

Name _____ Date _____

The Honest Neighbors

Long ago in a small village in China, five neighbors gathered at the public well to draw buckets of water. “Do you remember when the emperor passed through our village?” asked Chang. “The horses bolted, and as the carriage bounced to and fro, the emperor’s purse flew out of the window.”	13 26 38 51
“I remember!” said Ming. “Gold coins rolled all over the village! I found some, but I gave them back.”	64 70
“Indeed?” Wong asked suspiciously. “How did you buy your new boat if you did not keep some of the emperor’s coins?” Each of the neighbors then accused the others of keeping some of the emperor’s gold. They all began to argue and shout, declaring their own honesty and the dishonesty of the others.	81 95 108 120 123
Then a cart pulled up next to the well and a well-dressed man got out. He told them he was a goldsmith. In his cart, he said he had a special bell he was delivering to the emperor’s palace. “What makes this bell so special?” asked Woo.	138 156 168 170
“This bell can tell whether or not someone is telling the truth,” said the goldsmith. “I challenge each of you to reach behind the curtain of my cart and touch the bell. If the bell remains silent, we will all know you have told the truth. But if someone who is not truthful touches the bell, it will ring so loudly that everyone in the empire will hear it!”	184 198 214 230 239
Chang, Ming, Wong, Woo, and Lin each took a turn and reached behind the curtain. The bell did not ring. “We are all honest folk!” declared Woo.	252 266
Then the goldsmith asked to see their hands. Ming, Wong, Woo, and Lin all had traces of golden dust on the hand that had touched the bell, but Chang’s hand was clean.	278 294 298
“You did not tell the truth,” said the wise goldsmith, “so you did not dare touch the bell!”	313 316

