

# Danger In Monrovia

Choose Your Own Way – Book No. 1

By Paul Moxham

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DO YOU LIKE PAUL'S BOOKS?

## **READ BEFORE YOU BEGIN**

This story is written in British English so bear this in mind regarding the spelling of some words.

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This story is loosely based on [The Mystery of the Crown Jewels](#)

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Ever wish you could change the outcome of a story? If so, then this is the book for you. YOU choose what happens. There are dangers, adventures, mysteries and consequences. The wrong decision could end in disaster, even death. What path will YOU choose? The choice is entirely up to YOU.

Don't read this book like any other book. If you do, it won't make sense. Read the options at the end of each section and make your choice. Once you've reached an ending, go back and start again, there are 22 endings to find. Good Luck!

## **SETTING THE SCENE**

You are a child in 1950's Britain and you have been invited by two old friends Christo and Nadia, to travel to Monrovia, a country in Eastern Europe. You accept, as do your friends Joe (12), Will (11), Amy (10) and Sarah (8). You're particularly excited to go since you've also been invited to the palace of King Otto where you will attend a special birthday performance put on by one of the best circuses in Europe.

[Click here to begin your adventure](#)

It's early evening when you and your four friends, along with Christo and Nadia, climb into a long black limousine. Moments later, the vehicle cruises down the driveway of the farmhouse and out onto the main road.

"I can't believe we're travelling to the palace in this," Amy exclaims.

You shake your head. "Me neither." You turn to Will, the freckled faced boy with red hair. "What are you looking forward to the most tonight?"

"The magician," Will replies. "I've always liked magicians, so it will be exciting to see one of the best in Monrovia performing in person."

"I don't believe in magic," Joe says. "It's just a trick."

"But it's still fun to see it," Sarah pipes up.

You nod. "Yes, it might be a trick, but it's still fun to watch."

Before you know it, you're at the palace. Even though you're early, there are people everywhere. Nadia glances at her watch. "Gringo's Circus doesn't start for half an hour, so we could either have a look at the crown jewels or explore the large hedge maze while we wait."

## Choose Your Own Way

If you choose to see the crown jewels, [click here](#)

**OR**

If you decide to explore the maze, [click here](#)

“Let’s have a look at the crown jewels,” you say.

Nadia nods and leads the way to a tall stone tower that is set apart from the palace. A muscular guard stands in front of the sole door and, next to him, is a broad shouldered man with a grey moustache and short hair. It’s King Otto!

You hurry up as the man smiles at Nadia. “Enjoying yourself?”

Nadia nods and introduces you and the others. “Would it be possible for us to have a look at the crown jewels?”

The king nods and signals to the guard who takes a key from his pocket and slides it into the keyhole. You follow the king up the spiral staircase. As you reach the top and catch sight of the dazzling jewellery in glass cases, you gasp in awe.

Sarah’s green eyes shine with excitement. “They’re magnificent!”

The king nods proudly. “Yes, they certainly are.”

You walk from one case to another as you study the royal crown, the sceptre, a few rings, a necklace and other assorted jewellery. After admiring the jewellery, you walk back down the staircase. As the guard locks the door, you say goodbye to the king and head for the big top, wanting to make sure you get front row seats.

Once everyone is seated, the ringmaster, a man with grey hair and a sparkling rainbow striped suit, strolls out into the middle of the arena. “Welcome, welcome, all of you for a special celebration for King Otto’s birthday! Tonight you will see the best we have to offer. We have Mango the Magnificent, Leo the Lion Tamer, The Three Amigos, Clumsy the Clown, and much, much more. So, let’s get this celebration started!”

It doesn’t take long for you to start enjoying yourself and the evening rushes by. When all the performers come out into the ring together, you clap along with everyone else, thanking them for the wonderful night.

However, this joyous scene is soon interrupted as a guard enters the big top and hurries over to speak to the king. It doesn’t take long for you to realize that something is wrong. And, as people begin to murmur to one another, it only takes another minute or so for you to learn what the problem is. The crown jewels have been stolen!

“I can’t believe it!” Joe exclaims.

Will shakes his head in disbelief. “I can’t either.”

After one hour, everyone inside the big top is allowed to leave after being searched from head to toe. It’s quite late when you arrive back at the farmhouse so you go straight to bed.

The next morning, you accompany Nadia, who works for King Otto, to the palace. To your surprise, you discover that, though the big top is now packed away, the caravans belonging to Gringo’s Circus are still parked on the front lawn.

“I’d have thought they would have left by now,” you say, gazing at the caravans.

“Maybe they have the day off,” Will says. “I don’t expect they would perform every night.”

While Nadia goes to speak to the king, you stroll through the grounds and catch sight of two circus performers, the lion tamer and the magician.

“Let’s talk to one of the circus folk,” Will says.

“Good idea,” Amy says. “They might know something we don’t.”

## Choose Your Own Way

If you choose to talk with the lion tamer, [click here](#)

**OR**

If you decide to talk to the magician, [click here](#)

“Yes, it is risky, but I want to get to the bottom of this mystery,” you say.

Will nods. “I’ll go and get the police. Hopefully I won’t be too long.”

You wait for Will to disappear and then, moving cautiously, you resume searching, this time looking for a hollow tree.

Five minutes later, you come across such a tree. Hoping that it is the right one, you hurry forward and peer through the gap. In the darkness you can just see the shape of something. You reach forward and pull out the object.

It’s the rucksack.

Just as you bend down to see what’s in it, a hand grabs your arm. “What do you think you’re doing?”

You stiffen and glance around. You’re shocked to see two men standing beside you. Your heart sinks.

“Can you talk?” the other man asks.

You nod. “Yes, I can talk.”

“Good, because we’re going for a trip,” the first man says. He takes the rucksack from you and hands it to the other man. “Make sure it’s the one.”

“Yes, it’s in here,” the other man says a few moments later.

“Good, let’s go.” The first man grabs your arm tightly. “I don’t know who you are, but if the count got you to spy on us, he’s going to be terribly disappointed in you.”

“Count Radovic didn’t hire me to be a spy!” you splutter.

The man’s eyes glimmer. “Ahh! So you do know the count.”

“No, I don’t,” you reply.

“But you just said his name!” the man says.

“Yes, but—” you say.

“Come on,” the other man interrupts. “Let’s go before we have more uninvited visitors. For all we know, the police could be on their way.”

You have no choice but to walk alongside the two men. You are forced to sit in the backseat alongside the man with the rucksack while the other man drives.

As the car reaches the main road you glance around, hoping to spot your friends. But they are not around.

Suddenly, a police car appears around the corner and the driver puts his foot on the accelerator. The criminal’s car speeds away and you hope that the police vehicle will follow but, as you glance back, you see it turn down the dirt road.

Disappointed, you sit back in your seat and wait for the journey to be over. Thirty minutes later, the car comes to a stop beside a small house that appears to be in a state of disrepair not only on the outside, but also on the inside. The chimney on the sloped roof is only half standing and there is ivy crawling up the sides of the house.

As the man orders you up the steps, you stumble as one of the steps gives way. “How long are you going to keep me locked up?”

“Until we talk to the count.” The man pushes you into the room at the top of the stairs.

As the door shuts and you glance around, you see it’s an attic. It’s fairly small, has a wooden floor, and the only things in the room are a desk and a chair.

You walk back to the door and twist the knob, making sure it is locked, which it is. You try to peer through the keyhole to see if you can see anything, but you can’t. The man must have left the key in the keyhole.

You walk over to the desk and open the drawers, hoping to find something useful. You see pencils, a pen, some pieces of paper, a few hairpins, and a mirror.

As you catch sight of the mirror, you wonder if you could signal to someone. You turn towards the only window. It’s quite high up but, by moving the desk you can easily peer through it. Not a single house is in view. You tuck the mirror into your pocket and open the window. You climb onto the roof and gaze around.

You see a building on the far side of the house and you realise that the best spot to signal from would be beside the chimney, which is at the other end of the sloped roof.

You then catch sight of some ivy growing up alongside the walls of the building. Maybe, instead of trying to signal to someone, you could head for the ivy and climb down.

Or maybe neither is the best solution. After all, the house doesn't seem to be in the best condition and you have no idea what is structurally sound and what isn't. It might be best to head back inside and see if there's another way to escape, though you doubt you'd be able to find another way since the only way out of the attic, apart from the window, is the door, which is locked.

## Choose Your Own Way

If you decide to climb down the ivy, [click here](#)

**OR**

If you want to signal using the mirror, [click here](#)

**OR**

If you think both options are too risky and decide to head back inside, [click here](#)

Hoping that the rope won't break, you continue moving. However, suddenly one of your feet slips. You try your best to regain your footing, but you can't.

As Christo sees the difficulty that you are in, he moves closer. As your hands start to slip, he reaches out with his hand.

Suddenly, you lose your grip on the upper rope and you disappear into the rushing water. As you flail your arms about in desperation, Christo leaps into the water after you.

The current is really strong at this part of the river and it's not long before the two of you are swept far away from the others.

As the current gets stronger, you become exhausted and your head keeps on disappearing below the surface of the water. Luckily, Christo puts his arm around you and manages to keep you from drowning.

After five minutes of this, you hear a noise in the distance. As the noise increases in volume and the current get stronger, Christo yells out. "Waterfall!"

Desperate to not be swept over the upcoming falls, you are glad to see an overhanging branch as you are swept around a bend.

As Christo grabs the branch with both hands, you hold onto his waist. However, before he can go any further, you hear barking and two dogs suddenly appear beside you on the bank. Dismayed, you realise that if you climb onto the bank you'll be captured but, if you let go, you'll have to survive the waterfall. Neither option sounds good.

## **Choose Your Own Way**

If you decide to climb up onto the bank, [click here](#)

**OR**

If you choose to let go of Christo, [click here](#)

You don't know a whole lot about planes, but you do know that smoke is bad. So you get to your feet and run into the cockpit and tell the pilot about the smoke.

As the man thanks you, he attempts to shut off the engine. Just as he does so, there's a massive explosion and flames take hold of the left engine.

"There's no way I can take off with the engine on fire!" the pilot yells.

"Get us as close to the trees as you can," Captain Williamson shouts. "We'll climb out and make a run for the border on foot."

As soon as the plane reaches the shelter of the trees, the captain flings open the door and leaps down. You quickly follow.

Suddenly, the plane explodes in a ball of flame. You are flung to the ground. As you lie on the grass, dazed from the explosion, you hear voices coming closer. Before you feel fit enough to stand up, the Golden Dragons have surrounded you.

No one has managed to escape. But no one has died either.

Chang smiles, delighted at the capture of so many people. He leads the procession back to the road. From there, you are put on a vehicle and driven back to Eagles Nest.

You hear reports of sightings of the others and you hope that they escape. Maybe, sometime, a deal will be made to set you free. Only time will tell.

### **The End**

Want to try again? If so, [click here](#)

“I’m sure something is wrong.” Before Christo can stop you, you have exited the caravan. As you walk towards the dungeons, you suddenly see a number of soldiers approaching. You quickly duck underneath a caravan.

Christo follows suit. As the men walk past, you sigh with relief, glad that you listened to your gut. You stay still and see two people approach. You stare in astonishment. It’s Mango and Chang, talking like old friends.

You don’t know what’s going on, but you realise that Captain Williamson and his men are probably locked up. “We need to get to the dungeon.”

“Are you crazy?” Christo exclaims. “That’s the worst place to go. We’d be trapped.”

“But it would also be the last place that the soldiers would look for us,” you say.

Despite the gravity of the situation, Christo lets out a grim smile. “You’re smart. You’re right, they surely wouldn’t think of looking there. Let’s wait until Chang passes and then we’ll go.”

A minute later you follow Christo across the courtyard, your feet pounding on the stone surface. You wonder if someone will yell out, but no shouts are heard. You reach the door that leads to the dungeons and hurry inside.

As Christo spots the bolt which is on the inside of the door, he pushes it all the way down. “Let’s see if there’s a guard.”

You quietly walk down the steps. As you reach the end of the staircase, Christo pauses and whispers to you. “I see one guard.”

“Do you think there will be more than one?” you whisper.

Christo shakes his head. “No. Stay here.”

You do as Christo tells you as he tiptoes across the floor. You watch on anxiously as the man approaches the guard. Then, with one swift motion, Christo raises his arm and knocks the man out. As the guard falls to the ground, he grabs the keychain and rushes over to where the cells are as you join him.

As soon as your friends are free, you have a big bear hug with them, grateful that they look unscathed.

Amy smiles. “I’ve never been so glad to see you.”

“Did anyone hurt you?” you ask.

Will shakes his head. “No, but even so, it was fairly unpleasant being imprisoned down here. But at least we had some company.” He turns to the man in the next cell. “That’s Max, a British agent.”

You nod as Christo unlocks the remaining cells and frees the others. “The captain was telling me about him.”

As Max walks out of the cell, he gives Christo a bear hug. “Thanks.”

“Don’t thank me yet,” Christo replies. “We’re not close to being safe yet. Let’s see what the soldiers are doing now.”

You hurry after the man, coming to a stop as he reaches the dungeon door. He slowly opens it. He glances around. “Looks pretty safe. I think we’ll be able to...”

You gasp as you see two soldiers appear around the corner. “Oh no!”

As the men yell out, Christo steps back into the dungeon and slams the door shut. “Blast!” He pushes down on the bolt and turns to you. “It’s not going to hold them for too long, but it’s something.”

“What’s the point?” Captain Williamson growls. “That’s the only way out.”

Max’s blue eyes glint. “Actually, that’s not true.” As he hurries down the steps, you follow him. As he reaches the area where the unconscious guard lies slumped against the wall, he continues walking towards a door.

“Where does that lead?” you ask.

“To an underground pond, which leads to the lake. So, as long as there aren’t any soldiers watching the lake, we’ll be able to get away without anyone seeing us.” Max opens the door and walks down the tunnel.

You reach the end of the tunnel three minutes later. A small pool of water greets you.

“How do you know about all of this?” Christo questions.

“My contact in Zakova told me about it just before I was captured. However, there’s a good chance there will be a soldier or two within view of the lake, so I think it’s best if Captain Williamson and his

men, along with myself, scout ahead.” Max turns to Christo. “You stay with the children and wait for my return.”

“But what if you don’t return?” Sarah questions, scared.

“I’ll be back,” Max promises.

A few moments later, Captain Williamson and his men dive into the water and disappear from sight. Max quickly follows them.

You sit down on the nearby rocks while Christo paces back and forth. After five minutes pass, Sarah becomes nervous. “Shouldn’t Max have returned by now?”

Christo hesitates and then glances at his watch. “I’m sure nothing has happened.”

“But surely he should be back by now, shouldn’t he?” Amy questions.

Christo rakes a hand through his brown hair. “I’m sure everything is fine.”

## Choose Your Own Way

If you decide to search for Max, [click here](#)

**OR**

If you think Max can take care of himself, [click here](#)

“Yes, let’s find somewhere to rest,” you say.

Ten minutes later, you encounter a cave and, as you spot a pile of dry wood at the back of the cave, you plead with Max to light a fire.

As Max realises how cold you are, he says yes. You are glad, even though you know there is some risk involved. Soon, the wood crackles and the flames begin to sparkle in the darkness. After a while, you lie down to rest while Max and Christo take turns watching for any sign of trouble.

You drift off to sleep. You have no idea how long you’ve been sleeping, but you are suddenly thrust awake as Will roughly shakes you. “We have to move now!”

You stand up and glance around. “What’s happening?” As you see everyone except Max, you frown. “Where’s Max?”

“Max thinks the Golden Dragons are nearby and so he went out to investigate,” Will states. “He asked me to wake everyone up in case we have to move quickly.”

You walk towards the front of the cave and peer out. All you see is darkness. “What time is it?”

“I’m not sure. I think it’s after midnight,” Will replies. “I was in the middle of a lovely dream when…” He pauses as a figure emerges from the shadows and hurries towards the cave. It is Max.

“Are there soldiers nearby?” you ask.

“Yes,” Max replies. “They must have smelt the smoke from our fire.”

As soon as everyone is ready, you follow Max and the others out of the cave, walking in single file and stopping whenever Max orders.

The atmosphere is very tense and several times you hear noises to the left and to the right of you. Not knowing if the sounds are made by animals or the soldiers doesn’t help matters. You also have no idea how many Golden Dragons are searching in the woods.

Suddenly, out of the darkness, a soldier emerges. As he catches sight of you, his hand goes to his mouth and he whistles before yelling out. “They’re here!”

Max punches the man in the jaw and, as he collapses to the ground, he yells out. “Run for your lives!”

Max turns on his torch and runs through the woods. As you follow him, the woods light up as the nearby soldiers turn on their torches and yell out to one another.

You don’t know how you do it, whether it is pure luck or because it is the middle of the night and hard to see anyone but, whatever the case, you manage to escape from the area without encountering another soldier.

Once you are far enough away, you pause for a brief rest. Max looks at his watch. “It should be light in an hour or so, so we’ll continue on and, hopefully, the torch will last for as long as we need it. I have no idea how many soldiers were back there, but we were very lucky to escape. But once they find that soldier and he tells them the direction in which we were heading, they’ll soon catch up to us.”

“Hadn’t we better change direction then?” Christo questions.

“Well, we can, but not too much,” Max replies. “We’ve always been heading in the direction of the bridge, so if we change the direction too much we’ll miss it. And, if we don’t reach the bridge before the Golden Dragons, we may as well surrender. By the time daylight comes, this mountain will be swarming with soldiers.”

You resume walking. Just over half an hour later as light begins to penetrate the woods, Max smiles, the first time in many hours. “I think we’re almost there.”

Five minutes later, you reach the gorge. Spanning it is the bridge. No one is in sight. You leave the shelter of the trees and walk to the bridge. You gaze to the left and then the right as you wonder if anyone will appear, but no one does. You breathe a sigh of relief as you reach the bridge without a single person calling out.

Amy smiles. “We made it!”

“Are you sure this bridge is safe?” you ask as you study the rickety structure. “From back in the woods it looked okay, but up close it looks pretty old and rotten.”

“We’d better take it nice and slowly and only have one person on it at a time just to be safe,” Christo suggests.

“Yes, there’s no need to hurry now.” Max glances behind him. “I can’t see any soldiers, so we’re clear.” Max turns his attention back to the bridge which is supported by two ropes on either side. “I’ll

walk across first to test how stable it is.” Half a minute later, Max is safely on the other side. “Come over one at a time.”

Amy, Joe and Will are the next to go. They do exactly what Max has done and are soon across. Then it is Sarah’s turn.

