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Mini lived in China next to a rocky mountain that grows no fruit. She lives with Ma and BA. Her family is very poor. They all work in the field very hard to grow food to eat.
Every night at the dinner table Ba tells stories to Minli about dragons, magistrates and of the old man of the moon. Minli loves when Ba tells his story. Ma does not.
The story of the old man of the moon.

The old man of the moon is the guardian of the book of fortune. He will read the book and tie a red invisible string to a person so that people will meet up with their fortune.
Once upon a time he tied a string to a common girl so that she would meet a prince and they would get married. When the father of the prince found out he tried to kill the girl.

But nothing can break a red string and the girl lived and ended up marrying the prince.
The only time a fortune can be changed was once every 99 years by asking a question.
After hearing this story Minli said she would change the fortune of her family. Ma said that it is just a silly story and got upset about how poor they were. Then Ma told Minli to go to bed.
The next day Minli worked extra hard in the field and went home to make dinner for the family.

After cooking Minli packed up a bag and wrote a note to her Ma and Ba saying that she was going to change their fortune and make fruit grow on the mountain.
Minli started by passing the fruitless mountain and walked until she came to a lake covered by trees. There was something stuck in the lake. It was a dragon!
Minli was scared but the dragon asked with tears in his eyes if she would help him. She was even more scared that he could talk but she helped him anyways.
After helping the dragon get free, she told the dragon her name was Minli and asked the dragon his name.
The story of the dragon.

When dragon first heard voices it was

the voice of a painter and his helper. The
dragon could hear the voices but could not see

anything.
The painter said that he had painted the dragon from a magic painting stone that he got from a mountain far away. The painter said that if he painted the eyes the dragon would come right off the paper.
The dragon was painted for a mean magistrate so that he would not destroy the painters village but the magistrate soon noticed that the dragon did not have eyes and decided to paint the eyes himself.
Right when he painted the eyes the dragon came to life! He ran out of the magistrates house, through the village and scared many people. As the dragon made his way to the forest all the people where shouting ahhh dragon!
So I think my name is dragon said the dragon. That is what everyone called me. Minli thought that was a funny name.

Dragon asked Minli why she was in the forest all by herself.
Minli told him the about her poor family and

the story of the old man of the moon. Dragon listened

to Minli and then shouted

he

I know where to find

him. He lives on never ending mountain.
Then dragon asked Minli,

Can I come with you and ask him a question to?

Yes said Minli but what question do you need to ask the old man?
I need to ask him how to fly.

I don't know how to said dragon sadly.

Thats sad said Minli. Then you definitely need to come with me. So Dragon and Minli set out to go see the old man of the moon together.
As Minli and Dragon walked on, Minli’s Ma and Ba realized that she was gone. They read her note and started looking for her. They looked all night and all of the next day.
At one point they thought that they had found Minnis footprints, but they weren't where the footprints of a man with a cart of beautiful colored fish in glass bowls.
He was surprised to see them walking around the forest. He asked Ma abd Ba what they were doing out in the forest. So Ma and Ba told the fish man the story of the old man of the moon and of how Minli wanted to change her family fortune.
Minli is just a silly girl said MA.

No she is not said the fish man.

She is very brave and wants to make you happy. You should trust Minli and wait at home for her so that when she comes back you will be there waiting for her.
So Ma and Ba went back home and waited.

Minli and dragon walked through the forest they came across a buffalo and followed it to a nearby village.
Dragon decided it would be safer to stay in the forest and wait for Minli to come back.

When Minli came out of the forest the boy was surprised to see Minli and asked who she was.
She told the boy about her family's fortune, the old man of the moon and about her question she was going to ask him. She did not tell him about dragon.
The boy asked Minli if she needed somewhere to sleep for the night. Yes said Minli. So she followed the buffalo boy back to his house but it was just a mud hut with a bed of hey.
Minli asked him where his Ma and Ba were, and

the buffalo boy said that he did not have a

Ma and Ba just his buffalo.

Minli was sad for the buffalo boy and asked if

he wanted to come with her to see

the old man of the moon.
The buffalo boy said no with a smile. I'm already happy, I don't have a question for him. Minli was confused how the buffalo boy was so happy but did not argue.
The next morning the buffalo boy asked Minli if she had borrowed line from the next village.
What do you mean said Minli.

You need the borrowed line to get to the top of the never ending mountain. Go to the next village they have it said the buffalo boy.
Thank you said Minli. Minli waved goodbye as she went back into the forest to look for Dragon and told him of the borrowed line.
Ma and Ba were still at home waiting sadly for Minli to come back home. Ma said it was all her fault that Minli left. I should not have complained about out poor fortune. Ba said that Minli would come home and gave her a hug.
As Dragon and Minli walked to the next village, they stopped to rest in a cave. A green tiger jumped into the cave and scratched the dragon on the arm. Dragon could not get up and Dragons red arm turned black.
Minli waited till it was almost dark and went running to the next village to get help for Dragon.

