet Ying started hiking again. Walking, she became too exhausted to focus and did not realize there was a big sign in front of her. “BANNNGG!!!!” Yuet Ying bumped against the sign. She shook her head and to her shock, she was there.....

She was finally in Youzi Village! She was up in the sky, over the clouds, standing on a floating village! It was a breathtakingly gorgeous view. The villagers were all silent the moment they saw Yuet Ying, some fainted, guess they were very shocked. An old woman slowly walked towards Yuet Ying cautiously. She looked closely then turned around and yelled excitedly, “SHE IS! SHE IS OUR FIRST VISITOR FROM THE GROUND!” The villagers all gathered around Yuet Ying to ask her questions about the ground, and they also introduced their village to Yuet Ying. Yuet Ying got pampered well and had feasts every day. Almost everything Yuet Ying saw was like magical! The villagers each had a different kind of ability, some had super strength, and some had invisibility! The villagers loved Yuet Ying and Yuet Ying loved the villagers, too. Soon enough, Yuet Ying had to leave for home. The villagers were all sad and told Yuet Ying to have a safe trip. After saying goodbye, Yuet Ying set off for home. It was all incredible, wonderful, like a fanciful dream.

Li Bai was very happy to see Yuet Ying come home safe and sound. Yuet Ying told Li Bai everything about her journey. Li Bai was astonished by everything about Youzi Village. It inspired him to use the name of the village as a topic of his poetry called “Youzi Ling”. He was very happy to finish the wish of Du Fu.

Today, the mountain of Youzi Village is now known as Huangshan. After Li Bai died, Yuet Ying started to become popular. Everyone including the Emperor knows about her story. She became a legend to the world. And by that, the legend was me.

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

Creative Primary School, Lee, Bridgitte Katelyn – 9

The Yellow Mountain was a mysterious place filled with wonders and intrigue. Many believed that mystical creatures lurked in the shadows of the Mountain, and the Mountain had never disappointed them.

Li Bai was a very famous poet who wrote many poems about the Yellow Mountain. Bai Fu was a young and handsome poet who also wanted to follow in Li Bai's footsteps, so he moved to live in the Yellow Mountain. Each day, Bai Fu would explore the Mountain, seeking inspirations for his poems.

Bai had been living in the Mountain for two years now. Even though he had walked these mountain tracks hundreds of times, he was still mesmerized by the immense beauty of the Yellow Mountain. The tracks were lined with cherry blossoms, the deep, lush forests were always filled with birdsongs, and Bai Fu's favourite part was the majestic waterfalls which looked like they were falling from the sky.

Even though the scenery was beautiful, Bai Fu could not find any inspirations for his poems. One day, while he was admiring the landscape, he heard a scream for help. He looked around and saw a girl trapped in between rocks under the waterfalls. Bai immediately jumped to help the girl. The girl was about Bai's age. She had big, dark eyes and long, pointy ears. Bai sighed with relief when he saw the girl was not hurt.

"Thank you for saving my life," the girl whispered, trembling and shivering from the cold waterfalls. Bai was happy to save the girl. When he offered to give the girl some food, the girl shook her head. She then turned around and left.

On the other side of the waterfalls, a very mischievous and deceitful goblin called Slyki was bragging to another goblin, Halstag, about how handsome he was. At that moment, Bai Fu walked by. Halstag said, "Actually, I think this man looks far better than you." Slyki felt offended. He stared hard at Bai Fu's face and finally admitted that Halstag was right. Slyki thought for a moment and then came up with a scheme.

Slyki turned into a human being and walked towards Bai. Bai was surprised to see another traveller but was happy to make a new friend. When Bai told Slyki that he was looking for inspirations for his poems, Slyki said, "Perhaps I can help you. Have you heard of the Inspiration Stone? The Stone can help you write fantastic poems like Li Bai's." Bai was elated to hear the news. "But in order to have the Stone, you have to pass three challenges to prove your worth. If you win, I will lead you to the Stone. If you lose, you have to give me your face." "My face? Why do you need my face?" Bai said fearfully. "You don't need to know. If you want to have the Stone, come here the next morning." Slyki replied.

That night, Bai tossed and turned and could not sleep. Suddenly, he heard someone knocking on his door. When Bai opened the door, to his surprise, he saw the girl.

"I overheard your conversation with Slyki. Slyki is not human but a goblin. But I can help you win the Inspiration Stone," said the girl. "If Slyki is not human, how can you help me and why do you want to help me?" asked Bai. "You saved my life, and this is how I can repay you." The girl continued. "My name is Mei Wu. I am not human either. I am a fox goblin with nine tails. Let me show you." The girl bent down on her knees and showed him her true form. Bai was speechless and in complete shock. Her head was still the same, but her lower body was the same as a fox but with nine tails! "I guess you now believe that I can help you," The girl smiled. Bai was awestruck but he believed her.

The next day, Bai went to the waterfalls. Slyki was there waiting for him. The first challenge was a sighting challenge. Slyki showed Bai a half crescent jade earring and said that he left the other earring in the Cherry Forest. Bai's task was to find the other earring and bring it to Slyki before sunset.

Mei Wu was waiting outside the waterfalls for Bai and together they set off to the Cherry Forest. Since Mei had perfect eyesight, she could easily spot the earring. When Bai showed Slyki the earring, Slyki was surprised. But a deal had been struck and Slyki had to declare that Bai had passed the first challenge.

The Huangshan Tree Blockage

Creative Primary School, Lun, Renee Sophie – 11

Humans are annoying. Just read my experience below and you'll see.

First of all, I'm going to introduce myself. My name is Fiona Foxglove, female alpha of the Furies. The male alpha is Leo Lorenzo, who just started a few months ago since the war with Octavian. So far, everything has been just fine, and we were almost done rebuilding the village. However, because of the war, we were nervous about attacks and started patrolling duty around our village's perimeter where it is hidden by a magic shield. The magic shield makes humans see us as a cliff, but I have never been sure since I can see through it. Turns out, having guards patrol the village was a very bad idea since it almost got us killed by a human stampede.

It all started one day when Piper and Jason were patrolling our village's perimeter. Sure, the humans might not see us from the other side of the shield, but if they stepped into our village, they would see us and our secret would be destroyed. That day, I was walking around the village, making sure that all the buildings were repaired. Just as I was doing a final check, I saw Leo running towards me, and his face told me that something was terribly wrong.

"So, let me get this straight. A human was about to fall off Huangshan, the mountain our village is on, and Piper changed into a light fury in front of everyone, saved that male human, and then finally realized what happened, so she flew back to our village, revealing two secrets at once." I looked at Leo, who looked like he was afraid I was going to kill him.

"Actually, there's more. Don't freak out if I say this, but Jason said he heard the man yell that he was going to post that on Facebook....." He trailed off, so I guess my expression wasn't good.

"Not freak out." I repeated.

"Piper just exposed our secret and you expect me not to freak out."

Leo looked hopeful for a moment. "Yes.....?"

"ARE YOU KIDDING ME?! NOT FREAK OUT? OUR SECRET IS EXPOSED, LEO! SOONER OR LATER WE'RE GONNA HAVE THOUSANDS OF HUMANS OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE! AND YOU'RE TELLING ME NOT TO FREAK OUT?!?!?"

"Yes." Leo said firmly.

"Okay, fine. First of all, I think that we should wait until tomorrow to see how it goes. We can't act rashly, that might just make the situation worse, although I think that we should prepare for a few thousand *guests* tomorrow."

Turns out, I was right.

The next morning was a nightmare. Millions of humans crowded around our perimeter, trying to get in. It took almost all of our villagers to hold them back while Leo, Piper, and Hazel discussed what to do. "Ladies and Gentlemen, I hereby announce this meeting to order." Leo announced like a host of a show. "Amusing how you can still keep your humor, Lorenzo." I muttered. Leo raised an eyebrow at me, but didn't argue. "Okay, so let's start. As we all know, we have a huge mob of humans outside the village, and we have to get rid of them. And by *get rid*, I don't mean killing." I noted carefully, knowing that Hazel had a violent side.

"Maybe we could move our village to another location?" Leo suggested.

"I wish we could, but we can't move without the humans noticing," I pointed out.

Hazel chose that moment to speak. "Is there by any chance that we can erase their memories?"

Silence.

I started to say, "I'm sorry, Hazel, but—" Then Piper interrupted. "Wait a second... I think there might actually be a spell like that! I was in the library once, and I think I saw a book with the title *Forgetting Spell*!"

"Really?!" I jumped to my feet immediately. "Piper, that's amazing!" And off to the library we went.

"I FOUND IT!!" We all raced towards the voice. Turns out, Hazel had finally found the book. We had spent the last hour trying to find the book, and we were seriously starting to go crazy.

I may have jumped up and down like a little girl who just got her own pony.

Piper started reading the ingredients. "Dragon poison, we have that, no worries, melted bronze, and—" Piper's face paled. "It needs the blood of a female alpha."

"Are you sure about this?" Hazel asked worriedly. I nodded. So before I could reconsider what I was doing, I cut myself using scissors. I winced as blood oozed out of the wound, but it wasn't that bad. As soon as we got the right amount, we bandaged my arm. The rest was easy. We mixed the ingredients together, and in the end, we had a tiny vial of the potion.

"We did it." I said, "We actually did it."

Just then, Hazel came running towards us. "Guys! I just found out that the potion has to be drunk by only one person, and that person has to keep thinking about what she/he wants people to forget without getting distracted." "Sooo.....who's gonna drink it?" I asked.

Then three pairs of eyes fell on me.

I stood in the library, holding the potion in front of my face. "I'm not sure if I can do this." I said. "Hey. You can. Besides, if you fail, I will personally slap you in the face." Hazel smirked. That gave me confidence. As I drank the potion, I kept on thinking "Let the humans forget about us." Over and over again. After I drank down the last drop, I could no longer hear the human voices that had been bothering us. "It worked." I said as happiness crept up on me. "It actually worked!"

As we embraced each other, I had to admit that in this group of hugs and happiness, I had never been so glad.

But seriously, all that happened just because of one annoying human.

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

Creative Primary School, Mok, Shing Tsit Aquila – 9

Today is the long-awaited school fair for many aggressive Christmas shoppers, however it hardly excites Jackery and Josh apart from an extra class-free afternoon, where they can meet in a relaxing manner. After all we are all too eager to meet our friends again since the Covid lockdown was in force. Tons of red and white blingy Christmassy objects surround them but nothing catches their eye like this nifty puzzle box which has a rather humble appearance. The boys are instantly intrigued by this new challenge and are fully absorbed into the game. When Jackery snaps in the final piece of jigsaw, the boys immediately find themselves in a sea of clouds. They are bounded by majestic misty mountains and can almost hear dragons' growl from afar. When the drifting clouds unveil glimpses of the Bridge of Immortals, Jackery recalls a similar scene from the history books, "No mistake, it must be Huangshan. What brings us here though? It must be the puzzle box!"

Josh and Jackery are unexperienced climbers, it takes them hours of hard work and countless stunt moves to reach the bridge level. It is already dark, so they quickly settle down in the nearest cave. The boys fall into deep sleep and in their dreams, two spirits dressed in ancient Chinese robes approach them. They are the ghosts of Li Bai and Du Fu, the greatest Chinese poets of all times. They are bothered by the two weird looking youngsters who have just time travelled for 2000 years from the modern world of Hong Kong. The boys soon realize they are now in ancient Tang dynasty where dragons still live and there is a fierce one nearby, watching over the misty mountain and all the poor ghosts who died in Huang Shan.

Li Bai and Du Fu were once great friends and now even though they have turned into ghosts, these drinking buddies still looking after each other. Jackery and Josh and the two ghosts had endless chats. The ghosts team shared infinite knowledge in Chinese poems, ancient arts and music, stars, nature, and climate, on preventing wars, on benefiting the country, on running a better household, on providing better education for their children. In return, Jackery and Josh spoke about HK's scenic beauty, the magnificent night views, the 100 storey skyscrapers, the high density living, vehicles that run on land, ferries that cross the harbour in 10 minutes, underground MTR trains that holds millions of people and flying aeroplanes that allow passengers to travel round the world. They also spoke about the famous Cantonese food and all kinds of international cuisines, pop music, video games, KOL, computer gadgets, modern clothes, guns and missiles, animals and pets, school life and zoom class. The boys also spoke about their worries like the world pollution, the massive Protest across Hong Kong and the Covid lockdown. The ghosts were awestruck by the incredible stories told by these two 9-year-olds and decided to experience the modern world in their very own eyes. In order to free the two ghosts, the only hope is to feed the dragon with golden chicken. However, this mysterious creature has almost gone into extinction. During the classic great escape, Josh tamed the dragon by offering it some leftover chicken nuggets in his pocket. The dragon is charmed by the exquisite smell of deep-fried goodies and purred in satisfaction. Jackery take out the puzzle box and play the game in reverse, this time they land in 2020 Hong Kong.

Like any regular visitors, the ghosts eat like a king every day. They have dim sum in the morning, sushi in the afternoon and pizzas in the evening. They are also addicted to drinking beer in Lan Kwai Fong. They learned how to get around on the MTR. They visit temples, churches, museums, theme parks and skyscrapers. One day, they visit the Legco building, the ghosts are fascinated by the government debate and decided to step in by possessing the Legco members. In such a way, they are able to share their long-term goals on how to make HK a better place to live, just like what they did to assist the King 200 years ago. In order to help the society, they demand for more low-cost housing and benefits for the deprived. To relieve Covid or any future threats, they promote using Chinese medicine to keep citizens healthy at all times. To build a better future for our youngsters, they suggest reforming the education system to include more 21st century life skills like STEM and coding.

The ghosts are so pleased to be government officials once more. However, they also suffer the stress of living in pace of the modern world, having marathon meetings and debates, handling ridiculous number of emails, and responding timely on the social media. Months later, they are exhausted and devastated as they realize no matter how hard they try, their views are not always taken. They decide to take return to Huang Shan for a break, instead of using the puzzle box, this time they take the High-Speed Rail.

The Legend of the Phoenix

Creative Primary School, Ng, Cheuk Hin Matthew – 11

Legend has it, there was a phoenix living in the Yellow Mountains, guarding a potion that kept youth forever. Unfortunately, no one knew exactly where it was.

In 1780, there was the Jinlong Emperor of China, who had always been known to be unfriendly to his people. Moreover, he used the country's wealth for his own personal use. He was very unpopular throughout his reign.

One day, the emperor got sick and had been on bed since then. His grand secretary gave the idea of getting the secret treasure from the legendary Yellow Mountains to keep his life and youth. Hence, the emperor ordered a well-known French explorer, Jean Rousseau and a Chinese geographer, Zhang Ming, to take possession for him of this secret treasure. Jean Rousseau was appointed as he had led several expeditions in Asia for France. Zhang Ming, a trusted geographer in the imperial court, was assigned as a guide for this expedition.

From the Forbidden City where the emperor resided, Rousseau and Zhang took a carriage to the Yellow Mountains. While on the road, Rousseau wondered what the treasure was. "It wouldn't be that obvious and easy to find, it must be something valuable and extraordinary," wondered Rousseau. On the other hand, Zhang as a geographer, knew the danger of this journey, as the Yellow Mountains were also one of the steepest mountains in China. To reach the peak, they had to walk tens of thousands of rock steps carved on the side of the mountains. Along the way, they also had to be cautious as dragons that were extremely fierce had known to be living near the mountains.

It took them two days to arrive at a town near the Yellow Mountains. Both Zhang and Rousseau agreed to hike to the peaks, as they believed the treasure was kept there.

While walking on the stone steps, Rousseau remained calm and followed Zhang. He was amazed by the scenery from the mountains, with the unique rock formations and the mythical sea of clouds. He felt he was in heaven! While Zhang, on the other hand, was shaking and felt extremely nervous. He still kept his bad thinking in mind.

Suddenly, a dragon appeared and tried to attack Zhang. He was so frightened he got tripped on the rock steps and disappeared in a flash. The next thing Zhang knew, he was lying down on a cloud above the sky and saw a golden bird besides him. After a while, he realized 'the golden bird' was actually the legendary phoenix and it saved him from the dragon! Zhang was so shocked but pretended to be unconscious as he was terrified. A while later, after the phoenix left, he quickly got up and started looking for the treasure.

After ages of walking around the clouds, Zhang saw a small bottle of potion in the middle of nowhere. He quickly put the bottle in his pocket and swiftly ran down from the clouds while shouting 'Your Imperial Majesty, I have found it!' When he reached the ground, he quickly took the carriage without Rousseau and returned to the Forbidden City to bring the emperor the potion.

Back in the Forbidden City, Zhang gave the Jinlong Emperor a taste of the potion he had discovered. At first, the emperor felt slightly better; but just seconds later, he felt tired and sick again and had to lay on his bed. Zhang was ordered to be taken away to prison by the empress as she thought Zhang was trying to poison her husband. Zhang felt worried as the emperor might die.

Meanwhile, Rousseau had no idea where Zhang went and was very concerned. He quickly went around to search for Zhang but there was no trace of him. He decided to continue to walk to the peak of the mountain to find the treasure first as the emperor couldn't wait. Rousseau walked step by step carefully even though he was in a rush. While he walked, he saw a golden-red feather on the ground. Rousseau picked it up and realized there was a trail of feather. He decided to follow the trail as he thought it might be clues for the treasure.

The trail led Rousseau to a huge canyon, and he heard an angelic singing voice while he was looking. He turned around and saw a young girl standing on a cliff. The young girl looked down the canyon and tried to jump off the cliff. Rousseau quickly ran and grabbed her hand without hesitation. Even though the young girl tried to take his hand off her, Rousseau still held her tightly and pulled her back without considering how dangerous it was for his safety.

‘Thank you,’ said the girl gratefully. ‘Your friend had taken my potion for a person in need, but to make the potion effective, there is a secret behind.’ Rousseau was extremely confused, but then in a blink of an eye, the girl turned into a phoenix and flew away. Feathers of the phoenix fell down and in between them, there was a piece of note. Rousseau picked up the note and read it, ‘To stay young, be kind and have a heart of gold.’

Rousseau got back to the Forbidden City swiftly and ran to the Jinlong Emperor to give him the note. He explained that the potion was only half of the magic spell. After drinking the potion, the emperor also had to be kind to everyone to make the potion effective. The emperor then ordered the guards to release Zhang from prison as he now understood Zhang was not trying to kill him. After this, he also started to treat his people nicely and spent money to improve people’s lives. The emperor gradually recovered from his sickness and regained his youth.

The phoenix’s secret treasure from the Yellow Mountains finally worked!

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

Creative Primary School, Wong, Sum Yau – 9

It was rumored that the mysterious Huangshan, or Yellow mountains, once inhabited strange mythical creatures, which is why we can still see oddly-shaped rocks and waterfalls that resemble them even now. One day, George, a geologist, decided to hike up Huangshan. Obviously, he has heard of these myths and legends about Huangshan, but he didn't believe in them. He was more interested in the rocks and minerals on the mountains. On that morning, the air was misty, the fog surrounding the mountains seemed heavier than usual. George felt like he was walking on clouds. He continued to hike up the steep mountains and stopped at Dragon Peak. He was the only person on the peak, and all he could hear was the sound of the swirling wind. He immediately started collecting granite samples and investigated them carefully. He was so fascinated by the rocks that he stayed there for hours and didn't realise that it was almost sundown. Just when George was about to leave, he heard a strange noise.

Suddenly, the large rocks behind George made a loud cracking noise. George looked back, and he saw the most unbelievable thing. The rocks started to come to life! The rocks cracked into hundreds of pieces, and something slithered out. The sky suddenly turned into shades of purple and red and let out a sound of thunder. George was terrified! He fell onto the floor as he watched the rocks transform into giant flying dragons, lions and monsters. The creatures were glowing red, brighter than the sun. They all let out an ominous roar and flew up into the sky. Everywhere they flew, the trees beneath them started to wilt and turn into charcoal. The hot springs and waterfalls turned murky and eventually dried up.

The monsters turned an entire mountain peak into grey ash in a matter of minutes. George knew that if he didn't do something soon, the entire Huangshan would be gone. Fortunately, George saw a person rushing towards Dragon Peak. The man was wearing traditional Chinese robes and had a long white beard. George thought, 'He looks like he has been living here for a long time, maybe he knows what to do!' As the man approached the peak, he asked George, 'Do you know what happened? I heard a loud noise and came as fast as I could!' When George told him about the creatures, the man's facial expression turned grey. He said, 'I've dedicated my life to writing poems about the beautiful Huangshan, I cannot let anything ruin this place!' He wrote poems about Huangshan.... Of course! George remembered seeing the man's face in his Chinese textbooks. The man was Li Bai, the famous poet who lived in Huangshan! George was stunned, he couldn't believe that Li Bai was still alive! Li Bai replied, 'I'm sure you have a lot of questions, but there's no time to explain. Come on, I know what we have to do to stop those creatures!' As much as George was interested in Li Bai's life in Huangshan, he knew it was more important to save Huangshan first.

Li Bai quickly led George to the temple where he lived. He rummaged through his infinite stacks of books to find a small wooden box. Just when Li Bai found the box, he suddenly felt weak and collapsed onto the floor. George helped him up immediately and asked if he was alright. Li Bai spoke with his thin and unstable breath, 'George, the pill of immortality that I took was made from precious, magical ingredients from Huangshan. Now that Huangshan is being damaged, I'm afraid that the pill is wearing off as well. Please, help me save Huangshan.' George quivered with fear and worry. He stammered, 'But, but... I don't know how! I don't have any powers....' Li Bai opened the wooden box in his hands, and took out a smooth piece of stone. He said to George, 'You do have the power to save Huangshan.' Li Bai handed him the piece of stone, engraved onto it was a beautiful poem about Huangshan. He said, 'All you have to do is go up to the highest peak, hold the stone in your palms and read out the poem with the deepest admiration from your heart. Go, before the monsters reach the highest peak!' George nodded slightly and quickly ran out of the temple. He was determined to save Huangshan and Li Bai.

As George stepped out, he looked up to the sky and saw that the monsters were approaching the highest peak. George quickly ran up the hill, climbed over boulders and crossed a bridge. Finally, he managed to reach the highest peak before the monsters could. Just when the monsters surrounded the peak, George stood on the edge of the cliff and read out the poem as he clenched his fingers tightly around the stone. The engraved words glowed with rays of emerald green light. As George read out the last word, the creatures became fragile and brittle. One by one, they fell onto the ground and froze back into rocks. The pine trees became green again, and the Huangshan night sky turned into a gorgeous hue of dark blue. Soon, the rivers and waterfalls started flowing, the crystal clear water

shimmered under the night sky. George's eyes filled with tears as he saw a glowing moon as beautiful as the one Li Bai described in his poems.

George rushed back to Li Bai's temple and saw that Li Bai was fine again. Both of them were relieved that everything returned to normal. Li Bai then invited George back to his house. Together, they drank hot tea on the balcony as they admired the view of the breathtakingly beautiful Huangshan. George was excited, as he found out that the myths about Huangshan were true! He also couldn't wait to study his rock samples. Maybe the rocks have a hint of magic in them!

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

Creative Primary School, Woo, Yat Chin Renee – 11

Humans are annoying. Just read my experience below and you'll see.

First of all, I'm going to introduce myself. My name is Fiona Foxglove, female alpha of the Furies. The male alpha is Leo Lorenzo, who just started a few months ago since the war with Octavian. So far, everything has been just fine, and we were almost done rebuilding the village. However, because of the war, we were nervous about attacks and started patrolling duty around our village's perimeter where it is hidden by a magic shield. The magic shield makes humans see us as a cliff, but I have never been sure since I can see through it. Turns out, having guards patrol the village was a very bad idea since it almost got us killed by a human stampede.

It all started one day when Piper and Jason were patrolling our village's perimeter. Sure, the humans might not see us from the other side of the shield, but if they stepped into our village, they would see us and our secret would be destroyed. That day, I was walking around the village, making sure that all the buildings were repaired. Just as I was doing a final check, I saw Leo running towards me, and his face told me that something was terribly wrong.

"So, let me get this straight. A human was about to fall off Huangshan, the mountain our village is on, and Piper changed into a light fury in front of everyone, saved that male human, and then finally realized what happened, so she flew back to our village, revealing two secrets at once." I looked at Leo, who looked like he was afraid I was going to kill him.

"Actually, there's more. Don't freak out if I say this, but Jason said he heard the man yell that he was going to post that on Facebook....." He trailed off, so I guess my expression wasn't good.

"Not freak out." I repeated.

"Piper just exposed our secret and you expect me not to freak out."

Leo looked hopeful for a moment. "Yes.....?"

"ARE YOU KIDDING ME?! NOT FREAK OUT? OUR SECRET IS EXPOSED, LEO! SOONER OR LATER WE'RE GONNA HAVE THOUSANDS OF HUMANS OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE! AND YOU'RE TELLING ME NOT TO FREAK OUT?!?!?"

"Yes." Leo said firmly.

"Okay, fine. First of all, I think that we should wait until tomorrow to see how it goes. We can't act rashly, that might just make the situation worse, although I think that we should prepare for a few thousand *guests* tomorrow."

Turns out, I was right.

The next morning was a nightmare. Millions of humans crowded around our perimeter, trying to get in. It took almost all of our villagers to hold them back while Leo, Piper, and Hazel discussed what to do. "Ladies and Gentlemen, I hereby announce this meeting to order." Leo announced like a host of a show. "Amusing how you can still keep your humor, Lorenzo." I muttered. Leo raised an eyebrow at me, but didn't argue. "Okay, so let's start. As we all know, we have a huge mob of humans outside the village, and we have to get rid of them. And by *get rid*, I don't mean killing." I noted carefully, knowing that Hazel had a violent side.

"Maybe we could move our village to another location?" Leo suggested.

“I wish we could, but we can’t move without the humans noticing,” I pointed out.

Hazel chose that moment to speak. “Is there by any chance that we can erase their memories?”

Silence.

I started to say, “I’m sorry, Hazel, but—” Then Piper interrupted. “Wait a second... I think there might actually be a spell like that! I was in the library once, and I think I saw a book with the title *Forgetting Spell*!”

“Really?!” I jumped to my feet immediately. “Piper, that’s amazing!” And off to the library we went.

“I FOUND IT!!” We all raced towards the voice. Turns out, Hazel had finally found the book. We had spent the last hour trying to find the book, and we were seriously starting to go crazy.

I may have jumped up and down like a little girl who just got her own pony.

Piper started reading the ingredients. “Dragon poison, we have that, no worries, melted bronze, and—” Piper’s face paled. “It needs the blood of a female alpha.”

“Are you sure about this?” Hazel asked worriedly. I nodded. So before I could reconsider what I was doing, I cut myself using scissors. I winced as blood oozed out of the wound, but it wasn’t that bad. As soon as we got the right amount, we bandaged my arm. The rest was easy. We mixed the ingredients together, and in the end, we had a tiny vial of the potion.

“We did it.” I said, “We actually did it.”

Just then, Hazel came running towards us. “Guys! I just found out that the potion has to be drunk by only one person, and that person has to keep thinking about what she/he wants people to forget without getting distracted.” “Sooo.....who’s gonna drink it?” I asked.

Then three pairs of eyes fell on me.

I stood in the library, holding the potion in front of my face. “I’m not sure if I can do this.” I said. “Hey. You can. Besides, if you fail, I will personally slap you in the face.” Hazel smirked. That gave me confidence. As I drank the potion, I kept on thinking “Let the humans forget about us.” Over and over again. After I drank down the last drop, I could no longer hear the human voices that had been bothering us. “It worked.” I said as happiness crept up on me. “It actually worked!”

As we embraced each other, I had to admit that in this group of hugs and happiness, I had never been so glad.

But seriously, all that happened just because of one annoying human.

The Justice Fight for Huangshan

Creative Primary School, Yu, Lok Chin Diago – 11

My name is Peter. I am a traveler. A few months ago, I took a trip to Huangshan, which is a mountain in the middle part of China. Huangshan is one of the places that I really wanted to take a look at. According to what I have seen along the way uphill, Huangshan is really a place you should visit.

Huangshan is a breathtakingly beautiful mountain. You usually have to enjoy the view of an ordinary mountain by looking upward in most cases. However, you have to also look downwards to see this amazing scenery of Huangshan. When you do that, you will see a sea of clouds surrounding the mountain, which makes you feel like you are above the sky. It is named “Yellow Mountain” because it was where the Yellow Emperor rose to the heaven. Even the famous poets Li Bai and Du Fu lived there!

That afternoon, while I was walking up one of the peaks, I suddenly felt something cracking under my feet. I was wondering what it was but then suddenly I fell into a hole. When I looked back up, there was a trap hole above me covered by some small rocks. Just then, I saw someone remove them and cover with a huge rock. I shouted “help!” I was panic, so I climbed back up by a ladder next to me. I tried to move the rock, and it was much bigger and heavier than the one before. I was trapped in a mysterious hole!

It was very dark, but I still managed to see something next to me. I touched it, and it opened. It was an old wooden door. I found out there was a tunnel behind the door, so I walked into it. When I walked to the end, there was an ancient village house that had three wooden beds in it. At that moment, somebody yelled at me, “Get out of here, now!”

Next, there were three adults that walked past me. I told them I was just a traveler and trapped here. They believed me. They told me they were an old family that had lived in this village house for centuries. Li Bai and Du Fu were actually their grandfathers. The family had three members, Chan Xiao Ming the father, Lee Kar Ying the mother and Chan Xiao Lee the son. They said this mountain was blessed by Yellow Emperor; he had once saved the family from a village fire. They were thankful. However, an illegal developer company was trying to take control of Huangshan. The company created robot dragons and different AI animals to remove the old families.

At that moment, Chan Xiao Lee asked me if the company blocked the trap hole, I said maybe. I realized that the rock was to block the trap hole, and we could not get out of there! Just then, a bunch of weird AI animals came from nowhere flew into the village house.

Those creatures looked just like the combination of fairies and bees. They looked like fairies, but they had a sharp tail that could sting people. One of them carried a speaker, and the voice that came out from the speaker said, “This is the boss of Happy Living developer company speaking, I am Susan. Leave this mountain right now!” Chan Xiao Ming shouted, “No, we won’t!” Then, those creatures came towards us.

I suddenly came up an idea. I yelled at those creatures, “I have my last words to say.” They stopped with a curious look on their faces. I said, “This company is trying to get this magical mountain in an evil way, why are you guys helping them?” They were silent. I went on, “Are you guys alright? You must be very tired. Why don’t you all stay here and have a rest?” They all sat down and started to talk to each other. I could see they were starting to stand with us. Chan Xiao Lee whispered, “What a great job!”

The next day, the mother Lee Kar Ying prepared breakfast for all of us. Those creatures said, “We like you and we appreciate your effort to protect Huangshan. We have decided to stand on your side.” We were surprised that they actually knew how to speak in human language.

After a few minutes, we saw many gigantic robot dragons flying towards us. The company’s boss Susan was riding on one of them. Those creatures tried to attack them, but they were burnt by the flames that the dragons busted out. All I could see was them on fire, I was very angry, so was Chan Xiao Lee. He gave me a sword to fight. I ran towards the dragon who carried Susan. However, it suddenly burst out fire, I backed off. After a moment of thought, I ran

over and stabbed the dragon's stomach with the sword. Later on, I also killed Susan. I didn't feel sad at all for killing her, that was what she deserved from the beginning! Next, those weird but kind animals helped us push off the hard rock that blocked the trap hole, me and the family were free.

Just then, I saw the lights of Buddha shining down. I knew Yellow Emperor was watching us in a temple high at the peak of Huangshan.

A few days later, that company shut down and all of the people in it were arrested. I felt happy for two reasons, one of them was that Susan was being killed, which she deserved. That second reason was that the old family could finally live peacefully and happily in one of the most magical and beautiful mountains in the world.

The Secret of the Yellow Mountains

Creative Primary School, Yuen, Hei-Yin Kayla – 10

Long ago, there was a majestic village. It was not an ordinary village. It was a magical village filled with joyful children and intelligent adults.

This magical village used to be on earth and the people who lived there were known as immortal fairies. They were always cheerful and kind-hearted. They always helped and gave gifts to humans. However, some greedy people wanted the gifts all to themselves, therefore they went to war with the fairies. When they attacked the fairies, they had to give them their treasures because they did not know how to fight. The greedy people then spread the word about the weaknesses of fairies. Word spread quickly and more people attacked them constantly.

One day a group of people wanted to attack the majestic village but the entire village was gone. In fact, all the gifts the fairies gave them disappeared as well. The humans had no idea what happened to the fairies, until a golden note fell from the sky. It said “You humans bother us; your hearts have turned cruel and now you must pay for your sins. The gifts we have gave you vanished, now you must work for yourselves. Leave us alone on the clouds of on top of Yellow Mountains.” The humans figured that they were wrong in the past attacks and went back to work where they had to toil all day long.

One day, a wise poet, Li Bai, saw a horrible vision. He then wrote a long poem about it and he shared it with the people. The people were shocked when they read it. The poem exclaimed that they must bury this scroll under a big stone. If not, a terrible war will happen in the future between the fairies and the humans. Therefore, they buried all evidence of their sins under a big stone on a mountain. However, up in the clouds of Yellow Mountains, a little fairy was practicing her spells and she accidentally hit that stone. “Oh well,” she said while she was looking at the damaged stone. “That’s not a lot of damage I’ve created. I’ll just fix it and humans will definitely not notice it.” Unfortunately, when she was about to fix it, she got distracted and left.

Many eras later, humans truly have changed and the fairies were willing to gift the humans again. However, the fairies didn’t allow themselves to be seen on earth. So instead, they planted the gifts on Yellow Mountains and other places across the country.

The fairies saw that a few people started to climb on Yellow Mountains. At first, the fairies thought the people wanted to attack them but then they found out that the people were only exploring; so, they could discover animal species. The news about these explorers spread among the clouds in the fairy village, even to the king and queen. They decided to help the humans by burying fossils into the ground and creating new creatures in the Yellow Mountains.

One sunny day, a little girl named Rebecca Lim went hiking with her mom. While hiking, Rebecca saw a damaged stone and wanted to climb on it. “Oh, mom would never let me, she’ll say it’s too dangerous,” thought Rebecca. A second later, Rebecca’s mom was distracted by her phone and Rebecca made her attempt to climb on the stone. After she climbed on the stone, it immediately started to crack, “Mom! Help!” she shouted. Her mom quickly grabbed Rebecca from the stone and the stone broke into pieces. They discovered a long scroll underground. Rebecca’s mom called the police and told them the situation. Shortly after the phone call, the police came. One of them asked “Mrs. Lim, do you know where these are from?” “No, but my daughter thinks they were from the fairies.” Mrs. Lim and the police officer glanced at the smiling little girl. “Your daughter has quite an imagination,” the officer whispered with a stifled laugh. “No, I’m serious,” said Mrs. Lim. “Are you?” asked the officer. “Yes, look at that scroll and see for yourself,” said Mrs. Lim. “Well then,” said the officer. “Your daughter might be right and it looks historic. I should take these to the museum and show it to the archaeologists. It might lead to great discoveries.” Then, Rebecca and her mother went for a snack after a long day.

In the evening, Rebecca ate her dessert while her sister, Martha, was drawing. “Mm, this ice-cream is so tasty!” said Rebecca between mouthfuls. “You don’t deserve an ice cream since you didn’t do any chores,” said Martha. “You’re simply jealous!” Rebecca answered. “Martha’s so jealous, Martha’s so jealous...” sang Rebecca. Martha’s face instantly blushed and she complain to her mom. Her mom sent both of them to bed right away to stop them from arguing.

While she was sleeping, a fairy entered her dream. The fairy said “I am a unique fairy; I am your Grandma.” “Grandma? A fairy? Are you here for a reason?” “Yes, I am. I want to give you a special gift,” then her grandma pulled out an odd-looking fruit from her pouch. “This is no ordinary fruit,” said her grandma. “It is a magical fruit. After you have a bite of it, you will be able to do things fairies can do, such as casting spells, being immortal, levitating and healing people. However, you must keep your magical power as a secret!” “Certainly, grandma. Does it mean that I can become a fairy?” asked Rebecca. “You are correct,” replied grandma. She was going to take a bite of the fruit but stopped herself since she was not sure if the dream was real. Then, she asked, “Will my powers be permanent?” “Your powers will be permanent. Now, take a bite and you will know about it tomorrow,” said grandma as she flew away. Rebecca took a bite of the fruit and smiled as she waited for tomorrow to come.

Huang Shan's first (and the last) Dragon Pancake

Diocesan Girls' Junior School, Fang, Guo Xin Carolyn – 11

When I talk to you about mountains, what would you think of? Yes, precisely—huge lumps of rocks with a dense forest of oaks and perhaps those creepy—crawlies lurking under the soil. But, dear reader, what I would like to tell you today is that mountains are much more than you think—they are mysterious, full of surprises, and most of all, magical. And what I'm about to tell you now, is the Tale of HuangShan, and the answers to how its most famous natural wonders were created.

A long time ago, much longer than your great—great granny was born, HuangShan was the place where nymphs lived—it was a majestic stretch of mountains with lush towering pines, queerly—shaped rocks, and covered in a blanket of clouds. It was the definition of paradise itself. But there was just one problem; one huge—no, ginormous problem.

And the problem is this—there was a dragon. It wasn't just any dragon, it was the fire—breathing, human—eating kind. Each week, the dragon would leave its castle, which was supported by three pillars and sat upon the clouds, and devour one unlucky fellow from the village. Or two, if it was grumpy. Reader, as you may realize, this caused a rapid declination in the village's population. The nymphs needed that dragon dead, but obviously, no one was brave enough to volunteer.

Well, there was one. And it turned out to be—a mouse. Yes, you heard it, a teeny—tiny, defenceless mouse. His name was Bao. Since he was the only volunteer, the nymphs sent him to the dragon's castle, though knowing that he'll probably return by the end of the day as a pile of mouse ash.

So our brave hero Bao crept into the castle of the dragon. He was terrified. His paws shook. He trembled like a leaf. His enemy was a dragon, for goodness sake, and he could be blow—torched into mouse pie. But he knew one thing—the dragon was dumb. He just had to outwit it. Did he have a plan? Nope. Bao decided to go along with how things would turn out.

So Bao gathered his nerves and called: "Hey, you useless log! Wake up!"

The dragon lifted one eye. Then he opened both eyes and narrowed them. Its nostrils flared. Dear reader, you must understand, like most of us, the dragon wasn't much of a morning person. Or a morning dragon, to be exact. It was in a BAD MOOD. And Bao knew, he was going to be in deep trouble.

The dragon snorted—a loud, rumbling sound that was like thunder rolling across the sky. Then it parted its jaws and glared at Bao. "You will be my breakfast, mousie," it growled.

"Umm, hey, you know my mum used to say: think before you act—" Bao began, and a large column of flame cut him short and proceeded to sear off half of his whiskers. "Hey! That's not how you should greet a guest!"

The dragon didn't care much about manners, obviously. It continued to blow—torch our poor hero. Bao, terrified, pelted towards the castle door as fast as his tiny paws could and ran down the staircase to the never—ending expense of clouds outside. Since he didn't have much of an escape plan, he started running circles around the three gigantic stone pillars at the base of the castle.

So the battle continued. Our hero ran. The dragon breathed flames. Until at one point, Bao was so exhausted that he stopped for a split second to lean on a pillar and catch his breath. And something caught his eye. A glowing, smoking gash in the pillar. Reader, this pillar was made of special stone. The dragon made sure it could not be chopped away by an axe, because if it could be, the entire castle would be smashed into smithereens by losing the support of one pillar. But could it be melted by the dragon's fiery breath? Of course!

A plan unfolded in our hero's tiny mouse brain. He knew what he could do.

