

Fiction

Group 2



The Dragon Fighter

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Ball, Aiden – 9

Inside the magical Chinese mountains of Huangdon, a big, strong dragon flies through the colorful flowers, through the trees that are taller than a 3-story building, and to this beautiful area of land. On the very top of these yellow mountains, the view is so beautiful with mountains all around, the grass is greener than he ever saw, and the flowers are so colorful, it made his eyes water. But Xiao Fei the dragon is not feeling himself right now. In fact, he feels like he is not in control of himself.

Last year, Xiao Fei wandered around this area, breathed the fresh air of the mountains, and found a big piece of land. He thought, “This place is perfect for a village!” Xiao Fei did not like his old village because it was very loud and chaotic. But the true reason that Xiao Fei wanted to leave was because his evil brother named Fei Xiao was there. He has always been afraid of his brother.

Jia Xi is the only human that is in Xiao Fei’s village. He is a very smart boy who loves dragons. Jia Xi used to live in the big city of GuangZhou, but it was too noisy and too chaotic for him. So once he heard that Xiao Fei’s village is so peaceful, he moved there immediately. Jia Xi is also special because he is from a family of wizards.

As time went by, more and more dragons visited this village. They explored all around and liked the environment and the peacefulness. They told their friends that the place is very nice and the message spread around the whole of China.

More and more dragons moved into this beautiful paradise. There was nothing more the villagers could wish for. However, Fei Xiao, Xiao Fei's evil brother, found out where his brother had been and was not happy that Xiao Fei's village was becoming so successful. He was jealous of Xiao Fei's success so he came up with an evil plan to turn villagers into his slaves and eat any people there.

Fei Xiao came to the village with an evil smile on his face. When he arrived, he looked deeply into Xiao Fei's eyes. His eyes shined so brightly that Xiao Fei could not resist. Then Fei Xiao started to say "Look into my eyes and listen to me. Your brother is here to help you. You must follow all of my commands." And Fei Xiao continued to hypnotize Xiao Fei into doing whatever he said. Fei Xiao tells Xiao Fei the plan, where they would capture all the villagers and turn them into slaves. At the same time, they would feast on any people that they found.

Jia Xi overheard Fei Xiao hypnotizing Xiao Fei. He heard the last part where Fei Xiao said, "Remember, I am here to help you. Let us take over the village and we will rule all of the dragons in this province." Jia Xi knew Xiao Fei is no longer himself and that the village is in trouble. He gathered all the villagers that he could find and told them about Fei Xiao's cunning plot. He then assured them that he can save the village.

One of the biggest dragons stepped up and said, "You're too small! How can you defeat a big strong dragon like Fei Xiao?" And they all started laughing at Jia Xi. Jia Xi was mad and shouted, "STOP! DON'T UNDERESTIMATE ME!" The dragons of the village just laughed and walked away leaving Jia Xi to face Xiao Fei and Fei Xiao on his own.

Xiao Fei returned to the village feeling not himself. Jia Xi saw him and grabbed his tiny little sword with all of his might, and went to Xiao Fei. Xiao Fei looked at the human and his eyes glowed red. He opened his massive mouth and let out a massive roar! Jia Xi knew he had to use his wizard-like powers and be strong. He didn't even move or get scared one bit. He just stared into Xiao Fei's eyes with all his might, his eyes shining so bright almost blinding Xiao Fei. And just before Xiao Fei closed his mouth on Jia Xi, he shouted "STOP!" Xiao Fei froze in fear.

Jia Xi looked into Xiao Fei's eyes and said, "Don't listen to Fei Xiao. He is just a lying evil dragon! Your fellow villagers love you and need you. And I am your best friend." Xiao Fei stopped and thought for a second, still staring into Jia Xi's eyes. He realized that Jia Xi is his best friend and apologized. "I'm so sorry for trying to eat you and for turning against our village." Fei Xiao's evil spell was defeated.

When the rest of the village saw Jia Xi and Xiao Fei, everyone was surprised. They all started clapping for their most powerful but smallest villager. Some dragons started chanting "GO JIA XI!" They all apologized for thinking that he was not capable of defeating dragons and for laughing at him.

Fei Xiao came to check on his brother and see how his plan turned out. He was ready to burn all the villagers with his fire breath if he had to and was ready to attack. However, when he arrived, Xiao Fei immediately charged towards him, laughing out "I'm not scared of you anymore! You better run, and NEVER COME BACK!"

Fei Xiao saw that his plan failed and standing behind Xiao Fei was all of the village dragons and Jia Xi supporting him. He knew he couldn't fight them all. Instead he said, "I'm not done with this village, yet." He then turned and flew away.

Xiao Fei's village is now the most popular village in China for dragons. And every year the village celebrates Jia Xi day in honor of their small but brave hero. As for Fei Xiao, he never did have the courage to return.

The Ancient Scroll of Healing

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Chan, Alvyn – 10

“FELIXXX!” Called the emperor, waking Felix from his nap.

“Mmm?” Felix mumbled.

“My son has an unknown disease.” He said “Legend says that at Lotus Peak, the highest point of Huangshan mountain lies a pot with The Ancient Scroll of Healing, and it can cure anything, and you, Felix, is going to get it, now!”

Then the emperor left. Felix had never gone to Huangshan mountain before. He was scared, but gathered himself and set off for the mountains.

The sun was rising. Felix looked at the Huangshan mountain and gasped in awe. There were cliffs of granite that blocked the rising sun, and beautiful huangshan pines lined the sides of the mountains. Then he remembered what he was here for: *The Ancient Scroll of Healing*. He scanned the mountain peaks for the highest, and set off in that direction. Random bones lined the side of the road and frightened Felix.

“Those are just animal bones”, He kept telling himself. Then a *human skull* appeared, and that *really* sent chills down his spine.

Suddenly, the sky turned grey, thunder rumbled. From out of nowhere, came a ginormous roar.

A yellow dragon appeared from behind the rock and roared. “AHHHHH!!” Felix screamed, and raced down the path. He turned around and saw 3 demons sprinting towards him. “AHHHHH!!” Felix screamed even louder. Lightning zapped, thunder rumbled, and from out of nowhere, came a falling Huangshan pine. It landed right behind Felix, killing the 3 demons.

Suddenly, a 3D model of the emperor showed up and calmly said: “Felix, by the way, there’s a dragon.” Then it disappeared.

Felix trembled in fear. He slowly walked up the path, raised his bow, and drew it all the way back. ***There it was! The Dragon!*** He shot the Yellow Dragon. The arrow went deep into the dragon’s body, silver blood crept out of the wound. It roared and took out the arrow with its claws and threw it at Felix. Felix shot arrows again and again, but it seemed that the Dragon would never die. Felix was out of arrows. His only choice was to hit it with his sword.

“HIYAAAAH!” Felix screamed, charging at the dragon. He dodged many hits from the dragon and kept hitting it. After what seemed like a million years, the Dragon staggered back and lay on the ground, eyes dull and lifeless. The thunder and lightning were silenced.

Felix kept going and finally reached the top. He looked around and gasped: He was above the clouds! He looked around the peak: nothing, there was no pot!

It’s not here! The Ancient Scroll of Healing is not real! He thought. Then, he saw something poking out from the granite and dirt. He walked over to it. It was an orange clay ring embedded in a stone, the center filled with dirt. *Dig Me Up!* It seemed to say. Felix grabbed his pickaxe and uncovered the clay item.

Then he realized it was a pot. He took it out and examined it. The outside was lined with cracks, and looked as if it was here for more than one thousand years. The inside was all dirt. Then he removed the dirt from the pot. He gasped.

“It is the Ancient Scroll of Healing!”

He gasped “The scroll is real!”

He took it out and examined it. The paper was yellow and soft, and the wood was polished dark oak. There was a strange language written on the scroll: Ragb an oinno, a oglemd elomn, nda treeh muoes skeriwh. Ixm ti lla ni a caludorn nda ourp oth wtera ni. Isth wlli creu ayntingh.

Felix went back to the palace and showed the emperor

The emperor carefully examined it. “Aha!” He exclaimed. “it’s an anagram! It’s mixed up letters that form words! Go solve it!”

Approximately 5 Hours later...

“I figured it out!” Said Felix, dashing into the room. “It says ‘Grab an onion, a golden melon, and three mouse whiskers. Mix it all in a cauldron and pour hot water in. This will cure anything’ ”

“Good!” The emperor said, as he prepared the ingredients.

They put in the onion, gold covered melon, three mouse whiskers, and hot water... ***BOOM!*** The cauldron exploded. “What? Did we do it wrong?” Felix said.

They tried it again. ***Boom!*** Another time. ***Boom!*** It just wouldn't work.

“Oh no!” Felix said, “What should we do?”

“Maybe there are other ways to cure anything” The emperor said, opening a book about medicine. He flipped through the pages. *Fever, COVID-19, Plague...* Nothing about a medicine that will cure anything.

Just then, Felix saw a glint of gold in the bookshelf. He walked to it and took the book. *Best Encyclopedia, letters U-W*. “Interesting.”, he said. He found a chapter called: *Unknown diseases*. He flipped it open, and saw a list of funny names along with a page number. He flipped to a random one.

Intercell-02

A Mysterious disease that makes your nose red and have runny nose. Your eyebrows will turn blue and red. To cure this, put a Melon covered in gold in a cauldron with cold water, then sprinkle some chocolate in the water. Mix until the water is green. Serve 10 ml.

“Your majesty, what symptoms does the prince have?” Felix asked

“Umm... Red nose, runny nose, red and blue eyebrows. Weird, right?” The emperor said, his nose still buried in a book.

“I FOUND THE CURE!!!” Felix shouted.

“Really?” The emperor asked in disbelief. he sprinted towards Felix, grabbed the book, gathered the ingredients, and made the medicine. All in one minute. He dashed towards the prince’s bed and grabbed a 10 ml cup for medicine. He quickly poured the mixture in. “Please work!” The emperor said, and he fed it to the prince. The prince immediately stood up. “Hallelujah, Hallelujah.” He sang, hugging Felix. “Thank you!”

And Felix realised that the Ancient Scroll Of Healing was useless and he wasted lots of time and resources. “Use medicine books and encyclopedias!” He thought.

Save Huangshan, Save a clan

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Chan, Hania – 9

A burning summer day, Ryan, a grade 5 student that lived in China was walking home when he spied a letter in the mailbox addressed to him. Curious, he ran inside the house and carefully ripped open the letter packaging. Peering inside, he saw a piece of paper, words written in gold lettering.

The letter said:

Dear Ryan:

Congratulations! I am pleased to announce that you have won the silver prize of the young writer’s competition. The prize is a certificate and we will grant you a one-day free tour to visit Huangshan during the summer holidays. A tour guide will accompany you to Huangshan. It will be a fruitful experience.

Regards,

Judge Golderson

Ryan’s mind was racing and his heart was pounding heavily in his chest. A chance to visit Huangshan during summer vacation? It was a chance not to be missed! Ryan had heard that Huangshan had different views in different seasons. In summer and spring, the mountains would be covered in greenery: vines, leaves and trees. Throughout autumn season, colorful flowers decorated Huangshan like a rainbow. Finally, frost and icicles would

take over the mountains, making it a crystal world in winter! Ryan wished dearly that he could visit Huangshan soon.

“Yes!” Ryan leapt up in the air with happiness. He finally had permission to go to Huangshan. He would spend the days before the trip preparing snacks, a camera and other things for the trip.

After weeks of boring waiting, the day of the trip came. Ryan scampered down the stairs and leaped into his chair. Scooping cereal repeatedly into his mouth, Ryan finished his breakfast, grabbed his backpack and scurried out the door. To Ryan’s surprise, there was a limo parked in the driveway. A woman stepped out of the limo. The woman turned to face Ryan.

“Hi, I am Terissa, your tour guide, please get inside the limo. We will be arriving at Huangshan shortly.”

“Heavens!” Ryan’s mouth dropped open when he flung open the limo door. The limo was so fashionable!

Soon, they arrived at the bottom of Huangshan. As soon as Ryan got out of the limo, he gasped in amazement at the scenery.

Huangshan loomed above them, its tip tickling the sky and disappearing into the clouds. Red and yellow flowers lined the pathway and rocks like soldiers stood beside them.

“Cool...” Ryan trailed off.

As they walked higher, the air was fresh and the scent of lilies hung in the air.

Higher up on the mountain, the view was even better! The jagged, pointy rocks and rolling clouds surrounding the mountain gave the photo a spectacular view. Standing on the high mountain, the buildings beneath them looked like little wooden blocks. Ryan took a photo with his camera and nodded approvingly.

Just when it was sunset, they reached their goal: on top of Huangshan.

“Oof.” Ryan grunted, he pulled himself onto the rock and gasped with astonishment. The view was breathtaking! The bright orange sun pierced through the clouds and brought a glow to the rocks. The sea glimmered with light. Hills like shadows surrounded the sea, like giants protecting their treasure. It was truly a sight for sore eyes!

“Wow.” Ryan gasped, suddenly he remembered about his snacks. He hauled them out of his bag while enjoying the wonderful view laid out in front of him.

After Ryan ate all his snacks, he looked around for a rubbish bin, but there was none.

“Whatever.” Ryan threw the packets of snacks randomly around him because he didn’t bother to pack them in his bag and bring them home.

Because they were enjoying the view so much, time flew past them.

“We...should better get going now,” Terissa looked around nervously at the darkness.

“Ok,” Ryan said absentmindedly.

They made their way down the steep rocks. Suddenly, they saw rocks floating above them and with a loud **BANG!!** They rolled beside Ryan and Terissa and trapped them in a tunnel as long as the China bridge.

“What’s happening?” Ryan shouted in terror.

“I don’t know!” came the muffled noise from Terissa.

Darkness surrounded Ryan, he couldn’t see anything but he heard the loud and clear voice of a rock.

“I am grandpa rock.” the rock said. “And you have committed a serious crime to nature. If we hadn’t stopped you, you might have polluted Huangshan, making it dirty. You have to collect the rubbish you have thrown and bring them back home if you want us to free you!” Grandpa rock exclaimed furiously.

Ryan shook with fright, he spoke with a trembling voice.

“I promise.” he replied in terror.

There was a murmur of voices and the rocks cleared. Ryan blinked and looked around. He saw Grandpa rock.

Ryan looked down at his feet and whispered. “Sorry.”

“No need to say sorry, just pick up the rubbish you threw.” Grandpa rock ordered.

Ryan scuttled over to the rubbish he threw and gathered them in his hands. He put them back in his backpack.

“Good.” Grandpa rock nodded approvingly.

“Now promise me this. If you bring snacks up here, or any other mountain, Bring the rubbish and packets back home to throw. Do not pollute mother nature, it is our home!” Grandpa rock said seriously to Ryan.

“I will.” Ryan nodded furiously.

“Ok.” Grandpa rock waved and Ryan and Terissa disappeared.

A few seconds later Ryan and Terissa found themselves at the bottom of the mountain.

“That... was weird, but I will sure remember what.. Grandpa rock said.” Ryan panted, facing Terissa.

“That sure taught you a good lesson.” Terissa grinned.

After the summer holiday, Ryan went back to school, he really kept his promise and told his schoolmates what had happened at Huangshan. Ryan encouraged his friends to clean up after eating snacks and protect nature anywhere they went. Soon, Ryan was the school's environment ambassador, and he let other people know: Nature is beauty, keep it clean, better environment, treat it like our home.

The Legend of the Huangshan Volcano

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Chan, Ian – 9

_____It was another ordinary day at the Huangshan Mountain in China. The sun was about to rise above the beautiful horizon. There was a little boy called Jonathan who was on his way to visit his grandmother, who lived on the other side of the mountain during his school holidays. This visit would take Jonathan to an exciting and most memorable adventure of his life.

Jonathan got some homemade cookies for his grandmother and together with a travel backpack, he was ready to set off for his journey to his grandmother's home. On his way, Jonathan had to pass through a huge mountain which did not offer any transportations, the only way he could go there was hiking up the mountain. He had to walk up many ancient stone steps, each step was treacherous and hazardous. Each step brought Jonathan a sense of adventure and anticipation. After walking up to the top, he reached a wooden rope bridge. He had to hold on to the rope tightly or else he would fall into the deep valley beneath the bridge.

He arrived at a cliff, and the top of the high and extraordinary Huangshan mountain was in sight. He was determined to climb it even though it seemed a daunting and exhausting task. When he reached the top, there was a volcano! Why was it so hot and steamy? Alas, it was about to erupt! Jonathan ran away as fast as he could as the hot and deadly lava spilling out of the volcano.

He ran and ran until he heard a voice shouting “Who is there?” The mysterious voice was loud and scary. When Jonathan heard the voice, he ran away even faster than he ever could. He was running for his life.

Suddenly, a monstrous shadow came out of nowhere. That must be “The Legend of the Huangshan Volcano!” Jonathan thought, because he had read about this monster in a book called “The adventure at Huangshan”.

When Jonathan was escaping, he accidentally fell into quicksand. Luckily, there was a tree with a strong branch nearby and he managed to grab it and pull himself out off the sinking sand. He kept running away from the Legend of the Huangshan Volcano.

He ran as fast as his legs could take him. When Jonathan arrived at his grandmother’s cottage on the other side of the mountain and knocked on the door. When the door opened, it was his grandmother standing there. Jonathan was so glad and relieved to see his grandmother. He ran directly into her welcoming arms.

Later when Jonathan told his grandmother of his encounter with the “Legend of Huangshan Volcano”. His grandmother comforted him and told him never to go near the volcano again for his own safety.

But actually, Jonathan’s grandmother knew who the Legend was. In the beginning, she did not want to tell Jonathan who it was but he kept asking about it. “Who is the Legend, Grandma?”. Finally, she agreed and said, “I will not tell you, but I will show you..” Before she could finish, Jonathan shouted “Hurrah!”.

Later that day, Grandmother brought Jonathan to a cave where he had never been before. It looked very dark and scary. It was actually a hidden entrance to the volcano.

When they got in, the first thing they saw was the Legend of the Huangshan Volcano. Jonathan was terrified. Meanwhile, his grandmother was having a lovely chat with the legend. Now Jonathan realised that the Legend of the Huangshan Volcano was actually nice and friendly.

After bidding farewell to the legend, Jonathan asked his grandmother “Could we go visit the Legend of the Huangshan Volcano again some day?” “Sure!” she replied.

When they returned back to the cottage, they had a cup of delicious hot chocolate, Jonathan remembered to take out his homemade cookies for his grandmother. They both had a great time enjoying the cookies and the hot chocolate. His grandmother told Jonathan that the Legend’s spooky voice was used to scare away strangers getting too near to his home. It never had any intention to harm anyone. Jonathan felt safe. He stayed on at his grandmother’s cottage until the end of his school holidays. It was an adventurous holiday he would never forget.

Lost in the Chinese Mountains

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Chan, Pearly – 10

I squinted my eyes as the sun glared down at me. The light blinded me for a second, and then I felt myself falling face down on the dirt. I could feel my ankle twisting in the process, and I silently shrieked in pain. I slowly stood up, wincing from the pain of my foot. I looked around, trying to spot my parents. Had they already gone without me exploring in the jungle? I stumbled over dirt and rock, careful not to drop my amulet necklace as I made my way through the trail.

I started to panic. The sun was setting, and I was still in the middle of the jungle. I looked in my bag, hoping to find something useful, but no. I told myself. I’m 14 years old. I can handle this! I looked around. The trees blocked my view, but I could make out a small temple on the top of the Chinese Mountains. There was a lit candle, so I assumed some-one lived there. I decided to ask for help, and later on, I realised that that was a big mistake.

I could hear the rustle of leaves as I climbed a rock wall. I kept my head up, looking at the candle next to the temple for hope. I was nervous, and not prepared. My hand shook, as well as my feet. I told myself, It’s fine, Gwen. You’ve been through many other situations, they all turned out fine! Except none of them involved climbing a solid rock in the middle of the woods at night. I shivered. I was in the middle of a jungle at night, and the thought stayed in my head. I kept on climbing, looking at my watch every once in a while. It was 4 am when I had reached the door of the

temple. The temple was in the middle of a clearing in the forest. It was elaborately decorated, with candles on the windows, and a stone path leading in. However, as much as it was welcoming. I was unstable. I couldn't help but think that it was fake. I didn't know why. I could hear footsteps coming from inside the temple, and it was approaching the door. I anxiously backed away into the shadows and waited.

