



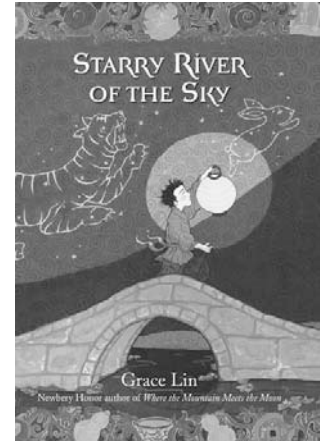
# THE SIX SUNS

An Interactive Read-Aloud & Game to Introduce the Book, *The Starry River of the Sky* by Grace Lin

## ABOUT THE BOOK

*The Starry River of the Sky* by Grace Lin (Little, Brown Books for Young Readers) follows the boy Rendi as he evolves from an angry runaway stranded in a forsaken Chinese village without friends (or the desire to make friends) to a boy who rescues that village by trusting himself and others.

Rendi becomes that hero by listening to ancient stories and by telling his own. Like Grace Lin's related Newbery Honor novel, *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*, the stories within this novel seem only to be a sweet distraction until they coalesce into the answers our hero Rendi needs to save the village.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Grace Lin is the author and illustrator of picture books, early readers and middle grade novels. Grace's 2010 Newbery Honor book *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon* was chosen for the Today Show Kid's Book Club and was a NYT's Bestseller. *Ling & Ting*, Grace's first early reader, was honored with the Theodor Geisel Honor in 2011. An Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award nominee for the US, most of Grace's books are about the Asian-American experience because she believes, "Books erase bias, they make the uncommon everyday, and the mundane exotic. A book makes all cultures universal." More at [www.GraceLin.com](http://www.GraceLin.com).

## ABOUT THE READ-ALOUD & GAME

(For Libraries, Bookstores, Classrooms, and Cultural Organizations)

Many of the stories in *The Starry River of the Sky* tell of why the sun and moon hang in the sky and what can happen when their balance is disturbed. This interactive read-aloud and follow-up game features one of those ancient stories and rewards readers with a glow-in-the-dark sticker that can represent for them the sun, the moon, and how their places in the sky effect our traditional stories and the story of *The Starry River of the Sky*.

The Interactive Read-Aloud allows you to read aloud from the first ancient story told in the book while including the whole audience. The script will also prompt you to use particular members of the audience and some simple props to tell the story of a hero who shoots the troublesome suns from the sky. The Game allows all the attendees to participate post-reading in a simple tossing of a rice-filled arrow onto a sun target. They can be rewarded with glow-in-the-dark stickers that you can order free of charge.

Further Tools for activities and lesson plans are available at [www.GraceLin.com](http://www.GraceLin.com) on the *The Starry River of the Sky* page.



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## WHAT YOU MIGHT PREPARE

(One Month Before the Event)

\_\_\_ Locate a copy of *The Starry River of the Sky* by Grace Lin (Little, Brown Books for Young Readers)

\_\_\_ Locate six yellow objects to represent the six suns. It is best if those objects are concave like a bowl or a plate or, best yet, a flying disc (a.k.a. Frisbee). You can also simply use six large yellow construction paper cutouts.

\_\_\_ Make six “arrows” by putting ½ cup of rice into each of six small Ziploc bags. Tape the bags securely into a tight cylinder. Cut a four-inch wide triangle out of a stiff paper and attach it to the end of your cylinder with strong tape. Now you have a toss-able arrow.

If you want a fairly realistic, but by all accounts safe, bow and arrow, order a “Marshmallow Fun Co Bow and Mallow - Classic - Red and Blue.” Toy stores and Amazon offer them for under \$25. They have been very popular in library events for *The Hunger Games* and the *Percy Jackson* series events.

\_\_\_ Order *The Starry River of the Sky* glow-in-the-dark stickers from [www.CuriousCityDPW.com](http://www.CuriousCityDPW.com). The stickers are a free gift from Grace Lin. Order one sticker for each member of your anticipated audience.