"You! Want to play hide and seek?" Bao called to the dragon and started running circles around the very pillar he had leaned onto the moment before. The dragon wouldn't say no, so he continued blow—torching the pillar. Unknowingly, the gash melted deeper, yet deeper still, into the stony surface of the pillar. At some point, when Bao nudged it with his paw, he could feel it wobble under his touch. And it also happened that our hero had ran out of energy and was on the brink of collapsing.

"Mousie, you're mouse pie!" the dragon grinned and revealed its horrendous rows of teeth, dripping strings of saliva.

"Not today, unfortunately!" Bao half—stumbled, half—ran just as the moment the pillar started tilting at a precarious angle.

"Wha—"the dragon stared after him, mustering another mouthful of flames, just when his eyes fell on the tilting pillar. It had the time to think: uh oh, before the pillar fell and the castle crashed upon it, smashing it into a delicious serving of dragon pancake.

So, this was how the dragon was defeated. The pillar that sealed its fate, fell from the clouds and buried itself at the peak of a cliff, which now you'd know as the flying-over stone, and what's left of the castle soon became peculiar chunks of rocks with moss growing over them. And I have to say, our hero Bao died several years after due to old age. Of course, his death would be remembered. A few weeks after his funeral, a young nymph saw a pine growing from his grave. And that pine, thousands of years after, still stands as what we now know as the famous Greeting Pine.

And reader, remember, when you see it, give our friend Bao a hello, okay?

Treasure of the Yellow Mountains

Diocesan Girls' Junior School, Ho, Nga Kiu – 11

My friend Ava had talked me into visiting the Yellow Mountains (Huangshan) after reading a brochure. At the base of the mountain, we saw a vendor selling souvenirs.

There was a vintage-looking map of Huangshan among the pile of souvenirs, but for some reason, I felt a strong pull towards it. I asked, “How much is this?” The vendor shook his head. “It’s not for sale. The map chooses its own master and only reveals itself to the worthy.”

I looked at it skeptically. “What are you talking about?” The vendor grinned, showing a mouthful of crooked teeth. “If you insist, I will sell it for a hundred dollars. It hails from the descendants of the ancient Chinese emperor, Huang Di.”

I took out my wallet reluctantly and handed over the money to the vendor. As we walked away, he seemed to vanish from my peripheral vision. “Did you see that?” I asked Ava (who was oblivious).

We first went to one of Huangshan’s most famous mountains—Lotus Peak. The trail was laborious, but when we finally made it to the top, it made the ordeal totally worthwhile. Ava looked at the view with tears in her eyes.

“It’s gorgeous,” she said, mesmerized. “Do you see the shape of a lotus blossom? That’s its namesake.” I thought it looked more like a cabbage, though I kept that to myself. The view was breathtaking though—a sea of swirling clouds with the faded image of the mountain peeking through the mist. It was like a picture straight out of an ancient Chinese painting.

As we ascended the second mountain, we hungrily absorbed in the incredible scenes we saw. It was spectacular. The peculiarly shaped granite peaks, the magnificent rock pillars and the misshapen pine trees were some of the most amazing things I had ever seen. We reached the renowned Greeting-Guest Pine, the pine tree that has stood for hundreds of years, welcoming visitors with his outstretched hands. Excited, Ava got a bit reckless. During the steep climb up to the Celestial Capital Peak, Ava leaned over to take a photo and let out an ear-splitting shriek as she fell over the edge.

“Ava! Are you all right?” I peered over the edge carefully. Ava had fallen on a small ledge overlooking the valley. “I’m still alive,” she replied, “but my ankle feels like it’s on fire.”

There was no one around, so I had to clamber down to save Ava. Thankfully, the ledge wasn’t very far from the cliff, but then again, I was a terrible climber. When I reached the ledge, I was trembling like a leaf. Ava even had the audacity to snap a few photos while on the ledge, so I yelled at her.

After I fashioned a splint for her leg using a twig, I took out the map. Strangely, this ledge was marked on it. “You’re not going to believe what I just found,” Ava said, pushing away a curtain of ivy to reveal a secret cave.

“Shall we go take a look?” she asked. I nodded.

The cave was larger than I expected. It was draped with a mysterious plant that illuminated the cavern with a faint cyan light. Their fragrance wafted across the cave like perfume. Several waterfalls ran from openings in the ceiling down carved stone stairs to pool in the centre of the cave, creating a serene ambiance. Golden orbs of light floated in the air, illuminating a series of runes that had been carved into the walls, and we looked around in wonder as one of them alighted on my head.

“You!” Ava exclaimed.

I looked around in shock. It was the vendor who had sold us the map! He was wearing a set of robes that looked as if they had come from ancient times, embroidered with the same runes I had seen on the walls of the cave.

“We meet again,” he smiled emphatically. “If you can see the secret passage to the treasure on the map—”

“It was me! I fell down the cliff!” Ava interjected.

“Indeed you did. If you truly found it, then the treasure is yours,” the vendor replied, smiling again. On that note, he vanished.

“But you haven’t told us where!” Ava cried. “Oh no, the map has become a blank sheet of paper!”

I frowned. “What are you talking about? I can see it perfectly clearly.” The map had transformed into a maze of passageways. “Come,” I said, “we have to go this way.”

I led Ava to a secret passage under the waterfall. Following the map, we finally reached a room carved with Chinese dragons. We looked at the map again, and then at each other in excitement. This was it! Ava and I overturned both boulders and searched every nook and cranny of the chamber before we finally noticed the inscription on the wall. I read it out loud.

What you search for is in plain sight.

It came to me suddenly. “Ava, I’ve got it! It’s just a matter of perspective.”

“Look!” I pointed to the wall across the room. When seen from a certain angle, the carvings formed one word: *Chi*.

Chi. The force that binds together all the things in the universe. Ava looked wonderingly at the dragons. “*Chi*,” she said. “What does it mean?”

The vendor appeared again and spread his hands wide. “This is where *Chi* was originated. Thousands of years ago, Huang Di and his disciples took great pains to converge positive forces from all over the universe to form the *Chi* that would sustain all life on Earth. It is the eternal energy that flows through the heavens, earth, and life, creating a virtuous connectivity that springs prosperity. Do you remember the runes on the walls?” We nodded. “Those runes, when correctly deciphered, tell you about the secret of *Chi*, the making of the universe.”

“And that,” he added, “is the treasure of the Yellow Mountains.”

Tale of the Dragon's Claw

Diocesan Girls' Junior School, Pang, Yuet Wing – 9

Golden rays of the rising sun are beaming through thick molten clouds, and birds chirp happily to welcome a new day in the heaven-touching Yellow Mountains. Shoals of tourists from around the globe are flooding the mountains to see the clusters of forest-green pine trees and fluffy cotton-like sea of clouds, as well as the strangely-placed boulders that have been given legendary stories of how they got there. Among all these jaw-dropping wonders is the Flying-over Rock that appears to come from the middle of nowhere. Well... it is much more than just a barren rock!

Once upon a time, a god fell in love with a mortal woman, called Ping-ting and they had a baby boy dragon that looked green and feathery. Ping-ting was so beautiful that she caught the attention of the selfish emperor who kidnapped her and took her back to his luxurious comforts of his palace.

The emperor could not wait to see Ping-ting, and she was summoned to the Grand Hall of the palace where the emperor met with his major officials.

“Be my queen, beauty! And you can enjoy more wealth and glory you could ever dream of!” commanded the emperor.

Ping-ting did not make a sound and gave the emperor a cold shoulder. The emperor felt so humiliated that he locked her up in a room under close surveillance by a couple of guards. She always lurked near the exits, waiting for someone to go in or out so that she could slip away quietly. Unfortunately, she always got caught by the guards and was dragged kicking and screaming back to her room. One dreary, cloudy day, a palace maid brought her food to eat as usual.

“Mei-ying, why...” shouted Ping-ting as the palace maid covered up her mouth in no time, feared that they might alert the guards.

Ping-ting couldn't believe her eyes when she found her younger sister right in front of her in such a heavily guarded palace. Ping-ting exchanged clothes with Mei-ying, and disguised herself as a palace maid to sneak out of the palace. Before long, the emperor discovered that Ping-ting was gone, and gave an order in fury to find her and bring her back to his palace. Ping-ting fled from town to town across the nation and ultimately to the Yellow Mountains to hide from him, with the emperor's forces in hot pursuit.

Ping-ting ran and ran in tears and desperation until she came to a cliff top. She looked up the sky believing that her dragon son would come to her rescue at this last moment. When she turned around, she found the emperor was just behind. Hopelessly, she leaned backward and plunged down the bottomless gorge. The emperor's horse plodded up to the cliff edge. The emperor looked down the canyon and sighed disappointedly at losing his queen-to-be, and prepared to head home.

The sky turned gloomy with dark clouds. The emperor could hear the howling wind that sounded suspiciously like “How dare you killed my mother! I will have my revenge!” Suddenly, the heavens opened and rain poured down. The emperor licked up the rain that had fallen on his tongue. It tasted salty, like... tears. At that moment, a streak of lightning flashed across the dark grey sky, with an impossibly loud clap of thunder on its tail. The sound of the thunder almost made the emperor deaf.

In a split second, the mighty dragon dived down from the heavens at lightning speed and got ready to dominate the army. Blinded by rage, he attacked the emperor. The emperor struck first, throwing his sword at the dragon's eye, trying to blind the dragon. The dragon dodged it easily and commanded a lightning bolt to hit the army, but it missed. They kept exchanging blows, with the emperor's army hacking at the dragon's tough armour made of unbreakable scales, looking for weak spots. All of a sudden, the dragon stabbed his claw to give the emperor a lethal attack, but in vain. The claw got stuck on the rock, and the emperor chopped it off with his extra sword. The dragon hissed in frustration and reached out with his claws, grabbed the emperor and hurled him into the very gorge where

his mother had died. Eventually, the dragon got so exhausted and the soldiers brought it down after hours of ground-shaking fight.

After the dragon died, his scales came off, the soft breeze blew them away and they were turned into numerous pine trees in the Yellow Mountains to protect his mother's spirit. Since the dragon missed his mother so much, his body became mist lingering around the Yellow Mountains to accompany his deceased mother. Remember the claw that was thrust into the rock and chopped off by the emperor? Precisely! It was fossilized after millennia have passed and is still standing securely on the clifftop today in the Yellow Mountains, and it is well known as the Flying-over Rock!

Don't be scared if you hear roaring amid the mist in the Yellow Mountains.

Dream of a Magical Mountain

Diocesan Girls' Junior School, So, Yiu Ka Clara – 10

It was midnight, and I couldn't fall asleep. While I was staring at the ceiling, an owl outside my window hooted. All I could hear was that and the snores of my eleven-year-old brother. I stopped staring at the ceiling and tossed and turned. I stopped doing that too, and gazed out of the window at the stars. Suddenly, a streak of bright, blinding light shone into my room. As soon as I saw the light, I squeezed my eyes shut and shielded them with both of my hands. After a few seconds, when I thought the light had faded away, I put my hands away and opened my eyes. I gasped and my eyes widened as I saw a huge bird-shaped shadow flying through my window, flapping its huge wings which created a strong wind. I shrank back and trembled in fear. The creature approached me. It was a gigantic dove! It had a saddle on its back which was brown. The dove winked at me. 'Climb on!' said the dove to my surprise. 'I'm going to take you to a place you've never been to.' I gathered all my courage and climbed on the dove's back. 'Hold on to my neck to make sure you won't fall,' instructed the dove, and on the count of three, we were off!

'But where...'

'You'll know soon enough,'

'But why...'

The dove didn't answer this time.

'Oh, right! Do you have a name?' I queried.

The dove shook its head sadly.

Soon we arrived. 'This,' said the dove, 'is the Yellow Mountain. It's big, isn't it?'

I nodded. The dove flew towards one of its peaks. There was a monkey-shaped stone on the peak, and it was gazing down at the foot of the mountain. When I looked down, I saw a lot of clouds. Even though they were as fluffy as candyfloss, it seemed like I could walk on them. It was the most beautiful and surreal sight I had ever seen!

'There's more to see!' the dove said and flew to another peak. 'This peak's name is Shixin.' The peak looked like a giant monolith and it was almost entirely covered with trees. I was also fascinated by this sight. The dove suddenly dove downwards. 'Look up!' I did and gasped. The mountains looked so mysterious and so majestic from down here! The dove flew around for a moment. I saw trees, peaks and even steaming hot springs.

'There's more to see!' the dove kept on repeating. 'There's more that I want you to see beyond the beauty of this magical mountain!'

'Can you tell me more about this mountain?' I eagerly asked.

'Once there was a teenage boy who came here with his parents and he spent a lot of time examining all the rock formations, especially the one which looked like a monkey, and another one over there which looked exactly like a tiger.'

'He returned years later, and continued to study the rocks. He started to observe the behaviors of different creatures and he even tried to mimic them. He learnt how the animals defended themselves, how they fought against each other, and how they hunted for prey.'

'He gave names to all those stances, including "Tiger Claw", "Tiger Pounce", "Mantis Arms" and "Viper Strike",' said the dove.

'He mimicked the monkeys and swung from one tree branch to another. People who witnessed this called him "The Flying Master".'

'What happened to him?' I asked.

'He set up a martial arts school and became one of the greatest Kungfu masters in the history of China.'

'There was also an elderly gentleman who spent years watching streams and waterfalls.'

'Years?' I exclaimed.

'He didn't just watch. He was always thinking. He thought that water, as soft as it is, can readily adapt to the shape of river beds, but in spite of its softness it can be so powerful as it falls down a waterfall. It always follows the rules of Nature and never competes with anything. Whilst people are struggling for higher ranks, water doesn't mind falling into the lowest and most unpleasant muddy pits. In doing so, it cleanses and nourishes all lifeforms on earth. Despite being so important, it never asks for any fame or fortune. Eventually it will always return to its purest form as it falls from the sky.'

'He later wrote a book Tao Te Ching. His followers called him "Laozi" and his philosophy "Taoism". "Tao" is the "Way" of Nature and Taoism guides people the way to exist in harmony with the Universe. He is considered one of the greatest philosophers in human history.'

'This mountain is magical not only for its unworldly scenery, but the way people see beyond its superficial beauty.'

'It's time to go back,' said the dove. It turned around. I couldn't explain why but I fell off its back. I closed my eyes and I fell and fell. I tried to scream but realized I couldn't. Then I opened my eyes and guess where I was...In my bedroom!

It was just a dream, wasn't it? It doesn't matter anymore. Because I now understand, that there is more meaning beyond a dream.

The Enchanted Huangshan

Diocesan Girls' Junior School, Sung, Zhi Yin – 10

On April 14, 2019, a nine-year-old girl named Yanyan was invited to represent Hong Kong at the Yellow Emperor's birthday at Zheng Zhou, Yanyan was thrilled to be given this opportunity! Yanyan immediately started packing, she did not want to miss a thing. She took a wonderful flight to China but when she got there, she never imagined how many hours of sleep she would miss! Yanyan rehearsed day and night with demanding rehearsals and she felt extremely exhausted. Finally, on the day of the ceremony all the rehearsals paid off. Everyone was exhausted but happy after the pigeons, which represented peace and harmony were sent off into the sky. That evening, a post-ceremony feast was hosted for all the guests and participants.

After the seventh course, Yanyan felt a bit bored because the adults were droning on about Chinese history so she decided to wander around the palace gardens. Suddenly, she tripped on a bump on palace ground and everything went pitch black! Before she knew it, she was stranded on a granite peak with seas of clouds surrounding her. Confused, she looked around and saw an old man less than seven feet tall with piercing eyes, elegant temperament, and arrogant personality gliding over on a cloud, reciting some famous lines

Before my bed, the moon is shining bright,
I think that it is frost upon the ground.
I raise my head and look at the bright moon,
I lower my head and think of home.

and immediately Yanyan concluded that it must be the famous poet Li Bai. However, his worrying look puzzled Yanyan so she went over and asked him, "Good afternoon mister, can I help you?" The old man looked up startled, not expecting to see a little girl dressed in party clothes, replied, "Oh! I am Li Bai and have lost my magic paintbrush to write beautiful poems, it must have fallen off when I was trying to chase the birds. Can you help me?" Knowing that this was really him, Yanyan said yes without hesitation, Li Bai looked extremely happy!

Together, they set off flying on the cloud in search of the magic paintbrush. They flew everywhere until they came to a magnificent sight: It was a waterfall! Li Bai explained that this was the 'Nine Dragon Waterfall' and that its history was just as magnificent as its sight. Long ago, a white dragon lost a game of hide and seek to eight dragon friends and got very frustrated. He was so furious that he blew fire out of his nose and burnt down everything from the village nearby. The Emperor was furious and punished the dragon by pinning him to the edge of one of the Huangshan cliffs. He also made the sky rain for nine days straight to cool down the fire but during those nine days things took another turn. The dragon saw how much damage he had done and felt sorry that he decided to sacrifice himself and requested to become a waterfall which provided fish and water for the villagers as a sign of apology. That was how the white dragon became a waterfall and stayed like that until now.

After that interesting yet sentimental tale, Li Bai took Yanyan to another mountain and started sharing yet another sad tale. In 1987, local residents of villages had to walk over an abyss along the old hanging path on Jingting Shan. Since the paths were narrow and steep making them dangerous, many of them fell and died and myth had it that they were taken by the gods and became different species. The villagers decided to name the bridge "Bridge of the Immortals". The myth sent chills down Yanyan's spine. It was such a tragic story but the more important thing was they still had not found the magic paintbrush. They were starting to feel a little hopeless and lost as Huangshan was so big.

While they were silently mourning their failure, they came across a funny-looking cave. Yanyan suggested to give it a shot so they headed in. They walked deeper and deeper into the cave. Dangling down from the cave like a glowing stalactite was Li Bai's magic paintbrush. Li Bai looked ecstatic and reached out to grab it but as he was grabbing it a figure came out of nowhere. It was "nian" and he spoke, "If you want this magic paintbrush, you will have to answer one question." Yanyan and Li Bai accepted the challenge. The question was "I only come out to scare everyone once a year but I am afraid of one thing, what is it?" That was really easy but Li Bai looked confused. As Yanyan was from the future and read a lot of books, she immediately knew the answer. But she wanted to fool "nian" so she said cheekily, "Is it water... fire... ice?" When "nian" was looking arrogant and happy,

Yanyan replied, “Firecracker.” “Nian” was surprised and speechless but kept his promise and handed the magic paintbrush over to Li Bai.

Li Bai was over the moon and thanked Yanyan for everything. As Yanyan was on top of the world, she started jumping on the cloud like a trampoline. Instead of landing on the cloud, the jump took her back to the resting room at the palace. Her parents and some guests were surrounding her looking worried. After reassuring her parents that she was alright, she shared her Huangshan magic tour with Li Bai with them. Yanyan enjoyed her experience so much that she decided to read more of Li Bai’s poems to understand what other stories he had. Huangshan is a very mysterious yet beautiful place and this memorable adventure would definitely stay in her heart.

Sunlight shines on Lushan, in a purple haze,
From afar, like a veil, a waterfall hangs.
Water cascading three thousand feet from the sky,
Is the Celestial River falling from heaven on high?

The Mountain of Transformation

Diocesan Girls' Junior School, Wong, Shun Ka Charlotte – 10

“I don’t WANT to go!” Allison screamed. She hated her parents and the stupid family tradition. “But you have to!” Her mother cried, wrenching her hands from Allison’s grasp. She had been shoved out of Allison’s room, accompanied by a door slam.

Allison exhaled deeply. The Taoist tradition required each generation to hike up Huashan, rumored to bring family harmony. Knowing the death toll of unmindful hikers, she was not going. Sadly, her mother banged open the door, shoved a bag into her arms and yelled, “You MUST go! Taxi’s here!”

Walking out Hengyang Airport, Allison kept a distance from her parents to avoid pointless arguments.

Distracted by her worries, Allison heard her father shouting, “We’re here! Let’s put on our gear and rent some harnesses!” She turned around and gasped in awe. All along, she had imagined Huashan could top Mount Everest. But now? Pfft. Easy. She smiled. It wasn’t so bad.

James *adored* hiking. He had scaled many dangerous mountains before. Today, he was excited to conquer “No. 1 perilous mountain in China”. Setting off the trail tensely, he soon arrived at the notorious Plank Walk. Fastening his harness, he stifled a scream. The drop was deep, and if he slipped, he would be dead—in seconds.

Trembling from a fear he had never experienced, James took steps on the feeble foot-wide planks. Taking a deep breath, he carried on his routine like it was nothing. Yet each time the planks wobbled, his heart felt like jumping out from his chest.

Eventually, James almost reached the South Peak. He would have been proud to arrive at the summit so early. But he made the fateful mistake of taking a mere selfie. “I have to post on Instagram! My harness will hold me if I fall.” He thought, rummaging for his phone. Next second, James regretted this action.

James lost his balance. A sharp rock cut his harness. Waving his arms like a windmill, he gestured for help. He screamed so loud as if this could be the last second of his life...

Overlooking the breathtaking views under the heaven, Allison was reminded of a novel by Jin Yong, “The Smiling, Proud Wanderer”. Clutching her harness, Allison climbed up the planks faster than her parents. She took every move with caution though. Many hikers had died because they thought they almost made it and felt safe.

Suddenly, hearing frantic screams, Allison ran ahead swiftly, unbuckling her harness. A boy about her age was holding onto the edge of a loose plank, about to lose his grip. Instinctively, she yanked on the boy’s hand. But he was too heavy. The planks splintered. Allison and James plunged into the darkness below...

James woke up groggily. Where was he? All his memories flooded — a girl tried to save him. He gazed around and saw a herd of cheetahs and a white tiger prowling around. He looked down, and realized he got tiny furry feet! He scampered to a river and gazed into the water. Stunned. He had turned into a mouse.

He asked other animals if they had seen a girl. Their leader told him, “Whoever enters this realm turns into an animal. No one stays human.” Suddenly, the white tiger stepped forward and growled. James shivered. Surprisingly, she gestured James to ride on her. She introduced herself as Allison, the “girl” he was looking for. They became good companions. Stranded in a forest, the duo decided to venture deeper...

“A lion told me a limestone from Huashan could send us back to human world,” Allison told James, “but how could we get one? The transformation into animals had taken our hiking packs and clothes, so we couldn’t even find a speck of dust from Huashan.”

“Focus on staying alive first,” James whispered. “I heard not all animals were originally humans, so not all are friendly...” Allison shuddered, but she threw her worries aside, holding her head high and wandering proudly. She was determined to escape someday.

One day, they heard a commotion. Some animals were bickering furiously while others were watching halfheartedly. “Let’s see what’s happening,” James suggested. He gasped. A limestone was in front of their eyes, on a cheetah’s paw.

Presumably, the cheetah Ash scaled the slope and found the limestone. It was of no use to Ash as real animal, but priceless to “human animals”. James fearlessly protested “Hua Shan Lun Jian” — open competition portrayed in Jin Yong’s novels. Admiring James’ courage, Ash agreed to host the contest and give the stone to the winner.

The crowd gathered at the arena next to a Taoist temple, cheering. Each contestant craved the stone; they would fight to the death. After one-to-one brawls, many were severely injured. Allison fought bravely, but unfortunately lost at semi-final. She felt helpless that she would never see her family again.

James got into final, yet his size was no match to his enemy. Avoiding being trampled, he jumped agilely on his enemy’s back, tickling him. His enemy fell onto the ground, chuckling. Ash declared James the winner.

Unwillingly, Ash handed over the prize. But James hesitated. He felt Allison need it more than him. He believed she would lead a happy life with her parents. Spontaneously, he pushed Ash’s paw over Allison’s.

“Wait—” Allison startled once she realized she got the stone. “NO! It was for you—” Allison was sucked into a vortex and disappeared. James repeatedly murmured “Wu Wei” (Non-Action in Taoism’s concept). He neither regretted, nor felt any sadness. He always wanted adventure, and now he was in the realm where anything could happen.

Allison landed on the road. Her parents smiled, beckoning her. Tears dripping down her face. Allison sobbed, “I’m sorry, Mom and Dad...” Her parents could not comprehend, yet hugged her tight.

Each year, Allison visited Huashan with her family. She hammered out pebbles to fall into the abyss, wishing some would reach her fellows, and bring them back to human world. Someday, she and James would meet again...

A Hidden Life

Diocesan Girls' Junior School, Yeung, Wing Kiu Angie – 12

It was five in the morning, and I had just woken up. As usual, I set off deep into the forest to collect firewood. On the way, I stopped at the edge of the peak to admire the early morning view. The clouds seemed to look extraordinarily lovely, not to mention the early sun's rays sharpening both its and the clouds' ethereal beauty. But something seemed off about the scenery. I couldn't put my finger on it, but the clouds seemed to drift by more quickly, and the sun shone brighter than ever.

I had moved to live in Huangshan many years ago and built my own cabin on the high peaks. Every morning I would go collect firewood, food, and water. And during the rest of the day, I would spend my time hunting for prey and hiking along the stunning peaks Huangshan has to offer.

Breaking out of my reverie and all my thoughts, I headed deeper into the woods, passing by a small lake. It seemed to be calling to me.

"But there has never been a lake here, and it certainly hasn't rained hard enough to create an entire lake!" I thought to myself. It was indeed strange, but I was getting thirsty from the journey, so I filled my flask with the lake water, very still yet was shining as if it was winking at me.

As I was about to take a sip, I remembered a story my mother used to tell — legend said that an enchanted lake existed deep in Huangshan, only visible to those who were hardworking, generous, kind-hearted, people who carried fine qualities. This lake would bring out the true potential of whoever drank the water and made them even greater at it. I never believed that I had "true potential" and this was just an old legend. Holding my flask against my lips, I drank the cool water.

Dramatically, nothing happened. Trying not to feel too disappointed, I grabbed my belongings and prepared to leave. Suddenly, I heard a voice speaking to me. It didn't seem to be coming from around me — it was as if the voice was coming from the inside of my head.

"I am the Water Spirit — do not be afraid, for you have drunk the water, which means you have been chosen. As the enchanted lake and I have promised, I will help you with your special talent — your potential, which you will come to discover soon. Remember to use this gift wisely." The voice hesitated, then vanished as quickly as it had come. I just stood there blinking. Was it a dream? It couldn't have been real. After all, it was only a myth...

A few days after my encounter with the pond, I was going on a hike on a bright afternoon. I had almost forgotten about the lake — the next morning when I went out, it was already gone. Looking up at the irregularly-shaped rocks, I noticed that something strange was happening. The rocks, lifeless, suddenly seemed to have come to life. Monkeys, bears and men came to life and their facial expressions vividly real. The pines, no longer just tall, standing trees, looked like they were kind men greeting me on my way, bowing deeply and their branches — arms nearly touching the ground. I had never seen Huangshan like this; my entire perspective of life had changed!

A sudden surge of energy made me want to write about the incredible sights of Huangshan, and how I saw them now. Although I had never been good at writing or poetry, I felt like I just had to write it down to remember this unearthly scene. Picking up my brush, I began to write.

It was almost miraculous — it felt as if my hand was moving on its own! After this had happened, every time I saw a breathtakingly beautiful sight or had something memorable, I would take out my brush and scroll and write a poem about it. I will never forget how the lake, the Water Spirit, and Huangshan have helped me in my journey of becoming a poet.

These poems are known all over the world, and I am now one of the most famous Chinese poets — Li Bai.

Virtues

Diocesan Girls' Junior School, Yu, Wing Jun Kaitlyn – 11

Qin Shi Huang looked up from the foot of the mountain.

It was so tall that nobody could ever see the summit, with clouds covering its peaks. It was so wide that people needed to travel days to get to the other side. Many people did not succeed in climbing up the summit and perished; all the more he needed to reach the top to prove himself worthy of ruling the country. He just had to.

Green trees bearing luscious fruit enticed him as he started his climb, persuading him to stop and have some first before setting off. But he couldn't; he had to get back to the palace soon, fearing that someone would unwarrantedly overthrow the Qin Dynasty while he was away.

Qin Shi Huang was an emperor who had just reached his forties. His beard was neatly trimmed, and his golden robes sparkled in the morning sunlight. The Tiger Emperor's cap rested tightly on his head, but the chain of beads was swaying with the soft wind. His eyes were a piercing colour of ebony, as if his gaze could turn a man to stone.

Qin passed many trees. Some were gnarly, some were primeval, some were so lush that they rivalled the greenest of grass. Qin wanted to stop to admire them, but he had to continue his journey. The rocks were quite strange too, eroded over aeons to become their current shape. They were in different shapes and sizes and Qin found himself stopping many a time to observe the wonders that Huangshan and Nature possessed.

The Tiger Emperor paused when he reached an odd-looking stone. It was shaped much like a man pointing the way to the top of Lotus Peak. He followed the rock's 'finger' and looked up into the sky.

"Hello," a voice said.

Qin jumped and looked down again—the rock had transformed into a man!

"I am Han Xiangzi, the Immortal Showing the Way.

Qin respectfully bowed to Han. "Enlighten me,"

"Have you heard of the story of the meeting of the Eight Immortals? I am stuck here because I was distracted by the scenery. Don't lose your head over small things like the officials you heard yesterday talking about you behind your back, saying that you were not worthy enough to be an emperor. You are the emperor of Zhong Guo after all, so you can prove them wrong!

Qin and Han continued their walk. Soon, they saw the Ciguang pavilion, its humble grey roof and red columns surrounded by breathtaking scenery.

"Govern your country in peace, be humble and learn to forgive those who have doubted you." Han advised.

And with that said, Han Xiangzi gave Qin a blue pouch and disappeared. Qin froze for a second and breathed a sigh of awe. He opened the pouch and found a seed inside. He eyed it warily but kept it in the pouch.

After hours of hiking up the steep ridges of the never-ending mountain, Qin grew tired. He sat down in a grove to rest. The grove was made of pine trees, and they arranged themselves neatly in a circle, as if they were awaiting to greet the arrival of something special in the middle.

Qin soon noticed that there were some gardening tools lying in the middle of the grove. He felt obliged to carefully plant the seed from the pouch. Qin Shi Huang gave it some water from his flask. Almost instantaneously, the seed grew into a small sprout!

“Thank you.” the sprout announced. Qin jumped at the sound of the voice but listened patiently.

“I have only just started my life, and you have already been on the throne for many years. Either way, we both have a lot to learn. I am only a little sapling, but I know that if I keep on growing, I will become a great pine tree of Huangshan. Learn from the others, and it will make you an even better emperor.

The sprout continued, “I know typhoons will whip and hit me, but I will stay strong. As should you. Even when you fail, don’t just sit and mope about it. Get up and try to fix it! Do think about this whenever you feel helpless or dejected. Now, you must rest after a tiring day’s journey. Goodnight!”

Qin nodded, yawned, and soon fell into a deep, dreamless sleep.

The next day, Qin Shi Huang woke up with a start. The Dragon King was in his presence! The King’s red scales glistened in the morning sunlight. He was eight feet tall, and fixed a piercing gaze on Qin, looking even more intimidating than the Emperor himself.

“Greetings, Qin. The mountain winds have told me that you’re building the Vast Wall. Why are you punishing the innocent? Don’t you know how hard it is for them to carry stones that are twice the weight of themselves without food and sleep? What about the wives and children who are yearning for their return? You must put yourself into others’ perspectives. You should hire experienced builders, but bear in mind that you must still give them enough food and rest. Put this in action, Emperor. Good luck!”

Qin frowned, contemplating. He bowed to the Dragon King gratefully, and made his way to the summit.

The full moon was shining brightly above Huangshan when Qin reached the Lotus Peak, casting dark shadows over the trees below. Qin looked up to the moon and reflected on what he had learnt.

The Tiger Emperor saw five stones behind him, each marked: Patience

Acceptance

Perseverance

Justice

Empathy

Qin understood everything. The mighty and arrogant Tiger Emperor was a changed man now. He made a silent promise that he would uphold these virtues, no matter what. Standing on top of Lotus Peak, looking at the sea of clouds and the pale, silvery moon, Qin Shi Huang knew that he needed to return soon. He needed to make amends.

China's Magical Mountains

Diocesan Preparatory School, Fung, Yat Hei – 10

I am sure you have heard of magical creatures or monsters. But have you ever thought that they might be real? To me, they are real.

The story started on the misty and mysterious Yellow Mountains in China. Tsz Lung was an explorer with stick-out ears. Many people called him 'The monkey'. He had two assistants. Li Wai and Siu Bai. Li Wai was a human, while Siu Bai was a dog. Li Wai was a scientist and Siu Bai was in charge of carrying water cans.

"The Emperor sent us here to take the 'Eye of the heaven'. I'm sure we will be punished before dinner if we don't find it! You're holding the map upside-down!!!" cried Tsz Lung. The location of the diamond was hidden in the ancient temple with lots of pine trees surrounding it.

"Ohhh! What an interesting plant!" said Li Wai.

"You're distracted!!!" shouted Tsz Lung furiously.

Soon, they were thirsty. They sat down for a break. "Siu Bai! Water!" They both cried.

While Siu Bai was busy, the two humans started chatting. "What's for lunch today?" asked Li Wai.

"Well... sweet potatoes and rice!" replied Tsz Lung.

"What?? Sweet potatoes goes right through me!!" cried Li Wai. "I was hoping hot and steamy Sichuan noodles and steamed buns!" No one noticed that Siu Bai was yanked away by a slender hand. "Siu Bai! Water NOW!" said Li Wai. "Where is he?"

"Yeah- where is he?" asked Tsz Lung. They looked for him everywhere, but all they could find was a can of water. They knew they were getting close, because they could smell Siu Bai's fishy breath. They ran into the part filled with trees, and ran into a temple.

"Jackpot!" cried Li Wai. "That's what we're looking for!" Li Wai was right. But the temple looks like it was about to collapse any moment now. There was a twig holding one of the pillars and it was almost snapped into half.

"Let's get the gem and run for our lives!" suggested Tsz Lung. Li Wai agreed and gently put the shining gem inside a box and quickly replaced it with a rock, slightly bigger than the gem.

"Phew!" said Li Wai, wiping the sweat off his forehead. They noticed a shadow. They stopped on their tracks and froze. "I-I-Is it a ghost?" whimpered Li Wai.

"Don't be a crybaby! Ghosts don't make shadows! It must be Siu Bai! There's nobody other than us!" said Tsz Lung confidently. "Siu Bai! Siu Bai! Come to me!"

Then, the shadow growled at them. Li Wai ran frantically while Tsz Lung was still sure that it must be Siu Bai. Then, it flew out and landed with a thump.

"MMMMMONSTER!!!" cried Li Wai. The "monster" was a little baby dragon. The pair laughed so hard that they rolled to the floor.

"You call that monster!??? We'll take this cutie back, name it as new species and we'll talk to the emperor about the bounty..." Suddenly, the ground shook. The baby dragon flew away. Then, a giant dragon flew out and made the whole temple collapse. The pair ran for their lives.

"How dare you insult my son!" screeched the dragon. The dragon had razor sharp teeth like daggers. Then the two men ran into the fog.

"Thanks Yellow Mountain!" whispered Li Wai. Then the dragon blew the fog away from them.

They hit the floor when the dragon blew blue flames at them. The trees nearby them were totally burnt into crisps. A dozen pines on the tree landed on their heads. That's when they knew there was no way to escape. The dragon had summoned a few phoenixes and surrounded them. The only way out was the river! They jumped in and figured out why the phoenix did not block there. There was a waterfall at the edge of the cliff! Luckily, the pair landed on a weird plant floating above the water. The phoenixes landed on the water, which made their hearts melt. The dragon was flying near them. "You're all going to die, heroes!" shouted the angry dragon, now covered in flames. Then, Siu Bai appeared and barked at the dragon. The dragon wanted to eat him. That's why it stole him in the first place. Then, Tsz Lung plunged a dagger into its heart. The dragon exploded, bouncing Tsz Lung away. He fell off a cliff. There was no water below, just sharp rocks and trees.

Did Tsz Lung die? No. He grabbed a vine just in time and dangled for a few seconds. Then, the vine snapped.

"You really have to go on a diet, Tsz Lung," chuckled Li Wai.

Epilogue

Are monsters real? No one knows. What do you think? Perhaps, if you switch off your television, and look into the skies, you might catch a glimpse of a baby dragon, flying in the air.

A True Story of an Exhibit

Diocesan Preparatory School, Lee, Man Hon – 12

“Morning, Mr History.” A group of primary students greeted me with excitement. For me, this greeting represents a brand new start! The pandemic had finally ended, and things got back to normal! I could finally see my audience’s smiling faces!

The students listened very carefully to my informative explanations, as if they were thirsty for knowledge. They sometimes nodded their heads and laughed genuinely. We all enjoyed ourselves in this awesome atmosphere.

When I was explaining how ancient Chinese people molded their pottery into such beautiful pots, a kid suddenly pointed towards the right and asked me, “Is that donated by you?”

“Yes! I found that drawing of a Red–Crowned Crane on one of my expeditions.”

“Tell us more!” they all screamed with sparkling eyes.

“Many years ago, I worked as an archeologist in China. I liked to study about the Chinese mountains a lot as it contains many secrets. One day, I went to the mountains of the Yellow Emperor in Eastern China. I settled down there and built a little tent to rest.

As the sun peeped over the range of mountains, the birds started to shake the morning dew off their feathers and sang a cheerful song. A light fog wrapped around the whole mountain. I yawned, gathered my belongings and started to work. I hiked around the mountain, hoping to find some ancient treasures lying beneath the soil.

After searching for hours and hours, I still couldn’t find anything. As I was about to give up, I spotted a cave. I thought to myself, “This could be a treasure trove!” With high hopes I ventured inside the creepy darkness, filled with spider webs and spooky insects. I turned on my lamp and the warm glow lightened the rocks. On the wall, I saw a poem and a few pictures.

Thirty six strange peaks,
Immortals with **black** top knots.
Morning sun strikes the tree tops,
Here in this sky mountain world.
Chinese people, raise your faces!
For a thousand years **cranes** come and go.
Far off I spy a firewood gatherer,
Plucking sticks from stone crevices.

Li Bai “Dawn Vista On Huangshan”

Every time I read the words in bold, it would shine brightly. I figured this could not be just mere chance. These words must mean something!

I sat down on a stone and pondered. Time passed by quickly and by sundown I still had no answer. With a heavy mind I trod back to my tent.

I woke up early next morning. The sun had just risen but it was dim and cloudy everywhere. I went back to the peculiar cave. Thinking out loud has always helped me to clear my mind. So, I, then, muttered “Black, Morning, Chinese, Crane.”

To my amazement, the drawings started to move! People in the drawings danced and frolicked around the wall. All of a sudden, the wall cracked and a Chinese red–crowned crane bursted out of it! Resembling two drops of ink on a delicate piece of paper, its eyes glowed in the dark and outshone my lamp. With a whoosh, it flew out of the cave and trumpeted in the grey mist. It zoomed back to me and danced around.

“Thank you very much, young man!” It sang.

“What! You can talk?” I shouted with awe.

“Of course!” It ruffled its charcoal feathers. “All animals can talk with a bit of magic. I am full of it!” It raised its red head proudly.

“Why were you trapped in this cave?” I asked.

It explained, “I was originally the guardian of this mountain. I lived happily every day, protecting Yellow Mountain. But one day, a witch came and tried to attack it. I fought day and night. But sadly, the witch overpowered us. She cast a spell on me and I was doomed to be trapped in the cave forever until someone could break the spell. Slowly years passed, and all hope seemed to be gone until you saved me.”

It was obliged to me that it promised to take me on a ride and grant a wish.

It knelt down for me to climb upon its big feathers. I climbed up to its back and grasped tight its silky back. Swoosh! The crane soared up to the sky once again, tearing through the clouds. The wind bent their hands to receive us, the trees gazed up at our magnificence and the mountains arranged their boulders into thrones fit for kings. Tiny birds flew next to us and chirped songs of praise. They were no match for the crane as we passed them and they dipped below us. I saw buildings and villages crowded with people, all amazed at the cry of the crane.