A figure stepped out of the door. It was wearing long robes, and by the looks of it, it had no hair. The figure was wearing an amulet bracelet, and looked around. The figure started to go back in. But at the last moment, the figure spoke. Its voice was clear and able to be heard. It was the voice of a female. "Who are you? What do you seek? Her back was facing me, but I could feel my heart pound. I backed away slowly, avoiding the cliff and into the trees. I thought I was safe. How wrong I was. The woman heard my every step. Suddenly, I felt a hand push me into the light. I looked behind me desperately.

Nothing.

Nothing was pushing me, it was like an invisible person was there, but no. I have never believed in magic, and never will. I struggled the whole way through as the invisible hand pushed me over to the woman. She had pure white skin, and her eyes were piercing. The woman demanded "Who are you. What do you seek." I was quiet for a few seconds, before answering. "How can I trust you?" I was trying to be cautious, but I could feel a bond between me and the woman.

An hour later, I was inside the temple, sitting on a straw mat sipping a cup of tea. I felt a wave of calmness slip over me, as the lamp on the simple wood table shone brightly. The monk had told me her name was Faye, and that she had wanted company through the night. Faye had gone to brew some more tea, while I sat there, waiting. Faye held a kettle and poured some tea into my cup, while she explained to me "I have parents, but they are not here with me." I was sure I could hear sadness in her voice. I was surprised, since I thought all monks didn't have feelings. I told her "It's going to be fine. They still live with you in your heart." Faye stared at me. "I don't want them to." She said in a cold voice. She stood up and left the room. I was even more taken back when I heard that... I remembered I also have parents...

That night, I snuck out of the temple when Faye was still sleeping. I headed inside the forest, and started looking around for my parent's cabin. I heard noises coming from bushes and trees, and was anxious. I came to a clearing and heard a faint rustling. I spun around and eyed everything carefully. I could hear footsteps emerging. I could feel the wind blowing against me. My heart was in my throat, and I could not move. I felt my whole body shiver, not because of the cold in the night. The figure in the night was a female monk... Faye?!

I was so confused. When I left the temple that night, I had made sure that Faye was sleeping. How was she here? Faye hung her head in embarrassment. "I wanted to follow you. When I first met you, my amulet glowed. I didn't know what had happened. My amulet never glows. I had felt a bond..." At that moment, blinding lights flew down from the sky. My name was being called... "May! May! May!..."

My name was being called by my parents. I opened one eye to see that I was lying in the bed of my hotel near the Chinese Mountains. I didn't want to wake up. I shut my eyes and opened them again after a few seconds.

There, in my hand, was an amulet bracelet.

The Ghost story of Mount Huangshan

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Chui, Hing Man – 9

SMASH! Something banged and shattered in the kitchen as Milly bolted through the kitchen to serve the king's pancakes. Everyone was shocked as he tore through everything. The king was stormy so he screamed: "Pancakes! IMMEDIATELY! NOW! OR I WILL CHOP OFF EVERYONE'S HEAD!!" He wielded his throne around, ready to fling it at everyone. Milly looked around, panicked, shot around the room and shouted: "Where are the pancakes?" His heart was thumping hard in his chest. Just when the king went insane, Milly saw the shattered thing. A clumsy old servant dropped the pancakes onto the floor and the crockery smashed. His thinking was obvious; it was on his face. Suddenly, Milly heard a gavel banging. A servant was being sent to prison!

Milly was going wild. He charged around, waiting for the chaos to end. Then Milly dashed to the king, told him everything, and guess what was the king's reaction?

The king was raging! It was red and swollen like a hot balloon! It seemed like the king turned into the dark serpent, the prince of foulness, and the evil god all at once. He roared: "Throw that servant into jail for twenty years! And if he survives out of prison, I will torture him forever!" But no matter how the servant begged and sobbed, the king threw him behind bars.

“Humph!” Milly sighed. His heart ached for the servant. Where was a good king when you needed one? He wanted to go on an adventure in the mountains to lose the terrible mood. He asked when the king was in a better mood. The king approved and so he went out of the kingdom. He climbed Mount Huangshan which he thought was amazing. The mountain stood taller, attracting Milly. The mountain looked like heaven. He was in the sky, floating on cloud nine. But his wants is to defeat the evil ghost at the cave in Mount Huangshan.

“This place is amazing! The sky is a watery blue, the rivers are clear like a piece of shiny glass, and I know that there are many amazing things waiting for me.” Milly said. He looked around, and imagined him touching the heavenly sky. Then without thinking, he walked straight into the cave. It looked safe, and it could be an easy win over the ghost. But he didn’t realize that there was a cave which had two ghosts there. Milly was trembling with excitement when he entered the cave. But something wrong floated there. And Milly had a spooky feeling that there were two ghosts, not one ghost. And he realized it wouldn’t be an easy win. The gentle wind turned into the harsh sound of clanging, the water looked like it would turn black, and the sky rumbled. “I’m in trouble,” Milly thought.

“HE HE HE HE HE!” echoed a sound around the cave. Milly jumped back in fear, spooked by the sound. But before he could run, a door slammed behind. BOOM! Milly was trapped! He was so shocked that he went into a deadly faint.

The next thing Milly knew, he was lying on a floating bed that was keeping him alive. He wanted to scream, but the sound wouldn’t go out of his throat. He opened his eyes, then saw the doomed thing he had been dreading. A face without eyes. A wicked grin with no teeth. A body made of what seemed like mist, floating above the ground.

A ghost!

This was turning into a trepidation.

And this was hell.

Milly shouted: “WHO ARE YOU?”

The ghost replied: “I am the nightmare of nightmares on Mount Huangshan.”

The ghost continued: “I am going to torture you! You will think it will be better to die than be alive. Here are tortures for you to choose:

The rack,

The Iron maiden,

The breaking wheel,

The Iron chair and

The Thumbscrew.

Which one do you want?”

Milly couldn’t believe it. The clanging was actually torture instruments!

Milly can’t decide which was the least horrible. He shivered at the thought of being tortured. Then he said: “I will have the thumbscrew.”

“Of course, young man!”

Milly felt extremely uncomfortable. The cold chilly air hammered his face mercilessly.

No sooner, the ghost brought the torture there. He gestured for Milly to put his thumb on the screw. Milly reluctantly obeyed, because he had no choice.

And then it began. Milly’s scream could be heard for miles but nobody was near enough to hear. The hour was an eternity. Just when Milly thought this was the end, something appeared in the darkness. A floating, horrible thing emerged. Milly gasped. He was right. There were two ghosts. This is the end of me, Milly thought. Then Milly fell to the floor like a huge sack of potatoes.

The next thing he saw was the king. Standing between the two creatures like a miserable mortal. The two creatures smirked to themselves. Hee hee, they thought. Of course, the king was as horrified as Milly. He was like a squashed person next to the ghosts. Then Milly remembered that he had his staff of strength behind him. It was following behind him like a ghost. The staff of strength begged to be used, which meant: “Let’s thrash and hammer and destroy these evil ghosts until they are in hell, where they belong!” With confidence, Milly picked up the staff of

strength. “Tyr!!!!” he cried. Then the strangest thing happened. The smug creatures were melting. Melting. Melting. Melting until they completely disappeared.

Milly and the king returned to the castle and the king was as happy as Larry. He let out the servant he had imprisoned and everyone lived happily ever after.

And as for the ghosts, if they had lived, they would have learnt an important lesson: Never ever trap someone and torture them. If you do, revenge will be theirs and you would suffer as much as being tortured.

The Mystical Mountions of China

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Gillen, Ciara – 9

Lily, a little girl, who lived in a village in central China decided to go for a walk in a forest. There were emerald green trees. And she could hear the rushing sound of water. It came from a waterfall leading to a river. It was frothing like a cappuccino, the rocks in the waterfall stood strong like soldiers. As she was walking, she saw a vertical stone staircase, which was carved into a mountain, a gloomy mist hung around it.

While she climbed this tall mystical mountain she got more and more tired, but was determined to reach the top to see the view, so she walked up and up and up the staircase, by now she was only a few steps away from the top. “Finally” panted Lily as she caught her breath. Just at that moment, her eyes fell upon something, it was an old wooden temple, covered by a canopy of trees, she crept towards the heavy wooden door, and opened it, as it opened it made a creak sound, she went deeper in, and a whole cloud of incense filled her nose, every single time she took a breath, then all of a sudden she saw a silhouette through the cloud of smoke, it was moving.

A shiver shot down her spine. she was speechless. It came forward. She was face to face with something. Something fluffy. It was a..... baby bear!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Lily could see that it was trying to tell her something. The small animal's eyes beckoned her to look outside. Gradually Lily understood the bear, maybe it's mother was lost? All of a sudden they heard a loud noise, they went and looked outside, and what a shock they got. They saw trees being bulldozed down. Their hearts missed a beat because of how shocked they were, They nearly fainted. Lily felt sweat rolling down her face in sadness.

Suddenly, something caught her eye. It was an old candle stick beside the entrance of the temple. She picked it up and examined it. She blew it out so the temple would not catch fire. But it would not blow out, instead out came a green smoke and it formed a sort of shape. What shape? A shape of a dragon it had big green wings, large white fangs and a long red tongue which shot in and out it was a shape of a dart. It croaked, "I will grant you one wish." Lily said "please can you stop those people, out there from cutting these trees, because it is destroying the animal's habitat!" and so the dragon told them to get on his back, and out they flew, there were men wearing bright yellow hats and big huge cranes creeping over them, the dragon roared "stop cutting the forest down," they looked way up and saw. What did they see? They saw a huge dragon with a little girl and a bear Cub on its back. The men froze in horror, they were rooted to the spot, they shouted back "no way we need this land for farming and for building we don't care about animals habitat" they shouted at the tops of their voices. "Well if you don't stop cutting down trees, then I declare a battle and who ever wins will get what they want" the dragon said, the men with yellow helmets said "deal"

One man threw his hammer up to try and hit the dragon's tail but missed and it hit one of the other men on the head and he was out, the dragon used his fire to burn the ground beside one of the men, one man went into the crane and tried to knock or at least hit the dragon but luckily just in time the dragon flew left and ducked it, the dragon was winning but the men were not going to give up, the dragon flew low down and used his tail to knock a person down the men threw rocks and threw it at them but the dragon was to speedy, and dodged them all, next the dragon used his tail and knocked out the person who was still in the crane, a man threw his saw, up and up and up it went and the handle of the saw touched Lily's hand, Lily grabbed it and the dragon flew down and Lily chopped some of the mens head off, then the dragon bit some of the men on their bottoms "ahhh" they shouted and fell to the ground still shouting, there were only 4 men left the men all threw any hard things they could find at them but the dragon dogged them all, it was raining hard things on the men the men tried to dodge them but only 2 survived this was one of the men's first success they got a match and a lighter lit the match and threw it up at the dragon's tail and it caught on fire but luckily at that moment it started to rain so the dragon's tail was not badly burned, it was still raining so to finish of the men the dragon used a giant rock and threw it at the remaining men. The dragon's team has won the battle.

There was a sigh of relief, and a cheer of happiness, the dragon, Lily, and the bear shouted "wahooooo!!!!!!!!!!!" the forrest was calm and the forrest was coming to life with all sorts of sounds from animals like a choir.

Then they heard a rustle in the forest and they saw a speck, the speck became a dot the dot became a blob. They were all flabbergasted. It was a, no it couldn't be, or was it,

But the baby bear ran towards.

Treasures Don't Find Themselves

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Guo, Joy – 10

“Hey Joy! Look what I found! It’s a treasure map leading to Huangshan!” And that was how my adventure started. Look, I’m a teacher. A normal teacher teaching English. I was no fan of going on treasure hunts or whatever. But when my younger sister Briana insisted I should go, there was no changing her mind. “But Briana, I don’t even know if this map is real! This could just be some prank! Anyone could just make a digital map on the computer!” I argued. “Joy, I found this right in the mud. It has to be real!” Briana argued back. She didn’t listen to a word I said. I remember that it was April 24th 2020 that day. Briana quickly ordered 2 plane tickets. She dragged and forced me on a plane. She even made me carry a sleeping bag and some tinned food!

I live in Hong Kong. So the plane ride was 2 hours. After 2 hours of plane sick, vomiting, and Briana talking about the treasure map, we arrived at Anhui. The place Huangshan was set at.

We arrived at Huangshan half an hour later. It was buzzing with tourists! Finally, we arrived at a place where most of the tourists went back down. There was a choice. Keep on going, or go back down. I totally felt like giving up. But Briana grabbed my arm and she blocked my way, making it impossible to go back down. “Joy, never give up! We are finding a treasure, and we are not going back down!” Briana shouted . Her voice was so full of determination and energy, that I had no choice. With a groan and a sigh, I kept going on the stairs that seemed to last forever.

After an hour, we arrived at a place which seemed like a dome and platform. The walls were made of mud and there was also a ceiling made out of mud.

All that hiking was worth it because the view was absolutely breathtaking. A mist of fog covered the valley below like a blanket. Vines twisted around the mountain like ropes. There was an orange and yellow sunset. The sun had turned red, like a ball. Clouds surrounded the sun, making it more beautiful than ever. The colour yellow and orange blended into the sky, making this view seem like a fairy tale. That's when I decided that I was supporting Briana. I glanced at Briana. "Let's go find this treasure!" I said as I high fived her.

By that time, we were the only people left on the platform. I took out the map and started following it. The map seemed old and ancient, and I was quite curious. "The first part is called secret tunnel" I said slowly. I realised that I was tired, so I leaned on the mudwall. Wait. Something seemed weird about the part I was leaning. It seemed softer than the other part of the mud. Then, I pushed my finger inside the wet part. I pulled my finger out, and a whole patch of mud came out together with my finger revealing a small tunnel just wide enough for me to pass.

"Let's go" I whispered. Briana followed. It was smelly and wet, but still, I continued. Before long, we arrived at another flat platform. It was like the last one, except that it was bigger. And it was getting a bit scary. Briana looked scared too, so I suggested having a quick dinner and go to bed in our sleeping bags. It seemed like a good idea, so we did. The next morning, we were off again!

"Ok, so the next part says narrow slide." I murmured. We crawled on the floor to look for clues. Things seemed pretty hopeless until—"Joy, come here! I found something!" shouted Briana. Full with hope, I ran towards her. But all I saw was a tiny stick stuck in the ground. "How is that a clue?" I asked, my hopes getting down. "Try getting it out." she said. I tugged and tugged. But it remained stuck. "Huh?" I muttered confused. Briana smiled and together, we pulled. Finally, it popped out, making us fall backwards. The stick was out, and so was another patch of mud. "I think we are supposed to go into this hole on the floor." I said. "But what if we fall into a trap?" asked Briana worriedly. "There's only one way to find out!" I cried.

I jumped first. "Briana, when I say "ok", you jump." I said nervously. Briana nodded. Taking deep breaths and counting to ten, I jumped. I got butterflies in my stomach. Finally, I landed on something soft. Grass. "Briana! It's safe here!" I shouted. A second later, she appeared beside me. Me and Briana stood up. Holding hands, we looked around. We were on another platform. "Grrrrrr!" I moaned in frustration. We seemed to be trapped! There were no ladders, no doors, no windows. I sat down leaning against the mucky walls. Suddenly, I fell backwards, revealing a tiny hidden room.

I could not believe what was in the room. "Briana, look at this treasure!" I cried. I was in shock. There was money, diamonds, gold, silver, bronze, jewellery, crowns... Everything that would make a person rich. "Joy, we did it! Now, help me put all the money into this bag! We will be rich!" Shouted Briana with excitement as she handed me a bag. I was about to obey, when I stopped in my tracks. "Briana, I will help you bring these treasures home, only if you promise me we will all donate them to the poor. Many people in this world are suffering. But not us, so we don't deserve this treasure." I said sternly as I stared at Briana.

Briana thought for a moment. Then said, "I promise." Briana could sometimes be a bit greedy. But guess what? This time, she kept her promise.

The Emperor of the Yellow Mountain

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Lam, Trinity – 10

“Woosh, woosh” the wind howled, at the dead of the night. Yan Xin was cuddled in his bed watching the rainfall like crystals all clinking on the ground. But soon Yan Xin was distracted by a loud noise coming from downstairs, he ran down and saw something that made his eyes watery. There was fire and destruction. His aunt was being taken away! The fire was spreading and he needed to act fast. He thought for a moment and tugged onto the floorboards using all his strength he pulled it up and broke the window, covering his feet with a rag he hopped out before the flaming fire like a beast trying to eat him would reach him. He never knew this would happen, his aunt was gone, and so was his home, his childhood wonderland falling to ashes.

Soon a wispy light was coming towards Yan Xin, it was a woman in a silky dress flowing behind her she was riding on a horse as white as the glowing moon like a pearl in the night. The woman had black neat hair that floated, fine robes that seemed like a cloud, it had a white rabbit on it, soft and fluffy. When she saw Yan Xin she came to a halt, her pearly face shining in radiance, smiling and said “hop on Yan Xin, I will take you to somewhere safe, trust me.” Yan Xin wiped his tears and said in a shivering voice, “I-I trust you”. The lady picked Yan Xin up and plopped him on the horse and they went along. After a long time, Yan Xin finally calmed down and asked, “how do you know my name?” The woman looked at Yan Xin and her eyes seemed to have an enchanting power. “I know your name, but...you don’t know mine. I’m Heng E. Now here we are. I think you need to meet a friend here in Bai Yun Shan.” Yan Xin hopped off and looked around. But found himself only surrounded by mist and fog.

Yan Xin and Heng E walked along a snowy and white stone path. The blizzard north wind blew hard on their faces. They stopped at the sight of a maiden. “Heng E? Why are you here? I thought you would be on the-” Heng E clasped the maiden’s mouth shut and said “this is my friend! He Qiong!” He Qiong shook Heng E’s hand off and

said “Oh hi there, Yan Xin! Are you seeking help?” Yan Xin then said, “I do seek help, my home was destroyed and my aunt is gone... because of the new Emperor.” He Qiong then said, “we’ll help you if you tell us a story!” Yan Xin’s eyes were large and frightened, but with little strength and courage, he told the story of “the cowherd boy and weaver girl” as told by his aunt.

After Yan Xin had finished, He Qiong clapped and said, “Very well, I will help you, I will tell you what the emperor wants. He wants the treasure of winter for with the mythical beast Polaris.” Heng E then said, “The Emperor lives on top of the Yellow Mountain and the treasure of winter is located in the peak. Believed it or not, it has been searched for a very long time, but no one has ever been able to answer the riddle of the guardian named Polaris, a starry bear, in order to get it.” He Qiong then said, “I can’t go with you sadly, but my mascot, Feng Huang can go with you. Now go onwards!”

The cold north wind brushes the ragged robes of Yan Xin. The stars in the sky shone like glistening gemstones in the twilight sky. It seemed like a never-ending winter but Yan Xin didn’t care anymore. He only wanted to find his aunt, or perhaps something more important. Yan Xin and Heng E went through the woods, the willow trees swaying like dancing. The wind brushed through his hair and into his ears as if to be saying, *“little boy, run along now, run along. Nothing good would happen if you go on.”* Yan Xin wondered about these people, and thought should I trust them? But now he was already on the Yellow Mountain, a mountain as sharp as a knife, Yan Xin and Heng E arrived at the peak after climbing up the moldy and frozen stairs. The snow up there was hard, like shards of ice facing you. Soon a figure rose up from the snow and it was the starry bear, Polaris! Polaris looked down at them and stared deeply into Yan Xin like it was the ocean. Until it just gave a nod and dropped a chest.

Yan Xin picked up the chest and walked towards the Emperor’s palace with Heng E. Inside they came before the Emperor sitting on the golden throne with dragon symbols carved on it. The Emperor wore a golden robe and a golden crown. They presented the chest and the Emperor opened it. His eyes glowed with rage immediately, and yelled “How dare you fooled me with an empty chest! DRAG THESE TWO TO THE DUNGEON!” But as the soldiers drew near they all turned into stone when they caught Heng E’s gaze. The Emperor was shocked by her magic and begged Heng E to spare him. Heng E looked at him and said with a voice like trickling water “You have been unkind to your people. You will live, but live a poor life in a village down the foggy mountains. Release all the poor people and head south. Do not tell anyone about this or else you will turn into stone.” The Emperor loyally agreed and released Yan Xin’s aunt along with other villagers.