Sarah looks anxiously at the bridge. “Are you sure it’s safe?”

“Of course,” Christo replies in a confident voice. “You’ll be on the other side before you know it.”

“Could you hold my hand?” Sarah asks.

“Well, I suppose so.” Christo turns to you. “Do you mind going last?”

You shake your head. “No, I’ll be fine.”

Christo smiles at Sarah. “Let’s get going then.” He reaches out and takes the girl’s hand firmly in his.

As they begin to cross the bridge, you wonder if it will hold the weight of two people and, luckily, it does. As they reach solid ground, you step onto the bridge.

Suddenly, a man yells out.

You turn around and are shocked to see two soldiers running towards you.

“Run!” Max shouts.

You do just that but, as you run, the timber begins to creak and the bridge sways from side to side. Fearing that the bridge may collapse, you slow down, uncertain of what you should do.

## Choose Your Own Way

If you think you should retreat back the way you came, [click here](#)

**OR**

If you want to run as fast as you can, [click here](#)

You nod. "That seems like a good plan."

A minute later, the steam train whistles and chugs out of the station. Just then, you catch sight of a policeman walking up the steps to the platform. You wave, hoping that the man will notice you, which he does, but he just waves back, thinking that you are simply being friendly.

Time passes very slowly. At every station, you peer out of your compartment and watch for any sign of Chang. It soon becomes apparent that the man is going a fair distance since the train has been travelling for over an hour and he has yet to step foot out of his compartment.

As the train reaches the second last station, you wonder if this is Chang's destination since you have now been travelling for more than two hours.

However, once again, there is no sign of him. As the train chugs out of the station, you turn to the others. "It's a good thing we bought our tickets for the furthest stop since that must be the one that Chang is going to be getting off at."

Sarah frowns. "I wonder where he's going."

"Well, since he did recently escape from prison, his wanted poster is probably in all of the police stations, so the sooner he gets out of Monrovia, the better it will be for him," Will points out. "And this train would be one of the quickest ways to reach the border."

You nod. "When I was buying the train tickets, I glanced at the map and I recall seeing that the furthest station was right next to the border."

"Once he gets across the border, he'll be free to do whatever he wants," Joe says. "And, once that happens, we'll never see the crown jewels again."

"Well, we don't know for certain if he has the jewels," you state. "It seems likely, but—"

"It doesn't matter if he has the jewels or not," Joe interrupts. "He's still a wanted prisoner. That much we know."

"I wonder how he's going to get across the border," Amy says.

"Probably by walking," Will says. "After all, if he doesn't want to be seen, it's not as though he'll want to pass through the border patrol when leaving Monrovia."

Joe nods. "Yes, I'd say you are right. So let's make sure that doesn't happen. Hopefully, there will be a policeman at the station."

Luckily, this is the case. Just as the train steams into the station, you catch sight of a policeman striding down the platform. "Look!"

"If only we can get his attention before Chang disappears," Will exclaims.

"I'll run and tell him." You leave the compartment and run down the corridor to the end of the carriage.

As soon as the train comes to a stop, you open the door and leap out onto the platform. You yell at the policeman. "Officer!"

The policeman comes to a stop and gazes at you as you rush up. "What's wrong?"

"Follow me!" you shout. "There's an escaped prisoner aboard the train."

The police officer runs after you. You climb into the carriage and hurry down the corridor. As you reach the compartment where the others are, Will speaks up. "Chang hasn't left."

You smile. "Good. I was half afraid he would have slipped away." You turn to the police officer. "There's a Chinese man in the second last compartment. He's an escaped prisoner."

The police officer nods. "I see. Is he armed?"

"I don't know," you admit.

The police officer pulls out his pistol and slowly walks towards the compartment.

You watch anxiously as the man advances. As he reaches the door, he whips it open and points his weapon into the compartment. A second later, he lowers his weapon and walks back to you. "There's no one in the compartment."

"What?" you exclaim.

"There has to be!" Amy shouts.

You rush to the second last compartment and peer in. It's empty. Completely empty.

Your expression is one of shock. "He must have slipped out when we weren't looking."

"Or maybe you think it's fun playing pranks on people," the police officer states.

You shake your head. “We have never done such a thing. I promise you, there was a crook in that compartment when we started this train journey.”

“And we didn’t see anyone leave the compartment whenever the train stopped at a station,” Sarah pipes up.

“What about when the train was moving?” the police officer asks.

You nod. “That must be the answer. He must have changed carriages when the train was moving and then got out at one of the stations we passed.”

As the police officer walks away, you make your way back to your compartment.

“Chang must have known we were watching him,” Will states.

“Yes.” You sigh. “We weren’t as clever as we thought.”

Hours later, when you arrive back at the farmhouse, you tell your story to Nadia and Christo. They contact the police and roadblocks are set up. For the next few days you glance through the newspapers hoping to see something about the crown jewels or Chang, but there is nothing.

After two weeks pass, it is time for you to return to London. As the plane flies up into the air and navigates a course for the British capital, you realise that you’ll never know what happened to the crown jewels.

**The End**

**Want to try again? If so, [click here](#)**

“Let’s go to the maze,” you say. “I’d love to see the crown jewels, but I love mazes more.”

Nadia nods and leads the way to the large hedge maze which is at the back of the palace. There are a few other guests walking about, but you don’t mind and you spend at least twenty minutes racing along the many paths that make up the maze. The paths twist and turn a lot and there are quite a few dead ends. You smile as you reach the middle of the maze and see a small pond with a large statue of a dolphin spouting water. As the others sit down on the wooden bench, you walk around and smell the many roses that are growing beside the statue.

You suddenly turn to the others. “First one out of the maze is the winner!” You tear off running down a path, hoping it’s the right one. You have no idea since the way into the maze is different from the way out of the maze.

You’re the first to exit the maze and you’re happy, especially since it’s almost time for the main performance. You quickly make your way over to the big top.

Once everyone is seated, the ringmaster, a man with grey hair and a sparkling rainbow striped suit, strolls out into the middle of the arena. “Welcome, welcome, all of you for a special celebration for King Otto’s birthday! Tonight you will see the best we have to offer. We have Mango the Magnificent, Leo the Lion Tamer, The Three Amigos, Clumsy the Clown, and much, much more. So, let’s get this celebration started!”

It doesn’t take long for you to start enjoying yourself and the evening rushes by. When all the performers come out into the ring together, you clap along with everyone else, thanking them for the wonderful night.

However, this joyous scene is soon interrupted as a guard enters the big top and hurries over to speak to the king. It doesn’t take long for you to realize that something is wrong. And, as people begin to murmur to one another, it only takes another minute or so for you to learn what the problem is. The crown jewels have been stolen!

“I can’t believe it!” Joe exclaims.

Will shakes his head in disbelief. “I can’t either.”

After one hour, everyone inside the big top is allowed to leave after being searched from head to toe. It’s quite late when you arrive back at the farmhouse so you go straight to bed.

The next morning, you accompany Nadia, who works for King Otto, to the palace. To your surprise, you discover that, though the big top is now packed away, the caravans belonging to Gringo’s Circus are still parked on the front lawn.

“I’d have thought they would have left by now,” you say, gazing at the caravans.

“Maybe they have the day off,” Will says. “I don’t expect they would perform every night.”

While Nadia goes to speak to the king, you stroll through the grounds and catch sight of two circus performers, the lion tamer and the magician.

“Let’s talk to one of the circus folk,” Will says.

“Good idea,” Amy says. “They might know something we don’t.”

## Choose Your Own Way

If you choose to talk with the lion tamer, [click here](#)

**OR**

If you decide to talk to the magician, [click here](#)

You decide that the roof is too unstable and, while you would prefer to escape, you don't want to risk being seriously injured, which could easily happen if you made your way across the roof.

As you close the window and sit down on the desk, you rummage through the drawers once more. As you do so, a plan forms in your head as you recall something you once read in a book.

You open a drawer and take out a sheet of paper and a hairpin. You walk over to the door and slip the paper underneath it. You then take the hair pin and poke one end into the keyhole. You fiddle about, hoping to push the key out of the keyhole.

You do just that a few moments later. As you hear the clatter of the metal onto the paper, you pause, hoping that the men don't come rushing up.

They don't, so you kneel down and slowly pull the piece of paper back towards you. As you grab the key you smile with relief, thankful that you hadn't been locked in a room with carpet, otherwise this wouldn't have been possible.

Eager to escape, you put the key into the keyhole and unlock the door. As it swings open, you step out and close the door behind you. You then lock the door, leaving the key in the keyhole.

You know you have to be careful going down the stairs, especially since one of the steps gave way last time, so you take it nice and slow.

As you reach the halfway mark, you hear the men talking. They seem close, probably in the living room, but you don't want to hurry. You can't afford to get caught now, so you take it one step at a time.

It seems to take forever, but you finally reach the front door. As it creaks open, your heart beats fast, hoping that the men don't come and investigate. They don't, so you slip outside and close the door behind you.

You run down the garden path and reach the road. There's a woman walking a dog in the distance, so you run after her. You convince her to telephone for the police and, when the police arrive, you tell them everything.

While one officer keeps watch on the house, the other calls for backup. Ten minutes later, two more patrol cars arrive. As the police officers surround the house, you watch from the safety of a police vehicle.

Thankful that everything has turned out well, you watch on as the men storm the building. It isn't long before the two criminals are dragged out of the house and taken to a police car. As this takes place, an officer walks over to you with a rucksack.

You smile. "You found the crown jewels!"

The man shakes his head. "No." He opens the rucksack and pulls out a bundle of money. "This is all we found."

"Maybe the men hid the jewels somewhere," you say.

"I don't think so," the officer replies. "During the brief questioning I had with them, they confessed to blackmailing Count Radovic, but they didn't know a single thing about the theft of the crown jewels."

"Do you believe them?" you question.

The man nods. "I do, which is why I'm going to have a talk with the count right now and see what he has to say."

"Can I come with you?" you ask.

The officer nods. "Of course."

By the time you arrive at the house of the count, a police vehicle is already parked outside. Standing next to the car is Joe, Will, Amy, and Sarah. You smile and hug them, quickly explaining to them what has been happening.

Once inside the house, Count Radovic admits that he was being blackmailed by the two crooks. They had instructed him to leave a rucksack full of money in a hollow tree in the woods, which is what he had done. He hadn't told the police since the men had told him not to.

Satisfied with his explanation, the officer gives the count his money back.

You and the others cycle back to the farmhouse and tell Nadia and Christo everything that has happened. While you are happy that you helped catch the two criminals, you are disappointed that they were not connected with the theft of the crown jewels.

The next morning, you decide to splash out and eat some chocolate cake, so you head for the nearest cafe. You are in the middle of your second slice when you catch sight of a man walking past the bakery window. You freeze in shock. “That’s Chang!”

“Are you sure?” Will asks.

You nod. “I’m pretty sure. Besides, how many Chinese people would live in Monrovia?”

“Not many,” Will replies. “Come on, let’s see if you’re right.”

You hurry after Will and glance around. Amy suddenly points to a man who has a rucksack on his back. “There he is!”

You follow the man. You don’t catch up to him until he reaches the local railway station, so it’s only then that you’re able to confirm that he is the man in the newspaper clipping that Nadia showed you.

You motion to the others to come to a halt as the Chinese man walks down the platform. “We need to find a policeman so he can arrest Chang.”

“Hey, see that rucksack he has on his back?” Will exclaims. “What if that has the crown jewels in it?”

You nod. “That could be possible. Either way, the sooner we find a policeman the better.” You glance around the station platform and are disappointed to find there is no police officer in sight. “Did any of you see the police station as we rode through the village?”

Amy nods. “I think I saw a sign for it. It was just as we entered the village.”

“Well, that’s quite a distance away, so...” You suddenly pause as you hear a train approaching. As you glance around, you spot a train steaming towards you. You look across at Chang who has walked down to the far end of the platform and is standing still. “Chang must be waiting for the train. There’s no time to notify the police. The only way we’ll be able to stop him is if we get on the train ourselves and then find a policeman when Chang gets off.”

“But what if we can’t find a policeman then?” Amy says. “Wouldn’t it be better to tell a police officer now so that they can telephone ahead to the other stations?”

## Choose Your Own Way

If you choose to get on the train, [click here](#)

**OR**

If you decide to find a policeman, [click here](#)

“I think we should steal the jewels.” Before your friends can comprehend what you are about to do, you run towards the plane. As you clamber into the aircraft, you quickly glance around. As you spot the rucksack, you grab it and retreat back to the others. Not until you’re beside the others and out of view of the cabin, do you relax.

“Are you sure the crown jewels are in here?” Joe asks.

“I didn’t examine the rucksack,” you admit. “Let’s do it now.” You empty the rucksack onto the grass.

As Amy sees the royal crown, she smiles. “These are definitely the crown jewels.”

Will nods as he sees the necklace, the sceptre, and other small trinkets. “Yes, it looks like everything is here.”

“Put them back. We need to get out of here.” Joe holds the top of the rucksack wide open while you and the others pile the jewels back into it.

Unfortunately, at this moment Chang emerges from the cabin and walks towards the aircraft. You hope he’s not going to head for the jewels but, as he yells out a few moments later, this hope is dashed.

As the two men exit the cabin, you and the others hide behind the bushes, hoping that the crooks are not going to see you. There’s an argument between the three men which lasts for a few minutes.

Suddenly, Sarah sneezes. It’s the worst possible time for this to happen since there is a small break in the argument.

As the three men spin around and look towards the bushes, you yell out. “Run!”

Almost immediately, the men spot you running away and give chase. With the rucksack slowing you down, you have to throw it under a bush. But even this doesn’t help as one of the men soon catches you. As he marches you back to the plane, you see that the girls and Will have also been caught. But Joe is nowhere to be seen.

Chang gazes angrily at you. “Who stole my crown jewels?”

“They’re not your crown jewels!” Will retorts. “They belong to King Otto. We were just stealing them back.”

“So you admit you stole them!” Chang shouts angrily.

You nod. “Yes, but we hid them, so you’ll never find them.”

Chang frowns. “Where’s the other boy?”

“What other boy?” you reply, knowing quite well that Chang is talking about Joe, but not wanting to admit it to the man.

Chang glances at his companions. “Find the boy. He must have the crown jewels.”

“But he could be anywhere by now,” one of the men protests.

“We’re not leaving without the jewels and that’s final,” Chang yells. “So split up. We’ll cover more ground that way.”

After the men tie your hands behind your back, they start searching for Joe. You hope that the police will arrive before the men find the rucksack, but this does not happen. However, just as Chang is walking back to the plane with the rucksack, you catch sight of two police cars.

The criminals also catch sight of the police and rush back to the aircraft. After Chang places the crown jewels back into the plane, he gazes at you. “I’ll take you lot along for insurance, just so that the police don’t try to stop me.”

“What!” you yell. “You can’t kidnap us.”

Chang takes no notice of your protest and pushes you inside the aircraft as his companions do the same with the others.

As the engine starts, you peer out of the cabin window as two police cars approach the plane. Your heart beats wildly as you see Constable Lubic clamber out and hurry towards the aircraft. Just at that moment, the plane moves forward as it taxis across the grass.

Disappointed, you can only gaze backwards as the plane thunders across the grass before rising upwards. You catch sight of Joe as he stands beside the police car. You wonder if that’s the last time you’re ever going to see him.

As the aircraft levels out, Chang turns to you. “You’d better settle in. We’re going to be flying for quite a while.”

“Where are you taking us?” you ask.

“Zakova,” Chang replies.

“Where is that?” Will asks.

“It’s the stronghold of the Golden Dragons, so don’t even think about escaping because that’s not even going to be an option,” Chang replies.

A few hours pass before the plane touches down at a small country airport and taxis to a stop. Chang orders you and the others to climb out. Once you’ve done so, the Chinese man leads the way towards an old bus that’s parked in the nearest hanger. Since the other two men walk behind you, there is no chance of escape of any kind so you have no choice but to follow Chang.

Upon reaching the bus, one of the men climbs into the driver’s seat and starts the engine as you climb in. After a few false starts, it roars to life. As the man drives out of the airport, Chang and the other man sit on either side of the door.

Realizing there is still no chance to escape, you sigh and gaze out of the window. The countryside looks very similar to Monrovia. However, the people don’t seem as happy or as lively. They are mostly dressed in clothes which are dark and shabby looking. The whole atmosphere in the village seems depressing and everyone keeps to themselves as they walk along.

When a vehicle approaches from the other direction with four uniformed men inside, the villagers hurry as fast as they can away from the road.

As the vehicle passes you, you notice a symbol on the arms of the men. It is a picture of a golden dragon. You then realise why the villagers are running away. They are scared of the soldiers.

After leaving the village, the bus passes a river. Just behind it is a tall hill. On top of the hill is a castle. Beside it is a lake with a small island.

Chang points to the majestic structure. “That is Eagles Nest, which is where you’ll be spending the next few days, weeks, or maybe months. It just depends on how co-operative your friends are.”

You are silent as the bus heads up the winding road and, as it does so, you catch sight of a cable car travelling from the castle to the village.

A few moments later, the bus arrives at the entrance to the castle. The big gate creaks open and the bus drives through. As the vehicle clanks to a stop in the massive courtyard, you climb out.

Chang takes a look around at the castle walls before gazing intently at you. “You’d better take a look up at the sky because that’s the last you’re going to see of it for some time.”

“You can’t keep us locked up forever!” Sarah cries out.

“Not forever,” Chang says. “In fact, I’d be happy to let you go tomorrow. It just comes down to how willing King Otto is. You see, the reason I wanted the crown jewels is because I was going to use them as a ransom for the return of my boss Mr Ming who is a prisoner in Monrovia. But, now that I have you and the jewels, I can ask for more than one person to be freed.”

You follow the guard down the steps of the dungeons and walk into the small cell. Luckily, you are all put in the same cell. As you sit down, you see there is a man sitting in the next cell. He’s clean shaven, so it doesn’t look as though he’s been locked up for too long.

The man smiles at you. “Why did the Golden Dragons lock you up?”

As you recognise the British accent, you grin and explain everything to the man. Afterwards, he introduces himself as Max, a government agent working undercover who has been a prisoner for two days.

“Do you think someone from England will come and rescue you?” you ask.

Max nods. “They’ll send someone. I just don’t know when.”

You hope it’s not going to be too long but, as one night turns into two, you wonder how long it will be. Then, on the third day, sometime in the afternoon, you suddenly see the guard get knocked out. A moment later, Christo and Joe rush over.