We arrived at some mossy historic ruins on the Yellow Mountain. The crane said, “This was once a very special castle. Different dynasties of kings and queens had once lived here. Tremendous amount of magical treasures, which could unlock the mysteries of the universe, were buried here!” I gaped with awe and thought, “Could their magic solve every problem humanity ever faced?”

The crane, with a swipe of its bill, transported me back to the cave and announced, “Now tell me your wish.”

“I wish to know the hidden places of the treasures and their secret!”

“S-s-secret.....”

And with a puff, the crane was encased by the rocks again.

Oh! “SECRET” was the word to lock the crane. The poem engraving collapsed and all that was left was a new picture of the crane right in front of us now.”

“No cranes! I want dragons, RAAAAH!!!!,” moaned one kid.

The others started to wander around, nonbelievers to magic. I gazed back at the crane. Surely some magic must remain!

As I turned my back, I could feel the soft feathers against my shoulder...

China's Magical Mountains

Diocesan Preparatory School, Mak, Hei Tsit – 11

As I munched on the bread I was given, I could not help replaying this recent, unprecedented yet remarkable experience inside my head over and over again.

“Li Yun, fetch me a cup of tea.” My teacher, Master Chen instructed me in a deep, yet friendly voice. It was dawn, and the first little birds began to chirrup. I returned to my seat, a silk cushion.

He began to speak again, “Young apprentice, I am quite confident that you know of the rumors spreading through this small village at the foot of the Yellow Mountains.”

“Master, are you referring to the one about the origin of the mist and clouds surrounding us, which are increasing lately?” I tried to clarify.

“Indeed, student, indeed. Rumour has that they are generated from top of Lotus Peak, and something has triggered it, causing it to emit more clouds. Li Yun, although you are still a child, do you dare journey towards the peak in quest for the truth?”

I was overwhelmed. Me, an eleven-year-old boy from a family of poets, on a historic expedition? Even though my heart was pounding, my hands shaking with fear and my mind quite disagreed, I managed to utter “Yes.”

“Right then, you might as well prepare to leave now,” he suggested. What have I pulled myself into? I muttered as I took my leather bag full of equipment and other hiking paraphernalia, I knew it was too late to turn back. Master Chen, my family and friends bade me goodbye at the foot of the mountain, before my long hike to the summit.

The trek began near noon, and the blazing sun started to scorch my back, but surprisingly, it was not painful, and gave me an urge to keep going and stay perseverant. The sky was azure, with enormous clouds. However, the higher I went, the denser the mist, fog and clouds became, making it more difficult to breathe. The temperature dropped rapidly, from cool to freezing. I took out a parchment, ink and a brush to jot down my thoughts and observations.

While I was hiking up the mountain, I was perhaps distracted, and wandered off the stone-paved path. I stared in horror as I realised every single pine tree in front of me was similar, even identical. I panicked, and began to worry. Just as I was on the verge of a nervous breakdown, a welcoming, gentle wind blew, and I could hear the rustling of the fallen golden-yellow leaves on the ground. When it stopped, I glanced down at the forest floor, and curiously, found a path of autumn leaves leading to somewhere. A tingling and magical feeling overpowered me, and I willingly followed the path, the snow and leaves crunched below my feet. The path had guided me to the peak, but in the exhaustion, I collapsed onto the snow.

A brilliant light awoke me, which was the sign of the start of sunrise, dawn. I looked down from a cliff, and found the sight to be breathtaking. A sea of clouds swirled around the peaks like ocean currents, and the sun bathed the peak in colours of gold and red. Strangely, I found a vermillion fox there, but it was scared away by my campfire.

I continued to explore, and was searching for a clue when a pleasant voice behind me asked, “Who are you?” I whirled around. The speaker was a dragon as black as coal, and beside it was another one, but it was as white as pure snow.

“I am Yin, dragon of emotion and this is Yang, dragon of creation. What brings you here, my child?” it continued. I told them of the increasing mist and fog, and about my adventure, too.

“If you seek for the truth, child, we will tell you,” Yang started to explain, “This mist, Yin and I create is magical and gives people inspiration. It comes from the glass orb, but vile fox spirits want to use it for their own good recently, so we have to guard it always, by releasing more mist to hide it.” I finally understood the reason behind the magic, mist and clouds of the Yellow Mountains, a mysterious puzzle many have tried to solve before.

Before my departure, Yang made me promise not to say anything about the orb to anyone. He then let me climb on his back to fly home, and I had a fascinating view of the magnificent lush green mountains.

When I was telling the significant parts of the story to everyone in the village, while we were eating dinner together, I secretly hoped I would meet the two dragons again, and have another adventure with them, in the woods of the mountains.

The Secret of Huangshan

Diocesan Preparatory School, Pang, Jianan – 12

“Wow.”

The mountain loomed over me, and I felt so small in its presence.

There were jagged rocks and peculiar-shaped trees, but the most amazing were the clouds—they floated above the highest parts of the mountains, and looked like islands hovering in the air. The clouds made the mountains seem all the more magical and mysterious, like an unreachable kingdom in the sky.

“Yep, Cecilia, that’s Huangshan,” Dad came up behind me.

“Ready to climb?” Mom, holding the map, was studying the trail we were going to follow today.

“Of course, Mom!” I was ready to leave the noisy crowd of tourists and step into the legendary Huangshan. So we set off.

It had just rained; I could smell the dampness in the air, and the fresh scent of the vegetation. As soon as we rounded a bend, the noise of the tourists at the bottom faded away. I could only hear birdsongs and the rustling of leaves.

A large butterfly flew past me. “Hey!” I took a step forward to inspect it.

As if it knew I was there, the butterfly flew away again and landed on a plant to my left. Taking a big interest in this insect, I started chasing it. Sometimes it flew tantalizingly near, and I could almost brush it with my fingertips; sometimes I nearly lost sight of it, and I quickened my footsteps till I caught up with it again.

Too out-of-breath to run anymore, I gave up and sat down, trying to catch my breath. Oh dear. I was too late to realise my mistake. “Mom? Dad?” I shouted. No reply. I took deep breaths and told myself not to panic.

“There’s only one way up,” I said out-loud, “So...my parents will have to be somewhere down there.”

But then I looked behind me. The pathway had disappeared! And I couldn’t find anyone at all, let alone my parents. I wandered around a while, hopelessly, and holding my tears back in. Then I heard a voice.

“Yes, this is the place.” The voice was gruff, like that of a middle-aged man.

I peered through the trees. Sitting on a big rock was a man, middle-aged, as I had predicted. But he was dressed most peculiarly. Like the kind they wear in the olden days of China. The Tang dynasty, I think. Then I gasped. I had seen enough drawings of him to be sure...this was Li Bai!

Li Bai turned around. I covered my mouth, thinking that he had heard me, but he just surveyed the area and turned back to his writing. I frowned. Surely I was in plain sight of him...how can he ignore me like that? Wait. I finally got hold of the situation. If he was Li Bai, it meant that I had travelled back to the... Never mind. I was never good at history at school.

Suddenly, Li Bai got up. He started trekking up the mountain. More surprised than scared, I scrambled up and followed him.

Li Bai seemed very familiar with the surroundings. He climbed briskly up weird-shaped rocks and twisted pine trees. I had to run to catch up.

After an unbelievably long time, we finally reached the top. I had no idea what time it was now; my watch had stopped working.

I was panting heavily, though Li Bai never noticed the racket I was making.

“Mr Li?” I asked, “Can you hear me?”

No response. Li Bai looked as if he was checking the surroundings, or trying to find something. But there was only a lot of powdery mist around. Either Li Bai was a really good actor, or he actually couldn't hear or see me. I chose the second option.

"Stupid mist..." I heard him mutter, and waved his hands.

To my surprise, he knocked me away too, like I had become mist, like I was floating. Maybe I wasn't really there. Maybe I wasn't allowed to appear, to mess with time. Then why did the butterfly bring me here...?

Suddenly, the mist started swirling around us. It took shape, morphing into small houses, animals, and people. And then, when it was almost a thunderstorm, the whirling stopped. There were still a few wisps of mist left, but most of it had taken shape to form a small village. I thought I was having some kind of vision, but Li Bai didn't seem surprised.

One of the villagers, the oldest one, stepped out. He had silvery hair and held a walking stick. When he saw Li Bai, his face wrinkled into a smile.

Li Bai smiled too. "What message do you have for me today, Wise?"

"Not for you, Li, but for her," said Wise, and turned to me.

I could see his dark brown eyes piercing into mine. He could see me!

"Who are you talking about?" Li Bai stared around, "I don't see anyone else."

"Me?" I asked.

"Yes, Cecilia," Wise told me.

He could also hear me!

"We are mere spirits of time," Wise continued, "Just like you are. This village has been here since Huangshan was formed 100 million years ago. But in your time, no one has been able to find us anymore. We are lost. If no one living remembers us, Huangshan will be lost forever. We are the spirits holding Huangshan together, the secret of Huangshan! Remember us!"

The villagers' voices collided together, all voicing their wishes for me to remember them.

Remember me! Remember me!

A splitting headache hit me.

"Cecilia! You ok?" Mom's voice jolted me back into the present.

"Yes, yes," I shivered a bit, "I'm alright."

Remember me! There were still echoes of the voices.

"Yes, I'll remember you," I whispered, "Thank you for keeping Huangshan together."
The wailing voices died down. I could finally sense peace.

So this is the secret of Huangshan.

I'll never forget you, spirits. I promise.

China's Magical Mountains

Diocesan Preparatory School, Yan, Zi Rui – 9

Deep within the mountain range of Huangshan, 400 km away from the East China Sea, the first rays of a rising sun pierced the mist shrouding its tallest peak. They shone on ancient, crooked pine trees, beautiful sparkling waterfalls, and a small cave entrance tucked into the side of the mountain, from which its only inhabitant quickly emerged. Though he looked like an ordinary monkey, no different from the hundreds living in the forests around him, he was in fact an immortal spirit whose job it was to look after all creatures big and small living in these mystical mountains. As he made his way uphill towards his usual vantage point, animals of all kinds lined up to greet him, as they did every morning, and he fondly greeted them back.

Reaching the top of Lotus Peak, the monkey slowly turned his head, taking up the magnificent scenery, while also checking on all the animals and plants living within the mountain range. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary, except... The monkey paused, his eyes widening. Walking at the foot of the mountain to the north was the most beautiful girl he had ever seen. The gorgeous village girl had dark long hair blowing in the cool breeze. Her chestnut brown eyes glittered under the sunlight. At that moment, the monkey swore to himself that he would find this girl and marry her. Having practised his superpowers in the mountains for thousands of years, he was quite confident in his shapeshifting abilities. While he often turned into a giant whose very presence could strike fear in the hearts of dragons, this time he turned into a handsome young man, and hopped onto the clouds in pursuit of this girl.

Posing as a young and attractive scholar from a prestigious family, the monkey politely requested to stay one night at the girl's home. The girl's parents were at first hesitant but thought that he was indeed a respectful and polite man, so they agreed. When the family had dinner that night, the girl and the scholar were mesmerized by each other. They chatted the whole night and both fell in love at the speed of light. By the next morning, the monkey felt sure enough of his love to propose her for marriage. The girl's parents were very surprised, but after the monkey pleaded to them repeatedly and promised to give her a happy future, they eventually approved the marriage.

The monkey was thrilled. He couldn't believe his dream was coming true! To prepare for the wedding, he went back to his cave and magically transformed it into a large house and all the animals and spirits of the mountain into servants. He also turned the pine tree next to his cave into a doorman who would warmly welcome his new bride and guests to the wedding. On the day of the wedding, he excitedly welcomed his beautiful bride to his new home and held a feast for her and all the disguised creatures. The monkey drank a lot of wine that night as he had never been this happy in thousands of years. He was so happy that he even forgot to cast a second spell before the day was over.

The next morning, when the girl woke up next to him, she was shocked to find a hairy monkey instead of her handsome husband. She tried to scream for help, but all the servants and guests who were with them last night were gone, replaced by frogs and snakes. Frightened and upset, she ran for her life, out of the cave and past an oddly shaped pine tree, with its branches stretched out like welcoming arms.

When the monkey woke up and found the girl missing, he realised his mistake, but it was too late. He and the other creatures of the mountain searched all day and all night, yet they couldn't find even a trace of her anywhere. The next morning, he climbed to the top of the mountain and looked out mournfully to the north, where he first saw her and fell in love. The landscape around him was as breath-taking as ever, but he could no longer enjoy it. He could only continue sitting there, not moving a muscle, lost in his own memory.

"Mom! Mom! Come look!" the little girl shouted. The mother hurried up the slope after her daughter, huffing and puffing.

"What have you found, darling?"

"Here!" the little girl grabbed her mother's hand and led her to a rock overlooking the sea of clouds below. "This rock looks just like a monkey!" The mother took one look at the rock and gasped in recognition. Memories buried years ago came flooding back as she stood frozen.

Finally, she smiled. "Come here, darling," she said, "let me tell you a story about your father."

China's Magical Mountains

Diocesan Preparatory School, Yeung, Pok Him Ethan – 10

One day in the lavish palace of Gangrox Prime, the Emperor was lying down in his bed with his son, Prince Layg'oi, and his daughter, Cenaia, by his bedside. He was about to die because of his severe illness, and he had to decide to pass down the crown to one of his children. When the Emperor breathed his last, his secret advisor, Lucoise read out his testament and announced that Princess Cenaia would be the new monarch. It was something that had never happened before. Everyone was shocked, especially Prince Layg'oi. He was furious as he thought he deserved the throne. At that moment, he planned a way to take revenge against his sister and to rule Gangrox Prime. That is something evil, cruel and ruthless.

Prince Layg'oi travelled to the top province of Gangrox Prime – Tayg'aa, where the planet's main electric generation device is located. Then he used his own magic to manipulate the electric current so as to hypnotise the Quag'ocs. The new empress soon heard of the news, and she decided to leave Gangrox Prime in search of a new planet with the secret advisor and also her fiancé, Lucoise and a bunch of un-hypnotized Quag'ocs. After a round of search, they finally decided to move to Huangshan on Earth because it was very similar to Gangrox Prime. After that, they took the royal mothership to leave Gangrox Prime and arrived Huangshan, allowing them to be safe from the evil prince's magical power.

When they arrived at Huangshan, their eyes had never beheld such a magnificent sight. There are forests stretching as far as the eyes could see. The pines in Huangshan were growing rapidly, covering most of the mountain's area; the sea of clouds was floating stunningly and peacefully across the sky; the sunrise was mesmerising, and flora and fauna were popping up everywhere. The mysterious and mystical phenomenon was known as the Buddha's Light. Under the breathtaking views, Queen Cenaia and her Quag'oc subjects quickly devised a plan to hide from the Prince's watchful eyes: they disguised the royal mothership with a camouflaging device. At the same time, they noticed that there was critical terrain and some grotesque boulders in Huangshan which they could easily start digging underground to make an underground civilisation. Empress Cenaia sacrificed her honourable and luxurious life in Gangrox Prime to hide from her malevolent brother who's ruling her poor Quag'oc subjects. She started an arduous and adventurous livelihood with her Quag'oc subjects in Huangshan with all her love, patience, guidance and support that was helping her subjects and herself become stronger and even braver.

Yet, the good times did not last for long. One day, when one of the Quag'oc refugees was out for hunting, he saw a familiar shadow and it was Prince Layg'oi's crimson-mauve UFO! The refugee panically escaped and reported the sighting to Empress Cenaia. At the same instant, Prince Layg'oi landed his UFO and broke into the underground city that Quag'oc refugees and Empress Cenaia founded five years ago.

"Brother? But...how?" Empress Cenaia stuttered.

"Ha-ha! I hid a tracker in the royal mothership. I thought you would've figured it out by now!" he cackled.

"Cenaia, I will protect you! Fellow Quag'ocs, attack!" Lucoise shouted.

Upon command, many Quag'ocs rushed out to fight Empress Cenaia's evil brother. The malicious Prince Layg'oi stared at them and uttered, "Dio'Faax Famlango D'tig I oll bittees". That was a Forbidden Spell, and right after he uttered the Spell, one of the frontline Quag'ocs started turning into a pine tree. This continued and, in the end, only Lucoise and Empress Cenaia were left. Those suffering Quag'ocs stretched their arms out, as a signal for help, but when people found the Quag'oc pine hybrids in Huangshan twenty-one years later, they thought the stretching arms was to welcome them. As a result, the hybrids were soon be known as the Ying Ke Pines (Welcoming-Guests Pines) and became the features of Huangshan. Then, Prince Layg'oi rushed at Lucoise to have a duel. Their sharp two-edged swords bashed and clashed. While the duel was happening, Empress Cenaia started wailing because of her fallen subjects. The tree-alien hybrids realised their queen's pity and used all their love to mix with her tears, transferring their passionate power to the strangest rock in Huangshan and make it into a bright pink jewel called the "Love Stone" – a stone with love and power.

Empress Cenaia noticed the Love Stone and picked it up, understanding the love and determination of Quag'ocs. Then she walked towards her heinous brother, and gave the Love Stone to him and hugged him. He stuttered, "What is the meaning of this?" He received the Stone and felt the power of love from his sister and the Quag'ocs coursing through his veins and he understood his Quag'ocs forgave his misdeeds and would always be loyal to the

Prince and Empress of Gangrox Prime. Prince Layg'oi gave up his vengeance mission then hugged her back. With tears in his eyes, he said, "I realised that I did so many wrong things. To make things right, I'll stop my hypnotic spell over the population. I am sorry."

Empress Cenaia embraced him and said, "I forgive you and will always love you."

In the end, Prince Layg'oi and Empress Cenaia returned to Gangrox Prime and ruled the kingdom together. To remember their invaluable trip to Huangshan, they donated the Love Stone to their national museum for everyone to touch it so as to convert everyone in Gangrox Prime to be loving and peaceful. In this way, Gangrox Prime slowly become the most futuristic and happy planet in the Milky Way Galaxy, which is full of love.

Heaven of China

Discovery Bay International School, Ailani, Janya – 10

Imagine a place where the elements of the earth sing, where the sun and moon danced all day long, where immortal beings fled across the shining blue sky: this is a story about that place.

Evie sat near the edge of the cliff as the wind howled as loud as a wolf through the evening. The mythical mountains were resting above the slothful river. She could hear the voices of the sun and moon, Gods whispering out to the emerald birds. Birds which were singing a melodious tune. The ancient forest trees started sleeping in the chilly, cold wind. Clinging onto the side of the cliff, the immortal being thought to herself, what a wonder it would be if I was a human.

Suddenly, out of nowhere, a thought came in her head, what if she could be a human. She sprinted whilst sparkling across the beautiful sunset sky. Dancing with the wind, playing with the maroon monkeys and singing with the birds. Her hands swayed as her legs hopped with glee and joy!

Evie trembled as she was packing her sack to leave for her magnificent journey to the top of the ancient mountain. She could feel her sweat dripping down her hands. She stood on the tower of rocks with her freezing back straight, wondering if she would come back as an amazing human. In a blink of an eye, she saw a glistening silver bridge. Without a second of hesitation, she walked into the unknown to meet the gods of the sun and moon

The Boy and the Portal

Discovery Bay International School, Cheng, Hector – 10

Jeff was on the bus to the yellow mountains. He had never wanted to go but his mother insisted. “It will be exciting!”, she had said. As the trees whizzed by, the news radio blared “Thunderstorms are predicted this afternoon with a chance of a hurricane.” “Great observation.” mumbled Jeff. “As if that’s going to be life changing.” As the clouds thundered and crackled, he was going to realise how wrong he was.

By the time the bus had arrived at the top of the mountain, a thunderstorm was underway. Promptly, the intercom announced, “everyone is to leave this site immediately. I repeat, everyone is to leave this site immediately.” He was happy, but mother was very disappointed, and Jeff would have felt pity for her if not for the fact that he never wanted to come.

On the way back, there was only chilly silence. Nothing was going wrong until Jeff had an odd feeling in his month, and judging by everyone else’s faces, they must have smelt it too. A man called out, “stop the bus!” The bus driver stopped and opened the doors. Everyone was in a panic to get out, but for most, it was too late. A white-hot streak of lightning struck the bus and as he ran, the heat of the world seared down his back.

He ran through the woods, hoping to get somewhere. His mother was dead but was too panicked to care. But then the warmth of fire was felt in front of him. “Safety”, he thought. But then fire spirits approached him from behind. He ran. The odd fire spirits trailed after him and he had two options. Stay and fight, and get himself killed, or jump off the cliff. “I am a moron”, he thought, and dived down into the abyss.

As he fell, he thought about what dying felt like. He hoped it would be painless and quick, when a blur of brown dived down in front of him and he landed on the bird’s back. As the bird and him rose into the sky, he asked, “what are you?” He only squaked back. What seemed like an eternity later, they arrived at a cave. Inside, once Jeff got off the eagle, it turned into a guy roughly the same age as him – ten-ish. “Hello Jeff.”, he said. “My name is Az.”

Jeff didn’t know what to say. He had just escaped an exploding bus, ran from some self-guided fireballs, jumped off a cliff and been saved by an eagle who could turn into a human. So he just went with something real sophisticated, “Uh, okay?” Then he snapped out of his confusion and asked “How do you turn into an eagle?” “Many of our kind can do amazing things like this. Shape-shifting is one of the least respected abilities.” “uh, okay. Why did you rescue me?” “Because you are one of us too. I could sense your presence. You must be important. Come. I’ll get you an apartment.”

The moment Jeff stepped into the main building inside the cave, he knew something was up. The people there were in a state of turmoil. There were thin and sickly people, groaning and tired people. “There are two spirits haunting this place.”, Az explained, “They take control of people and cause destruction in their wake. They are near impossible to subdue as when we are close to capturing them, they leave the person’s body.” As if something had reacted to his speaking, the alarms sounded. Az ran off in the direction of the alarms with Jeff following close behind.

There was a man busting open the bank vault. Many people tried to stop him but his power over metal was unstoppable. Anything people threw at him were blocked and bullets were stopped in midair and sent back. As the bank vault was about to blow, the man was caught in a net but he stopped glowing purple and a chilly breeze left the room.

Jeff hoped he had helped. Out of nowhere, fire came from his hands and melted down some returning bullets. Bullets had zoomed at him and fire roared from his fists. As they zoomed away, he could still see a vague shadow of ghosts(that he was pretty sure that only he could see them) leave. He ran after them, with Az screaming to him, “Where are you going!” After racing through a food court, he pursued them to a dead end, which the spirits floated straight through. Great.

He went to a drill shop and took one(the society was communist)to bust down the wall. As he went in, the spirits turned into the fire spirits that chased him off the cliff. He was no longer scared. If he could summon fire, then

maybe he could resist it too. The spirits, or as Az called them, makai, shot white hot flames at him. The resisting sort of worked : They had burned his hat off. “Aw, c’mon. That was my best hat.” The makai fired off towards another mountain with a cave.

Az finally caught up. One look at the situation and he understood what to do. He threw a string across and it turned into a bridge as soon as it reached the other side. The duo Ran across the makeshift bridge . The spirits were nowhere to be seen. Az brung out dynamite and started placing it around. Jeff got in on the act along with a few others. The Makai must have known they were surrounded so they came and lit one. “Take cover!”

Space–time tore open to reveal a portal. “This is a portal to your home time before your bus is struck down.” Jeff waved goodbye and jumped in.

China's Magical Mountains

Discovery Bay International School, Co, Georgina – 10

Beginning

Dragons trekked and soared through the picturesque mountains of Huangshan in China. The mountains were steep and treacherous. Jagged granite peaks touched the tips of the clouds and fog, making it seem so easy to hitch a ride with the dragons that flew across the grey skies.

The mountains were tranquil and solitary with very little noise in the background. The sound of rain created a calming effect on people and so did the wind blowing as trees swing gently.

Breathtaking, idyllic views hung over the heads of villagers. Villages that were perched on cliffs with ambient sounds of cows mooing and chickens clucking. Life there was peaceful and harmonious.

But one of the things that caught one's mind was the secrets that lie above the clouds and inside the caves in the mountains. Legend says that there are emerald green dragons and treasures that have been buried for centuries.

I wish my life was full of adventures; I wish those legends were true. Everyday I have to collect buckets of water from the stream with my hands ending up badly cramped and hear my 3 brothers constantly make fun of me for believing about inanimate, made up theories.

My homes in my village are made mostly of straw roofs and wooden walls. Life was very simple and we didn't have many comforts. People often were famished during the winter and dehydrated during the summer. We plowed every crop but yet never ate. We never knew of the comforts and fun part of life, instead adapted to what we have. It was never fun. All I fantasized was something interesting to happen.

I was just in my disorganised room, reading books. Until I saw something fly across my window. And I knew for a fact it was the dragons. It was absolutely amazing and I couldn't believe what I was seeing! I quickly put on my boots and ran outside. The wind blew in my face, I could taste the crisp air lingering in my tongue and hear the sounds of footsteps.

I decided on taking on the challenge of following the dragon. The peaks soared and touched the heavens. I felt determined and encouraged to embark on the journey, the valleys looked like pages from my storybook. It felt unreal or I was hallucinating. I continued on trekking through the cliffs, nearly having the desire to give up but before I knew it, I was up.

The view was irresistible. The clouds passed and the sun rays beamed through. For the first time, I felt myself and just free. It was the best feeling I've had in a long time. I sat down on the grassy surface adoring this inexplicable sight. After being mesmerized by the view, I suddenly lost track of the dragon. I tried calling it.

No reply.

At this point, I lost hope. I curled up and hid my face between my arms. Tears rolled down my cheeks until I noticed a green ember glow in the nearby cave. With caution, I crept inside. It was cramped, frigid and dark. But I didn't let my fear hold me down. So, I continued. Hours later, I saw a dragon. Curled up, and snoring. The scales glowed a light shade of green and the wings were rigid. It was female and covered in lustrous scales.

I couldn't believe what I was seeing. This proves the legends were true! Behind the dragon, I saw a chest of gold nuggets. I quietly crawled under the dragon's tail and dipped my hand into the chest and grabbed a handful. It was cold to the touch.

Without noticing, I dropped the gold. The gold made a loud sound hitting the rocky surface. The female dragon woke up and opened one eye, and then another. The dragon spat out flames, burning the walls of the cave.

“What do you want from me?” she roared, clawing on to the rocks. “Ah! I’m sorry!” I squealed. The dragon looked angrier, she was furious and started chasing me through the cave. I ran and ran like it was the end of the world, and she stopped. It was very unexpected. She examined me as I stayed still, just waiting to run again.

“I know you! You are that girl constantly getting harassed by your brothers am I right?” she asked. “How do you know? But that’s me yes.” I replied. “So you see, I look out for children who are huge believers in magic. These days, nobody pays attention to them.” the dragon exclaimed, picking up a bigger chunk of gold.

I smiled and trekked back home and kept the chunk of gold under my piles of books. Although my life was hard, it sure was magical. Again, the dragons flew across the sky and were journeying to unknown places.

The Adventure

Discovery Bay International School, Connelly, Thomas – 11

Matt wiped the sweat off his brow, hiking was hard work. He, his father, his little sister, Amy and his best friend, John were going on a two hour hiking trip. It was the summer holiday so they didn't have to worry about school. They had already done all of the homework that was set for them so they were fine until school started again in about three weeks time. "Three weeks and four days, to be exact.", he thought to himself. Matt liked to be exact, which was something his mother had encouraged him to practice to be a better mathematician. Matt had great passion for mathematics ever since.

Even though the mist in the air stopped them from overheating and decreased the chance of getting a sunburn, it did nothing to stop the exhaustion they all felt. Therefore, thirty minutes into the hike, Amy called for a break and they all happily agreed. Matt pulled out his phone to see if anybody had texted him, no one had. As he switched off his phone, he heard a faint rumble. Then, he heard it again. This time, only louder. He looked down at the screen of his phone and saw boulders rumbling down the hill towards him. "LANDSLIDE!", he bellowed to the rest of his team.

The rocks fell out from under their feet as they tumbled down the cliff face, bouncing and rolling until they landed in a small pond. Climbing out, they all saw an old man fishing in the pond. "Well, hello" he called, good-naturedly, waving them over. "I see you have fallen down the same trap I did, except maybe you will get out?". "It'll be easy to get out of here, right?", Matt said. "We can just walk around to the end of the cliff." But the old man shook his head, "It's a circular canyon, you can't just walk out." They all sat there for a moment, thinking. Then John burst out, "How about a helicopter or plane?" "The tree canopy is too thick." The old man replied. "So," reasoned Matt, "we'll have to climb the cliff?" "Bingo." said the old man. Then he pointed to a pile of climbing harnesses, clips, ropes and grappling hook guns. "Well," said Matt's dad, "I guess we'll have to give it a shot then."

BANG! The grappling hook flew up the side of the cliff and latched onto the ledge where Matt's father was already standing. "OK, NOW PRESS THE GREEN BUTTON!" He bellowed down to them. Matt obeyed, punching the button and was uncomfortably pulled up by the grappling hook gun that was attached to his harness via the three steel clips securing it. They continued this slow, painful ascent, pulling themselves higher and higher every time as they grappled from ledge to ledge until finally, after hours of absolutely exhausting work, they reached the top of the cliff face. From there, they followed the hiking trail to their destination, Huangshan city, named after the mountain range they had been hiking on. Afterwards they took a plane back to Hong Kong city and had a huge celebration and invited many people, friends, neighbours, teachers and parents, all were invited and even though they didn't know why. They all laughed and danced and joked and played all the same, but only a select few were told the true story... and now you dear reader are one of them.

Epilogue

Thinking back, Matt knew that if there had been no landslide, if the old man had not been down at the bottom of the canyon, if they had not landed in the pond, then they would either be dead or not have had what would probably be the greatest adventure of his entire lifetime. Before he had thought you could never have too much adventure, now he knew he had more adventure than his whole lifetime was worth and that there was only a certain amount of adventuring someone could do without becoming addicts. So he decided that he had reached his limit and he would do much, much, much less adventuring from then on and lived the rest of his life as a jolly, content and happy man.

Hallucinations

Discovery Bay International School, Convey, Tara – 10

The mountaineer heaved herself up onto the top and drew in huge, wracking breaths. She had spent the last 40 minutes climbing that mountain, which, in the long run, was quite a fast climb, but would've been much more quick had their helicopter not crashed way below where they were supposed to have gotten. She had finally reached the top of the mountain – her lifelong goal achieved. She beamed into the nothingness in front of her. She turned in a circle, marvelling at the view from the top of the yellow mountains. Her friends climbed up behind her and her surprise at their state nearly knocked her over the edge again. Oria had a deep, crimson scar running across her thigh and leaves were tangled in her hair. Nussy was holding her arm – which was twisted in an unnatural angle – like she was holding a baby. But what was most concerning was their eyes. Both of them had white pupils, which were steadily getting bigger until they will probably, eventually, fill their eyes. Oria seemed perfectly calm, like always, but if anyone looked close enough, they would see that she was panicking inside. Nussy, on the other hand, was screaming and looking around frantically, like someone – or something – will ambush us any moment. I frowned, puzzled at their reactions. Unless they both packed a mirror, they shouldn't be able to see their own eyes, which should be the only thing that would freak them out this much...

Oria tried to calm herself and ignore the giant wispy monsters thundering towards the trio. When she had suggested climbing the yellow mountains, she thought it would be fun, experiencing what it would be like above the clouds and perhaps finding a new species. But, as the soft clouds swirled around her, making an illusion of a safe place, she concluded that it was not fun to be up here with the monsters, which were now scurrying from beneath rocks to behind trees as if hunting us, not fun at all. When she shifted away from the monsters and grabbed a branch from the floor to defend herself, since they would probably attack eventually, she saw them...flicker...as if they were a projection. The thought popped into her head that they may be a simple illusion of the eyes, a image that her mind conjured, but as soon as the thought appeared she dismissed it, because there was no way that these monsters aren't real...

Nussy stared wide-eyed at the monsters around her, opening her mouth to scream but no sound coming out. She turned to the mountaineer – her friend – and asked her if she saw the same things Nussy was seeing, but the mountaineer was frowning and looking at her and Oria's eyes. Nussy somehow managed to ignore the strange sounds around her and asked "Tristie...Do you see the monsters?" But she made no noise. Now that she thought about it, the only sound she could hear was the monsters and their snorting and growling. But Tristie seemed to react to her words that Nussy herself didn't hear, for some peculiar reason. And when Tristie responded, a breath of air escaped her mouth, at first seemingly harmless, but quickly absorbing the monsters and the trees and rocks and then the ground they were standing on and –

Nothing...

If one would fly a drone or a helicopter over where the mountain climbers had supposedly gone missing, they would see nothing out of the ordinary – the reason being that nothing actually was out of the ordinary. It had to have been some disease or hallucination they received in the magical mountains from some mystery plant or beast, with the three friends now passed out on the top of the mountains stretching high above the clouds.

Mountains too high..

Discovery Bay International School, Derkash, Noah – 9

Imagine a place where the mountains are too high, where you cannot climb mountains, where the evil steal villagers: this is a story about that place.

Katara gazed up at the gigantic mountains that stood before her. “They must be magical.” Thought Katara. The trees swayed so soft and quiet as though they were majestic. The birds sang in such a beautiful melody that made Katara and Dak-li feel like they were dreaming. Something interrupted the bird's song. Katara and Dak-li froze as they heard rustling nearby. Katara grabbed her staff and Dak-li grabbed his golden single-edged dagger. The creature had walked right out of the bush and stood in front of them. “What is this creature?” Dak-li asked. “I have never seen anything like it before.” Katara said. They both lowered their weapons and holstered them. The creature had realized they both had weapons and quickly ran off into the distance. “This place is magical.” Katara exclaimed. “Let’s keep going.” Dak-li said to her. They both started walking towards the mountains.

After walking for hours, they stopped for a rest. Katara zipped open her bag and searched for her canteen. She took a long swig of the refreshing cold water. After putting back her canteen, they set off again.

Finally, they had reached the mountains. “They’re so tall!” Dak-li exclaimed. “Indeed!” Katara agreed. How were they gonna get up? The thought raced through their minds, but just then a cloud –or at least it looked like a cloud– descended towards them. “Should we climb on?” Katara asked. “You can’t stand on clouds, silly.” Dak-li told her. Katara had climbed on the cloud. It was fluffy. Katara gave Dak-li an “I-told-you-so” look. Dak-li stepped onto the cloud. “Woah!” Dak-li exclaimed. The cloud floated up towards the top of the mountain. But when it was entering a cloud, a blinding flash came upon their eyes..

The Jade Treasure

Discovery Bay International School, Dou, Grace – 10

Imagine a place where mountains rise higher than clouds, where crystal clear streams wound through the calming landscape, where a secret lies beyond the mountains : This is a story about that place.

Yuki and Sora stood at the edge of a luscious forest. The beautiful trees swayed in the gentle cool breeze, next to them a bubbling river wandered through the sunny afternoon sky. Colossal mountains rose like gigantic teeth from the ground and very far above they could just see a teeny tiny pinch of what looked like a jade palace clinging to the side of a distant peak. They knew they had to get up there, they had to just see what was up those mysterious mountains.

Wiping the cool sweat off their foreheads, Sora flung his heavy backpack. Reaching inside he grabbed a wooden container and took a long swig of the fresh, cold water. Yuki marched carefully to the edge of the vast cliffside, Sora standing beside. They wondered if they would be able to make it up there alive? Would they be able to discover the hidden treasure up the mountains?

Reaching into the bag, Yuki grabbed an enormous sheet of paper and some really long string. Sora stared at her curiously and asked “What are you making?” but she just replied with a sly smile on her face. After about 30 minutes of cutting and drawing she finally finished making her creation... It was an extremely big and colourful kite! Sora stared amazed, then he broke the silence, “Woah!” he exclaimed and Yuki smiled. So Yuki told Sora her ideas of how to fly up to the mysterious mountain “We can fly a kite up there but we need to wait for some wind to come” she said sadly. After three super long hours of waiting, wind was finally swirling in the air, Yuki woke up with a jump, she called to Sora who also woke up with a jump, Yuki giggled and walked up to the edge of the cliff and grabbed the top part of the big kite and Sora grabbed the lower part and they both pushed off towards the dazzling sunset sky.

Tales from China's Magical Mountain

Discovery Bay International School, Glennon, Lily – 10

Imagine a place where vivid emerald green mountains stand looking out to a fiery sunset. where a never ending mountain reaches the sky and what lies at the top still remains a mystery . This is a story about that place .

To get over the endless green wall of mountains you'd have to heave yourself over trenches, potholes and rushing rivers,use a machete to bash through the trees where a track is blocked, the climbs up were steep with eroded banks .to finish you'd have to climb 100 feet.but all of that was worth it for inside the fortress was true paradise they have sugary white sand beaches luscious trees and opal flowers were everywhere where a gradient sky gleamed against the lake where fishermen cast their rods .

Lay is a girl , 11 with long dark hair , bauge skin , and freckles scattered all over her cheeks. Her hazel green eyes shone in the moonlight .

Lay wears a white dress with an aqua waistline and her hair is tightly braided into an intercat plat that swirls around her. When she bikes around her village she uses the playground seesaw as a ramp to launch herself across the fish pond,plumulting herself toward the houses that stood at the foot of a white sand beach she then skids on the gravel path that leads you around a cluster of houses in her village.

Although lay seemed a normal girl who loves to feel the breeze, while watching the apricot sun lay its head on the sapphire blue bed of the horizon . She loves to draw and explore although there is something special about lay and her love for the world above .

Lay has always been fascinated about a legend that tells that in the middle of China there is a mountain that reaches to the sky and above into outer space . When this celestial mountain reaches above the atmosphere it turns to an ocean blue with sapphires that hang of trees as if it were a mere leaf . Although this wasn't the only thing there is life form and creatures not of this world. this mountain is told to reach the moon goddess 嫦娥 of who owns a bow that shall make your dreams come true . and legend tells who is worthy to reach the top of this celestial mountain shall retrieve the bow and use its powers.

Lay expressed to her father that she felt as if she was on the rim of destiny,and that one day she will reach it .then explore the unknown.unfortunately her father thought different he wanted lay to run the family business ,an art shop even though lay had the potential to do things so much more significant than that . why her father was so close minded about lays future was before in his younger days he had lived in a land where cruel sinister people had hurt him and others and lays father whose name is chan worries that hell will lose lay and wishes to keep her close but lay has other plans....

Lay had been planning something big for the past year. She had been scavenging baking pans,trays and multiple different types of cans. She had grabbed all of the honey and fudge and syrps from all over town . Now finally after scavenging all her needs she was ready to build the cat copter so tonight lay snuck out of her house and crept tip toeing ' left right left right creakkkkkkk' the floorboards squealed , but still no one woke not even chester the cat nothing shook not even the coat on the rack . Finally lay had reached the abandoned warehouse where the scraps were .With her fathers tool kit she hammered away tray after tray slowly making the shape of a rocket the contraption looked as if it were brand new lay walked back to have a look at her creation then realised something was missing COLOUR she thought. She rushed back to her house slowly unlocking the door and maneuvering herself down to the shed in the backyard where a bucket of hot pink paint lay sitting on the rim of the shelf in the art shop .

Lay sprinted into the backyard and snatched the paint . then once again tip toed towards the door then she hesitated and thought to herself 'how could i be so blind i need fuel so as she sprinted towards the rundown gas station ,her legs began to tire but she pushed on and saw a bike then hopped on it and put the paint in the basket and the fuel on the back and began to ride all the way to the other side of town at the warehouse .