On the carriage back home, Yan Xin’s aunt was asleep, and Yan Xin asked Heng E, “How did you turn them into stone? Who will be the new emperor? What is the true treasure of Polaris?” Heng E replied with a smile, “Slow down. The new emperor will be good and faithful, and the true treasure is courage. I am Hang E, but you will forget this encounter with me soon.” Even though Yan Xin was intrigued he soon fell asleep. At dawn he woke up in an imperial room, with robes of an emperor on and a piece of paper flew on his face, saying, “Yan Xin you are the new emperor. Your aunt is safe. Take care of China.” With the pure sunlight glistening out of the windows, Yan Xin looked up and saw the most beautiful sight ever. The sun had just risen and the moon was still there, making it look like the sun and moon had finally reunited. Recovering from shock and taking a deep breath on this cold winter morning, he said with determination “I, Yan Xin will be a good emperor.”

Magical things in China

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Lau, Chelsea – 9

This is Camila Poppy Jane. She lives in America, on the other side of the world. Of course, her friends called her Cam. But she discovered something magical, something gorgeous. Want to know what it is? Want to know the tale of Camila Poppy Jane? Now let's start over shall we?

Camila Poppy Jane was just 15 years old. She was in her room studying for her biology test. Her biggest dream was to uncover some secrets of China like the magical mountains and worlds underwater. She has been researching about it for the longest time, but does not have any proof that any of the legends existed.

“Ms. Jane Poppy Camila! Wake up! For heaven's sake, You have been sleeping throughout the lesson!” Said a very furious Ms. Chan. “I believe you were studying about magical stuff again? Last friday night?”

“Y-e-s Ms. Chan, is there a test or something?” Camila stammered.

“There is a test next Monday, but not a biology test nor a history test, why? Because you are sitting in math class!”

Back home, Camila studied for her math test. But stopped when a paper airplane came through her bedroom window. At first, she thought it was some kind of April fools joke, since it was nearly April fools, but then she realised that it was a letter. She unfolded it and realised that it was a message.

“Hello Camila Poppy Jane, this is a letter from China, you are invited to join the hunt of magic on the Huangshan mountains. Please come here on the fourth of July 2020!” She read aloud. Camila closed her math book and put it into her school bag, and zipped it shut.

The next day, she realised it was the fourth of July already! She hurriedly packed a small bag and set off for China.

At the mountains, it was huge, and maybe, perhaps even taller than ten giraffes put together Camila thought Camila met the others. There were about forty of them to hunt in the mountains. The leader of the hunt blew his whistle, BEEEEEP! And they started the hunt.

Camila spotted a cave and went inside.....

“Ahhhh!” She screamed, a ghost was inside guarding some sort of treasure. The ruby necklace! The one that belonged to Mary from the legend, that Mary became a mermaid then got poisoned and became a ghost and found a ruby necklace to keep! It was true?!

“Ooooooh a Ruby necklace it’s mine!” Said a twinkling voice, it was Jones the queen of fairies from another legend. There was about to be magic! Camila couldn’t bear but watch the two fight!

“I will be the one who would keep the ruby necklace!” Giggled Jones.

“It was mine! I found it fair and square!” Roared Mary.

“I better leave...” Said Camila. But, The cave caved in, Camila tried to push and shove the rocks but it was no use. Camila Poppy Jane was trapped in there forever.

Meanwhile, the rest of the group had finished looking and they found nothing. So, the leader decided to count up all the people and send them back home.

“Draco, Jess, Theo, Amanda, Sanna, Leah and Camila. Wait.. Camila? Are you here?” The leader asked. No response. “Well I guess we have to be on our way. Time is running out and the train to the airport is leaving in a few minutes!”

Back at school, Camila’s friends were looking for her.

“Cam? Are you here? I heard that the research group had just returned from the investigation!” Lenne asked. It was recess and Camila still had not showed up yet!

“Y-you don’t suppose she’s dead right?” Asked Liz, one of Camila’s best friends.

“Don’t be silly, our Camila is much much stronger than that!” Leanne said, But she too felt nervous, she began running her hand through her thick blond hair.

“I think she really is dead..” Ms. Chan Said. “The backup group was walking into an open cave and found her dead body with a ruby necklace on her neck.”

“I-what? She is d-dead?” Leanne and Liz said together. Both of them were shaking as they said this. They couldn’t believe it. They thought that Camila was just late. But they never thought she was dead.

“Dead? But Poppy was always strong and stood up for us!” A pair of twins said. They always liked Camila! But dead? They couldn’t believe it either.

The news of Camila’s death passed around the school quickly and soon, the whole world knew about Camila. People thought that Camila had been eaten by some monster and the monster spit her out. But no one guessed that she Camila Poppy Jane would have died because of magic or some rocks..... YET!

And this story became a legend. Camila had found proof, of course, that the legends were true, and it all happened in that one little cave, and that is the tale of Camila Poppy Jane.

Promise

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Lee, Erin – 10

Sophie hauled herself up to a platform. ‘Huangshan,’ she breathed, taking in the beauty of the magical mountains. Sophie had almost forgotten about her distant Chinese heritage. The case that revoked her memory was about the theory that Huangshan, the ancient mountain, was sick.

The mission required a scientist to investigate in China. Sophie had taken the job immediately. And now here she was, at Huangshan. When she accepted the mission, she’d secretly hoped to find more about her mother’s Chinese family. Her mother, who had hiked Huangshan and never came back. Scientists assumed that she had gotten lost in the mountains and couldn’t find her way. But child Sophie had never believed it. Her mother was her idol, and when she was gone, she promised to find her again. And Sophie hoped that this was her chance.

Her senses didn’t tell her immediately what was wrong. After all, could mountains even get sick? But slowly she noticed things that were different. Trees had started to wither. Poisonous vines wrapping around cliffs. And no creature had appeared so far, only dead carcasses. She gingerly picked up one with tongs and put it in a plastic bag to investigate. At first, she thought that it was just this spot of nature. But it wasn’t. As she went on, it only got worse. She started to think that, as fake as it seemed, Huangshan really was sick.

‘But what could we do?’ she wondered. ‘We can’t just give Huangshan some medicine.’ She searched her mind, and she focused on an unlikely memory: her mother telling her a legend about the mountains. The story took place in the highest peak of Huangshan, and it said that a temple stood there. You had to face two challenges before you got a vial of potion. The potion could cure everything, and heal it to the fullest extent.

Sophie scolded herself for telling stories. ‘It isn’t real and it will never be.’ But she couldn’t shake the idea. Finally, she gave in. ‘What else can I do?’ she thought. ‘It can’t get any worse.’ But in her mind’s eye, she saw Huangshan withering, crumbling and finally collapsing, crushing the planet...

She slung her backpack over her shoulder and started climbing. She put one hook after the other, pulling herself up. As she got higher, the wind got stronger, sweeping her hair out of her face. The view, while breathtakingly beautiful, was incredibly far away. She shuddered, and resolved not to look until she reached the top.

It seemed impossible to reach the peak. Sweat poured down her face, but she still continued to climb. At last, the peak could be seen. 'I'm near the top!' she excitedly thought. She pulled herself up to the top peak. 'Where could it be?' she wondered. 'This is the peak.' She looked up, and she saw a glint of light... Sophie reached out, and stumbled on a stone...

Falling seemed to take ages. The wind rushed in her ears; groping wildly, she finally grasped a ledge by her hand. Suddenly, an invisible force seemed to slam into her and knock her out cold...

When she opened her eyes, she saw a temple before her. 'This is it,' she breathed. Sophie got to her feet, and gingerly entered the doors. 'Three challenges,' she reminded herself, and walked in.

The room was dark, except for the small, obvious golden light on a stand. *Is this a trick?* she thought, when suddenly a silhouette appeared inside the room. It was a woman, with black hair and a strangely familiar shadow... It couldn't be. The woman picked up the vial filled with potion. Sophie frowned. 'I thought there were two challenges!' she thought. The woman turned around, and a flood of memories hit Sophie.

The woman's expression changed from confusion, recognition, shock and then disbelief. 'Sophie...?' she whispered. Sophie's eyes widened. 'Mum?' she asked tentatively. She couldn't believe it. 'Is this one of the challenges?' Her mother shook her head. 'You remembered the story!' she said. 'There were two challenges, but they weren't monsters. The first one was willing yourself to believe in the story. The second challenge was climbing up to the top. You did both.' Her mother stretched out her hand, and the tiny vial lay there. Sophie took it with trembling hands, and stepped outside the temple.

She knelt down, uncapping the bottle. Slowly she tipped the potion into the rocks. The liquid soaked into the earth, and wrapped the mountain in a golden light... Trees sprung up. Animals darted between plants. Huangshan was cured.

'You did it,' said a voice, and her mother placed a hand on Sophie's shoulder. 'They said you died!' cried Sophie. 'There was one part of the story I never told you. When I found the temple, I had a choice to become the mountain guardian. I knew that this meant that I could never see you again, but I took the chance. I tried to take the vial, but only those who have faced the challenges could retrieve it. Ever since, I have been living here.'

'But now you can go home with me!' exclaimed Sophie. Her mother shook her head sadly. 'As the guardian of Huangshan, I cannot leave the mountains. You must leave without me.' Sophie felt like the world was falling apart around her. 'But then... I'll never see you again.' Her mother sighed. 'Sophie, when you leave, promise me one thing. Not only Huangshan is dying. All of nature is withering, and it is harming the world. And humans are the cause. You must start the path to save it. Only then can the mountains be cured.' Sophie nodded, blinking back tears. 'I promise.' Her mother pulled her into a warm embrace. 'Goodbye,' she whispered.

As Sophie made her way down the mountain, she gazed at the beautiful scene, teeming with life and renewed nature, that was Huangshan. She silently vowed to protect it, and all of nature forever. 'I promise.'

The Golden Princess

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Lee, Katelyn – 10

“Waaaa waaaa” the baby wailed as the doctor put her in the Pram. The royal family rushed to surround the baby princess. The sound made everyone so proud of their queen, well except one.

That day the town was buzzing with excitement. They were all excited to see the new royal princess. When the queen came out with the baby in her hands accompanied by the king, the crowd gasped! The babys hair was made of gold ! Everyone whispered , “is that the baby?” said some , “her hair !” said another . “Oh my !” exclaimed most. The people of **Shanghai** were shocked, the king soon realized that the commotion was about the princesses hair , “citizens ! This is our precious princess!” The crowd silenced “her hair is made of gold !” the king continued. they looked around in disbelief .

The Queen Mother was mad , she didn't know that her least favorite child gave birth to a money making princess! She was mad, very mad .She ran into the castle , into the telephone booth, she dialed her wickedest wizard, herald the magnificent ! she held the telephone to her ear , with the vilest smirk that you could ever imagine ! “herald ? my dear , my son just gave birth to a golden haired princess! With real gold hair ! I want her to never be seen again! ” The wizard said that there was a spell , when it turns winter , he can enchant her to go to the huangshan , there's a secret hole that can fit anything ! so she can stay there , until she dies and no one remembers her. The queen loved it, she said yes, winter was only 2 months away...

2 months later, princess Alexandra learned to laugh, she was the only thing the king cared about (aside from the queen). That night , after bedtime , the king sat down on his soft bed , his guts told him something was wrong , and suddenly , The alarms started ringing ! someone broke into the baby's room!

The king and queen rushed to their daughters room , the window was shattered , the glass was everywhere. They ran to the crib, she wasn't there ...

Months of searching passed by, no one found a clue, the old queen acted innocent the whole time, although everyone knew she hated Alexandra.

A decade later, in Huangshan mountain, the princess just had her birthday, she was 16 years old, the Queen Mother set off on her dragon to check on her, in a deep cave, the Queen mother found a beautiful girl in rags combing her hair, the old queen stomped her foot to get her attention. Alexandra looked up, “Alexandra! Look at you! I knew you're not meant to be a princess!” the old queen spoke in a loud and scary voice, the old queen went closer into the hole, she saw her face, her sea blue eyes, and her golden hair, it made the queen feel bad.

The Queen Mother decided to save Alexandra, she used her magic to float her and Alexandra up, she looked around, she was nervous, Alexandra had never been to the outside world! Queen mother's dragon flew by and picked them up, Alexandra felt wind in her hair, it was nice. She looked at the fluffy clouds, she wanted to touch it, but she didn't. They flew down to the castle doors, people looked at the old queen and the girl in rags, the Queen mother stood on the stage, the king and queen walked out, “everyone! Meet your long lost princess!” the Queen Mother announced. In moments, everyone was in tears. Even the queen and king were in tears! They found their princess, at last!

The Adventure to Huangshan

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Leung, Hin Ching – 9

It all started in Chinese class. A subject I hate. On that day, we were learning about Li Bai's poems. I leaned back on my chair, and my eyes were half closed when I heard Ms Lee say, “Before we read the poems, we are going to watch a video.”

The video began with a short bearded man standing at the base of a tree-covered mountain. He talked about Huangshan as many images of the mountain paraded across the screen. I had no idea how beautiful it was!

When we practiced reading the poems, I noticed something was flying through the air. It was beaming bright like the sun. What the heck?

I shot my hand up and asked if I could go to the lavatory. Before Ms Lee could say anything, I rushed out of the classroom. I bounded down the steps and didn't stop till I reached the playground.

The bright light was resting on the ground beginning to take on a more physical form. The light faded and transformed into a creature. I stared at it. I was too shocked to move until I realized the creature was a dragon! I opened my mouth to scream, but no sound came out.

“My name is Lightning,” the dragon said suddenly, “I'm looking for a human to help me.” I didn't have time to ask questions.

In a few seconds, we were at the top of a mountain. I saw numerous grotesque rocks and some of them were covered with floating clouds. It was breathtaking.

Lightning said sadly, “Last week, the dragons had a party. A monster discovered the party but he was not invited. He was jealous of this happy, and beautiful place, so he killed all the other dragons. He stole my dragon egg and even worse, he was planning to destroy *Huangshan*.”

“Ohmy! How can I help you?.”

“The dragon egg is very important to me. This is the last dragon egg left in Huangshan. Besides, I don’t want this place to be ruined. Luckily we have this map to find the monster.” Lightning pulled out a map. There was a big red cross on a little bridge.

“I’ll help you then.” I pointed to the big cross. “Let’s go there!”

When we reached our destination, I gasped. There were many oddly-shaped rocks! I walked up to one and tapped it. It cracked and opened. I poked my head in and... felllllll!

Down, down, I tumbled into the darkness. I looked around, straining to see. I was in a spooky cave. My heart began to pound. All of a sudden, a ray of light blinded my eyes. I turned around and noticed Lightning was just next to me!

We walked around the cave. Suddenly, I stepped on something hot and wet. I looked down and saw a hot spring bubbling beneath me. We looked closely around the water. Then, I spotted something. Resting at the bottom of the spring, sparkling like a diamond, was a football sized egg. A dragon egg! I squatted down and picked it up. “That was easy” I thought.

But there was only one problem. We were stuck in a small, creepy cave with no way for Lightning to fly out! Lightning and I looked around. I figured there was a waterfall! I poked through it and saw a long staircase.

“The exit is behind the waterfall!!” I cried.

Lightning and I were so happy we could have danced up the stairs. But it was long and steep. We kept our eyes glued to the sky above us.

After a long time, we made it to the top. Our heads popped out of the cave and we froze. There, in front of us stood a monster.

The monster laughed. He pulled out a bottle of poison, “When this rises, Huangshan will be destroyeeeee!” The monster cackled. I watched as the monster opened the bottle of the poison. Thinking fast, I snatched the bottle and threw the poison at him. He tried to jump away, but it was too late, the poison splattered across his hand.

“My hand.” The monster screeched. He lunged at me. Lightning yelled, ‘*RUN!*’.

I ran as fast as my legs could carry me. I could feel the wings chasing behind. When I stopped to catch my breath, I looked behind me to see if the monster was chasing me. To my surprise, the monster wasn’t charging at me, it was charging at Lightning.

They were fighting each other, claws scratching into flesh, teeth chomping into one another. Both of them were badly injured. The monster tried to curse him, but Lightning ducked just in time. Lightning kicked him off the cliff. The monster screamed as he faded away down, down to an eventual *THUD*. I had been so surprised with everything that it was only then that I realised I had dropped the dragon egg. It had crashed into pieces. *NOOOO!*

Lightning turned around. I froze. His whole face was full of scars and was obviously badly hurt. I had a bad feeling that he was gone for good.

He plastered a fake smile on his face and said weakly, “Relax...everything will be fine. See, people can still see these beautiful mountains in future.” Then, he closed his eyes.

I wished I could cry, but it was impossible. My brain was spinning faster than ever...

I found myself back at the playground. I ran to my classroom, flung open the door and sat on my seat. I was glad that I didn't get in trouble.

Though I'm older now, I can still remember the adventure to Huangshan. Nowadays, scientists have found bones of mysterious animals around Huangshan. I'm the only one who knows what happened. I have told many people about this, but they just shake their heads and walk away. This adventure is mysterious, exciting and impossible to explain. It can't be described by equations, logic or books. You just have to believe.

Huanshan Trio

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Leung, Jonathan – 10

"This place is awesome! It's got the chill vibe I like!" said an impressed Alex. He started to levitate a few inches out onto the famous sea of clouds on the legendary mountain, Huangshan.

"Let's start training here, alright?" asked Brianna.

"Yeah, sure!" Alex replied. Alex kicked the dummy, focusing his wind flow on his torso and legs. The dummy flew with the wind, and finally, Alex slammed it down on the ground with an axe kick.

"Not bad." said Brianna, "Train more, we'll get on The World's Top Ten Heroes chart soon".

Every hero's goal is to become the most powerful and popular hero, getting attention from the public and all, it feels great. "I sure wish Chris was here." Alex groaned. Chris was their hero friend, who was on vacation. He can move insanely fast while Alex controls and generates wind and Brianna manipulates lightning.

BOOM. An explosion burst through the beautiful mountain's peaceful vibe.

"What the heck was that?" said Alex. Alex made himself fly and went to the scene.

Alex glided on top of the explosion site. He flew down and blasted the flames away with his wind. He caught a glimpse of a man wearing a bird-shaped mask in the explosion with flames swirling around him. Alex narrowed his eyes. "Who do you think you are? And how dare you ruin the tranquility of Huangshan?" Alex growled. The man looked at him and turned into dust, leaving flames behind, morphing and swirling some characters that spelt the word "Blaze" together.

Alex blew out the flames with a dense wind, then he flew away as quickly as possible. He went home, then called Chris as he lied down on the floor, levitating slightly. When Chris answered, he told him to come over, quickly. Out of a sudden, there was a beeping sound coming from the wall. A man wearing a blue hoodie was lying on the wall, smiling at him.

"Hey! How ya doin' mate?" Alex said. Chris just grinned and shook his head.

“So uh,” said Alex, “There’s a guy also known as Blaze, we think he can control fire, so anyway, he made an explosion, and it’s a huge one that tore down some stone steps and pine trees. I mean, who can generate *and* control fire freely and infinitely?”

Chris shuddered. “There’s a legend that says there was a powerful dragon that guarded the first Emperor’s tomb. Just asking if it was real, what if he has the dragon? The explosion was made pretty near it so I’m suspicious.” He’d be godlike!” Alex pointed out.

Suddenly, metal clanged on the house and there was an almighty roar. Strong winds gusted from the windows, so strong that glass shattered. Alex created a windshield made of powerful shockwaves, covering the whole hut. Chris grabbed them and rushed out of the small hut at a high speed, escaping. Blaze charged up his flames, suddenly, a dense beam of fire came out of his hands. Alex blocked it with the same windshield. Then a huge dragon swooped down and breathed flames as Brianna shot a high voltage lightning at it, making it a match for the flames. She stunned the dragon while Chris grabbed both of them and ran away.

“Projectile SPLASH!” Alex twisted his hands while dense ‘bullets’ of wind shot out of it. Blaze dodged it and reached the dragon.

Blaze commanded the dragon to hit him with super-strength, blasting him through layers of pine trees. Chris teleported to Blaze’s side and kicked him extremely hard. After the wind of the impact cleared, Blaze remained still, the kick was as effective as spitting in a house fire. Brianna struck Blaze with lightning. Once the smoke cleared, Blaze was gone. Alex cracked a smile, hurting his face. Unexpectedly he was blasted back very hard with the wind roaring in his ears, and that was all he remembered before everything went black.