You are so happy to see the two of them that you can’t keep the smile off your face. As Christo unlocks your cell, Joe quickly explains how they managed to infiltrate the castle by being members of Gringo’s Circus.

Sarah hugs Joe. “It’s so good to see you.”

Joe smiles back. “It’s good to see you. Did anyone hurt you?”

Will shakes his head. “No, but even so, it was fairly unpleasant being imprisoned down here. But at least we had some company. This is Max, a British agent.”

Joe nods. “Good to see he’s here. Christo was telling me all about him.”

As you glance around, you see that Christo has now unlocked all of the cells. “We’d better get out of here before someone comes to check up on us.”

“Let’s see what the soldiers are doing now,” Christo says.

You hurry after the man, coming to a stop as he reaches the dungeon door. He slowly opens it. He glances around. “Looks pretty safe. I think we’ll be able to...”

You gasp as you see two soldiers appear around the corner. “Oh no!”

As the men yell out, Christo steps back into the dungeon and slams the door shut. He pushes down on the bolt and turns to you. “It’s not going to hold them for too long, but it’s something.”

“What’s the point?” Captain Williamson growls. “That’s the only way out.”

Max’s blue eyes glint. “Actually, that’s not true.” As he hurries down the steps, you follow him. When he reaches the area where the unconscious guard lies slumped against the wall, he continues walking towards a door.

“Where does that lead?” you ask.

“To an underground pond, which leads to the lake. So, as long as there aren’t any soldiers watching the lake, we’ll be able to get away without anyone seeing us.” Max opens the door and walks down the tunnel.

You reach the end of the tunnel three minutes later. A small pool of water greets you.

“How do you know about all of this?” Christo questions.

“My contact in Zakova told me about it just before I was captured. However, there’s a good chance there will be a soldier or two within view of the lake, so I think it’s best if Captain Williamson and his men, along with myself, scout ahead.” Max turns to Christo. “You stay with the children and wait for my return.”

“But what if you don’t return?” Sarah questions, scared.

“I’ll be back,” Max promises.

A few moments later, Captain Williamson and his men dive into the water and disappear from sight. Max quickly follows them.

You sit down on the nearby rocks while Christo paces back and forth. After five minutes pass, Sarah becomes nervous. “Shouldn’t Max have returned by now?”

Christo hesitates, and then glances at his watch. “I’m sure nothing has happened.”

“But surely he should be back by now, shouldn’t he?” Amy questions.

Christo rakes a hand through his hair. “I’m sure everything is fine.”

## Choose Your Own Way

If you decide to search for Max, [click here](#)

**OR**

If you think Max can take care of himself, [click here](#)

You decide it's too risky to continue on and you walk backwards. As you do so, soldiers run up and grab hold of you. The others yell out, but there is nothing they can do as the rope bridge collapses, stranding them on the other side.

Moments later, Chang arrives on the scene. He walks over to you. "So, you're the only one who didn't make it?"

You don't answer.

Chang laughs and utters a command in Chinese. As the soldiers drag you to the woods, you glance back at the others, wondering if it will be the final time you see them.

The Golden Dragons take you back to Eagles Nest and put you into the newly fixed up dungeons. You have no choice but to sit there and ponder what might have been. You now realise that you should have continued running. It would have been risky, but it would have been better than being caught. You have no idea what is going to happen to you.

As the days turn into weeks, you feel that you are going to spend the rest of your life as a prisoner of the Golden Dragons.

Luckily, that is not the case. As two months come to a close, you are escorted out of Eagles Nest and placed on a plane. You are delighted to see Max.

You envelop him in a hug, not wanting to let him go. Eventually you do and, on the flight back to Monrovia he lets you know that they had to do a prisoner swap in order to get you freed, but it was worth it, and he apologises for taking so long.

You smile, just happy to be alive.

**The End**

**Want to try again? If so, [click here](#)**

You can't afford to be caught and so you watch from the shelter of the bushes. Unfortunately, you don't learn anything else and, as the van speeds away, you step out onto the road.

It's then you realise that Nadia should know the number plate. Realising that all you have to do is to get to a house, you run down the road. By the time you come across a house where someone answers the door, over an hour has passed.

It takes another half an hour before the police officer on the other end of the telephone puts you through to Officer Lubic, Christo's friend. He is just about to head for Dragons Den himself to check on things and so you caught him just in time.

You tell him to telephone Nadia and ask about the number plate. You then arrange to meet the officer at the road near Dragons Den.

You walk back to the road, hoping to see some sign of the others. Luck is with you as you see Joe and Will talking together by the road.

You explain what has been going on and wait for the police car to arrive. Once Officer Lubic arrives, you climb into his car. By the time you arrive at police headquarters, numerous roadblocks have been set up.

As the hours pass, Nadia and a friend show up. An hour after that, a burning vehicle is reported. Upon checking out the scene, the police conclude it is Christo's van. There is no sign of any bodies inside.

As the days pass, hope fades. But luck is with Christo. A farmer happens to check out a noise near an old house and finds Christo in a stable condition. He's hungry and thirsty, but he'll survive.

As Christo recounts his tale to you, he says that Chang was picked up by an accomplice a day after his capture and headed for the border.

You are disappointed, but happy that Christo survived. Things could have been a lot worse.

**The End**

**Want to try again? If so, [click here](#)**

“I think we should head for the rope bridge,” you say. “There is no way of knowing how long we’ll be stuck at the river.”

Max nods and reaches into his rucksack and pulls out a map. “Okay, we’ll head up the mountain. I have no idea exactly how long it will take, it depends on how fast we travel, so let’s get moving.”

It’s hard going at first as the hillside is thickly forested, but then Max spots the dirt trail. “This must be the path that the shepherds used to take this trail up and down the mountain in order to feed the sheep.”

Christo nods. “That would be correct. I mean, I don’t know anything about this specific mountain, but that is what happens in Monrovia.”

“If everyone knows about this mountain pass, wouldn’t the Golden Dragons also know about it? And therefore, wouldn’t they send men to the rope bridge?” you question.

“Yes, they probably will, but we should have enough time...” Max suddenly pauses as he hears a noise in the sky. He reaches into his rucksack, pulls out a pair of binoculars and peers through them. A moment later, he calls out. “It’s a plane! Quick, hide among the trees.”

Luckily, it doesn’t take long to find a good hiding spot. As the plane flies over you without adjusting its flight pattern, you breathe a sigh of relief. “Good thing we weren’t in a clearing.”

Max nods, a grim look on his face. “Yes. I just wonder how many men they’ve got searching for us. I hadn’t expected to see an aeroplane, but that shows that the Golden Dragons are doing everything in their power to find us, which means we need to get out of Zakova sooner rather than later.”

You continue walking. Unfortunately, as the trail becomes steeper, you have to slow down and, after walking up the trail for a number of hours, you are still nowhere near the bridge.

“How much further?” Amy asks.

“A while yet,” Max replies. “I hadn’t anticipated being this slow, but I suppose it’s to be expected since your legs are a lot shorter than mine.” He looks at his watch. “It’s going to be getting dark soon, so I don’t think we’ll reach the bridge today.”

“But I don’t want to stay another night in this horrible country,” Sarah moans.

“Okay, well, let’s see where we are in half an hour,” Max replies.

Half an hour later, dark clouds appear and it starts to rain. As the trail begins to get slippery, everyone is forced to move even slower than before.

Max pauses. “There’s no way we can reach the bridge before nightfall, so let’s find a place to camp for the night before it gets too dark, and then we’ll set off at first light tomorrow.”

“How much longer do you think it will take to get to the bridge?” Joe asks.

“Roughly an hour and a half,” Max replies.

“Why don’t we keep walking and reach the bridge tonight?” you say. “I know it’s raining, but it’s not dark yet.”

“Since I’m not certain where the bridge is, there’s a chance we could miss it in the darkness,” Max says. “And it may not be the best idea to walk on the trail right now in case we encounter a section which is slippery.”

“But if the Golden Dragons catch up with us while we’re resting?” Will questions.

Christo nods. “That’s possible, which is why we need to make the smartest decision.”

## Choose Your Own Way

If you decide to find somewhere to rest, [click here](#)

**OR**

If you feel you should keep on walking, [click here](#)

“We can’t afford to lose sight of Chang.” You quickly walk over to the counter and ask for tickets.

You have no idea where Chang is going to get off, so you get tickets to the end of the line. A few moments later, you hand out the tickets to the others.

The others follow you to the train that has just come to a stop at the station. You wait until Chang has climbed into a carriage and then you climb into the same one. You enter the first compartment that is empty and sit down.

Joe peers down the corridor and, after seeing which compartment Chang has entered, turns to you. “All we have to do now is to peer up the corridor whenever we come to a station. And, if we see Chang exit his compartment and get off, then we’ll do likewise. Otherwise, we stay put.”

## Choose Your Own Way

If you decide this is a good plan, [click here](#)

**OR**

If you believe you can think of a better plan, [click here](#)

“Let’s talk with the lion tamer,” you say.

Leo, a giant of a man with a scraggy beard, smiles at you as you approach. “I just fed the lion. Did you want to see him?”

You shake your head. “No thanks. Do you have any idea who stole the jewels?”

Leo shakes his head. “It’s a great mystery. From what I’ve heard, the guard on duty didn’t hear anything out of the ordinary and it was only when he accompanied one of the invited guests up the stairs that he realised the crown jewels were missing.”

“That really does sound like a mystery,” you say. “I mean, the crown jewels couldn’t have just vanished into thin air. Maybe the guard was lying.”

“That’s a possibility, but I also heard he’s one of the king’s most trusted guards and has been working at the palace for the past ten years,” Leo responds.

“Then it doesn’t seem as though he would have had a part in the theft,” Joe says. “But what I can’t understand is how the thief managed to get the jewels out of the palace grounds since the guards searched everyone from head to toe last night.”

Leo nods. “Yes, they did. They even searched me. It’s a good—”

“Leo! Get to your caravan! We need to get going,” the ringmaster suddenly yells out.

“Okay, be right there.” Leo starts to walk away. “The palace guards have been searching all of the caravans, which is why we haven’t left yet. Luckily, though, we’re not travelling too far for our next performance. Goodbye!”

You wave goodbye and spend the next five minutes watching the procession of caravans trundling out of the palace grounds.

As they do so, Joe suddenly turns to you. “I just thought of one place that the guards wouldn’t have searched. The lion cage!”

“But why would they search that?” you question. “It’s not as though the lion could have stolen the jewels.”

“Of course not, silly, but what if someone hid the jewels in the lion cage?” Joe questions.

“But the only person who could do that would be the lion tamer since he would be the only one able to get close to the lion without the animal attacking,” you point out.

“Or the jewels could have been placed in the cage while the lion was performing,” Will suggests.

Just then, Nadia walks over to you. “All ready to go?”

You hesitate for a moment before you answer. “Does the king have a list of all the guests who saw the crown jewels last night?”

“Yes, why?” Nadia asks.

“I was wondering if any of the circus folk could have been involved in the theft,” you reply.

Nadia shook her head. “No. The only person from the circus who took a look at the jewels was the magician, Mango the Magnificent, and he took a look at the jewels at the very beginning of the evening.”

“Who was the last person to see the jewels?” Amy questions.

“Count Radovic,” Nadia replies. “But there would be no reason for him to steal the jewels, he’s a respectable gentleman.” She sighs. “King Otto thinks it must be someone belonging to the Golden Dragons.”

You frown. “Who?”

“The Golden Dragons is a group of men and woman that operate out of Zakova, a war torn country,” Nadia explains. “What started out as a security company a few years ago has now turned into a criminal organisation so large that no government can touch them.”

“You seem to know a lot about them,” Sarah pipes up.

Nadia nods. “I should, Christo used to work for them. Plus, they’ve been in the newspaper lately, all due to Chang, one of their top men, escaping from prison.” She reaches into her handbag and pulls out a newspaper clipping. “This is a photo of Chang. If you ever see him, contact the police, he’s a dangerous criminal.”

You study the man in the black and white photo. He’s Asian looking, has dark slanting eyes, and dark shiny hair. “How long ago did he escape from prison?”

“One week ago,” Nadia replies. “So, it’s possible he’s already in Zakova by now, but I just thought I’d let you know in case you run into him. Come on, let’s get back to the farmhouse.”

After eating lunch, you and your four friends cycle to the local village and look at the shops. As you gaze at one of the windows, you point. “Look! Gringo’s Circus will perform in Adler tomorrow.”

“Let me see.” Joe studies the poster. “You know, I think it’s likely that the crown jewels were somehow stolen by one of the circus folk. For instance, if the acrobats had teamed up together, they may have been able to scale the tower without even needing a ladder. I think we should pay another visit to the circus and have a look around.”

“But what about Count Radovic?” Amy questions. “Shouldn’t we be riding over to his house to see what we can find? After all, he was the last person to see the crown jewels.”

## Choose Your Own Way

If you think someone in the circus stole the jewels, [click here](#).

**OR**

If you believe Count Radovic is responsible for the theft, [click here](#)

Not wanting to risk getting caught, you hurry back to your bicycle and climb on. You and Will peddle as fast as you can to the road where the others are waiting.

“What’s going on?” Joe asks.

“Two men are looking for the rucksack in the woods,” you reply.

“Which is why we need to notify the police,” Will says.

You nod. “We should head for the police station that we passed before we reached the home of the count. That should be the closest.”

“Shouldn’t one of us stay behind to see if the men leave?” Amy asks.

You nod. “Good thinking. Okay, you girls and Will stay here. I’ll ride to the station with Joe.” You turn to Joe. “Ready?”

Joe nods. “Let’s do this!”

You follow your friend down the road and it isn’t long before you reach the police station. Once the officer hears what you have to tell him, he orders you to come with him in his patrol car so you can show him the way.

As the vehicle speeds down the road, you hope you are going to be in time. However, as you reach the place where Joe and the girls are, you frown. They are motioning for the vehicle to stop.

As the police officer does so, Will rushes over to the driver’s window. “You just missed the car by a few minutes.”

You’re frustrated, but hope the chase can still continue. “Did you get a look at the number plate?”

Will shakes his head. “No, it was covered in mud.”

“Well, I’ll see if we can still spot them.” The police officer resumes driving down the road.

You and Joe each peer out of a side window, hoping to see some sign of the men’s car. But, after driving around for fifteen minutes, the police officer drives back to the station.

As you and Joe cycle back to the others, you glance across at your friend. “What if the men drove away without finding the rucksack?”

“Why would they do that?” Joe questions.

“I don’t know,” you admit. “But we could still search.”

Joe nods. “Okay, I suppose we can do that.”

After searching in the woods for half an hour, you give up. “Well, I suppose that’s the end of that lead.”

“We could have a talk with Count Radovic,” Amy says.

You shake your head. “No, he’s not going to say anything. Only thing we can do is to keep watch on his house and see if he does anything suspicious.”

After watching the house for a few days, you realise you made the wrong decision in notifying the police. You now believe that it was someone with Gringo’s Circus, but since they are now performing in Zakova, you will never find out.

You spend the next two weeks swimming in the local pool and eating delicious cakes and buns. While it’s not as satisfying as solving the mystery of the crown jewels, it’s not a bad way to spend the last few weeks of your summer holiday.

**The End**

**Want to try again? If so, [click here](#)**

“Let’s check the house,” you say.

Leaving your bicycle by the road, you walk through the knee high grass. As you approach the house, no sign of life can be seen.

“It was probably a reflection you saw,” Amy says, looking around at the desolate place. “From the looks of it, no one has stayed here recently.”

“Which means that it would be the ideal place for Chang to hide out, so let’s be careful.” You crouch down as you get closer to the farmhouse and crawl on hands and knees through the grass.

“Do we really have to do that?” Sarah protests, turning to her older sister.

“Well, I suppose...” Amy pauses and then drops to the ground as the front door of the farmhouse opens and a man appears.

It’s Chang!

You stay as silent as a mouse, glad that the knee high grass is hiding your body. Chang strolls around for a minute or so before heading back inside.

As the door closes behind the man, Joe breathes a sigh of relief. “That was close.”

“Thank goodness we weren’t any closer,” Sarah whispers. “But I don’t understand. Why is he here? Where does the green windmill fit into all of this?”

“I don’t know,” you admit. “However, this means that the flash of light I saw earlier was almost certainly not a coincidence. I would say it was either Will or Christo. Come on, but keep quiet.”

Luckily, the tall grass goes all the way to the main structure and so you’re able to get to the house without fear of being spotted.

However, in order to get immediately below the window from which you saw the flash, you have to risk being seen since there isn’t any grass, just gravel.

“Stay here.” You creep along the wall until you’re right below the window. You bend down and pick up a small stone. You then throw it up against the window pane on the upper level.

You breathe a sigh of relief a few moments later when nothing happens to indicate that Chang has heard anything. Instead, much to your joy, Will’s face appears at the upstairs window.

You smile and wave. You know he can’t talk, or even whisper to you, so you just wave and walk back into the knee high grass.

Suddenly, a van roars up the driveway. You crouch down out of sight.

You hope that the driver of the van hasn’t seen you, but only time will tell. As the van comes to a stop next to the farmhouse, you wait for the driver to climb out.

However, the man doesn’t. He just keeps the engine running. Intrigued, you peer between the tall blades of grass and are astonished by what you see. The side of the van is clearly visible and it is completely white except for one symbol, which is painted green. It is a windmill.

Amy is also surprised. “Is that what I think it is?”

You glance at your watch. It is twelve o’clock exactly. “The police were completely wrong! They are looking for an actual green windmill and not a symbol of a green windmill.”

Suddenly, the door to the farmhouse opens and out hurries Chang with a rucksack on his back.

You stay still until the van has left and then you leap to your feet. “Joe! See which way the van goes.”

As you enter the farmhouse, you call out. “We’re coming Will!”

When you reach the upper level a few moments later, you see a key poking out from the keyhole of a closed door. Certain that this is where Will is being kept prisoner, you turn the key and fling open the door.

Will peers up from where he’s bending over Christo. “I can’t wake him! I think he’s been drugged.”

“Leave him! Chang is getting away!” You turn around and race down the steps and out of the farmhouse. As Will catches up with you, he puffs and pants. “Christo had a drink last night and then he fell asleep. He hasn’t woken since. Chang must have put something in the water.”

“I’m sure he’ll be fine when it wears off,” you say. “In the meantime, we need to catch Chang.”

You yell out when you see Joe. “Which way?”

Joe points to the left. “That way!”

“Good,” you say. “Now we just have to hope a car comes along pretty quickly.”

“What about our bicycles?” Amy asks.