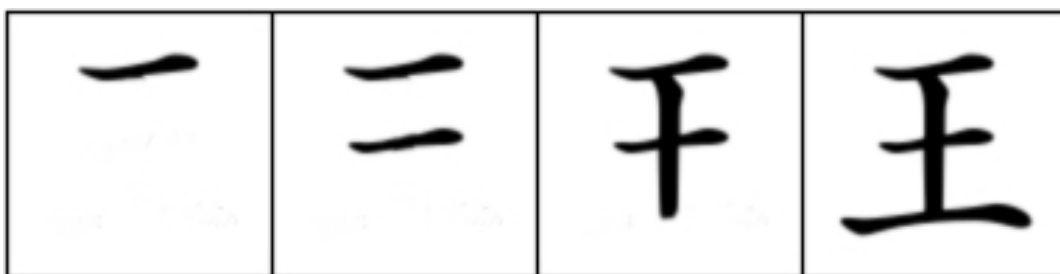
\_\_\_ Locate face-painting crayons or an eyebrow pencil.

\_\_\_ Locate a blue sheet or blanket.

\_\_\_ Print out the script sheet and divide up the two parts.

\_\_\_ Make sure you have 1-2 volunteers to help you with the event.

\_\_\_ Practice making the character "wang", the Chinese character for power. Use the guide below.



From [www.EastAsiaStudent.net](http://www.EastAsiaStudent.net)





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## HOW YOU MIGHT ADVERTISE THE EVENT

If you are holding this event for the public, here are some ideas for marketing the event.

\_\_\_\_\_ Copy and display the poster in this kit in your community. The open circle is for the date, time, and location of your event. You might consider coloring the circle with a highlighter so it glows like the moon.

\_\_\_\_\_ Include the poster and book in a display of books by Grace Lin and books on Ancient China and Chinese legends.

\_\_\_\_\_ List the event in newsletters and online calendars with copy such as:

What would happen if six suns burned in the sky or if the moon disappeared? Join us as we celebrate a new chapter book by author Grace Lin. **The Starry River of the Sky** brings us back into the legendary China we experienced in her Newbery Honor title, **Where the Mountain Meets the Moon**. Readers will listen to Chinese legend, shoot imaginary arrows, and be rewarded with the moon. For all ages, best for ages 7-12.

## WHAT YOU MIGHT PREPARE

(The Week of the Event)

### Making Mooncakes

If you wanted to serve food at your event, you might consider making a simple version of a mooncake. The Moon Festival or Mid-Autumn festival is celebrated on the fifteenth day of the eighth month of the lunar calendar, when the moon is at its most bright. The festival celebrates the legend of the woman who lives in the moon, the archer who shoots suns from the sky, and many other elements that are woven into *The Starry River of the Sky*.

You can find a simple recipe at [www.GraceLin.com](http://www.GraceLin.com) on the *The Starry River of the Sky* page.

### Serving Tea

Green Tea would be ideal to serve at this event, either hot or cold. Green tea is an acquired taste for many kids. Green Tea with Jasmine, however, often adds enough sweetness to please everyone. You can find Green Tea with Jasmine at many stores.





