

Brothers

by Yin

illustrated by Chris Soentpiet

(Arranged for Readers' Theater by CYRM Committee Members, for classroom use only.)

Characters:	Narrator 1	Narrator 2	Narrator 3	Narrator 4
	Narrator 5	Narrator 6	Ming	Shek
	Patrick			

Narrator 1: After more than a month at sea, Ming, a young Chinese boy, has finally arrived in San Francisco. He has come to join his older brothers, who left China several years earlier with the first Chinese railroad workers.

Narrator 2: Ming is met by his older brother, Shek. He is disappointed to learn that the brother he remembers best, Brother Wong, has gone back to work on the dangerous railroads. Perhaps he'll never see him again.

Narrator 3: Shek takes Ming to Chinatown, where the brothers have a wood-framed store, the result of their hard work laying railroad track years earlier. Unfortunately, business is slow because most of the Chinese have left Chinatown to work on the railroad up north.

Shek: We must work hard and send money home to our family in China. I found extra work farming vegetables and fruits some miles from here. I'll come home for a few days each week. Ming, you will mind the store while I'm gone. And do not go past Stockton Street. Chinese should not go outside Chinatown.

Narrator 4: It is quiet and lonely when Shek is gone. Ming starts to work on the long list of jobs Shek has given him. Only a few customers come in, and they're always Chinese. They have little money to pay for the goods and they are too few. There is nothing to do but sit and wait. Ming longs for a friend.

Narrator 5: One day, Ming grows curious, and wonders what is beyond Chinatown. As he darts past Stockton Street, he is met by stares and grumbles. He cannot understand the people who speak, but the look on their faces is not pleasant.

- Narrator 6: Ming runs back to the store, where he gets an idea. In his brother's closet he finds a jacket and hat. He hides his long braid under the hat and turns the brim down. He walks carefully. No one stares. The disguise is working!
- Narrator 1: Just then Ming's braid falls from behind the hat, and he quickly hides behind a tree. Peeking out, he sees kids playing. The sounds are unlike the silence of Chinatown.
- Narrator 2: Some of the children are holding books and heading toward a big house. A school, Ming thinks. Ming has heard about schools in America. He would like to go. Someday.
- Narrator 3: Suddenly, Ming feels a tap on his shoulder. A boy with brown hair and eyes the color of the bright sky points his finger to his chest and speaks.
- Patrick: PAAA-TRICK.
- Ming: Ah-PA-TOO-LICK.
- Narrator 4: Ming tries again but has to cover his mouth and bite his cheeks to keep from laughing.
- Patrick: PAAA-TRICK.
- Ming: Ah-PA-TWO-RIC. PAA-TRICK.
- Narrator 5: Ming struggles. His Chinese tongue is not used to the sounds. Both boys laugh. Then Ming remembers—he must go back to the store! He wishes he knew English. But he can only wave good-bye. For now he must go back to Chinatown.
- Narrator 6: The next day, Ming sits and waits. It is three o'clock, no customers. He thinks of Patrick. He wants to go back! Wearing his disguise, he quickly runs past the road and waits by the same tree. A group of children swarm out of the schoolhouse. From behind, he feels a hand on his shoulder. It's Patrick!
- Narrator 1: With a sneaky grin, Ming pushes the book out of Patrick's arm. Patrick chases Ming, and passes him a few times. Ming runs after him. Patrick runs fast, but Ming is faster.

Narrator 2: They run past a busy street all the way to Chinatown. At the store, Ming dips his bowl into the barrel of water and offers it to his new friend.

Narrator 3: While they rest in the store, Patrick digs in his pocket and pulls out a piece of chalk. He writes his name: P-A-T-R-I-C-K. He points to letters and then points to himself and slowly says,

Patrick: Paaaaa-trick!

Narrator 4: He points to Ming, as if wondering what his name is.

Ming: Ming!

Patrick: Ming.