“No, they would be too slow,” you reply.

“We could run to the nearest house and telephone the police,” Sarah suggests.

“But we don’t know where the vehicle is headed,” Will points out.

“But we do know what it looks like,” Amy says.

“By the time the police start searching for that van, Chang may have ditched it and stolen another one, just like he did with Christo’s vehicle,” you say. “I think the best thing...” You frown as a lorry comes into view around the bend. “Let’s wave this driver down!”

The others follow you onto the road and everyone waves their hands. As the lorry comes to a halt, a friendly faced farmer peers out through the half open window. “What’s the matter? Is someone hurt?”

“No, we need you to follow someone in the van,” you say. “The man is wanted by the police.”

The man frowns. “What van? I can’t see one.”

“It’s just up ahead, but you have to hurry!” you shout.

“Okay, but four of you will have to hop in the back,” the man states. “There’s only enough room for one of you beside me.”

“I’ll take the front,” you say, hurrying over to the passenger side of the vehicle as the others climb into the back.

As the farmer drives down the road, you quickly fill him in on what is going on and urge him to go as fast as he can so that they can catch up with the van.

The man listens intently to every word that you say and increases the speed of the lorry. Luckily, the road doesn’t intersect with any other road, so you soon catch sight of the van.

“You can slow down now,” you say. “We don’t want to get too close to Chang in case he suspects something. When we spot a police car we can tell the officer what’s going on and he can take charge.”

Unfortunately, no police vehicles are seen. As you study the map that the farmer has, you realise that the road you are on leads to the border. You frown as the van suddenly turns off the main road and heads down a dirt road. You hurriedly glance at the map. “Where’s he going?”

“Shall I turn down the same road?” the farmer asks, slowing down.

“Yes, follow them,” you say. “We need to see what they’re up to.”

The farmer drives down the dirt road for a number of minutes before bringing the lorry to a stop. It is the end of the road. Nearby is the parked van. You climb out of the lorry and glance around.

Joe sees a walking trail that leads towards the woods. “Chang must have gone down there.”

“Of course!” Amy says. “He’s trying to cross the border on foot!”

Will nods. “Thus avoiding the border patrol.”

“Does this trail lead across the border?” Sarah questions.

“No,” the man states, peering into the woods. “However, it leads to the top of that nearby hill. And, when you go down the other side, you’re in Sukova.”

You quickly make up your mind. “We’ll follow him on foot.” You turn to the farmer. “Go to the nearest town and alert the police. Tell them everything I’ve told you. And hurry!”

The farmer nods. “I’ll be as quick as I can.” He runs over to the lorry and climbs in.

As the vehicle heads back down the road, you turn to the others. “We’ll have to run if we’re going to catch up to them, but keep alert. We don’t want them to catch sight of us.”

“Got it,” Will replies. “Lead the way.”

You run down the trail. At first, it’s easy going since it’s flat but, as the path heads up the mountain and it becomes steeper, you have to slow down.

Puffing and panting, you struggle to go fast, so much so that you have to take a small break. Then, after a few minutes rest, you continue up the trail.

After climbing up the trail for half an hour, you finally reach the top. As Joe peers down the hill, he spots two figures far below them. “Look! Down there! That must be Chang and his companion.”

“Come on, there’s no time to waste,” you say. You head down the other side of the hill, the others following right behind you.

Luckily, Chang and his companion have also stopped for a rest and so that gives you enough time to catch up to them. Finally, after walking for another fifteen minutes, the two men come to a halt beside a cabin. Next to the small building is a small plane.

As Chang calls out, a man emerges from the cabin. The men clearly have no fear of being heard or seen as they talk loudly to one another. However, you can't understand a single word that's being said since the men are speaking Chinese.

Will sighs. "Chang must be planning to fly out of the country. That's why the plane is here. Which means that, by the time the farmer alerts the police and they start searching, Chang will be long gone."

"Even if we went to the police right now it would still take some time," Joe admits.

You frown as you see Chang reach into the rucksack and pull out something long and shiny. It's the sceptre!

"So Chang did steal the crown jewels!" you whisper.

"I was pretty sure he had," Joe whispers. "I just didn't have any proof."

"But now we do," Amy says.

Chang places the sceptre back into the rucksack. Then he walks over to the plane and climbs through the open door. He exits a few moments later, this time without the rucksack.

"He left the crown jewels in the plane!" Sarah pipes up.

You watch as the three men walk towards the cabin and enter the structure. You quickly turn to the others. "If we act right now, we can get the crown jewels back."

"But the men could exit the cabin any second," Sarah argues. "For all we know, they could just have gone to the cabin to get something."

"Or they could be having a drink to celebrate," Will suggests. "Or even trying to make radio contact with whoever sent them on this mission."

"I say one of us goes to the nearest police station," Amy says.

## Choose Your Own Way

If you decide to creep into the plane to steal the jewels, [click here](#)

**OR**

If you offer to run to the nearest police station, [click here](#)

You decide to risk it and continue running. However, this proves to be your undoing as your feet fall from under you as the wooden slat you are standing on gives way completely.

All you can do is to reach out with your hands and grab onto the next one as your feet dangle in the air below the bridge.

Suddenly, there's a strong gust of wind and the bridge sways from side to side. Then, the middle part of the bridge breaks apart. For a moment, you think you're going to hurtle to the bottom of the gorge and plunge into the river far below.

However, luckily this isn't the case since you hang onto the remaining part of the bridge which smashes up against the side of the cliff that the others are on.

You hold on for dear life as Max tries to reach you. "Let go of the rope and grab my hand."

"If I let go, I'll fall," you reply.

"If you don't let go, you'll eventually fall," Max states. "That piece of rope isn't going to hold you much longer. As soon as you grab my hand, I'll pull you up. Do it on the count of three. One, two, three!"

As soon as Max utters the number three, you let go of the rope with one hand and reach out. You just manage to put your hand around Max's hand when the rope brakes apart.

A few moments later, you are lying on the grass, thankful to be alive. You breathe a sigh of relief. "Thanks Max. That was really scary being down there." You stand up and look towards the other side of the gorge and sees with surprise that no one is in sight. "Hey, what happened to Chang?"

Amy peers across to the other side. "I'm not sure. I was concentrating so much on you that I didn't see them leave, but I'm glad they did. Now, at long last, we can be rid of them."

"I'm surprised they left just like that," Joe says. "I really thought Chang was going to try something."

"Like what?" Christo questions. "He was trapped on the other side of the gorge."

"But he could have shot at us," Will says.

Max nods. "Yes, but maybe he has another plan which he could be putting in motion right now. So even though we're in Sukova, it's best to keep moving until we reach Monrovia."

Once you're back in Monrovia, you go straight to the king's palace and explain to him everything that has happened. After handing the king the crown jewels, he smiles. "Thanks. You have done me a great service in helping to get my crown jewels back. If it weren't for you, I would have had to strike a deal with the Golden Dragons which would have been very unpleasant. And as for you two..."

The king walks over to where Max and Christo are standing. He shakes their hands. "Both of you were outstanding. If it hadn't been for you, these brave children might not be standing where they are today, and so I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart."

Max smiles. "It's good to be of service."

As the two men depart, the king turns to you. "While you were in Zakova, we arrested the lion tamer from Gringo's Circus. A police officer had pulled him over for a faulty headlight and soon discovered who he was and quickly arrested him. Oh, and Chang was arrested as he tried to slip across the border."

"Did you capture Mango?" you ask.

King Otto shakes his head. "No, however, the lion tamer has confessed that Mango confided in him and asked for his help in stealing the jewels. Mango knew he could steal them, he just needed a place to hide them afterwards, which is where the lion tamer came in."

"So the jewels were hidden in the lion cage," you say.

King Otto nods. "Yes. One of them would then hand the jewels over to Chang and, in return, get a large sum of cash."

"So how did Mango pull it off?" Amy asks.

The king smiles. "It was very simple actually. It's a wonder no one thought of it. After all, the evidence was right in front of us the whole time. We knew he had seen the crown jewels earlier in the night, we just didn't know that he saw the jewels again, which is when he stole them."

Sarah looks puzzled. "But how could he have stolen them? He wasn't on the list twice."

"That's because the second time he used hypnosis." As the king sees the puzzled expression on your face, he explains. "Before Mango became a magician, he was a hypnotist. He was so skilled in the

art of hypnosis that he was able to convince people to do things that they wouldn't normally do by putting them into a trance."

"Which is what he did with the guard, right?" Will asks.

The king nods. "Precisely. Once the guard was under the trance, all Mango had to do was to remove the key, enter the tower, put the jewels under his cape and then break the trance. I have since spoken to the guard and confirmed that the magician did speak to him shortly before the jewels disappeared, but the man hadn't thought to mention it since it had been a very brief talk."

"But in reality it was much longer," you say.

King Otto nods. "Correct. It was a very clever plan, one that almost worked."

"But how did Chang convince Mango and Leo to steal the jewels?" Amy asks.

"Well, I've made some inquiries and it seems as though Gringo's Circus was going to shut down at the end of the year," King Otto replies. "I believe both the magician and the lion tamer knew that and decided to make a bit of extra money while they could. Now, would you like me to give you an official tour of the palace? I know it might not be as exciting as what you have just been through, but that depends on what you think of a secret tunnel underneath the palace."

Joe's eyes light up. "A secret tunnel?"

King Otto smiles as he leads the way out of the room. "Yes."

As you follow King Otto down the hallway, you smile, glad at how everything turned out.

**The End**

**Want to try again? If so, [click here](#)**

“We can’t waste time,” you say. “I’m going after Max.” Without a moments hesitation you dive into the water.

You might not be the best swimmer, but you’re pretty good and it’s not long before you reach the lake. As your head pops up you glance around. You see Captain Williamson wave at you, urging you to swim towards the small island, which you do.

As you reach the bank, the other soldiers pull you up. You glance around, expecting to see Max, but he’s not there. You frown. “Where’s Max?”

“Didn’t you see him?” Captain Williamson questions. “He went back to tell everyone to follow him.”

“I must have just have missed him.” You keep your eyes glued to the water, wondering when the others will appear.

As the seconds pass, you walk a bit closer to the edge of the island and that is when someone yells out. You peer towards the shore and see several Golden Dragons gazing at you. Realising what a fool you have been, you duck down. But it’s too late. As more soldiers appear, the captain grabs your arm. “Come on!”

You follow the man to the other side of the island and swim to the shore. You hear shouting, but that is all. The captain pulls you up out of the water. “Hurry up!”

You run after the soldiers. You don’t know how you do it, but you manage to escape the grasp of the Golden Dragons.

The hours pass very slowly. There are times when you have to pause in order to wait for a patrol to pass by. And then there is another time when you need to cross a bridge, which is impossible since a vehicle belonging to the Golden Dragons blocks the entrance. This means you have to walk even further out of the way until you find a small footbridge.

All in all, it takes a very long time before Captain Williamson comes to a stop. “The field is just down this road and to the left. I know that it’s taken a long time, but it’s going to be worth it. If it wasn’t for this plane, we’d have to walk to the border and that would take even longer.”

You peer up into the sky. “Looks as though it will be dark soon.”

The captain nods. “Yes, which will be good. I’m not sure the pilot would have wanted to take off in the light, so it’s perfect timing.”

“But what happens when the soldiers see the plane?” you question. “I mean, the plane is hidden now, but once the engine starts up, they’ll probably hear it. If so, they might send another plane after us.”

The captain nods. “That’s a possibility but, once we’re in the air, it’s only going to take ten or so minutes to reach the border, so they’re going to run out of time. As much as they want to capture us, they’re not going to cross into Sukova.”

You follow the soldiers down an embankment and across the field. As you catch sight of the aircraft, you see it’s quite a large plane. The machine is parked at one side of the field and men are taking off the camouflage netting.

As you walk over, the pilot speaks to the captain. “I have a man posted by the road to keep watch for the Golden Dragons. Shall I call him in now?”

Captain Williamson glances at his watch and then looks up at the sky. “It should be dark in fifteen minutes, so I don’t suppose there’s any need for him to stay on guard on any longer.”

The pilot nods and calls out to one of his men. “Bill, go and get Stan and tell him we’re getting ready to fly out.”

While the captain talks with the pilot, you follow a soldier to the plane. As you climb up the steps and sit down on the comfortable seats, you relax for the first time in quite a while.

Suddenly, someone yells out. You frown. A second later, a rifle shot suddenly rings out. You peer out of the plane window. You see several men standing beside the plane with their weapons trained towards the distant road where the figures of numerous men can be seen.

As the shooting continues on in furious fashion, the pilot leaps aboard the plane and makes his way to the cockpit. He tries his best to start the engine and, after a few false starts, it cranks to life.

Your heart sinks as you see a vehicle filled with soldiers all wearing the uniform of the Golden Dragons tearing across the field. “Oh no!”

Suddenly, the captain climbs up the steps of the plane and hurries into the cockpit. “We have to get this plane into the air right now! If we don’t, we’ll never get away.”

Everyone climbs in and the door is slammed shut as the plane taxis across the field. As it does so, Golden Dragon soldiers continue to fire upon the plane. The shots are erratic, but then you catch sight of a machine gun being set up. “Oh no!”

Captain Williamson also catches sight of this latest development and yells out. “Hit the floor!”

As you fall to the floor, bullets slam into the plane. As the bullets pass through empty air, the captain yells to the pilot. “We need to get into the air now!”

“I’m doing the best I can!” the pilot shouts.

Through one of the bullet holes, you catch sight of a plume of smoke coming out of the left engine. As the pilot taxis the aircraft along the field, you wonder if you should run to the cockpit to tell him about the smoke or stay on the ground as the captain ordered.

## Choose Your Own Way

If you choose to stay where you are, [click here](#)

**OR**

If you decide to run to the cockpit, [click here](#)

As soon as you arrive back at your compartment, Joe speaks to you. "What did you see?"

"He jumped," you reply. "Either he spotted us or else that was his plan all along."

"So what do we do now?" Sarah questions.

"We need to think, so let's get off at the next station," you say.

You and the others do just that. After you have told the police everything you know, you go to the local bakery. As you sit near the back of the small shop devouring some fruit buns, you have a look at the map on the wall. It's a map of the area. Nothing stands out.

"Maybe Christo will have some thoughts," Will says. "After all, he was a member of the Golden Dragons."

You nod. "Yes, let's take the next train back."

Later in the afternoon, you tell Nadia and Christo all about your train adventure. Christo brings out a large, rolled up map. He lays it out on the coffee table and places two books on either side of it so it stays flat. "Let's have a closer look at the area."

You peer at the names of the towns to get your bearings. A moment later, you trace the route that the train took with your finger. "This is where Chang jumped off."

Christo nods. "What if Chang was heading to Dragons Den, his old headquarters?"

"Wouldn't that be the first place that the police would search?" Amy questions.

Christo nods. "I'm sure they would have at one stage, but I would imagine that was right after he escaped from prison."

"Why would he go there?" you ask.

"I don't know," Christo admits. "But if he was able to make radio contact with his people in Zakova, that could be the ideal pickup point."

"We still have a couple of hours of daylight left," you say. "So why don't we go there now and see for ourselves?"

"Well, I'll telephone my friend, Constable Lubic, and see what he thinks," Christo says.

As the man leaves the room, Sarah looks at Amy. "I'm tired. I don't think I'll go even if you go."

Amy nods. "I'm happy to stay home as well. I doubt Chang is at Dragons Den."

A second later, Christo walks back into the room. "My friend doesn't think it's likely that Chang is at Dragons Den, but he'll talk to his superior tomorrow."

"But it will be too late then!" you exclaim.

"Maybe not," Amy says. "If there is a secret room in Dragons Den, then Chang might stay there for some time."

"But a plane could come tonight!" You turn to Christo and plead with him. "Can you please drive us to Dragons Den so we can see if Chang is there or not?"

Christo glances at his watch. "Well, I don't have any other plans this evening, so I suppose I could drive you there."

You stand up and head for the door. "Let's go then before it's too late."

By the time Christo's white van reaches the woods that surround Dragons Den, it's sunset. As Christo climbs out of the vehicle, he glances at you, Joe, and Will. "Remember what I told you earlier. If you see any sign of Chang, or anyone else for that matter, tell me immediately. I doubt we'll come across anyone but, if we do, we need to contact the police."

You nod. "Okay."

Joe glances at his watch. "Let's start searching before it gets too late."

With Christo leading the way, you follow him through the woods. After walking for roughly five minutes, you arrive at the clearing. You pause and peer down the small slope.

A tall, stone wall surrounds the entire property, however, in places it has been damaged. Christo sighs. "I haven't been to this place for a very long time, but it still brings back memories."

"Good or bad?" you ask.

"Mostly bad," Christo replies. "I wonder if the secret tunnel still exists."

"Secret tunnel?" you question.

Christo nods as he walks over to a grove of trees. "The entrance was around here somewhere, next to a large fir tree that was hollowed out from the inside."

"Like this one?" Joe questions.

Christo looks at the tree which Joe is indicating. “Yes, that seems to be it. Now, somewhere underneath these leaves is a metal ring.”

You watch on as the man fiddles around on the ground. A smile spreads across his face as he finds it a few moments later. He pulls it up without any problems.

You gaze down at the black hole. “Where does it lead?”

“To a secret room behind the dining room,” Christo replies. “However, since I can see that no one has used this entrance for some time, there’s no need to go down it.” He puts the trap door back in place and stands up. “Come on, let’s head for the main entrance.”

As you approach the main building, you come to a stop and peer at all of the bullet holes that riddle the walls around the doors and windows.

“I didn’t think this place would be in such bad shape,” Will says.

Joe agrees. “Me neither. But, by the looks of it, the Golden Dragons put up quite a fight before surrendering.”

“I can only imagine what the inside must look like,” you say.

Christo leads the way into the building. The front door is unlocked and, as you go from one room to the next, you can see why. Anything valuable has been taken away. The only things that remain are some chairs, sofas and tables.

You follow Christo into the dining room. There is a long table and a big fireplace. He walks over to the fireplace. “This is the other entrance to the secret room.”

“Does the fireplace swivel around?” you ask.

Christo nods. “Yes, but I’m not sure what you had to press.”

As he tries to press some stones, you and the boys go upstairs and search the rest of the house. Afterwards, you walk back down the staircase and, as you walk into the dining room, you are just in time to see the fireplace moving back into position.

“Christo must have discovered how to move the fireplace,” Joe says.

“Yes, which means that the fireplace should start moving again shortly,” you say.

“What if it was Chang?” Will says.

