

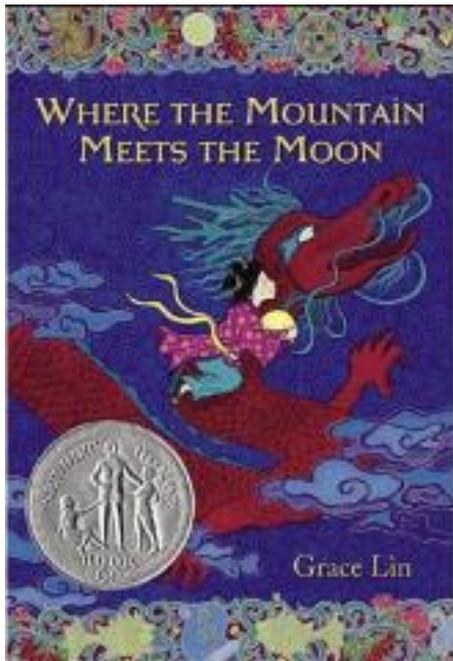
# Where The Mountain Meets The Moon

## By Grace Lin

Designed by Sonja Tierney, Alexandria Robbins, Darby Logan, Frankie Trader

Students in EDUC 2311, Children's Literature

For the University of Colorado-Boulder Book Festival, Sep 30, 2020



**Age Level:** Grades 3-8 ([Scholastic](#))/ Grades 4-7 ([Booksource](#))

New York Times Best Seller & Newbery Honor winner

### About the Book:

Where the *Mountain Meets the Moon* written by Grace Lin tells the story of the adventures of a young Chinese girl named Minli. The story is interwoven with short stories that Minli hears on her journey to meet the Old Man in the Moon in order to ask him to change her family's wealth. Along the way Minli makes friends with a flightless dragon, a talking goldfish, a King, and a boy with a buffalo. The characters she meets all play a role in helping her find her way to the Old Man in the Moon. Throughout her journey Minli learns lessons about happiness and true wealth.

### About the Author:

Grace Lin is a Taiwanese American artist and children's book author from upstate New York. The short stories included in her book *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon* are reimagined versions of Chinese stories that Grace Lin heard growing up. Like Minli, the main character in *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*, Lin's only pet growing up was a goldfish! She published her first book *the Ugly Vegetables* in 1999 and since then has published numerous books embedded with Asian culture, earning a Newberry Honor Medal, a Caldecott Honor Award and a Geisel Award. To learn more about Grace Lin, you can visit her website [www.gracelin.com](http://www.gracelin.com) .

### Extension Activities:

1. **Write a Fanfiction Story:** Write your own short story that you feel could be added to the book. You can choose to write a background story about a character

or creature Minli encountered on her journey. Try to have a moral to your short story that reflects one of your values or a lesson you have learned.

2. **Create a Borrowed Line:** On a blank piece of paper describe what you think the key to happiness is, and what true wealth is. Be creative, use your artistic freedom!
3. **Make a Map:** Minli's adventure took many twists and turns. Draw a map that represents her journey. Use pictures/ drawings/ words to illustrate the different places she visited, people she met, and obstacles she faced.

## Chapter by Chapter Reading Guide

### Chapter One

**Summary:** The story opens by describing the small village where Minli and her family live. The village has a poor fortune because it sits at the base of the Fruitless Mountain. When Minli's father came home, he told her the story about Jade the Dragon and the Fruitless Mountain.

#### **Questions:**

- What did Jade the Dragon do to the people & why did she do it?
- Have you ever said or done something you did not mean when you were angry? How did you feel about it afterwards?
- Why do you think nothing can grow on the mountain? Do you think anything ever will?

### Chapter Two

**Summary:** Minli helped her parents plant seeds until the sun was too hot. Then, they sent her home to make dinner. While thinking about her family's poor fortune, Minli heard a commotion outside about a man selling goldfish. Inspired by the man's promise that the goldfish would bring one good fortune, and by her father's stories, she bought a fish.

#### **Questions:**

- Would you have bought a goldfish? Why?
- Do you think the goldfish will bring the family fortune? Why do you think that?
- Have you ever believed something others thought was silly?