Narrator 5: Patrick writes the letters of Ming's sound. Ming beams with delight, and places his hand on Patrick's shoulder.

Ming: Pun yao.

Narrator 6: This is how you say "friend" in Ming's language.

Narrator 1: That night, Shek comes back to town.

Ming: Uhhhh, I...ummm...a school...I saw some kids—

Shek: I told you not to go past Stockton Street!

Ming: But why?

Shek: People out there are not Chinese. Chinese are not allowed in those schools. We are safer right here in Chinatown. Just do as you are told!

Narrator 2: Ming bows his head in silence. He wants to tell Shek about his new friend, but he is afraid he will be angry.

Ming: Ahh...Brother Shek, I have a new---

Shek: I saw you with...a boy. Your new friend is nice?

- Ming: Yes, very. I don't know why he chose me as a friend. He has a caring heart. He teaches me English.
- Shek: Just be careful, Ming.
- Ming: I will, Older Brother. Please do not worry.
- Narrator 3: Now that Shek knows about Patrick, Ming looks forward to seeing Patrick when he comes by the store. When Patrick teaches him English, Ming says, "More." Every month, Ming's English gets better and better, thanks to Patrick.
- Narrator 4: Some days Patrick helps Ming at the store, and when there are no customers they play marbles. Some days Patrick helps to clean the store.
- Narrator 5: One rainy day, Patrick invites Ming to his home. He is afraid of what Patrick's family will think of his almond eyes and dark long hair. With Shek's blessing, he goes with Patrick to his home.
- Patrick: Ming is here!
- Ming: Ahhhhhh...hel-lo.
- Narrator 6: Patrick's mother hugs Patrick and strokes Ming's head. Her voice is soft. Ming doesn't understand everything she says, but he feels a tickle in his heart.
- Narrator 1: With his hands, Patrick's father tells a story. In his homeland, their family had nothing to eat. So his father crossed the ocean and saved enough money to bring his family from Ireland to live in America. Patrick's father has also worked on the railroads, just like Ming's older brothers.
- Narrator 2: After supper, Patrick's father plays his flute and his mother hums and claps while the boys dance. Patrick's mother tells Ming he is welcome anytime.
- Narrator 3: The days Shek does not come back home, Ming goes with Patrick and has supper with his family. His English is getting better.
- Narrator 4: Months pass and still, only a few customers. One night, Shek reads a letter out loud.

- Shek: "My Brothers, I may have to stay here a while longer. Since business is not good at the store, I will move east with the other railroad workers. Take care, ah-Wong." Ming, if we don't get more customers, we will have to close the store.
- Patrick: What's the matter?
- Ming: You cannot understand. We move out. No people come to store. No pay rent.
- Patrick: But why don't you have customers? It's a great store.
- Ming: In Chinatown, only Chinese buy. And Chinese...have no money.
- Patrick: Maybe you need customers who aren't Chinese. Ming, you can speak with them in English!
- Narrator 5: The boys say nothing for a long time, but then Patrick's words spark a bright idea.
- Narrator 6: Early the next morning, Patrick brings a long cloth and lays it across the ground. Ming gives him ink and a brush. He writes: GENERAL STORE –WE SPEAK ENGLISH! Then Patrick helps Ming up the ladder, and Ming nails the sign to the store.
- Patrick: The sign is beautiful!
- Narrator 1: All day the two boys wait. No one comes except an old Chinese man who stops to admire the new sign. He buys some dried mushroom ears.
- Narrator 2: The boys wait for another customer. They kick some empty cans around and wait. They play hide-and-seeK in the store and wait. They play some marbles and wait. Darkness falls. Shek should be back soon. Maybe the boys have failed.
- Narrator 3: Finally a couple riding in a wagon points to the sign. Patrick and Ming jump up and guide them into the store. The man buys nails by the keg. The woman buys a small bag of sugar.
- Narrator 4: The next morning, Patrick's father and his coworkers arrive at the store. He admires the lanterns and sorts through some baskets.