Joe frowns. “But we haven’t seen any sign of him.”

“Exactly,” Will replies. “Which means he could be anywhere.”

As a few minutes pass and nothing happens, you turn to the others. “Let’s search the rest of the house and call out just to make sure Christo isn’t anywhere else.”

While Will keeps watch on the fireplace, you and Joe start searching. By the time you and Joe return to Will, you are confident that Christo and Chang are both in the secret room.

You turn to the others. “What if we attempt to enter the secret room from the tunnel?”

“Okay, but we’ll have to split up,” Will says. “We’d look stupid if, while we were in the tunnel, someone exited via the fireplace and left Dragons Den without us seeing him.”

You nod. “One of us needs to keep watch while the other two go down the tunnel.”

Joe glances at Will. “What do you want to do?”

“I’m fine with either,” Will says.

“Okay, then I’ll go down the tunnel.” Joe turns to you. “Do you want to join me in the tunnel or do you want to keep watch while Will goes with me?”

## Choose Your Own Way

If you choose to keep watch, [click here](#)

**OR**

If you want to explore the tunnel with Joe, [click here](#)

“Wait!” you say. “I think I’ve found something.” You reach up to the stone and press it.

Nothing happens for a moment or two and then, with a grating sound, the fireplace begins to move. Joe rushes over and joins you on the fireplace as it moves. You peer out anxiously as you enter the dining room. No one is in sight.

“Where do you suppose Will is?” Joe asks.

“Either following Chang or hiding somewhere.” You lead the way out of the room and into the hallway. After spending a few minutes searching the house, you realise that you need to find out for certain where Will is. So you call out.

There’s no answer. You even walk outside and shout his name. But still there’s no answer.

“Well, wherever he is, he certainly isn’t here.” You glance at your watch. “Even if he had followed Chang, I would have expected him to be back by now.”

“Maybe Chang walked off into the woods and Will followed him,” Joe suggests.

“Possibly,” you agree. “Anything could have happened since we last saw him, so there’s only one thing for us to do now, and that’s to tell the police what’s been happening. Let’s go back to the van and get the map of the area. Then we’ll be able to walk in the direction of the nearest village.”

You and Joe walk side by side, deep in thought. As you reach the road, you frown. You shine the torch to the left and then to the right. “Isn’t this the spot where the van was?”

“We must have made a mistake,” Joe says. “It must be further down the road.”

“Yes, that’s the trouble with the darkness, you never know exactly where you are,” you say.

You walk down the road for a few more minutes, pausing when you come to an intersection. You turn to Joe. “I don’t recall this. We must be going in the wrong direction.”

Joe nods. “If only Will was here with us. He’s always good with directions.”

“Well, it’s not as though the vehicle could have driven away by itself so we’ll find it, hopefully sooner rather than later,” you state.

However, twenty minutes later, you still haven’t found any sign of the van. You’re stumped. “I don’t understand. First Christo disappears, then Will, and then the van. What’s going on?”

“Chang must have taken the van,” Joe says. “It’s the only answer.”

You nod. “I didn’t want to say it earlier, but that thought did cross my mind. However, I dismissed it since I couldn’t see why he would want the vehicle. After all, he got to Dragons Den by walking—”

“Maybe his next destination is further away,” Joe interrupts. “Maybe he’s going to the border after all.”

You sigh as you sit down on a dead tree stump. “It’s all my fault. If I hadn’t suggested going to Dragons Den tonight then none of this would have happened. We’d all be in our bedrooms right now.”

“Once we tell the police what’s going on, they’ll find Christo and Will,” Joe says. “After all, this time, we know everything about the vehicle that Chang stole. If the police set up roadblocks they’ll be sure to stop Chang.”

“But Chang isn’t a fool,” you reply. “He’ll know that the first thing we’ll do is notify the police. Which means he’ll dump the van as soon as it’s no longer any use to him.”

“Then we need to act first. Every minute we…” Joe pauses as a vehicle roars down the road. With the headlights blazing, it’s impossible to see what type of vehicle it is.

You have to shield your eyes from the bright lights as the vehicle screeches to a stop a few feet in front of you. As a police officer steps out, you smile.

Over the next few minutes, you and Joe explain to the man what has happened. You’re not sure if the police officer will readily accept what you have to say but, as it turns out, he believes everything because he is Constable Lubic, Christo’s friend. Lubic had originally been planning to visit the place in the morning, however, after receiving a phone call from a worried Nadia, he had decided to drive to Dragons Den.

After Lubic contacts his superior with details of the van, he drives you and Joe back to the farmhouse. “As soon as I hear anything, I’ll let you know,” Lubic says. “My superior told me he’s going to send some men to search Dragons Den again, so we might be able to get a better idea of what Chang’s plans are.”

The next morning, the telephone rings. After Nadia takes the call, she comes into the kitchen to tell you the news.

“Have they found Will and Christo?” you question.

“No, not yet, but the police have made some progress,” Nadia replies. “The officers who were sent to Dragons Den have uncovered another secret room adjacent to the one behind the fireplace. They didn’t find much, just a radio and a desk.”

“So Chang went there to talk to someone,” Joe says.

Nadia nods. “There was a piece of torn paper underneath the desk. The writing was in Chinese, but the rough translation is green windmill at twelve o’clock.” Nadia smiles. “It isn’t much to go on, but the entire police force in the area has been alerted to be on the lookout for a green windmill.”

“That might take a while,” you say.

Nadia nods. “Yes, well, at least we have some time. The police think that twelve o’clock means midnight and, since no day was given, they think it refers to tonight at midnight. And, since they think Chang was speaking to his people in Zakova, they believe a plane will be flying over, so there should be a large field near the green windmill, which narrows it down a bit.”

“What if it was last night?” Joe asks. “Chang could have travelled to the green windmill after leaving Dragons Den and got there by midnight. Which means he and the others could be long gone by now.”

“Yes, that’s possible, but very unlikely,” Nadia replies. “Anyway, we’ll soon see.”

Eager to do your bit, you and the others soon depart the farmhouse and start searching. It’s a beautiful sunny day, perfect cycling weather.

As there are large fields in every direction, it doesn’t matter which way you ride, so you pick one direction and start riding. There aren’t many windmills to be seen, but those you see are mainly brown, while a few are white. One is red, but there’s not a single green windmill.

As you cycle, you pass a number of police vehicles which you wave to. Although you don’t speak to the officers, you feel sure they must be searching for the green windmill.

Wanting a small break, you see a bridge with a stream flowing beneath it and decide this is the perfect place for a rest. Leaving your bicycle by the road, you walk down to the stream, take off your shoes and socks, and wade into the cool water.

As the others lie down on the grass, you glance around. The only building in view is a small farmhouse on the other side of the stream. You’re just about to turn away when a flash of light catches your eye. You frown and gaze hard at the upstairs window from which it came.

Nothing. Thinking the flash is just some random reflection, you’re just about to turn away again when the flash appears once more.

This gets your attention. You hurry up onto the bank and gaze around, hoping to see a green windmill. But none is to be seen.

“What’s the matter?” Amy asks.

“I saw a flash coming from one of the upstairs windows,” you say.

“But I don’t see any windmill,” Joe says.

“And the field is covered in long grass,” Sarah pipes up. “There’s no way a plane could land anywhere near that farmhouse.”

You sigh. The others are right.

Suddenly, a police car roars down the road, its siren blaring and lights flashing.

“I wonder what’s going on,” Amy says.

As you scramble to put on your socks and shoes, another police car goes past.

## Choose Your Own Way

If you choose to cycle after the police cars, [click here](#)

**OR**

If you decide to investigate the house, [click here](#)

You jump. As the icy water touches your body, you struggle to not scream out. It is cold, very cold. You swim to the shore and soon reach firm ground.

“We must get somewhere warm,” Christo states. “If we stay in these clothes too long, we’ll catch pneumonia.”

“We must also get as far away as possible from the lake,” Max says. “The further away the better, since it’s not going to take long for the Golden Dragons to realize that we’ve jumped.”

“How are we going to get to Monrovia?” you ask.

“Let’s just take this one step at a time,” Max says. “So, for now, let’s try to get our clothes dry.” He gets to his feet and starts walking.

You follow after the others. You’ve been walking for just over five minutes when you hear the sound of vehicles approaching.

“Quick, into the bushes!” Max orders.

You race into the undergrowth as quickly as you can. It’s a good thing that you do so since, a few moments later, several vehicles roar past. They are all filled with soldiers.

You resume walking, but soon Sarah gets tired. And so does Amy. And soon, so do you. “I’m afraid I can’t keep on walking. My hands are frozen and my legs are stiff.”

“I suppose we could take a break now.” Christo turns to Max. “Do you think we’re far enough away from the castle?”

Max nods. “Yes, I think so. Let’s find a place to rest away from the main road.”

You walk for another few minutes before you catch sight of a cottage. After Max speaks to the owners and confirms they are not going to turn the group in, you enter.

Half an hour later, you are all dry and warm. As you sit beside a crackling fire, Christo ponders the situation. “How are we going to reach the border?”

“We could wait it out here and see if the patrols stop,” Amy says.

“Or we could steal one or two uniforms from the Golden Dragons, then hijack one of their cars and pretend to be on patrol,” Will suggests.

“But we can’t dress up as soldiers,” Joe says. “We’d be recognized at once. The only thing I can think of is for us to travel there on foot.”

“But then we’d be spotted for sure!” you exclaim.

“Not if we walked at night,” Joe replies.

Max thinks for a moment. “If we were to take the main roads it would take us no longer than two hours or so, but going by the main roads would be risky. If we kept to the side roads it would take longer, but we’d be less likely to be spotted. But it also depends on whether we take the short way or the long way to the border.”

“What’s the difference?” you say.

“Well, we could head for the river, which is an hour or so away and, once we found a craft to float down it, we could stay with the river all the way to the border,” Max replies.

“That sounds easy,” Sarah pipes up.

“Or we could head for the mountain pass,” Max says. “It’s quite a trek, over five hours, since we have to take the trail that meanders up the mountain but, if we take that route, we can cross the rope bridge that crosses the gorge. From there, it’s a small downhill walk to the border.”

Will grimaces. “That’s a long walk. Do you know for certain if the rope bridge is there?”

Max shakes his head. “No, not for sure. But it was there a few years ago.”

“It seems both ways have risks,” Amy says.

Christo turns to you. “Which way do you think we should head?”

**Choose Your Own Way**

If you want to head for the river, [click here](#)

**OR**

If you want to trek up the mountain, [click here](#)

“Time is of the essence,” you say. “We need to keep on going. There is no telling how far behind the soldiers are. Let’s just keep on walking for the time being.”

Max ponders for a few seconds. “Well, I suppose we could continue walking for a while.”

“Okay, let’s get going then,” you say.

As the rain continues to pour down, Max resumes walking.

As half an hour passes, and the rain continues to fall, darkness arrives. Just as you are thinking of suggesting a break, you hear a thundering noise.

You look around, trying to place where it is coming from. You then see it. A mountain of debris heading straight down the mountain.

An avalanche of rocks, mud and bushes. As everyone screams out, you try your best to avoid the oncoming attack by positioning yourself behind a pine tree.

Unfortunately, a massive rock slams into the tree and tears the roots from the ground. You get knocked to the ground. As the mud rushes past, you wonder if you’re going to survive. You also wonder why you made the foolish decision to walk in the pouring rain.

**The End**

**Want to try again? If so, [click here](#)**

“Okay, press it,” you say.

Nothing happens for a second and then, suddenly, the floor beneath you gives way. You are so astounded by what is happening that you don’t even yell out as you fall into the darkness.

As your feet hit the ground five seconds later, your body crumples over. You hear the voice of Joe call out from above and then you lose consciousness.

When you open your eyes many hours later, you find yourself in a hospital bed. Your friends hurry over to you as they see you open your eyes.

“Are you okay?” Sarah asks anxiously.

You smile. “I’ll live.”

Amy grabs your hand and holds it in hers. “I was worried you weren’t going to wake up.”

“How long was I unconscious?” you ask.

“Too long,” Joe replies. “You gave me quite a scare.”

“You gave us all quite a scare,” Will says.

You attempt to sit up, but cry out in agony.

As pain shoots through you, a nurse rushes over. “Just relax. You’re not going to be able to move for some time.”

You frown. “I’m not?”

The nurse shakes her head. “No, you sustained quite a lot of injuries falling down the hole. You’re lucky to survive. It could have been much worse.”

You let out a small smile. “Yes, I suppose it could have been.”

**The End**

**Want to try again? If so, [click here](#)**

“I’m not sure I should leave you alone with the man,” you say. “Since you have a sore leg, you won’t be able to follow him if he goes somewhere at a fast pace.”

Joe nods. “That’s smart thinking. Hey, look!”

You turn your attention to the man as he pours water on the flames and, after stomping on the embers with his boots, puts his rucksack on his back and walks off into the darkness.

As he switches on his torch, you turn to Joe. “Good thing I didn’t go back to the farmhouse.”

You and Joe hurry after the man. Because of his fast pace, you soon leave Joe behind. You don’t want to separate, but there isn’t any other choice.

In roughly fifteen minutes, the woods come to an end and, after continuing to walk down a path for another five minutes, the man climbs over a fence and heads towards a farmhouse.

All is dark, and then you spot a dim light coming from the outside of one of the barns. You assume that this might be where the man is meeting someone.

You hurry to the fence and climb over. Wanting to be as close as possible in order to hear what is going on, you slowly make your way towards the large structure. As you approach, a man holding a lamp comes out of the barn and greets the newcomer.

As the two enter the barn, you stealthily creep towards the barn and, once you’re near the open door, you stand as close as you dare in the hope of hearing what is being discussed. However, you are disappointed. The men are talking in low voices, too low for you to hear a single word.

So, taking a chance, you find a small rock and throw it as hard as you possibly can towards the farmhouse. As it clinks onto the path, the two men stop talking and hurry outside. You press yourself against the side of the barn as they rush past and then, as soon as they do, you slip inside. You take a quick look around and realize there is only one place to hide, which is the loft.

You run over to the ladder and climb up. You sit down near the wall and wait for the men to return. They soon do but, this time, they stand quite close to the barn door.

Annoyed that you still can’t hear them, you creep towards the edge of the loft, hoping that this will enable you to hear what is being discussed. However, just as you reach the railing, the wood groans and the plank splits in two.

As the entire front of the loft collapses, you leap backwards. You just make it, but the three hay bales that were in the loft roll down onto the barn floor.

As the men yell out to one another, you crouch up against the back of the loft, wondering how long it will take the men to climb up the ladder and see you.

As the men approach, one of them suddenly yells out. “Fire!”

You frown, wondering if the men are trying to trick you and then, as you see the flames, you realise this isn’t a trick. You don’t move in case you’re seen so you listen on as the men attempt to put out the fire. Within seconds, the fire grows tremendously and, as the smoke and flames start to spread, you hear one of the men yell out. “Let’s get out of here before someone comes!”

As the two men flee the scene, you relax. You have no idea what would have happened if they had seen you, and thus are grateful that the fire did start. However, as you walk over to the ladder to climb down, you’re shocked to find the fire burning right below you.

Dismayed, you walk as close as you can to the front of the loft and glance around. Your heart sinks as you see that the fire has reached almost every corner of the structure. No wonder the men left.

You realise you have to get down from the loft and out of the barn as soon as possible. But now that the ladder is no longer an option, you will have to jump. As you try to decide on the best plan of action, you hear someone yell out.

## Choose Your Own Way

If you think it’s the men and decide to stay quiet, [click here](#)

**OR**

If you believe it’s Joe and choose to shout back, [click here](#)

“Let’s talk with the magician,” you say.

Mango, who has dark piercing eyes and a moustache that twirls up at the ends, is dressed in an orange suit. He whips out a pack of playing cards from his right pocket. “Pick a card, any card.”

You wait a moment as the man takes the cards out of the packet and fans them in front of you. You then reach forward and take a card. You quickly peek at it. It’s the seven of hearts.

“Now, after you’ve memorized your card, put it back in the pack,” Mango says.

You do as you are told and the magician spends the next few moments shuffling the pack. He then puts the pack of cards into his left hand.

“Now, think of a number between one and fifty two,” Mango says.

You nod. “Do I tell you?”

“Yes,” Mango replies.

“Thirty one,” you say.

Mango counts out the cards in his hand, stopping when he reaches number thirty one. “Unless I’m mistaken, this is your card.” He picks up the card and slowly reveals it to you.

It’s the seven of hearts.

Your expression is one of shock. “How did you do that?”

Mango smiles as he puts the playing cards back into his pocket. “Magic.”

“Do you have any idea who stole the jewels?” Amy asks.

Mango shakes his head. “It’s the mystery of the invisible thief. No one saw or heard anything. They just vanished into thin air. One moment they were there and—”

“Mango! Get to your caravan! We need to get going,” the ringmaster suddenly yells out.

“Okay.” Mango starts to walk away. “See you around.”

You wave goodbye and spend the next five minutes watching the procession of caravans trundling out of the palace grounds.

As they do so, Joe suddenly turns to you. “I just thought of one place that the guards wouldn’t have searched. The lion cage!”

“But why would they search that?” you question. “It’s not as though the lion could have stolen the jewels.”

“Of course not, silly, but what if someone hid the jewels in the lion cage?” Joe questions.

“But the only person who could do that would be the lion tamer since he would be the only one able to get close to the lion without the animal attacking,” you point out.

“Or the jewels could have been placed in the cage while the lion was performing,” Will suggests.

Just then, Nadia walks over to you. “All ready to go?”

You hesitate for a moment before you answer. “Does the king have a list of all the guests who saw the crown jewels last night?”

“Yes, why?” Nadia asks.

“I was wondering if any of the circus folk could have been involved in the theft,” you reply.

Nadia shook her head. “No. The only person from the circus who took a look at the jewels was the magician, Mango the Magnificent, and he took a look at the jewels at the very beginning of the evening.”

“Who was the last person to see the jewels?” Amy questions.

“Count Radovic,” Nadia replies. “But there would be no reason for him to steal the jewels, he’s a respectable gentleman.” She sighs. “King Otto thinks it must be someone belonging to the Golden Dragons.”

You frown. “Who?”

“The Golden Dragons is a group of men and woman that operate out of Zakova, a war torn country,” Nadia explains. “What started out as a security company a few years ago has now turned into a criminal organisation so large that no government can touch them.”

“You seem to know a lot about them,” Sarah pipes up.