### Chapter Three

**Summary:** Ba told Minli the story of The Old Man of the Moon. He told her that the Old Man in the Moon knows everything about everything. Minli was convinced that if she talked to him, he would be able to give her family fortune.

#### **Questions:**

- What are your first impressions of the Old Man from the story?

- Why do you think stories are important?
- Do you believe that some things are fated to happen? Do you think you can change your fate?

### Chapter Four:

**Summary:** Minli was filled with regret after her parents' reactions to the fish, so that night she snuck out to set it free. In gratitude, the fish revealed that goldfish can talk to those who will listen. Speaking to Minli, the fish gives her directions to the Never-Ending Mountain to meet the Old Man in the Moon.

### **Questions:**

- How did the fish know how to get to Never Ending Mountain?
- Why would Minli consider embarking on this quest?
- Why do you think only some people could hear the goldfish?

### Chapter Five

**Summary:** Minli wrote a note to her parents explaining that she must go to Never-Ending Mountain to ask the Old Man of the Moon to change their fortune. She added that when she returned, they would be rich. She packed her bag and embarked on her journey.

### **Questions:**

- Do you think Minli was brave or foolish to leave home to search for the Old Man of the Moon? Explain.
- What do you think your parents would do if you left home?
- Have you ever started a quest? If so, why did you go on your quest?

### Chapter Six

**Summary:** Minli's journey officially began as she headed toward the base of Fruitless Mountain. She was nervous that her neighbors might stop her, but she escaped unnoticed. By the time she finally decided to rest, she was exhausted!

### **Questions:**

- What do you predict will happen on Minli's journey?
- What would you bring on the journey that Minli did not?

### Chapter Seven

**Summary:** Ma and Ba came home to find Minli gone. Emotional, they blamed one another for their daughter's departure. Quickly, they packed up some things, and headed out to find her. They followed a set of footprints they believed to be Minli's.

**Questions:**

- What do Ma and Ba find when at the base of the mountain?
- Do you think the footprints belong to Minli? Why or why not?
- Do you think it is Ba's fault that Minli ran off? Why?

Chapter Eight

**Summary:** Minli continued on her journey and found some water. She tried to drink some, only to find out it was salt water. Curious, she followed the stream, which became a river, and deepened. She heard a cry for help and followed it, which led her to something magical.

**Questions:**

- What did Minli run into when exploring the river?
- Have you ever accidentally drunk salt water? What were you doing when this happened?
- Would you follow a voice calling for help, even if you could not see who it was?

Chapter Nine

**Summary:** Ma and Ba continued their search for Minli. They bickered over why Minli left and Ma blamed Ba's stories. The two pushed on until they heard a noise that they thought was Minli. Excited, they chased after the noise.

**Questions:**

- Minli's parents are exhausted on their journey. Do you think that they should rest? Would you rest if you were them? Explain.
- What do you think the goldfish man was doing in the woods?

Chapter Ten

**Summary:** Minli cut the dragon loose from his ties, and the dragon explained that it was the monkeys that did this to him. The dragon confessed that he could not fly, so Minli invited him to join her on her journey to see the Old Man of The Moon.

**Questions:**

- Why do you think Dragon could not fly?
- Dragon calls the Monkeys greedy. Has someone's selfishness ever stopped you from doing something?
- Have you ever set a trap like the one Minli set for the monkeys? If so, describe it. If not, imagine a time when you could have.

### Chapter Eleven

**Summary:** Minli introduced herself and asked Dragon what his name was. Confused, the dragon explained his origin story and told her what he believes is his name, Dragon. He explained why he could not fly and why he has been hiding in the forest.

#### **Questions:**

- Why do you think that painting Dragon's eyes made him come to life?
- Why do you think Dragon wants to be able to fly?
- How did you get your name?

### Chapter Twelve

**Summary:** Ma and Ba met the goldfish man and told him that they were looking for their daughter. The goldfish man questioned their intentions and told them a story about his journey to change his own fate. He suggested that the parents have faith in Minli.

#### **Questions:**

- Why do you think the Old Man decided to change his fate?
- What do you predict Ma and Ba will do with their goldfish?
- Do you believe you have a destiny? What is it?

### Chapter Thirteen

**Summary:** After Minli finished cutting Dragon loose, he took her to a place where she could get water. They continued their journey until they faced a problem. The monkeys would not let anyone pass, so Minli and Dragon had to take a break.