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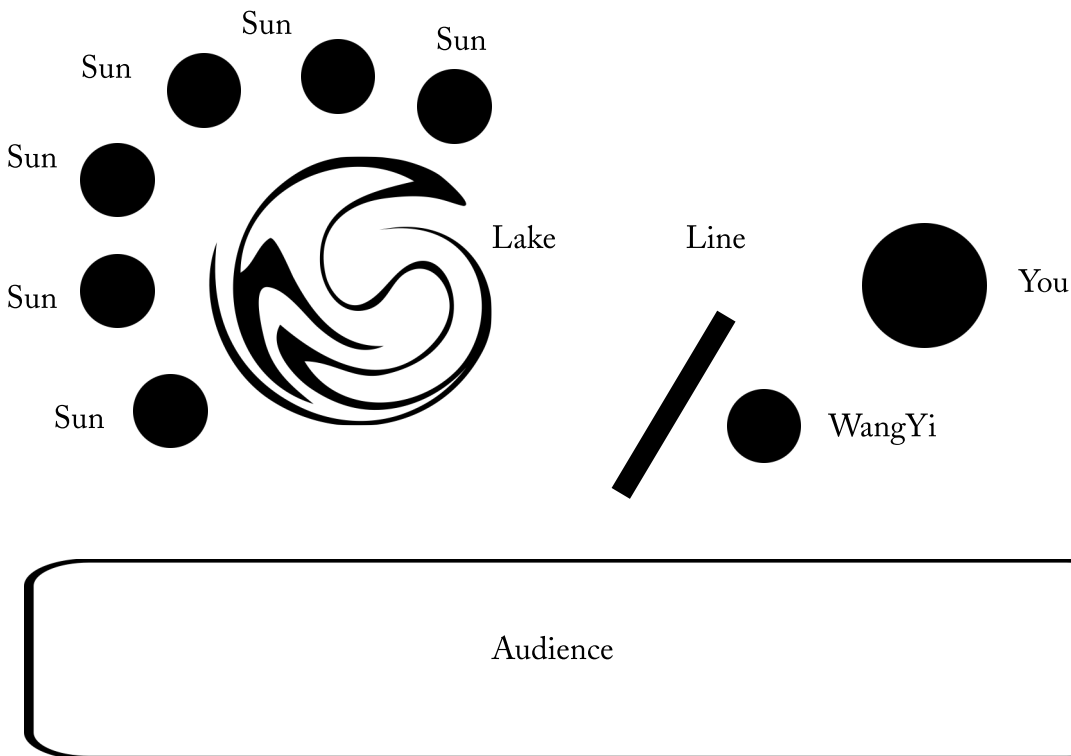
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## WHAT YOU MIGHT PREPARE

(The Day of the Event)

\_\_\_\_\_ Lay out your food if you have chosen to serve it.

\_\_\_\_\_ Lay out your game area. In front of where your audience will sit, lay the blue blanket or sheet in a rough circle to represent a lake. It should be big enough so that your 6 yellow bowls or discs can be arranged on it. Using masking or duct tape, mark out a line 3-4 feet from the “lake” for your hero to toss arrows at.



\_\_\_\_\_ As the crowd gathers, you might draw the Chinese character "wang" on the foreheads of readers.

\_\_\_\_\_ When your crowd has gathered, introduce the story with this suggested Opening Script.

\_\_\_\_\_ Start your Interactive Reading. The bold indented items are prompts to involve readers in your library, classroom, bookstore or other audience in your read aloud of “The Story of the Six Suns,” an ancient Chinese myth from *The Starry River of the Sky*.





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## OPENING SCRIPT

Note: Bold indented items are prompts for you.

This book, ***The Starry River of the Sky* by Grace Lin**, is the story of the boy Rendi, who becomes so angry with his father that he runs away far from home. But, as Rendi discovers, sometimes when you are running away, you get stuck in one place waiting for a chance to keep running. And sometimes when you are stuck, what you are running away from catches up with you.

As the book opens, Rendi is a stowaway on a merchant's cart. Before the cart can take him further from home, he is discovered and left behind in the Village of Clear Sky. This is not a good place for Rendi to be stuck because the village used to have a mountain, but the mountain is gone and the sun blazes down brutally all day. And the village used to have a moon at night, but the moon has gone missing and all night the sky moans with missing it.

Rendi is made angrier being stuck in village where the sun and the moon do not behave as they should and most of the villagers have fled. He is not, as you can imagine, interested in helping this village; he is only interested in finding another opportunity to run. You, the reader, may want him to be a hero, but he is not ready to be one.