Narrator 5: Days pass and business gets better, thanks to the new English sign. Sometimes there are a few customers, sometimes ten. One day, there are thirteen!

Narrator 6: Shek hauls in his wagon full of fresh greens and glowing fruits all the way from Sacramento. He looks up at the sign and grins.

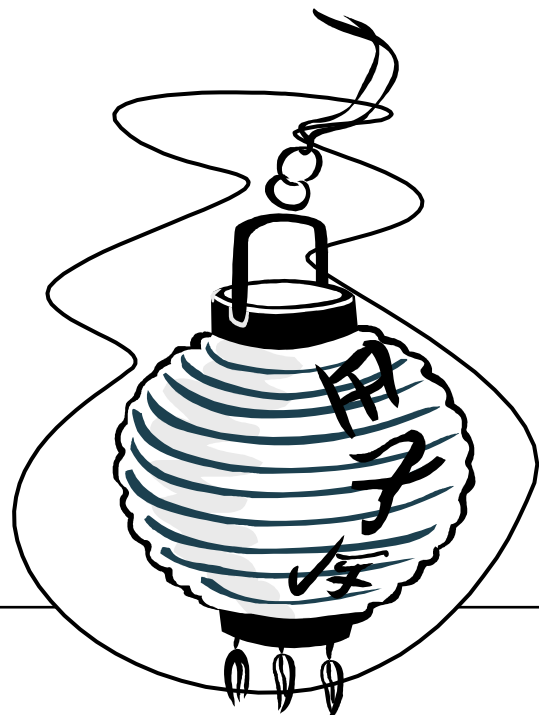
Shek: Maybe we don't have to leave after all.

Narrator 1: Patrick's mother tells them to stock honey, wheat, oats, and flour for the new customers. And they cannot forget bamboo shoots, pickled vegetables, and rice for the Chinese customers, too.

Narrator 2: The store is so busy, Wong comes back to help. Now the brothers are all together.

Narrator 3: One day, Ming teaches Patrick Chinese. He writes, "hing-dai," BROTHERS.

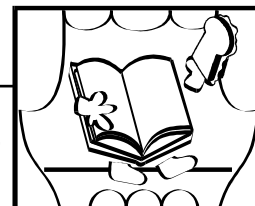
Ming: We are more than friends—we are brothers.



Readers' Theater

Mystery at the Club Sandwich

by Doug Cushman



(Arranged for Readers' Theater by CYRM Committee Members, for classroom use only.)

Characters:	Narrator 1	Narrator 2	Narrator 3	Nick
	Maggie	Lola	Policeman	Magician
	Chef	Cecil		

Nick: My name is Nick Trunk. I am a detective. People hire me to find things. I do not charge much. I work for peanuts.

Narrator 1: One morning, the door to Nick's office opened. In walked a beautiful lady. She looked like trouble.

Maggie: My name is Trouble. Maggie Trouble. Are you Nick Trunk?

Nick: That's my name.

Maggie: I work for Lola Gale, the famous singer. She's lost her marbles.

Nick: Excuse me?

Maggie: She has a bag with six marbles in it. She calls them her lucky marbles. She keeps them in her dressing room at the Club Sandwich. She sings there every night. Last night, after her first song, she looked for her marbles. They were gone. She thinks they were stolen. She sent me to get you.

Nick: Where is Lola now?

Maggie: At the Club Sandwich. She hasn't left her dressing room since last night.

Nick: I will take your case. But I need to be paid now. In peanuts.

Maggie: I don't have any peanuts. Just an empty jar of peanut butter and a box of peanut brittle.

Nick: The brittle will do for now. Let's go to the club.

Narrator 2: They went to the club. Lola was in her dressing room.

Lola: You must be Nick Trunk.

Nick: That's my name.

Lola: Can you find my marbles? I've had them since I was a little girl. They are very sparkly. They bring me good luck.