She filled the fuel tank then did the calculations and checked the velocity of the rocket and finally after months of hard work she returned the bike and came home. the sun was beginning to peer out of the hills so it was time for her father to wake . The worn out lay quickly rest her head to get some shut eye for her big night .

As soon as her alarm clock rang her she sat up so fast and and bounced out of bed with a spring in her step and beamed out the window and began to pack food entertainment devices and her book and most importantly her camera to document her discoveries and as she slung her bag around her back the mid noon sun smiled at her as she sprinted down the stairs for break fast pork dumplings and rice and with a full mouth and said farewell to her father who thought she was going to school and ran to the warehouse to retrieve her rocket . she hopped in the pilots seat and looked back at her little house and hesitated as she was really going to leave her life behind then she thought about her dreams and without looking back she pulled the trigger.then SHE FLEW .

China's Mountains

Discovery Bay International School, Holbourn, Keira – 10

High in the mountains of China, holds a hundred questions and a thousand answers. The mountains are covered with thick mist as white as snow. At the top of one of the many mountains, Is a tiny hill. On that tiny hill is a tiny house. In that tiny house is a poet. This poet wasn't tiny. The poets name was Du Fu.

Du Fu had a sea of words as big as the widest ocean. He wrote about things he saw and felt. He chose to live on that tiny hill in the tiny house because things were so mysterious there. The curiosity overwhelmed him.

When Du Fu was just a boy, He used to go into the woods risking his life for his curiosity. One day he found the chinese mountains he decided to hike to the biggest mountain. Its took him three days and three nights to get their. Eventually he did get to the top. Their were all kinds of thing anyone could ever dream of. On his first day, Du Fu was looking around and found a giant panda. The Giant panda had a purple and white pattern.

On Du Fu's second day he wrote a poem about the giant panda. Then he got inspired to stay and write more poems and give them for free. Because he enjoyed people enjoying them selves. Hee lived happily ever after.

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

Discovery Bay International School, Jayasekera, Cubie – 9

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Unseen Fire

Discovery Bay International School, Lorenz, Alina – 9

Imagine a place where dragons fly high, where griffins make nests, where all elements live and die: this is a story about that place.

Morag and Sky, two elementals, stood on top of their dragons, Soot and Misty, and stared upwards at the towering mountains. A beautiful, frozen river wound across the massive green landscape, followed by a little flame of fire that never seemed to go out as it danced across the luscious grass. Staring higher up they could see a seven petaled flower, each one ending in a little flame. That was their goal. They had to get up there to have any chance of saving their village from sickness.

Thinking only of their suffering village, the two elementals rode their dragons higher and higher until their dragons ran out of breath. Knowing they had to walk by foot, they strode forward, fearless of the consequences.

The final obstacles were now right in front of them: the ice cold lake, which was as quiet as a sleeping baby, and the burning hot fire. Nodding at Morag, Sky summoned all of her power and lifted it out of the ground since she was an ice elemental. Screaming, she twisted the ice into a shape like a spring. Morag threw back her head and her eyes turned as red as rubies as she made the ice column melt in places so that it formed into a staircase. As her eyes turned back to emerald green, Morag looked at Sky and they looked at the ice stairs and, whilst tears of joy started forming in their eyes, they triumphantly marched upwards...

The Mythical Snowflake

Discovery Bay International School, McKnight, Kiona – 9

Imagine a place where the trees grow wild, where the enchanting wind sings softly, where mountain tops reach the sky and above: this is a story about that place.

Topaz peered down in fear as the rock tumbled aggressively down from the steep cliffside. Topaz had so many great ideas of how to save Star but there was one idea that would successfully work. He made his way as he journeyed to the Moon Goddess. Topaz leaped across the clear, turquoise streams. He rolled along the luscious, green meadows. After three long days he reached the portal to the endless, mythical mountains Topaz leaped through and in a blink of an eye. He arrived.

Topaz steeled himself. He sprinted to a nearby stream and took a long gulp of the cool, teal water. He breathed slowly in focus. He glared at the misty, opaque clouds as they started to drift across the indigo, starry night sky in wonder. Topaz said to himself “ I wonder how I will get to see the Moon Goddess.”

Topaz wished and wished for a clue. Suddenly, a single snowflake glided out of the night sky and landed softly on Topaz's damp black nose. Topaz blew the single small, white snowflake on the azure, cool stream. Topaz stared in shock! The snowflake started to grow and grow huge pillars supported it he cautiously stepped on the cold surface. A crystal clear globe covered the top and it started to rise and rise. The snowflake broke through the atmosphere and reached the round, pale moon. Astonished Topaz stared at the moon dance around planet Earth. The moon laped around Earth as it was a runner sprinting on a track. Topaz stepped on the moon thinking “ Will I encounter any dangers on the moon?”

Swallowing hard, Topaz headed to the dark side of the moon. Hours past. In the distance Topaz saw the slightest of light. Topaz sprinted hard he sprinted as fast as a aeroplane taking off. He broke through the gates and greeted the Moon Goddess and asked her for a map. The map was as thin as a strand of silk. The Moon Goddess lended him a old, ancient map to a nearby cave guarded by a ice dragon. The Goddess spoke if you want to save your friend, you must go into the cave fight the dragon get the fire stone retrieve your friend and go back to your home. The map showed the Well of Wisdom cave. Topaz asked to Moon Goddess how to get back. She didn't answer. I suddenly was back where I started.

Topaz located the cave and bit by bit he climbed up and up. He climbed up through the dewy, misty clouds and to the top of the towering, mystic mountains. Topaz stormed through the cave and dodged every strike of terror. Topaz grabbed the stone desperately and sprinted out. He ran to the village where they were keeping Star. Star sat lonely in a cage waiting. Topaz aggressively bit off the lock and hugged Star then used the fire stone as the key to the portal, Topaz and Star safely arrived home. Topaz told Star all the adventures he had. Star curiously said “ I wonder where the dragon is and where will he strike again?”

Mysterious Mountain

Discovery Bay International School, Moriarty, Ruby – 11

I love this Ruby! I like how it all draws together at the end – effectively organised and some vivid description too – well done! I've just added a few things, just minor grammar :)

I lay on the windowsill looking longingly at the misty mountains just on the edge of our quaint village. No one ever goes into the mountains – many have tried but say the mist is too thick, whilst others never even came back. I've never been afraid of them, for my whole life most people would run and hide when becoming only fifty metres away, but not me – I just wanted to explore them. I would go alone because no one in their right mind would come with me.

That particular day my mum sent me to go to the nearby shop, everything in our village was about a five minute walk, nothing was ever too far. I went and got the items my mum asked me to get and on my walk home, that's when I saw it.... something black roaming across the mountains. I dropped the bags of shopping and ran towards them. At that point, I didn't care that no one knew about them. I HAD to find out what it was. Just as I started to get near the mountains I started to slow down and soon I was walking the steep steps – drawn by the black mist.

It had almost been an hour and I was still walking up steps. Soon I noticed the steps were starting to curve so I started running. I wanted to see what was around the corner! Upon turning that corner I found the most amazing thing...

There lay a village up high in the mountains! The buildings were so traditional – everywhere beautiful black tiles sweeping downwards. I wanted to see inside, so I walked into one of the buildings to find a group of people, my heart started to beat so fast and I wanted to run out of there as fast as I could but then I noticed someone that I recognised. In fact, I recognised everyone who was there. They were the explorers who hadn't come back from the mountains. They told me that I needed to find a creature I had seen before flying high above our village. Thankfully, the explorers gave me some food and water for the journey and then I continued on my way to find this mysterious creature.

As I walked further into the mountains the trail started to fade away and I was soon navigating my way through tree roots and fallen trees. I started to hear something rustling in the bushes – out of nowhere a black dragon swooped out of the trees and onto the ground. I then realised that this was what I had seen. I started to stroke her scaly back and the dragon started to make a purring sound that reminded me of my cat back at home.

Now, every day as I lay on my windowsill I can see the dragon gliding majestically through the air and sometimes when I look towards the dragon I think she looks at me and smiles; a knowing smile.

Magical Mountains

Discovery Bay International School, Muller, Leila – 10

Once there lived a boy who was called Huangshan, he was the ruler of the magical mountains. He lived in the beautiful magical mountains and the meaning of the boy's name was 'Yellow Mountains'. He lived with a dragon who took care of him and protected him through the storms and the attacks from the aviators who thought they were the rulers of the mountains.

But whatever they did, he would always be the ruler. One day one of the avatars came to where the dragon and the boy were living, and the avatars was the one who was helping the aviators to stop the battle! She was helping them find a safe place to stay and hide, every time she heard where the aviators were going to ambush. And that's when everybody knew there was going to be war and a lot of peace that would fade away. So the dragon who was taking care of Huangshan trained him and taught him how to fight and use his powers and the powers he had is nothing like you can imagine.

One month later Huangshan was ready and knew exactly what to do but it wasn't just them he had support from some avatars and magical creatures from the yellow mountain. Suddenly there was silence and the birds stopped tweeting and the earth was frozen and that's when the war began. It lasted over a week and there was blood and injured people, people who was gone. Huangshan knew that he stopped the war but the avatars wasn't happy, so they killed Huangshan and took over the mountains. They didn't rule it for long because the power and the kindness Huangshan had, rose and took the yellow mountains but he knew someday there would be peace. He was right, there was peace because the avatars ruled a quarter so they made peace and there was no war ever again. The end.

The Journey In The Yellow Mountains

Discovery Bay International School, Nilsson, Siena – 10

Story...

As I finally emerged through the thick, dense fog I could see something, something I don't ever think should have been visible to the human eye. I gulped and took five steps closer, then I stopped. I saw this breathtakingly, beautiful levitating mountain, suspended with no connection to the world below. It had edgy sharp rocks on its side, however, in the middle, the rocks looked smooth like the surface of a pebble. There were emerald green evergreens everywhere you looked. I almost didn't notice the jade embossed bridge that blended in with the surroundings.

Although the mountains were serene and picturesque, the rugged and staggering wild terrain sent a chilling feeling up my spine... I knew something had to be coming my way. I was wondering if I was the only one here? Was there someone else lurking around in the depth of the mountains? As I brought myself back to reality, I took my last few steps off the bridge, I could see a blur of yellow haze blanketing the top of the yellow mountains. Feeling a deep sense of responsibility, I knew I had to take some kind of action, even if it put me in danger; I was soon to find out...!

As I was looking around, trying to find something to help me get rid of this depressing haze that could change the future of these mountains forever. Something spectacular happened! A sparkling light suddenly blinded me out of nowhere. I swiftly moved in and out of the trees, trying to find the source of where the light was coming from. Just then, it was there. A mysteriously looking stone perched on top of the grass almost as if it was floating. I cautiously picked it up. It felt normal, however deep down I knew there was absolutely nothing normal about this stone at all. I just knew it was special. I flipped it around to find a carving implanted in the smooth otherworldly stone. It said "I help." I was discombobulated at this statement. Did it have something to do with the haze? Could it help me and the mountains? All these thoughts whizzing around in my head like a shooting star, one thought passing to the next. What was it?

As I decided to calm down and only focus on the beauty of this place (despite the haze,) the blinding light came back! This time not only was the stone glowing, but an old, gnarly almost dead looking tree was glowing as well. It had a perfectly oval shaped hole in the centre. I finally realised the stone was telling me it belonged to that hole. To be honest, I was quite petrified that something bad would happen, however, I took the chance. A few steps closer I thought, what was going to happen? The cold damp stone in my shaky hands... I pushed it in as hard as I could, although it was not necessary because it fit smoothly like a glove. At first nothing happened, then, something happened, something big...!

Suddenly, a huge wave of magic wiped out everything that was harmful to the world in the yellow mountains. Just like that, the rubbish on the muddy ground was gone! Just like that, the haze was no longer blanketing the mountain as it was GONE! As I watched all this happening, I almost couldn't believe it, I thought it was all just a crazy dream. Little did I know, it definitely wasn't, there was absolutely nothing fictitious about this place; everything was REAL! The view, it was surreal, absolutely mesmerising, the sky blue as the ocean, the clouds white as snow. Even the dead tree where I fitted the stone, was now luscious green filled with leaves, more than 100 I saw. Nothing in life is perfect until you've seen this place, it was quintessential.

Just when I thought my magnificent journey was coming to an end, I felt the yellow mountains shaking. I went through all the possible scenarios of what it could be. 1: a crazy dream, 2: an earthquake. But then something touched me. Horrified, I leaped back to only find myself lying on the cold, damp ground slowly losing consciousness. As I was peacefully sleeping, not able to open my eyes or get up, it was like I was in some sort of illusion. All of a sudden something interrupted my dreamy state; there were faint whispers creeping inside my ear... is she dead? Is she okay? Annoyed, I finally jerked my head up and saw pocket sized creatures standing on my stomach.

As I abruptly started getting up, the creatures slid off my legs like I was some sort of slide. They started talking louder and excitedly to me explaining their tale. “Hello, we are the people of the yellow mountains, about 100 years ago everyone lived happily until Zurich and his mighty soldiers came and destroyed this place. That’s when we knew we had to go into hiding. They littered this place like it was their own personal trash can destroying everything in their sight. Finally, after Zurich and his soldiers got bored with their destructive behaviour and decided to leave, still no one dared to step foot out of their hiding places until this very day as we were petrified of their wicked return...! However, with your arrival you magically put this place back to normal, all peace was brought back. So my fellow people decided they wanted to see, so here we are now, back in the home that we remember; exquisite, peaceful and beautiful. So from the bottom of our hearts, THANK YOU. However, we have to be parted now and send you back home, as you cannot stay here, it is not a land for any human, only magic lives here.” A portal opened up, something forced me to go in. I had my last looks and before I knew it I found myself lying in my bed in my own home.

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

Discovery Bay International School, O'Connor, Oran – 10

Imagine a place, where wizardry is everywhere you look,
Where there is nothing you can't accomplish,
Where the world could be in your hands at any moment.

This is a story about that place.

Fiery, red devils swarm the beautiful, majestic, yellow mountains and transform them into the devil mountains. But how did it get to this you may ask? Well, the mountains were glorious. Bright cyan, diamond rivers sway through the tall, gorgeous, rocky mountains. The devils were jealous of it and wanted to take it over, and they were looking for something evil to do. But before they started their monstrous attack, a hard working kid, who would risk his life for another soul, and has angry, red, fiery hair and grips onto a strong, enchanted sharp sword to protect himself, others and his trusted companion.

The boy's companion is a mighty, fearsome dog, but don't let him trick you with his main power, cuteness.

It was so calm and chill on the mountains. One day, the boy, named Oran, and his dog went for a walk in the green, luscious forest sitting at the bottom of the mountains. Around five minutes into the walk, they heard the full alarm for a major attack in the village. Oran and his dog run back up the mountain to see evil devils setting the small, defenceless town on fire and locking all the people up in jail at the top of the mountain next to the devil kings temple. "AHHHH!!!" Screamed Oran, but he couldn't shout too loud or the devils will see him and lock Oran up! "Mmm mmm" cried The dog, named Oliver. Oliver cried a bit too loud and the devils spotted Oran and Oliver and snatched them up.

Oran woke up by Oliver whimpering on Oran's chest in a dark, gloomy jail cell, it was kind of weird when Oran looked at the metal door and found it was unlocked! Oran and Oliver ran out, but the exit to the jail was on fire! A devil guard charged at Oran but Oran moved in time and the guard flew into the flames. Before the guard's pants went on flames, Oliver snatched the keys out of his pocket by his mouth. Coincidentally, a fire extinguisher was right next to them and Oran blew out the flames and unlocked the doors.

Oran and Oliver rush up to the top of the mountain, Oran restocks on arrows and shields.

Now, Oran made it, Oran bursts open the door and the guard sprays fire on Oran, Oran uses his shield but it's made of wood so he throws it onto 2 guards and they are set to flames, 2 guards left. He takes 2 arrows and shoots down the other guards and throws his sword on the king, the king is still alive though, Oliver bites the king and that's the end of him. Oran and Oliver kept the jail unlock key and let everyone out of jail. After nearly a whole entire week, the town was back to its self, And Oran And Oliver were named as kings for the town.

Chuck And The Mountain of Immortality

Discovery Bay International School, Price, Harry – 10

Imagine a place where the sky is always blue, where valuable ores are as common as rocks, where clouds cover mountains like a blanket: well, this is a story about that place.

Chuck wandered through the emerald forest. The swirling, swift winds ran past the endless mystical mountains. As he was walking along, Chuck spotted a sapphire river gently strolling across a wide open field. Chuck looked above himself and could just about see a pedestal holding a scroll. He knew that, if he obtained that scroll, Chuck Could take on any adventure no matter how dangerous it was.

He puffed out his chest and turned his hands into fists and marched to the mountain like a giant spike on the ground. Chuck trembled slightly just thinking walking all the way up the mountain rising like a giant spike from the ground, but was determined to finish this impossible climb, so he started to walk.

Chuck found a flat cliff to take a rest on, so he pulled a delicious juicy sandwich out of his bag and had lunch. Suddenly, while he was eating, a strong breeze came along and blew thousands of leaves and almost looked like it was forming something... A bridge! Chuck stared at the leaf-bridge in awe. It lead straight to the top of this humongous mountain. Still in shock, he approached the bridge and was ready for anything to come...

The Story of Li Bai

Discovery Bay International School, Righetto, Naima – 11

Once there was a young boy called Li Bai. He lived in a village that was in a magical place called Misty Mountains. The mountains were beautiful with floating clouds all around them. Li Bai would always sit on top of the mountains and write poems while he admired the lovely view. He loved the village, its community and the mountains all around: he would always write poems and draw pictures of those mountains.

One day Li Bai's mother told him that they were going to move to town and that he will be in a new school and in a new community. Li Bai didn't want to move, he really liked the nature and he would have missed those mountains very much. He wanted to stay where he was and not move, but they had to go so the following morning they moved into town. At first Li Bai was not happy but then, as he got used to his new life, school and community, he started to enjoy and he made new friends.

After a couple of years, when Li Bai was an adult, he decided to go back to the mountains and live there. When he arrived he recognised his community and all his old friends. This made Li Bai very happy because he missed his village immensely. Li Bai continued writing poems and drawing pictures on top of the mountains. Then one day, when Li Bai was writing his poem, a man came. The man had a white beard and looked very old, but Li Bai recognised him: he was a famous poet called Du Fu.

Du Fu asked Li Bai if he could read one of his poems, Li Bai was happy and gave the poem to the man. The man read it very slowly and said to Li Bai that he did a great job and that he should publish his work. Li Bai thanked the man and went back home. The next day Li Bai published his poem. Many people enjoyed reading his beautiful words and they asked Li Bai to write more and more poems. Li Bai became a very famous poet and he continued living in Misty Mountains and writing poems all his life.

Fighting for Life!

Discovery Bay International School, Song, Yuqing – 9

Imagine a world where the wind howls like a ghost, where flashing, bright lightning crashes into the misty, foggy sea, where a single cave is waiting to be explored: this is a story about that place.

Jisu continued to trudge along the sandy path. She had been trying to climb this mountain for days, but still no luck. The sky was pitch black now as if someone had painted it. A mountain melted into the darkness. She marvelled at the pale wandering rivers, but there was no time to waste. She had to get up there, or else her family would be dead...

Cautiously, Jisu knelt down and began to crawl along the cliffside. Shivering, she took out her torch with trembling hands. Shining her way through the dark, she could feel a shiver of excitement rising in her. Would she make it? Hopefully, a small voice in her brain answered.

Climbing up the crooked, old stairs, Jisu saw a misty, glimmering shimmer of gold. Reaching out to grab it, she accidentally tripped on a stone and stumbled into the darkness. Felling the cave all around her, she knew adventure was in her path.

The Journey

Discovery Bay International School, Straub, Alaska – 11

The landscape is beautiful. Lush, green verdant valleys, few animals could survive in this arid place. The valley is parched. The leaves, sun-baked, brown and crispy. It was blinding, it was so high up that it felt as if you could touch the sun. There were rolling hills, one after another. There was one lonely house standing on the bleak hill top surrounded by undulating hills. Within the distance there was fog that was being windswept away. The beautiful land had a craggy coastline in the shape of a circle. The land was rugged, you had to be careful where to step.

One day a man named Ho, decided to take on the challenge to hike the Yellow mountains. Ho was from China, as a child he had heard that the mountains were so mysterious and magical, some of the peaks were floating well above the clouds. He just had to see it with his own eyes. One day, he went to a souvenir shop and found a map to guide him to the mysterious place. Sometimes when people go in, they never come back out, he was warned. Ho travelled to Huangshan, China anyway. Which was the start of his life changing journey.

The very next day he woke up to a beautiful sunrise, ate breakfast and set out on his journey. When Ho got to the very bottom of the yellow mountains his jaw hit the floor! He couldn't even see the top of the yellow mountains as they were so high. He was just about to turn away but there was a large group of people cheering him on. Go on, they cheered repeatedly. One person from the crowd started making his way towards Ho. He had a very long and skinny beard with an unusually long yellow robe. How weird he thought. The man started walking closer. Ho was scared, the strange man put his hands together and bowed down. Ho stepped back, the man opened his mouth and whispered "I am the Chinese Emperor, you must obey me. The people who try to go up there never return." Ho gulped, he wanted to say something but he couldn't speak. The Chinese Emperor looked up and said "Good luck" and tapped Ho on his back and walked away. The crowd was making space for him.

So he started his long journey. As Ho was going up he started to slow down, he had already been hiking for two whole hours. Ho was exhausted and tired, cold and hot at the same time. Although he had only just begun, he felt as if he had been going for many days already. The more he climbed, the more tired he became. Ho was hot, hungry, and exhausted, he had to stop for a break. Ho was surprised that he had made it this far before stopping. He was EXHAUSTED!

After his break he turned around to continue on his journey and bumped right into the strange man he had seen at the bottom of the yellow mountains. Ho was shocked, he asked "How did you get here so fast?" The strange man replied, "Timmy took me." Ho was confused, and asked "Who's Timmy? But before the man could answer Ho's question he was already gone! Before Ho could even get his backpack on he heard a really loud whistle! He rushed ahead to see where the sound was coming from. He got to where he thought he had heard the noise, but nothing was there.

Ho was already scared, now he was petrified! He wondered if it was his imagination. He found a tuft of hair on the ground. He picked it up and examined it. It was red and orange, bushy like a lion's mane. He put it in his bag surreptitiously. And looked around to make sure no one was looking and carried on. He walked for hours, it was getting late. He found a cave and took out his torch and walked in the cave slowly. He wanted to rest, so he closed his eyes and drifted off to sleep. The next morning he woke up to the most breathtaking view ever! He screamed, "How on Earth did I get here?" He was on top of a hanging bridge! His legs were jelly!

Ho layed back down, closing his eyes tightly, hoping it was all just a dream. Ho tried to recall how he got to the bridge in the first place. He was feeling groggy and uncomfortable so he moved and saw something zoom above him in the sky! He realized it was a dragon! He was so startled that he fell from the bridge. He felt as he had been falling for minutes, when suddenly he stopped! He saw what looked like the tuft of hair he had seen earlier in his journey. That's when he realised realized that he was on a dragon! He was relieved, but thought it was weird that the dragon had saved him from falling from the bridge. A mysterious, floating, haunted bridge he whispered "Thank You."

Ho was confused, he immediately thought back to the events of the day. From the encounter with the strange man with the long and skinny beard, the one who called himself the Chinese Emperor and the thought occurred to him, he said to the dragon “Are you Timmy?” With that, a red tornado swirling fast and floating down from the sky appeared. The dragon vanished and the Chinese Emperor appeared! Ho didn’t know if he should be relieved or terrified, all he knew was that he wanted nothing more than to go home.

A Perfectly Normal Story

Discovery Bay International School, Watson, Jamie – 10

Mountains flourished the land, as far as the eye can see. They just stood there, overwatching the rest of the forest. Vegetation extended over the lush, green landscape, on mountains, rivers and plains.

“Wow”, mumbled Callisto, his eyes dazzling with amazement,

“I know right?” said Amber

“You’ve been here before?”

“Yep, a couple of times with my dad when I was younger”.

“And we’re looking for some treasure that you’ve always been weirdly desiring?”

“Hey! It’s not a weird obsession”

“Ok, you do you”

Together, they walked into the midst of the mountains, letting nature engulf them like a blanket.

“Are we there yet?” Callisto whined “I’m so tired!”, “no, not even close. Hey, but look on the bright side. we’re approaching dragonfly lake.” said Amber,

“Uhhh!” replied Callisto

As they were arguing, a blue smudge appeared in the distance. as it grew larger, it became a breathtaking and perplexing lake, hidden amongst the dense fog that encased the water. Both Callisto and Amber were dazzled with bewilderment as if they just saw a cow fly. Now reader, although this lake may seem amazing, there’s one secret it’s been hiding.

As both our characters were stunned, the trees started dancing to the rhythm of the wind. the water rippled cautiously and swiftly across the lake, as a colossal shadow rose up from the body of water, gazing down on our dear friends.

In a second, both Callisto and Amber were dashing to safety, running for their lives. The creature, a giant multi-headed snake, lunged towards Amber. Mouths open wide, claws stretching out, and body at full length, there was no way she would make it out alive. Callisto watched in horror as his friend was now In the belly of the hydra.

“Quickly, let’s go” whispered the bush. “huh?” said Callisto very intelligently. “Psst, it’s me, Amber. Let’s go”.

Callisto, as stealthily as possible, rushed into a withered bush and popped out the other side into a giant cave.

Limestone lined the walls and Callisto heard a rushing river nearby and spotted luminescent algae scattered across the cave. It was beautiful. Our friends were safe at last.

“Hello!? hello!?” Callisto shouted as an echo filled the cave. it was so loud it shook the earth around them. “Now that’s a big echo” ”uh, I don’t think that’s an echo” said Amber

”What do you mean?”

”I think we should get out of here, and quick”

The cave started to rumble, stalactites were falling from the roof, dropping down on Callisto and Amber. Just in the nick of time, Callisto took something out of his pocket. It was bronze and the size of a tennis ball. He faced it towards the falling stalactites. The grey disc unfolded and the sound of gears crackled and echoed through the cave. What was a small disc, was now some sort of giant plate. It was a shield. “What?! Why do you have that?” whispered Amber

“Who doesn’t bring a portable shield on a supposedly normal hiking trip that turns out to be certain death? Plus, better to be safe than sorry,” replied Callisto.

“Never mind”

“Roar” moaned something in the distance

“Here we go again,” said Amber, annoyed “run!”

Both of our friends ran towards the cave entrance, towards the sunlight, towards freedom. Rocks tumbled down from the ceiling, blocking the exit to the open world.

“What do we do now? Run the other way?” suggested Callisto

“Yes” shouted Amber. They ran, knowing if they weren’t fast enough, they might not make it out alive.

Even though our friends were exhausted and in shock, arms drooping, legs limping, they still had hoped they'd make it out. "There!" shouted Callisto, gasping, "An opening". Together, they ran towards the exit. 10 meters, 5 meters, 3 meters, they were so close, yet the voice booming from behind seemed to get further away. With relief, They both popped out the opening. Whatever was chasing them, was afraid of something. "FINALLY!" yelled Amber with a lack of energy, "we're safe now!" "uhhh, I don't think so," said Callisto. As they turned around, the moon and stars gleamed in their faces, blinding them for a few seconds. Our friends quickly adapted to the light and what amber saw, made her shriek in terror. "What?! What's that?" she screamed
"I think... I think it's Human bones" responded Callisto. "a graveyard of human bones"

Both looked petrified from the horrible sight (especially Amber, who was totally freaking out).

"Hey look, up there," Said Amber, " It's the treasure"

"Oh, and look over there, It's a bunch of intimidating skeleton warriors, with razor-sharp swords and menacing bows," said Callisto

"Somewhat?!"

"Skeleton warriors"

As Amber looked to her left, there was an army of skeleton warriors, equipped with swords and bows. About 10 to 16 of them.

"RUN!" they shouted in unison.

Our friends both ran in opposite directions, shouting and screaming for help.

"Get up the hill, we'll be safe up there!" shouted Amber, "plus, the treasure's up there!"

The skeletal warriors ran after them, with their spine-chilling, bone crackling noise.

Callisto ran without arguing and was scared out of his mind, with adrenaline filling his body. Arrows whizzed past and distant bones crackled from behind. The hill was right in front of him. An arrow hit him in the shoulder and Callisto yelped in pain. So close. He no longer could hear any bones And as he got up the final boulder, the treasure was right in front of him. Amber was sitting next to it. The chest was gold and studded with precious gems. it looked amazing, especially with the orange sunset behind.

"You ready to open it?" said Amber

"Ya" replied Callisto

And Amber opened the chest, and it gleamed so bright, it blinded them for a few seconds.

"Whoa!" said Amber "it's amazing!"

"What?" questioned Callisto

But once he looked down, he regretted everything...

It was a PINK iPhone 12 pro max phone case spotted with gems

Mystical Mountains

Discovery Bay International School, Wilson, Oliver – 11

Story...

Welcome to the world, Little Nico

I was born on February 16th, 1876. We lived in the Philippines, Sagada. I remember having a happy life there, growing up surrounded by animals. Being raised with as much care, love and attention as I could have ever wished for. It was, and should have been that way for my whole life. I wanted to stay there, forever. But of course, fate just couldn't let that happen. The US declared war due to illegal and unseen trades between us and other countries, violating so security protocol. Of course, I didn't know this at the time – it was simply described to me as 'people being unfair to each other.' Soon, it became clear to us that it was unsafe and dangerous to be around. Villages nearby had been bombed, thousands had died and we were lucky to be alive. So we immediately took the chance to escape.

China

Within the first week, we had adapted to the place. Our village contained small concrete huts with straw roofs and a small storage underground. My family and I ran out of food. Our father didn't have a job, and therefore weren't earning money. We hurriedly rattled out, bombarding the village people with queries for recommendations, and came back empty-handed. Our neighbours grew concerned. I had noticed earlier, people had turned away and watched noisily from the safety of their huts. By the end of the week, we were helpless. Famished after a long, distressed day, we plowed through the last of our foods and simply did nothing for hours on end. We were afraid to go out, afraid of our destiny. Our last chance of survival, our only hope was to take it to the Mountains.

The Highland Mountains

We left during Winter, snow covering the land as far as the eye could see, like slick, white icing encrusted on a cake. Trekking up the rolling hills, our problem soon became clear. The temperature dropped shockingly low at dusk, freezing our numbing feet. Our gloves no longer offered protection, but there was no chance of returning. We were on our own now, in the wild. The little food we had left was consumed, nothing left to eat but berries and nuts fallen from the leafless trees. The fluffy white snow began to daze my sight, seeing things I wished were there. Once, I remember a sudden chill froze me to the bone as I looked around, and saw nobody. I collapsed: afraid, shaky, alone. Everybody had gone.

Whenever I ask him, what happened next, I would get the same old answer.

"Nobody knows what happened to Little Nico," he would say "He is as small as an ant on a huge mountain. A beautiful prison of illusion."

No matter how much I longed for an answer, nothing would change. Nobody knows what happened to Nico, and nobody ever will.

Mountain to Heaven

Discovery Bay International School, Wong, Liann – 10

Imagine a place where mountains rise, where no danger comes, where celestial mist floats around the ancient mountains: this is a story about that place.

Cindy stood at the foot of the majestic mountain. The trees were as slender as snakes, the turquoise blue river pulled itself across the silent green hills and she heard a tiny bird tweeting its song out in the hazy sky. Cindy stared up at the monstrous mountains, they looked like a terrible giant's teeth rising above the ground. She could just about see a beautiful temple at the peak. She knew getting up there to see the emperor was the last chance of saving her village.

Her legs trembled as a nervous drop of sweat slid down her cheeks. Rolling up her sleeves, Cindy took a deep breath. Making her hands into fists, she straightened her back and marched with pride up to the rushing river where she stopped.

She thought about how she will make it across. Just then, Cindy saw a mysterious bamboo lying on the rocky ground. She picked it up and to her amazement, the bamboo lit up like a lantern. She gave it a mighty swing and the bamboo got wider and wider until it formed a bridge! Cindy was shocked but she knew there was no time to lose, and strolled into the unknown jungle...

The Majestic Mountains of Huangshan

Dulwich College Beijing, Hu, Benita

Do you know about the stunningly beautiful Huangshan mountains? These mountains in Anhui hold up many villages and are covered by thick forest. Huangshan mountains are also called the Yellow mountain since the place was named again after the great Yellow Emperor also known as the Huang Di in about 747 AD. But before it was renamed, the mountains were called Yishan / Mount Yi. However, Yishan in Chinese means a black mountain, and Huangshan in English is Yellow mountain, these mountains were neither black nor yellow. These mountains were also known as Tianzi Du, which means the heavenly son's (emperor's) capital city and captures its character more precisely.

Huangshan mountains are famous for its beautiful scenery, strange, shaped peaks, pine trees, hot springs, snow, and the clouds floating all around the place. The stone steps in Huangshan are over 60,000 steps throughout the place. No one knows how old Huangshan's stone steps are, but some say the pine trees might be about 1,500 years old, and the stone steps might be just as antique. Huangshan mountains are also treasure houses of plants. Do you know that more than 300 medical herbs can be found there? These mountains also appeared in some modern works. James Cameron, a director said that Huangshan was one of his greatest influences while making one of his famous movies: Avatar. *Stitch and Ai*, a spin-off film of *Lilo and Stitch* from Disney is also shot on location of beautiful scenery of Huangshan mountains.

Huangshan mountains have some most beautiful sceneries in China. 'View from stone monkey gazing at the sea of clouds' is one of the most famous place among them. It has dense, green trees packed around it, and seas of clouds floating around it. A piece of monkey-like rock, looming into the clouds and the edge of the cliff as if observing the sea (that are the clouds) gives the place the name of 'View from stone monkey gazing at the sea of clouds'. Many people also like to arrive extra early to see the beautiful sunrises that looks like half of an orange ball, appearing in the middle of the horizon, making the mountains look shady and shy. Another famous peak is the Feilai peak. This peak is a good place to looking up sky as blue as the ocean, and there is another strange rock sticking out off the cliff and makes you heart stirring when looking from the foot of the rock. The stones scattered everywhere around the peak resemble the images of magic animals such as dragon soaring above the sky and stampeding elephant.

Huangshan mountains are also famous for its footprints in history. From the Tang dynasty, all the way to the end of the Qing dynasty, more than 20,000 poems and ink drawings were made about the beautiful mountain sceneries of Huangshan. One of the most famous travelers amazed by the beautiful sight of Huangshan was Xu Xiake, a geologist and a literalist in Ming dynasty. Xu Xiake was amazed by the glamorous mountains in Huangshan and made the famous speech of “五岳归来不看山，黄山归来不看岳。” which means: “You don't need to visit any mountains after visiting the 'Five great mountains' and you don't need to visit the 'Five great mountains' after visiting Huangshan.” The 'Five great mountains' are known as the most famous mountains with good view in China, but in Xu Xiake's opinion Huangshan is even better than the 'Five great mountains.' Such an appraisal inspired many other travelers to come visit Huangshan.

In 1983, the government in Anhui changed the name Taiping county to Huangshan and set it up as a county-level city. In 1987, the cities in Tunxi and Huangshan were combined too. In now days, Huangshan is also famous for its special local cuisine called the Anhui cuisine. A lot of food in this cuisine come from areas of mountains. Some white and soft bamboos on Huangshan can be cooked into many delicious meals, and the mushrooms that grow on the mountains of Huangshan can be very tasty too. The Anhui cuisines are often made by braising, steaming, and stewing unlike sautéing and frying, and usually taste either salty or spicy. Some examples of famous dishes are bamboo shoots cooked with sausage with dried mushroom, royal pot (or Yipin Guo), salted mandarin fish, Li Hongzhang hotchpotch, Huangshan braised pigeon, and there are many more delicious foods. Many traditional foods in Anhui have bamboos, but among all of them, a famous food called Wenzheng hill is the most delicious. People say that the royal pot dish was created by Mrs. Yu, who was the wife of the minister of justice. one day, the emperor decided to pay a visit to their house, so Mrs. Yu decided to make a very special dinner for the emperor, and when the emperor found out how delicious this dish was, he was so satisfied, he even gave it a name: the royal pot. The salted mandarin fish is known for its stench. It uses fish caught from the local river, then salted, and braised with soy sauce, and

bamboos; it is rather stinky yet delicious. The Li Hongzhang hotpot was named after the famous politician in Anhui – Li Hongzhang. The story behind this is that Li Hongzhang visited the United States, and he went to a special banquet, and ordered a special stew, its ingredients including: sea cucumber, squid, tofu, ham, chicken, and more, this dish was so delicious, it was passed down to be a delicious and famous dish.

The beautiful mountains of Huangshan have caught thousands of people's attention, but would you go to this beautiful mountain next time for your holidays?

Sky's Story

Dulwich College Beijing, Hu, Della

Sky stood at the base of the enormous mountain. She had seen many impressively large mountains before, but the Yellow Mountain was truly spectacular. The rocky surface of the mountain was concealed with enormous white clouds, obscuring her view. However, she could see glimpses of tall pine trees and rocky ledges throughout the misty veil of clouds. She felt her mind tugging her and tried to focus. But still, on the memories came, taking her to the world of before.

Her village had been badly terrorized by a dragon for ages. One day, it had attacked Sky's brother. Sky had been devastated, all she wanted was to kill the dragon and protect the people she loved. An old and wise man told her that the dragon lived at the top of the Yellow Mountain, in the mysterious amber cave. Now gazing at the towering mountain, her heart went pitter-patter, and she felt icy claws gripping her chest. She just wasn't ready yet, and the mountain looked impressively well... scary. But Sky couldn't back down now. Not when everyone was counting on her. So, she took a deep breath and began to climb the mountain.

As soon as she had started climbing, she realized just how beautiful Yellow Mountain was, the sounds and sights of Yellow Mountain were equally amazing. Yellow Mountain was home to thousands of animals, from the Dusky Thrush to the Tibetan Rosefinch. Also, ancient pine trees and waterfalls with crystal-clear surfaces were common sights here. It was spring, so gorgeous blossoms and heart-shaped leaves gracefully danced in the gentle breeze.

Once Sky had made it past the first section of cliffs, she felt confident about climbing. But when she was getting ready to climb the twisting mountain path beyond, she heard a noise. It was like crackling branches being snapped. No, wait that was the sound of footsteps, coming nearer, and nearer and nearer still. Sky held her breath, as the branches in front of her snapped and a face poked through.

It was a tiger. A snow-white tiger with black stripes and menacing gold eyes. As soon as the tiger saw Sky, it growled and shape-shifted into a man!

"Who are you, and what are you doing in my territory?" The man glared at Sky through steely gray eyes, and his voice was low and raspy.

"I am Sky, and I have come to slay the Ruby Dragon." Sky said bravely.

The man snorted: "You? You skinny little thing, you want to kill the dragon? Green Dragon and Rose Finch would laugh hard at this."

Sky's eyes stretched wide. "Green Dragon and Rose Finch? Then you must be White Tiger, one of the ancient four pillar gods!"

White Tiger snorted again. "You want the clue to how to kill the dragon?"

Sky nodded eagerly, "Yes I do!" White Tiger laughed, "Then, you have to fight me."

Sky felt a course of fear seep through her veins. How could she compete with fighting a god? Sky said yes eventually, thinking of her purpose to come here.

"Ok, I will fight you."

White Tiger dropped back into Tiger form and paced towards Sky. Sky's heart was racing but she kept her cool. Ok, White Tiger is too powerful by strength and fighting abilities. So, I'll have to battle him using by smarts. Just as she thought that, White Tiger charged. Sky quickly side-stepped and delivered a series of karate kicks. White Tiger lost his balance and fell hard onto the ground. Then, while he was winded and unable to stand, she tackled him and pinned him to the ground.