Alex sat up and saw Chris jumping around the dragon, slamming it like a rhino. He looked invincible but Alex knew that it drains up his energy.. The dragon was controlled by Blaze and it was doing what he wished. Brianna tackled Blaze bravely, she punched and punched, hurting him. Alex jumped and blasted winds at Blaze, but Blaze pulled her with him, pushing them deep down. Alex was about to leap in, suddenly, the dragon slammed him backwards. Chris flew next to Alex. He dashed towards it while having his arms folded into an X-shape. Heavenly X-STRIKE! The dragon roared in pain and flew back.

“Hey!” Chris shouted. “The dragon’s goal is to protect the emperor’s tomb, so we have to get the dragon back to it!” “On it!” Alex replied. He kicked the dragon, making a swirling tornado, while stomping on its head, forcing it down. Alex hit the dragon with all his wind and raw power, making it fly down. The dragon whipped its tail next to a beautiful stone. The dragon circled it, roaring flames at both of them.

“Is that *The Tomb*?” Alex whispered to Chris.

“Yeah. Rest here. I’ve got a plan.” Chris replied.

Chris pushed the dragon downwards, onto the tomb’s cave, then he shot off right away. His plan worked like a charm. The dragon immediately calmed down, sitting next to the tomb. It flapped its wings and made a gust of wind, healing Alex and Chris. “The dragon’s gift,” Chris said, amazed, “It’s the highest honour anyone can have from a dragon.” The dragon’s mouth heated up, and BOOM, a multicoloured beam was shot out, making the sky the same colour. It curled up in the cave of the tomb. Blaze was found under a huge amount of rubble, a few meters away from Brianna, both of them unconscious. Brianna and Blaze were severely injured. Blaze was imprisoned, Brianna recovered, and the legendary Huangshan was left alone, at peace.

Missing Dinosaur Bones

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Lin, Clara – 10

In eastern China, there are several beautiful mountains. There are clouds in different colors floating around the mountains during sunset and sunrise, but most of the time they are pure white. There are words written all over the stone wall and some pine trees that are 1500 years old. There are tens of thousands of stone steps that are as ancient as the pine trees on the side of the mountains to go to the castles. There are caves inside the walls. It only opens up to the ambitious ones, or else it will remain closed.

Maya and her best friend Mason went on a trip to Huangshan, they heard that it was a nice place to visit during the holidays. They booked a tourist and they planned to use this opportunity for their school project that was due after the holidays. They didn't know anything about Huangshan so it was tricky. Maya didn't know what to pack because she didn't know the weather in eastern China and she didn't know what season it was in China. She packed all kinds of clothes and her suitcase was overflowing with random clothes for different seasons. Even the biggest suitcase didn't fit all of the clothes. She packed a lot of extra clothes for a 4 day trip in China.

They went on the plane, and for some reason, it looks more luxurious than ever and they are not even in first class.

They got off the plane and Maya was tired to death even though she took a 9 hour long nap. She couldn't carry her big suitcase so Mason put it on the cart thing. She took another nap and she couldn't wake up at all. Until Mason said "sleeping beauty, wakey wakey!" She sat up straight and gave him a death stare. Mason knew immediately that today is his death day. "Next time you annoy me, I won't hesitate to get my frying pans out." said Maya. Mason looked like as if he was gonna pee his pants. He got hit by Maya multiple times before so that's why he has so many scars all over his face, arms and legs.

They went to their hotel and dropped their stuff off and then rode the bus. The tour guide's name is Nikki, so they just call her Nikki. They asked questions all the time and halfway through their tour, the stone wall opened a small gap just enough for them to fit in. They thought they saw Nikki go through the wall so they followed and it was pitch dark. Suddenly, a fire lamp turned on. It was shining brightly right at Mason. Mason stuttered and Maya screamed. She was too scared to move. Suddenly a voice said "Please...help me find the missing dinosaur bones from this cave..."

Their first clue is on the walls, so they had to look at the picture. Suddenly it moved. It looked like a guy, unburying the bones and walking through the wall that looks like ice... Suddenly the pictures stopped. Maya thought that they could use the fire lamp to unfreeze the ice and walk through it. They tried it and luckily it worked. They literally did it in five seconds. They went through and saw footprints on a different bridge. For some special reason, the footprints look huge.

They went on the bridge, and then they trembled because the bridge was shaking really hard. They quickly jump to the other side of the bridge, trying not to fall. Maya bumped into a wall the bruise on her forehead looks like a t-rex. They thought that it was on purpose that the wall had a bump shaped like a t-rex. They figured that the next clue is a t-rex. There was a leaf on the ground. Mason acted all nerdy and said that t-rexes also eat plants. They flipped the leaf over and it said "walk forward 66 steps, turn left 22 steps, and walk forward 12 steps." "OMG! I think the key number is 100." They did the steps in order and they were exhausted! Phew. It looked like another wall with writing on. It said "ask anything." Maya had this big question in her head. She wondered why they needed to find the missing bones. The wall answered "Lots of people tried to find the missing dinosaur bones, but neither came out alive. You guys seem like you have enough courage, so stay strong and find the bones. And most important of all, have courage." They were reading it calmly until they got scared by a loud thumping noise. "I believe you are here to find the missing dinosaur bones?" The big creature asked in a dark emotionless voice. "Y-yes we are..." they said in a frightened voice. "Well well, you need to fight me first then to fight our king."

Maya attacked first. Surprisingly she was pretty strong. She knocked the wind out of the first royal guard. She then with the help of Mason, she jumped on top of the second royal guard and bonked his head. The third one she stomped on the royal guard and made him lying there unconscious. With the first one dizzy, he murmured "I don't get paid enough for this job..." The royal king of the big ginormous unknown monsters saw Maya attack his three guards, he just teleported her to him and tied her onto a tree and challenged Mason to fight him. For some special reason, He had karate lessons before but he was a "little weakling" that's what everybody in his class called him. Before he even tried to strike, he got punched by the king. There was a big bruise and he heard Maya trying to say "have courage" he tried so hard to punch once and a part of his body was tingling. Then he felt like he had grown powers. "Thank you so much wise stone wall!" He whispered. He quickly attacked and the king fell unconscious. Mason grabbed the bones and he untied Maya. He buried the bones and brought Maya to the clinic with Nikki that was nearby. Maya woke up in cold sweat. "Where am I?" she asked, breathing hard. "Just now you were suffocating so you fainted and then i brought you here." Mason answered. "So it was not a dream..."

The Legend Of The Mountains

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Lui, Reanne – 11

Woosh! A man dressed in black galloped through the air, black cape billowing behind him. With a closer look, the man was carrying a large black bag. The bag was the color of black coal, lagging in the man's hand. The man came to a stop, halting at a place where you could only see hard, metal cages. The man pulled back his cape. His eyes were brown and full of hate. When you looked at him, you almost felt like you would die. The man's wrinkly skin looked like it wasn't washed in one hundred years. His mouth formed a cold smile as he opened the bag. Inside, was a little girl. The girl looked scared as the man tossed the bag carelessly into one of the cages surrounding him. "Ha, ha!" The man grinned a menacing smile as he looked at the girl "You would make a wonderful servant!"

"Pass the remote, Liah!" Luci screamed at her sister "I want to watch Teletubbies!" "Never!" Liah shouted back as she clung tighter onto the remote. Luci mean-frowned her sister. "You always get what you want!" Luci hollered, running up the stairs. "Luci, wait!" Liah cried as she ran after her sister. But before she could reach Luci, Luci slammed the door. Seconds later, the lock clicked shut. Liah was stuck outside. Inside the room, Luci's eyes glanced at her reflection in the mirror. Luci has honey brown eyes, golden hair, and a perfect little pink bow that matches her style completely. She was told that she was the prettiest teen in the neighborhood, though she really didn't think so. Luci always noticed that outside, in the mountains, was a secret, a secret no one ever knew about.

"Why is Luci acting like this?" Liah asked herself as she headed to the attic, the only room she had. Her golden locks of hair bounced on the shoulder as she tried to ignore them. She pretty much looked identical to her sister. The only difference is that her sister had honey-brown eyes and she had ocean blue eyes. She pulled open her door and walked into her room. Liah's hands reach over to grab her diary. "Urgh." Liah slumped down on her pastel-colored bed and she flipped through the diary. She had noticed her sister's strange behavior since her birthday. Her sister had been out for a walk in the misty mountains and had come back home, late at night. After that, Liah noticed, Luci's behavior had changed so much. She became really sensitive. It was Liah's destiny to figure out what happened to her sister.

"Why are you packing your bag?" An astonished Liah asked as she saw Luci, packing her bag with tremendous things. "None of your business." Luci answered coldly as she tried to ignore her sister's questions, lurking inside her

ear. A grumpy Liyah headed outside in the garden, grumbling at the flowers. Liyah had a frown on her face, trying to see a bright side. Her mind was stuck to her sister, why she was packing, and what was up with her attitude. As Liyah grabbed a daisy, in the corner of her eye, she saw Luci coming out the front door, glancing up at the misty mountains. Luci looked up at the mountains, she was going to confront anything that was in the mountains. "Yup, everything." Luci told herself, trying not to show the fear that was starting to grow in her veins "I am going to confront the thief up there."

The misty mountain was WAY more mistier than it seemed from down below. White fog hugged the mountains, the clouds were moving slowly as they started to crash into each other. Luci spotted a huge crack in the mountain, it was as black as the depth of the sea. Fearlessly, Luci jumped inside, feeling the waves of curiosity whooshing through her. At last, she landed on a hard floor. Luci was surrounded by loads and loads of hard metal cages. "Well, well. Luci, our first visitor in years." A deep voice proclaimed as a shape stepped out of the shadows. "The thief of the mountain!" Luci shouted as her inner heart trembled. Stepping out of the shadows, was a man dressed in black. Luci pulled a sword out of her bag, it shimmered a blaze of light in the dark cave. "Don't you DARE harm anyone, if you dare to, you will have to face me." Luci gripped her sword even tighter. "Ha, ha! Just you try!" The thief clapped his hands. "Well then, LET THE FIGHT BEGIN!" Sword shimmered, as dark cloth twirled. They fought back and forth, not wanting to give up. Suddenly, Luci's sword sliced through the thief's hand as the thief cried out, grabbing his bloody hand.

"Come on thief, you don't have to hide." a soft voice filled the room as the thief inched a little on the ground. He opened his dark brown eyes and saw Luci, standing over him, with a hand reached out. "I can't." The thief pulled his hand back. "I just can't." "Come on thief, I'm giving you a chance." Luci said softly, with a hand still reached out. The thief suddenly smiled, a warm smile. He took it slowly as he let her lead him back to the city. Stopping in front of a huge mansion, the thief recalled "This was where I was born, my parents threw me out." Luci took his hand "Remember, that the world is a better place now, go on, and reunite with your family." Luci nodded, as the thief strolled inside. She could hear cries of "Wilbur! You've come home!" Luci could feel different feelings zooming in and out of her body. Without thinking, she raced home, desperate to find Liyah. Luci did a victory dance. She defeated the thief in the mountains.

Even if a girl could do such great things, you could do too.

The 4 Realms in the Yellow Mountains Fire Ice Wind Earth

Victoria Shanghai Academy, So, Tiana – 10

Long ago, there were 4 kingdoms - red, blue, yellow and green. Red represents the element of fire, blue stands for Ice, yellow reflects the wind and green controls earth. They are guardians of the spirit realm and in full control of their elements. The Fire kingdom exists in the lowest part of the Yellow Mountains known as the burned mountain, 'Burntin'. Above the Red Kingdom is 'Treenold', the most crowded earth realm. High up in the peaks lay Coldtown filled with icicles. Lastly, BreezeTwin lives high above the clouds. There are 4 ancient objects that keep their realm alive. These were made by the maker of all the lands, Darklight Dawn. He created the mountains and sorted them into 4 realms. Then he left forever, because the Fire Tigers wanted to kill him.

It was a foggy day in the Yellow Mountains and Coldtown had a village party. It was the Queen's 23rd birthday, and Queen Snowlen of Blue was planning to take the Jewel of Iceland out, but it wasn't the same since her husband, the king, had passed away. However she had to keep going, and said that this is the proper day of her being the queen. When she looked for the jewel, it was missing! She was horrified, but she knew exactly who stole it! The fire realm are enemies of the Ice people. Everyone knows the fire kingdom will have unlimited power if they take all four ancient objects of each kingdom. The queen called on brave warriors to take back their kingdom's jewel. Her trusted Yetis and Ice dragon army will fight the King of Fire, Burnbreath, himself.

The fire realm fought back as soon as they found yetis and ice dragons attacking their kingdom. The fire armies of coals and fire dragons were very powerful. The ice dragons fought the fire dragons and the coals fought the Yetis. Then, one of the Ice dragons flew to the burning palace.

It was the queen herself and her son, Iceter, who went on a mission to the fire realm and snuck in. She froze the guards, and went into the throne room where Burnbreath sat cutting his toenail. They entered the throne room in a rage. They started fighting, boom blam boom bash crash slice bash. The queen ducked from the king's punches, and the king jumped away from the queen's kicks. It was like the battle would never end, but suddenly the queen had an idea. She thought, 'the fire people must need light to survive, and we don't. There are candles in this room and I'll

just turn them off.' She hurried to the lights and froze them all off. The king screamed in pain, "The evil 4! They have the jewel!" and fainted.

After Snowlen defeated the king, she said in a hurry, "Quick, we must hurry and take the evil four! The king will pass out for only a day. Take the evil four!" They ran off to find the evil four. The Evil 4 were also ancient objects created by Darklight Dawn. The first is the mirror that an evil queen used, the second is the necklace in my Little Mermaid, the third one is the rose in Beauty and the Beast and the last one is Jafar's scepter. These objects were extremely powerful.

The queen knew they had to find the Room of Secrets because there were ancient secrets no one knew except for the king and queens. First, they must find the mirror in the fire realm's highest mountain, called Pandoraleko. There were a lot of traps. Their first test is to climb the highest tree and bring down the golden feather. They needed to find Yaso, the tree. They met a unicorn on their way. The unicorn flew them to the tree.

The queen asked "Can you fly all the way up on the tree?"
"No I can't, it's too high."

The queen used her ice powers by chanting a spell then pushing her arms out to create the ice. This created an elevator that transferred them to the top. Once they were on top, they took the golden feather.

After passing the first test, they had to pass through the fire lion, also the guardian of the mirror. Iceter remembered his yoga class. He took a deep breath and used his mind power to ask the lion to move away from the mirror. It actually worked and the lion moved away. They grabbed the mirror as quickly as possible. Off they went to find Ursula's necklace.

They went back to the Ice realm, as they needed to pass two elves who were guarding the necklace. However once the elves realized she was the queen, they quickly let her pass and take Ursula's necklace. They grabbed the necklace.

The next stop is for the rose! In the Wind realm, they snuck in and took the rose when Gaston was admiring his muscle.

At last they must take Jafar's scepter. It was in the Museum of Villains Powerscore, which was also in the Earth realm. The Ice army were like spies. Iceter slowly made time freeze. Since he has the ability to freeze time, he also changed the weather into winter.. They stole the scepter, for good, and unfroze the time as they left.

They successfully took all four objects. They combined them all together in the Centre of Huangshan. This created unspeakable power in a ball shape in smoke form. The Ice Queen said the magic words, "Thy spirits of all nice realms come to me and defeat the evil once and for all!!!!" They all chanted a spell together, and after a spark of lightning they had finally defeated the king!!!

Well, now his son became the next king. The good thing is that he is good, kind and helpful. At last, Snowlen married the fire king and they lived happily ever after.

Darkness

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Sun, Shengya – 10

Weird things happen, that's unpredictable. Sometimes, it means discovering, but other times, it means... Well, something way beyond his imagination.

The Chen Family lived at the foot of Huang Shan. Every day, Chen Li would climb the mountain to collect herbs. Though Li went there every day, he never noticed something below his feet- Somewhere dark, cold, with thousands of secrets waiting to be discovered.

One morning, Li stretched his arms and yawned. He felt strange... Something wasn't right, but he told himself that everything was okay.

Climbing halfway through the forest, something under his feet moved. He panicked, this never happened to him before, he tried lifting his feet, only to find that it was stuck. There he stood still, on the rocky path. In an instant, the whole mountain started shaking, the shaking became more and more violent. Suddenly, the mountain stopped shaking. He thought that everything went back to normal, but before he could even take another breath, suddenly, he was standing on nothing, and he went into a free fall.

Si Hu, despite her amazing vision, spotted someone falling down the hole in a distance. She ran to where she saw whoever fall, only to find a giant rock, unmoved. She tried lifting the rock, but it was firm, it won't budge a bit. "Weird." Hu thought. "Here goes nothing... !" She closed her eyes shut, allowing her feet to approach. Within seconds, she's in another world! An underground world. But that wasn't the point, she had to find whoever fell down here.. "Hello?" Her voice echoed through the cave. She slowly walked down the cave, making sure she wasn't stepping on anything dangerous. "Footsteps!" She suddenly yelled. She knew to follow the footsteps.

She walked further into the cave, not aware of what's happening around her, she suddenly bumped into someone. "Oh, I'm so sorry! I didn't mean to-" Hu's looked up... Her eyes widened.

"Well, here we are now, stuck in a cave with you," Hu said hugging Li. "Hey! We have been best friends since middle school!" Li argued. "Ok ok!" Hu agreed. "Hey I wanna show you something," Li said, before Hu could even say anything, he held her hand and started running at top speed, out of the cave. When he got to the very end,

he said "This is where we fell. You probably didn't pay attention, but..." Li pointed at the back of Hu's head. Hu turned around, then in disbelief whispered, "is this the longevity herb?!" "Yep." Li continued, "knew you would like it." But instead of picking it, Hu winked at him.

"Can we get out of here now?" Li asked, trying to change the subject. "Yeah, sure, how?" Hu asked, looking around. The next thing they knew, it was all quiet. "Something hard will help," Hu said. "Something hard... What do you... Mean?" Li asked in great confusion. "We could use something hard to carve out holes, and we can step on the holes, it kind of works like a ladder!" Hu sounded eager. "Well, err... How about rocks?" Li suggested. "Rocks? There aren't any rocks here..." Hu said. "I remember clinging onto one when I fell. It should still be here..." Li placed his index finger on his lips, slowly tapping. "There!" Hu pointed at a rock covered in dust and mud.

Hu blew off the mud. "What the-" She blinked a few more times, taking a closer examination. "C'mon Li, we need to go back inside! There are somethings WE need to know about!" Hu grabbed Li on the wrist, which made Li almost trip and ran into the cave once again.

"What's that 'Important thing' you were talking about?" Li asked, panting when they have finally stopped. "Look!" Hu pointed at the rock. Li stared at the rock. It looked like a key and on top of the key shape, there was a small text, Answers. Hu flipped the rock, Li then saw his mother and Hu's father. "But this is... Impossible! They are dead!" Li said, confused. "They are... Have you ever thought of why or how though?" Hu asked, suspiciously. "No...? But it's so normal! People here go missing every single day, it has been like this for ages! Didn't seem like they cared?" Li argued. "I think it's time we find out why." Hu watched Li fiercely. "Fine, if your not coming, then I'm going myself!" Hu sounded annoyed, crapped into the small hole without looking at him one last time. "Um... I'll- I'll just stay here..." Li muttered, loud enough for Hu to hear. Hu didn't answer.

It wasn't a long time until, suddenly, Li heard a short loud scream. He knew who it was, but didn't know what happened. He took a small step back, he could feel his heart pounding. A black shadow with two fire red eyes appeared out of nowhere. "Hello there, fellow human..." A dark, deep voice whispered in his ears. He was stunned. "Um... Who are you...?" His voice was really shaky. The black shadow circled around him. "Some people are

meant to die, and what I mean by "some people" I mean people like you!" The shadow suddenly went right at his face, but Li was fast enough to dodge. "I'm your middle school friend..." The shadow continued. "And people like you... You took away our home, you collected our food. Now, we are FORCED to live here, FORCED to grow our food down here!" The shadow screamed. "Seventy years ago, we lived here together with humans. Then one day, your grandfather wanted all the land to ONLY humans! He called up all human's living here, only to defeat us. People disappear everyday, that's because we killed them as revenge. I changed my body, and went to your school, ate human food, only to finish you off." Those red eyes stared right through his eye, slowly, he closed his eyes...

Weird things happen, that's unpredictable. Sometimes, it means... Death.