But then a mysterious woman named Madame Chang comes to the Village of Clear Sky and starts telling stories that are set long ago in Chinese legend. These stories are ancient, but could these stories mean something to Rendi? Can they help him? Can the stories help the Village of Clear Sky? Will these stories make Rendi into a hero?

I am going to read you one of stories that Madame Chang tells. Now, the best stories are stories where all the listeners have a role, so I am going to ask you all to help me act out this ancient Chinese tale.

I will first need someone to be the Spirit of the Mountain and a someone to play Wang-Yi's wife . Who here is a good reader with a strong voice?

**Pick the two readers, go to their seats and give them their cue cards. Tell them you will tell them when ti is time to read their "lines."**

And I will need six volunteers to play the six suns of the story.

**Pick your readers, bring them to the front with you, give them each one of the six discs, bowls, or plates, and arrange them in a semi-circle per the diagram.**





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## INTERACTIVE READ-ALOUD

Note: Bold indented items are prompts for you.

### "The Story of the Six Suns"

An Ancient Chinese Legend from *The Starry River of the Sky* by Grace Lin

Long ago, so long that only the sky, mountains, and water can truly remember, six suns appeared in the sky.

**Ask your suns to hold their suns in front of their chests.**

These six suns caused great suffering and devastation to the earth. Rain boiled away before ever touching the ground. The trees and plants withered, leaving behind only the scorched earth, burned and brown.

**Ask the audience to pretend like it is very hot and very bright.**

All the villagers were forced to live like worms, crowding into an ancient dark hole in one of the hills. As they began to starve, they also began to despair.

**Ask the audience to moan in despair.**

But then a rumor began to murmur at night, perhaps sent by the Spirit of the Mountain above.

**Ask the Spirit of the Mountain to read his/her script:**

**"The one marked with power can save you. The one who bears the mark of power can save you."**

The people looked at one another in confusion until a man stepped forward. His name was Wang Yi, and he was the strongest, bravest, and quickest of all men. He had already done many great deeds. They said he had tamed the flooding water serpent with just the fierceness of his eyes, and he had killed the single-toothed earth giant with his mighty strength. But more than that, Wang Yi had an unusual scar on his forehead. It looked like the character wang, a symbol of power.

**Ask for a volunteer to be Wang Yi. Draw the symbol of power on his/her forehead with a face paint crayon or eyebrow pencil. Have Wang Yi stand to your left facing the suns.**

"It must be Wang Yi whom the Spirit of the Mountain meant," the people said. "The scar is the mark of power!"

**Have the audience repeat, "The scar is a mark of power."**





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## INTERACTIVE READ-ALOUD (CONT.)

Note: Bold indented items are prompts for you.

But when WangYi stepped on the scorched earth and gazed at the six suns, he knew his strength and fierceness would not help. He had to stand in the shade of the mountain, for the ground lit by the suns burned his feet.

**Ask WangYi to act as if his feet are hot.**

Everything on earth was suffering — even the giant tree next to the mountain seemed to be withering. WangYi realized that he could not fight the suns. His only hope was to shoot them down from the sky.

**Ask the suns to rise to the top of the sky by raising their arms.**

WangYi shot his arrows at the suns, pulling his mighty crescent bow so that it made the shape of a full moon.

**Ask WangYi to use a pretend bow and arrow to shoot at the suns.**

But no matter how powerfully he pulled, the arrows could not reach. Over and over he shot, until the shade of the mountain disappeared as the suns moved overhead.

**Ask the audience if they think WangYi managed to hit the suns.**

WangYi's arrows could NOT reach the suns. Finally, with only six arrows left in his case, WangYi looked down in defeat.

It was then that he saw reflections in the pool. The great lake had shrunk because of the heat, but the shade of the mountain had saved it from completely vanishing. There was still enough water for him to see the six suns reflected in it.

