

A BLIND ACTION
Based on a Chinese tale by Lieh Tzu
Adapted by Carole L. Cooney

Setting: An open-air market

Characters:

Narrator

Quan, a thief who grabs things with his *fist*

Chen jui, an *old* jewelry shop owner

Jimin: a *helpful* guard

(The above italicized words give the meaning of the Chinese name.)

Narrator: Juicy tangerines, bright green apples and clusters of red grapes lay beside crisp lettuce, round ripe tomatoes, white onions, and purple eggplant. They glistened in the bright sunshine that flooded the open-air market. It was here that Quan felt very much at home.

Quan: I love walking through row upon row of delicious foods. Ahhh... I can see the rug merchant has a few new carpets to sell. And over there, I see beautiful dishes and silverware. I would love to have the hand-made pots and vases I see. Oh, everything delights me!

Narrator: But these things were not what Quan really wanted. He quickly moved through the crowd toward the Jeweler's stall. The tables were spread with golden jewelry studded with precious rubies, diamonds and pearls.

Quan: What beautiful treasures! And they can be mine! All mine! If they were mine, I would be rich enough to build a palace with servants. I could buy fine clothes. I would eat the most delicious foods.

Narrator: But Quan was not satisfied with just looking and dreaming about the jewelry. His desire was so strong that he suddenly grabbed a handful of golden jewelry and ran through the crowd.

Chen jui: Stop! Stop him! He's a thief! Quick! Catch him! HE IS A THIEF!

Jimin: Yes, good Chen jui! I will catch him with the help of the crowd. Quick! Run after him!

Narrator: The Guard ran and ran through the streets and alley ways calling out loudly.

Jimin: Thief! Thief! Help! Catch that little man with the gold jewelry in his hand.

Narrator: Quan quickly slipped into a doorway as the guard and crowd raced by. Huffing and puffing Quan, slowly crept down the street staying close to the walls and shadows. He turned the corner when suddenly the large crowd lunged toward him.

Chen jui: That is him! Look! See the jewelry in his hand. Grab him! He is the thief!

Jimin: Surround him! What is your name?

Quan: My name is Quan.

Jimin: Give that jewelry to Chen jui, NOW!

Quan: (timidly) Yes, sir.

Narrator: The crowd cheered as Chen jui was given the stolen jewelry. The guard marched Quan off to jail. As they walked, Jimin asked Juan some questions.

Jimin: Why did you steal the gold jewelry in front of such a large crowd? Didn't you know that everyone was watching you?

Quan: (sadly) My eyes were only on the jewelry. All of the gleaming gold and sparkling stones dazzling before my eyes blinded me so that I didn't see any one. I only saw the jewelry. I was very foolish.

Jimin: Yes, sometimes we make unwise choices when we see tempting things. I hope you have learned a valuable lesson. As the Chinese proverb goes:

A deliberate inaction is better than a blind action.