Nick: Tell me what happened.

Lola: Every night before I sing, I hold my marbles. I did the same thing last night. Then I went on stage to sing my song. It was a short song, only three or four minutes. When I returned to my dressing room, I looked for the marbles. They were gone! I looked everywhere. Maggie helped me.

Nick: And you haven't moved from this room last night?

Lola: No.

Narrator 3: Nick spied something on the floor.

Nick: Does this feather belong to you?

Lola: No. I don't like feathers.

Narrator 1: Nick put the feather in his pocket. He looked around some more.

Nick: Do you see this smudge on the door?

Lola: Yes.

Nick: It's peanut butter. *Very expensive* peanut butter.

Lola: I never eat peanut butter. It sticks to the roof of my mouth. Then I can't sing. All I can do is hum.

Nick: Maybe the thief left it. I'm going back to my office. I will call you if I think of anything else.

Narrator 2: On the way back to the office, Nick stopped at a grocery store. He sniffed fifteen different jars of peanut butter before he found the one he wanted.

Nick: *"La Peanut Goo."* Just as I thought. This is the kind that was on Lola's door.

Narrator 3: Back at the office, Nick looked at the feather. It was an ostrich feather. There are not many ostriches living in this city. But ostrich feathers are used for costumes. Costumes at clubs. Clubs like the Club Sandwich.

Narrator 1: Maybe someone who worked at the club had stolen the marbles. Nick knew he had to go back to the club. Maybe if he found someone who liked ostrich feathers and peanut butter, he would find the thief.

Narrator 2: Nick drove to the club and parked his car in the alley. Lola had just finished singing. A magician walked out on stage. He performed card tricks and pulled a fish out of a hat. He was good, but clumsy.

Narrator 3: When he performed the Disappearing Peanut Butter Jar trick, the jar vanished with a wave of his hand. But then he dropped the jar. An ostrich feather magically appeared. But then he sneezed.

Narrator 1: More feathers and jars of peanut butter. Was the magician a crook?

Narrator 2: Nick went backstage to Lola's dressing room. Maybe there was a clue he had missed. There was a policeman guarding the door.

Policeman: Hello, Nick.

Nick: Hello, Denby. I'm working this case. Has anyone been inside this room?

Policeman: No one. Not even Lola. The chef came by. He said he was looking for a missing jar of peanut butter. Thought it might be in Lola's room. But I didn't let him inside.

Nick: Good. I want to check for more clues.

Policeman: Be my guest.

Narrator 3: Nick looked in the closet and under the table. He looked behind the door and in the costume trunk. He even looked behind the fish bowl with the sparkly rocks. Nothing.

Narrator 1: Then he opened the cupboard. On the shelf was an empty jar of La Peanut Goo. This was turning into a nutty case. Nick went to see the magician in his dressing room.

Magician: You must be Nick Trunk.

Nick: That's my name. I'm looking for Lola's missing marbles. Where were you last night?

Magician: Getting ready for my magic act. It's right after Lola's song. I finished, then walked back to my dressing room and fell asleep.

Nick: Did you see anything strange?

Magician: No. I passed the chef in the hall. Lola was back in her dressing room. Maggie was there, too. She was near the fish bowl, feeding the fish, I think. Nothing strange.

Narrator 2: Nick spied a jar of La Peanut Goo and an ostrich feather in the magician's magic trunk.

Nick: You are a good magician. A little clumsy, perhaps.

Magician: I know. I need another good trick. Or more practice. But what I really need is a little luck.

Narrator 3: Nick thought, *A little luck? Maybe from some lucky marbles?*

Narrator 1: Nick went back to the kitchen to look for some more clues. The chef was cooking fish with peanut butter sauce.

Chef: You must be that detective, Nick Trunk.

Nick: That's my name.

Chef: Too bad about Lola's marbles. They were very pretty. Very sparkly.