**Ask your suns to lay down their suns on the blue blanket. If they have a disc, plate, or bowl, have them place them so the bowl section is facing up. Ask the suns to return to their seats.**

“I will shoot them here!” WangYi said.





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### INTERACTIVE READ-ALoud (CONT.)

Note: Bold indented items are prompts for you.

**Stand behind WangYi with a bag or basket with the six arrows. Hand WangYi an arrow and ask him to toss the arrow at the suns.**

And with his back to the mountain, he quickly placed an arrow in his bow and shot at the reflection of one of the suns. As the arrow flew into the water, a sun sank from the sky. WangYi fitted another arrow and shot again.

**Hand WangYi an arrow and ask him to toss the arrow at the suns.**

Another sun fell.

Immediately, the people felt a change in the temperature.

**Ask the audience to breathe a sign of relief.**

They crawled out from the hole to watch WangYi shoot the third sun and then the fourth.

**Hand WangYi an arrow and ask him to toss the arrow at the suns.**

But as everyone cheered, WangYi's wife was thinking.

**Ask the audience to cheer. Ask Wang Yi's wife to come up and to stand behind WangYi. Have her read her script.**

**"If he shoots all the suns, we will be forever in darkness."**

So, knowing better than to disturb her husband's concentration, she crept behind WangYi as he prepared his arrow for the fifth sun.

**Hand WangYi his fifth arrow while handing WangYi's wife the sixth arrow.  
Have WangYi's wife hide the arrow.**

With all eyes on WangYi, only the mountain saw WangYi's wife as she silently took the sixth and last arrow from his case and swiftly hid it in her sleeve.

As a result, after shooting the fifth sun, WangYi found his case empty and laid down his bow. This is why there is now one sun. The end.







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### CLOSING SCRIPT

Now imagine Rendi listening to this story in the Village of Clear Sky. What might he learn from this story?

Did WangYi shoot the sun from the sky because he was strong? No? WangYi instead used his cleverness to trick the suns and shoot them in the water.

What would have happened if WangYi's wife had not stolen his last arrow? What might Rendi have learned from this part of the story? Maybe that you cannot save others without friends to help you?

If you read *The Starry River of the Sky* by Grace Lin, you will find out if Rendi is clever and whether or not he learns to trust those around him to help him. And you will learn whether or not Rendi becomes a hero.

Note: If you would like to do another interactive read-aloud from the book, "The Story of the Rooster's Song" (starting on Page 43) works nicely as a companion to "The Story of the Six Suns."

### START THE GAME

Note: Bold indented items are prompts for you.

If you would each like to be WangYi, we will give you the symbol of power on your forehead and you can try tossing an arrow at the many suns.

If you knock down one of the suns, you will get a glow-in-the-dark sticker to take home to remind you of this story and the importance of the sun and the moon in the sky.

**Have the kids line up where Wang-Li stood.**

**As one volunteer helps readers throw the arrows at the sun, you or another volunteer can go down the line drawing the symbol of power on foreheads.**

**(This is a great distraction if there is a Grace Lin book signing and readers must wait to have books signed.)**





## SCRIPT FOR THE SPIRIT OF THE MOUNTAIN

Say this nice and loud when we point to you. You do not need to leave your seat.

**The one marked with power  
can save you. The one who  
bears the mark of power can  
save you.**



## SCRIPT FOR WANG-YI'S WIFE

We will invite you to the front read this. We will tell you when it is your turn!

**If he shoots all the suns, we  
will be forever in darkness.**



CELEBRATE GRACE LIN'S NEW BOOK,  
**THE STARRY RIVER OF THE SKY**



AT THIS EVENT, YOU WILL...

- \* LISTEN TO CHINESE LEGENDS & GRACE LIN'S WORDS
- \* SAVE THE EARTH WITH YOUR BOW & ARROWS
- \* TAKE AWAY THE MOON

For all ages, best for ages 7-12.