#### **Questions**

- Minli and Dragon are not welcome in the forest. Do you think it is fair that the monkeys keep others away from the peach trees? Why?
- Minli and Dragon are becoming friends. Do you think they will stick together? Why?
- Can you think of a time when you helped a stranger? What happened?

### Chapter Fourteen

**Summary:** Dragon and Minli set up camp. They were stuck there until Minli thought of a plan to get through the forest. She set a trap and waited until the monkeys got stuck. Once they were stuck, Dragon and Minli set off to continue their journey.

#### **Questions:**

- What made Minli think of the trap?
- Minli's trap was very creative. Can you think of a time when you used creativity to solve a problem?

- Do you think it was right of Minli to trick the Monkeys?

### Chapter Fifteen

**Summary:** Ma and Ba finally stopped to rest. During this time Ba heard the goldfish talking to him. The goldfish suggested that Ba tell Ma the story of the Paper of Happiness. Afterwards, they concluded that Minli would come home when she was ready, and that they should return home and wait for her.

#### **Questions:**

- What do you think happened to the family in the story about the Paper of Happiness?
- What do you think the key to happiness is?
- Ba and Ma decided to stop looking for Minli. Why would they do this?

### Chapter Sixteen

**Summary:** Minli and Dragon continued their journey. When crossing a river, a goldfish talked to them because it thought that Dragon might be an old family member. The goldfish explained his confusion by telling the story of the Dragon Gate. Before entering the city, the fish warned them that Dragon should not go into the city because he might scare everyone.

#### **Questions**

- Why do you think the goldfish thought Dragon was their Aunt?
- Aunt Jin believes that the story of Dragon gate is real and went to find it. Does this remind you of any other characters in the story? Who?
- Do you think Dragon will be safe at the edge of the city?

### Chapter Seventeen

**Summary:** Minli entered the city of bright moonlight, and quickly discovered that she did not know how to find the King and was overwhelmed by the crowd. She met Buffalo Boy, who told her that she would not be able to meet the King because he lives in the Inner City. He invited her to stay the night at his house and she went along.

#### **Questions**

- Do you think it is fair that people can not see the King except once a year?
- Why do you think the Inner city and the Outer city are separated?
- Do you think the Buffalo Boy will help Minli on her quest? Why or why not?

### Chapter Eighteen

**Summary:** The boy with the buffalo brought Minli back to his home, and Minli learned that he is an orphan. When she asked about any friends he has, the boy described a beautiful girl who appeared in the woods one day. He told Minli that he visits with her once a month.

### **Questions**

- What happened to the Buffalo Boy's parents?
- Who do you think the Buffalo Boy's friend could be?
- Why does the Buffalo Boy think it is not a good idea for Minli to meet his friend?

### **Chapter Nineteen**

**Summary:** Minli woke up in the middle of the night, and found the boy talking to his friend. She spied on their conversation and notices that the Buffalo Boy's friend is both mysterious and beautiful. Once their meet-up was over, he came back to tell Minli that she might be able to find the King tomorrow.

### **Questions**

- Why do you think the girl knows where the King will be?
- Do you think that Minli is more grateful for her home after seeing the Buffalo Boy's home? Why?

### **Chapter Twenty**

**Summary:** Ma and Ba returned to the village. Everyone was disappointed and angry that Ma and Ba had decided to wait for Minli to come home. They placed the goldfish on their table and started to wait.

### **Questions**

- Do you think Ma and Ba should have ended their search and returned home?
- What do you think your parents would do if you ran away?
- Why do you think Ma cannot hear the goldfish's words?

### **Chapter Twenty-One**

**Summary:** The Buffalo Boy brought Minli to the city and wished her luck on her quest. Minli was waiting for the King when she saw a beggar. Minli felt bad, so she bought him a peach. The beggar planted the pit, and a magical peach tree grew from it immediately. The beggar tried to disappear after the display.

### **Questions**

- Why do you think Minli bought the man a peach?
- If you only had one coin, what would you hope to use it for?
- Who do you think the beggar is and why?

### Chapter Twenty- two

**Summary:** Upon discovering that the beggar was secretly the King, Minli chased him desperately through the city in hopes of finding the Borrowed Line. She followed him through a secret entrance into the palace, and the King hid her from his guards. They ate a secret dinner together and went for a walk.