As White Tiger panted, wheezed and gasped for breath, Sky stood by him, her breath coming out in little puffs, her head spinning as she thought about what she just did. She had beaten a god!

Just as she thought, White Tiger recovered himself and said something elusively: “When the time comes, the greatest weapon will be in front of you.”

Then he gave Sky a pouch and said: “This is your pet. Use it wisely.”

Eager to find out what her pet was, Sky bowed and muttered a thank you, then left and enthusiastically opened the pouch. A knobby, brown mushroom popped out. Oh my god! All the pets in the world and I get a mushroom? Just when she was thinking, a beautiful phoenix with red and gold sparkling feathers whooshed past.

“Wow!” Sky had breathed and watched the phoenix fly back in the direction it had come. It landed on the floor and turned into a beautiful woman with braided hair and wearing a sparkling, jeweled robe.

“Darling, you have just met White Tiger. Now, you are meeting me, Rose Finch.”

Sky tensed her muscles, ready for another battle.

To her surprise, Rose Finch smiled: “You have proved yourself to be a truly worthy warrior. You shall be teleported to the dragon’s cave right now.”

Before Sky could react, she was at the entrance to the Amber Caves. Slowly, she took a deep breath, and stepped inside.

All of a sudden, a tail caught her and she fell, sprawling onto the floor. Then, she dared to look up. A fifty feet tall dragon was standing in front of her with piercing eyes, and emerald scales. Sky stood up and shot a jet of gold at the dragon. She could only watch in horror as the dragon waved the magic away, unharmed. Quickly, Sky shot more jets, she threw daggers, swords, even arrows! But nothing harmed the dragon. He fought back, breathing out flames and roaring. Sky tried all her old tricks, feinting, dodging and leaping, but nothing fooled the dragon. Just when Sky was on the edge of her last breath, the mushroom toppled out of her bag. It turned into a dragon claw, sharp and six inches long. Sky stared at the claw. White Tigers words came back to her. When the time comes, the greatest weapon will be in front of you. In front of you, in front of you, that was it! The dragon’s scales were powerful, but so was his claws! So, if she pierced his scales with his claws, the dragon might die! Quickly, she picked up the claw and pierced the dragon’s heart. Slowly, Sky watched in amazement as the dragon disintegrated into dust.

Thirty years after...

“And then, I returned home to my village and we were never afraid of another dragon.” Sky told the crowd.

She was sitting at the base of Yellow Mountain and was telling everyone her heroic tale, basking in the sunshine and applause of the crowd. Sky looked up at the mountain and smiled to herself. Yellow Mountain was like her home now. She visited it yearly and the mysterious mountain didn’t seem that scary anymore. Instead, it looked welcoming and friendly.

The Hidden Elixir

Dulwich College Beijing, Lee, Damien

Sitting on the couch in their house, Dominic and his brother Stefanos stared at the laptop, reluctantly trying to focus on the online Chinese lesson.

“I hate online lessons!” sighed Dominic.

“I hate Covid-19 even more!” Stefanos replied in low spirits.

They were learning about the Tang Dynasty poet Li Bai and his famous poem <Invitation to Wine>.

“Do you not see the Yellow River come from the sky,
Rushing into a sea, never coming back...”

As the sound of the class lowered, their eyelids drooped, and complete darkness overwhelmed them.

Suddenly, the sound of hearty laughter and the tinkling of cups woke them up. Their jaws dropped in astonishment.

In front of them was a tall man in a snow-white robe with his silk-black hair in a bun and his long beard waving in the breeze. He was chuckling to some friends next to a giant rock etched with the words ‘Drunken Stone.’ Each of them held a brush dipped with black ink and delicately wrote words.

The boys turned their gaze. Mist flowed around jagged mountains; peculiar-shaped boulders rested on giant-like cliffs, seemingly moving in the piercing sunlight. Colourful birds chirped and tweeted, perched on an umbrella-shaped ancient pine tree. A glistening river wove its way throughout the lush-green forest.

Dominic mumbled, “We must have travelled back in time to the Tang Dynasty because that man in white matches pictures of Li Bai perfectly!”

Dominic jogged up to the poet, “Sorry to interrupt, but are you Li Bai?”

The poet replied, “Indeed, I am. Who are you, and what brings you to Huangshan?”

“I’m Dominic. This is Stefanos.”

“What a weird name! Are you from the West? Anyways, drink some wine, while I’ll perform <Invitation to Wine>!”

Dominic gasped, “No thanks; I’m only nine years old. It’s illegal to drink alcohol as a child!”

“Well, then, drink some tea!” Li Bai shook his head, laughing.

When he stopped laughing, Li Bai noticed the disheartened look on the boys’ faces, “You look depressed!”

With a weary smile, Stefanos told Li Bai about the pandemic. People were getting infected and dying every day, and it had forced schools to shift to online learning.

Much to the boys’ surprise, Li Bai sipped some wine and told the boys that pandemics raged around in the Tang Dynasty quite often.

“I have a friend named Sun Si-Miao, known as the ‘King of Medicine’. Once, he told me a secret. On the crest of Huangshan, there is a rock named the ‘Flying Stone.’ On its tip, rests a golden elixir, which can cure any epidemic. Thousands of years ago, our ancient ruler, Yellow Emperor, spent 480 years making alchemy here. When he refined pills of immortality successfully, he ascended to Heaven from the ‘Flying Stone’ and left an elixir in case a disease threatened to wipe out humankind.” said Li Bai, a wide grin on his face, “However, you must complete three tasks to get the elixir!”

Without any hesitation, the boys expressed their gratitude and set off for the 'Flying Stone.'

Once they arrived, they saw a small item on the tip of the precipitous rock, shimmering as if the sunlight itself was emanating from the elixir. As Stefanos reached out for it, a door suddenly appeared.

Dominic grabbed the doorknob, revealing a dark room with ominous words carved on the ceiling: Invitation to Wine, recite it or die...

"This must be the first task!" murmured Stefanos, trying to think the words Li Bai recited earlier and the verse he learned during the online lesson.

Suddenly, he shouted,
"Do you not see the Yellow River come from the sky,
Rushing into a sea, never coming back?
Do you not see the mirrors bright in chambers high
Grieve over your snow-white hair though once it was silk-black..."

The verse flowed around the boys with a hidden magic, while a mysterious light flashed, forming shadows around the room. When the words were finished, the room plunged into a total darkness. Moments later, the boys found themselves transported to a mountain peak.

A sinister laugh startled the boys. A three headed man with six arms stood in front of them. Each hand held a razor-sharp weapon and he seemed more beast-like than human.

Suddenly, an arrow whizzed past Dominic, "I am the elixir's guardian. You must defeat me to get through!"

Stefanos threw himself forward, ducking and weaving around. Dominic soon understood: The guardian had power, but no speed; Stefanos was distracting him so that Dominic could throw the man off the cliff! Creeping up from behind, Dominic grabbed the man with all his might and threw him into the bottomless chasm.

The boys then headed up to the massive cliff for the final task. Tiny crevices covered the rocks, but the cliff was at least two hundred meters tall, without any rocks to hold on to.

Looking around desperately, Dominic soon spotted a tangled mass of vines on his right. He raced to the clump, pulled out vines, and began to tie the constrictor's knot. Throwing the vine onto the cliff, Dominic used the end of it to catch a tiny fissure, and slowly hauled himself to the top.

"Stefanos!" he called, "Come up! The vine is secure!"

Stefanos nodded and began climbing, but as he had almost reached the top, his foot stumbled. He lost his grip. Just as Stefanos thought he would plummet to death, Dominic leaped forward, grabbing Stefanos's hand.

With a trembling hand, Dominic reached out for the sparkling elixir...

Then, with a flash of golden light, the boys were back home.

"Beep..." BBC and CNN apps were beeping vigorously.

"The COVID-19 vaccine trial was successful!" Stefanos whooped with delight while Dominic jumped in exuberance.

Was the adventure pure luck? Was the vaccine success purely coincidental? Or was the supposed-dream true? All the boys knew was that Covid-19 would not kill as many people as it once did, and all the children could go back to school soon!

Ming Chang, the God of Huang Shan

Dulwich College Beijing, Lee, Ella

Long ago, even longer before when human beings were alive, Ming Chang shot up to a place called the Huang Shan mountains located in Eastern China. He was quite young, about 25 years old when he first appeared. Ming had a really silky beard, black as coal. However, he was as tall as people who we know as. He wanted to hide the fact that he was a god. Ming was also a demigod of the wind and Huang Shan mountains. He wore clothing with two detailed Chinese dragons and they looked like as if they were soon going to appear right up and blast fire balls all across Ming. On his clothing was also wore detailed designs that were similar to the third-dimension drawings we draw. He resembled to a successful person who will soon make a huge improvement to China's mountain, Huang Shan.

As Ming's age increased, he made human figures with clay and soil drying them with wind and making the shapes up inside with rocks. The people were sprinkled by special magical dust that gifted lives to the clay figurers. Each person reproduced themselves one time no matter they were men or women, children, or grandma grandpa. Ming made them look much like gods and having two arms and two legs with hair and toes and fingers. There were different types of faces and people. They were all distinct. They were all special. They were all gifted. Before, there were not a single tree or plant. Of course, animals were far away from being alive. Ming's talented people who were skilled at crafting, learning and the ability to hold up heavy objects.

The people were especially strong and they started building all the wonders we see with their own hands, crafting everything and planning them peacefully with the coworkers who took out their wonderfully designed plans, their muscles were very strong and thick, born with those features, they were able to do things easily. We now use cranes and technology but, in those days, hands were the only option. They ticked out lists that they have already done and it created the Huang Shan mountains. Hard working and loyal people were not lazy even one bit. People in the tribe was respectful to the gods and gods rewarded them with more happiness and special powers. They always had tasty and yummy food to eat, the right temperature to work and the plans were successful with luck. As Ming saw everything from far above, he was extremely satisfied and cheerful inside his heart, He thought the people were like family to him.

There were not any massive fights and discrimination between people and a perfect person named Lu Kang became the chief and director of the tribe. He was specially told by Ming to go and rule those people. He ordered people to make the mountains more beautiful with true heart. They did not act lazily and they listened carefully to what Ming told them to do. They did their best on everything. He was not evil at all and he did not order every one of his people to follow the rules he made. If he did, he followed them himself together with his people. He was more like a peaceful person who never wanted any fights and wanted to gift people with freedom, justice, and joy.

One part of the wonderful group managed to put the large humungous stone on top of each other to make the three famous peaks of Huang Shan; The Lotus, Bright, and Celestial peak. The Lotus peak was the tallest of them all. When it rained, the views were the best of all time, filled with smells of a forest blended with pretty auroras in the night sky. On Bright Peak, the second most tall peak, there is the actual view of Huang Shan mountain. Last but not least, on Celestial peak, people were able to wonder in the stone house where 10 people fitted in at a time. As time ticked by and the chief died. His one and only son Ling Kang became the admirable chief.

At his living time, more things were created and the people in the tribe made a Welcome Pine. They made two arm-like branches hanging out from the old tree looking like as if it was greeting people who came to the Huang Shan mountains. Soon, they planted more pine and other types of trees. Soon, flowers and grass grew from the fertilized land. The plants made a relaxing, wonderful, calm smell vibrating across the whole mountain. Animals stepped on land as Ming created them the same way he did to humans. As soon as the cute adorable animals were made, Ming made insects that pollinated flowers and killed harmful substances. With pride, generations passed and soon, the tribe was never to be seen again in Huang Shan. There were only houses left but the traces of them were even harder to find a needle in a desert.

Nowadays, you are able to see more sights built by our generation of people. We might be ancestors of those people made by Ming Chang! We have made Xi Hai Grand Canyon through years of hard work just like those tribes. It is a wonderful scenery just like the others in Huang Shan mountains. Ming is long forgotten between people even if he and others created Huang Shan. As this story is told to many others, Ming Chang would soon recover his fame and keep on being remembered after all those hard works he has been through with his clay tribe. The scenery is extremely pretty and that makes the wonderful features of Huang Shan. After all of these wonderful and extreme work, Ming Chang became the demigod of the wind. Huang Shan mountains and more importantly, human beings. He gave luck to kind people and nothing to criminals and bad ones. He made them know what they have done

wrong a Shan and what to do next time. The good people were blessed by Ming Chang. Ming Chang kept on saving the feeling of Huang Shan mountains. He is now working harder to make some more new things with his new group of tribes.

Endless Game –The Adventure of Yellow Mountain

Dulwich College Beijing, Li, Gavin

As the vivid morning light flickered through the mist, Oliver, Elijah and James were together in arcade game center at the corner of a street, smiling ear to ear. Oliver, Elijah and James were working at school all week. However, it was the winter holiday. They were filled with excitement. Early as it was, the chilly wind whistled through the boys' ears like a sad, sad, song. James pulled up his hoodie to cover his ears. Only the clerk was sitting in the dark—brown front desk made of oak, looking at his phone leisurely. Suddenly, the boys started to argue fiercely about which game to play. After arguing, they finally decided on the “Endless Game.” The screen, one meter tall and thirty centimeters wide, sat firmly on the wall, with a black screen when not powered. The hole to insert coins into game was shaped like a pine nut. The teenaged boys tried to turn on the screen, but it didn't work. After minutes and minutes of trying, James was fed up. He started banging and hitting the joysticks. At last, it worked, however, it only said, “mission incomplete.” At that moment, the boys started to feel strange. They felt like if they were slowly being lifted into the air.

“What's happening?” cried James, annoyed.

“Maybe it was broken after you kicked it,” replied Elijah but Oliver didn't say anything. He had a confused look on his face.

“Maybe it is taking us into the game to complete with missions!” exclaimed Oliver a few seconds later. In the meantime, the boys' bodies started to hollow out and turned green, disintegrating into powder and disappeared in the air. Quickly, the boys were sucked into the game one by one.

“I think that I have a headache!” called Oliver. Then, a rectangular machine as big as a child's hand appeared in front of him. He tried his best to grab onto it. Maybe this will be useful throughout my trip, thought Oliver calmly.

“Look, there is this weird shield in front of me and it moves with me!” shouted back Elijah.

“Check this out, I can leap more than three meters!” James yelled back, simultaneously; he threw himself into the air. Twenty feet high, and four meters forward in one jump!

Oliver had the superpower of prediction and intelligence. Elijah had the ability activate protective shields. Lastly, James could jump farther and higher than all human beings in the game.

After that, the boys were teleported into the air and fell onto a green grassland. This was already predicted by Oliver after he checked his machine. Fortunately, no one was injured.

“Hey, the shield opened automatically, and you will float in the air one yard above the ground!” proclaimed Elijah proudly.

“I think I was here 3 years ago, when I was nine—year—old,” muttered James, as he looked at the unique, strong and evergreen fir trees, standing like soldiers on top of a peak.

“Me as well! This is the famous Yellow Mountain! It has towering peaks and stunning views. Its stones, clouds and fir trees are famous all over the world!” declared Elijah. Yellow mountain is 6,115 feet high and located in the south of the Anhui Province in China. It might take one month or longer to see all the sights!

Elijah tells the others to follow him and keep an eye out for danger. With a leap, James and the others flew to a very high place where there are rows of towering and jagged mountains.

The Misty Air

“Where are we?” asked James, shocked by the sunrise behind the mountain and the misty air.

“This is the best place I have ever been to!” muttered James under his breath.

“I think that we are on an observation deck. Check that out, it is the famous place in the Yellow Mountain called the Monkey Watching the Sea!” remarked Oliver pointing into the direction of a rock shaped like a monkey, looking down at the mountain range.

“Well, let's not just look at one view, let's go further up the mountain.” shouted Elijah. They are off again, higher and higher into the mountain.

Walking about half an hour, the boys can hardly see anything. The air was misty, the mountain was steep. They had to use their feet to feel if anything was below them. Sometimes they tripped, but they were determined to keep

going bravely. Fifteen minutes later, the boys can finally see clearly, then, they realized that they were above the floating clouds! They were overjoyed,

“Guys come and see this!” bellowed James. The sun was just in front of them, “Wow! This is amazing, I am going to take a photo of it,” cried Elijah, grabbing out his phone. The sky looked like if it had been painted red. The sun was round and big, it made all the people feel warm, comfortable and relaxed. They continued going farther and farther onto the trail.

Scarping Cliffs

“That was close!” Whispered Elijah, he was surrounded by rocks and mist. On closer inspection, the team was actually hanging from a cliff! The cliff was high enough to reach twenty feet. The boys didn’t dare to look down, they thought that they would faint.

“Yeah! We almost fell off the cliff and I am not able to jump in the air, but I grabbed the edge feebly,” replied James quite scared

“Well, guys, let’s keep going,” announced Oliver. They helped each other onto the cliff, dusting their clothes. Right at that moment, the earth trembled violently as if it had just been hit hard. After that, they heard an ear-shattering squeak.

Hurriedly Elijah peeked out at the cliff and shouted, “It’s groups of monkeys and they are all after us, run!”

The boys ran as fast as they could, but the monkeys seemed to catch up quickly. As fast as lightning, Oliver brainstormed about what they could do. He looked in all directions to see if anything could be helpful. Not long after, his face lit up in delight. He saw a small path that only a human could travel one at a time. It was a plank road built along the face of the cliff. However, if you fall, then you will not be able to get out of the game, prompted the machine in Oliver’s hand. Oliver’s heart pounded quicker and quicker, starting to have cold sweat. He wondered if his friends and him were able to get over the rock quickly. Right in front of him is a scarping slope and right behind him is groups of monkeys with sharp white teeth, ready to attack...

They had no time to waste, so Oliver, frowning, told the others to follow him. He and his friends jumped over the rock while the monkeys hit head-first into it with a “thump,” and then fell into the endless valley because of congestion. The boys then realized that it was not the end. A pile of steep steps with sharp edges was in front of them. It will be deadly if you fall vertically on the edge. Safely, Elijah’s shield activated without delay.

Prickly Fir Trees

The boys were so tired that they didn’t even have any strength to keep going. However, the Christmas feast back at home gave the boys confidence to enter the forest of fir trees. The sky suddenly turned black and lightning slid over the sky. Not long after, a green sign appeared. “This is the last level of the game, enter if you dare, this is also the boss level, BEWARE!” read Elijah out loud. Now, the boys’ excitement was gone again. The gang shivered with fear, they wished that they had chosen another game instead of this game. But what could whining and blaming each other do. All they now know is to enter the forest.

The forest has tall trees that can block the sunshine and some of the trees are over one thousand and fifty years old! Can you imagine how big and thick a tree is if you need five children to hug around it? It’s famous because of its unique shapes, some are shaped like soldiers, some are like playing Tai Chi and some are like clouds.

Elijah then activated his shield, but it also said, “three more you can use the shield.” Oliver’s brainpower was gone and James’ jumping power was the same with Elijah’s protective shield. Just when they entered, squirrels with red eyes appeared. They started jumping onto the boys, but, the squirrels were too slow for them. However, the squirrels had bigger plans...

“I think we have lost them!” shouted James but they heard noises in front of them clearer and clearer.

“Oh no!” cried Elijah, “another group of squirrels!”

Now, the boys were surrounded. They can’t run back because there are more squirrels around them. When things seemed hopeless, James came up with an idea. He whispered it to the others. Then, he shouted “Go!” Elijah activated his shield while James jumped into the squad of squirrels with the others grabbing onto his shirt. The squirrels tried to break the protective shield, but it just knocked them backwards. The boys dashed in and out of the squirrels, finally, they escaped. Victoriously, they completed the mission and got a golden pine nut.

“This is the thing to put into the controller!” James yelled excitedly.

Now, everyone realized their success with the hole in the machine, they cheered and high-fived each other in celebration. In that meantime, the boys’ bodies started to hollow out and turned green, disintegrating into powder and disappeared in the air.

Then, they were teleported back into the arcade game center. The boys had their mouth open when they realize how late they were back. Kids and adults were playing games in full swing and they didn't notice what had happened. After that, Elijah, James and Oliver walked quickly to the game they had just been sucked into that morning. Oliver then put the golden pine nut into the hole, which fit properly and easily.

"Guys, don't you remember the writing homework from school of landscapes? We can write down our experience from Yellow Mountain," mentioned Elijah.

What a good idea, what a good experience, what a good view, thought the boys.

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

Dulwich College Beijing, Lu, Nini

It all started there, at the airport, with Mr. Brown giving us instructions.

“Alright, class. We are going to have a photography competition. You can choose your own groups of four or five people, and we will head out into the mountains. This is also a survival course. It will test your knowledge about what you have learnt.”

“Robin, are you with me?” asked Holly. I nodded. Soon, Rachel and Sophie had joined our team.

We boarded a bus towards Huangshan, which meant the ‘Yellow mountains’ in Chinese. Once we arrived, Mr. Browns told us to take a camera from the box (two per team) and received a walkie-talkie which would tell Mr. Brown if they were in danger.

Our class arrived at the foot of the mountains rather quickly, and we were told to choose our own trail. Rachel, however, began acting strangely. “No, not that one. It looks too hard. Not that one either. Nope,” she said. And to think of it, Rachel was the most athletic girl in the class.

After a rather heated discussion, we took a trail in the woods the curved around the mountains. I noticed on top of one of the mountains, there were many people crowded around a strange looking stone.

Night began to fall, and Holly picked a spot where we would set up our tents. I set up mine with Holly, but it turned out that no one else had brought tents. Miraculously, we somehow managed to squeeze inside. But apparently Rachel had forgotten her sleeping bag...

I woke to light poring out of a gap in the tent. I quickly woke Holly and Sophie, and then I realized that Rachel was gone, along with a camera. Sophie argued that we should send the message for help, but that would put us all in trouble, so we decided to follow a trail of footprints.

We followed the footprints for a long time, abandoning the trail and heading into the thick undergrowth. But the footprints ended abruptly at the foot of a mountain. “She must have climbed up there,” stated Holly. I agreed, but I was very worried. Why would Rachel suddenly disappear? Furthermore, the stone on the top of the mountain that was there yesterday had vanished...

I told the others about the stone and we decided that it really was strange. Without hesitation, we headed up the slope, and came upon another trail carved out of the rock. Fortunately, the trail was not challenging, and we got to the top of the mountain. “Strange, it doesn’t look like the stone was moved,” Sophie commented, “There are no scrape marks.”

The sun shone directly above the three of us, showing that it was noon. But in fall, the sun would set earlier. “I’m sorry. There’s nothing to see here,” I apologized. After all, it was me who had led them here.

“It’s not your fault at all!” exclaimed Holly, “This gives us a very good mystery to solve. Two, in fact.”

“But this is less important...” I replied. But I was cut off by the sound of an ape running towards us. Somehow the ape felt special, there was something about it that I just couldn’t place.

“Hey, wait a second,” joked Sophie, “We need a picture of you for our competition!”

“I’m afraid that is not possible,” came a deep voice. Our heads all turned in surprise to find that the source was the ape.

“Umm...” murmured Holly, voicing the question that we all had in mind: ‘Can this ape really talk?’

Luckily for us, the ape turned out to be pretty good at explaining. He said that he was this stone and had come alive because there was someone threatening the whole mountain. He had been the protector of the mountains and was the monkey in a legend where he had loved a villager. “It is not true,” he claimed, “I needed an excuse to go to the village to release captured birds. That is why I can speak their language. But this time, someone new is threatening the wildlife here.”

“Ahem, excuse me?” I asked. I told the ape all about how Rachel was acting strangely and then disappeared. I also asked him if he could help us.

“Of course!” he gleefully exclaimed, “After all, who doesn’t like a good mystery now and then?”

We followed the ape and came to a cave. He explained that the birds had told him that they had seen a young girl walking alone. Deeper into the cave, I heard footsteps. “Rachel!” I shouted. But the face that turned back at me was not Rachel’s. It was someone unknown.

“I’ve been her imposter for so long and you didn’t even realize!” she scorned, “Now there is nothing you can do about it. I’ll capture so many wild birds and earn a fortune!”

“No, there is,” came a deep voice. I expected to see the ape, but instead, a firm-looking policeman towered over us. Then, remembering the ape’s ability to change form, I began to play with the act. So did Sophie and Holly.

The ape took the young girl and said not to move, he would be right back. After he returned, he said, “I handed her to the real police. They will deal with her appropriately.”

The third day, we were picked up by our classmates, and although we didn’t win the photography competition, Sophie and Holly agreed that it was the best adventure ever.

As for Rachel, it turned out that she had been sick and the impostor simply took advantage of the fact.

Return to the Mountains

Dulwich College Beijing, Tong, Jolin

Curiosity got the better of her, and she urged herself to go on.

The further she went, the image got blurrier and she had to stop twice to rest and think, '*what exactly am I looking for?*'

She remembered clearly what she saw and what she wanted when she started running. She was chasing something, perhaps.

But whatever it was, she could not remember it.

'*Start with the easy things first,*' she told herself. '*My name is Yue, and I am nine years old. I am from...I am from.....*' She hesitated.

Where was she from again?

And what was she doing in the mountains?

It was certainly not a suitable place for a young girl like her.

Yue looked around, she was surrounded by pine trees, twisted, and crooked.

The bark was lumpy and warty, with pine needles colorless with a shade of greyish green but sharp enough to prick through the soft, tender skin of a young girl.

A swirl of mist twirled and tangled around the trunks, wreathing itself in different shapes as if teasing Yue and saying in a malicious tone: "Poor girl, scared, aren't you?"

it sent a chill down her spine, and she clutched her elbows tightly in her small hands. She felt like if she went in the mist, she would never come out again.

There was no way heading back, so there was only one way to go, up.

How long had she been walking now?

One hour, two hours?

The sun had disappeared in the somber, grey sky, leaving the poor girl with no sense of the time. Her surroundings were still the same, prickly pine trees. The mist, however, had disappeared. On her neck was a jewel pendant, now grey and colorless just like her skin and clothes.

The sound of water rushing woke her up.

A few feet away, a pool of blue water rippled and steamed. She went towards it and she thrust her fingers in the hot water spring.

She expected her fingers to unfurl in the soothing warm water, but she felt nothing. The water kept on steaming, but did not ripple. Her hands were not numb and icy but did not turn warm in the water. In fact, her hands seem to trail a grey wisp of smoke as she moved them.

She panicked, '*what was that?*'

Her hands shuddered, '*it was just hallucination.*' She reassured herself.

But then, it just happened again! As she got her hands out of the pool, a trail of pearly grey smoke came out of her pearly grey skin.

Yue shook her head; she was not going to let this stop her to find what she wanted. Then she widened her eyes, *‘I am finding something!’*

She remembered!

Forgetting all her doubts, she stood up and started trekking up the mountain.

After hours of climbing, she ended abruptly; she reached the top.

A dead pine tree and a rock was occupied there, nothing else.

Was this what she was looking for? A dead end? She edged forward slowly, and felt anger raging in her. How could she have been so stupid to believe a random thought?

Then she heard voices.

“Are you sure this is the place?” One complained.

“Why would I be joking?” Another replied.

Yue quickly hid behind the rock, her fingers brushed past the somewhat smooth surface. Just as she ducked behind it, she noticed a few characters carved on it. She felt her heart jump to her throat. But there was no time to inspect, two men walked out of the trees and investigated their surroundings, one was bearded, one had a stone axe in his hand.

The two walked towards the rock, and Yue felt her heart thumping like drums. She bit her lip and snapped her eyes shut tightly.

“Hmmm,” the axe man looked at the rock, “Liu Yue, born at 1535, died at 1544.”

“Hey! Wasn't that the little menial we killed years ago in Ram Village when we were robbers? Hah! Do you remember, Wu?” He laughed like cattle farting.

“I don't remember. But I do remember robbing Ram Village, we killed Zhang to get his loot! But being a tomb raider is better than a robber, lower risks.” Wu muttered. “And how do you remember her name, Wang?”

“There had been a pendant on her neck that I wanted to take, it had her name carved in it. But then a man came in and was lunging at me before I had unclasped the necklace.” Wang sighed.

“You could have ripped it off her neck,” Wu sighed again.

“But the blood would stain it.”

Having to hear so much, Yue finally could not stand it anymore, waves of memories washed over her. How she died, how she became a ghost, each memory was like a dagger stabbing on an unhealed wound. A mix of rage, hatred, revenge and sadness twirled in her body, forming a current that swept over her. She screamed, and charged from behind the rock, literally passing through it. She charged at Wu and thrust her hand into his chest. She grabbed on to his spirit, and clenched her hands in a tight ball, squeezing his *qi* out of him. He choked, and spluttered, but soon closed his eyes forever. Wang saw this and knew the next one would be him; he thrashed his axe at her, but it passed through. She turned around and stared with sober grey eyes. She shrieked, and her hand was soon on his spirit, and he edged backwards, foolishly thinking he would be out of her grasp, but behind him was the cliff. He fell.

Yue stopped, and she realized what she had done. She cried. A good, hearty cry was all she needed; she spilled her tears along with her sadness and cleaned her eyes that had already seen too much.

Then, slowly with a quavering grey body of fading smoke, she disappeared in the soil in front of the rock....

The Adventure of the Harrison family

Dulwich College Beijing, Yao, Suri

As July flipped through her notebook, her brother James sat on his blue bed and sighed. It was vacation, and their parents had told them to think of a place to go in this holiday.

“How about we go outside of Europe?” Asked James excitedly. “Maybe somewhere in Asia?”

“How about the Huangshan mountains?” James agreed immediately, jumping into the air, full of joy. So, the kids sprinted downstairs and into the kitchen, finding themselves face to face with their sleepy dad.

“What’s the matter kids?” he muttered.

“We think we have found the place for our adventure!” July said happily. She told their father their ideas.

“Ok, I’ll tell your mother when she comes back from shopping.” Their dad answered back and continued pouring coffee into his black mug.

Happy that their dad had agreed, the kids waited in their bedroom quietly, hoping their mom would also say yes. A while later, mom walked into their room with a wide grin on her face. She said she would love to go to China for this vacation, and said that they’d better pack their bags soon, because they will be on the airplane sooner or later.

The next sunny morning, James woke up with a big yawn and stretch as he saw his sister already starting to pack.

Rummaging through her huge purple luggage and backpack, she asked her smaller brother,

“Don’t you think it would be the best vacation ever? I had a dream yesterday about all the fun we will be having there!”

She tried to stuff all of her belongings into her case.

At last, it was time to go on their vacation! They drove in the car for a few hours, trying to get to the airport. As their mum and dad switched places driving, James and July were busy playing, talking nonstop, or sleeping in the backseat which was squished with luggage.

After 10 hours on the airplane, the Harrison family managed to get to Anhui. As they got closer to their destination, they could now clearly see the magnificent view of the Huangshan mountains. The towering peaks stretched up towards the sky as a ray of sunlight pierced through the cracks. After a few more minutes of driving down the rocky, twisted road, they finally got to their hotel which was near the mountains.

After a good night’s sleep, another new fresh day has started. The family ate a healthy breakfast of porridge and noodles, they started their exploration from the mountains in front of them. The hike was harsh, but they kept on going, resting and eating in the middle of steps up and down on the rugged stone steps that took them to the top. Not long after they started, James and dad have already used all their energy and was now sitting on the benches at the side, munching happily on the snacks in their backpack as well as drinking a few mouthfuls of water from their water bottle. July and their mom watched them hopelessly, they thought they have nothing to do, so sat down on a bench and started to talk about what they are going to do next when their dad interrupted suddenly.

“How about we move on? I’m done resting.” Everybody agreed, except for James because he was busy taking a nap on the bench he and dad sat on.

“WAKE UP!” July shouted into his ear. “OR THERE WILL BE NO SNACKS LEFT FOR YOU IN THE REST OF THIS CLIMB!” Hearing this, her little brother sat straight up. But then, after a few more steps, the family heard a strange sound coming from the top of the mountain.

“Probably just animals.” Dad comforted them, so they continued to walk forward. But no one knew that it wasn’t animals. Nothing like them at all. As the sound got louder and louder, everyone was convinced that it isn’t animals. But not their father. He told them it’s definitely animals, and there is nothing to be afraid of, so just keep on walking. But not long after, small rocks started to fall down, and then larger ones, and then even larger rocks started falling down the steep sides of the mountain. Soon, the Harrison family found that they were facing an enormous pile of different-sized rocks. Even worse, from the dark, eerie night sky which was filled with clouds, it started raining and it was like someone was above them, pouring buckets of water on their heads. As the gigantic rocks continued falling down, the family were dripping wet with rainwater, soaked from their heads to their feet.

“RUN!” Shouted the children’s mother as she encouraged the kids to run down through this tough condition. Using all their energy, the Harrisons ran as fast as they could down the hill, tripping over logs and rocks as they stumbled towards their hotel. Then suddenly, an idea popped out of James’s head. He told the rest of the members, and they all agreed. So, they four of them each grabbed a strong tree and tried to push them together, making a wall. James idea managed to work after a few minutes of hard work! The trees blocked the huge rocks from rolling down.

Thinking that it’s time to go, they tied the trees together, hoping it would stay so that the family can get down safely, then, with dad at the back, they sprinted down the mountain, using their fastest pace. All of the stumbling and falling were the men. Because they usually like to exercise together at the gym or at home, July and their mum were as light as a feather as they ran down the hill. They got to the hotel first, soon followed by James and then a panting dad covered with a layer of dust.

“Your safe dad!” the kids both shouted as they hugged him tightly, almost strangling him to death.

“Let’s get back to our room and have a good night sleep. I don’t think the trees will stay long.” Mom told them as she jogged towards our place. The vacation was fun, but it was very dangerous. Full of amazing things that happened and adventures, the family was tired when they got back home.

The Myth of Euphrates

Dulwich College Beijing, Yuan, Jonathan

A long time ago, when the world was young, a great god ruled over the land. He was called Triton and had supernatural powers. He lived in a palace high up in the clouds, looming over the entire earth. He also had lots of other gods as his helpers. There was a fire god, who controlled the sun by a long chain harnessing it. There was a tree god, who created the pants and trees, and helped them grow. There were also farming gods, animal gods, and medicine gods. They ruled earth together peacefully together every day.

Triton's father, Tigris, was not the chief god. His brother Euphorbias was. Euphorbias knew his son Euphrates was not fit to inherit his throne. So, Euphorbias gave his throne to his brother's son Triton. When Euphrates heard the news, he was furious! So, he started to hate Triton. He could not stand looking at him sitting haughtily on *his* throne. Euphrates became the god of mischief and hate.

One day, a guard ran hurriedly down the leafy garden of Triton palace, shouting happily, "The peaches! The oranges! The apples! They are ripened!" Now you might think: Why is a guard so happy about some ripened fruits?

Remember, this is in the sky, so fruit only ripen for every 10 years. Triton jumped up in his throne as his whole chest swelled with pride. "I am going to invite all of the gods to a huge banquet of fruits and wine and meat!" he cried, "Send me the messenger god!" the guard scuttled away as fast as his two stout legs could carry him. He came back with a peculiar god. He was small and short, round as a balloon, and looked as if his belly would pop if you jabbed your finger into it. On his face he wore a big fat smile. "The messenger god had hurt his ankle," the guard explained, "This is his substitute." The substitute smiled up at Triton and open his little pouch. "Invitations please!"

The substitute (who turned out to be called 'Nimbus') skipped proudly along the winding path, thinking how intelligent and useful he was, to be given such an important job, when he tripped on a rock, flew, and found himself dangling down on a low vine of a tree. Nimbus wriggled out of the vines, stood up, stepped one step forward, fell ten feet from the tree, and landed with a splat. On his way down, an invitation flew out on Nimbus's pouch. On it, in golden letters, wrote: "To Euphrates"

Of course, Euphrates never got the invitation, and you can imagine how he felt. To be abandoned, rejected, ditched. And of course, Euphrates flew into a temper, and held a large meeting with the mountain trolls, fire and ice dragons and a group of retired Army officials. They planned to start a revolt, slay Triton, and get Euphrates's Throne back. Euphrates called his army the Redheads, as they wore a red ribbon on their heads.

On that very night, they attacked on the banquet hall. Panicked guests fled anyway they could. The Redheads seemed to care more about the throne, than about them! Euphrates gave an order to his assistant, "reroute the main attack—line to the army camp!" Euphrates was going to block out the Army Triton needed, in order to defend his throne!

Meanwhile, Triton gave a last desperate call for the Army of The Sky as the Redheads stormed in. His bodyguards — the sky soldiers attacked them viciously, but they weren't strong enough. Triton and a sky soldier jumped onto two harnessed clouds and sped off, with three Redheads chasing them.

The sky soldier handed Triton a rifle and two pistols. Triton, who knew how to use guns, reloaded his rifle, took careful aim, and fired twice, bringing down two Redheads. Just after he did, he spotted the last Red—Head soldier. It was Euphrates! On his side, there was him and the sky soldier that had given him his gun, on the top of the tower of wind.

Triton loaded his pistols and stood up from his cloud. So did Euphrates. Suddenly, Euphrates fired twice and missed Triton by a little bit. The soldier on the top of the tower of wind shouted at him to come to the tower. Triton drove his cloud towards the tower and started to scramble up the steep rope–ladder. Euphrates chased behind in hot pursuit. Halfway up the rope ladder, he fired. The bullet scraped Triton's forearm and hit the Sky solidier on the top of the tower. In his pain and anger, both pistols went off. Bang! Bang! Euphrates toppled off the rope ladder and fell to his cloud, just as the Army of The Sky finally arrived, and captured Euphrates.

Locked up in chains, Euphrates was forced down into earth, and became imprisoned in the yellow mountain. Triton sent a vulture to peck on him hard forever, draining the power from him. With little power left, he tries to lure poets to come to yellow mountain, to free him. Sadly, none of them ever did.

A Journey to the Summit

Dulwich College Beijing, Z, Kelly

“Huff! Huff!” Marco Polo lumbered towards the summit of Huang Shan. A shaft of sunlight was shining through the canopy of leaves which was dazzling like golden confetti. Sweat flooded down his back and his face being as bright as a lantern. He doubted he would finish his journey to the summit.

Huang Shan was an enchanting mountain, upon layers and layers of soil was layers and layers of history; upon layers and layers of diamond-green leaves was the azure-blue sky. The forest floor was covered in a blanket of foliage, crackling as Marco walked. Tree trunks were as thick as Earth layers and twigs were as thin as needles. Many trees were as high as skyscrapers, but many were toddlers, looking up towards the towering statues. Flowers decorated the floor, covering it like a gown, with countless colours and shapes. They waltzed in the breath of the wind, together, like dancers pirouetting gracefully. Birds sang in a choir of voices, some high pitched and some low, to the rhythm of dancing.

Marco Polo was climbing the slopes laboriously, whilst enjoying the beauty and power of nature. He had already walked for centuries, but the journey never seemed to end. He looked around examining the path. Then, suddenly underneath him, a red blur materialized out of nowhere. It had a pointy nose, two small eyes and ears as sharp as a knife. It had two wings and fins covering its entire body. Its skin was brown with a flicker of red. It was Zhu Bi! In its eyes, there was something uncanny, but far away. Marco saw it staring at him. His mind raced with ideas and his head was tangled in a lump of thread. *What was it? Would it attack? Would it just leave?*

To his surprise, it spoke in a shrill voice, “Mr. Polo, I know you are quite tired, but if you follow the path paved with stones, you will soon get to the top of the mountain.” Marco’s eyebrows furrowed. *Should I believe in him? Why are there man-made steps in such a natural place?* However, he released the worries to drown, and without thinking he followed the path. As he stepped onto the first ice-cold stone, a chill climbed down his back. An imagery passed through his mind: the eery eyes. Instinctively, he realized that he had made a fatal mistake. When he swung around, other paths had already disappeared. With a sigh of despair, he ambled further into trouble. Mist began to surround him, strangling him in a colour of white and making it hard to breathe.