Nadia nods. “I should, Christo used to work for them. Plus, they’ve been in the newspaper lately, all due to Chang, one of their top men, escaping from prison.” She reaches into her handbag and pulls out a newspaper clipping. “This is a photo of Chang. If you ever see him, contact the police, he’s a dangerous criminal.”

You study the man in the black and white photo. He's Asian looking, has dark slanting eyes, and dark shiny hair. "How long ago did he escape from prison?"

"One week ago," Nadia replies. "So, it's possible he's already in Zakova by now, but I just thought I'd let you know in case you run into him. Come on, let's get back to the farmhouse."

After eating lunch, you and your four friends cycle to the local village and look at the shops. As you gaze at one of the windows, you point. "Look! Gringo's Circus will perform in Adler tomorrow."

"Let me see." Joe studies the poster. "You know, I think it's likely that the crown jewels were somehow stolen by one of the circus folk. For instance, if the acrobats had teamed up together, they may have been able to scale the tower without even needing a ladder. I think we should pay another visit to the circus and have a look around."

"But what about Count Radovic?" Amy questions. "Shouldn't we be riding over to his house to see what we can find? After all, he was the last person to see the crown jewels."

## Choose Your Own Way

If you think someone in the circus stole the jewels, [click here](#)

**OR**

If you believe Count Radovic is responsible for the theft, [click here](#)

You yell out. “Joe! I’m in here! Help me!” There is no response. As the fire begins to get out of control, you realize you have to leap down. And so, after spotting a bale of hay that is, as yet, untouched by the flames, you leap down on top of it. This softens your landing and, even though you roll onto the ground after hitting the hay, it isn’t as bad as hitting the ground immediately.

You quickly get to your feet and glance around. You’re shocked to realize that there is no way out. You’ve waited too long. The flames are engulfing all four walls of the barn. There is no way you can escape from either the windows or the door.

However, not wanting to give up, you make your way to the nearest window. But you can’t get close. The flames are too hot.

You’re not one to get frightened easily, but you know that the situation in which you now find yourself is bad.

As the seconds tick by, the situation becomes worse. The flames grow bigger and the smoke increases. You desperately head in every direction, trying to find a way out. But you’re stopped by the massive fire every single time. As sweat runs down your face, you realise that the situation has gone from bad to impossible.

There is no way out.

Suddenly, there is a noise of an engine and, before you can comprehend what is happening, the barn door smashes open and a tractor bursts through. It rolls past the flames and comes to a halt. Peering through the smoke and the flames, you catch sight of Christo at the wheel. As you make eye contact, Christo yells out. “Get in!”

You race over and grab the outstretched hand of Christo. Once you’re safely on the vehicle, Christo reverses.

You glance up as you hear a loud creaking noise and are horrified to see that the flames have reached the beams that criss-cross along the top of the roof. Realising it isn’t going to be long before the entire structure collapses, you’re thankful that you’re safe.

But only just. As the tractor comes to a stop beside the farmhouse, the burning barn collapses onto itself.

You hug Christo. “Thanks. You were almost too late.”

Christo nods. “Thank Joe. He’s the one who told me. Now, let’s make sure that the fire doesn’t spread.”

It takes many hours and numerous firemen to put the fire out, but finally they do it.

The following morning, a police officer comes to the farmhouse and lets you know that there hasn’t been any sign of the stranger or Leo. Both have vanished into thin air.

Disappointed, you decide to get a bite to eat somewhere so you head for the nearest cafe. You are soon eating a scrumptious chocolate cake and are in the middle of your second slice when you catch sight of a man walking past the bakery window. You freeze in shock. “That’s Chang!”

“Are you sure?” Will asks.

You nod. “I’m pretty sure. Besides, how many Chinese people would live in Monrovia?”

“Not many,” Will replies. “Come on, let’s see if you’re right.”

You hurry after Will and glance around. Amy suddenly points to a man who has a rucksack on his back. “There he is!”

You follow the man. You don’t catch up to him until he reaches the local railway station, so it’s only then that you’re able to confirm that he is the man in the newspaper clipping that Nadia showed you.

You motion to the others to come to a halt as the Chinese man walks down the platform. “We need to find a policeman so he can arrest Chang.”

“Hey, see that rucksack he has on his back?” Will exclaims. “What if that has the crown jewels in it?”

You nod. “That could be possible. Either way the sooner we find a policeman the better.” You glance around the station platform and are disappointed to find there is no police officer in sight. “Did any of you see the police station as we rode through the village?”

Amy nods. “I think I saw a sign for it. It was just as we entered the village.”

“Well, that’s quite a distance away, so…” You suddenly pause as you hear a train approaching. As you glance around, you spot a train steaming towards you. You look across at Chang who has walked down to the far end of the platform and is standing still. “Chang must be waiting for the train. There’s no time to notify the police. The only way we’ll be able to stop him is if we get on the train ourselves and then find a policeman when Chang gets off.”

“But what if we can’t find a policeman then?” Amy says. “Wouldn’t it be better to tell a police officer now so that they can telephone ahead to the other stations?”

## **Choose Your Own Way**

If you choose to get on the train, [click here](#)

**OR**

If you decide to find a policeman, [click here](#)

“I’m happy to stay and keep watch,” you say.

As Will and Joe leave, you wonder where you should sit. While you want to have a good view of the fireplace, you don’t want to be too close in case it is Chang who comes through the secret entrance. So you decide to stay where you are. You’ll be close enough to hear the fireplace moving, but far enough away to be able to find a hiding place should it be necessary.

Knowing it will take the others some time to reach the tunnel, let alone walk down it, you sit down and attempt to relax as best as you can given the situation. After a while, you become so bored that you begin to feel sleepy.

Before you know it, your eyelids close and you drift off to sleep. The next thing you hear is a grating sound. The fireplace is moving!

In a flash, you stumble to your feet and see Christo as he walks through the opening. A smile of relief appears on your face but, almost immediately, it disappears as Chang appears behind him. It is then that you see that Christo’s hands are behind his back. He’s a prisoner.

Wondering where the others are, you quickly tiptoe into the nearest room, not wanting to be in the hallway when the two men enter. As it is now almost dark, Chang switches on a torch and walks behind Christo as they head down the hallway.

As they disappear from view, you wonder what you should do. You don’t want to leave the others, but then you don’t want to lose sight of Chang either. He’s a very cunning fellow and, if he disappears from sight, who knows when he’ll reappear. Since Chang has a rucksack on his back, it probably means he has the crown jewels with him.

After a moment’s hesitation, you follow the two men outside. You wonder if Chang has a vehicle hidden behind some bushes but, as they walk down the road, you realise this isn’t the case.

Ten minutes later, as the two men stop beside a vehicle, you realise what’s happening. Chang is stealing Christo’s van!

You don’t know why you didn’t think of that earlier. Chang must have interrogated Christo until he revealed the location of the van. Since Christo has his hands tied behind his back, Chang has to help him into the vehicle. You realise that, once Chang starts the engine and drives away, that will be the end of the trail and who knows what will happen to Christo.

However, if you could memorize the number plate of the van and then race to the nearest house and tell the police what’s going on, then Chang might be caught. It’s risky, because you could be caught. But if you’re successful, you’ll be known as the person who helped capture Chang.

## Choose Your Own Way

If you decide to memorize the number plate, [click here](#)

**OR**

If you choose to keep watch from the shelter of the bushes, [click here](#)

You are scared of the dogs, but you more scared of the waterfall so you hold onto Christo as he pulls himself closer and closer to the bank.

As the two of you reach dry land, you take in big gulps of air. You try to stand up, but you are too exhausted. The river has taken all of your energy out of you.

A few minutes later, a number of Golden Dragon soldiers rush up and put your hands behind your back. Once your hands are tied, they get you to walk along the riverbank.

“Don’t worry,” Christo says. “Someone will come for us.”

As much as you want to share his enthusiasm, you wonder if you should have taken your chance with the waterfall. But you’ve made your choice and now you’ve got to stick with it.

**The End**

**Want to try again? If so, [click here](#)**

You decide Max can take care of himself and so you sit down and wait. A minute later, a shape becomes visible in the water below and, a moment or two later, Max rises up to the surface. As he pulls himself up out of the water, he gulps in a few big breaths.

“What happened?” Christo asks.

“Captain Williamson and his men are waiting on the small island,” Max says. “I can’t see any Golden Dragons, so we’re fine. Just give me a minute before you follow me.”

You nod as the man dives back into the water again. As everyone else prepares to get ready to dive in, you swing your arms back and forth in anticipation of the swim ahead.

“Okay,” Christo says. “Let’s go.”

Just as you are about to dive in, Max appears. He pulls himself up out of the water. “Change of plans. The soldiers are circling the lake as we speak,” Max replies. “So we can’t escape that way.”

“But then we’re trapped!” Amy exclaims.

“Amy’s right,” Joe says. “If we can’t swim to safety and we can’t escape via the dungeon door, what are we going to do?”

Max sighs as he drags himself to his feet and glances around the small cave. “I’m not sure. If only there was another way out.”

“But there isn’t,” Christo states.

“Hey, look!” You rush over to the far corner of the cave and peer up. “There looks to be some kind of hole up here.”

“But how does a hole help us?” Amy questions. “If we can’t escape that way—”

“Hold on, you might have something,” Max interrupts, hurrying over to you. He gazes upwards. “If we can make the soldiers believe that all of us swam up to the lake, they will leave the castle to search for us, thereby giving us a chance to make our way to the cable car and escape that way.”

Suddenly, you hear footsteps approaching. “It must be the soldiers! They must have broken down the dungeon door!”

“Into the hole!” Max hisses.

You and the others quickly hurry over to the hole. You have just managed to bring your legs up into the hole when Chang emerges from the tunnel along with five other soldiers. As the Chinese man gazes around the cave, you wonder if he’ll look towards the hole and see you.

Fortunately, Chang doesn’t even glance in your direction. He just turns to the soldiers. “They must have swum to the lake. Come on, we’ll track them down outside.”

As the men hurry back up the tunnel, you relax. As the echo of their footsteps becomes quieter and quieter, you climb down from the hole.

Christo looks at Max. “Is the cable car our best option?”

Max nods. “With a little bit of luck, we can make it there without being seen. I only had a brief look at the layout of the castle that Captain Williamson showed me, so hopefully we won’t get lost. But, with any luck, most of the soldiers should be searching for us outside.”

“But what happens when the soldiers look up and see the cable car leaving the castle?” you question.

“Hopefully nothing,” Max replies. “But let’s cross that bridge when we come to it. First we have to get to the other side of the castle.” Without further ado, Max leads the way back up the tunnel.

You soon reach the dungeons and halt for a moment to survey the scene just in case someone has been left on guard, but this isn’t the case. You continue on up the stairs until you reach what remains of the door.

Max cautiously peers out and then, a moment or two later, steps out into the hallway. “All clear.” As he hurries to the right, you follow him.

At first, you think you’re making good progress but, as you make your way down a second lot of stairs, you whisper to Joe. “I wonder if Max really does have a good memory. It seems to me as though we’re going in circles.”

“I’m sure it just seems like it,” Joe says. “After all, this castle is a big—”

“Quiet!” Max orders.

You halt as Max peers down the hallway. A second later, the man points towards the nearest door. “Quick, inside!”

As you and the others enter the room, Max quietly closes the door. Just as he does so, you hear footsteps. Max just has enough time to push the bolt across the door and stand back before the handle rattles.

Max holds his finger up and places it across his lips, urging you to be silent, not that this is really necessary. This goes on for two minutes as the soldiers in the hallway try every door.

Finally, as the footsteps cease, Christo breathes a sigh of relief. "That was close. If you hadn't heard something, they would have caught sight of us."

Max nods. "I thought I heard a very faint sound in the distance." He unbolts the door and peers out.

As he motions for everyone to follow him, you do so. After five minutes or so, you suddenly catch sight of a door which is slightly open.

You grab Max's arm and point out the door to him. He nods and walks towards it. You watch on as the door opens wider and a man exits. Before he can yell out, Max punches him and he collapses to the ground.

As you wander into the room you are shocked to see the crown jewels on a mantelpiece. You smile as Max and Christo hurriedly load the jewels into a rucksack. Once this is done, you leave the room.

Five minutes later, you arrive outside the door marked cable car. Throwing caution to the wind, Max flings open the door. No one is in sight, so he stands aside and waits for you and the others to enter. After you do so, he pushes the bolt across the door before hurrying down the winding corridor. Half a minute later, he reaches another door. This one is unlocked.

Max pauses for a moment and peers around into the next room. A moment later, he turns back to you. "Stay here for a moment. I'll have to take care of the guard."

You creep forward and watch as Max tiptoes towards the solitary guard. As the man crumples to the ground, Max glances back. "Hurry up!"

As you obey, Max studies the controls. He presses a few buttons and moves a few of the levers. "It looks pretty easy to operate, so I should be able to get it going." He turns his attention to the cable car which is docked nearby. He presses a button and the doors of the cable car open. "In you go."

You rush over and are the first one to climb in. Max is last, leaping in just as the cable car starts to move. A second later, the cable car has left the platform and is slowly making its way down the mountain.

"What are we going to do when the person in charge at the other end sees who we are?" you ask.

Max pulls out a pistol. "Well, I grabbed this from the guard I knocked out, so if the guard knows what's good for him, he'll do as I say."

"But what if there's more than one guard?" Will asks.

"Well, we'll just have to wait until we get closer and then..." Max pauses as the cable car suddenly clanks to a stop.

"Why have we stopped?" Sarah pipes up.

"I have no idea," Max says.

"I've got a bad feeling about this," Christo says.

You peer towards the cable car station but can't see anything. You are too far away. You gaze down and realise you are directly above a river.

Joe suddenly turns to Max. "Why don't we jump?"

"Jump? Are you crazy?" Sarah yells.

Joe shakes his head. "A soldier must have paused the controls. We have to escape before the cable car heads back in the direction of the castle."

Max rakes a hand through his brown hair. "It's risky, but you're right. It's better than heading back to the castle."

"But the cable car could start up again," you say. "It might have just malfunctioned."

Max shakes his head. "My mind is made up."

Max is the first to jump, quickly followed by the others. You're the last to jump. As you reach the open doorway and peer down at the water below, you take a few seconds to collect your bearings.

But then your fear of heights takes over and you freeze. As this happens, the cable car starts moving again. However, it doesn't head back to the castle, it just continues on, so maybe it was a malfunction after all.

## Choose Your Own Way

If you decide to wait until the cable car reaches the other end, [click here](#)

**OR**

If you feel brave and decide to jump, [click here](#)

“We need to let the police know about this right away,” you say.

“Let’s ask the station master about the police,” Sarah pipes up.

You nod. “Yes, let’s do that.”

You hurry up to the man who is selling tickets and ask him to telephone the police. He does, but it’s another ten minutes before a police car arrives and an officer walks up to you.

You explain about Chang but, because the officer asks a lot of questions, it takes another ten minutes before he uses the telephone at the train station to contact headquarters.

You and the others eagerly await his return. Once he does so, he tells you that officers will be on the lookout for Chang at all the stations and that he will let you know if they catch the escaped prisoner.

Since there is nothing else you can do, you cycle back to the farmhouse, wondering if you have made the right choice.

As the hours pass and there is still no word, you realise you should have got on the train instead of trying to find a police officer.

Darkness is in full swing as the telephone rings. It’s the police. After being stationed at all the platforms, no one has seen anything. It seems like Chang has done a disappearing act. As the days pass and there is no further word from the police, you know for sure that Chang and the jewels are long gone.

**The End**

**Want to try again? If so, [click here](#)**

Choosing to signal for help from the chimney, you slowly walk across the roof. As a few of the tiles start to give way, you kneel down and take it even slower.

You breathe a sigh of relief as you reach the chimney. As you clamber on top of it, a few of the bricks start to move. You hesitate, wondering if you have made a wise decision.

As they stop, you continue climbing upwards until you are standing beside the chimney. You take the mirror out of your pocket and wave it towards the other house. As you get closer to the chimney so you can get in the best possible location, it starts to collapse.

As the bricks fall down the hole, you hurry back to the window. Your speed is your undoing and the roof tiles also give way. This time, you are not so lucky.

You fall onto your bottom as the tiles slide down the sloping roof and hit the ground below. You try to use your hands to grab onto something stable, but you can't find anything. You slide down the roof and just manage to hold onto the gutter.

As you cling desperately to the gutter, you wonder if you should call out for help. But, before you can make that decision, your fingers give way and your body flies downwards.

As you hurtle towards the ground, one thought flashes through your head. How could you have been so stupid?

**The End**

**Want to try again? If so, [click here](#)**

“Something big must be going on,” you say. “I’m cycling after the police cars.”

The others follow you as you cycle down the road. As the vehicles disappear around a bend, you wonder if you will ever see them again.

But, a few moments later you do, this time in pursuit of a red van speeding down the road.

“It’s a police chase!” Sarah pipes up.

You nod. “Yes, that is what it looks like.” You move to the side as the convoy of cars heads towards you. You suddenly hear a siren behind you and you spin around to see a police car tearing towards you.

The driver of the red van also sees the police car approach and he swerves off the road and into a field.

The four patrol cars follow suit and soon surround the van as its front wheels get stuck in mud. You and the others watch on as the police officers drag the criminals from the van.

“I don’t suppose this is related to the crown jewels after all,” Joe says.

You shake your head. “No, but I want to make sure.” You hurry across the field and, as a policeman sees you approach, he walks over.

You quickly learn that the driver of the van, along with his companion, had been pulled over for reckless driving. The officer had been about to arrest them when the driver sped off. He also says that the two men are petty criminals and are well known to the police.

You head back to the others and tell them what the police officer told you. Afterwards, you decide to cycle back to the house by the stream so that you can investigate the flashes of light you saw earlier.

You leave your bicycle by the water and walk through the knee high grass. Luckily, the tall grass goes all the way to the main structure so you’re able to get to the house without fear of being spotted.

However, in order to get immediately below the window from which you saw the flash, you have to risk being seen since there isn’t any grass, just gravel.

You creep along the wall until you’re right below the window. You bend down and pick up a small stone. You then throw it up against the window pane on the upper level.

Much to your joy, Will’s face appears at the upstairs window. He waves and manages to open up the window a tad. He then calls out. “Come up! Chang has gone!”

You and the others hurry into the house, thankful that the front door is unlocked. When you reach the upper level a few moments later, you see a key poking out from the keyhole of a closed door. Certain that this is where Will is being kept prisoner, you turn the key and fling open the door.

Will peers up from where he’s bending over Christo. “I can’t wake him! I think he’s been drugged.”

“When did Chang go?” you ask.