Minli found two children who were twins and asked them to bring her to the village.
The twins brought her to the village and found the grandpa of the two children. Minli told him the whole story and the grandpa went rushing with medicine to help. He told Minli to stay in the village and get some rest.
When Minli woke up she went to go see dragon but he was right outside of the house playing with the children of the village. He was feeling much better. Minli asked the grandpa about the medicine. Grandpa said that is also a tea and gave Minli some to take home.
She then asked grandpa about the borrowed line but the grandpa said that it was stolen by the green tiger and that he also started to eat all of their food.
Minli was sad. How would she get it and see the old man of the moon. The two children that helped Minli earlier said that they would help her trick the green tiger. The green tiger use to be a mean magistrate and that he was quick to get angry.
So Minli and the two children went to find the green tiger. He was in a cave sleeping with a long red beautiful string under him. The two children started teasing and saying mean things about the tiger and tricked him to leave the cave.
Minli went into the cave and grabbed the string.

The green tiger was so angry that he jumped out at the twins. He did not look where he was going and when he jumped off of the cliff and could not get back up.
Minli and the two children told the village about how they tricked the green tiger and that they were safe from the green tiger.
Minli asked if dragon and her could borrow the

borrowed line and they said that Minli could keep it. The children gave Minli a beautiful kite to

say thank you and the village gave Minli a coat to stay warm.
Dragon and Minli set out to the never ending mountain.

When they got their they did not know what to do. Minli had an idea! She tied the borrowed line to the kite and the kite went up into the air higher and higher until Minli and Dragon could not see it anymore.
Then the string turned into a Minli looked at the bridge,

amazing Minli said.

I don’t think I can cross the bridge.

I am too big said Dragon.
Dragon started to cry. Don't worry said Minli i

will ask the old man of the moon your question.

Thank you said the dragon I will wait for you.

So Minli went up the bridge. It took a entire day. When Minli got to the top a little white bunny was waiting for her.
There you are, follow me. He is waiting for you. As they walked down the hall, Minli looked out the window and it was amazing how close she was to the moon. Minli thought if she reached out she could touch it.
The old man of the moon was in a big room. The room was covered in red strings leading to hundreds of different places crossing each other.
Minli said the old man, I knew you would be coming. Yes said Minli I have questions to ask you.
I'm sorry Minli, but I can only answer one question.

Minli stopped. Her heart started to hurt, she started to cry. What about Dragon she thought.

Minli, you must ask me a question soon, the day is almost over and then I won't be able to answer your question.
Minli knew the right thing to do. Minli knew which question to ask, why can't my friend Dragon fly?
Dragon waited for Minli for three days but he never moved from his spot. He wait for her to come back down from the When Minli did come back down she was running toward dragon with a big smile.
Dragon I know how to make you fly.

She shouted from the bridge. As she got off the bridge, Minli climbed onto dragons back and grabbed the round stone that was on the top of dragons head.
What are you doing dragon asked. The old man said

that the stone is weighing you down and

that is why you cannot fly. As she pulled

it off he started to rise off the ground

and into the air.
He was so excited that he started to twirl around and around not realizing that Minli was still on his back. She was holding on to his antlers with one hand and holding on to the stone with the other hand.
Minli asked if the dragon would fly her home to her village. Yes, he said, and started to head back to the forest where they had met.
They passed all their new friend, the twins.

Flying their kites and the buffalo boy who could not believe that he was seeing Minli on the back of a dragon.
As they came to the forest dragon asked what the answer was to Minli's question.

I could not ask my question she said the old man of the moon would only answer one question.
Dragon felt sad and happy at the same time.

Thank you Minli, and I'm sorry that you cannot help your family and their fortune.

It is ok dragon. I just miss my Ma and Ba.
As the got closer to Minli's village dragon shouted to Minli, I'm home! Minli, this is my home. This is the same stone that the painter painted me from. I have found my home.
He dropped Minli off at the edge of the Do you want your stone? Minli asked Dragon. No you can keep it said dragon I don't need it. They hugged goodbye and Minli started to walk toward her village as dragon flew higher and higher up to the top of the mountain.
Just then Ma and Ba where starting to eat dinner

and where missing Minli even more. They had a

bowl out for her with some rice just in case

she came home. Then a neighbor banged on the
door and shouted Minli is home.
They ran out of the house to see Minli and
when they did they started to cry they picked
her up and hugged her tight.
They asked her what had happened. She told the whole village about her trip and at the end Minli showed Ba her new stone that she got from dragon.
That is not a stone Minli, it is a pearl! You did it, you have changed our fortune, said someone in the village.
Ma, Ba are you happy now asked Minli. Ma and Ba looked at Minli.
You are all we need Minli you are our fortune they both said at the same time.
Just then the fruitless mountain turned green and was speckled with different colors of fruit. It was the magic of the dragon being so happy. Every on in the village was happy too and thanked Minli.
The end.