

**MARCO POLO**  
**(With an Italian accent)**  
By Carole L. Cooney

This play is based on some of the items Marco Polo found during his explorations. Marco started exploring with his father when he was 14 years old. A few years later, he, his father and his uncle traveled to many different places on their journey to Asia. There they found many unusual things. When he returned, no one believed his stories.

**Setting:** An outdoor market and a restaurant, The Jade Palace, in Asia

**Characters:**

Narrator

Marco Polo

Nicolo Polo, Marco's father

Maffeo Polo, Nicolo's brother

- Narrator:** Marco Polo, his father, Nicolo Polo and Maffeo, his uncle traveled for three and a half years to reach China. While they were exploring, they discovered many unusual things. In this scene, we find them at a large outdoor market.
- Marco:** Papa! Papa! Come-a quick. I want-a you see-a this thing!
- Nicolo:** Marco, we haven't-a time-a to stop-a. We must-a meet-a Uncle Maffeo at-a the restaurant-a.
- Marco:** Pleeze-a, Papa. It-a will only take-a leettle minute-a.
- Nicolo:** All-a right-a. What is it you're so excited about-a?
- Marco:** (He turns his back to his father, reaches in his pocket and pulls out a pair of eye glasses and puts them on, then swiftly turns around facing his father. He smiles broadly)
- Nicolo:** Marco! What-a on earth-a is that-a *thing-a* on your nose-a?
- Marco:** Papa. It-a is called-a eye glasses. Here-a, Papa. Try-a them on-a.
- Nicolo:** (Putting the eye glasses on.) Oh! (Blinking) They hurt-a my eyes-a. They make-a everything blurry. Ah! Marco, throw them away.
- Marco:** Oh, Papa. Pleeze-a let-a me keep-a them-a. It's a new invention to help-a people-a see. Look-a. Papa. See over there-a. There are people-a wearing eye glasses.
- Narrator:** Just then, Maffeo walks toward Marco and Nicolo carrying two sacks.
- Nicolo:** Maffeo, what-a did-a you buy-a?
- Maffeo:** I have-a in-a these sacks-a, the most-a fragrant-a and-a delicious-a spices in the world-a. This is-a called cinnamon (lifting up one sack) and-a this is-a ginger (lifting up the other sack).
- Marco:** May I smell-a their fragrance-a?
- Maffeo:** Help-a yourself-a. (Marco and Nicolo open the sacks and smell the spices.) What-a do you think-a?

**Marco:** I think-a they're delicious-a smelling. Can-a we eat-a some food-a prepared-a with-a these spices-a, Papa?

**Nicolo:** Of-a course, Marco. Let's-a go to The Jade-a Palace, that-a little restaurant-a across the plaza. I've-a heard-a that-a the food-a is-a the best-a in-a the town-a.

**Narrator:** Marco, his father and uncle walk across the plaza to the restaurant. They carefully read the menu but have difficulty understanding the Chinese letters.

**Maffeo:** Let's-a ask-a the waiter to help-a us-a order our food-a. Waiter! Waiter!

**Waiter:** Yes, sir. How can I help you?

**Nicolo:** We don't-a know how to order our food-a. Would-a you bring-a us what you think is the best-a food-a in-a your restaurant-a?

**Waiter:** Yes, sir. (He walks into the kitchen and orders the Chef's specialty dishes.)

**Mafeo:** (Looking around the restaurant) Uncle-a Maffeo, what-a do you think-a those long-a wiggly things-a are? I-a wonder what-a they are called-a.

**Narrator:** The waiter carries a large tray. There are bowls of steaming noodles in a clear broth with pieces of shrimp, chicken and pork floating on top. He serves the noodle dish into the bowls and places them before Marco, his father and his uncle.

**Waiter:** (bowing low) Please enjoy!

**Narrator:** Marco, his father and uncle, look around to see how the other people are eating this dish. They finally pick up the chop sticks and spear a piece of shrimp. The waiter rushes to them and shows them how to use the chop sticks. They have a very difficult time learning to use the chop sticks.

**Marco:** I can't-a do this-a! Can't-a we just-a pick up-a this stuff-a with our hands-a? What-a is-a this called-a anyway?

**Waiter:** Sir, it is called noodles.

**Nicolo:** We'll-a call it-a "pasta" and bring-a some-a pasta back-a to Italy, cook-a it and-a eat-a it-a with a fork-a and-a spoon-a! For-a now, Marco, just-a do the best-a you can.

**Narrator:** Marco, his father and uncle did their best to eat the noodles but it wasn't easy. When they brought pasta back to Italy, it has been said that this was the first time Italians had ever seen or eaten them. Well, that may be true. However, it is also said that Italians were eating pasta before Marco was born. You decide.