The Xuanyuan Odyssey

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Sze, Kristen – 10

The monster exploded in a cloud of black.

Steve sheathed his sword and wiped his brow. He had already lost count of how long he has been on this perilous journey.

He traveled on the rugged dirt path that connected the mountain foothill to the mountain top. The path was steep, and surrounded by strange pines of all shapes and sizes. It was noon, but the dark floating clouds encircling the magical mountain had such a tremendous reach that they darkened the surrounding lands. *I have to stay alert. With all these clouds around, a monster could easily sneak up on me.* Steve maintained his stealth as he continued to travel. The monsters he had defeated on his way here were nothing compared to what he might have to face.

A sudden gust of wind, too strong to be of natural causes, swept across Steve's path. Something appeared in the near distance and blocked his way. It was big with a long body, and it was slithering towards him. It was hard to see through the clouds. All Steve could see was a blur of blue. As he got closer to it, the creature started to roar. It was a dragon!

The dragon raised its head and inhaled. As a veteran soldier, Steve instinctively dashed away at great speed. Dragon flame had incinerated all the pines in the vicinity, but he managed to avoid getting hurt. Steve charged towards the dragon head-on and slashed at its upper torso. The dragon reacted by throwing him back with its tail. Steve was exhausted and realized he couldn't engage in a direct fight with the beast. He decided to switch to defensive tactics and took out a shield. Carefully, he approached the dragon, determined to do damage. Strangely though, the dragon paused from retaliating. *I have to defeat it.* He bit his lip as he exerted all his force into a powerful stab. *Cling!* Something shiny fell to the ground. It was a dragon scale! He grabbed it and slipped it into his backpack while repositioning himself.

Suddenly, he could hear a rumbling sound. Everything started to shake. The dragon stared at Steve. *"I'll be back for you."* The ground beneath Steve opened up, and he fell...

He landed in a heap on the floor. All around him was a sea of clouds, obscuring his vision. He could smell sulfur from hot springs, and hear the sound of water in the distance. There was no obvious path he could take. He

walked blindly forward. After a while, he saw rocks. All around him, there were rocks of absurd shapes. Big and small, tall and wide, not a single one of them the same shape as another. Some looked like creatures, some looked like other objects. Within the foggy atmosphere, they looked alive. He wanted to turn back, but he couldn't find his way. He walked around and around, keeping his guard up at all times. A rock fell from above him. It landed next to Steve. *Was it moving?* Steve was starting to lose his mind.

Something in Steve's backpack shook, snapping him out of his trance. Steve checked and found that it was in fact the dragon scale that was vibrating. Steve tested it and realized the scale would vibrate at different intensities as he walked around the rock maze. *Is it trying to tell me something?* With no other options, Steve decided to follow the scale's lead and walked in the direction where it vibrated the most. The cloudy atmosphere began to dissipate and the absurd rock formations became less prominent as he followed the scale's lead. Finally, he reached a cliffside face with an entrance carved in smooth marble stone. *This is it! Xuanyuan's temple.* Steve entered cautiously.

The corridor walls were also carved out from marble, ice-cold to the touch. The design of the walls and the winding corridors seemed to allow natural light to be shined and reflected through, making the place dimly lit and not completely dark. As Steve continued on, the dragon scale continued to vibrate. *It's showing me the way.*

Eventually, rays of sunlight emerged at the end of the corridor. Steve reached a large chamber, with an open balcony situated on a cliff's edge. The chamber was magnificent. The ceiling was about three floors high. Grand draperies were hanging on all walls. There was a majestic golden throne in the middle of the chamber, with its back to the cliffside. The throne was decorated with rainbow-colored gems of all sorts, and on the end of each armrest was a carved dragon head, much like the dragon he had met earlier. But the grand scene was somewhat tainted with charred human bones scattered around the chamber.

Steve was too excited to see the treasures than to worry about the bones. He focused his gaze on the chest sitting behind the throne. He opened it hastily. *I found it!* An elixir, in a beautiful crystal vial, lied in the middle of the silk-laced center of the chest. Steve grabbed the vial and held it up. The light reflected through the clear liquid. He was in awe as he held the vial high. This represents the pinnacle of Emperor Xuanyuan's research, the elixir that cured everything and anything.

As Steve held the vial in admiration, the clouds outside scattered and the dragon emerged from the cliff below. *"You have found what I need, you are dismissed."* Steve was still pondering what the dragon meant when suddenly, he felt dragon breath upon him. In a flash, Steve was engulfed in flames. All he could think of were the charred bones in the chamber before everything went black.

"GAME OVER." Steve sighed and turned off the TV. *No time to play again today. I'll definitely beat the dragon tomorrow.* Steve thought he was lucky to have found this never-heard-of game from the second-hand store the other day.

As he left his room, the game console began to vibrate.

The Journey to the Top

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Tam, Celeste – 11

“Are we there yet?” Moaned Alex, also known as Blaze, was an 11-year-old boy with messy brown hair and bright blue eyes. “No. Keep going. Mom and dad are waiting for us, plus I promise the view will be amazing.” Said Colin, who was Blaze’s older brother. He was a head taller than Blaze as well as a year older. He had midnight blue eyes and the same, but a bit darker messy hair as his younger brother. The two brothers were walking up a narrow path up the Huangshan mountain, slowly making their way to the top.

At last, the two brothers had reached a small, rocky platform. Blaze started walking to the next set of stairs leading to the top of the mountain but immediately jumped back.

“What?” Asked Colin “That- that thing!” Said Blaze, his eyes glued to a weird-looking, big-lipped monkey with no nose and brown fur. “Oh. That. That’s a golden monkey. I know it looks a bit weird.” answered Colin. “C’m on, we’re nearly there. We just need to walk up those stairs and walk across the bridge.” Said Colin impatiently. “Please. Mom bought a pizza. And the view is great on top of the mountain.” “It- l-looks hilarious!” Said Blaze, rolling on the ground, still pointing at the monkey. Colin rolled his eyes. He punched Blaze on the arm. “Fine! I’ll go!”

The two brothers had finally reached the top of the last set of stairs and were staring at the long, narrow rope bridge. It looked old and unstable, and too fragile for two light, skinny human beings to walk on it, let alone two boys carrying heavy bags packed full of stuff. “How are we going to get across?” Asked Blaze. “I’m not a ninja.” “I could think of a solution if you would stop grumbling.” Snapped Colin.

“Hmm...” Colin thought for a moment. “Blaze, throw a pebble across. If the bridge holds up, then we can try a bigger rock. If not, I’ll have to think of something else.” Following his older brother’s orders, Blaze picked up a round, grey rock that was about the size of his hand, and chucked it across the bridge. The rock landed near the middle of the bridge and started rolling towards the edge but a groove in the wooden plank on the bridge caught it and held it in place. The bridge was quite still for a second, but then swayed dangerously. Then, the supporting ropes that held the bridge up snapped, leaving behind nothing but a large, gaping hole of where the bridge used to be.

“Oh come on!” groaned Blaze. “Now we’re stuck here with no way of getting across! And it’s getting dark too...” Colin put his finger in front of his mouth, while looking at the rocky side of the mountain. “We-” Colin couldn’t finish his sentence. “What? We scale the side of the mountain?! Look down! You can’t even see the ground! It’s just clouds! What if we DIE?!” Screamed Blaze. “I don’t want to end up like that bridge! It’s probably still falling!” Colin put his hand on Blaze’s shoulder and Blaze fell silent.

Thirty minutes later, Blaze and Colin were both holding their grappling hooks in their hands, getting ready to climb the side of the mountain. "I'm scared." was all Blaze could say. "It's fine. I'll go first." Said Colin, his hands shaking. He swung the hook into the mountain face. It caught onto a big rock protruding from the side of the mountain. Colin gulped. He grabbed the rope tight and put his neon yellow helmet on. Then, he gently started stepping across the stones that were sticking out of the mountain. "Don't die!" shouted Blaze. Colin didn't answer. He was too busy trying not to die to listen to Blaze.

"You did it!" Blaze was clapping for Colin since he had reached the other side. "Now your turn, Blaze." shouted Colin from the other side. Blaze froze. He slowly looked down at the swirling clouds. If a single, tiny pebble came falling down at him, it could mean death. "You can do it, Blaze. If I can do it, you can!" Colin said, still shouting to make himself heard. Blaze thought for a moment. It would be really cool to do it if he didn't fall, plus he would have something to brag about when he got back to school. He sighed. "Fine, I'll do it." he moaned. He strapped on his blue and red helmet and made sure his grappling hook was lodged tight into a rock. He slowly started to walk across the little stones in the mountain. He could feel his heart racing as rocks crumbled and fell behind him. "Something's not right here." thought Blaze. "When Colin stepped across, nothing fell. Why are rocks falling behind me?" Blaze stopped for a moment and shook his head. "I'm thinking too much." and with that. He started walking across the stones again. He occasionally stopped every few stones to see if death had decided whether he should die or not, but nothing happened.

"Well done! You did it!" Colin cheered as Blaze walked across the last few stones and stepped onto the large platform Colin was standing on. "Woah..." Blaze looked up at the sky. The sun was beginning to set, and the clouds were glowing a mix of orange, yellow, and red. It reminded Blaze of a fancy sunset drawn in a painting he once saw. "Yeah, this is what I told you about. No wonder our parents wanted us to come up here..." Colin replied. "Now come on, let's go find them..." and then the two brothers walked through the forest of pine trees, and to the warm, glowing light at the end.

The Lost Ruby

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Tan, Liya – 9

Brooke scowled.

'Mom,' Brooke groaned, 'Why are we here on Mount Huangshan staring at the stupid view?'

'Honey, don't be silly, the view is tremendously beautiful, don't call it stupid!' Mom said, gazing dreamily at the clear blue sky.

'But I want to stare at my sparkling Ruby back at our cottage!' Brooke whined

'Well then, why don't you go to our rented cottage and get your Ruby? I don't mind you bringing it here,'

Brooke rushed to the small cottage located at the very middle of the mountain. She ran to her room and threw all the contents of her luggage onto her bedroom floor. The only thing left in the luggage was a beautiful, sparkling Ruby. Brooke had found it on one of the grassy fields.

'Ah, here it is,' She muttered, clutching the Ruby in her hands.

She walked back to the grassy bit of the mountain, clutching the Ruby in her hands.

'I don't want this to ever break or be lost' Brooke thought, 'It's my greatest treasure and my favorite lucky charm.'

Brooke gazed at her mom, who was now gazing at the grassy mountains opposite of Mount Huangshan and lay down on the grass. She held her Ruby high above her head, and the sky turned a beautiful shade of red. It seemed as if strawberry-flavored jelly had covered the sky and-

'Oh NO!' Brooke screamed, 'Get it, catch it before it rolls into the ocean!!'

Brooke and her Mom made a beeline towards the edge of the peak, trying to catch the Ruby which was rolling away, about to fall into the ocean- but it was too late. The Ruby fell many kilometers and with the last appearance of glowing red light, it disappeared.

Brooke gazed down at the ocean, horrorstruck. Finally, her Mom spoke.

'Er... why don't you go off to bed for a good night's sleep to calm you down?' Mom suggested nervously.

Without looking back, Brooke silently breezed down the peak and into their cottage and fell into her bed. Tears streamed down her cheeks as she thought about her, now lost, Ruby. It was the best time of her life when she found her Ruby, and now it was all wasted. She rolled over on her bed, thinking.

‘Why didn’t I see that coming? I’ve been having bad luck ever since I arrived over here...why didn’t I see losing my Ruby coming?’

Brooke heard the slamming of a door and the sound of quiet footsteps walking to the bathroom. Thinking it was her Mom, she rolled over once again and tried to fall asleep.

The next day, Brooke was awoken by the sound of birds twittering on the breezy peaks. She staggered into the kitchen groggily where she found her Mom cooking bacon and egg for breakfast.

‘Fancy some bacon and eggs, Honey?’ Mom said, smiling

‘Yeah, sure, thanks,’ Brooke grunted

‘Hmm...you seem upset, this is about your Ruby, is that right? Don’t worry, it’ll turn up, it is magical after all.’

After those words, Mom winked and gave Brooke a reassuring smile, and continued humming and frying the bacon. Brooke, on the other hand, was immersed in her own thoughts. Magic? She thought. Wasn’t that a non-existent thing?

They returned to the same grassy spot Brooke and her mom had hogged the day before. Mom, to take pictures, Brooke, to lie down still immersed in thoughts about her Ruby. Suddenly, she felt the sensation of falling- down, down, down into the unknown, then her world went black.

Brooke heard a moan next to her.

‘Where are we?’ A voice came next to her.

Silence.

‘I think we’ve fallen through a trap door of some sort,’ Brooke said finally.

‘Oh. How- how do you think we got here?’ Her mom replied.

But Brooke wasn’t listening.

‘Mom,’ She said. ‘Do you see what I see?’

Pointing a trembling hand towards the dark surroundings, they saw it: a glint of red. An impossible theory hit them both, it seemed as Brooke had finally found what she lost.

She stood up abruptly, suddenly running forwards. What is she doing? Her mom thought. Best to follow her, I guess, maybe she’s on to something. She got up and started walking towards Brooke. Once her mom caught up with Brooke, they walked silently, they saw it now, towards the small glint of red, which was getting slightly bigger every step they took.

Brooke suddenly came to a halt. Her mom copied. Standing before them just like it was waiting for them, was Brooke’s Ruby. Brooke let out a huge squeal.

‘I’ve found it, my Ruby!!’

‘Good for you, I guess Mount Huangshan is magical after all, letting you find your Ruby like that! Now, we need to find a way out of here...’

‘Not to worry! Some stone steps are leading up to daylight, should we take it?’

Stepping into the first beams of light, they sighed as warmth hit them. Brooke ran over to their little cottage and slumped on the couch, her mom stepping into the cottage a short while after.

‘Well, sweetie, we’ve been through a lot of trouble this trip,’ Her mom said finally.

‘Mhm,’ Brooke replied.

‘Er- you asked to go back home yesterday, so we can,’

‘Are you kidding? Of course not, I want to stay! I want to explore some more!’

‘Oh, sure. Then we can stay here for another week if you like,’

‘YESSS! Five days will be fine, thanks!’ Brooke cheered.

Five days later, Brooke wandered out of their cottage.

‘I’ll miss this place,’ She admitted. ‘But I know a part of it will always stay in me.’

She walked out of their cottage, and smiled at the whole of Mount Huangshan and its surroundings: all the tall, sharp peaks, the ocean, the village, and she smiled the most at the small grassy fields, where she had experienced the magic of the mountain.

And Mount Huangshan smiled back.

The Enchanted Mountain

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Tsoi, Jayden – 9

My name is Sapphire, I am an explorer with a passion for adventure. I climbed up The Yellow Mountain today, I climbed up the tallest mountain of all. I found I was above the clouds, I was curious, so I put my hand above the clouds, I felt an invisible force bring me above the clouds, and I found myself in a castle made of pure diamonds.

I thought I heard someone call my name, the noise was very clear, then a knight wearing crystal armor appeared in front of me, he said “Welcome to the kingdom of the clouds!” I replied to the knight and said “Hi, but why am I in the kingdom of clouds?” The knight then told me that his name was Atlantic, he then said to me “I am here to describe your mission, about 3 days ago, our queen the fairy Starlight got kidnapped, her wicked brother Eclipse used his magic powers to make a enchanted mirror, it was made of pure gold and had 8 black pearls around the frame, it has many powers and he plans to use it to destroy the kingdom and be king, so we need your help”

I agreed but asked him how can I stop the mirror, he told me I had to find the 8 pearls of the kingdom and replace them with the black pearls, he then gave me a crystal suit of armor and a crystal sword, he then dragged me on a silver carriage dragged by unicorns, we headed toward west and Atlantic told me “The first pearl is in the cave of dreams, guarded by Emeralda the green dragon”

We headed for the cave of dreams, and gusts of winds blew the carriage in circles, the unicorns landed right in front of the cave of dreams. I and Atlantic walked into the cave, and I spotted Emeralda, and in front of her was a pillar holding the pearl of light! Emeralda politely told us she knew what we were here for, he handed us the pearl and then said “The next pearl is south, on the rocky peaks, the guardian is Archolat the giant spider”

We thanked Emeralda and headed back on the carriage and headed to the top of rocky peaks. At the bottom of the rocky peaks, I and Atlantic needed to walk up the mountain, it was a long walk, but in the end, we reached the top. Archolat waited for us above the mountain, I told him “I suppose you know why we are here.” but Archolat shook his head, Atlantic described our mission and we climbed the rocky peaks to get the pearl, Archolat told us the pearls couldn't be given to us unless they pass a test, for the test we needed to slice a emerald bar, then Atlantic told me “Use the crystal sword, it is the strongest magical object ever created!”

I nodded and whipped out my crystal sword and hardly moved my arm, I sliced the bar with a tap of my sword, Archolat's mouth hung open, he gave us the pearl without saying anything. Then Emeralda came flying to the top of the mountain, then she said “The unicorns went back to Diamond Castle, I will be your ride for the rest of the mission. The next pearl is at the bright star guarded by Relicca, she is also Starlight's sister”

After a few hours of flying, they reached the bright star! They dove into a hole and we saw Relicca, she was sadly counting her pearls, her smile brightened when she saw us, she passed us the pearl and hopped on Emeralda, then Emeralda said "Relicca is known as the silent fairy, the next pearl is at the pit of flowers" We flew to the pit of flowers and saw a giant squid in a pond, the squid stared at us, he knew what our intentions were, he smiled and grabbed the pearl from a sludge puddle and said "I'm Sid, and I know all of you, since I can read minds"

Then Emeralda started flying while she said "The next 2 pearls are in the same place with different guardians, we are headed for Aquastar!" I didn't know where that was, but we reached there fast, the first pearl was guarded by Colossal, in the dark abyss, Relicca waved her wand and recited a spell, and a whale swam to us, with the pearl on his tail, his name was Colossal and he swam into the abyss.

Then there was a crab named Buster in the palace, he opened his claws revealing the pearl, we took the pearl and went back to surface, we flew to the magical volcano, it was called that since it was full of water, we dove in and saw an aqua dragon, she was called Delphine, she told us to follow her, we then grabbed the pearl and flew to the extreme whirlpool. It was one of the most dangerous places, Delphine followed us, and Buster and Sid appeared and now we had a big group, we spotted the whirlpool and dove in, Syntine the Fairy was the guardian, she handed us the pearl and joined us and escaped the whirlpool, now they were headed for the land of darkness to face Eclipse!

We flew to the Tower Of Dark Magic and saw... the wicked Eclipse, he held Starlight prisoner and Relicca stood up to face each other, Eclipse held a sinister smile, and shot a beam of light at Relicca and she fell, they fought for a long time, then Eclipse said "Now I will put the gem of darkness in the mirror, nobody can stop me!" We held the pearls and a beam hit Eclipse, we then replaced the black pearls with the pearls of light, we freed Starlight and took off to the castle, then Starlight shone a smile and said "Goodbye!" I felt a force and was on Yellow Mountain!

The Secrets Of The Misty Mountains

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Wong, Abigail – 10

The misty mountains have always been a mysterious place, and I can tell you its secrets...

I was having a vacation from staying home doing nothing. I wanted to go to the misty mountains. I wanted to see the magical nature and find out all about it.

I set out with a **BIG BIG** backpack, full of all the stuff in my bedroom squished into a pile. As I entered the forest my eyes started jumping up and down, as the beauty of nature drove me deeper and deeper into the forest. As the sun sank and the moon rose all the visitors who stuck to the main path went home. But I was not home, I was not stepping on the beautiful stone steps back down the hill, I was not sliding down the beautiful stone railings of the magical misty mountains, I was lost in the mysterious forest of the misty mountains.

A sad song drifted into my ears "sounds like there is someone here so maybe I can ask the way out." I wandered around the forest following the sad but beautiful song. I stopped when I saw a glowing light in the forest "maybe there is a village in the forest so I can shelter for the night" I walked towards the radiant glowing light. It seemed so warm and welcoming, I reached my hand towards the light as I feel the warmth it has. I started feeling dizzy then sleepy after that all I saw was darkness...