Nick: What did you do last night?

Chef: I took Lola and Maggie their dinner. They were in Lola's dressing room. It was just before the show. Then we talked.

Nick: What did they eat?

Chef: Lola had fish and a salad. Maggie ate a sandwich.

Nick: What kind of sandwich?

Chef: Peanut butter. In fact, she ate a whole jar of my best peanut butter.

Nick: What did you talk about?

Chef: Singing. Maggie said she likes to sing, but no one will give her a job. Lola said she just needed more practice and a little luck.

Narrator 2: As the chef talked, he spread sauce on the fish with a feather. An ostrich feather. Hmm. Was the chef the thief?

Narrator 3: As Nick left the club, he saw Maggie. She was throwing a bag of jars into a trash can. They made a loud crash. Maggie growled. She put the lid on the trash can and walked away. An ostrich feather fell from her boa.

Narrator 1: Nick wondered why she was so angry. He looked inside the trash can. Among the broken jars was a letter.

Narrator 2: Dear Miss Trouble: Thank you for singing for us yesterday. Your voice is very nice, but you sound like you have peanut butter in your mouth. We are sorry, but we cannot hire you. We hope you have good luck singing somewhere else. Signed, *Le Café' Ritzy*.

Narrator 3: This case was getting more interesting by the minute. Nick needed to think. He drove downtown to his favorite snack bar where his friend Cecil serves the best peanut-butter-and-herring sandwiches in town.

Nick: Hi, Cecil.

Cecil: That's my name. You look like you need a peanut-butter-and-herring sandwich. New case?

Nick: Yes. It's a tricky one, too.

Narrator 1: Nick told Cecil the whole story.

Cecil: Do you have a suspect?

Nick: I'm sure the crook works at the Club Sandwich. You see, Lola's song was only three or four minutes, so the crook had to work fast. The police searched everyone. No one had the marbles on them. That means the crook must have hidden them somewhere in the club.

Cecil: Good thinking.

Nick: They may even be hidden in Lola's room. Thanks for the sandwich. Put it on my tab.

Narrator 2: Nick walked down to the river to think some more. He found his favorite bench and sat down. He made a list of everything he knew about this mystery. He thought about the clues and the suspects. Maybe if he knew where the marbles were hidden, he would find the crook.

Narrator 3: Nick looked out over the river. He saw two fishermen in a boat. He watched them cast their lines into the water. They pulled fish out of the water like a magician pulling a fish out of a hat. The moonlight sparkled on the fish. It reminded him of something.

Narrator 1: Sparkly fish ...water ...sparkly rocks in water ...Suddenly he had an idea.

Narrator 2: Nick hurried back to the Club Sandwich. Lola was in her dressing room with Maggie. The magician was there, too, doing card tricks. On the makeup table was a tube of lipstick, face cream, the fish bowl, and a jar of La Peanut Goo. The chef was handing out sandwiches.

Lola: Have you solved the mystery?

Nick: Yes. To solve this mystery, I needed to find the marbles. Whoever hid the marbles was the crook.

Narrator 3: Nick stuck his hand into the fish bowl. He pulled out six sparkly objects.

Lola: My marbles!

Nick: They look just like sparkly rocks. You see, the crook had to hide the marbles quickly because Lola was returning. The crook saw the rocks in the fish bowl. It was the perfect hiding place. But because either the police or Lola was always in the room, the crook couldn't get them out.

Lola: But who stole my marbles?

Nick: Only one person had a chance to take them. The magician was getting ready for his act. The chef was in the kitchen. You were singing. The crook was someone who loved ostrich feathers and peanut butter. Someone who wanted to sing but couldn't ...because she always had a mouth filled with sticky peanut butter.

Lola: You mean ...?

Nick: It was you, Maggie. Why did you do it?

Maggie: I was tired of working for Lola. I wanted my own act. I thought if I had her lucky marbles, I would get lucky and find a singing job.