“Ten or fifteen minutes ago,” Will replies. “Someone came in a white van and picked him up.”

You walk over to the window and gaze out. “He could be anywhere by now.”

“We could still tell the police,” Joe says.

You nod. “Yes, we can still do that.”

While the others take care of Christo, you and Joe cycle back to the field where the police were earlier. Luckily, there are some officers trying to move the bogged van.

You go up to one of them and tell them everything. He contacts headquarters and everyone in the police is alerted.

You and Joe ride back to the house and, after Christo awakes, return to the farmhouse. As the night closes in, Christo rings Constable Lubic who says that no one has seen Chang.

Disappointed, all you can do is try to enjoy the rest of your holiday, which is hard since you realise you were so close to catching Chang.

**The End**

**Want to try again? If so, [click here](#)**

“Let’s pursue the car,” you say. Without waiting another second, you peddle as fast as you can. You realise that, if the car goes really fast, there is no way that you are going to be able to keep up with it. But it’s worth a shot.

The others follow you around the first corner. You just see the car up ahead as it disappears around another corner.

You soon leave the others behind in your pursuit of the car. By the time you have reached the next corner, the black car is nowhere in sight. As you spot a white sedan coming towards you, you cycle into the middle of the road and wave your arms to and fro, hoping that the driver will stop.

As car screeches to a halt, you peddle over to the window that the driver is winding down. “Did you see which way the black car went?”

The driver frowns. “I haven’t seen any black car in the past half an hour.”

“Are you sure?” you question.

The driver nods. “No, if that is all, I’ve got somewhere else I need to be.”

You nod and move away from the road. As the car drives away, you glance back and see the others approaching. You wait for them to come a bit closer before you yell out. “Keep your eyes peeled. The black car is somewhere along this road.”

“What? How do you know?” Amy questions.

“That driver I just spoke to hadn’t seen any black car,” you reply. “Which means that the count turned onto a side road.”

“But which one?” Amy asks, gazing ahead.

“The one on the left goes to a farmhouse and the one on the right goes to the woods,” Will points out.

You think for a moment. “I say he’s heading for the woods but, to be on the safe side, we should split up.”

Joe nods. “We’ll meet back on the road in fifteen minutes.”

You cycle in the direction of the woods, Will right behind you. The others head for the farmhouse.

“What do you think the count is up to?” Will asks.

“I say he’s meeting someone in the woods,” you reply. “Yes! There’s his car.” You smile as you catch sight of the black car parked at the end of the dirt road.

As you arrive beside the vehicle, you glance around. There is no sign of the man. You see a path that heads into the woods, so you decide to stow your bicycle behind some bushes.

You’ve just done so when the count appears and rushes over to his car. You and Will duck down as the man glances about for a few seconds before climbing into his car.

As the vehicle heads back down the road, you turn to Will. “I wonder if he left the rucksack in the woods.”

“Well, there is only one way to find out,” Will replies.

You follow Will down the path and glance around. “Let’s separate and meet back here in five minutes.”

Will nods. “Okay.”

You leave the path and walk amongst the bushes and trees, gazing around at everything and anything. You have no idea where the rucksack would be hidden or, for that matter, if there even is one, so it’s a tricky task.

Five minutes pass without incident. You meet back up with Will. “I suppose we ought to head back to the others.”

Will nods. “I think…” He suddenly pauses and grabs your arm. “Duck down!”

You follow the lead of your friend and duck beneath the bushes. A few seconds later, two men walk by.

“You don’t suppose the count has double crossed us, do you?” one of the men says.

“No, we were just idiots to think that there was only one hollow tree,” the other man replies.

As the men walk away, you whisper to Will. “The count must have hidden the rucksack in a hollow tree!”

Will nods. “Yes, it seems like it. But by the time one of us gets the police, the men and the rucksack will be long gone.”

“Not if I stay and search for it,” you say.  
Will frowns. “That could be awfully risky.”

## Choose Your Own Way

If you decide to keep on searching for the rucksack, [click here](#).

**OR**

If you want to cycle back to the others, [click here](#).

Deciding to head for the ivy, you slowly walk across the roof. As a few of the tiles start to give way, you kneel down and take it even slower.

You breathe a sigh of relief as you reach the ivy. You gaze down at the ground below and realise that it would be quite a drop if you were to fall. Praying that this isn't going to be the case, you grab hold of the ivy and give it a tug.

It seems strong enough. Satisfied that it can hold your weight, you start to climb down. Unfortunately, as you reach halfway, you take hold of some ivy which is dead and it gives way instantly.

You cry out, but that's all you can do as you hurtle to the ground and slam into the grass. As pain rips through your body, you cry out. You're hurting, really hurting, and you need medical attention desperately.

But no one comes running. Not even the men. As you gaze up into the cloudless sky, you deeply regret trying to climb down the ivy. It was a stupid thing to do. Really stupid. And now you have to face the consequences of your action, whatever they may be.

**The End**

**Want to try again? If so, [click here](#)**

You shake your head. “No, because what if Chang moves to a different carriage while the train is moving?”

Joe nods. “I hadn’t thought of that. Yes, that’s something that he might do.”

“Yes, especially if he thinks he’s being watched,” Sarah says.

“So we’ll need to keep watch at all times,” you say. “We should take it in turns.”

Joe nods. “I’ll go first.”

Nothing happens for the first few stations and then, suddenly, there is movement. Since you are the one watching you pull back, not wanting to be seen. As the Chinese man hurriedly leaves the compartment and strides further down the carriage, you stand up. “He’s on the move.”

“What do we do?” Sarah pipes up, her green eyes shining.

“I’ll follow him,” you say. “It might look suspicious if he sees five children behind him, but he might not notice just me.”

Will nods. “Take care.”

You quickly depart. By now, Chang has disappeared from view. You hurry along the corridor to the end of the carriage. As you open the doors at the other end, you catch a fleeting glimpse of someone halfway down the embankment as the train steams past.

You stare in astonishment as you realise it’s Chang. He must have jumped. As the figure starts moving, you wonder where he’s heading for. You’re thankful that you were keeping watch all of the time but, as you hurry back to the others, thoughts turn to what you should do. Do you continue on to the border and tell the police what you’ve seen or do you get off at the next station?

You spot a map on the wall and have a quick look at it. The train line goes all the way to the border, which is two stations away. You have so far travelled past four stations. You rack your brain. What should you do?

## Choose Your Own Way

If you believe Chang is heading for the border, [click here](#)

**OR**

If you think he could be heading somewhere else, [click here](#)

“I’ll run to the police station,” you say.

“Good luck,” Joe says.

You nod. “Same to you.” You take off running, not wanting to waste another second. Your legs already feel a bit sore from walking up and down the hill, but you want to catch the criminals who stole the crown jewels. You believe you can run faster than the others, which is why you decided to volunteer. Now you just need to hope that the police station isn’t too far away.

Fortunately, luck is with you. As you reach the road, a car approaches. You wave your arms madly in an effort to catch the attention of the driver, which you do.

After explaining your need to go to the police station, the man invites you to climb into his car. Five minutes later, you arrive at a small village.

As the car pulls up beside the police station, you see several police officers talking to one another. You rush up. “I need your help!”

As one of the men glances in your direction, you are surprised to see it’s Constable Lubic. “What are you doing here?”

“Never mind that,” the police officer says. “What’s the problem?”

“Chang is about to fly off with the crown jewels!” you reply.

“What?” Constable Lubic splutters. “Where?”

“In a field not far from here,” you reply.

“Come on men!” Constable Lubic orders. He rushes to his car. “You come with me.”

You climb into the policeman’s car and direct him to where Chang is. You are quite pleased with yourself since it hasn’t taken as long as you thought it may have taken. As you see the plane still in the field, you smile. But then your expression changes as you see the others standing beside Chang.

As Constable Lubic swerves off the road and heads towards the aircraft, you see your friends being pushed into the plane.

Chang glares at you before he also climbs in. And, as the police vehicle roars up alongside the plane, it starts to taxi across the grass.

Constable Lubic climbs out of the car and rushes to the plane, but he’s too late. Your heart sinks as the plane lifts off the ground. As you see the faces of your friends peering out from the cabin windows, you sigh.

As the constable drives back to the police station he tries to reassure you that everything will be okay. But you have no idea if he’s just saying that to make you feel better or if he really means it.

After you arrive at the station, you sit and wait for the constable to talk to the rest of the police officers. As soon as you see Constable Lubic exit the brick building half an hour later, you rush over to him. “Has anyone spotted the plane yet?”

The man shakes his head. “No. It hasn’t been picked up by radar either, which means it’s very unlikely we’ll see any sign of it.”

You sigh. “It’s all my fault. I should have opted to be the one to go into the plane and steal the rucksack. Maybe then the others wouldn’t have been caught.” As you follow the police officer to his car and climb in, you sigh. “Does anyone have any idea where the plane might have flown to?”

Constable Lubic nods as he starts the engine and drives down the road. “Yes, that much we do know. In fact, my superior is pretty confident where the plane will land.”

“Good,” you say. “So will they’ll be able to rescue the others when the plane lands?”

Lubic shakes his head. “No, because it’s headed for Zakova.”

“The country north of here?” you ask. “Why?”

“Because Zakova is where Chang lived before he came to Monrovia as well as the headquarters of the Golden Dragons,” Lubic explains.

By the time Constable Lubic has dropped you off at the farmhouse, Christo is resting in the living room. After you have told him and Nadia everything that has happened, Christo offers a solution. “I have a friend, Max, who works for the British Government. I’ll give him a ring and see what he says.”

“Thanks,” you say.

The next morning, as you enter the kitchen, you catch sight of Christo talking to a good looking man with sandy coloured hair. As Christo sees you, he introduces you to the man. “This is Captain Williamson.”

You nod. "Nice to meet you." You turn to Christo. "Did you talk to Max?"

"I did, and the captain answered," Christo says. "After explaining the situation to him, he offered to come here."

Captain Williamson nods. "I wish Max could have come, but he's on a secret mission in Zakova. Unfortunately, it's been more than forty eight hours since we last heard from him."

"That's the country where the others probably are!" you exclaim.

Williamson nods. "Yes. Christo informed me of that fact. I wouldn't be surprised if the Golden Dragons are keeping them all imprisoned at Eagles Nest."

"What was Max doing in Zakova?" you question.

"The British government wants to put an end to the Golden Dragons but, in order to do so, they need to know more about the organization," Williamson explains. "So Max was sent undercover and pretended to be one of the soldiers. He made daily contact with another agent until recently."

"Are you going to rescue Max?" you ask.

The captain sighs. "We don't have any plan to send in soldiers because we don't want to create an international incident. One captured British agent is bad. But it would be much worse to have a whole squad of men captured. Besides, Max was on a secret mission and, therefore, the British government doesn't want any official team going in to rescue him. However, they have asked me to help out. But I don't know what to do."

You suddenly grin. "I think I might have the perfect plan. Last night, when I was tossing and turning in bed, I suddenly remembered that Gringo's Circus is going to be performing in Zakova."

Williamson looks across at Christo. "How much do you know about Gringo's Circus?"

"It's one of the most famous in the region," Christo states. "And now that I think of it, it is performing in Zakova. There was an article in the newspaper about it. I'll go and get the paper now and just confirm what the date was."

Christo leaves the kitchen and returns a minute or two later with the newspaper. He spreads it out on the table and flicks through the pages until he finds the article. "Ah, here we are. They're performing in Zakova tomorrow and, not only that, they are actually performing at Eagles Nest."

Captain Williamson thinks for a moment or two. "If we were able to pretend that we were part of Gringo's Circus, we wouldn't have any problem getting into Zakova. We could then carry out a rescue right under the noses of the Golden Dragons. It would be the perfect opportunity. I'll go and talk with the ringmaster straight away."

By the time evening arrives, everything has been finalised and five soldiers, who are friends with Captain Williamson, have flown in from London.

You and everyone else change into circus clothes so that you fit in. Then the long drive to Zakova begins. After hours and hours of travelling, you arrive at Eagles Nest, the castle beside the lake. As you help set up, Christo explains the plan to you. "During the performance, Captain Williamson and his men, dressed up as acrobats, will head for the dungeons. Once they rescue the others, everyone will hide in the caravans until the performance inside the big top is finished. Then we'll help pack up and be on our way back to Monrovia."

"That seems like a good plan," you say. "I just hope that nothing goes wrong."

Christo nods. "So do I."

Time seems to go incredibly slowly but, as three o'clock comes and the big top is set up in the courtyard of the castle, you watch from inside one of the caravans.

After the performance has been in progress for roughly half an hour, Williamson glances at his watch. "It's time. If we don't return in twenty minutes you'll know something has happened. But don't worry, I'm sure we'll be out before then." Williamson pats Christo on the back and then leaves the caravan dressed as an acrobat. His men follow him.

You watch anxiously from the caravan window as they walk across the courtyard towards the dungeon. As they disappear from sight, you turn to Christo. "What if someone decides to check on the prisoners?"

"Let's hope they don't, or we'll all be locked up," Christo replies. "The plan is good, but it's not foolproof."

As the minutes pass, you begin to get worried. You know you shouldn't worry, but your gut is telling you that something is wrong.

## Choose Your Own Way

If you decide to hurry to the dungeons, [click here](#)

**OR**

If you wish to remain in the caravan, [click here](#)

“Get off the rope!” you shout. “The rope can’t hold both of us!”

Christo takes your advice and slowly moves back towards the bank. As you see him step onto the ground, you resume moving across the rope.

As you hear a scream, you look over and see Christo being attacked by the dog. Eager for that not to happen to you, you move your feet faster. However, this proves to be your undoing as your feet slip.

You try your best to regain your footing, but you can’t. Suddenly, you lose your grip on the upper rope and you disappear into the rushing water. As you flail your arms about in desperation, you yell out, causing water to enter your mouth. Your heart beats wildly and desperation mode sets in.

As the current gets stronger, you become exhausted and your head keeps on disappearing below the surface of the water.

It’s not long before you lose consciousness and you are swept along at the mercy of the river. You might survive, you might not, only the river knows.

**The End**

**Want to try again? If so, [click here](#)**

“I think we should head for the river,” you say.

Christo nods. “I’m fine with that.”

“Okay, let’s set off in a few hours,” Max says.

Once everyone has rested, you set off. It isn’t long before you catch sight of the river. No one can be seen. Suddenly, in the distance, you hear a dog barking. Max frowns. “They must have got dogs to smell out our scent. Therefore, our only chance of escaping is to cross the river.”

You hurry after Max. As you reach the river, you see it isn’t a quiet, shallow river which you can easily cross. It is, in fact, quite the opposite. It looks fairly deep and is fast flowing.

“We can’t cross this,” you groan. “It’s impossible.”

Max doesn’t say anything for a moment as he walks up to the bank and studies the water. “It does look pretty fast and deep, but it might be okay. Besides, we don’t have any choice.”

“What about a bridge?” Will asks. “Surely there must be one around here somewhere.”

“Yes, there is.” Max takes a moment to pull out the map and study it. “According to this, there are two bridges close by.”

“Why don’t we walk towards those?” Sarah suggests. “That way, we’d be sure to get across.”

“I’m sure the Golden Dragons would be guarding those,” Max replies. “But if you really don’t like the look of the water, I suppose we could...” He pauses and frowns. “You hear that?”

Amy shakes her head. “No.”

Suddenly, the barking of a dog reaches everyone’s ears.

You frown as you turn towards the woods. “That dog sounded quite close.”

Max nods. “Yes, which means we need to move now.” He reaches into his rucksack. “Fortunately, I’ve got these two ropes which will come in handy.”

“Where did you get them?” you ask.

“I asked the owners of the cottage if I could take them.” Max turns his attention to the trees on the other side. “One of these ropes we can stand on, the other you can use to pull yourself along.”

You watch as Christo grabs one end of each rope while Max swims across to the other side. As both men tie the ropes to trees, you realise it’s going to be like walking on a tightrope.

Once Max and Christo have tugged on the ropes and confirmed they are tight, Joe is the first one to walk across. Since the bottom rope is a foot above the water, there is no chance of getting wet unless you lose your footing, which is why Joe takes it nice and slow. Since only one person is able to cross at a time, it takes a while. Finally, just you and Christo remain.

You look at the river in trepidation. Even though you’ve seen the others cross, you’re still not confident. Suddenly, the barking, which had stopped for a while, resumes and sounds closer than ever.

Christo puts his hand on your shoulder. “I don’t want to pressure you, but we need to move now.”

Taking a big breath, you clutch the upper rope with both hands and step onto the bottom one. Balance has never been one of your skills, and you go slower than everyone else.

As the wind picks up and you begin swaying, you almost lose your footing, but save yourself just in time. You take a deep breath and continue on.

Suddenly, the barking increases in volume. Then, a moment later, a dog appears. As the animal spots Christo, he growls savagely and heads towards the river. Christo has no choice but to clamber onto the rope.

Instantly, the rope starts to swing wildly and you wonder if it can take the weight of both you and Christo. As much as you don’t want the dog to attack Christo, you also don’t want the rope to break under the weight of the two of you.

## Choose Your Own Way

If you yell to Christo to climb off the rope, [click here](#)

**OR**

If you decide to hope for the best and continue moving, [click here](#)

“I’ll go with Joe,” you say.

Will nods. “Good luck.”

Light is fading fast as you and Joe head into the woods. Since it is going to be harder to find the entrance in the dark, you hurry as fast as they can.

“You know, there might actually be a simple explanation to all of this,” Joe says.

“Such as what?” you ask.

“Well, what if Christo found the way into the secret room, but was unable to find his way out?” Joe suggests.

“Then he would have yelled out and we would have heard something,” you reply.

“Possibly,” Joe admits. “But the walls could be thicker than we think.”

“Maybe, but I don’t think so.” You slow down as you reach the trees. “Anyway, for all we know, we might not be able to make it all the way down the tunnel. It could be blocked off.”

Joe nods. “Yes, that could be the case.”

As you reach the metal trap door, you bend down. As you struggle to lift it, Joe helps you. Together, you are able to fully open it.

Joe shines the light down the hole. “Who wants to go first?”

“I’ll go.” You take the torch from Joe and walk down the narrow steps. It descends sharply for the first twenty feet before levelling out.

The two of you make your way down the narrow, rocky tunnel. After the tunnel levels out, you’re able to make good progress until it narrows and it becomes much harder to walk since the height of the tunnel decreases. There are several spots where you have to bend down just to get through.

Finally, you reach a number of stone steps. As you shine the torch light upwards you catch sight of a wooden door that has been built into the side of the rock. “This should be the exit.”