Blink blink blink I woke to see a kind happy face smiling back at me "mom?" I asked but no it was not mum this face was much younger, happier, and more peaceful. This peaceful happy face floated away and left a trail of sparkling glowing dust floating the sun rising and disappearing into the daylight "What was that?" I wondered as the trail was disappearing I had to catch up quickly. I ran towards the light figure but then right before my eyes, it vanished. I started rummaging everywhere behind the bushes, up top the trees and while rummaging through the forest I found a lovely field of long grass that was up to my waist. I found the peaceful happy figure of my mum with other figures of my memory displaying the events of my memory then fading away. I tried to stop them from fading to ask them how they knew my memories and why they displayed them, but they faded too quickly. I could not catch any of them. I wandered in the woods to see if I could find another one to question, I found a little hole in the ground and it seemed to glow "oh maybe there's a flashlight!" I began to dig and dig then when I dug an entire hole two roots reached and grabbed me and pulled me into the hole.

The Masters of The Misty Mountain

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Wong, Isaac – 9

On the misty mounts of Huang shan, during the Han dynasty... Ping! Pow, as the master kung fu school called, blades of glory's Shifu mastered the unbeatable swirls of the sharp winds technique on the master of the iron body kung fu hardened his fists to iron like feeling, he punched the sword away, then attempted to hit the head of the swordsman, but the swordsmen quickly smote his sword on the fist of the mighty men.

"Oh, hahaha, trying to win the prized medal of the best kung fu ahh?" said a shadow, it came out, it was the master of the poisoning fangs technique, her name was orchid, then the bulky iron man said "hahaha, you little witty, you're a girl what can you do?" his name was master LinShao, "you never know," said the swordsman, smiling. The swordsmen sliced on the bulky man's leg, leaving a scar "ow! I will have revenge!" and he crushed his sword in his fist, leaving the swordsmen with only one sword.

The woman shot a poison dart to the bulk, but the man moved, making the dart miss.

Another shadow came by, saying "what are the odds hiking on this misty mount and seeing masters battling each other," she came along with a beggar, the new girl was the master of the doubled illusions technique, called flower petal, and the beggar was the master of the iron poppy technique, with no name. The girl flung an illusion as she spat a dart on the belly of the swordsmen. "Ahh!" as the swordsman coughed red and green thick liquid out of his mouth, and fainted in unconsciousness. The beggar perfected the iron petal movement on the girl.

The girl deflected it on the woman, she dogged as called out for his dog, the dog was famous for being fast, so he called him to outspeed illusion, then, a little boy from the town right on the bottom of the misty mounds needed to get water, tip tap tip tap as he walked up the road tip tap tip tap as he jogged up the mountain. And as he went up, the masters felt like someone was going up to them, so they put their hands down, stood up, and lifted both sides of their mouths slightly.

As the little boy approached, the masters waved and said gently "hello, how was your day?" The little boy felt weird, but he tiptoed to the well and scooped three big bottles of water, The beggar and The Bulk thought "If I manage to train and teach the little boy, he might be able to help me win!" And so they secretly scheduled classes but little did they know, their classes were at different times, so they won't know they are both teaching the boy.

The next day, the boy was next to the giant well, the beggar came, and whispered to him the secrets of the iron poppy technique also telling the boy not to tell anyone he was teaching him, the same happened with the bulk.

A few years of training later, the boy was told there was a duel that he could join by a poster stuck on his door, he was thinking of it, thinking...thinking...thinking...

He then thought how his masters would be proud, and he always wanted to make people pleased, thinking it was the perfect opportunity. On the day of the tournament, he woke up as early as possible, slamming the door behind him, and he sprinted to the stone stairs, walking up getting faster and faster.

After all the masters and the boy arrived in the area around the well, all the masters were surprised, but they accepted the new challenge... the bulk screamed "START" and they all fought like dogs and cats. the bulk attempted to hit the neck of the master of the blades of glory, but the master sliced the bulk's eye, blinding him while he screamed in pain and horror, the boy flung out a puff of the iron petal movement at flower petal, the girl from earlier, flower petal felt nausea in her tummy, while the boy shot another of the iron petal movement at the girl, cutting through her meat. The swordsman then attempted a sliced on the beggar, then the beggar somersaulted up into the air and shot another iron petal on the swordsman, with only the three remaining, the poison woman shot a pair of bowls towards the beggar. The beggar reflected those bowls and the woman dodged, but the bowls where acid painted bowls!!

And the beggar died...

Now with only two remaining, the boy flung his hand while putting all the force of the iron body technique in his fist, his fit was burning with energy, and the woman dodged, but the boy quickly shot an iron petal at her, as fast as lightning, the poison woman dodged and shot a poison dart and the boy barely dodged just in time, and as fast as a cheetah, he hit her, and the woman fell to the ground in unconsciousness, the boy was the strongest master! And the boy was crowned the best master of them all...

The Famous Tale

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Wong, Vora – 11

We all heard the famous tale about the magical mountains hidden behind the cold white mist, the one with temples floating on clouds with dragons that breathed magical fire, the one with pleasing trees that stood everywhere you go and beautiful lakes that pour themselves down the rocks. But don't go there, no one dared to, the tale warned: "Once you touch the mist, the punishment begins... unless you're with somebody, somebody you miss...."

It was a snowy day in Anhui, China. Lin and Tong were sweeping snow and collecting coal. When they finally finished their work, Tong and Lin went for a walk. Grabbing on Tong, Lin watched the white mist rise and float down the Magical Mountain. Tong stopped and glared at the mountain. They were determined to explore.

The pair stopped and read the sign painted in yellow with tiny scratches. "Mount Huangshan..." Lin read as written, she had never seen this mountain and neither had Tong. But they knew something about it, they knew the traditional tale that their Grandma used to read to them about this 'Mount HuangShan'. Walking past the warning signs, The two arrived at a crystal blue lake. Lin looked up and was most satisfied to see the bead trees hanging above them. The wind blew onto the trees and made them wave. Lin smiled slightly and looked at her brother. Tong was kneeling on the grey bumpy rocks they were standing on. He put his hand into the ice-cold lake and scooped up some fresh water, the water was sweet and refreshing. Tong gestured his arms to tell Lin to try, Lin nodded nonplussed and slowly kneeled. Suddenly, Tong heard a deep rumbling voice "Don't touch my water...run away when you still can..."

Tong's eyes enlarged. He searched around for the voice and saw a big dragon with silver and green scales breathing smoky fire that became the magical mist. While all the chaos was happening, reaching out slowly, unobservant Lin reached over gently and touched the water, The magical mist rose from the water and covered Lin ... "NNNNOOOO!" Shouted Tong in panic but it was too late... Tong's fearful face slowly transformed into an expression filled with regret and sorrow. Tong's was crying despondent tears, he had weak bones that were too despairing to move, a brain that was not willing to accept the truth and a pair of pearl black eyes that turned indistinct and couldn't believe what it just saw...

"AHHH!!!" screamed the frightened girl. "Get off me!" she said furiously while crying endless tears. She moved to try to get away from the dragon's sharp claws that were grabbing her tight on the shoulders. FLASH! The

memory of her grandmother who passed away in 1856 reading the tale reappeared in her brain... Lin's mind drifted back to reality. Lin knew the tale meant something... She knew it was a warning sign sent from someone... *purple...potion...* mumbled a ghostly sound in Lin's ear. As the dragon flew by a cabinet packed with thousands of potions, Lin managed to grab the only purple coloured potion and stored it in her coat.

Tong looked at his feet, feeling helpless and miserable. He reached into his bag and grabbed out some water to calm himself down. He knew that this was all his fault, he knew that he would sacrifice his own life for his sister if only he could.

"Tong!Tong!" sobbed Lin with her voice trembling and her hands shaking. The dragon locked Lin in a tiny cage that was only a bit bigger than her. Lin's tears slid down her cheeks, she knew her intelligent brother would come to help her, she had faith in him, but she was still petrified that she might not survive...

Tong took three nice deep breaths, he knew it was life-risking, he knew if he couldn't save Lin he would be stuck there too. But what else can he do? Tong reached his hand out and touched the mist, the mist curled around his hand. After a few seconds, just like what happened to Lin, a neon red dragon grabbed on Tong's shoulders and flew to the temple above the clouds. He knew he would find Lin there! When they arrived, The red dragon stared at the kids fiercely as if he was a tiger, he locked Tong in a cage and put him next to Lin. The kids didn't know what to do. Suddenly, a ghostly figure appeared next to the kids. The kids screamed but they stopped when they realized it was someone they knew, someone they missed, someone they loved...

The ghost slowly glided towards the kids and unlocked their cages, the children hugged the ghost tight. Even though the kids could scarcely see this figure, they knew it was her. Yes, it was Grandma, the one who passed away in 1856.

Grandma recalled the details of the tale that was permanent in her brain. "The purple potion contains time travelling and teleportation powers. Once you drink the potion, it will teleport you to the location you were at a day ago!" Lin reached into her coat and grabbed the purple potion she put in her coat from earlier. "Is it this?" said Lin hoping it was.

"Yes," said Grandma with a smile. "Drink the potion and leave this temple of your nightmares!"

"Thank you, Grandma, thank you for helping us! " said Tong gratefully.

"It was my pleasure to help you both, now, it's nearly dawn. You better head back home, your parents will be worried if you don't hurry!" Grandma replied.

"Goodbye!" the children said as they took one last glance of grandma and drank the potion. Flash! The children were back home, home sweet home.

Now, Tong and Lin are adults and have children of their own. The family would gather around the table and listen to Tong and Lin's fascinating story that changed their lives and made them more cautious.

The Mountain, The Legend & The Locket

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Wu, Laura – 10

Sighing, Ruby sat down next to the fireplace, knitting slowly, a pattern woven on the material. “How I wish my mother would get better” she thought as her eyes drifted towards a curtain, and some coughing heard from behind. If you hadn't known, Ruby's mother is ill with an unknown disease, and there is only one known cure, but it made it almost IMPOSSIBLE to get it, as it was on one of the hardest known mountains ever to climb. Ruby returned to her knitting, weaving in and out, in and out. Suddenly, she sat up, possibly struck by an idea. Ruby stuffed her knitting into her bag, quickly pulled on her jacket and boots. She trudged over to her mother, and murmured “Mother, I'm going to set off finding the cure to your illness. Stay strong, I'll be back as soon as I can.” She turned to leave then stopped, frozen, as though she was hearing her mother speak for the first time in forever. Ruby held her breath, and heard her mother wheezed “Ruby...I might not be here much longer, but I want you to know, I love you forever, and I'll be with you forever.” She points to Ruby's heart, as tears roll down her face, she takes her quivering hand, and removes her golden locket. “Promise me you'll never forget me.” Ruby's trembled, a thousand emotions flooding through her. She took the locket and whispered, “I promise”. Without looking back, Ruby turned and left.

There's something very special about this mountain that holds the cure, you see... Besides, it even has a legend all behind it! Let me tell you the story... There was once a hill, which sat next to a village called Tracks Town; people who lived there were brilliant scientists, healers and researchers. One day, a terrible storm erupted and caused a nearby volcano to explode, ashes, lava and bricks, tumbling down. Now, you might think that Tracks Town is probably buried, but it was to be said that the hill that sat outside the village, grew and grew and grew, and blocked the lava from reaching the town. Now that hill was the hill Ruby was journeying on. While the mountain grew, you see I forgot to mention that a tiny flower was riding on the back of the hill, so when the hill grew, the flower remained sitting there. It was also to be said that the flower holds an extraordinary cure, cure for anything in the world, now back to the story....

2 and a half hours later, Ruby looked around wearily. She wiped her sweat off her forehead and sat down on the blazing ground. Ruby took a deep breath, and continued walking up, up, up the stairs. She kept thinking about the cure, as well as thinking about giving up. “No..” Ruby firmly shook her head. “I won't give up, even though I might regret it.” After the sun setted, Ruby brushed the dust off her and gazed out. The sunset was glowing proudly, colours red and orange weaving through the clouds. Seeing the sunset reminded Ruby and the fun memories brought by her and her mother. She brushed the thought away and firmly walked off, fists tightened.

After a few more minutes of walking, Ruby gasped. Could it possibly be?... A hooded figure stood mighty high in front of her, gazing out into the sunset. This reminded Ruby of a memory of her and her mother, happily sitting together, having a picnic. As tears streamed down her face, she smiled as she wiped them off. Ruby walked towards the figure but without warning was thrown back by somehow an invisible shield? She sat back up, confused. All of a

sudden, the hooded figure threw off their hood and faced Ruby, who gasped loudly, as tears flooded her eyes once more...

“mother?!...What?! How..” Yet is it Ruby’s mother, yet it is not. Tis had wings, an halo but yet Ruby’s mother’s essence. “My dear, tis this flower does not hold the power of anything, it is the view and existence of this wonderful mountain tis I am here, yet not I am so not.” She smiled. Ruby understood perfectly to know that she had to let go. She heaved a great sigh; and looked up at her mother, and her smile trembled as Ruby watched her one and only family member fade away; as she pulled out her knittings, and tears began to drop on it, the material absorbing. Ruby suddenly remembered the locket, pulled it out and shivered to open it. It burst open, and she touched her cheeks, as she grinned at the picture inside; of which was she and her mother. Ruby whispered as she heaved the locket on, “You are always next to my heart.”

A Wild Discovery

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Yau, Charlotte – 10

“Why do we need to go to the village?” Farrah complained, dragging her legs along the path.

“We have to visit your grandparents,” Her mom replied without looking back. She sounded annoyed and tired from pulling up her own luggage bag up the mountain.

“But the mountains are *boring*.”

“No, it’s not, Farrah. Now stop asking questions.”

Farrah rolled her eyes. She hated going to the mountains. There was no internet. *And* they had to pull their luggage up and down mountains to get to the village. Why couldn’t her grandparents live somewhere in the city? It’s not like she didn’t want to visit her grandparents; she just thinks that nature is boring.

“We’re here!” Her father announced after another fifteen minutes of walking.

They went to a half broken down house and knocked. The walls were pale grey, and if you look closely enough, there were holes in the walls.

“You’re here!” The door flew open and revealed a short old woman with grey hair that was very much like the color of the walls. She smiled warmly at Farrah. “Come in, come in.”

She stepped aside, allowing Farrah and her parents to go into the house. There were only two rooms apart from the living room, and the living room contained only one table and a few chairs. One of the other rooms was the bedroom, and the other room was just a simple kitchen.

“I’m almost finished making tea,” Grandma said. “Your grandpa’s asleep - he’ll wake up later. Farrah, why don’t you go for a walk until I’m finished? Your mother and father can stay and help me with the food.”

“Okay, sure.” Farrah turned back towards the door and walked out of the house as her parents followed her grandmother into the kitchen.

“Don’t go too far!” Her mother called back over her shoulder before she went into the kitchen.

“I won’t.” She called without looking back. She walked away from the village, into a hardly visible path up a mountain.

If we were back at home with them visiting us, we could have just did something better - like going on the internet and play something, for instance. But... Mom and dad will never agree for grandma and grandpa to trek all

the way down and up the mountain, then take buses to our house. They would rather us do it. But the mountains are so BORING.

Suddenly, Farrah heard a ‘clunk’ as a stone fell from the top of the mountain she was walking. She ignored it. It was probably just the wind knocking some stones off the top. But as she neared the top of the mountain, she heard the sound of something sniffing, and the sound of something soft walking on the ground.

That sounds just like my dog when he walks. Which, technically, sounds like paws walking... But this sounds a bit scratchy.

Cautiously she peeked at the top of the mountain. A creature that looks like a dog was sniffing with its nose to the ground, but instead of fur, it’s got grey scales with an especially long tail.

What’s that? Dogs don’t have scales. Maybe it’s a special type of crocodile, but crocodiles’ legs aren’t that long, the ears are hardly visible, and it’s tail is way thicker. The tail’s as long as a whole meter, if not longer. What is that creature?

She hesitated, knowing she shouldn’t approach it, but curiosity to see it up close kept luring her until she finally gave in. Grunting with the effort, she climbed on top of the mountain. At once, the dog-like creature spun around, it’s amber eyes widening in fear, and ran down the mountain on the other side.

“Wait!” Farrah called. “I won’t hurt you!” but the animal was already far away.

She wanted to chase after it and look at it close up, but then realised that she might just scare that animal even more. She remembered that some animals were discovered at Yellow Mountain - Crociduras, for one. This might be another animal that isn’t discovered yet.

“Well... Maybe nature isn’t so boring after all.”

The Mystery

W F Joseph Lee Primary School, Ho, Sin Tung Vicky – 12

“What?” Emperor Taichung jumped to his feet, a map which was filled with mysterious routes and drawings dropped onto the golden carpet. “That’s unbelievable!” He turned towards Ai Ching and stared at him, “Is it true? Huangshan has a god who makes elixirs for people to live forever?”

Ai Ching was trying to explain to the anxious emperor, “Your majesty, there’s certainly a god. I suggest sending a servant to unlock the secrets.” TaiChung made a decision. “Fine, I will send my reliable servant Nianlong to seek for the god, and if there are any elixir for me to live forever, bring one back to me,” he stood there just like a statue, too fascinated to speak.

“My best emperor, I am honored to have your trust,” Nianlong gave him a deep bow, his hair almost touched the ground. TaiChung gave him an imperial sword and his final suggestions, “This sword represents me. Don’t make your mission end with failure. After your mission, I will give you a huge prize!” They met each other’s eyes and Nianlong gave him his promise with his strong voice ranging throughout the palace.

Two days later, Nianlong was ready to begin his mission. Nianlong said farewell to his family and friends and rode on a horse with a red tail that could run miles nonstop. It was given to him as a gift from Emperor Taichung.

After several months of riding, he eventually reached Huangshan. He opened his mouth wide open with amazement, “I couldn’t believe it! *The high tower is a thousand feet tall, from my hand I can pluck the stars. I couldn’t dare to shout out loud, as I am afraid to disturb the gods in heaven.*” He took a deep breath, “I mustn’t upset TaiChung! Although I’m not sure how I could do it,” he murmured.

Sea clouds, mist and fog surrounded Huangshan, making it into a paradise. Nianlong climbed along the stones, grabbing them deep as he was bursting with energy. Unfortunately, he heard roars after him. A dragon with long green nails dashed out of nowhere! He scowled and spit out blasts of fire, “What are you doing here? Get out before I burn you into pieces.” The dragon hissed, unsheathing his claws out and curled his lips into a snarl to show his sharp teeth, “Get out!” Nianlong showed the imperial sword but was stammering with horror, “Do you dare to attack the Emperor? I am looking for a god in this mountain. The son of the heaven told me to do so.” The dragon snapped back, “Then? Gods should be above mortal humans!” He slashed out his claws, tore Nianlong’s clothes, and threw him into a pool beside the dragon. Surprisingly, the pool he fell in was a magic pool. Whoever touched the pool will have the magic of courage. The dragon snorted and turned to Nianlong, “It’s time for me to...” His mood turned at just a second, “Oh no...”

He burst into a cry, "Brave Nianlong, I am so sorry for my behaviour! Please, please, please, don't kill me!" He sniffed; his chilli flavoured smell poured over Nianlong.

Nianlong replied coolly like a hero, "As long as you bring you to your master's house, I promise I won't kill you with my imperial sword." The dragon cheered, "Thank you, your majesty!" They immediately set off and were soon whooshing in the diamond-blue sky.

Finally, after twelve hours of travelling, he arrived at the top of Huangshan. He stepped cautiously into the house and found that everything was made of clouds! "Come here, brave Nianlong." A sound caught his attention. Brought by his curiosity, he wandered into a room, "Who's there?" A voice which was like from heaven floated into his ears. Nianlong gasped, "It's Lord Laozhi!" Lord Laozhi smiled, "Are you taking TaiChung's orders to get an elixir for him to live forever?" Nianlong nodded, too stunned to speak.

"But, before I give you this elixir, you need to tame a hissing snake." Lord Laozhi flapped his cloak and a snake appeared in front of Nianlong!

It creeps slowly towards him, its tail flicking with hate. Flame surrounded the snake, and it tried to spit them onto Nianlong. The snake hissed, "You will never get the elixir!" Showing his flame teeth, he wrapped around Nianlong's neck, spitting flame into his eyes. Slashing out a lot of poison through his mouth, Nianlong first shook himself with terror. But after remembering he had a touch of the magic water; he had the power to defeat the snake. He used his sword to cut the snake into half, the snake again fired homeward and took a bite on Nianlong's hand

hard. "Haaaaaa! You will NEVER win the elixir! It's all MINE!" The snake flew onto Nianlong's head, the unsheathing claws made Nianlong cried with insane pain. Nianlong used all his might to chop the snake, "Ahhhhh!" The injured snake gradually huffed and puffed and changed back into a teeny-tiny lizard. The lizard licked his hands friendly, "Congratulations! You tamed me! You will get your prize!" He went back to Lord Laozhi. Lord Laozhi smiled and gave an elixir to him, "Please take it back as soon as possible before it disappears into mist." Then, Lord Laozhi and the house disappeared, and Nianlong was sitting at the back of the sacred dragon.