#### **Questions**

- Why does the King hide Minli?
- What is the King's response to being caught?
- Why do you think the King sneaks out and pretends to be a beggar?

### Chapter Twenty- three

**Summary:** The King and Minli talked over dinner, and she told him about her quest to find the Old Man in the Moon and how she needs to find the borrowed line. Minli also learned that the King's ancestor was the evil magistrate! The King then told her a missing part of the story of the Old Man and the Moon.

#### **Questions**

- What do you think the key to happiness is?
- Why did the King's family hold on to the paper for so long?
- How did the magistrate get the page from the book?

### Twenty-four

**Summary:** While Dragon was waiting for Minli to return, he met the guardians of the city. They told him about how they watched over and took care of the city. They also lent Dragon another type of borrowed line, one given to them by the Old Man of the Moon to tie the city together.

#### **Questions**

- Which borrowed line do you think is the right one and why?
- Why do you think the Old Man of the Moon gave the guardians a string of fate that ties people together?

### Twenty-five

**Summary:** Ma and Ba anxiously awaited Minli's return. They both became more worried every night, and both Ma and Ba were greatly disheartened by the absence of their beloved daughter. Ba comforted Ma as she sobbed for her lost daughter.

#### **Questions**

- Why do you think Ba thinks faith is the key to happiness?
- How do you think your friends or family would react to you being gone?

### Twenty-six

**Summary:** Minli snuck out of the city and reunited with Dragon, and they discovered that they had each found a borrowed line. Dragon's borrowed line was supposed to hold a city together, while Minli's borrowed line supposedly had the truth to happiness written on it.

#### **Questions**

- What do Dragon and Minli decide to do with the two borrowed lines?
- Do you think it is a good idea? Would you have decided differently?

### Twenty-seven

**Summary:** Dragon and Minli found what they thought was a village a few miles away, but they decided to sleep in a cave for the night. Suddenly, they were attacked by a giant tiger! Minli was terrified for her life, but Dragon woke up and protected her!

#### **Questions**

- What was Minli thinking about that made it difficult for her to fall asleep?
- Do you think Minli and Dragon will survive the Tiger attack?

### Twenty-eight

**Summary:** A storm hit the village of Fruitless Mountain, and Ma and Ba were afraid for Minli's safety. They hoped that Minli was not out in the same storm, and wished that she was safe at home with them, rather than on her perilous journey.

#### **Questions**

- Storms usually represent turning points or new beginnings, what could this storm symbolize for Ma and Ba, or for Minli?
- Why do you think Ma prayed to the moon?

### Twenty-nine

**Summary:** The tiger tried to attack Minli, but Dragon stepped in and scared the tiger away. Minli was terrified, but noticed that Dragon was hurt. Despite Dragon's belief that he would heal soon, his condition worsened and Minli went to get help.

#### **Questions**

- Do you think Dragon will be able to recover? Why or why not?
- Dragon called the Tiger pure evil. Does that explain why Dragon's wounds are so grave? Why do you think so?

### Thirty

**Summary:** Minli decided to chase after the Tiger, but suddenly a boy grabbed her arm and told her to be quiet! Minli was confused, and he pointed towards a young girl approaching the Green Tiger. The girl told the Tiger that she and her brother were meant to be sacrificed to the Green Tiger, but her brother had been taken by another beast. The Green Tiger is enraged and decides to follow the girl.

#### **Questions**

- Who do you think the Green Tiger is? Why do you think that?
- Do the boy and the girl have a plan? What do you think it is?

### Thirty-one

**Summary:** The little girl led the tiger to a well where the beast had supposedly taken the boy. She kept saying things to make the Green Tiger very angry. The Green Tiger got so angry that he jumped into the well and disappeared!

#### **Questions**

- Why do you think the boy and girl trapped the tiger?
- Like Minli's trap for the monkeys, the children used the tiger's weakness against him. Why do you think these traps worked?

### Thirty-two

**Summary:** With the Green Tiger gone, the children rejoiced. They heard their father, as he had been looking for them. Once the man saw Minli, she told him that her friend Dragon was attacked by the Green Tiger. Concerned, the man told Minli that the tiger is poisonous, and he rushed to help her friend the dragon.