Nick: Someone call the police. Maggie, you're going to jail.

Lola: You're wonderful, Nick! Now I have my good luck again. What can I do to thank you?

Nick: A peanut butter omelet would be nice.

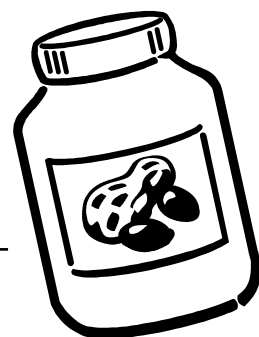
Chef: I'll make it extra crunchy!

Narrator 1: So that's the way it ended. The case was a tough nut to crack, but sticky crimes can be solved.

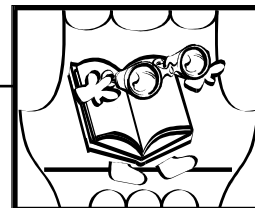
Narrator 2: Lola still sings at the Club Sandwich. The chef still cooks with fish and peanut butter.

Narrator 3: The magician is still clumsy and pulls fish out of a hat.

Nick: As for me, I still work for peanuts.



Readers' Theater



Pop's Bridge

by Eve Bunting
illustrated by C. F. Payne

(Arranged for Readers' Theater by CYRM Committee Members, for classroom use only.)

Characters:	Narrator 1	Narrator 2	Narrator 3	Narrator 4
	Narrator 5	Charlie	Mom	Pop

Narrator 1: My pop is building the Golden Gate Bridge.

Narrator 2: Almost every day after school, Charlie Shu and I go to Fort Point and watch. The bridge will stretch across the bay, from San Francisco to Marin.

Narrator 3: People said this bridge couldn't be built. Some call it the impossible bridge. They say the bay is too deep, the currents too strong, the winds blowing in from the ocean too fierce.

Narrator 4: But I know my pop can do it. Whenever I say he's building the bridge, Mom laughs.

Mom: There's a crew of more than a thousand men working on that bridge, Robert. Including Charlie's dad.

Narrator 5: I know that, but I just shrug. To me, it's Pop's bridge.

Narrator 1: Pop's a high-iron man, balancing on the slatted catwalks, spinning and bending the cables. He climbs so high that sometimes clouds come down around his shoulders. When the fog rolls in, he disappears completely. That's why the high-iron men are called skywalkers.

Narrator 2: Charlie's dad is a painter. The painters start work long before the bridge is even finished. My pop says if it weren't for them, the bridge would rust away, but I think he's just saying that to be nice. The skywalkers have the most important job of all.

Narrator 3: At Fort Point I look for Pop through the binoculars Mom lends me. The workers look alike in their overalls and swabbie hats, but I can always find my pop because of the red kerchief he ties at his throat. It's our own secret signal.

- Narrator 4: I don't worry much about him on days when the sun sparkles on the water, when sailboats skim below. It's so beautiful I can forget that it's dangerous, too.
- Narrator 5: But when the wind blows through the Golden Gate, the men cling to the girders like caterpillars on a branch. On foggy days my hands sweat on the binoculars.
- Narrator 1: *Where is he?* When I find him, I try not to look away, as though the force of my eyes can keep him from falling.
- Narrator 2: At my house Charlie and I work on a jigsaw puzzle Mom bought us. When it's done it will show how an artist thinks the bridge will look.
- Narrator 3: Charlie and I work on the puzzle most every day. Bending over it, I feel like I'm building the real thing, along with Pop. I'm a skywalker, too.
- Charlie: We're almost done. I wonder which of us will put in the last piece?
- Narrator 4: I shrug. But what Charlie says makes me think. My pop built that bridge. He should set the last puzzle piece in place. That's only fair even though Charlie might think his dad should do it.
- Narrator 5: When Charlie isn't looking, I slip one of the pieces into my pocket. Later I hide it in my room. I'm saving it for Pop.
- Narrator 1: The "impossible bridge" is nearly finished. One evening Mom and Pop and I walk down to Fort Point. The bridge hangs between stars and sea.
- Pop: It's like a giant harp. A harp for the angels to play.
- Narrator 2: I look up at Pop, and I can tell this wasn't just a job to him. He loves the bridge.
- Narrator 3: In San Francisco there is great excitement. Everyone is waiting for opening day.
- Narrator 4: Charlie and I have watched nearly every bit of the bridge go up. We saw the two spans come together from opposite directions. We saw them meet. We saw the roadway go in.