"Ah! Nianlong is back finally!" TaiChung screamed eagerly at the top of his lungs. Nianlong hopped off the dragon swiftly and presented the elixir to TaiChung, "Here's your elixir, your majesty. My mission is finished." TaiChung accepted the medicine and gave an enormous bag of pure gold bars to Nianlong. Nianlong's mouth went as wide as a black hole, "But..." TaiChung replied to him, "This is your prize, as I mentioned before. Thank you for helping me to seek the god and bring the elixir back to me. I also felt from my heart that you are a brave hero to me."

China's Magical Mountains

Wellington College International Shanghai, Chen, Kuei – 10

Aisha was having a fairly enjoyable day. She had finished breakfast, packed her bag and took off in her Mercedes Benz. Aisha was thirteen years old and was athletic for her age. She took all kinds of classes and had been learning self-defense since she was seven. She was flying to visit her grandma in China in her private Piper Comanche 250.

“Well, here I come, grandma...” she muttered under her breath, and the plane left the runway.

Of course, something had to go wrong. She was a Levesque. They have had bad luck for twenty-one centuries. Aisha was above the Yellow Mountains, peering down, when the whole plane lurched.

“Ahhhhhhh!” she screamed, as the plane started to tilt at a 45° angle.

“The plane’s malfunctioning!” the pilot exclaimed. The plane was definitely tilting now. The Piper was going to crash, and it was taking her with her! Aisha panicked. Out of the many skills that she had, flying or fixing a plane was not one of them, and for some reason the pilot was nowhere to be seen! Then she saw it.

Jackpot!

A river!

If I could time this correctly... she looked down. It was only a few seconds before the impact. It was a leap of faith, and she made it! There was a wonderful “Splash” and then a muted explosion. Aisha kicked her feet and swam to the surface.

Aisha stifled a gasp. “Whoa,” she murmured.

Mist was curling around the sun, as though she was under a blanket, with only a few streaks of sunlight peeking out. Trees were everywhere: from pine to birch, swarming the area with lush green fur. Even more trees were clustered together, scaling the mountains, and creating steppingstones for other creatures. But the most impressive was the Mystical Mountains. From different varieties of cliffs hidden by the translucent clouds, they were sensational. There were ones with jagged peaks, like razor sharp teeth jutting out from nature’s carpet; there were ones that had flat, mesa-like surfaces, sturdy and a long drop if you fall, and occasionally being a rubrics cube from different minerals. There were also ones with Earth’s stairs, each step at least 30 feet high, and if you do manage to get to its top, you would also see a luminescent ocean of clouds and mist. You can almost imagine that the mountains were floating islands, drifting, and lumbering about, bumping into one another. Below, a river was winding through the mountains, like a snake. “This is a magical place” muttered Aisha

The scenery made her doze off, and by the time she finally woke, her mind had snapped back to reality. “Sure, this is a beautiful place, but it isn’t grandma’s apartment. How will I get back to the modern world?” Aisha wondered. She suddenly remembered the story. There should be a temple around here... there! If I could get to the top, God can teleport me back! But will I survive that terrifying climb...?

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

Wellington College International Shanghai, Liu, Lindsay – 10

Nine years passed by for the Wang family, but it was filled with madness, anger, hatred, betrayal, revenge..... and not a single drop of love. There was no warmth, care, kindness, of course love. The house was cold, hallow, the windows were all back faced to the sun, so no sunlight spilled in to paint the house golden. Their house was sat on the very top of the moss-covered mountain. The view was simply divine. Everything was so beautiful it looked like a masterpiece artwork. It looked like a puzzle, but there was one piece missing, love. The sky had drops of blue fade in, the mountains were placed perfectly, each one’s color fading lighter than the previous one, the colors bleeding in like watercolor paintings. The trees twirled and danced under the guide of the wind, altogether forming an artwork.Countless hours the candles burned and flickered with loneliness. It was supposed to be the only thing that had warmth in the house, but it just added awkwardness between the silences of conversations. The house felt like it was covered in layers and layers of thick snow that never melted.

Heather Wang was the lady of this house. She had a sleek and slim body and was always elegant as if she walked right out of a fairytale. Whenever she had time she would sit on the second floor balcony, watching the birds soaring and diving freely, the wind brushing her feathers..... Perhaps today she would fancy being a crane, splashing about freely in the clear shallow waters carelessly underneath the sapphire blue skies, or turning into an eagle, soaring and diving over grassy meadows and fields, with happiness tingling in every corner of her body. But as soon as she closes the door of imaginary, and sucks away every last drop of happiness, she would no longer be able to believe. Then, she would be traveling back to reality. Everyday she would long for freedom.

Bremen Wang was one tough man. He was forced by his parents to marry Heather by the Chinese law and never in his life loved her, needless to say even liked her. At the break of dawn, he would disappear into the forest miles away without his shadow lurking behind him. His favorite would be listening to the bloodcurdling shrieks of animals. He could kill them with one shot, but no. He preferred a lot more to devour the taste of seeing them suffer, one by one. He would use knives to slash their bodies open, their stomachs sprouting out blood like a fountain that was dyed fresh red. The creatures were not poor defenseless animals that had no hope to Bremen, he would believe it was a noble and exquisite piece of artwork that he created.

Tim's Epic Huangshan Adventure

Yew Chung International School, Chang, Kylie – 10

One bright and sunny afternoon, somewhere high up in one of Huangshan's peaks, there was a mysterious cave. The cave was covered with long green vines and surrounded with enormous umbrella shaped pine trees. In this cave lived a little dragon, who was called Tim, and a mother dragon.

Tim was a small green dragon who loved to play. One day, Tim sneaked out of the cave to play in the mountains. He flew over peaks after peaks, hid behind rocks after rocks, in the end, he was lost.

"Help! Can anyone please help me?" Tim cried. Suddenly, a loud bang and a trail of smoke floated from a nearby peak. Tim recognized that peak, it was his home! He quickly flew back to the cave and saw witches surrounding it. Tim was terrified. He tried to hide behind a huge rock but fell into a deep chamber. The rock was a secret magical barrier. Tim looked around and saw a weird shadow hiding behind a large pillar.

"It's alright, you are safe here. No one will find you," a mysterious voice echoed around the chamber.

"Who are you?" Tim asked in a scared voice. The shadow slowly emerged from behind a pillar. It was a phoenix!

"I am the guardian of this portal. Each mirror here leads to a place in the mountains. A group of witches want your blood to make medicine that will let them live forever. I see your friends and mother in grave danger for not telling the witches where you are. Would you like to save them?" the guardian explained.

"Of course!" Tim exclaimed.

"You have exactly 12 hours to save everyone. Here is a watch, it will show you how much time you have left, touch the blue gem on it to come back here," said the guardian, handing Tim the watch.

"Why would I want to come back?" questioned Tim.

"This place is extremely safe. When you need rest, you may come back." explained the guardian. "I suggest you start with saving your friends, they are in more terrible danger than your mother is in right now," suggested the guardian.

Tim got out of the chamber and went to save his friends. He quietly flew into the Sea of Clouds, where his friends always played, and saw them surrounded by a humongous group of witches. The witches wore black robes, shoes

and hoods. They raised their wands in the air and started discussing what curses they should use. Tim sneaked closer to one of the witches and heard that they wanted to turn his friends into monsters. Tim decided that he will have to trick the witches. He hid behind large rocks while edging closer to his friends and collecting smaller rocks.

When he finally got near, he made sure the witches couldn't hear or see him and whispered, "Lola! Crystal! George! I have a plan to save you guys!" He quietly shared his plan with Lola the Tibetan monkey, Crystal the masked palm civet and George the bear. They used the stones that Tim collected to quickly build shapes that looked like themselves and covered it with a thin layer of clouds so the witches won't see that it's stone right away. After that, they silently snuck away before the witches found out.

"That was close!" Lola sighed in relief.

"I think your mother is also in danger, Tim. I heard the witches discussing if they should curse us or your mother first," Crystal said.

"We better go now! I heard the witches love cursing," George added.

Tim took his friends to the magical chamber. He told them to stay there while he went to save his mother, who is also in danger.

"The exit for this place is right above you," Tim explained.

"You sure? Because I'm quite sure it's the ceiling," Lola asked.

"It's actually a portal, but in order to keep this place safe, it has been made to look like a ceiling from below, a ground from above," answered the guardian, who appeared out of nowhere.

Tim touched a mirror that represented the woods near his house to see where his mother was. He saw his mother tied up with long brown strings so she couldn't move, her mouth was covered with a white cloth so she couldn't call for help.

"We shall cast the most wicked spell on her!" suggested a witch.

"Indeed we shall!" agreed another witch.

Tim got very scared, there were a lot more witches here than at the Sea of Clouds. All the witches raised their wands and started cursing. Just as the first cure was about to reach his mother, three pieces of mirror flew out from behind a huge rock and surrounded Tim's mother. Ping! The curse hit the mirror and bounced off, hitting the witch who did the curse. Three heads poked out from behind the mirrors. It was Lola, Crystal and George who were carrying the mirrors. Suddenly, there was a huge rumble, followed by the sound of humongous flapping wings. A ginormous dragon appeared before the witches and started growling. The dragon was so big it almost covered the sun! It was Tim's father who came back from a vacation! Tim's father growled so loudly that rocks started rolling off the cliffs. The witches got so scared that they slowly backed away.

"Who dares to fight me?" grumbled Tim's father while puffing out smoke.

The witches fled faster than lightning, disappearing within seconds. Tim flew out from the forest to go help his mother.

"Well, the witches finally left us in peace," Tim's mother sighed in relief.

"I'm glad they didn't succeed with their medicine plan," Tim murmured. Just then, the phoenix popped out from behind the huge rock and walked towards Tim.

“Thanks for helping me!” Tim thanked the phoenix. The phoenix nodded, opened his ginormous orange wings and flew off like an arrow to report to the emperor.

China’s Magical Mountains

Wellington College International Shanghai, Rao, Jade – 10

Muck was having a “great” day. It was the 9th day he’d been kicked out of his “mother’s” home, along with his sister. They were climbing China’s Yellow Mountain, in search of the Master.

“I’m really tired, I haven’t eaten in days, DAYS!” Muck cried.

Finally, they reached the top of the mountain, where an old man sat. “Ah, the warriors have come.” He said in a deep voice. “From today, your sister will be called Wind, you shall be named Storm...”

The rest of the days dragged on as The Master trained them, but danger awaited... The Master had disappeared, without a word, without a trace. “Storm, a message!” Wind yelled.

The message said:

*Beware the dragon of dark magic,
Beware the stalker of dreams,
Beware the whispers watching you,
Beware the mist, for it is not what it seems.*

“There’s an evil dragon out there that we’ve got to slay.” Wind exclaimed. “We must get to Black-Dragon-Mountain immediately, we might find some clues there.”

As Wind and Storm climbed up onto the peak of Black-Dragon-Mountain, Storm asked, puzzled: “Is it just me or has the mountain moved?”

Wind nodded and mentioned for Storm to follow. They hurried down Black-Dragon-Mountain. As soon as they were a safe distance away from the mountain, they whispered: “I think Black-Dragon-Mountain is a real dragon, and it’s waking!”

Surprised that they had said the same thing, they crept closer. There, a snake-like silhouette ascended into the sky like winding stairs.

“Who?” A slithery, ice-cold voice rasped. “I’ve defeated the Master, no-one can challenge me.”

Storm and Wind stifled a gasp. Suddenly, the Dragon came hurtling down at lightning-speed, knocking Wind unconscious. Storm took a deep breath, and charged.

Storm ducked as the Dragon aimed a fiery breath at him. “Water against fire,” he reminded himself. Storm rolled away once more as the patch of grass beside him burst into flames. He concentrated, willing a storm bringing thunder and rain, his eyebrows were furrowing against his will, his mind was screaming with pain, yet he still concentrated. The Dragon shot towards him, then it hesitated. Seeing the determined look on Storm’s face, it’s eyes flickered from a gentle sky-blue to a emotionless black, it showed a hint of recognition and its necklace wobbled, becoming faint. Suddenly, the necklace shot out a blinding light, the Dragon’s eyes turned back to the obsidian black and it roared in fury, but Storm didn’t seem to notice, he just concentrated harder. Droplets of water splashed onto the burning grass, putting it out; droplets of water splashed onto Wind, waking her; droplets of water splashed onto the Dragon, calming it down as the fight drained out of it. It’s necklace melted and turned to ash as the Dragon’s eyes turned to a gentle blue. Then, the Dragon faded away and a Phoenix rose out of the ashes.

Although it was a great ending, there was still something that troubled Storm: the prophecy was not yet fulfilled...

The Legend of Meiying

Yew Chung International School, Liu, Xinran Amy – 9

Long long ago, there was a village under the DaWu Mountain. Everyone in the village had enough food and water and was living happily. Until one autumn, the ferocious lion monster came to the village and stole all the water. The ponds dried out without leaving a droplet. The villagers were no longer able to grow food, not even a bowl of rice. They had lost everything, but the worst of it was that they had lost hope, except Meiying.

Meiying was the daughter of a retired soldier who now made and sold pottery. People said she was the bravest girl in the village. She was humble and generous, clever and independent, loyal and ambitious, courageous and energetic. She was also very beautiful. She had sleek ebony black hair as black as ink, light hazel eyes that sparkled and a pale peach reflection. Her father believed that girls should also know how to protect themselves. So he taught Meiying martial arts, hand to hand combat, advanced survival skills and how to use bows and swords. Meiying truly was a very talented young girl and a magnificent sight to behold. She kept believing she could bring the water back.

So one day, Meiying woke up before the sun and headed to the DaWu Mountain, thinking she could help the village to find the water as a member of the village. Meiying left with only a short white dress made of hemp, a lodestone and a straw braided rope.

Every day, she woke at dawn to keep climbing to the summit. Food and water was often scarce and hard to find. Usually Meiying depended on berries and mushrooms. For water, she drank from small drizzling streams. Every night, Meiying went to sleep with her shoes covered with blood and hundreds of blisters on her feet. She slept under the stars on the hard rocky ground of the mountain.

She searched and searched, but couldn't find anything, until she, too, began to lose hope. When Meiying felt that she could not find water and was about to give up, she heard the roaring of a lion. She knew at once that it was the roar of the lion monster. She immediately followed the roar’s echo to the lion monster’s cave. She saw the lion monster had pointy pearl white teeth as white as snow, five poisonous and deadly tails containing poison that would make you faint, two ruby red horns of a devil and a pair of scarlet eyes as red as blood that would turn you to stone if you looked directly at them.

Meiying found out that the lion monster made a dam out of massive logs to trap the water that flowed into their village’s ponds. When Meiying saw the dam, she knew what she had to do. She needed to destroy the dam. Meiying pulled again and again with all her strength but she couldn’t break the dam. But she wasn’t going to give up after all that she had been through. Meiying thought about her family and her friends with all her might. Suddenly an idea popped out of her head. If pulling didn’t work, what about pushing? She tried pushing it and surprisingly one

crack, two cracks and the dam broke before her eyes. When the Lion monster saw what was happening, he ran to stop it, but it was too late. He was swept away screaming and shouting nevertheless he was never seen again and most likely drowned.

Still Meiying also couldn't get out of the way in time so she disappeared into the water peacefully. However the village's ponds began to flow again, faster and faster until it formed a huge lake in the shape of a star. It was enough to supply all the village's needs and to trade with other villages.

Now the little village is now a giant city called Starlight city named after the star shaped lake. Yet no one knows what happened to Meiying though some say she turned into a spirit called the white lady that guards the village and it is a mysterious secret.

That is the legend of Meiying.

China's Magical Mountains

Yew Chung International School, Lo, Jasmine – 8

"Why would grandpa bother writing Chinese Calligraphy?" Zachary murmured. Beside him, Grandpa was writing Chinese Calligraphy on a decorated paper. "Watch!" Lily pressed some buttons and some fancy words appeared on the screen. Then, Zachary printed the paper.

"HELP-" Grandpa yelled, the printer sucked Grandpa first from toes, then to head! The children tried to pull Grandpa, but it was too late. Buzz! It was the printer! Lily walked to the printer to collect the paper, then she saw: We do not need handwriting anymore, we have technology.

Zachary yelled, "CALL THE POLICE!" "WAIT! Who'd believe us when we said that the printer sucked Grandpa?" Lily insisted. She kept reading the words the printer printed. "We do not need handwriting anymore, we have technology... TECHNOLOGY! Handwriting stands for Chinese Calligraphy..."

"Where is Grandpa?" Zachary challenged. "I don't know, but I know how to get there." Without waiting for Zachary, Lily seized Grandpa's brush and started to write. When the tip of the brush touched the paper, it seemed a tornado coming in the room. The printer sucked Lily inside, she called, "I'll wait you there, grab the brush and write!" Then, she disappeared. Zachary was thunderstruck, he wondered, "There...?" He grabbed the brush and wrote: '救命'(HELP)! Buzz! Swiftly, the printer sucked Zachary, too.

"WELCOME!" a familiar voice said. Zachary asked, "Where am I?" "The place you can find Grandpa." Lily's face appeared.

"Look! These are the weird pine trees, and that's the 'Guest-greeting Pine'! Look at the curved branches and the flat crown on top of its head! You see those extraordinary rocks? This rock looks like a monkey! Have you noticed the 'Sea of Clouds' above your head? Here is the Hot Spring," Lily pointed in one direction. "Look at the clear, smooth water! These are the 'Four Wonders of-'" "HUANGSHAN!" Zachary shouted. "So we must be in Huangshan! Then how are we going to save Grandpa? There is no trace of him!" He wondered.

When Lily was about to reply, Zachary interrupted, "Ugh! I'm starving! Oh, how I wish to have Peking duck as my lunch!" "We need money if you want Peking duck." Lily stated. Zachary immediately searched his pocket for money, he found no money, but Grandpa's brush! Frustrated, Zachary waved the brush frantically. As he did, Lily attentively noticed that there were sparks flying in the air where the brush had just been! The sparks landed on the Collared Finchbills!

Magically, the Collared Finchbills started to talk! "To save Grandpa, you must stop using technology, plus you must write '永' (forever), for this word contains all the strokes in Chinese. Write it firmly so it won't vanish. Good luck!" After this, all the birds flew away. Zachary exclaimed, "It's easy!" Then he instantly wrote '永

'(forever), "It doesn't work!" Lily sighed, "You need to write it beautifully and full of meaning." "How?" "If the printer sucked us here, then the answer must be here!" Lily said enthusiastically.

"Look at the waterfall, the droplets look exactly like the first stroke(㇀) of '永' (forever)." Zachary said, preoccupied. Then he picked up the brush, and wrote the first stroke(㇀) of '永' (forever) just like the droplets. Out of the blue, the sparks appeared! This time, it circled what Zachary had just written. Lily shouted cheerfully, "You did it!"

"The 'Guest-greeting Pines'! The second stroke (㇁) is just like the trunk of the 'Guest-greeting Pine'! It's so straight and strong!" Zachary wrote the next stroke (㇁) of '永' (forever). Strangely, no sparks, instead, the stroke disappeared into thin air! "What's wrong?" Zachary grumbled. Lily stared thoughtfully at the Pines, "Try looking at the point where the branch and the trunk meet, it seems stronger. So, I think after the horizontal stroke, you need to hold for a moment, prepare energy to turn to the vertical line." Zachary wrote as Lily said, simultaneously, also thinking about the 'Guest-greeting Pines'. Finally, the sparks came and circled the stroke. "We can soon rescue Grandpa!" Lily exclaimed encouragingly.

Zachary took the brush, wrote the next stroke (㇂) just like the branch. To his surprise, it didn't glow, but it just vanished. How could it be wrong? Lily observed the environment carefully. Just when the Collared Finchbill flew past- "Ah...! The bird's wings!" "The branch and the trunk were too hard; I should write it as dynamic as the bird's wings, too!" Zachary realized. He held his brush, wrote the next stroke (㇂) of '永' (forever) imitated the bird's wings. Unforeseen, the stroke glowed! They had succeeded!