#### **Questions**

- Why do you think that the Green Tiger is poisonous?
- Do you trust the man and why?
- Do you think Dragon will be alright?

### Thirty-three

**Summary:** After arriving at the cave, the man helped Dragon by using a special medicine he had with him. However, he needed more medicine, so he sent Da-Fu and A-Fu back home to get some. He asked them to bring Minli so that she could get some sleep. Reluctantly, she agreed and followed the twins.

### Questions

- Seeing a dragon must have been a great surprise. Did the family react how you thought they would? If not, how did you think they'd react?
- If you were Minli, would you have trusted the man? Why or why not?

### Thirty-four

**Summary:** Minli was greeted with the sight of beautiful trees all over the village and learned that it was named the Village of Moon Rain. Curious, she asked the twins why it was not named for its beautiful flowering trees. They told her the story of how their village got its name.

### Questions

- Do you think the village is named well? If not, what would you name it?
- Would you be confused if seeds suddenly fell from the sky?
- If your hometown was named like the villages and kingdoms in this book, what would it be called?

### Thirty-five

**Summary:** The villagers, including Ma and Ba, cleaned up after the storm, and everyone was still worried about Minli. Ma caught Ba trying to listen to the fish, and they joked and laughed together.

### Questions

- Who did Ba try to seek guidance from? And did they help?
- Why do you think that Ma is becoming nicer and more open to smiling and having fun?

### Thirty-six

**Summary:** Amah, Da-A-Fu's grandmother, told Minli about the Green Tiger and what trouble he had brought to their village. Then Minli explained her journey to the Never-Ending Mountain. Fortunately, Amah could tell her how to get there.

### Questions

- How did Amah find a cure for the tiger's poison?
- Does the Old Man of the Moon play a role in the moon rain? Explain your reasoning.

### Thirty-seven

**Summary:** After a long night, Minli ate breakfast with Da-Fu and A-Fu's family, and they decided to name the magic tea after Dragon! After this, Da-A-fu started their journey to take Minli and the dragon to Never-Ending Mountain.

### Questions

- If you were Minli, what would you feel when you saw that your friend Dragon was healed?
- How would you feel if you saw what Da-A-Fu's family had done to help make Minli's jacket?
- Have you ever received a gift that was as thoughtful as the jacket? If so, explain it.

### Thirty-eight

**Summary:** A-Da-Fu led Minli to their home, the village of Moon Rain, riding on Dragon. During the journey they told a story of their ancestors who had to flee the Magistrate Tiger. They explained that the Old Man in the Moon must have relocated their family to keep them safe.

### Questions

- Do you think that the Old Man in the Moon will grant Minli her wishes?
- Do you agree with the ancestors' decision to accept their fate? Why?
- How would you feel if you were Minli and were about to go to the Never-Ending Mountain?

### Thirty-nine

**Summary:** The group arrived at the Never-Ending Mountain and they tried to figure out how to get up to the Man in the Moon. Inspired by A-Da-Fu's story, Minli created a kite out of her borrowed lines and they magically turned into a bridge for her to climb up on. She had to go up alone because the bridge would not support Dragon's weight.

### Questions

- How do you think Dragon feels about staying behind while Minli climbs the bridge?
- Can you imagine a different way Minli could have gotten up to see the Old Man in the Moon?
- Would you want to change your fortune if you had the opportunity? How would you?

### Forty

**Summary** Ba told Ma the story of the Dragon's Pearl. In the story, a dragon spent much time perfecting a beautiful pearl that was coveted by all. After it was stolen, the Heavenly Grandfather suggested that they put it where all could see it, in the heavens and on Earth.

### Questions

- Where does the Dragon's Pearl end up?
- Are the Heavenly Grandfather and the Old Man of the Moon the same person? Why or why not?
- Was the dragon in the story greedy? Why or why not?

### Forty-one

**Summary** After arriving at the Never-Ending Mountain, Minli and Dragon come across a small rope bridge that Dragon could not cross. Minli decided that she would go on and ask both of their questions to the Old Man of the Moon while Dragon waited.

#### **Questions**

- What does Minli promise Dragon? What would you have promised or said to Dragon?
- If you were to meet the Old Man in the Moon, what would you ask him, and why?
- Why do you think Dragon cannot fly? Do you think his story could be related to any other stories in the book?