Shockingly, just as the mist began to clear, a Mafu lunged towards him. Luckily, Marco just had enough time to dodge. With a human face and a tiger body, Mafu cried like a baby. It didn’t give up and kept charging. Marco was nearly out of breath and was about to faint. With a sense, he felt that someone was behind him. Swiftly, he turned his head, it was a chivalry man wearing a coal-black hat with a long and trenchant sword in his hands. He had thin, up-pointed eyes with eyebrows stretching to each side of his forehead. Above his lips was a silk like moustache that danced in the air with the wind. In a blink, Marco saw the man nod at him confidently. Marco stepped aside and saw him raise his sword and catapult towards it. The duel began. The man stabbed... rolled... dodged... struck...kicked. The two were a clash of colours, circling around each other like a ball. The predator bellowed. The man spun to one side and jabbed the monster on its head. It growled and began to spin its head like a tornado.

The head hit the man, and he laid fainted on the ground. Startlingly, he stood up again and resumed attacking. He used his Kung Fu skills and side kicked in monster’s face. When the fight stopped, Mafu was laying on the floor, lacerated, blood pillowing its body.

The man glanced at Marco and muttered whilst stabbing at the monster, “Glad that you survived the monster. It would have eaten you if you haven’t seen me. I am Li Bai, a poet from the Tang Dynasty traveling in times. I can take you as a guide to explore Huang Shan.”

“Sure. What is on top of the mountain that makes all these climbing worthy?”

“I do not know. Only when we reach the summit ourselves, will we know!”

They walked on. A carpet of chrysanthemums was pirouetting, performing their dances. They were all in different colours, some wearing a pink dress, some wearing a flaming dress. Sweet-scented osmanthus were next to the army. The little and gentle flowers were hairclips to the chrysanthemums, the scent of osmanthus were flung like wafts of perfume into the air. Leaves were like parachutes drifting down gradually. The branches swayed softly onto the ground like a mother stroking her child. Soft mist blanketed the whole place like Heaven. Auspicious creatures all appeared on their way: A Dragon, a Phoenix, and a Kirin. They were all majestic and splendid in their own forms.

As a peek of blue came into view, they sprinted forwards. Yet, something stopped them – a slithering body with green scales. It had a scaly head that was like a lizard and was surrounded by a hood of slime green and red skin. It had two bodies but one head. *A Fei Yi*. Thought Li Bai. Marco looked down and saw venomous slime drool from its razor-sharp teeth, its fangs curled beneath its chin that dribbled with blood from the last kill. Slowly it rapped its thick bodies around the two explorers. Water was sucked out of their bodies, and they almost fainted. Swiftly, Marco took out his arrow. Aiming carefully, the arrow flew through the air and Fei Yi exhaled its last breath.

Finally, they mounted to the summit and looked up into the sky. Pine trees stood tall and proud bandaging the many meadows beneath. White and puffy clouds were swirling and rippling around them while other mountains were small islands floating in the sapphire blue ocean-like sky. What a spectacular scene! Li Bai and Marco beamed at each other. Without a word, they knew their great minds were thinking alike: there was never an easy path to the “summit” and there would always be a golden lining leading to unseen and stunning scenery from a chaotic journey.

800 years passed; this still holds... although the world is still suffering from many uncertainties, we will overcome them all and there will always be light at the end of the road shining us forward!

*Mythical creatures are originated from 《山海经》 (Shan Hai Jing).

The Mystery of Huangshan

ESF Bradbury School, Koul, Ivana – 9

He had always heard about it but never did he actually think he would be chosen for this expedition. The mysterious Huangshan mountain had always intrigued and inspired him.

He was relaxing in his comfortable white armchair, sipping a nice warm cup of coffee, when he got the letter.

He opened the red wax seal and nearly spilt his coffee while reading it. The letter read *Dear Nick*,

It is with immense pleasure we invite you to join our archeological team in Huangshan. Please join us at 8. Canal St. on the 20th October at 9 am.

Head of Expeditions,

Mr. Jones

On the 20th, Nick was so excited. He hardly noticed the long, bumpy flight. After 14 hours, he was finally at Huangshan. This city of beauty was especially mesmerising that day. The mountains were extremely vibrant and the river looked crystal clear. “Ok everybody, here are your duties for this trip”, Mr. Jones said while showing them a list of duties and separate bags for all of them. Nick checked his duty, he was in the fossils department and had to go to Guang Ming Ding digging site to look for fossils. He picked up his sack. “Awesome” thought Nick as he looked for something to help him get to the digging site. He looked around and after sometime he found a red traditional Chinese style boat. There was a man next to it, he was wearing a black tang suit and his shoes were ragged and old. Nick quickly transacted and borrowed the boat for a month. Nick clutched its two white oars and started rowing. After a while, he finally reached Guang Ming Ding. Nick got off the boat and was exhausted. He looked around, there was a giant digging area and a tiny cottage. Nick slowly approached the cottage and went inside. There was a small white bed and a tiny work station. Nick sat at the work station for a few minutes. He took out a map from his bag and started checking the site. He chose an area to begin digging. Nick unzipped his bag and took out his digging tools. After working for many days continuously, one fine day his hammer hit something. Nick kept digging to see what it was. He was surprised to find a fossil, which was shaped peculiarly like a wing. He took this piece of fossil immediately to the forensic department. After three days of wait, which seemed like a lifetime, Nick was informed it was surely a wing from 747 AD. Nick ran for miles till he found a library. He went inside, it looked as though no one had gone in there for years. He looked for some books belonging to the old era, but all he could find were scrolls. Nick kept frantically reading scroll after scroll. Suddenly, he found a scroll from the 8th century and noticed something engraved at the bottom.

Nick was confused, he tried to figure it out multiple times, but failed. After many unsuccessful trials, he went to the librarian and asked for people who could read it for him. This was not traditional Chinese but an ancient tribal Chinese language. The old and rusty clerk, handed him the address of some tribals who could be of help. With the address in hand, Nick started rowing towards this village.

Nick had never seen a village so beautiful. The little houses were built on top of bamboo sticks. They were so high up that it appeared to touch the sky. After talking to a few people around in that village, Nick decided to meet the head of the tribe. The house was warm and cosy. There was a giant red carpet and two gold chairs with a gold table. The table had a pot of tea and a few cups in the corner. Nick slowly crept forward to find a short old woman with grey hair, wearing a red Hanfu.

“Welcome! To what do I owe this visit?”

“I have come to ask for help” Nick told her about the wing, the scroll, and the words written on it.

The old woman read the scroll and quietly said, “Hmm... it talks about the famous Huang Emperor and his beloved pet dragon. His name was ‘Fu Canglong’. They say the yellow emperor buried his dragon with his treasure.” Then she pointed to something written with bold dark ink and said

‘Where the dragon lies, the treasure hides’

Nick bowed and walked backward till the exit then turned to go back to the boat.

While rowing back home, an idea struck Nick. Could it be possible that the fossil he dug up was the wing of the yellow emperor’s dragon? The only question that remained unanswered was, where could the rest of the dragon lie? Nick reached his cottage and started looking mindlessly at his map to check the next digging spot. He traced a few lines on the map with his pencil. Suddenly, he gasped. One particular area shaped out like a Dragon. “This is it, the treasure is where the dragon lies.” thought Nick.

In a matter of few hours, he was at the digging site of that area, with a few more workers from the fossil department ready to explore. From the very first hit, he knew something was there. Then a huge smile started growing on his face. Nick and the workers started digging deeper and deeper till they found a beautiful golden coffin. It was adorned with gems and it read a message in ancient Chinese. Nick asked one of his workers to translate. The message read “Here lies Fu Canglong – beloved dragon of the yellow emperor”. Next to it was a silver chest. They pulled the chest and the coffin out of the hole. As Nick opened the chest, a cold breeze sent chills around his body and he almost screamed! This was not something he had expected...

The Shadow Tops

ESF Bradbury School, Shao, George – 8

It was a beautiful sunny day in the magical mountains but unknown to the people of china what was yet to come. Endless darkness, endless terror, and fear unlike anything the world has ever seen before. Just by looking at this beast can make people go crazy. But not him, he was deemed the only one who could put an end to this reign of terror.

In the far far east...

A lost temple hides in a thick rain forest where many people disappear of the face of the earth with no explanation. There lay an entity who might be the explanation to all this. Thought to be a myth turned out to be a reality. Who his only goal was to erase all life in the in ancient China.

Located all around the mountains where beings of fire earth water and air, from natural origin who work as guardians of their temple if they join forces. Then our word is truly doomed. Across the stone path lay an ancient battlefield where we won "The war" or so we thought we just slipped through the cracks. As I went higher and higher It got hotter and hotter, but I did not notice but when it was already too late. A ball of flaming hot molten fire ball, it was the fire elemental that has been summoned by Vulcan. A flaming ball flying at me and I swiftly dodged. He was going to do the final attack. And I had to do it quick, I said to myself: "the water stone!" I use my wand to crack the stone, it exploded. Then I saw a giant wave of water it was going to flood the mountain, then as it got lower and lower, smaller, and smaller. Before magickly moving then hitting the monster it defeated the fie monster I checked what was left over it was a flaming sword I did not know it but it was going to be useful. by now we were about 1000m into the mountain, but it seemed like there was an infinite path above me that's what's so magical about the mountain. About it was already dawn so had to pick a place to camp there 1 hour later I had found it a lush green area with a nearby stream it was the perfect place to camp. So I set up my tent I needed food I had a stream beside me so it was the perfect time to fish when I cast my rod in the stream fish where already biting on my rod so I had dinner.

Part 2

I woke up from the sound of water dripping onto my tent I was not even ready yet and the water elemental already found me I got out my wand ready to attack gulp the water elemental and swallow me whole help! I screamed which did not work grabbed the air stone and put it into my wand I cast the spell which destroyed the beast leaving only a puddle of water remaining in that puddle of water was on axe with liquid water on it, that ended quick. I climbed up higher and higher that is when I met the earth monster, I dodged his balls of dirt then I used my fire stone to defeat the earth monster only remains of his where a pile of dirt and inside that pile where I found a shield it was completely made of dirt, but it felt so sturdy to I held on to it many miles into the mountain at the very peat I saw something it was like a tear the fabric of space and time. I jumped through seeking what was inside, it was like a whole new world.

Part 3

This was it was the time to complete my mission, it was a baron wasteland that surrounded me. Then it was him, my elemental weapons were charged, and I was ready to battle. I blocked his dark beam with my shield. I hit him with my sword, but I just got knocked back. Next, he charged up his final move and he was going to destroy the wall of China. However, I had to do it for everyone sake and to protect all life in China. I did my final move and it blinded me. Next, I saw it destroyed the king but myself I lived and to this day he still lives to tell the tale.

A few years later the order has been restored, every building has been fixed then the earth start shaking here we go again I said.

Dragons Of Bluestone Valley

ESF Glenealy School, Byrne, Saoria

I've always believed in dragons. Some people didn't and teased me. But I knew. Oh I forgot I'm Hannah! Frost dragons are my favourite of them all! "Oh here Ms!" Sorry I'm in class.

Ok I'm finished class. Anyways this is my best friend Sarah She also believes in dragons. Oh no looks like someone is coming.... "Well, isn't it the dragon believers?" Her name is Ashely, she is so popular but very MEAN." I mean what are the chances of seeing a dragon?" Ashley said. Her minions Brittany and Sabrina chuckled. "STOP I believe in dragons I know." "Yeah you don't always have to see to believe you have to believe to see." Sarah said. "Oh right it's all about BELIEVING" B & S were laughing and mocking them. "Just GO!" "Ugh fine." Ashley grunted.

"I can prove to them that dragons are real!" Hannah said. "But how?" questioned Sarah. "On the weekend...." "Oh no" said Sarah "We're going to Bluestone Valley!" Hannah said excitedly. "NO no no no!!" Shrieked Sarah. "YES yes yes yes!!." Shrieked Hannah in an excited way. They walked up to Ashley and her minions and said "This weekend we bring you to Bluestone Valley so I can prove to you that dragons ARE REAL! And no excuses." Squealed Hannah. "I mean sure but I already know that dragons are not real." she exclaimed. "Yeah lets just see your little sad faces when we don't see a dragon." Sabrina mocked. Hannah rolled her eyes and grunted. "The only thing that's making this trip bad is them." she mumbled under her breath. "Anyways, we're going this weekend!" Sarah explained. "This weekend!? I have plans!" yelled Ashley. "Well you're gonna have to cancel them." Hannah said.

Today is the day! Thought Hannah. She went to Sarah's house and then they set off to Ashley's house where Sabrina and Brittany were. "Woah! This is HUGE!" shouted Sarah enough to get Ashley, Brittany and Sabrina's attention. "Ugh have some patience!" Ashley shouted. They came out the front door. "Come on it's a 2 hour drive." exclaimed Hannah. "2 HOURS?!" shrieked Brittany and Sabrina. "We all need our beauty, sleep you rags!" Ashley shouted. "I will order the extra large Uber and *you* can pay. Ashley said to Hannah. "FINE" "The uber is here! Sarah shouted to get Ashley off her phone. It worked.

They were actually there standing at the sign that said "Welcome to Bluestone Valley!" "So this is it?" Ashley asked. "Yep." Sarah said. Hannah was still speechless that she was in Bluestone Valley. "Look! there is a sign that says "dragons this way! Hannah said. they followed the trail and saw something swooping around. "what was that?" Ashley asked. "I don't know, let's follow it." explained Hannah. They all heard some really heavy breathing. "Uhh what was that." Sarah asked, getting a bit worried. "I don't know but we're following it." explained Hannah. "NO no no no NO! We are not following, actually let's turn back now we already know they are not real!" Yelled Ashley. "ROARRRRRR!!!!" "AHHHHH what was that?! Scream the girls. "I don't know, let's go." they went through the forest and found something AMAZING. "But how?! I thought they weren't real!" Ashley cried. "You were wrong!"

The end

I would like to thank the young writers award in HK.

Stay tuned for book 2!

The Secret Village Of Huangshan

ESF Glenealy School, Chan, Argus

Li and Ming are two of the small latter of kids in the world who are still interested and passionate in geography in the world, as in 2050, kids are more interested in technology and engineering. This Easter, Li and Ming's families are going to Huangshan, a place both have been eager to go to.

On the first day at Huangshan, the two families both walked up the stone pathway up to the cable car entrance. The site hadn't been renovated in many years, and still has cable cars instead of teleporters. With the sun shining bright in the morning day, and lush, green fruit trees surrounding the mountains, coloured butterflies sucking nectar from the many fragrant and enticing flowers, with birds chirping, the scenery was as beautiful as if they were in a dream. They all then started hiking up the endless amount of stairs in Huangshan.

At the start, Ming said to Li, " Li, let's race up to that gigantic fruit tree over there!" Li replied, " Sure!" They ran and ran, both running nearly side by side. When they nearly reached the fruit tree, Ming slipped over a small stone pebble lying down on the floor and grazed his knee on a surprisingly smooth stone. Ming winced in pain, and when Ming's parents and Li went to help him in the busy and deafening crowd and all of a sudden, fog burst everywhere, making Ming stop wincing and look around. Ming got up and tried to find someone, and bellowed, " Dad? Li? Is Anyone there?"

Then, a deep voice boomed, " The heirs of the golden throne have come! "

Ming looked around to see who was speaking, and asked in a scared voice, " Who's there?!" The fog disappeared, and the whole scenery had changed! There were still many people, but dressed in strange clothes. They were in a ugly city, which had rubbish everywhere! The city had clouds surrounding it, looking like a field of cotton candy.

Ming asked himself, surprised and in disbelief, " W...W... Where am I?" He looked around and saw another boy, but this time, he knew who it was. He rushed toward him while shouting , " Li! Where is everyone?"

Li replied, " I don't know either! "

A voice said, " Hello Li and Ming." Both Ming and LI turned around to see a man in silk, golden ancient robes and a braided beard, who then said, " Welcome to Huang Village, Ming and Li. I am so glad to see you ."

Ming and Li both identically said, " Who are you and why do you know my name?"

The man replied, " My name is Zhang, and you two are the heirs of the Yellow Emperor, Huang Di, as stated in the golden scroll. The emperor will tell you all about it when you arrive at the Huang Palace."

At the palace entrance, Li and Ming were amazed to see such a humongous palace fully made of gold, and with guards wearing golden armour too. Inside, servants greeted them as they chanted, " The heirs of the throne are back! The heirs of the throne are back!" As they walked through the hallway to the throne room. Then, Zhang politely said, " Huang Di, here are the heirs of the throne." Zhang then turned around, and paced out of the room. Huang Di was a very old man with long, silky grey hair and a beard which was braided to his stomach. Huang Di said, delighted, "Hello Li and Ming, it is so glad to finally meet you."

Li asked, puzzled, " Dear Sir, but I think you have mistaken us for the wrong people. We were hiking up the Huangshan mountain with our families when we suddenly appeared here."

Huang DI chuckled, and said, " Oh yes. You two should not know what has happened and the history of you two. I am Huang DI, as you know, but I am nearly 4800 years old, as I am Huang Di of the chinese Three Sovereigns."

Li and Ming gasped in shock, as they learned about Huang Di in lessons last year.

Huang Di continued, " I never died, instead I took the elixir of immortality which will wear off in a month's time. This village has been hidden because no one can know about my secret. Since I am so old, I cannot help my villagers and 20 years ago, the dragon tribe attacked us and nearly wiped all the population out. Two months ago, I searched through the Golden Scroll of Emperors to find the perfect heir for my throne, and chose many, but none accepted the challenge I gave. This is the challenge: Help me make my city connected to the rest of the world, replenish everything and give my villagers a new and happier life. You can do whatever you like and you will each receive my will. Do you accept? Both Li and Ming's eyes were in disbelief, and said, " Yes. We accept the challenge."

Huang Di said, " Ok. Good luck, and goodbye. To return to Huang Village, just snap your fingers twice. " As Huang Di said goodbye, everything disappeared in fog once again, and Ming and Li were back in the real world, exactly as it was before.

Both Ming and Li said to Ming's father, " We received the will of Huang Di of the Three Sovereigns and have to connect his hidden city to the world and rebuild it! We can actually show you."

Ming's dad chuckled, "Okay. You can show me later."

Ming and Li said, " Sure!" The two families then continued walking on their adventurous hike on Huangshan.

Ming and Li showed their families, reported to the news, and used Huang Di's will to help rebuild his village and show it to the rest of Earth, and is now a tourist attraction favourite in Huangshan. As for Huang Di, he became a ghost in his palace and meets Ming and Li every week.

China's Magical Mountains

ESF Glenealy School, Chan, Lucas

Introduction

Have you ever wondered where fairies come from? Have you wanted to become a fairy? Have you ever wished to see a fairy? If so, I suggest you can go to Huangshan. It takes less than a day to get to the top. Huangshan is a very popular place and many people go there every year. That place has breathtaking views and the top of the mountains are sharp as a knife. You can see the clouds below crashing like waves. If you think this sounds good, buy a plane ticket now!

Chapter 1

Huangshan has more than 70 peaks with different heights, unique, funny, strange or odd shapes. There are many small streams flowing out the mountains, huge forests, dark caves, high cliffs, giant rocks, deep valleys, rugged canyons and much more. Fairies who used to live there always fly around from peak to peak. Fairies used to live in Huangshan and practice the art of alchemy to make pills of immortality. Do you know who succeeded in becoming fairies?

Chapter 2

In ancient Chinese history, the earliest emperor China reached a very old age and was about to pass away. He needed to do good deeds for the country, so he sent somebody to find a place for him to make the alchemy so he would become a fairy and live on forever. After three years, the person he sent came back. He had found a group of mountains where the emperor could make his alchemy. They went to what is now called Huangshan and gathered herbs and started making alchemy. After another three years, they finally finished making the pills. They ate the pills of immortality and became immortals.

Chapter 3

Once upon a time there was a young woman who lived in the Xianyuancun village. Next to the village in a group of mountains called Huangshan, there lived a monkey fairy. Once he saw that the young woman was born, he fell in love with her. The monkey turned himself into a scholar and made up a fake name "Sun Jun Wu", and claimed that he was the son of the village master. The money fairy went to the young woman's house. The young woman's father liked the monkey fairy, so he held a banquet for him. Sun Jun Wu asked the father of the young lady if he could marry her, and the father agreed. On the day of the marriage, scholar "Sun Jun Wu" got drunk and became the monkey again. Once the young lady found out, she was shocked and ran away. Ever since, the monkey fairy sat on the rocks all day keeping a look out for the young woman. Overtime he became a rock, and that is the story of the monkey-shaped rock in Huangshan.

Conclusion

Do you want to become a fairy and become immortal? If you do, go to Huangshan now! The easiest way to get up to the peak is to take a cable car, but I would recommend you to walk up as it only takes a day and the scenery is beautiful.

Tales from China's Magical Mountain

ESF Glenealy School, Cheung, Max

Ming looked out at the distance from his hut in the ancient mountains of Taihang, 1750 meters off the ground in northern China, squinting to avoid the sun's glare. He was resting because he had just finished planting his carrots, as he had been doing for the past 20 years. He had black hair and green eyes, with a broad frame. His crops that month were too dry to sell, and he hoped his new batch of carrots would be sufficient to sell to the townspeople which depended on his crops for most of their food.

He stood on the cliff his hut was built on, listening to the birds chirping peacefully. He lived near a waterfall which the townspeople had always said was magical. He found the area soothing, and often went there to rest after a hard day's work. Suddenly, the waterfall started glowing, and the water began to bubble. Ming stood back, staring at it, as it began to brighten even more. The light eventually died down, and Ming saw a large hole in the side of the mountain. It was in the shape of an oval, and instead of just rocks on the other side of the hole, there was metal.

He stepped through the hole, and saw an exact version of the mountain he lived on but was plated in metal. He looked around for any greenery, but everything was just steel and iron. It was a stark contrast to the lush green mountains where he lived. There was an empty spot where his hut would be, and there were no trees in sight. The sky was a dull brown colour which reminded Ming of mud.

The land was completely dry, with no hint of any moisture. It was extremely dry and bland. He walked back through the hole to the green mountains, into the warmth of the sun. He inspected the difference of the two lands, and looked at the border between them. The metal was sneaking into the greenery, slowly infecting the grass and plants. It crept up the trees, covering them with steel.

Ming watched in shock as the metal took over the plants, turning the once vibrant mountain into a pile of steel and iron. He ran down the mountain, rushing to tell the townspeople about the metal. He took a shortcut to the town, climbing down vines to reach a large rock where you could hike there instead of walking down a large flight of stairs and needing to cross an old bridge before reaching it.

He warned the villagers about the metal infection and told them to harvest as much food as they could before all of the plants became steel. From afar, the mountain seemed like it was being painted grey. He told them about the metal world and the hole in the mountain. As Ming was going down to the village, the hole had increased and now the metal was spreading quicker and quicker.

The mayor of the town told Ming to explore the metal land and try to stop the infection. The mountain was completely covered in metal already, so it was difficult for Ming to cross some areas. He went through the hole into the metal land, and trekked across the steel mountain, trying to find the source of the metal.

After walking for an hour, he found a large steel structure. It had four pylons holding it up, a turret and a large circular dome above. He headed towards it, curious. Ming found a hole in the bottom and climbed up, seeing several people inside. He introduced himself and explained why he was there. The people told him that they were astronauts part of a space program trying to eradicate the metal from biological life, which the metal was infecting.

Ming led the astronauts back to the town and explained everything to the townspeople. The astronauts said that the structure that Ming found was a device that was capable of eradicating the metal, but had to have access to vegetation. The townspeople helped transport the device to an area completely isolated from metal, and set the device up.

The astronauts adjusted the device to align with the metal, and fired a laser beam from the turret towards the metal. It cleared the metal there, and they repeated the process several times before the town was completely cleared. The laser had to cool down before it could fire again to avoid overheating.

The metal was creeping back into the hole now, and the greenery was beginning to be returned to the mountain. Ming watched as the device cleared away the metal plated on the cliff, eradicating it. The device continued to fire, ridding the entire mountain of steel. It blasted the rocks, sending them tumbling into the hole, blocking it.

The metal was eventually completely cleared, and the astronauts left the town, hauling the device along with them. They disappeared in the distance. The hole was now blocked up by the rocks, so none of the metal could enter. However, the area near the hole where he lived was no longer fertile, so Ming had to relocate his farm to the town.

When Ming finally had the courage to enter the metal land again, he realized that the rocks that block the hole were so integrated into the side of the mountain that it was as if it was never there. He was so familiar with the area near the hole, but he could not find it. He searched for the hole for years, but never found it.

Ally and the Magic Mountain

ESF Glenealy School, Clews, Matilda

1 – Mountain Magic

In China's misty magical Yellow Mountains there lay a world, above the clouds, that never aged.

It was a quintessential land of harmony, serenity and perfection. People were always kind and thoughtful, loyal and hardworking. Even creatures who dwelled there lived in peace! There was not one hint of sadness in the air.

The valleys were brimming with blooming flowers, arrayed in the most vibrant colours one could imagine. The clouds, floating gracefully as if held by invisible strings, were a dazzling pure white.

At the top of the mountain lived a tribe called the Mountain People. They were born just like you and I. However, at the age of 30, the ageing process stopped.

Not only did these magical mountains house a magical people, they were also home to an ancient myth...

2 – Shattered Silence

One summer's day, every creature was resting in the cool shade, hiding from the sweltering sun.

Suddenly, a ROAR reverberated through the mountainside. All the animals came to attention, and all the fish surfaced, compelled by their curiosity!

Without warning, an adventurous allosaurus named Ally exploded from the bushes, screaming at the top of her lungs. The other dinosaurs crowded around her instantly, inquisitive as always.

“Top...hill...hidden...secret...cave...dragon...” the terror-stricken allosaurus stammered.

“Do you mean.... You went up the mountain, found a hidden cave, and saw a dragon!?” they inquired nervously.

“C...Correct!”

The reason for the disturbance was now clear!

3 – Fiery Foe

Earlier that day, Ally had ventured out to uncharted places. Unsuspecting, she stumbled across a cave. After a moment's hesitation, she cautiously... tiptoed... inside.

Darkness engulfed her. The absolute stillness and silence sent a chill down her spine. Her heart skipped a beat. As her eyes adjusted to the darkness, she began to see shadows.

A faint stir caught her eye. Suddenly, there was a ROAR!!! The cave was illuminated by a spurt of fire! Behind the orange glow was the outline of a colossal dragon!

“AAAAAA!!!” Ally shrieked as she sprinted out of the cave – the dragon hot on her tail – and dashed down the mountainside!

Eventually, the dragon gave up the chase and retired to its cave.

4 – Mysterious Myth

Meanwhile, up in the village, at the sound of the roar, pandemonium erupted! The Mountain People were afraid the myth was coming to pass!

And this was the myth that had been told for many years:

In the Yellow Mountains of China, there once lived a fearsome dragon. As long as the dragon was roaming free, the land was filled with chaos and everything was in shades of grey. There was predator and prey, disasters and disease, conflicts and arguments..... and eventually, death.

Amidst the misery, the creatures united to petition the god of the highest heaven to put an end to it all. The god agreed, banishing the dragon into a cave near the top of the mountain. He cast a spell, only permitting the dragon to come out if someone went in. A tribe called the Mountain People were installed as guardians of the land.

5 – Creation Chaos

The creatures had heard whispers of the myth too, wondering if it was true or just Chinese whispers!

Down in the valley, an eagle swooped down and caught a fish. A wolf savaged a goat. These things were never sighted before.

Up in the village, the usual peace was pierced as hostility emerged – people pinching and biting, hitting and fighting! Grey hair sprouted; wrinkles appeared. People were growing old!

Peace and harmony dissolved. The once vibrant colours faded. Flowers and plants wilted in despair, and the sparkling white clouds turned grey, as chaos and darkness shrouded the land.

6 – Startling Sacrifice

Ally had to do something. She couldn't just stand there and watch her home crumble!

Sprinting across the grey grass, she ignored the terrified shrieks and cries. Upon arriving in the village, she started searching desperately.

Unaware of approaching footsteps, she jumped as she felt a tap on her shoulder.

“Young dinosaur, what are you doing?” a wise steady voice asked.

“I'm looking for weapons to fight the dragon,” she replied frantically.

“I'm afraid we have none. We never needed them,” he solemnly replied.

Reluctantly he continued, “To defeat the dragon... someone must willingly walk into the dragon's flames.”

“But who'll do that?” Ally exclaimed hopelessly, shock lining her face.

A sombre sense of realisation crept into her heart, “I was the one who woke the dragon. It began with me, so it must end with me.”

Filled with dread, she trudged toward the dragon's den. The Mountain People and creatures, watching from afar, all gasped with horror as Ally approached the mouth of the cave.

The roaring echoed as the dragon stomped out. The mountains shivered.

The dragon's fiery breath scorched everything in its path. Ally recoiled – terrified, once again, ready to run away.

She caught sight of the people and creatures in the gloomy atmosphere, and it was hard to bear. She plucked up her courage, squeezed her eyes tight, and stepped into the dragon's path – terrified, but this time, determined.

Flames consumed her. She felt her body stiffening. Her skin turned to ashes. She crumbled to the ground as a pile of rocks.

The dragon thrashed around ferociously, roaring victoriously. With his roar still echoing, he too stiffened and crumbled into a pile of rocks.

As this happened, the curse lifted. People's youthfulness returned. The peace and harmony of the land were restored.

As the mountains returned to their former glory, without a hint of sadness in the air, the people rejoiced.

A precious lesson was learned that day: To maintain peace and harmony, it required sacrifice.

As they looked onto the rocks that had once been Ally, they realised their fight was not against a dragon. The real fight was within their own hearts, to always love, and be willing to sacrifice for others.

May the magic continue to dwell with Ally and the Mountains.

Tales from China's Magical Mountain

ESF Glenealy School, Kwan, Brendon – 8

As lightning struck throughout the black, foggy sky, the black, scaled dragon was soaring above the town. When the beast was breathing out an eruption of flaming hot fire from his mouth, he forced people to run away in fear. The fire blew houses down and the townsfolk rushed hopelessly to the lake.

The dragon soared high into the sky waiting to attack. She had an enormous monstrous head with a slobbering mouth. Her eyes were filled with anger. When her bat-like wings were golden and shiny, she was ready to attack once again.

Down by the cliffs, townsfolk were screaming for help. I sprinted into a nearby cave. I panicked. My heart pounded fast and missed a beat. Suddenly, I heard a voice. She appeared. Her eyes were filled with evil. I ran as fast as I could to get away from the dragon then she said, "To break the curse, get a white flower from the peak of the HuangShan mountain".

Without warning, the dragon disappeared. Then some of the elders from the town appeared. The old men said, "You kill the dragon!". Another shouted, "Steal her eggs!"

Suddenly, the wise woman screamed, "Silence!" Everyone went quiet. "We have destroyed the dragon's forest and she wanted revenge. People said that the forest has now been reinforced and there are magical gates all around the forest, so no one is able to get in"

I begin my journey up the mountain. As I was walking, I discovered an old deforested land where trees were cut down and habitat had been destroyed. Was this the destroyed forest of the dragon? I wondered.

As I followed the trail to the top of the mountain, I saw a long and extremely steep stairway—it was not even like stairs! It was a stone ladder. I started heading up as I looked down the path below me and my view vanished into clouds.

At the top of the stairway, it was very dim and getting darker ahead. It was getting difficult to see with the mist around me. It was also cold and foggy. I continued walking until the sky was pitch black. It was gloomy and ghostly. I am now in darkness, I imagined all sorts of terrors. Near me was a magnificent forest of tall trees. The trees had fiery red eyes. I gulped air, my palms were sweaty and took long, shuddering breaths.

Around the corner, I felt something moving. I tried to stay brave and calm. All of the sudden, someone tapped me on the shoulder. I turned around, and I jumped screaming. I ran as fast as my legs could carry me then a voice said, "STOP!" I looked back and he was there staring at me with his fiery red eyes, He was tall and majestic, he had long arms and long legs. "Listen up! You humans might stop killing us!" shouted the big monstrous looking tree

I ran away deeper into the forest terrified I could not stop thinking about what that tree said. My heart raced up to the highest level I could ever be! I tried to calm myself down by taking a big breath. By now, I am too tired and found a resting place to sleep for the night.

Sunrise approached. I did not have a good sleep as I was cold and hungry. I kept telling myself that I needed to find the white flower to break the curse and this will keep my family and town safe from the dragon.

The path becomes more narrow. It soon becomes a plank bolted to the sheer wall of the mountain face. I saw a long plank and my heart pounded even faster now.

As I walked on the planks, my legs became wobbly. My teeth were chattering like castanets. The planks were creaking and I was nervous. Suddenly I missed my footing and fell, a monkey came out from nowhere, swinging by to save me. I was relieved. I use the vines to climb back to flat ground. By now, I am all sweaty and tired.

,

The monkey spoke to me and said, “ You are destroying my habitat and I have no place to live. Please go back and tell your people to stop doing it.” he then swung back into the forest. I started to feel sad and guilty. I should do something about it. I could plant new trees and flowers.

I continued my journey and I saw the dragon ahead of me. She did not look angry anymore. She was petting her three magical eggs. I wonder if maybe she was angry because the townsfolk were trying to steal her eggs? The dragon had yellow eyes and a red long tail and she was sitting at the top of the mountain. Her eggs were golden brown and beside it was the white flower. The dragon told me that the white flower was useless to remove the curse. The wise woman just wanted me to go up the mountain to see the destruction done by humans. These eggs will be the last dragons left in the HuangShan Mountain that will be born in a deforested land. And after which, dragons will be extinct as their habitats will be gone..

I assured the dragon that I will do my best to share the words and take actions to prevent further destruction. I headed back down to my village to tell the story. The townsfolk all agreed to do their best to save the forest, so we started planting trees again. The dragon has never returned to the town ever. Everyone lives happily ever after then on.

Once Upon a Magical Mountain

ESF Glenealy School, Leung, Chriselle – 9

Once upon a time, there was a mountain named Himalaya that was known for its magic. Underneath the mountain lived a small and poor village named Huan Mei. Many people who lived there went to Himalaya to grant their wishes. They took advantage of Himalaya by using its magic everyday to get toys, books and other goods. Even though the villagers were thriving in Huan Mei, they wanted more. They set up a tourist attraction for everyone around the world to come and see the magic of China's mountains and charged \$800 per wish. It was expensive but the tourists were willing to pay because they wanted their wishes to be granted. Over the years, the villagers became greedier and everyday they raised the price of a wish. The magic began to fade away because of how many tourists were misusing Himalaya. After a few months all the magic of Himalaya vanished. After the magic was gone, Huan Mei became poor again because they didn't earn any cash, so Grandma Wong announced, "We must find someone to ask the mountain counselor for the magic gold coin or else we cannot use Himalaya's magic for 36 years!"

The mountain counselor

The Mountain Counselor is a nice and friendly person who is known for fixing all the magical mountains around China. For every magical mountain, the Counselor has a magical gold coin which brings back the magic to every broken mountain. The Counselor once said "If you lose your mountain's magic then you may use the gold coin, only if you promise to never misuse the mountain's magic again. You must come to my home, Mount Shu, to retrieve the gold coin."

Jun

Grandma Wong struggled to think of someone who could bring the magic back, but then, an idea randomly popped out in her head while she was taking a bath! She could ask Jun! The smartest and bravest 13 year old in town. Jun was a Chinese girl who lived in the orphanage for almost 11 years and had become the bravest girl in Huan Mei. She was known for being an extreme risk-taker and was sweet and confident. Grandma Wong was sure Jun would be brave enough to help save the village!

Convincing Jun

"Jun, I have a big favour to ask you. Could you please hike up to Mount Shu and ask the Mountain Counselor how to get Himalaya's magic back?" asked Grandma Wong. I promise you a good reward! "I would love to help you but I am afraid the only thing I want right now is a family." replied Jun. "Then I will get you a family!" said Grandma Wong. "But how? Who would want to adopt a teenager?" Jun asked sadly. "You will see! I shall grant you your reward, I promise." Grandma Wong winked in reply. "If you promise me a family once I get back, I will do it." Said Jun.

Mount Shu, here I come!

Jun thought about the trip all night, tossing and turning on her bed while thinking about the long trip tomorrow. The next morning, Jun packed her bags with some snacks from Grandma Wong, said goodbye to all her friends and headed out. It was one straight road ahead so Jun walked and walked until she became hungry. Jun took out her potato crisps and started to munch until her chewing muscles became tired. Jun saw many eye-catching things that she had never seen before, such as a beautiful koi fish, a frog as green as grass, blue birds that flew gracefully in the sky, a wonderful glowing apple tree and much more! Jun walked with a skip in her step and wondered what Grandma Wong meant when she said "You will see." Soon later, Jun had walked 6 hours already! She was extremely delighted to see that she was only 1 hour away from Mount Shu!

The arrival

When Jun arrived at the top of Mount Shu, she walked over to a magnificent looking palace. She went in and asked the counselor, "Sir, me and my village have misused all the magic for Himalaya, may I please use the gold coin?" "Of course you may, but promise me that you will never misuse Himalaya's magic again." The Mountain Counselor said wisely. "Thank you so much Mountain counselor, this means a lot to me." Jun exclaimed.

“No problem, would you like a ride home too? We can ride in my helicopter!” Asked the Mountain Counselor.
“Oh yes please! That sounds great.” Said Jun gratefully.

Helicopter ride home

Jun slept most of the trip because she was exhausted, so the Mountain Counselor gently put the magical gold coin in Jun’s bag. When Jun woke up, he said “Ah good afternoon! I put the gold coin in your bag. Just shine it against one of the rocks on Himalaya and the magic will be back in a jiffy!” Jun smiled and replied, “I will make sure to do that when I get back, thank you so much!”

Home sweet home

Jun could see everyone in the village cheering for her and yelling “Grandma Wong, Jun is back!” Jun got off the helicopter, thanked The Mountain Counselor and quickly headed to Grandma Wong’s place. “Grandma Wong! I’m back!” Yelled Jun. “Jun dear! How did it go?” Asked Grandma Wong. “It went great, I got the coin and all you need to do is shine it against a rock on Himalaya and the magic will be back really fast!” Squealed Jun. “Wow Jun, thank you so much! Let’s go fix Himalaya.” Jun and Grandma travelled up the mountain together and shined the coin on the first rock they could see. 3 hours later, the magic came back and the sky turned sunnier than ever.

In the end, Jun got her rewarded and Grandma Wong was the one who adopted her. They all lived happily ever after in wonderful Huan Mei.

Thank you for taking the time to read my story.

The Chinese Fish

ESF Glenealy School, Toe, Roxie

A long time ago, there was a fish the color of the fish was yellow he is 40 years old and his name was yu yu the fish. He never get to go to different places because he was too slow and he could not get to work. His office in the sea was closed, he did not go to the office for a year. He started this situation on 2020 in january 1 so he was fired from the office. But his boss hired him back.

When yu yu woke up the time was 9:00 he was suppose to wake up at 7:00 he rushed he was too slow, but another fish came to yu yu. The other fish that came to yu yu his name his yo yo his color is blue he is 30 years old. Yo yo was younger than yu yu so yo yo helped yu yu go to yu yu's office

By the time yu yu has arrived it was 12:00 when he got to his boss's office, he was disappointed in yu yu the boss got very angry yu yu was crying. But yo yo helped yu yu pranked the boss and they success. But actually yo yo and yu yu are brothers. The boss is a fish he is 60 years old his name is fu fu.

After work yu yu went back home yo yo followed yu yu. Yu Yu did not know yo yo is yu yu younger brother. When the boss woke up he wanted to let all of his staffs band yu yu from the office. Yo yo thought that yu yu's boss is a bad evil fish. Yu yu's boss is always negative he is never positive and he damage the whole sea but the boss can live in the evil sea. The real boss of yu yu he is 70 years old his name is fo fo he was always positive fo fo is fu fu's older brother fu fu is also very , very mean and evil.