Upon this, the word '永' (forever) glowed brighter than before. Before you could say a word, the '永' (forever) transformed into a tunnel! Surprisingly, Grandpa walked out of it! Astonished, Lily's eyebrows shot towards the sky. Zachary was also amazed, his eyes popped out when Grandpa appeared.

Instantaneously, Grandpa smiled gladly, "You not only saved me, but also the Chinese Calligraphy! You may say that the printer and the Chinese Calligraphy was at war, if it had not been you two, the Chinese Calligraphy would disappear because people think ancient Chinese Calligraphy is meaningless." Zachary burst out, "No! If you write Chinese Calligraphy, you need to write it full of strength and dynamic which the printer can't do." "Yes, you and Lily also used the beautiful views of Huangshan to help: you used the droplets to understand how to write a stroke neatly; you used the trunk of a tree to understand how strong the stroke is; you used where the branches and the trunk meet to understand the thick and thin places of a stroke; you used the bird's wings to understand the dynamic of the stroke. You two are going to be a wonderful Calligrapher." Grandpa grinned like a Cheshire cat.

"Hey! Let's get some Peking duck!" As they walked towards the cottage, a strong wind blew past and transported them back home.

Qilins: The Legend of Ti-Kay

Yew Chung International School, Tsang, Elizabeth – 9

Chapter 1 Ti-Kay

In the far away land of Yellow Mountain, Ti-Kay was resting on a big rock near the Black Tiger Pine Tree, it was a beautiful day. Like the other qilins that live on the mountain, Ti-Kay looked after the pine trees of Yellow Mountain. For Ti-Kay, all the pine trees are sacred, but Ti-Kay liked the Black Tiger Pine Tree the best. According to legend, if the trees were destroyed, the person destroying the trees will become ruler of China.

Yellow Mountain was located in eastern China, hardly any humans lived there. Erlang, a god whose third eye had the power to give life, used to live there too. Qilins were helpers of Erlang. Erlang left Yellow Mountain when he turned 10 million years old but before he left, he gave the qilins the power to give life.

Just as Ti-Kay was dozing on the big rock, he heard Jujubie shout that he was late for training. Ti-Kay opened his eyes, stretched before getting up. Soon, he was flying to the training grounds with Jujubie and Rosaline. While flying, the three qilins smelled the scent of humans, they wanted to find out who has entered Yellow Mountain, but running late for the training, they flew on.

Chapter 2 Trouble

To the northwest of Yellow Mountain is Mongrek. Throughout the year, harsh cold wind blew through Mongrek, making the land unsuitable for farming. It's ruler, Tobaha, was mean to his people. Tobaha's only wish was to destroy the pine trees on Yellow Mountain and become China's ruler.

Pacing in his room, Tobaha had lost his patience, he would go to Yellow Mountain. Tobaha chose a few men to go with him and as they marched through the water marshes, a storm forced Tobaha to seek shelter. The storm lasted for several days and there was not enough food. In hunger, Tobaha killed 2 men for food. It was the blood of these dead men that Ti-Kay, Jujubie and Rosaline smelled.

Chapter 3 A surprise

T-Kay, Jujubie and Rosaline huddled together amongst the rocks near the Black Tiger Pine Tree.

Rosaline asked "I am afraid, shall we tell the Pamibia what we smelled?"

Jujubie retorted: "Shh! We shall resolve this ourselves!"

Ti-Kay: "We need to find out what is happening."

Rosaline: "Now? But it is dark!"

Jujubie: "Yes, let us go"

Ti-Kay and Jujubie spread their wings ready to fly. Rosalie reluctantly rose, following Ti-Kay and Jujubie.

When the three qilins arrived at the water marsh. Tobaha's troop had set up tents there. The qilins sneaked around the largest tent. Through a hole at the back of the tent, Ti-Kay saw Tobaha. Ti-Kay was furious, Jujubie and Rosaline held onto Ti-Kay preventing him from rushing into the tent and forcing him to return to Yellow Mountain with them. Just as Ti-Kay was flying off, he saw Tobaha holding the madstone wand...a weapon which could destroy the pine trees...

Chapter 4

War

Pamibia had watched Ti-Kay grow up and Ti-Kay respected him. Ti-Kay walked up to Pamibia, wanting to tell him everything that he saw the night before.

Ti-Kay: "Pamibia, I have something to tell you. It will only take a few minutes"

Pamibia: "What is it?"

Ti-Kay: "Tobaha and his men are at the water marshes. We think he wants to destroy the pine trees to become the ruler of China. Tobaha had the madstone wand too!"

Pamibia: "This cannot be right! We have to stop him! Let us call the troops."

The qilins gathered near the Lake of the Thousand Fairies. Surrounded by beautiful rocks and pine trees that are more than five thousands of years old, the lake has suddenly become lively.

Pamibia: 'Quiet! I need your attention! Tobaha is here!' Pamibia repeated what Ti-Kay told him. The qilins listened intently to the instructions given by Pamibia.

The qilin troops approached the water marsh quietly, but they were discovered by Tobaha's men and a fight began. Pamibia fought Tobaha but was seriously wounded by Tobaha's madstone wand.

Chapter 5

Is this it?

Two years passed, although the qilins fought hard, they lost most of the battles. Tobaha had conquered most of Yellow Mountain. The qilins now guarded the Black Tiger Pine Tree and the few hundred pine trees left nearby. The qilins know they must go on fighting, they would let Tobaha become ruler of China.

One day, Pamibia received a letter from Tobaha claiming that he would attack the remaining pine trees on the third day of the next month. Pamibia told Ti-Kay about this and Ti-Kay was furious. Ti-Kay was determined to protect the last pine trees and Yellow Mountain.

On the second day of the next month, Jujubie and Rosaline came to Ti-Kay.

Jujubie: "Ti-Kay, be brave, we are with you till the end."

Rosaline sobbed: "We will get our home back."

Ti-Kay felt more courageous. He headed to the water marshes together with Jujubie and Rosaline.

By noon on the next day, the qilins were ready for the final battle with Tobaha. They marched to the plain where Tobaha and his troops were stationed. The two sides started fighting. On the fourth day, only Ti-Kay and Tobaha remained standing.

Tobaha wielded the madstone wand towards Ti-Kay, Ti-Kay swirled around, bringing up the dust around him, then Ti-Kay roared so loud that Tobaha was stunned. Ti-Kay soared into the air and came down with great force towards Tobaha. Tobaha fell to the ground, his head bumping against a rock. The madstone wand laid broken, Tobaha was motionless. Ti-Kay had won.

Chapter 6 Pine Trees of Yellow Mountain

It was Erlang's power of giving life which Ti-Kay used to heal those qilins who were injured and to bring back to life those qilins who were killed in the war against Tobaha.

Ti-Kay became the leader of the qilins. Ti-Kay knew that for as long as there are pine trees on Yellow Mountain, the qilins would always have a home.

The Secret Garden

Yew Chung International School, Xing, Janey – 10

"Don't forget your sunscreen! It might be hot", Ellie's dad called out. Ellie sighed and rummaged around her closet for her sunscreen. Pictures of her and her mother covered the inside of her closet. The Browns were going on a vacation to Huangshan for the summer, and Ellie's dad was overreacting as usual. Ellie heaved her luggage out of her room and headed downstairs, where her dad was waiting.

Ellie lived only with her dad. Her mother used to be a professional mountain hiker, but 4 years ago she had mysteriously disappeared when she was hiking. For her 6 year old birthday present her mother had given Ellie her Nintendo and a photo of her mother standing in an open field. Flowers surrounded her, and nearby a waterfall ran through a hill. On the back it said in her mother's scrawly handwriting:

To Ellie, from mom. Love you ♥□

Ellie constantly worried that her mother's love for hiking surpassed her love for Ellie. Ellie blamed her mom very much for herself having only one parent. A tiny voice in her head told her that she just wanted someone to blame for her mother's disappearance, but she never listened to that voice. A life without her mother was like a movie without music. Her family still went on with life as usual, but there was a deep silence where her mother used to be.

Ellie wasn't very enthusiastic about going to Huangshan. She hated all mountains; they reminded her of her mother's disappearance. After they disembarked the plane, they had Pickled Mandarin Fish and Youjian Mao Doufu for dinner, and then rode a taxi to Jade Screen Tower Hotel.

The next morning, they hiked to the famous Greeting Pine. It's outward branches made it look like it was greeting people. Ellie glanced at her Nintendo. There was a Pokemon here! She flicked the Pokemon ball at the Pikachu on the screen, and caught it. While doing so, she accidentally knocked off a pinecone from the Greeting Pine. The pinecone started to glow, a soft yellow light evaporating from it. Ellie was so shocked she dropped the Nintendo. The pine cone then rolled on top of the Nintendo and the game controller started to glow as well. The light around it grew brighter and brighter, and the Pokemon ball bounced out of the Nintendo! Ellie stared down at it in shock and pinched her arm to make sure she wasn't dreaming. "Ow!" She muttered. No, this was definitely real. She glanced around her, and saw that her dad was studying a map a few steps away. The ten-year-old girl picked up the ball and shook it gently, half expecting it to disappear. In the blink of an eye, the ball fell apart, and a Pikachu hopped out!

“Wha- how-”, a bewildered Ellie stuttered. “Hi! I’m Piku. You must be Ellie!” The Pikachu said in his squeaky, cute voice. Ellie was so shocked that the Pokemon could speak that she barely noticed that it knew her name. “Let’s save the introductions for later. Follow me, I have something important to show you!” Piku said urgently, and immediately took off, running towards the other side of the mountain. Ellie stood there dumbfounded, staring after Piku. Was she really going to take off after a real living Pokemon who could speak English and knew Ellie’s name? But her gut told her to follow Piku, Ellie was sure of it. She ran over and explained where she was going. “Of course. Stay safe, don’t wander too far!” Once her dad agreed, she set off after Piku.

Piku was very fast for such a small creature. He bounced as he ran, his tiny yellow legs pushing his agile body forward with every jump. After a few minutes they dodged through a bunch of bushes, on to a small stone path. Piku bounced ahead and suddenly stopped so abruptly that Ellie nearly crashed into him. The tiny yellow Pokemon had stopped at a painted white gate. It’s bars were interlaced with vines and flowers, making it look very welcoming. Behind the gate Ellie could see beautiful pine trees on a green field, vividly coloured flowers growing everywhere on the soft emerald green grass. A waterfall flowed through a hill, water splashing against rocks. It was a very calming sound that Ellie could fall asleep to. She felt like the place was very familiar, although she couldn’t remember where she had seen it... it was on the tip of her tongue. Piku slowly pushed the gate open. “Wow... this place is so beautiful!” Ellie cried. She stared around her in awe. Above the garden she could see mountain tops and pine trees. Huangshan really is beautiful, Ellie thought. Maybe I really underestimated mountains..... Oh, I wish I

could hike all the way up to the top! Imagine the breath taking view I’d see from up there..... Oh, now I understand why my mom wanted to hike so much! Ellie stared around her at the beautiful field. She immediately wished she could show her parents it. Oh, that’s where Ellie had seen the field! It was very alike the one her mother stood in in the photo her mom had given to her. Her mom must have loved her, to want to share nature with her! It felt like the hole in Ellie’s heart was starting to heal. Ellie felt a moment of complete content, then knew that it was time to head back. “Thank you”, Ellie said to Piku. “Thank you for showing me that my mother loved more than her career, and thank you for showing me the beauty of mountains.” Piku just smiled knowingly and said, “Don’t thank me. After all, it was your decision to follow me.” Piku grinned and bounced back to the Greeting Pine with Ellie. Ellie felt as if the trip to Huangshan happened decades ago. She smiled as she hiked with her dad to the top of Huangshan.

The Phoenix

Ying Wa Primary School, Pan, Ching Kan – 11

The last silver of golden light faded under the misty mountains of Huangshan. Silvery stars began to appear as the sky began to darken, its color changing from a bluish-grey to pitch black. The local farmers had returned home for their dinner, so no one witnessed the peculiar event occurring in the air — stars began to cluster together as if they were pulled in by some unknown force, merging and creating an orb of pure light so bright it resembled the moon. Heavy with stardust, it started descending gracefully down onto the ground, where it was picked up by a gust of wind and landed right on a wooden doorstep on a certain house in the ancient village of Huangshan.

Dawn broke. The first rays of tangerine sunlight lit up the sky, the rice stalks casting shadows across the plains, dancing at the presence of the autumn breeze. A boy emerged from his doorstep and immediately felt the ruthless coldness seep through his torn, thin clothes. He found himself hunched over the creaky doorstep of his house. A colorless orb hovered a few inches above the wooden surface, its faint light shining through the countless cracks and holes of the walls and door of his tattered house. *What's this?* He thought. Out of curiosity, he stuck out his hand and wrapped his fingers around the object. Instantaneously, a burst of warmth flooded through his body, almost as if the sun was sucked into him. He looked around, afraid that someone else had seen the queer object, and after making sure no one was around, he shoved it into his pocket.

The boy sat on the lush grass just beside the fields of crimson fruit, nibbling on the heated meat of roasted fish. He then threw the remains of the meal into the weak crackling flame. He looked at the small fruit in his hands. He and his *Niang* (mother) used to have one every time after supper, fresh from the fields, before she rose into the sky two years ago, taken away from him by that mysterious force that killed millions every single day. They would crack its spiny shell open and suck every single juice and meat from this small fruit, enjoying its sweet taste until there was nothing left but a hollow shell and a large seed that grew in the center. Frustrated, the boy hurled the tiny fruit, where it sailed in an arc above the fields and landed on the grass with a *plop*. A bitter, iron-like taste began to form inside the boy's throat. Holding back his tears, he stomped out the flames and returned to his house, not noticing the orb slip from his pocket and submerge into the final embers of the fire.

A sudden heat spread across the valley. The boy rushed out of his house, only to see a great inferno in the middle of his lawn. He watched as it grew bigger and bigger, eventually consuming the field, his only connection to his mother. His howls of rage transitioned into squeals of surprise as the fire began to take shape. Wings with fiery feathers sporting colors of blue, crimson, tangerine, and amber spread widely as emerald eyes along with a beak emerged from the inferno. A majestic caw shook the mountains as a figure burst out of the flames. He gawked in awe at the sight of the mystical creature. A glow in its purple crest motioned him to get on. Hesitantly, he clambered onto its back, surprised to find that its fiery feathers did not burn him at all. The boy whooped with delight as they rose into the evening sky.

The sun singed the top of his head as the wind beat against the boy's flushed cheeks. He enjoyed the scenery of Huangshan as they flew upwards. The mountain caps, matted with green, crimson, brown, and amber, pierced through the sea of white puffy magic and soared upwards as if wishing to compete with the sky itself. Flocks of

birds frolicked around the branches, their melodious symphony echoing across the mountains. A deafening roar shook the earth as a curtain of white water came over the giant boulders and crashing into the lake below as if it was being poured by a giant bucket that never emptied. It was the loveliest scene the boy had ever seen in his short, eleven years of life. But he was awestruck when they broke through even the highest of clouds. A face appeared — a face he didn't expect to see — *Niang*, He whispered. His mother embraced him in her hands as tears streaked down his bony cheeks. She pressed a tiny object into the boy's hands — a lychee fruit. Memories flooded his brain as she did that sweet smile, like sun-heated dripping down a jar on a hot summer day. They began to embrace together, him snuggling into her arms for what seemed to last like an eternity...

The boy's eyes snapped open, finding the lychee fruit still clutched in his hand. He looked around to see nothing but the burnt remains of the field. He got up, staring at the blackened mess. A stinging sensation in his hand loosened his grasp on his fruit. A burst of green spread across the ground, as lychee trees bloomed into existence as if they were never destroyed. He looked up at the pillar of embers and feathers ascending into the clouds. He let out a contented sigh, and smiled back at the face in the heavens above.

True Immortality

Ying Wa Primary School, Su, Yue Sheng – 11

He had followed the crumbling maps, evaded the deadly traps, and now he was finally here, the end of his quest, Huangshan. Jack Astro, the intrepid explorer, in a camouflage outfit, his black hair rippling in the morning air, the sunrise making his face seem golden and timeless, and a backpack filled with fresh water, climbing gear and donuts, would climb the 60,000 steps and retrieve the sacred pills of immortality, refined by the legendary Yellow emperor in ancient times. "This is it," he thought. "My whole career has been leading up to this!" and he ascended with fire in his heart.

He saw amazing things on the mountain, trees more than thirty meters tall, monkeys and birds playing hide and seek in its branches. Once he saw a huge wildcat with light grey fur and black spots. Perhaps it was a leopard or a cougar.

Jack checked his black leather smart-watch every now and then. He knew he needed to get to the peak of deities. After some research, he found that one of the peaks there was called the Celestial Capital Peak, so he deduced that that was where he had to go. "I'll make it before sundown and eat some donuts there." He pulled one out of his pack as he said that aloud.

He soon saw signs of much lush wildlife. The grass was soon up to his knees, the ferns scratching his face and poking his eyes. The tourist brochure had told him that vegetation was thickest at 1100 meters. He murmured to himself, "The brochure was not kidding." He trudged a few feet further and thought, "Well this is ridiculous." He was completely entangled in vines and creepers, leaves covering his eyes. He turned around, thinking about backtracking to find another way. His jaw fell open. It was as if the vegetation had just decided to form a wall behind him, making him stuck there.

Jack started to panic. He felt trapped in this abundance of plants. He wanted to start a fire, but that would burn down everything! "Of course. My knife." He thought. He pulled out his knife. It wasn't the best, but what could he do? The airport wouldn't let him take his chainsaw past security. He began to hack through the plants. He had no real destination in mind. Only, out of this forest. He saw a glade through the slim cracks between the plants.

The glade had a small waterfall that splashed into a pond with a beautiful shower. Animals milled about, obviously content with this wild home. Jack sat down a rock and drank from his canteen. A tiny deer came over interested in his backpack. He smiled and fed it a donut. He decided even though he couldn't see the sun, it must be close to sundown. Jack Astro, the mighty explorer carried on.

Jack reached the summit two hours later. The view was breathtaking. Jack was breath 'taken' from running up all those steps. He saw the great jagged peaks like huge stone pillars holding up the sky. He was so high up in fact, that the clouds were below his feet, sometimes forming little rainbows in the mist. He hadn't come to admire

the scenery though. He poked under the rocks and discovered a little wooden box. It was intricately carved with ancient Chinese dragons. The box itself would be worth a fortune. That wasn't what Jack was after though. He opened the box, hoping to find some pills. However, all he found was a little strip of paper. It said, "I await the seeker at the glade of tranquility, protected by the grove of fear." At least that's what Jack thought it said. He was a little busy sobbing. The strain of trying to find the pills had finally cracked. He sat down and cried. He only stopped from stubbornness. He decided he had to keep going, no matter what.

Jack wondered where to look. Then he remembered the small glade from before. He thought there must be a lot of them in the mountain, but he backtracked.

In the glade, he kicked around, trying to find a wooden box like the one he'd found at the peak. However, he found nothing like that. He started making a list. "Squirrel, deer, eyes... wait... EYES?" A pair of monstrous yellow eyes was staring at him. He stared back. The rock it was under growled, and the dragon rose.

The thing was bigger than a pickup truck, and its hide perfectly matched the boulders and moss. However, now that it was standing, it was the most eye-catching thing in the clearing.

Jack slowly edged around it, and its eyes followed. Then, it lunged. Jack lunged to the side and leapt inside the hollow space it once occupied. He found a second box in the dark, but the dragon had slithered in behind him. It backed him up to a wall and growled. Jack was out of options. He pulled his knife out and faced it. Again, an excellent time to have a chainsaw. Jack had no skills in combat. He hoped that the dragon was just a test set up by the emperor and not a cruel joke of fate.

He thought of an old saying: "Life is meaningless without death." He sighed. He saw the only way the dragon would leave him alone. He put down the box. The dragon hissed and recoiled. Jack said, "I surrender the box. It was not mine to take." The dragon bowed its head and pushed the box back towards him.

Jack left the cave and stared at the box. He could take a pill. Then he considered life. Sure you would die, but you could have a fulfilling life. If you lived forever, you would never be satisfied. It wasn't worth it. He left the box on that mountain and he never had a twinge of doubt to take it back.