### Forty-two

**Summary:** After she crossed the bridge, Minli met a white rabbit that led her to the Old Man in the Moon. On their way, they come across Wu Kang, who must chop down a tree that never falls, or learn to be satisfied with what he has. Minli realized that the seeds which fall into the Moon Rain Village come from this very same tree!

#### **Questions**

- Does Wu Kang's story sound familiar to any characters in the book? Which characters, and why?
- There seems to be a recurring theme of a white rabbit. Is this familiar to any other stories you have heard? Which ones?
- Are there any other points in the story that contain recurring themes or imagery?

### Forty-three

**Summary:** Minli met the Old Man in the Moon, and realized that the Buffalo Boy's friend was the Goddess of Weaving, who spins the red thread for the Old Man. Minli was told that she can only ask one question, and she had to decide between her question and Dragon's question.

#### **Questions**

- If you were Minli, would you have asked the Old Man of the Moon the same question?
- Who was the last person to ask the Old Man of the Moon a question? Why is it every 99 years?
- What word did Minli see on the page of the borrowed line? Why is this significant?

### Forty-four

**Summary:** Ma and Ba waited desperately for Minli to come home. However, Ma offered Ba a story for once. The story was about herself, and how she used to not value what she had, and

how bitter and cold it had made her. She described how the loss of her daughter has changed her as a person.

### **Questions**

- What is Ma's story about? Why do you think she told this story?
- What does Ma hear at the end of the chapter? Why do you think she is suddenly able to hear this voice?

### **Forty-five**

**Summary** On the third day, Minli returned from the top of the mountain, and she pulled off the stone ball on Dragon's head, enabling him to fly! Dragon rejoices in his ability to fly through the sky, and he is sad to learn that Minli could not ask her own question of the Old Man of the Moon.

### **Questions**

- Why did Minli no longer need the answer to her question?
- Who were some people along Minli's journey who helped her to realize why she did not need to change her fortune?

### **Forty-six**

**Summary:** After some time to rest, Minli and the dragon decided it was time to leave the Never-Ending Mountain. They began their journey home, and on the way came across an orange dragon! Dragon was shocked, but continued on. He stopped at the base of Fruitless Mountain and said he did not want to continue further. Minli told Dragon goodbye and ran home to go to sleep.

### **Questions**

- Why do you think Dragon wanted to stop? What made him feel at home?
- How would you feel after coming home from a long journey such as Minli's?

### **Forty-seven**

**Summary:** Minli woke up to Ma and Ba hugging her, grateful to be home. Ba saw the souvenirs Minli had brought home from her travels, and is shocked by the pearl given to Minli by Dragon. They heard a great noise and ran outside to see the amazing sight. Fruitless Mountain was no longer Fruitless, and the river had turned clear. Minli realized that Dragon may have been one of the Jade Dragon's children, and now that Dragon had returned home, the land was fruitful again.

### **Questions**

- Why do you think Dragon let Minli have the pearl so willingly?
- Have you ever gotten a gift like that from someone? Why was it so meaningful?

### Forty-eight

**Summary:** The goldfish man returned to The Village of Fruitless Mountain to find that the village had changed since he last visited. His cart was bought out, much to his surprise, and he spoke to a little girl about Minli. She directed the goldfish man towards Minli's house, and he knocked on the door. Minli's mother opened the door and threw her arms around him to hug him. The goldfish man entered the house and chatted with Minli's parents, who told him that Minli was outside. He peeked his head out of the back door and saw Minli sitting outside, smiling.

### **Questions**

- How do you think the goldfish man felt to return to the village and see all the changes that had taken place?
- How do you think seeing Minli again made the goldfish man feel?

### **Whole Book Discussion Questions:**

- Which of the short stories was your favorite and why?
- Why do you think Grace Lin chose to incorporate short stories into the novel? Did you like the addition of the short stories? Why or why not?
- Which character in the book did you relate most to? What traits do you share? Why did you find this character relatable?
- What do you think the King's broken line would say about happiness if you read it? Why do you think that?
- What do you think Minli learned on her quest? What or who do you think helped her learn this?
- What do you think Minli's parents learned while Minli was on her journey? In what ways did they change throughout the story?