The next morning yu yu and yo yo woke up they sneakily went to the office fu fu is not there anymore but yo yo has a tracker it tracks the boss only yo yo is a an inventor. Yu yu and yo yo have jobs to do. They don't get to see each other monday to friday they can see each other when they come back. On saturday and sunday they can take a break. Now yu yu is working for his invention. Yo yo is also an inventor he is working on a tracker that can track people who hurts his brother and his younger family members.

By the time yu yu and yo yo had a great time together and there family members they had dinner together and had a dance party under the sea. The stayed up until 2:00 am.

AND THEY LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER!

The Huangshan Secret Cavern

ESF Glenealy School, Wat, Jake

The summer holidays had just started and me and Charlie were very excited. We were going to one of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites (Huangshan) for our summer holiday! We rode the express train to the Huangshan City station. "Let's start exploring now!" said Charlie after we had arrived. "Good idea!" I said. In the end, we decided to take a tour of Huangshan and the city surrounding it.

"First, we will take a short helicopter ride around Huangshan City." said the tour guide. "Wow!" we both gasped in awe. As we looked out of the window, we saw wide green valleys, shining and glittering rivers, huge majestic mountains, multicoloured fields, and tiny buildings surrounding us as we took off from the helipad. "This is one of the best views I have ever seen in my life!" I declared loudly.

"Next, we will ride a private scenic train that will take us around Huangshan." announced the tour guide after we had landed. "Yay!" Charlie said. "All aboard!" said the tour guide. The train chugged its way through forests, over rivers, around lakes, under tunnels, and finally came to a stop next to a small, private pier. "What's this?" I asked Charlie. "Ask the tour guide, I don't know." He replied.

"To wrap up our tour, we are taking a private ferry to the famous Huangshan, because a few weeks ago, a lake mysteriously formed around it." the tour guide explained. "Yay!" I said. "Oh, ok." Charlie said in a disappointed voice, because he disliked it. "We arrived!" I declared. "Yay!" Charlie exclaimed. "I will stay here while you explore the mountain." the tour guide said. "Ok!" we both said.

We walked all around the mountain, before coming to a stop at a cavern that was hidden behind the mountain. "Ooh, look!" Charlie said. "Should we explore it?" I asked cautiously. "Yes, definitely!" Charlie replied. We climbed in slowly, and cautiously approached the opening. We saw..... thousands of solid gold coins, pure silver goblets, diamond crowns, and countless pieces of jewelry all stacked up in a neat pile! It seemed as if Huangshan was actually hollow! "This is great! We're rich!" Charlie shouted with glee.

Suddenly, there was a loud bang and a long growl. "What's going on?" I asked. "I don't know!" trembled Charlie. Right beside Charlie, a massive plume of fire erupted out of..... A dragon's mouth! "AAAARRRRGGGGHHHH!" we both screamed. "Run!" I shouted. We instantly ran as fast as we could, and hid behind a crack in the wall. "Are we safe here?" Charlie asked quietly. "No, we need to get out of here quickly!" I whispered. "How do we get out, though?" asked Charlie. "The dragon closed the door, so.... We can dig a hole out of this cave!" I said.

We instantly started digging a hole through the loose soil in the cave until.... We reached something hard. "What is it?" I asked. "Maybe it's more treasure!" said Charlie, always trying to look on the bright side. "Actually, it looks more like a concrete wall." I commented. "How are we going to get out of here now?" Charlie asked in a hopeless voice. Boom! Boom! The dragon was searching for us! "We need a plan B quick!" I whispered. "How about trying to pull the door up?" said Charlie. "It might be the worst plan in the world, but it is our only hope, so let's try it!" I decided quickly. "Ok, plan in action!" Charlie declared excitedly.

"Heave!" Charlie said. "It's so heavy!" I commented. The door started to creak open the tiniest crack. "Keep going!" I exclaimed! Suddenly, there was another jet of fire from the dragon! He had found us! "Duck!" screamed Charlie. "My hair nearly got burnt!" I exclaimed. "Keep pulling!" We both shouted. The dragon forcefully snatched Charlie off the ground and lifted him slowly up to.... His mouth! "What should I do?" I asked Charlie worriedly. "Look inside your bag!" He shouted back. "There should be a small marble in there. Take it out." Charlie added. "What do I do with the marble thingy?" I shouted. "Peel the wrapping paper off, and then eat the ball inside. It will allow you to talk to animals and mythical creatures." Charlie replied. "Great!" I exclaimed.

Just when Charlie was about to be eaten, we both swallowed the translator candy and then I shouted in my top voice: "Don't eat Charlie!". The dragon's hand stopped right in front of his mouth. "Why?" The dragon asked me. "I haven't had anything to eat for days in a row!" he added. "Oh, we have tons of food in our backpacks." I offered. "Thanks for offering!" the dragon said. "Let's eat a picnic!" Charlie declared.

When we had finished eating the picnic, we decided to tell the dragon why we were here. After we finished, the dragon said “I can take you on a ride around Huangshan as a tour.”. “Really!” We gasped. “Yes!” said the dragon.

“Wow!” We gasped in awe. “This is even better than the short helicopter ride we rode!” Charlie said. The dragon flew us around Huangshan City, as passer-byers fainted when they saw a real life dragon. We landed on the Huangshan Airport. “Thank you for taking us on a ride!” We both said. “No problem!” Said the dragon. “See you next time!” We all said. “Come again soon!” The dragon added. “Where is the tour guide?” Said Charlie as we rode the express train back to Shanghai. “I don’t know! Should we go back and help her?” I exclaimed. “I don’t think so, the tour guide can find her way back to the Huangshan City Station.” Charlie replied. “Ok.” I said, glad that we were on our way back to our home.

The Children's Garden

ESF Glenealy School, Yoon, Seung Joon

The thieves marched in broad daylight. It was 1937. Thick fog clouded the air, and a light breeze was blowing gently, tickling our cheeks. A mass of distant brown figures rolled towards the mountain pass leading up to us. They held their dirty steel guns upwards, slicing the air like porcupine quills. Lin, my brother, and I with our fellow guerillas from Hongcun village hunkered down in our cave, watching the soldiers.

The night before, the General looked out of the window of his newly-built house in Hongcun. The moonlight cleared his mind. Small raids and traps by child guerillas in Huangshan had escalated into attacks on meetings and food robberies. He thought of his own 10 year old son, and his beautiful wife, with her silvery laugh. He dimly remembered a quieter age, when he was a small kid without a care in the world to worry about. But, once again, he pushed down his feelings as quickly as they surfaced. Tomorrow, he would attack.

The night before, I lay gazing up at the night sky towards the comforting moon, floating above me like a little white pearl. 'We can do it! You must never lose hope!' said a part of my brain. 'There is no hope. The adults were right. Go home.' said another, more logical, and as it turned out, a more convincing part of my brain. "There's no turning back now." I said. There was a sigh of silk as Lin and I turned to watch our sleeping team. The mountain had been our garden, our home. Memories flooded. We laughed and told jokes around a roaring campfire, played hide-and-seek in the dense bamboo forest, and raced each other up and down the spiralling granite stairs built around the towering peaks. My brother and I smiled as we looked up at the whorls, loops and textures of the cave ceiling. They looked so powerful, yet soothing. Eternal. Soldiers can burn down a house, but not Huangshan.

High up on the peak, a voice rang out. "The troops are coming!" Ling cocked her head towards the sound. Her eyes widened. "We have to escape this place." "No." said her brother firmly, slowly raising a tattered sleeve. "Ling, I have a better idea..."

The General and his men slowly marched up the narrow pass leading up the mountain. Little did he know that children were watching from above, waiting for the moment to strike. As the brigades marched single-file, the air began to thicken, and the soldiers began to shiver from the growing cold. The General was new to this foreign atmosphere, and he too began to grow uncertain of his plan. Suddenly, when the brigades were crossing a rickety wooden bridge, boulders the size of cannonballs rained down on them, causing the troops to wobble and tumble across the wooden planks. Many fell into the cloud of mist below. Before the soldiers could even spot the attackers, they had vanished.

An unmistakable gunshot rang across the air. High up on a stone ledge, we watched as the troops rattled up the pass. Soon, blurry shadows of men became visible through the thick fog. I shivered as their piercing eyes scanned the area. However, the mist hid us from sight. "They should be here. Find them!" came a voice. Waves of soldiers came charging towards our hiding place. But as the brigades came rushing towards us, pandemonium erupted. Loaded coils of daggers sprang up and soldiers stumbled and flailed across the leafy ground. Camouflaged nets gave way to hollow pits as deep as two grown men.

"Attack!" We roared. We grabbed our guns, and fired downwards. Others shoved boulders and logs, which crunched and splintered over the screaming soldiers. As each of us ran out of ammunition, we resorted to slingshots, arrows, pots and pans. Soon, all that was left of what was once an army of metal and flesh was lumps in holes and the smell of fear.

The boiling feeling of hatred and anger inside of the General burst out of him. He took out his pistol and began firing into the sky. The howling of his troops and the cries of the children did not fade. All was lost.

The General sprinted blindly until he collapsed by a wooded stream. As his anger gradually evaporated, he noticed the peaceful chirping of birds and the quiet rushing of a waterfall. He closed his eyes. He fought to keep the

image of his family in mind. With slow, controlled movements, he filled his pockets with rocks. He laid down in the cool water. The aches subsided as he breathed in deeply.

The troops were gone. Shaking like leaves, we returned to our village. I rushed to the village prison and opened the one at the end of the hall. "Hello?" I whispered. "Ling? Is that you?" came a hoarse response. My parents rushed up and hugged me. "Are you fine? Where is Lin?" I hung my head. "He's..." I choked. "Lin is dead. The soldiers killed him while he was luring them to our traps." I had tears in my eyes. My mother and father, somehow, still continued to look at me. My parents began to cry too as they hugged me harder.

As I write this, we now live on a distant, bumpy highland, where we grow herbs and hunt deer. After the battle, we moved here to start another life — ragged but hopeful. My brother is buried in our backyard, where I can visit him everyday. Every night, I stare at the shadowy outline of Huangshan. I think of the abandoned cave, quietly whistling every night, like a gentle giant, a friend to us all. I feel my eyes beginning to close. And just before I drift into a deep sleep, I see the moon, bright as ever, looking just like it did the night before our battle.

The Lost Emerald

ESF Kennedy School, Carter, Olivia – 10

“Keep climbing,” Jennifer told herself. “Keep going, you are nearly there.” She looked across the ocean and saw a small island, “No! Jennifer, you have to keep focusing on the hike.” spoke David, her best friend. Jennifer and David walked side by side up China’s towering, magical mountains on a quest.

1 and a half weeks earlier

Jennifer sat down at the table with her mum, eating her morning eggs. “Hey mom, are you alright?” Jennifer was genuinely concerned for her sick mother. “Yea Jenny, just feeling a little nauseous.” Her mother said while her voice was quaking and cracking. “I believe you have a rare illness but I’m not sure how to cure it, we could call a doctor.” They called the doctor and Mr. Phillips picked up and said “Ahh yes, you need to find the lost emerald of the HuangShan mountains in order to save your mother. You have 2 weeks to find it. Good luck!” then he put down the phone. “Hey mum, I can plan a trip with David and see if he’s up for the adventure?” Jennifer suggested. “Oh, uh” she paused then replied. “No honey, it’s too dangerous. I bet it’s a myth.” Later that night Jennifer packed a large bag, opened her bedroom window and climbed out to go to the HuangShan mountains, in order to save her sick mother.

1 and a half weeks later

“Jennifer? Hello...? We have to keep moving” David was getting annoyed with Jennifer. “Oh uh yea?” She had snapped out of her day dream, “So let’s go!”. They climbed the tall, majestic mountain for hours upon hours. Jennifer moaned “Ugh when is this over”. They finally reached the mountain top. The mountain was exciting with all sorts of flowers and rocks. The side of it was steep but very tall and majestic. Jennifer slumped down onto the bright green grass but before long was back on her feet. “Oh. My. Gosh! Is that a...” but before David could finish the sentence, Jennifer screamed “DRAGON!”

It was true. Right in front of them there was a fierce, bold, colourful dragon. The dragon sat down and snuggled in between Jennifer and David. “So he’s nice?” David said with a confused look on his face. “I guess?” Jennifer didn’t waste any time and started petting the dragon. “Let’s name him..... Charlie!” Jennifer exclaimed.

Hours had passed with Charlie and they had completely forgotten about the emerald. The next morning they woke up on the soft grass with Charlie laying next to them in a ball. “Omg! The emerald, we totally forgot! We need to search.” Jennifer was terrified and nervous for her mother. David wondered if Charlie would help. “Maybe Charlie can help?”. Jennifer woke Charlie up and explained her mother and the emerald but Charlie wasn’t happy, he growled so loud Jennifer’s mother could probably hear it from miles away!

David and Jennifer ran, weaving past rocks and trees until finding a cave entrance at the edge of the mountain. Jennifer turned around to see Charlie close behind, David grabbed her arm and ran into the cave. They tucked behind a corner and had lost sight of Charlie. Then they realised they were in a dark, cold, long cave and suddenly 1000 eyes awoke from the darkness. “Ahhhh!” Jennifer screamed. In one direction of the cave there were so many bats they couldn’t count! And only the other there was Charlie who had just spotted them in the distance. Before long they were lost, there were 4 hallways. “What do we do?” Jennifer asked whilst shaking very noticeably. David was walking in one of the halls, “Wait up!”.

There was a small light at the end of the tunnel, so little that they barely noticed. The tunnel was long, slim, dark and cold. In other words, not very pleasing. Jennifer squealed when she saw a small green gem which was producing the light. “The lost emerald! Let’s go!” Jennifer and David were dancing around until they were pulled into a small room with rusty walls and a tightly locked door. Stern, mean, deep, a man’s voice said “I see you have arrived, but you will never escape.” Before shutting the door and locking it. “Oh no no no!” David was highly panicking at this point. Jennifer just sat down and took out a hair clip from her short, black hair. Jennifer was a part of the girls scout and she had been in the group since she was 9 years old. She picked the lock and it had opened but they could hear footsteps coming closer and closer until the man from earlier had appeared. He had 2 bowls of cold soup that seemed to be made of potatoes. “Here. You’ll be needing it”. He said while passing them the bowls. “Thanks?” Jennifer said with a quiet little voice.

Once they were sure he was gone they opened the door and ran towards the emerald. David grabbed it and it sent shivers down his spine. It felt like he had been electrocuted but he didn’t care. He gently put it in his pocket and they

ran as fast as they're legs could run. "Hey! Come back!" The man said while chasing after them. They got to the intercepting point and didn't think but ran down the bat alley. They saw the light at the end of the tunnel but before they could exit the cave, Charlie blocked the exit. "Charlie, calm down." Jennifer spoke in a very gentle voice. "I will give you food" she said whilst reaching into her bag and grabbing some nuts. She tossed the nuts next to him and Charlie munched away. Jennifer and David ran past him following the path they came from in the first place. They had a clear path home so they ran into the sunset with the lost emerald of the HuangShan mountains.

The Phoenix of Fire

ESF Kennedy School, Chen, Claire – 8

There was once a steep mountain called HuangShan, with a statue of a phoenix on the top. One day before sunrise, the whole mountain shook. People screamed, looked up and saw an enormous phoenix with feathers red as fire had suddenly appeared. The people flooded out of their houses and ran away from the mountain, never to return. The phoenix was very shocked when people ran away in horror. What made her that scary? Where did she belong? Bravely she set out on a quest to find her family and friends.

First, she flapped her golden wings, and decided to go on a journey in the forest where no one was able to come out alive. She tiptoed in silently and found a little bird stuck in the sticky swamp, and she rescued it. The bird said her name was Twinklelight and they continued their journey through the forest together. When they walked past the large cherry tree, they found two pairs of eyes shining in the moonlight. They belonged to the Wolf of Darkness. Then they saw another wolf running toward them, roaring angrily at the scary wolf. The two wolves started to battle with their claws and sharp teeth. The phoenix put Twinklelight on a high branch and opened wide her beautiful golden eyes. With a strike of the phoenix's powerful stare, the Wolf of Darkness crumbled to ashes.

The Wolf of Destiny thanked them, and decided to join the team to find the phoenix's friends and family. Next, the phoenix set across the fountain of youth, a fountain with water that could make you immortal. Twinklelight and the phoenix flew across the fountain, but the Wolf of Destiny ran around the fountain. So twinklelight and the phoenix waited patiently. Finally, the wolf met them at the foot of the mysterious mountain.

The wolf told them they could go to the gorge of light on HuangShan. There was a god that would grant your wish if it was pure. So they decided to go to the other side of the mountain where there was a path called THE PATH OF HOPE. It led straight to the god's house. As they were walking, the wolf told them about the dangerous path. There are three traps that they needed to cross. The first one was a trap hole in the ground. A minute later they dropped right into the trap hole as it was covered by leaves.

The phoenix and Twinklelight tried to fly out but there was sticky slime all over the bottom. Suddenly, a bucket of magic water poured down, and a ladder dropped down. Now their feet were free the wolf quickly climbed up the ladder and the phoenix and Twinklelight flew out. They found a beautiful dragoness. She said her name was Sparkle, the princess of the silver dragons. She had pink, watery eyes, a jewelled crown and silvery, white skin.

They continued their mission on the path. On the way, they saw a talking stone and a raven named Cleverwing. As soon as Cleverwing saw them, he hopped over to them and squawked "I sell everything here! Come and take it for free!" But the friends ignored him and ran over to the crying stone. The stone explained between sobs he lost his glowing gem, a gem of power. But in evil hands it could destroy everything. They decided to take a detour to the land of a thousand nightmares where Evileye the evil wizard reigned over.

They went to the cold, dark castle of evil nightmares. On the door hung a sign that said, " help wanted." The friends decided to let the phoenix dress like an old lady and find the gem in the castle. So Cleverwing cut some holes for eyes in the soft skin clothes and the phoenix put them on. Next, he drew some eyebrows and a nose, and the phoenix put on a wig with a bun and some decorations. Finally, she put on a dress, a mask and a rose-patterned apron.

The phoenix nervously knocked on the door. With a screech, the door opened and a nasty voice shrieked "come in you filthy rubbish!" The phoenix ran down the hallways and finally found the gem in a safe in the cellar. She was about to leave when a bunch of phantom knights chased her, so she took off her disguise and flew down the path to her friends.

To show their gratitude, the raven and the stone agreed to help the phoenix. Next they entered a forest made of shiny white bones, but when the phoenix stepped on a stone and an enormous boulder came flying toward them! They bent down quickly and the boulder missed them. Finally, they saw a fountain that said its water was tastier than chocolate. But when they drank the water, it tasted just like onions! Now they passed all three traps.

They continued walking, they arrived in the temple where the god lives, and the phoenix bowed down to the god and said, "I need to ask for your help, do you know where my family and friends are?" The god told them that her family was at the cave of light right next to the temple, her old friends were just around her!!!! She surprisingly looked around at Twinklelight, THE WOLF OF DESTINY, Sparkle, Cleverwing and the big stone. She cried tears of joy. Her friends dried her tears and decided to help the phoenix reach the cave.

They travelled across the river to the rocky cliff named The Kingdom of Golden Phoenix. She found her family in the underground cave of the kingdom. King Golden and Queen Golden cried with happiness and said that they were looking for their dear daughter for ten years. Suddenly, the phoenix realized that her name was Prettyfeathers, the lost princess of the kingdom. The king and queen honoured Prettyfeather's friends as defenders of the kingdom. Together they lived happily ever after.

Lily's Magical Stone

ESF Kennedy School, Chu, Nadia – 9

In the magical, misty mountains of China, there lived a girl called Lily. She was 11 years old and she lived all by herself. Lily's parents had died in a plane crash when she was young and had left Lily a small, cosy cabin in the magical, misty mountains.

Lily was a kind, open-minded, adventurous girl. Actually, Lily was not really alone, she had Luna, a light-grey dachshund. Lily liked all animals and she wished that she could be one of them, one day. Lily loved exploring the mountains and listening to the music created by all living creatures.

One morning when Lily was venturing in the mountains as usual, a cave came to her eyes. It looked damp and the entrance was covered in oak leaves. "Should I go in? Or... should I not?" Lily moaned to herself. "Maybe just 50 meters." Lily soon convinced herself. As she walked inside the cave, suddenly she saw a bright pink light catching her attention. She followed the beam, and to her surprise, she saw a glowing pink stone floating on a puddle of water. Lily picked up the stone. Before she had a chance to examine the stone, Lily felt its temperature and all of a sudden, it cracked open in her palm. A voice suddenly came out: "Lily, you now own this magical animal stone! This will allow you to speak to any animals and have all the magical powers you desire! The uni-doggies are in danger. They need your help. Come back here tomorrow." Lily was awestruck, she thought it was all a dream. But this... could be a sweet dream!

The next day, she woke up at 5 a.m. She just couldn't wait to hurry back to the cave again. She brought herself some essentials and carried the magical pink stone in her bag. In the cave, at the same spot where she found the stone yesterday, she saw a glowing door with a sign. "This way to the land of uni-doggies".

Lily murmured to herself: "Wow! This is unbelievable! I feel like I am in my dreams!" As she walked through the glowing portal, she was pulled into the land of uni-doggies. The land of uni-doggies was full of dogs with horns on their heads that looked like unicorns. The uni-doggies were colourful. Their horns were shiny and where magical powers lied. But what was strange to Lily was that some parts of this amazing land were a bit too white to be true. "Hello!" a uni-doggie came to greet Lily, "My name is Emma. Welcome to the magical Rainbow Island! We need your help!"

"Hi! My name is Lily. What happened to this island?" Lily asked "Well, come with me and I will explain it." Emma started to lead her way to the palace. Lily followed Emma. Along the way, a few uni-doggies joined them to the palace. "This palace is spectacularly... white!" Lily couldn't believe her eyes. Once they were inside Emma explained: "We have a few rainbow gems that give colours to the Island and us magical powers. But yesterday an evil dragon came and burned a small part of the precious stones!" "We tried to fight with the dragon but he had a mighty breath and he... just... flew away with no damage!" Emma sobbed as she spoke. Holding her fist, "This is terrible!", Lily said. "We know. How do you think we can stop this dragon?" Emma groaned. "I'm not sure yet, but let's work this out!" Lily answered.

A thought suddenly came to Lily, "Do you think if there is anything that could destroy the dragon or anything that could scare the dragon away?" "We need to find something that can guard the stones but can also defeat the dragon at the same time," Lily said. "Oh! This is a great idea! I know the dragon is afraid of the water!" Emma said excitedly. "This is perfect!" Lily nodded, "Let's protect the gems with water. Let's see if we can build a rain curtain for Rainbow Island!" "Yes! The other uni-doggies can help too! If we work together, I think we can complete it before the dragon comes again today." Emma continued, "Let's go tell the others."

Lily followed Emma to the top of the palace, where there was a rainbow speaker. A rainbow speaker!! What a thing! Lily could have never imagined such a thing in her life. But again, with Rainbow Island and the magical stone, everything seemed to be possible. "May I please have your attention uni-doggies? We need to defeat the dragon! We need you to build a rain curtain. This way we can kill the dragon and keep the gems safe!" As Lily spoke through the speaker, the uni-doggies had started building as instructed.

Lily and Emma also helped to fill the room where the gems were kept with water. Once all these were done, everyone hid and waited for the dragon to come. This was an intense moment of waiting and hoping all the work that was done would work.

When the dragon finally arrived at the Island, everyone was holding their breaths while watching the dragon breathing fire. But as soon as the water from the rain curtain touched the dragon's wings, it let out a humongous roar and fell to the ground.

The uni-doggies were delighted and thanked Lily. That night, they had a grand feast to celebrate success. The uni-doggies gave Lily a wand that sparkled in every colour of the rainbow. Not long, Lily had to say goodbye to the Rainbow Island and all the uni-doggies. Feeling exhausted, Lily fell asleep immediately once she reached home. In her dream, she saw that all the colours in the Rainbow Island were restored and every uni-doggies was as happy as they could be. The next morning, Lily was woken up by Luna, noticing she was holding a grey stone in one hand and a stick in the other hand.

The Reflection of the Moon

ESF Kennedy School, Dudgeon, Lucinda – 11

The wind howled, encircling my face, prising my ears open and screeching so hard that I heard a ringing in them. Jagged rocks pierced my limbs. I felt harsh pangs in my stomach, telling me that I hadn't eaten for days. My eyes, blurred with tears, could only make out the vague outline of swirling black clouds, teasing and tormenting me. All I could do was bite my chapped lips, and feel my life slip away. But my time wasn't over, not just then.

My cheeks tingle and I felt a warmth spread through my body, starting from my toes up. Hearing a faint buzzing in my ear, I swat a fly away and sit up. My hair cascades down my back in ebony ripples, striking against my skin, (slightly browned from being in the sun all day, every day.) Standing up, I lean out of the roughly cut window of my little hut. "Happy birthday!" I whisper to myself, then make my way across the room. The view from the window sticks in my mind. Even though I've seen it almost every day for the past 4 years, something seems special about today. The lush green valleys, so welcoming and inviting. Above that, towering hunks of rock. The mountains are slightly less welcoming, but protectors, brave and true, all the same. White clouds, graceful as dancing maidens, their movements willowy, flit around the sky, shielding the eye from the top of the peaks.

I step out of the residence. The grass is dewy, and feels delicious on my toes. I throw my head back, and enjoy the blissful feeling whilst I can. Soon it will be winter and there will be no more glorious weather and fresh fruits, but more huddling around a poorly made fire, barely keeping it alive, and nibbling on the last of the rations.

I make the rest of the short journey to another hut, adjacent to mine and tap on the door lightly. A grunt of approval escapes from the crack under it, and I enter. As per usual I survey the place and see a lanky man bent over a hunk of wood acting as a table, his tongue sticking out and eyes watering, face lined and wrinkled with concentration. He holds a fragile brush between his thumb and forefinger and makes some tentative, careful strokes before placing it down.

"Ying Yue. Good morning." He doesn't smile but I can tell by the crease in his eyelids that he needs to see me. I place down my breakfast offering (some plums in a ceramic bowl I had cut yesterday) and he stares at me and says my name again. "Ying Yue."

Reflection of the moon. I was given this name because at ten years old, I was found alone on a mountain with no food or water, abandoned and speaking a strange dialect no one had ever heard before. No idea of my name or who I was. I don't remember anything, but as I have been told (only once) I was found by a young man and taken here.

Dai Hung, a poet with a spare hut taught me our language little by little. I had no one to practice with (my saviour had disappeared soon after I was discovered) so I conversed with the chattering birds, humble trees and patient clouds. Now I can read and write nearly as well as Dai Hung can. Though my words cannot create pictures or paint images, like his can. I tried but my words are too rough, and the edges are sharp and won't bend. His words are smooth like silk, and he can mould them like mud into the right shape. I do not care. He provides me with blankets, which I stitch into clothes. Every morning and evening I give him something to eat. Sometimes he refers to me in poems, as "my companion". He has never called me that in real life. He is a man of few words, saving them for his poems.

I am a girl of many words. I sing them to the clouds, and scratch them into the mud. Nature doesn't mind if they are jagged or rough, because they are too. I am wild, and I belong outdoors, and I respect Dai Hung for giving it to me. His one rule is that I am not allowed past the edges of the rocks, shielding me from the sea. I have nearly explored everything else and I feel a gnawing in me to get out and escape into the blue.

Dai Hung's eyes are still upon me, so I reply to his repetition of my name. "Yes?"

Clearing his throat, he says the words that implement complete horror into my heart.

"In one year, I am leaving. You are sixteen today, so now I can train you to be my apprentice. Even when I leave, you can write more poems. My friend has to make some money, and your work can be published under his name. His son will travel here later, to make sure that you are still working, and being respectable."

I will never reach the sea, and my jagged words will have to be moulded, against their will.

China's Mystical Mountain's

ESF Kennedy School, Grant, Claudia – 8

Up above the cold but fluffy clouds, there lies the mystical mountains of China. It's a very delightful place you see. It's where dragons soar and humans ride along on their backs, high above the clouds lie very mysterious dragons. Some are female, some are male. Some are old and some are young. One of the dragons was named Rose. The other dragons would admire her work but never ask if they could be friends. The other dragons were too busy soaring above the sky with their human buddy on them. All Rose did with her human buddy was take her to the top of misty mountains where she always studied and did her best work and her neatest.

On an ordinary day, many people would visit and find dinosaur bones all around the mystical mountains. The residents that live there keep the dragons as pets. Even Rose is a pet herself. Her owner's name is Kimmy. Kimmy is from Thailand, she has dark brown eyes, caramel smooth skin, and long dark chocolate hair. Kimmy really liked when Rose brought her to the top of the mountain. The view from this point was breath taking, magnificent and calm. She would enter a zone where she could focus and remember details of her historical events.

Rose would usually be on the top of Misty Mountain with Kimmy when she wasn't at school. Rose was in her cave room when the minister of the dragons trotted by. The minister of the dragon's name was Melodie. Melodie said, "What's wrong Rose?" Rose mumbled, "I wish Kimmy was with me now instead of attending her silly dumb school, she would be happier with me at the top of misty mountain." Then sniffled a little then sighed then Melodie saw a teardrop fall from her eye. Rose flew away fast as she could up to the top of misty mountains to try to avoid being annoyed by any other dragons or just needed some alone time. It was Friday and Rose wasn't in time to pick Kimmy up which was unusual for Rose.

When Kimmy finished school she went to the supermarket nearby to get some fruit for herself and her dragon Rose. She waited a couple of minutes for Rose. Just when Kimmy thought she wasn't going to show and she would have to walk, Rose arrived just in time and picked Kimmy up. She took her to her house for dinner. Rose dropped Kimmy off at her house and Kimmy said "Good night." She flew back to her den where she thought, as tomorrow was Sunday, they could do some stuff together.

When Rose woke up she came to see that she could fly 350 meters if she tried. She wanted to go to the Emperor's palace. She practiced and practiced but she wanted to go bigger once she nailed it, (which took a week or two) she wanted to glide with a human on her back. Kimmy couldn't find time for it because she had to study for her math test, history test and her English. Rose had to do it without help. She set an even bigger goal to fly past the Emperor's palace and glide to the next mountain. As she was pushing off, she collected heaps of speed. When Rose was pushing off the next mountain she went too fast and strained her wing badly. While she was falling she passed out. The last thing she remembered was that 5 or 4 dragons were there flying towards her as fast as they could before she fell into the lake below. It was scary, horrifying, dangerous, and terrifying but...

After the fall Kimmy came as fast as she could, running at her fastest. Kimmy said, "I am really sorry I ditched you. I got all my homework done so we can practice." Rose said, "We can't, my wing is hurt."

"But can we at least try," said Kimmy.

"Fine we can try again," said Rose. After that Rose had to have a long but peaceful nap because she had to rest but Kimmy also lay beside her fast asleep as they were both tired.

The next day...

They both agreed to try to do what Rose had planned. No matter what happened they both tried to do it but when it was time for the qualifying race/performance they were nervous. They hadn't even perfected it yet. They had courage though. When it was time to line up Rose and Kimmy were nervous, very nervous. They knew they could do it if they believed and had courage, otherwise they had no chance. They gave it their best shot. First they did their summer roll to launch and so far they were in the lead. Then they dodged the fireballs and went through the hoop. Then in the last round they gave everything they could. They did a back roll, belly flip, crazy loop and collected a lot of speed. Rose and Kimmy overcome the challenges. This time Rose did not strain her wing. She zoomed and won first place! She finally felt like she belonged. As for Kimmy whose real name was Kimaayra she made friends with the most popular girl in school Samantha Parkington. You're probably thinking they got what they wanted but the end not quite yet. The last thing they wanted was to discover who the mysterious dragons above the clouds were. They took off their hoods and it was the minister of Dragons as well as the minister of Humans. They were in shock but in a good way.

The Jade of the Emperor

ESF Kennedy School, Kim, Yeonsoo – 10

Master Fa droned on about something while I snored soundlessly sitting up. I could hear a faint giggling and a small chuckle. One from Chunhua and one from Biyu. It came through in my dream and the mouse I was dreaming about didn't squeak, but talked about stuff in Master Fa's deep voice.

"Blah blah blah blah blah blah"

My teacher, Master Fa, is nice enough but can still get angry when I sleep. I woke up just in time to see his eyes frowning at me. "I thought we agreed.... you wouldn't.... sleep!" He narrowed his eyes, and added, "I haven't seen your participation, or calligraphy books...." I just nodded and apologised to him and he sighed heavily, signalling dismissal. I swung the leather bag over my shoulder and ran out. As I walked past the village, something grabbed my bag.

"Wait!" I turned around and saw Chen behind me. Chen just grinned haughtily and smiled the same smile a snake would smile at its prey just before it attacked.

"You promised to bring coconut tofu..." Chen jerked his head and signalled Ling, his sister.

"Well, what do you think we should do this time?" He grinned. For someone named wide, or vast, his mind was not that big.

"How about a nice dunk in the lake?" Ling suggested, giggling. Her girlish laugh was enough to make me drown her.

"Nice!" He lifted me up by the arms and tried to swing me into the lake. But I dodged last second and kicked his stomach and flipped to the other side near where Ling was standing and pushed him in. Ling's giggles faded and her beautiful face showed signs of horror. I smiled and ran away. For laughing at me. For bullying me. But in the corner of my eye, I saw a gold coat glimmering on the side of the lake in the bamboo stalks. I thought I was just imagining it. I felt no remorse for pushing him. I just felt free. I ran silently because my horse was still in my stable. As soon as I got there, I burst into the inn, the aroma of oolong tea filling my nostrils. Mother was pouring rice wine for a middle-aged man dressed in respectable clothes.

"Hello Daiyu your food is already upstairs." She smiled wearily. "Say hello to General Yang."

"Hello Mother..." I looked at the man closely. He had a thin long scar, running down from his upper cheek to down his throat. It looked like a sharp knife had done it. On his side lay a small dagger.

"Actually, my name is Gang. Pleased to meet your little daughter." General Gang's voice was a deep, rumbling sound, like a powerful earthquake. I mumbled back a greeting and walked back to my room, when Gang said, "Wait." I groaned. All the times somebody said wait to me, I was either dunked into the water or snatched of my bag.

"Yes, sir." I paused and edged towards the room.

"Have you perhaps seen a ah, leopard around here?" He asked, twisting his mouth, something that looked almost like a smile. I thought back to the flash of gold I had seen. I wasn't sure if it was a leopard.

"No, sir." I lied, curious to see his reaction. When a thought filled me, I grabbed my bow and arrow and wore boy clothes. I told my mother I was going out and went outside to the stables. My horse, Beauty of Spring, or for short, Spring. The familiar white mare snorted. I had bought him coming back from tutoring's and he was so cheap I couldn't believe it. He was the most beautiful horse there, and I simply couldn't understand. Turns out he was wild. I tamed him by rewarding and he became as careful as a nobleman's horse. Spring snorted and I smiled.

"Sorry. We're not going to the pasture today." I said, stroking his neck. Spring snorted defiantly and whinnied.

"No." I said, this time more impatient. The pampered mare snorted and finally allowed me to ride, bareback on him. I clutched the rein and nodded, signalling a go. I arrived at the lake, searching around me for possible routes. I found a nobleman's clothes, probably Chen's. I saw a dirt bridge and slapped Spring's hindquarters. He immediately went faster and galloped through it. I heard a whimper and tied Spring to a tree.

"Stay here." I whispered firmly. I crept towards the sound of it.

A clouded leopard was injured with blood pooling at its side. A deep gash was embedded in it. The leopard had the same gold fur I had seen in the bamboo forest. With a quiet shock I realised it was the same leopard. Creeping hastily, I tiptoed nearer and nearer. The leopard let out a small whine and I sniffed. I actually didn't have to be quiet after all! I couldn't move. It tried to get away then, the most surprising thing happened. It turned over, licking the wound on its belly. I frantically ripped the silk clothes and wrapped the cloth over the creature's waist. Scarlet was spreading over the jade coloured silk. I scurried over, holding the leopard. I had no intention of turning him over to Gang. Then I remembered the scar. He asked me if I had seen a leopard around here. And thinking about it, there *was* talk in the town about the emperor's beloved leopard escaping. I looked at the leopard in my arms. The gash suddenly looked familiar. I had seen it earlier today... Yes! It was the dagger on the side of Gang. But why would Gang attack it? Wasn't he working for the emperor? Or maybe the emperor wanted the leopard replaced, but didn't

want to seem heartless? I decided that was right and set off to find him. I have let my mother know that I am going and will return weeks later.

The Mountain Egg

ESF Kennedy School, Lee, Julianne – 9

‘WHERE IS THE EGG?’ King Jin roared at his subjects.

‘W—we don’t know, sir!’ stuttered a frightened looking courtier.

Queen Lan, the dragon queen, sat on her throne weeping and looking at a picture of her treasured egg. ‘My poor little dragonet, he must be so scared!’ she wailed.

Suddenly, a dragon flew in through a window, out of breath, ‘King Jin, I have some information about the egg! Sorcerer Lei has kidnapped the egg and he’s going to use a magic spell to make it evil!’

Everyone gasped. ‘Bring in Warrior Zhan! I must see her...’ King Jin said.

‘Slow down, Rongyang! You’re going too fast!’ Rongyin said, running to keep up with her twin.

‘If we want to get to the top of this mountain and find Father, we have to move quickly! Right now, a snail could go faster than you!’ her brother replied, chucking a pebble at her.

‘I’m going as fast as I can! I didn’t know the mountains of Huangshan were this big and rocky!’ Rongyin grumbled.

‘Oof!’ Rongyang tripped over a tree root and fell flat on his face.

‘HA! Now I bet you wish you’d gone slower!’ Rongyin chuckled.

The tree root twitched. Then it moved and the twins stopped arguing to see a huge shape appear out of the rock.

‘Um, Rongyang? I don’t think this is a rock...’ Rongyin mumbled quietly, backing away from the figure.

‘Well, well, well... what do we have here?’ came a voice, followed by a burst of flame.

‘W—we are Rongyang and Rongyin and we’re looking for our father, Sorcerer Lei. We’ve been looking for him for years and we just found out that he’s been hiding in the mountains of Huangshan.’ Rongyin stuttered.

‘Hmm... He’s your father, you say?’ the shape said.

‘Err... yes?’ replied Rongyin.

‘Isn’t he very dangerous?’ the voice came again.

‘Yes, but he can’t hurt us with his magic, it won’t work since we’re family!’ Rongyang exclaimed impatiently.

The figure finally stepped out from the shadows and there was no mistaking what it was: a dragon. It had huge scaly wings and a whip sharp tail. Its eyes were a piercing, icy blue which studied the twins intently, ‘Then I might as well join you! I’m looking for him too. You see, I am Warrior Zhan. The king sent me on a quest to find his egg, the dragon prince who your father kidnapped.’

‘Really? That’s terrible! Let’s get going right away!’ exclaimed Rongyin.

‘Hmmm.... Are you sure about this, Rongyin?’ Rongyang mumbled suspiciously.

‘Hahaha! No one can stop me now! Not even King Jin! I have his precious prince and once I turn it evil, it’ll kill the king! He’ll be sorry for banishing me!’ the sorcerer cackled with glee.

‘Stop!’ Rongyang yelled, jumping out of their hiding place and dragging his sister out with him. ‘Don’t do this!’

‘How are you going to stop me?’ the sorcerer said chuckling.

‘Huyan luan yu!’ he yelled, and a blast of green light shot out of his wand and headed towards Rongyang and Rongyin.

But the glowing green ball just passed right through the twins. ‘What? How can this be? Who are you?’ Sorcerer Lei roared in disbelief.

