



The Greatest Archer

The greatest of all archers was Yi, for the targets of his deadly arrows were not made of straw, nor were they mere creatures of flesh and blood. The enemies Yi fought and conquered were powerful spirits who rebelled against the order of Nature, in the time of the saintly Emperor Yao. Under his rule men lived in peace, but these malevolent spirits took to themselves the forces of the elements and threatened to destroy all that lived.

It all began harmlessly enough, when ten children tired of playing each one by himself and decided that they would all go out to play together. For these were the children of the Supreme Ruler, born of his wife Hsi-ho. Each of these boys was a mighty star, a sun, and they lived all together above the Eastern Ocean. There a giant tree, the Fu-sang tree, rose thousands of feet from the surface of the water. A thousand men with arms outstretched could not span its trunk. It was in the branches of this tree that the ten suns took their rest. Each dawn it was from there that one of them would set out, as his turn came according to a fixed rota, on his journey across the heavens bringing light and warmth to earth. As

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they kept so obediently to their rota, men had never seen more than one sun at a time, and indeed they did not know that more than one sun existed, for all ten of them looked exactly alike.

No one knows quite why these ten sun-children suddenly took it into their heads to set out one morning all together across the sky. But the Supreme Ruler learned of this happening with alarm. He knew that his children brought great blessings to the earth—one at a time; but with ten in the sky together, surely only catastrophe could follow? His fears were confirmed when the Emperor Yao, in place of his customary prayers of thanksgiving, began to speak of blinding light, unbearable heat, of parched cattle and burning crops. All-powerful though he was on earth, even the Emperor Yao himself was helpless in the face of this new peril in the heavens. Assistance must be sent to him, some hero must descend who would save the world from the fate which threatened. At once the Supreme Ruler thought of his noblest warrior, Yi, the Heavenly Archer, had the skill, the courage, and the goodness which the world would need. Yi it was, therefore, who on a night of full moon came down to earth and announced his presence at the gate of the simple dwelling from which Yao ruled his people.

Yao rose to welcome his visitor, and praised the great red bow he carried in his hand. He led him out into the street, where he pointed to the mountain peak which rose in the distance above the roofs of the capital. On its summit grew a solitary pine-tree. 'Let us see what use you make of this mighty bow you carry,' the Emperor commanded.

Slowly, deliberately, the great archer selected from the quiver at his side an arrow, long and straight and tipped

A great phrase to get the reader to understand that something big is going to happen

Also inclusive of the audience

Starter shows movement of character

Great use of adverbs—two better than one

with purest, hardest bronze. This he fitted to the string which he drew back with one smooth gliding of his right arm. Legs apart, body upright, he faced the distant peak. The pine gleamed in the moonlight, a thread of silver. Yi took his aim. There was a sound like the plucking of a giant zither as he released the string of his bow—and the pine on the hill-top clove in two before the impact of the speeding shaft.

The Emperor smiled. 'Take your rest now,' he ordered. 'Tomorrow there is much for you to do.'

Yi spent the night on a bed of fragrant grasses. When the Emperor himself came to wake him the sky was not yet light. Yi knew that Yao had not slept; he must have spent the night in prayer for his people's deliverance. Still there was no sign of weariness in the compassionate lines of his face. 'Come now,' said the Emperor calmly. 'I wish you to witness the dawn.'

Unattended by any suite the two walked out through the streets of the sleeping capital. The watchman at the gate, wary at first of strangers at such an hour, threw himself flat on the ground when he recognized his Emperor. Yao raised him to his feet, and bade him light their way with his torch to the top of the gate-tower. No sooner had they reached this vantage-point than the first washes of silver on the eastern horizon began to seep into the deep blue of the night sky. The dawn was breaking. For a few moments all was just as in any other dawn. But soon it became apparent that a greater light than the light of the morning was waiting below the horizon. The silver washes were now a flood, and the silver itself was of heightened brilliance. In a second, it seemed, the sky gleamed gold in the east. At the centre of the gold, the disc of the sun lifted itself clear of the land-line. Then, at

the precise moment when the sun stood clear in the sky, over the horizon flashed the rims of two suns, each of equal brilliance with the first. Now about this group of suns the sky flamed angrily for a while, until yet more suns rose, more than the watchers were able to make out in the liquid, boiling, white glare that filled the heavens.

And it was hot. Yi was astonished, when he put his hand on the stone rampart, to find that it burned and blistered, already in the early dawn. He opened his mouth to speak, but the parched air dried his mouth at once so that only a croaking sound came out. The Emperor Yao understood, and nodded and signed that they were to go down. But before they left the roof of the tower, he pointed to a field of millet below, close against the city wall. The ears had not yet formed on the stalks, and the stalks should have been green. But they were brown, withered. As they watched, from a corner of the field came wisps of smoke, and in a few moments the field was aflame. The flames themselves lasted only for a minute. Then all that was left was a layer of white ash, beneath which the ground was already beginning to crack.

Quickly the two men descended from the roof. As they left the tower they felt the soles of their feet burn against the ground. Yi turned back to the tower, where in the shade he found a pail which still contained some water. With this they soaked their sandals, and thus prepared they were able to make their way, though with pain, back to the Emperor's dwelling.

There Yao told his visitor of messengers who had come scores and hundreds of miles from all corners of the empire. They had brought stories of whole villages dying of thirst when the wells had dried; of men perishing in the fields from exhaustion in the heat; of forests ablaze, dense

You know how he feels before he speaks

This tells us they were alone so we can visualise it

Short sentence- so the reader is clear

Use of adverbial

Change of place

To be able to classify paragraph starters



Change in place or time There Yao told... Quickly the men descended...	Use of adverbials Slowly, deliberately... Quickly...
Short sentence The Emperor smiled. And it was hot.	Phrases good for story telling It all began harmlessly enough... No one quite knows <u>why</u> ..
Helping us visualise Yao rose to welcome... Unattended by any suite...	Other



I've classified the paragraphs starters from the first two pages now you can fill in for the rest of the story

*Which work best?
Are adverbials always appropriate?*