Joe nods. “We should listen to see if we can hear anyone on the other side.”

“Yes, let’s do that,” you reply.

You make your way up the steps and, once you reach the door, you put your ears against it and listen intently. Almost straight away, a voice is heard. Your heart sinks. The person is talking Chinese.

While you know that you don’t know everything about Christo, you are pretty sure he cannot speak Chinese. Which means that someone else is in the secret room.

You and Joe leave the top step and walk back down to the relative safety of the tunnel. Once you feel you are far enough to not be overheard, you turn to Joe. “It certainly does seem as though Chang is in the room, we just don’t know if Christo is with him.”

“Maybe we should listen for a while longer,” Joe suggests.

You nod. “Let’s do that.” You lead the way back to the door and, just like before, you press your ears up against it. However, unlike before, there is silence.

You frown. Has Chang already left the room? As the minutes pass and there is still no talking, you grab hold of the door knob. You switch off the torch and, after ascertaining once more that it’s silent on the other side, twist the door knob and slowly push the door open.

You breathe a sigh of relief as blackness greets you. Confident that this means Chang is no longer in the room, you switch on the torch. As the beam of light swings around the room, your face falls.

It’s empty apart from a desk and a chair. You quickly go over to the desk and open all the drawers. They are all empty. You sigh. “Let’s follow Chang.” You walk over to the fireplace and look around for some kind of lever.

Nothing seems to stand out, so Joe walks around the room while you study the stones above the mantelpiece. You frown as you see a square shaped stone that seems different from the others.

As you go to press it, Joe yells out. “There’s a button on the side of this desk. Shall I press it?”

**Choose Your Own Way**

If you decide to tell Joe to press the button, [click here](#)

**OR**

If you choose to say no so you can press the square stone, [click here](#)

As the fire begins to get out of control, you realize you have to leap down. And so, after spotting a bale of hay that is as yet untouched by the flames, you leap down on top of it. This softens your landing and, even though you roll onto the ground after hitting the hay, it isn't as bad as hitting the ground immediately.

You quickly get to your feet and glance around. You're shocked to realize that there is no way out. You've waited too long. The flames are engulfing all four walls of the barn. There is no way you can escape from either the windows or the door.

However, not wanting to give up, you make your way to the nearest window. But you can't get close. The flames are too hot.

You're not one to get frightened easily, but you know that the situation in which you now find yourself is bad.

As the seconds tick by, the situation becomes worse. The flames grow bigger and the smoke increases. You desperately head in every direction, trying to find a way out. But you're stopped by the massive fire every single time. As sweat runs down your face, you realise that the situation has gone from bad to impossible.

There is no way out.

As the seconds pass, the flames get taller and taller, forcing you into the middle of the barn. You are coughing constantly now and, as you glance around, you start to get dizzy.

A moment later, you fall to the ground. The last thought that goes through your mind is that you should have called out for help since anything is better than death.

Luckily, some time later, you awake. As you glance around the hospital room, you realise every part of your body hurts. You have no idea how long it will take you to recover from your burns, all you know is that you're lucky to have survived.

**The End**

**Want to try again? If so, [click here](#)**

You decide to obey the captain and, as the plane taxis across the field, you keep watch on the engine, hoping that the smoke will disappear. But it doesn't. In fact, it gets worse.

As the plane takes off, flames appear. You realise you should have told the pilot about the smoke. A few seconds later, there is a massive explosion that rocks the aircraft from side to side as flames fully engulf the left engine.

"The engine is on fire!" you shout.

"I know!" the pilot yells out.

The situation quickly turns from bad to worse as the flames creep from the engine to the wing. As warning sounds from the plane's instrument panels sound throughout the aircraft, the pilot yells out. "Hold on! I'm going down!"

You quickly find something to hold onto knowing it's going to be a rough ride. As another explosion rips through the aircraft, you wonder if you're going to survive. You close your eyes and hang on tight as the aircraft hurtles towards the ground.

As the aircraft makes impact with the ground, it splits in two and you are thrown onto the grass. As you lie there you smell fuel. Realising what's about to happen, you attempt to hurry away from the area. But you're still fairly close when a mammoth fireball engulfs the aircraft.

The force of the explosion sends you hurtling into the nearby bushes. Just when you think the situation can't get any worse, you hear men calling out in Chinese and you realise you're going to be captured.

**The End**

**Want to try again? If so, [click here](#)**

“Let’s head for the circus,” you say.

When you arrive at Adler a short time later, you easily find the field where the circus folk are setting up their big top.

As you walk around, you say hello to a few of the circus performers, including Mango the Magnificent, who even performs a card trick for you. This is in stark contrast to the lion tamer who only nods his head and gazes forlornly at the ground as he passes by.

“Let’s find somewhere to sit down and keep watch,” Joe says.

“Let’s go and sit up on that hill over there.” You point to a hill on the other side of the field. “From there, we’ll have a good view of the entire circus.”

Pushing your bicycle, you follow the others up the hill. Once you reach the top, you lay your bicycle down on the grass and sit down. As you gaze around, you notice something. “The lion tamer is heading for the woods.”

“I wonder where he’s going,” Will says.

Joe stands up. “Let’s follow him.”

“Why?” Amy questions. “I doubt he’ll be doing anything suspicious now. It’s the middle of the day.”

“But that’s when you would least expect something underhand to be happening,” Joe states. “And, if I’m not mistaken, it looks as though he’s carrying a rucksack. Quick, before we lose sight of him.”

Leaving your bicycle on the hill, you hurry after Joe. The others quickly follow.

After walking for five or so minutes, Joe suddenly comes to a stop as he catches sight of Leo. He has stopped and is peering around. “Duck!”

You quickly duck behind a bush. You scarcely breathe for the next few moments as the lion tamer continues to stand still. Then, as he resumes walking, you relax and continue to follow him.

This lasts for another few minutes before Leo pauses again.

You hide behind the trunk of a tall oak tree. As the man begins talking to someone, you peer around and spot another man who is wearing a coat and a hat which is pulled down over his eyes.

Leo hands the rucksack to the man and, after saying a few more words, which are unrecognizable since the men are speaking in low voices, walks away.

You’re eager to follow the stranger, but decide to wait until Leo is out of sight. Unfortunately, by this time, the stranger is nowhere to be found.

“Who do you think he was?” Will asks.

You frown. “I have no idea. Whoever he was, something weird is certainly going on.”

“Do you think it’s connected with the missing jewels?” Amy asks.

“Well, it’s possible that the rucksack Leo handed the man had the crown jewels in it,” you reply. “But even if it did, there’s nothing we can do about it because we don’t know where the man has gone.”

You walk back to the hill and climb onto your bicycle. You then ride around the field, hoping to catch sight of Leo, but he’s disappeared. Not knowing what else to do, you return to the farmhouse.

In the middle of the night, you’re awakened by an owl hooting. Hoping to see the bird, you walk over to the window and push aside the curtains.

As there is a full moon, there is enough light for you to see the owl on the branch of a nearby tree. As you study the bird, it hoots once more before flying away.

Just as you are about to close the curtain, you catch sight of a light in the distance. It seems to be coming from the woods. Could it be a fire that has been started by accident or is someone camping there?

You look at your watch. It’s twelve thirty, which is quite late for anyone to be awake. You decide this needs investigating and so you switch on your bed lamp and proceed to get dressed.

A few moments later, awakened by the light, Joe stirs. He frowns as he sees that you’re half dressed. “Is it morning already?”

You shake your head. “No, there’s a light on the hillside. I’m going to see what’s going on.”

Joe climbs out of bed and walks over to the window to have a look. “Maybe there’s a cabin up there.”

“No, I don’t think so,” you say.

“Maybe we should tell Christo,” Joe suggests.

You shake your head. “No, not until we know what it is. Come on, let’s find out.” You quickly put on the rest of your clothes and patiently wait for Joe to do the same. Then, after grabbing your torch, you hurry outside.

The moon provides quite a bit of light, so you don’t switch on the torch until you reach the woods. Navigating your way up to where you saw the light takes some time as you have to go slowly due to the uneven terrain.

As you spot the light through the trees up ahead, you switch off your torch. There is no point giving advance notice to the person up ahead in case there is something underhand going on.

You and Joe cautiously walk towards the light, not making a sound as you do so. Once you’re near enough, you stop behind a tree and peer at the man sitting by the roaring fire. He’s sitting on a log and, beside him, is a rucksack.

You frown. The man seems to look familiar, and it doesn’t take long for you to realize why. You whisper to Joe. “I think this is the same man we saw earlier today, the one who met Leo!”

Joe nods. “Yes, it could be, especially since that rucksack looks like the one that the lion tamer was carrying.”

Suddenly, the man glances in their direction. Fortunately, he turns away a few moments later, seemingly satisfied that no one is nearby. He then reaches for the rucksack and removes something from it.

As you catch sight of a sparkling necklace, you can hardly believe your eyes. It’s part of the missing crown jewels!

As the man removes the crown from the rucksack, you whisper to Joe. “Let’s talk for a moment.”

You and Joe stealthily walk back a bit. Once you are satisfied that the man can’t hear, you turn to your friend. “Now that we know we’re on the right track, we need to tell the police.”

Joe nods. “Yes, this is too big for us to handle. One of us needs to go back to the farmhouse and tell Christo. He should know the telephone number of the nearest police station.”

“And the other person needs to keep an eye on the man in case something happens in the meantime,” you state. “Which do you want to do?”

“I’ll take the torch and be back as soon as I can,” Joe replies.

“Good luck,” you whisper.

As Joe hurries away, you keep watch. Ten minutes later you hear a noise in the bushes. It’s Joe, and he’s limping.

“What happened?” you ask.

“I tripped over a branch,” Joe mutters.

You frown. “That’s too bad. It would be good if the police knew what was going on.”

Joe nods. “Well, you could go back to the farmhouse.”

“Yes, I could.” You peer at the man. He is no longer looking at the jewels which are now packed back in the rucksack. “I’m just not sure how much longer the man will be here.”

## Choose Your Own Way

If you decide to run back to the farmhouse, [click here](#).

**OR**

If you think it’s better to stay with Joe, [click here](#).

“I think we should find out more about Count Radovic,” you say.

“But we don’t even know where he lives,” Joe splutters.

“Well, I’m sure Nadia would know,” you say.

Amy nods. “Let’s ask her.”

You cycle back to the farmhouse and ask Nadia about the man. She says that he lives alone, has a bald head, and normally wears spectacles. Since he lives only a short bicycle ride from Adler, you ride off in the direction of his house.

It’s not long before you catch sight of the massive property. There is a big, stone wall surrounding the house. Since the property covers such a wide area, there are plenty of trees growing in the front garden. In fact, there are so many that it makes it somewhat hard to see the house. With Joe and Will giving you a helping hand, you clamber up the side of the stone wall.

“What can you see?” Amy asks.

You stare at the three storey house. It’s massive, bigger than any other house you’ve seen in Monrovia. Even though the tall trees block most of the view, you can see the black car which is parked in front of the building. “I can’t see much,” you say. You frown as you catch sight of a man clutching a rucksack exit the house and hurry towards the car. As the man glances around, you see he has a bald head. A moment later, he climbs into the vehicle.

You realise that the man must be leaving. “Quick! Help me down!”

As the boys do so, you turn your attention to the steel gates that can just be seen in the distance. “A man is about to drive off.”

“Is it Count Radovic?” Amy asks.

“I suspect so,” you reply. “He has a bald head, but he wasn’t wearing any spectacles. Come on.”

The others follow you as you cycle towards the gates. By the time you arrive, the man is just closing them. He then hops back into his car and drives away.

Sarah sighs. “There is no way we’re going to catch him now.”

Will nods. “We’ll probably lose him after he rounds the first corner.”

“I still think someone in the circus is responsible,” Joe says. “And, since we can’t ride as fast as a car, I say we go to the circus now.”

“I don’t mind what we do.” Amy turns to you. “What do you want to do?”

## Choose Your Own Way

If you decide to pursue the car, [click here](#)

**OR**

If you want to ride to the circus, [click here](#)

Even though your gut is telling you to go, you decide to stay where you are. After all, Captain Williamson can take care of himself. You lie down in the caravan and await the return of the soldiers.

Suddenly, Christo yells out. "Blast!"

You scramble to the window and glance out. You see five Golden Dragons enter the courtyard. "That's not good."

As one of the soldiers points towards the caravan you are in, you realise you have been spotted. "Quick, let's get out of here!"

You run after Christo and weave to and fro between the caravans which are parked in a circle around the big top. But the soldiers close in and you are soon caught. As you are led to the dungeons you wonder why the plan fell apart.

And then you see the reason. Chang is talking to Mango. You shake your head in disgust. The magician was working with the Golden Dragons.

Even Christo is amazed at this and he can only gaze in wonder. Then, the dungeon door is flung open and you are led down the steps.

As you see that Captain Williamson and his men have been captured, you realise that all hope of escape is gone. Your friends are glad to see you, but you are so annoyed with yourself. You should have listened to your gut feeling. Then all of this might have been avoided. Instead, you are now at the mercy of Chang and the Golden Dragons.

**The End**

**Want to try again? If so, [click here](#)**

There is no way you are going back to Eagles Nest. So you do the only thing you can do, which is let go. You're quickly swept along at the mercy of the river. As you round another bend in the river, you wonder if you should grab hold of a rock. You try to do so, but they are so slippery that even when you do manage to grab onto one rock, your fingers lose their grip within a few seconds.

As the river snakes around another bend, you hope that the waterfall isn't a big one and that the water down below is going to be deep enough so that you don't hurt yourself.

The roar of falling water quickly fills your ears and you're dragged towards the middle of the river. A few seconds later, you are swept over the waterfall.

Your arms flail this way and that as you fall. You hit the water with a splash and sink below the surface. Gasping for air, you swim as fast as you can to the surface.

After taking in big gulps of air, you swim over to the bank. You lie there for at least five minutes, too exhausted to move.

As you hear barking, you realise your adventure isn't over. As you stumble to your feet, you notice blood dripping down your left leg. Luckily, the cut on your leg isn't too deep, but it's going to slow you down.

You're exhausted, hungry, bleeding, cold, and many other things. You have no idea if you can find your way to the border, but you're going to give it all you've got. With a sigh, you begin walking.

The next forty eight hours are the worst you have ever experienced. By the time you come in sight of the border, you are so exhausted, you can't even make it.

You fall to your feet. As you spot the Monrovia symbol on the uniforms of the police, you let out a small smile. You don't know if the others made it to Monrovia, all you know is that you did.

**The End**

**Want to try again? If so, [click here](#)**

You step back as you change your mind. As the river is replaced by trees, you sit back down and wonder how you are going to regroup with the others.

Unfortunately, there isn't any decision to make. As soon as the cable car comes to a halt at the other end, soldiers swarm the car.

You have no choice but to put up your hands. As you are taken away, you realise you should have followed the others. It was a stupid decision to separate yourself from the others just because you had a fear of heights.

You wish you could go back and change the past, but you can't. Now all you can do is wait and hope that you are rescued.

**The End**

**Want to try again? If so, [click here](#)**

As soon as you arrive back at your compartment, Joe speaks to you. "What did you see?"

"He jumped," you reply. "He must be heading for the border and decided this was the best way to get across."

"Maybe he thought there would be police at the station if he disembarked then," Amy says.

You nod. "Yes, so we need to continue on until we reach the border."

"I wonder how he plans to get across the border," Amy says.

"Probably by walking," Will says. "After all, if he doesn't want to be seen, it's not as though he'll want to pass through the border patrol when leaving Monrovia."

You nod. "Yes, I'd say you are right. So let's make sure that doesn't happen. Hopefully, there will be a policeman at the final station."

Luckily, this is the case. Just as the train steams into the station, you catch sight of a policeman striding down the platform. "Look!"

You race down the corridor to the end of the carriage, the others right behind you. As soon as the train comes to a stop, you open the door and leap out onto the platform. You yell at the policeman.

"Officer!"

"What's the matter?" the police officer says.

You and the others quickly explain about Chang. While he seems a bit hesitant to believe five children, he makes some telephone calls and, once he realises that you are telling the truth, he thanks you.

Delighted, you and your friends pay a visit to the local cafe and indulge in some ice creams. Later that afternoon, you head back to the farmhouse.

You hope that the police will get in touch with you with good news, but they don't.

For the next few days, you glance through the newspapers hoping to see something about the crown jewels or Chang, but there is nothing.

After two weeks pass, it is time for you to return to London. As the plane flies up into the air and navigates a course for the British capital, you realise that you'll never know what happened to the crown jewels. And that Chang probably wasn't heading for the border after all. It wasn't the best decision you could have made and you regret making it. But there's nothing you can do about it now.

**The End**

**Want to try again? If so, [click here](#)**

Deciding to memorize the number plate, you stealthily creep around to the back of the van and kneel down to study the letters and numbers. Just as you finish doing so, a beam of light suddenly shines upon you.

You quickly stand up and attempt to run away, but you don't get far before a strong hand grips your left arm. You have no choice but to stop and turn around. As you do so, you gaze into Chang's eyes.

The man smiles at you. "I thought I heard someone following us. I just wasn't sure. The question is, are you alone?"

"Of course I'm not," you lie. "The others will be here with the police any second."

"Then we'd better not waste any time." Chang drags you to the side of the van and pushes open the door. "In you go."

You sigh and do as you are told, bitterly regretting your actions. You have no idea what is going to happen to you and it's all your fault. You just made a very costly mistake and now it's going to haunt you for the rest of your life.

**The End**

**Want to try again? If so, [click here](#)**

“We need to tell the police what is going on,” you say.

Joe nods. “Okay, here’s the torch.”

You slowly walk away and, once you are far enough away from the campfire, you start running. There is no knowing how long the man will stay where he is, and so every second counts.

Since there isn’t any trail, you have to twist and turn as you make your way down the hill.

Suddenly, you fall face down on the ground as you trip over something. As your head smashes into a rock, you lose consciousness.

As the morning sun sweeps through the bushes, you awake. As you stumble to your feet, you hear voices calling out.

It’s Christo and Nadia. You respond to their calls and they are soon by your side. As they help you back to the farmhouse, you see Joe. He lets you know that the man left in a hurry and he couldn’t keep the pace up, so he had no choice but to return to the farmhouse.

Back at the house, the doctor examines you and lets you know that you have a fractured leg. You spend the last two weeks of your holiday cooped up in the house and are happy when you get on the plane back to London.

**The End**

**Want to try again? If so, [click here](#)**

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