

Dancing with Chosita

The bookmobile landed on soft grass. The girls jumped out and saw bananas hanging from big green leaves. Butterflies fluttered among mango trees and papaya trees. Bright birds soared overhead. On the ground were dozens of chickens, scuttling and clucking!

Grandmother Elf and Brownie Elf had flown the bookmobile all the way to Thailand.

"Look over there!" called Alejandra.

The Brownie friends saw a girl about their age. She was busy gathering eggs. When she saw the visitors, she nearly dropped all the eggs from her basket!



WORDS WORTH KNOWING

CEREMONIES are ways we honor a special time, like a birth or a wedding. When you were in kindergarten, did your class have a graduation at the end of the year? That was a ceremony! What Girl Scout ceremonies do you like most?

"Got it!" Campbell said, catching an egg just in time. She handed it to the girl and explained, "This is a bookmobile. It takes books all around the world!"

The girl smiled and said hello. Her name was Chosita, which means "happiness."

Then she went back to gathering eggs. "I need to get these to the temple," she said. "The eggs are used to bake cakes for **ceremonies**." The girls joined in and soon all the eggs were nestled in Chosita's basket.

"*Khobkhun!*" said Chosita. That means "thank you" in Thai and it sounds like *kobe-kun*. "Would you like to come with me to the temple?" she asked.

"Let's go in the bookmobile!" Jamila said.



WORDS WORTH KNOWING

A **TYPHOON** is a huge storm with very strong winds and rain. In some parts of the world, a typhoon is called a **HURRICANE**.

"Really?" Chosita asked. "I love to read, but my school doesn't have many books. A **typhoon** hit and all the books got soaked!"

The Brownies listened as Chosita told them about the roaring winds and flooding waters. They told her about a **hurricane** that hit their country. "We all pitched in to get new books to libraries and schools," Campbell said. "I'll bet you and other girls here in Thailand can do something like that."

Grandmother Elf looked around the library. "And here is a whole shelf of books that may be just right for your school. They'll give you and your classmates something to read while you gather more books."

"Thank you!" Chosita said.



WORDS WORTH KNOWING

A **FRIEZE** sounds like something cold but it's not! It's a decorative carving on the outside wall of a building.

"These were hurt in the typhoon," Chosita said. "But this **frieze** still tells a very old story. I learned the dances for it. I'll show you!"

Chosita raised her arms and waved them softly, moving her hands as if telling a story with her fingers. The Brownie friends followed along, moving their hands from side to side just like Chosita.

"This is fun, but it's not easy," Campbell said.

"I practice every day!" Chosita said.

Chosita then took the eggs to the temple and soon returned with a beautiful lantern shaped like a lotus flower. "I brought this from the temple," she told the girls. "I wish you could stay to see our Floating Lantern Festival at the end of the rainy season."

Just then, Grandmother Elf came with a book of photographs of the festival. The pictures showed lights on every river and stream, like fireworks on the water.

A Musical Queen

QUEEN SIRIKIT and King Bhumibol have ruled Thailand since 1950. Queen Sirikit likes to write songs. She also works for her country's Red Cross, which helps people after disasters such as typhoons and tidal waves. Queen Sirikit has been a queen longer than anyone else in the world!



"My family makes lots of lanterns for the festival," Chosita said. "I'd love for you to meet my family!"

And so they headed to Chosita's home in the bookmobile, past green fields of rice plants rippling in the breeze. "I work in the rice paddies with my family," Chosita said. She sang a rice-planting song, "*Rhii rhii, khoa saan*," which sounded like *Ree, ree, koh-a san*.

Chosita's house was built on thick poles like stilts. Chosita left her shoes by the steps. "Please come meet my mother," she said.





The girls, too, left their shoes by the stairs. Inside, in a big room, they saw colorful, shimmering fabrics.

"Thailand is famous for its silk," Chosita's mother said. She and Chosita's grandmother had woven the silk themselves. Some of it glittered with gold threads. The family made silks for the many children and grandchildren of the queen and king of Thailand.

"How about I teach you my favorite game?" Chosita asked. "It's called *Ling Ching Lak*, or Monkey Fighting for the Poles. It's one of the oldest games in the world."

Chosita explained the game and Campbell agreed to be the monkey. The other girls stood by one of three big trees in Chosita's yard. Those trees were "safe."

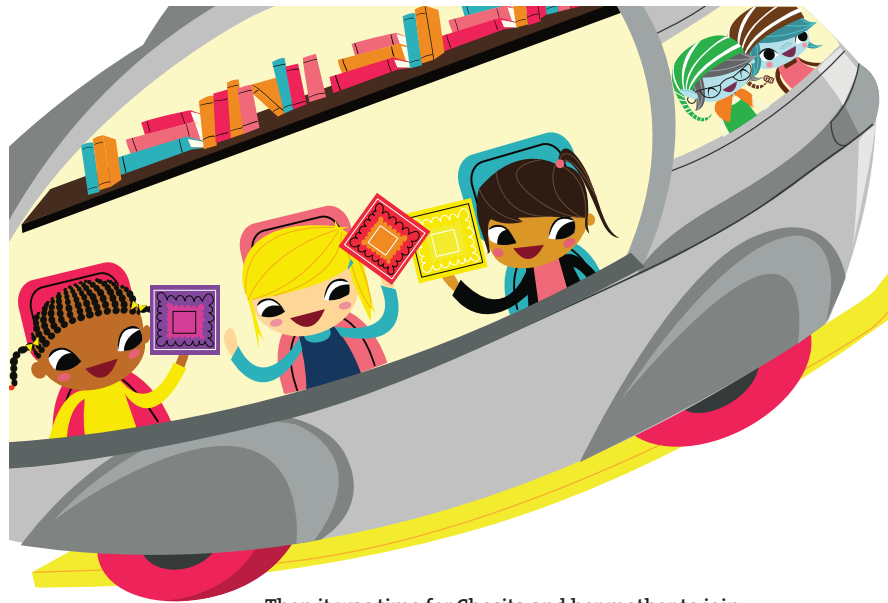
"Ready, set . . . go!" shouted Campbell.

When the "monkey" gave the signal, the girls took off, each trying to reach a tree before the monkey caught them. A girl with no tree became "it."

Alejandra laughed. "Oops! Now I'm the monkey! Ready, set, go!"

"I like this game," Jamila said. "It reminds me of our games of tag and musical chairs."

After the girls played, they ate mango slices and sipped spiced tea under the shade of a banyan tree.



Then it was time for Chosita and her mother to join the rest of their family in the rice paddies. They gave each girl a square of silk—purple for Jamila, red for Campbell, yellow for Alejandra. The girls said thank you and Chosita and her mother waved good-bye.

“There are so many girls in the world. Who will we visit next?” Alejandra asked.

“We’ve been to warm countries so far,” Jamila said.

“How about someplace cold?” asked Grandmother Elf. “I know the perfect place to get cozy with new friends and a good story—and some nice hot tea!”

“Hooray!” shouted the girls.

And then *poof!* Off they went!

WORDS WORTH KNOWING

HEROINES are women or girls who act with special courage—in real life or in stories.