Narrator 5: And my pop did it. No one can be as proud as I am. Not even Charlie. After all, my dad is a skywalker.

Narrator 1: And then one day, something terrible happens. Charlie and I are watching as the scaffolding pulls away from the bridge.

Narrator 2: There's a noise like a train wreck as the scaffolding crashes down into the safety net. The net tears loose, and men go with it into the swirling tide.

Narrator 3: I can't breathe. I can't think.

Narrator 4: But then I look hard through the binoculars and see Pop still on the bridge, his red kerchief whipping. "Pop!" I whisper in relief.

Narrator 5: Beside me, Charlie is screaming.

Charlie: Where's my dad? Where's my dad?

Narrator 1: We had seen him working close to that scaffolding. I can't see him now.

Narrator 2: We'll find him, I promise. We have to.

Narrator 3: I sweep the binoculars up and down the bridge cables, looking at every painter hanging high on his Jacob's ladder or swinging in a bosun's chair, like a knot on a rope.

Narrator 4: Be there, Mr. Shu, I plead. And then I spot him.

Narrator 5: I yell, *Over by that cross girder!*

Narrator 1: Charlie fumbles for the binoculars. I help him. He looks where I point.

Charlie: He's there! He's safe!

Narrator 2: The next day we find out that only two of the twelve men in the water were saved.

Narrator 3: I think and think about that day. At night, half asleep, I see the bridge shake. I hear the crash. One of those men in the water could have been Pop. Or Charlie's dad.

- Narrator 4: I finally understand, and I feel ashamed. Equal work, equal danger, for skywalkers *and* for painters.
- Narrator 5: The work goes on. A new safety net is put in place. Pop says there's less talking and joking now among the men. There's a remembering.
- Narrator 1: But the bridge must be finished. And at last it is. We watch through Mom's binoculars as the golden spike is drilled in at the center of the main span.
- Narrator 2: Now the celebration can begin.
- Narrator 3: On opening day no cars are allowed. Thousands of people walk and dance and roller-skate across the bridge, including us. I wear Pop's kerchief around my neck.
- Narrator 4: There's a man riding a unicycle. There's another on stilts. Navy biplanes fly above the great steel towers. Battleships and cruisers sail below the bridge and into San Francisco Bay.
- Narrator 5: Wind strums its music through the stretch of the cables, and I think of my pop's harp.
- Narrator 1: That night our family has our own party with Charlie and his dad. There's stewed chicken and a Chinese noodle dish Charlie's dad made and a snicker doodle pie. The jigsaw puzzle sits on the coffee table with a gap in the middle.
- Mom: I've searched and searched for that missing piece.
- Pop: A good thing we didn't leave our bridge with a space like that. We'd be working still.
- Narrator 2: It's time. I slip upstairs to get the hidden puzzle piece, then find the scissors and cut the piece carefully in half. I go back down and put a half piece in Mr. Shu's and the other in my pop's.
- Narrator 3: Finish it, I say. It's your bridge. It belongs to both of you.
- Charlie: Hey, where?

Narrator 4: But I just watch as the two pieces fit in, so perfectly, so smoothly.

Pop: Team effort.

Narrator 5: We raise our glasses of sarsaparilla to celebrate the laborers and riveters, the carpenters and the painters and the skywalkers. All the men who worked together to build the most beautiful bridge in the world.