‘We’re Rongyang and Rongyin, **Father**.’ Rongyang said defiantly.

‘Rongyang? Rongyin? Aren’t those the names I planned to give my kids? Are you my children?’ He asked disbelievingly.

‘Yes, Father.’ Rongyin said quietly.

‘So, you know? You know that the king banished me for injuring Queen Lan very badly? But it was an accident! It was a complex spell gone wrong. And I couldn’t even see you and tell you that I wasn’t the Royal Wizard anymore because you lived in the dragon kingdom. I wanted to take revenge on the king for banishing me and not even allowing me to see you children when you were born.’ he explained.

‘We know, Father! That’s why you have to come home! So, you can apologize! We know it was all a mistake. We love you! Please return the egg!’ Rongyin said, taking his hand.

‘But I’m banished, I can’t go back, the king will kill me!’ He protested.

‘No, I’ll take you there and explain what happened. Please hand over the egg.’ said Warrior Zhan quietly, stepping out of her hiding place.

‘Yes, Father. We believe that you are good.’ The twins said.

‘Okay. I’ll give you the egg.’ The sorcerer said reluctantly.

‘Warrior Zhan! Did you find my egg? Did you?’ exclaimed King Jin when he saw Warrior Zhan.

Warrior Zhan bowed to her king and presented the dragon egg to him. 'Yes I did, with the help of these courageous twins... and their father.'

The sorcerer stepped forward and bowed to the dragon king, 'I am deeply sorry, my king. I hope you can forgive me.'

The king replied joyously 'Of course! I have come to realize that it was all a mistake and you didn't mean to hurt Queen Lan. I am very sorry that I banished you.'

At that moment they heard a cracking noise; the egg was hatching! Out popped a tiny dragonet who squealed in delight when he saw his mother and father watching him and stroking his head. 'The dragon prince has hatched!'

King Jin bellowed in delight. 'My son has hatched!' And then the king asked, 'Rongyin, Rongyang, would you like to be the prince's official playmates?'

The twins answered in unison, 'Of course!'

And that is the story of Rongyang and Rongyin, the guardians of the Mountain Prince.

The Prophecy of Huangshan Mountain

ESF Kennedy School, Lee, Summer – 8

Allana—the sorceress—and her friends, Phoenix, Alexis, and Sammy were reading a book about their home, Huangshan mountain. It was in foreign language so Allana was reading it since she knew all sorts of languages. “In the biggest cave of the Huangshan mountain there was a dragon. There are loads of course, but one lived in the deepest area. It stood on top of a huge trapdoor. It guarded something. People attempted to try to get past the dragon. They obviously thought they’d somehow end up as an explorer and the bravest people in the world. But according to the demon scrolls, the treasure of the village of Huangshan, they only ended up as the dragon’s lunch,” Allana read. “What else does it say?” Phoenix asked. “Uuuh, I dunno. Something here in, Polish or something. Why did these people even write this book in foreign languages and other hard languages? Some parts are in Latin, some are in French, Spanish, Italian, Russian...,” Allana said, thoroughly confused. “Well, read the next part then,” Phoenix said. “All right. There are also a thousand more things guarding the mysterious treasure in the cave, again, according to the demon scrolls. Some may have glimpsed the treasure, but the reason they have no other book apart from this one is because nobody that went in that cave survived to tell the tale,” Allana translated the Russian texts. She squinted at a word. “THIS sentence is all wet and covered in mold,” Allana said. Alexis groaned. “Well, let’s do some—” Sammy started but he was cut off by a huge RUMBLING sound. The quartet inched closer to where the sound was coming from. Allana stared at a cave, a massive one like it says in the story. Sammy gasped. Alexis clapped his hands to his mouth. Phoenix almost fell down the cliff. “We need to go in,” Allana said definitely. “Okk,” Phoenix said, still holding on to the edge of the cliff. Phoenix pulled herself up and followed the gang into the cave. They explored deep and deep. Allana flashed out a bit of her magic light. When they were about at the heart of the cave, they saw something that made them stop in their tracks.

A DRAGON

Allana gasped. The dragon looked at her. She and her dragon had a HUGE battle that involved Allana’s magic. At the end, Allana won. But, that wasn’t the end of the adventure. Allana and her friends found a trapdoor. They looked at one another. They all nodded. They jumped in. A few moments later, the quartet ended up in a small, dusty little chamber. They looked around and Alexis found something. A prophecy. Alexis tapped Allana. Allana turned around sharply and saw the prophecy. Allana picked it up and read it. “The dragon will come to the village, and it may as well be the end, but one brave hero will save the place and the dragon will be well defeated,” Allana read the prophecy. Allana was dumbstruck. Within 10 minutes they were in the village and the dragon, like said in the prophecy, was there. It was destroying houses and hurting animals and burning crops. Allana ran, she jumped and casted a spell that was once used in the sorcerer war, firecube. The massive ball of fire Allana had summoned charged towards the dragon with a large whooshing sound. The firecube hit the dragon square in the chest, but there was no effect. Allana tried again. Another fail. She ended up casting a spell that defeated the dragon but made her fall to the floor. A week later Allana woke up on a bed in the hospital. Her friends were there. After Allana got full health back, they had all rebuilt the village and peace and happiness was stored in the village again. Allana from then quietly sat in a small hideout where she read spell books and practiced ancient spells in case something else happened. Other than that, she spent time with her friends more than before. One day while looking at her spell book, she found something that caught her attention. A paragraph that really caught her. A spell. She tried it but it did not go as supposed to be. It absorbed her into a dark and mysterious land...

Mountain Huangshan, the Dragon King, and Uncle Jacks Secrets

ESF Kennedy School, Liao, Sofia – 10

Emily walked out of Shanghai Pudong International Airport, pulling her suitcase along and a neon pink backpack slung over her overcoat. Shanghai Pudong International Airport was a huge yet magnificent modern complex.

“Uncle Jack!” Emily shouted, and giving him a big hug.

“Hey Emily!” Uncle Jack replied back with a sunny smile, lifting Emily up in the air and making her laugh.

“Let’s enjoy the limousine and I shall give you the first tour guide of Shanghai City”, said Uncle Jack.

“How’s school going?” He asked Emily.

Uncle Jack invited Emily to visit China this summer holiday. Emily, a 10 years old girl, was born and raised in Hong Kong, but she barely knew about China except from books.

“I got all straight A’s in my report card.” Emily replied confidently with her eyes busy feasting those beautiful skyscrapers along the Huangpu River.

“That’s awesome! I’m so proud of you!” smiled Uncle Jack.

“How do you feel about Shanghai so far?” Uncle Jack asked in the limousine.

“The city is so busy, and I liked Shanghai the first moment, since I enjoy the chilly air that I breathe in because there is no real winter in Hong Kong.” Emily giggled.

After a delicious dinner after Uncle Jack’s mansion, Uncle Jack shared his favourite video about Huangshan.

“I spent almost every summer and winter holiday in the past decade in Huangshan and I became totally obsessed about it”, said Uncle Jack. Uncle Jack, 42 years old, was a successful business executive in Shanghai and he loved reading, arts and sports.

“Why and how come a mountain will have such magical power over a successful and talented man like Uncle Jack?” Emily asked herself.

“Do you know why Huangshan is so meaningful for Chinese? Over hundreds and thousands of years emperors, poets, artists, almost everyone embraced, adored and even claimed that Huangshan is THE mountain in the entire vest China?” Uncle Jack said with a mysterious smile.

“Tell me the story, please! I love to listen to all kinds of stories.” Emily pleaded.

“So here is the untold story about Huangshan,” said Uncle Jack with a confident smile.

“Huangshan” the name comes after the Mountain of the Yellow Emperor. It was said that the Yellow Emperor, who was believed to be the ancestor of Chinese thousand years ago, tried to make pills to make himself and his beloved wives with longevity, flying to heavens and become immortal.

But the real mystery about Huanshan was about the “Nine Dragons” waterfall. Among many breath-taking sceneries, including pine trees, sharp peaks, floating clouds, and magic hot springs of Huangshan, “Nine Dragons” waterfall is the most indisputable scene. “Nine Dragons” waterfall is famous for its unique composition of nine waterfalls and nice water holes along some 600-meter free fall from Huanshan.

Everyone knew “Dragon” is the symbol of the emperor in China. And “Nine” is the utmost number or completeness in ancient China. So “Nine Dragons” resembled “King of the Kings”.

The mystery believed that long ago the Yellow Emperor himself was a mighty Dragon King who lived in the depths of misty Huangshan. The Dragon King used his powers to make people live happily and keep the circle of lives running well. Yet not everyone knew that a dragon king lives in the mountain since the Dragon King disliked disturbance from human beings.

Nevertheless, the wife of Dragon King passed away and the King was left to raise nine dragon sons alone. Dragon King had done its best to look after his nine sons by training them with all magic power to change weather from a sunny sky into snowing in seconds and transform themselves into different shapes of stones or even pine trees. These nine sons learnt well, however as the Dragon King became older, these nine dragon sons had been quarrelled all day long about who can succeed the throne of the Dragon King.

With growing power, these nine dragon sons were getting naughty. They went down from the mountain and made fun of farmers by changing four seasons in one day. So, farmers lost their crops because nothing can grow with such rapid change in weather and temperature. Farmers started to starve since there was not enough food to feed their families. These dragon sons went so far as to turn some farmers into dragon stones standing in the cliffs or some unbelievable places in the mountains to decorate Huangshan.

The Dragon King was filled with fury after he learnt what his sons had done to human beings. However, he found himself unable to help spoiling his sons, especially after the Dragon King lost his beloved wife. The King could see people suffering because of mischief and reckless behaviour caused by his sons, yet he failed to discipline his sons!

The Dragon King was getting older and he decided to use the last piece of his strength to turn his nine dragon sons into nine waterfalls, and himself into everlasting running water to connect every one of his sons. Their magic power remained and lasted till today. Therefore, Huangshan's weather was fickle. Visitors nowadays were amazed by the floating cloud, and dragon stones. Because of the Dragon Kings and his nine sons were buried in Hunshan, millions of visitors, including emperors, poets, artists, business men, are attracted to visit Huangshan in order to get spirit inspirations.

"I want to breathe in the spirit of Huangshan as soon as possible", Emily begged.

"I learnt so much about China, and Huangshan, and I am so proud to be the descendant of the Yellow Emperor", Emily said.

"Uncle Jack, you know, I happen to be the house captain of dragons in my school in Hong Kong!" Emily yelled.

"I cannot wait to experience China with my own eyes and feet. Maybe I am lucky to find some remains of the Dragon King in Huangshan", said Emily.

"Now you know why Hunshan is so attractive to me and my secret of success", Uncle Jack laughed.

The Legends of China: Rescuing the Yellow Emperor

ESF Kennedy School, Oh, Tay – 9

On a bright beautiful morning Dan woke with a cookadoodledo! Dan's chicken, who was called Mr. Zuo, always woke him up. He had scruffy brown feathers with turquoise spots, a voice of a dragon and a long blue tail. Dan lived in the mystic mountains of Huangshan in China. He lived there alone in his humble home in the middle of the mountain. He walked down his ladder and stretched while yawning like a bear woken from hibernation. Then he went to have breakfast, just a normal, ordinary day he thought, he was right until a helicopter started descending down to his house. Dan panicked. He said in a loud voice "Is anybody there?" In a blink of an eye, the helicopter crash-landed into his house. A girl came out of the copter. "Hello I'm Katie, nice to meet you."

Dan was staring at Katie, dumbfounded. He just saw a helicopter crash into his house, ruining his roof! And a girl introduced herself, completely ignoring the fact that she crashed into somebody's house. She had brown hair, green, grass eyes and wore climbing gear. He thought he needed to at least ask what she was doing wrecking his house, so he replied

"I'm Dan. But, WHAT ARE YOU DOING AT MY HOUSE?"

"Oh, I'm sorry. I was just trying to find out about the legends of China." Katie apologized.

Then they heard a whish and whoosh sound coming from somewhere, a few seconds later a boy in a hang glider crashed into Dan's house.

Dan shouted angrily at the top of his lungs "WHY DO PEOPLE KEEP CRASHING INTO MY HOUSE?"

The boy answered "Maybe because it's a good landing spot. By the way the name's Donald."

Donald had blonde short hair and a huge smile. Dan did NOT like him kidding about his house and him thinking it was normal to crash-land on people's houses.

"Are you lost?" Katie asked in a questioning voice.

"Kind of." frowned Donald.

Suddenly a mysterious, wise voice recited,

*"Three children shall travel up,
to where the spirit is,
the trio will have the dragon's help,
while not knowing what their actions are."*

"Hey! Who was that?" Donald shouted.

"I think that's some sort of prophecy, I read it in a book about the legends of China." Dan said calmly.

"You know about the gods and legends of China? You see that book you claim to have read was known to be burnt centuries ago by pirates." Katie questioned, like a news reporter.

"I think so, but if the legends were true that would have been Confucius, a wise man." Dan reasoned.

"Guys, sorry to interrupt but I think there's a giant red bird coming at us. I think we better run." Donald warned.

Donald was right, a red, fiery, probably-going-to-eat-them bird was coming at them at a high speed, whenever it touched a tree, that tree blazed into red hot flames. It was the vermilion bird!

"Can we please go on your helicopter?" Donald asked.

"Yes, but let's run, quickly." Katie bolted to the helicopter. Behind, Dan could see the vermilion bird approaching Mr. Zuo, so he ran, grabbed him and ran quickly to the helicopter.

They went north because the vermilion bird lived in the southern part of China. It was a spectacular sight when they landed on the bottom of one of the mountains of Huangshan (which were filled with green trees and yellow rocks as if someone had dripped paint). A voice that sounded like an emperor boomed "Who dares enter my mountain, you shall not escape and help me get back to heaven."

Stone brick walls appeared on all sides of the mountain and completely wrecked the helicopter.

"Well, I guess we have no choice but to climb up and help whoever said that and get out of here." said Katie.

They started to climb up the mountain, they got up to a dark cave, then two red eyes appeared inside, a humongous wild boar. It aimed towards Dan trying to hit him with its white tusks. Donald lit a matchstick that was in his pocket, the boar flinched, it was scared of fire! They all ran out as soon as they could.

After a while of running and climbing, they saw a black tortoise, it wrote something on the ground in Chinese ‘骑我’ or Ride me in English. Katie told Donald and Dan to ride on it. When they were all seated, the tortoise (surprisingly) travelled at such high speed that the trees around them seemed to bend.

They were at the top after about ten seconds, they thanked the tortoise and told it to go back. A dark purple humanoid said “I am the spirit of the evil minds of China and I am the one who imprisons the great yellow emperor. Fight me to free the voice you heard.” They didn’t know what to do but they tried to fight anyway. Donald lit a stick—on fire and charged at the spirit, Katie picked up rocks and threw at the humanoid and Dan punched the purple figure with his fists. Then Mr. Zuo squawked and somehow turned into a dragon with majestic greeny blue scales, he roared and breathed fire at the spirit.

‘The spirit had disappeared but not forever.’ Dan thought. Then a yellow emperor appeared and spoke “That was the dark spirit, I fear he will come again soon. Good job Azure Dragon, you called him Mr. Zuo didn’t you Dan. I gifted the dragon a long time ago to you because I knew this day was coming, you three shall be rewarded. Katie, have the staff of magic that can be quite, well, magical. Donald you shall have the gift of Fire, you can be invulnerable to fire and control it. And finally, Dan, you shall have the most powerful sword passed down from emperor to emperor. Believe in the legends of China children, believe. You three will have many adventures, soon, soon.”

The Tale of Two Sisters

ESF Kennedy School, Percival, Amelia – 8

There were once two sisters. Ling had hair as black as night but Ting's hair was brown like her father's. Ling liked adventure and talked all day. Ting liked books and had many secrets.

They had never been to China but had read all about it in their mum's dusty old books. Snowy mountains, beautiful bridges and deep gorges were some of the sights they were excited to explore.

Finally, their Poh Poh picked them up from the airport and called a taxi. As they travelled along the bumpy road, they chatted, making plans about where they wanted to go. Finally, they arrived at the house. They all enjoyed steamed rice, spring rolls and stuffed buns for dinner before saying goodnight.

The next morning on their pillow lay a mysterious red packet. They quickly opened it. Inside it they found 20 Yuan and a poem. Ling read it aloud...

Beside the mountain
Underneath the broken tree
You will find a clue

"What do you think it means Ling?" asked Ting confused.

"It sounds like we need to go on a quest. Let's sneak out while Poh Poh goes to market."

The girls quickly ate breakfast and packed a bag. They took the road that headed towards the snowy mountains. After 15 minutes they reached a sign which pointed towards an old, bendy bridge. They crossed over the bridge and stopped to have a drink beside the mountain.

Ting noticed a tree that had been damaged. When she looked closer she realised that under the tree lay another shiny, red packet. Excitedly Ting ripped it open.

She read it out to her sister...

Follow the stone path
Jump over the river blue
Above the red rose

The girls sat for a moment.

"Look over there! A path made of stone!" Quickly they were on their way following its stony trail.

Ling was sweating in the heat of the blazing sun so they stopped for a rest by a river. They could see something red in the distance so crossed to get a closer look. It was a rose.

"Ting, I remember from the clue that we need to look above the rose." Ling whispered quietly.

They looked up. Right above them was a cliff side and there sat a humongous, purple, blue and yellow dragon.

It swooped down to the sisters and spoke,

"Hello Ting and Ling. " The sisters froze. Finally, Ling asked, "How do you know our names and how can you talk to us?"

"Long story," the dragon said. "You must follow me, I need your help."

Ling and Ting looked at one another both thinking the same thing. Ting was the first to speak.

"Should we follow him?" Ting asked anxiously.

"Let's see where he takes us and we can always turn back." Ling reassured her sister.

The dragon started to fly up and up into the air. His wings were like a kite flapping in the wind. The girls began to climb. Higher and higher until they reached an empty nest.

The dragon spoke again. "I am Yellow Rider and I need you to help find my eggs. A mysterious pink creature stole them from me last night. Next to my nest is a cave and it says you need 20 Yuan to enter. That's where the creature ran with my eggs. The door is tiny. I need someone small to go in for me."

Ling turned to Ting. "Do you still have your 20 Yuan?" Ting nodded. The dragon took the money, ran and posted it through the cave.

Immediately the door opened and a big hallway was in front of them. They were greeted by a giant orange, slimy lizard. He wore yellow glasses, a pink bow tie and blue slippers. Behind him were many doors that led to mysterious places no one except animals had been before.

"We've come for the eggs," Ling's voice echoed.

"What eggs?" asked the lizard.

"The ones that were stolen from the dragon."

"Very well," said the lizard. "You must choose a key. Choose correctly and you will find the eggs.

There are 7 keys and you get 3 chances: green, orange, purple, blue, pink, red and yellow."

"I am not sure about trusting this lizard" Ting whispered to her sister "Let's choose purple, it's my favourite colour."

The purple one led them to a cave of spiders. So, they ran out. The girls agreed to choose red next but the room was empty.

"I think we should go back," Ting worried.

"We can't stop now! We have to use the last key," cried Ling.

The girls chose the orange key and carefully turned the lock. Suddenly, a light shone and they saw hundreds of flying dragons. There were Extronaaxis dragons and Youterdocus dragons, and many more that Ling and Ting had never seen or heard of before.

Out of the corner of her eye, Ling spotted a pink creature with some green spotted eggs! The girls ran over as fast as a comet and stood trapping its body so it couldn't escape.

"Give us those eggs," demanded Ling.

"These are my eggs," the creature snarled holding them tightly.

Ting stood forward bravely and asked, "Where did you get them from?"

"I stole them from a dragon but now they are mine!"

Both girls looked at each other and with a nod Ling reached for the eggs and snatched them out of the creature's hands. They both started to run as fast as they could and didn't stop until they reached the entrance to the cave. Luckily the lizard was sleeping soundly and they were able to sneak slowly past without waking him.

The dragon was waiting and took the eggs in her hands. All of a sudden, the dragon transformed into their Poh Poh! Both girls jumped back in shock.

"Poh Poh, is that really you?" the girls squealed. Everyone put their hands together, took a bow and said "Gong Hei Fat Choi!"

Magic Mountains

ESF Kennedy School, Ram, Sumona – 8

Once there were two twin girls called Chang E and Jing Mei Na following a small dirt path to get some water for the main festival of the year, January 13th, a wizard would come and perform a magic show in Magic Mountains.

The twins were very excited but sad because the people that used to live here had new and high technology buildings but they left and moved to the mountain next to them but doing so they knocked down all of the buildings on one mountain and rebuilt them on the other mountain! Their world was becoming more and more polluted because the pollution from the next mountain drifted all the way to their mountain! When the sisters reached the well instead of the well being there they saw a crystal clear river with adorable pandas eating some bamboo on the bank of the river! Then they saw a giant chariot swooping down to them from the sky, “Greetings!” Boomed a voice from the chariot, then all fell silent. The only noise was a rattling sound like this: Rat– a tat–Rat– a tat! It was coming from the twins knees!

“Don’t be afraid!” The voice said. The person was chuckling now. The twins were becoming less afraid but more cautious. As the mysterious person stepped out of the chariot the twins GASPED...

“Why is your world so polluted???”

“Some people came here before us and polluted this area by building new and high technology buildings, then they left and as they left they knocked everything down, they didn’t want other people to come and live in their high technology buildings chorused the twins, recognising the visitor as the wizard that performed every year. “You can call me Zhang Wei and I am the wizard that comes to your village every year on January 13th to perform a magic show. You might have recognised me by now! I came to fetch you two to help me on my quest, see I am trying to figure out where this river leads to. I have read in one of my books that the river will lead to a secret ice city that includes plants. We need the plants to absorb the carbon dioxide and release oxygen! Will you come with me???” The twins looked uncertain but after a while they said... “YES!”

The twins sat down by the river and Zhang Wei told the twins to do whatever he told them to do, for example if Zhang Wei told the girls to run without him they would do it. The girls hesitated, but the wizard looked so stern they gave in. As they got close to the end of the river the Quest Crew (the wizard and twins named themselves that) saw a bright light and the Quest Crew began to run. When they reached the city there were plantes, houses and sculptures! The air was so clean and not polluted at all! The wizard found some herbs to mix with a magic spray to teleport them back! When they were back they alerted everyone and decided to move.

Before they could enter the world they found their path blocked by a humongous cave with a giant, who lifted them up by the neck! “Why are you hurting us?? It isn’t pleasant!!” Said the Quest Crew.

“Who said it WAS pleasant??” Replied the giant. You trespassed in my territory!

“Sorry, we did not know this was your territory, please let us down!” Begged the Quest Crew. “No!”

“Well, what if we brought you something you really wanted???” Asked the Quest Crew.

“Hmmm, actually that might work!” Boomed the giant!

“Great, now can you PLEASE let us down? So we can bring you what you want?”

“Okay, okay! Now I want you to bring me this special herb that requires quite small hands to pick it. Remember, pick it by the stem not the petals. I will give you a map. Here.”

The Quest Crew studied the map carefully and left after an abrupt silence.

After a long trip the Quest Crew found the flower. It was called The Blue Lily! The wizard picked it up very carefully and put it in a little hatch in his soft leathery bag. “We should be able to make it back before dark.” Said the wizard anxiously. “Ouch, that hurts, a lot!” Squealed the wizard, “someone is pinching me!” It was a demon named Diao Si Gui! “Girls, take my bag and run back to the cave to get some help! NOW!” Shouted the wizard, but the twins didn’t listen to him, they ran behind the demon and Jing Mei Na found a very sharp stick on the ground and started prodding Diao Si Gui with it! The demon was startled and immediately ran away! Zhang Wei was saved! “I thought you agreed on running away if I told you to!” Said Zhang Wei in a soft tone. The twins exchanged glances and stared at the floor. The wizard laughed and said “I’m glad you fought Diao Si Gui off, he can be very nasty!”

Finally they made it to the giants cave, “WOW!” Marveled the giant. He crushed the flower in one bit and added it to the pot he was stirring. “Now you may enter my beautiful world!”

“How did you know I wanted to enter your world?” Asked the wizard

“You were carrying all your possessions!” Replied the giant! “Here let me show you the entrance! I will help you settle down and let’s be careful of the snake.”

“What snake?” Asked the Quest Crew.

“Silly me!” I forgot to tell you about the snake! This snake is poisonous and if it bites you, you will become mortal but you will be evil all the same. Oops!” The giant accidentally knocked down one of the houses. “Don’t worry!”

Said the wizard. “I have some magic spray in my bag that can repair things!

“Thank you!” Replied the giant.

China's Magical Mountains

ESF Kennedy School, Schorr, Luca – 10

Long ago by China's Magical Mountains lies a massive magical village called the "The Home of Dragons". All the people in this village love animals and plants. Even with some very dangerous animals walking around, everyone lets their children play outside. Sometimes there will be a time when you are not allowed out because of dragons flying in the air but people don't get scared of it – they stay calm and watch them fly around. There aren't many animals but they do come out of the bushes a lot to get any food from the rubbish bins. These animals are wild but very friendly.

The village loves to be eco friendly. When anyone has a chance to recycle they do. They take care of the plants around their houses, they water them and make sure they are safe from anything.

There is this one plant called the Golden Lily. It is only found in The Home of Dragons. This flower is very special. Every town around them wants to trade with them but they say no because only one grows every year. One day a terrible storm came and swept the grown flowers away because they were drying outside. That didn't disappoint the people. They just forgot about it and started their collection again. Now they have 3 flowers and they will keep the collection growing.

Many people tell their children or grandchildren stories from long ago every night. They believe this helps the children sleep. Sometimes the stories are scary but most of the time they are happy and very rarely people tell the children about the day Cana tried to take over the village. They don't tell the children this story often because they think someone like Cana will try to take over the village again.

The next day was the day the Empire had to pick the Golden Lily. All the people gathered around it and waited for Empire Zuzu (The empire is chosen by voting). They didn't worry that he wasn't there on time, he sometimes was late, but people started to get worried when he didn't show up 15 minutes later. They all decided to go to his house to see if he was ok. When they got outside his house two people at the front went in and when they knocked no one answered so they did it again but still no one answered, everyone said they should go in so they did. When they went in they found Empire Zuzu lying on the floor with scratches on his face and arms. They were so sad to see him like that because everyone loved him. So they got him up and brought him to the throne and everyone got water and food for him. Then they all sat down and listened to what happened to him. This is what he said. "I was in my house putting on gloves to pick the flower, I turned around to leave but this man was standing in my house, I asked him if I could get him anything but he said no and hit me in the face. He kept on hitting me and kicking. He said something about wanting to be the Empire. That's all I remember."

Everyone was so sad to hear that, this is what someone said back. "We have to find that guy and kick him out of our village, but we should still pick the flower. That might give us good luck." So they picked the flower and put it to dry with all the others and went home to rest. As the last few people were going home two dogs came out of the bushes, the people walked slowly to their houses as the dogs walked forwards. The dogs didn't mind the people, they just walked to the bins and ate.

The next morning everyone got to work trying to find the man that hurt Zuzu. They asked everyone if they were at the flower picking ceremony if they weren't they would bring that person to the Empire and ask him if he was the guy. They did that all day but they had no luck. Except at 6:00 the evening when all the children were going in from playing, two children found this guy running to the cliffside to get away but instead of letting him get away the children jumped on him and that made him fall. It was very loud so everyone came running that way, even Zuzu was there. He told everyone that that was the guy that beat him up. The children were now heroes of the village and everyone thanked them. Zuzu gave the children's families free food for 6 months. He also kicked the guy out of the village.

That will be a story that is told everywhere. Even if it brings bad luck.

Unknown Tale of Chang Er Discovered!

ESF Kennedy School, Wong, Jasmin – 8

Many years ago, there lived a girl called Diamond Light, a young girl of 12. She lived in the amazing mountain of China, Huangshan. Every day it was the same story, hiking up the rocky peaks to reach the very top, hunting animals for meat, harvesting new crops, and so on. Now, Diamond Light was a curious little girl, and loved her grandfather because of one thing: Myths of China's mountains.

"Grandpa," she began one morning while eating her usual breakfast on huge rock, which was a fried egg and hunted venison with a cup of hot tea, "What other tales are there about China's mountains?"

"Ah, my dear, many more," he replied. "So many that when I am only halfway through, my funeral would have begun. But I could tell you one of the most famous ones. It's called Chang Er Flies to The Moon."

"How does she?"

"The question will be answered at the end of the story, Diamond Light. Let's start. It was long, long ago, before I was born, a woman named Chang Er married someone I don't remember who. Anyways, one day some kind of stranger got into the house and put a potion somewhere."

"Wasn't that dangerous?"

"Not at all. It was only magical really, it would be absolutely stupid if it was dangerous. So, hmm, where was I?" He paused for a minute as he tried to recall. "Ah, yes. The stranger put a potion in the cabinet. Then, Chang Er found it and started drinking it. As soon as her husband was back, she started flying. Yes, she started flying, that's the story I've been told, I think. Yes, that must have been it. Sorry, girl. It's my age. Hahaha." As Grandpa started dozing off, drooling on the mountain soil.

But he woke up with a start when Diamond Light said, "OH, that's ok, Grandpa. At least I know the gist of the myth now. And does that mean she started flying to the moon because of the potion?"

"Yes, that's exactly what happened! Now, she only has a rabbit for company. If you see her, then tell me."

Then they had a jolly good laugh and started having a hike up the mountain.

That night, she heard a whisper. "Diamond, Diamond," it seemed to say. Her eyes fluttered open, and saw a beautiful fairy. It was Chang Er!

"What is it?" Diamond asked.

Chang Er replied, "I heard your granddad telling you a story and the topic was how I flew to the moon. Well in fact, I didn't. I was born there." Wow! That's some story! And yet no one has ever heard of it in the history of China! Diamond Light thought. Now she could tell a true story to her kids and pass it on for generations! Then, Chang Er told Diamond Light to come with her. They floated up and away (with a bit of Chang Er's magic), and eventually reached the moon.

Chang Er said, "Look, that's my home!" And indeed, it was. A family was drinking Elhamo, the moon's signature tea. The family seemed to be waiting for Chang Er, and greeted each other with soft hugs and some sweets, although they tasted like brain numbingly disgusting gherkin pickles.

Then the pair sat down and they all talked about Chang Er's history and Diamond Light introduced herself. She was amazed she could breathe, but of course it was all in the magic the fairy cast earlier.

Soon, Chang Er told Diamond Light about the amazing delights on the moon.

"This is the northern part of the moon. Come, look! Do you see those little beauties over there?" Indeed, Diamond did. "They are Furglbokas, the most expensive, priceless jewels on the moon. You can find them on some of my dresses, in fact! They can be from pitch black to glossy geramola."

"What kind of a colour is geramola?"

“Blue and yellow marble colour, of course. Over there, however, is Ranolata, the Southern part of the moon. They make the best Fangala Syrup, which is what most kids your age drink in the morning.”

“Just like milk!”

“What’s that?”

“A nice beverage for young people to start the day.”

“Ok, got it. Now anyways, we think it tastes like chocolate! Want some?” She showed Diamond a drink that was smooth like honey. She had a sip, but grimaced. She asked Chang Er if this was really the taste of their chocolate.

“Whoops, I must have gotten the Space Serum! I’ll just go get the Fangala Syrup.” And so, she left for a couple of minutes, or was it hours, days, or even weeks? Finally, she returned.

“Got it!” she cheered. This time, Diamond Light got a delicious taste, better than her favourite strawberry hazelnut tea back at home!

The next day, Diamond Light eagerly skipped to Grandpa’s section of the den. She then told him the true story of Chang Er, the delicacies, everything.

“Wow! I bet no one knew that! Shall we write it down on some bamboo later?” Of course, Diamond Light agreed.

Now, Diamond Light is 47, a mother of three kids. She had told her little toddlers the true story of Chang Er for a bedtime story trillions of times, but they never got bored of it. As for Chang Er herself, she lived happily ever after with her other fairy friends, as they always exchanged gigantic quantities of Elhamo and showing off their magic skills. She even creates sunsets and new planets in a flash of lightning. Oh, let’s not forget, as she is an adult, teach young ones how to use magic to float up, up, and away.

The Magical Mountains of China

ESF Kennedy School, Yu, Teah – 9

I am turning 13 next week. As a present mum and dad decided to bring me to China's Huangshan mountains. I've always wished to go there. Grandfather has told me all about it, mythical creatures, magical floating clouds, fantastic views and much more than I can ever imagine.

On the day of the flight, I hugged my two kittens and puppy tight, I hugged grandpa and waved goodbye to my two besties. Mum, Dad, me and my sister Opal piled into the cab and squeezed our suitcases into the trunk. As we headed to the airport, I sucked on a lollipop, Opal played candy crush, Dad was frantically looking for the passports, while mum dozed off in case of queasiness.

Soon, we boarded the aircraft and a while later we arrived in Hangzhou. Dad checked us into a motel, while Mum arranged our suitcases and baggage with another assistant.

A few days later we arrived at the top of a small hill, I gazed around astonished, carried away by the prettiness of the mountains. I started wandering up the mountains, I didn't notice my family heading back down. I began to feel tired, that's when I noticed I've lost my parents and Opal.

Suddenly, a strong flap of wings whizzed round. I was so surprised I fell to the ground. I barely took a glance at the noise and it disappeared. I heaved myself up, my shoulders aching and legs hurting. I started back down, and then I saw it, the noise, the creature, I winced when I saw it, it had beautiful blue eyes, tiny cute tail, golden scales, bright coloured wings and horns engraved with gold jewels. I rubbed my eyes, I might be seeing things, but I wasn't. I pinched myself, I might be dreaming, but I wasn't. It was real...

"Grrrrr" growled the creature cutely. It looked at me then at my feet, and then trotted over and sat down, covering most of my foot. It was quite light and very warm; its hot body warmed my legs. But that was before I realised it was injured, so I took out an antiseptic wipe from my bag, and wiped the wounded creature carefully. "Ahh" Said the creature shyly. Then I wrapped a bandage around the injury. "Hee-hee" Cried the creature playfully. I giggled and bent down, gently stroking its sparkly scales.

Its cute, blue eyes turned to look at me, I smiled, He smiled back and before I knew it, it disappeared into a gust of dust, "what..." I whispered, "no way"

I sighed, I knew it was real, it was truly magical, but it left me here all alone...

Back down the hill, I heard faint voices "Ivy? Ivy?" "SISSSSSS!!!" "IVY?" "Ivy?!" I ran towards the sound of my family and hugged them tight, "Where have you been?" "Are you okay?" "What happened?" Questions shot at me like bullets. I didn't tell them about the critter, I just said I was fine and I was just looking around.

A day later, we celebrated my birthday and I received a ton of gifts and even a beautiful cake decorated with pearls and blueberry ice cream served by the motel chef. After I unwrapped the presents and ate the delicious food, we wrapped up and packed our suitcases.

2 hours passed, and we got a taxi to the airport, Opal playing Candy crush, Mum dozing off, Dad looking for our passports, I simply opened the window and took it all in, I would really miss this place. This was the most amazing holiday ever. On the plane back to Melbourne, Dad slept, Mum watched a short movie clip and Opal kept begging me to tell her my favourite gift, Outside the window, I suddenly notice a small golden sparkle in the sky, as it came closer it made a shape of a dragon, and that was the most amazing present ever.

Yellow Day

ESF Quarry Bay School, Andriano, Milla – 10

I woke up to the sound of my Dad screaming my name.

“LI! GUESS WHAT DAY IT IS!?” That question caught me off guard.

“Sunday? Or... wait, no...” I glanced at my lunar calendar and ran my fingers over the beautiful engravings of lush emerald green mountains and prepossessing lavender-rose flowers. I looked at the date, and my insides exploded.

“ITS YELLOW DAY!” As I sprinted down the stairs, I realized I had one yellow sock, and one green sock on, but I didn’t care. It was yellow day!

“That’s right, my yellow queen!” He exclaimed as he poured congee into my special bowl, the one that Mum gave me. “Go upstairs and pack your bags!”

An hour later at the bus station, Dad paid the conductor 40 RMB as he led us to our seats. Outside the window, I gazed at ancient pine trees looking down and protecting us. A melody of swaying leaves and tweeting birds immediately calmed my mood. Although the views were amazing, I was relieved when I got out of the stuffy bus and felt the fresh, Yellow Mountain air snake up my nose. We got off at Xinguoxian Huangshan Scenic Area Bus Station. It was busy, but the scenery was magical.

We walked up so many flights of stairs that my legs felt like jello. Luckily, we didn’t have to climb up all 60,000 of them! When we got to the top, it was worth it. Dozens of stone temples sat on the edge of the cliff, barely visible through all of the fog. Metal bars were covered with rusty locks and blood red ribbon, glinting in the sunlight. Every person had their camera out, taking photos of rocks, trees and bugs. Following a long day of sightseeing, we stopped at a small motel for the night. After a hot bowl of delicious noodles, Dad and I told scary stories shining torches under our faces. Eventually, because of the light breeze and the good feeling in my stomach, I fell asleep.

CRUNCH! I sat up straight, squinting through the open window. I was sure I heard something. CRACK! There it was again! I rubbed my eyes, gazing into the distance. It seemed like the whole world was silent, holding its breath and waiting.

“Hello?” I called. No reply.

“HELLO!” I called

louder. I heard another noise echoing in the distance. I slowly edged back towards the window and saw two bright green eyes, staring back at me through the darkness.

“AAAAAAHHHHH” I screamed and immediately regretted it. The eyes scampered into the distance, leaving me all alone with my mouth hanging wide open. Those big green eyes made me want to follow them into the darkness of the night. I crept out of the room and dashed down the stairs. I ran as fast as I could, trying to catch the creature’s darting shadow.

After what felt like hours, the creature finally slowed down enough for me to realise it was a beautiful old sika deer. The deer stopped, making a soft grunting sound as it jerked its head towards an old, abandoned temple. Having been here every year, since I was born, I was surprised to see a temple I had never seen before.

The deer lowered its head, almost as if bowing, then trotted away. Great. Now I was lost, with nowhere to go and no humans in sight. The only place I could go was the temple. I guess that’s kind of what the deer wanted, now that I think about it. Slowly, I crept towards it, half expecting a giant dragon to jump out and eat me alive. I walked up the crumbling stairs, stones falling from under my feet. When I finally reached the top, I was amazed. No, better than amazed. I was popplewinked (it’s a word my Dad and I made up when I was five. It means so amazed that you can’t even explain it). The bright light of the moon in the distance washed over the whole temple, drenching it in a silver glow. Mountains swam in the cool white mist, bathing in its foggy substance. I felt revived, almost protected by the scenery and marched on to see what the temple held for me.

The temple was nothing special. With all of its small broken stones and gloomy grey mould, it wasn’t very attractive. It almost didn’t look like a temple, but an abandoned house. I slowly walked inside, aware that the roof could collapse right onto my head at any second. Suddenly, my eyes drooped, and my head lolled. I felt overwhelmingly tired, like I had just run a marathon. I dropped to the ground hitting my head hard, before falling into a deep, dark sleep...

In my dream, I was taken away to the ancient Yellow Mountain villages. Small houses made of hay, sat in rows among the fluffy white clouds. Old women with wrinkles so deep they looked like maps etched onto their faces, tended to their gardens. Mist fell through the mountains like white waterfalls as mythical dragons swam in their depths. Exquisite wood, stone and brick carvings stood tall against the steaming hot springs and colossal grey rocks.

I was desperate to explore the serene landscape, but, in the distance, I heard someone calling my name, dragging me back to reality. The rescue team had found me. Dad had been searching for me all night, terrified that something bad had happened. We embraced in a long, tight hug. It was then, and only then, that I realised that the Yellow mountains truly were magical, and that I would return every year for the rest of my life.