

## The Magic Paintbrush

Liang was a poor Chinese boy who could not go to school and had to work hard. He was very talented at painting but could not afford a paintbrush. One day, he had a dream. In the dream, a ghost gave him a paintbrush. When he woke up, he really found one beside him. It was a magic paintbrush, as every time he finished a painting, it came to life. The Emperor heard about this and wanted Liang to paint him a mountain of gold. Liang knew that it was wrong and he decided to chase the Emperor away. He then used his talent and magic paintbrush to help the poor in his village.

### Characters:

Liang and the two villagers are good friends and have lived in the same village all their lives. They are poor and always help each other. However, they do not like the greedy and mean Emperor because he takes most of the villagers' money to make his palace the best in China. His soldiers are loyal to him but rude to the villagers. The old man, a wise ghost, knows that Liang is kind and talented at painting so he gives him a present.

**Emperor** - He is very rich but greedy and mean. He keeps everything for himself and gives nothing to anybody.

**Liang** - He is talented at painting. He is poor but kind. He likes to help everyone.

**Old man** - He is a wise ghost with a magic paintbrush. He wants to give his brush to a special person who will use it to help others.

**Soldier** - He is very loyal to the Emperor but he is very rude to poor people.

**Villagers 1 & 2** - They are friends of Liang and they are poor too. They want to help Liang, as they can see how talented he is.



**Scene 1**  
**(In a field)**

*(Liang and two poor villagers are working and talking in a field.)*

**Villager 1:** Liang, why are you working so hard today?

**Liang:** I want to buy a paintbrush. I must work hard to make enough money to buy one. Then I will become a painter and paint pictures all day long.

*(Liang takes a rest. He kneels down in front of a flat stone on the ground, takes out a stick and starts drawing a picture of a rabbit.)*

**Villager 2:** You have a very big dream, Liang. Your pictures are always so beautiful and look so real. I want to help you make your dream come true.

*(The two villagers look at each other and go on working. Liang looks at the picture he has just finished.)*

**Liang:** If I have a paintbrush, it will be perfect.

**Villagers 1 & 2:** Liang, someday you will have enough money to buy one. You must work hard to make your dream come true.

*(Liang continues to look at his picture. He yawns and lies on the ground, still looking at his picture. He falls asleep and starts to dream. He sees an old man in his dream.)*

**Liang:** Who are you?

**Old man:** I was a painter. I know that you want to be a painter too. I want to give you my special paintbrush. But you must be careful with it.

*(Liang looks at the old man in amazement.)*



**Liang:** Th...th...thank you.

*(Liang reaches out to take the paintbrush but the old man disappears. Liang wakes up with his arms stretched out in front of him. Villagers 1 & 2 are looking at Liang and laughing out loud.)*

**Villager 1:** What were you dreaming about, Liang?

**Liang:** An old man was giving me a paintbrush. It was so real. I felt the paintbrush in my hands.

**Villager 2:** Look! There's something by your side, Liang. What is it?

**Villager 1:** Yeah, what is it?

**Liang:** What? Where? *(Looking down at both sides excitedly)* It's a paintbrush! My dream was real. I can't believe it!

*(Liang jumps up and looks at his paintbrush happily. He immediately starts painting a picture of a frog.)*

## Scene 2 (In a field)

*(The frog comes to life. It jumps off the stone. Liang and the two poor villagers are standing in amazement.)*

**Villager 1:** *(Pointing at the stone)* Did you see that?

**Villager 2:** Yeah, how did that happen?

**Liang:** Amazing! The old man in my dream said that this paintbrush was special. It's really magic. As soon as I finished painting my picture...



**Villager 1:** It came to life...

**Villager 2:** And jumped right off the stone!

**Liang:** Now it's gone.

*(One of the Emperor's soldiers is passing by.)*

**Soldier:** Hey there! What are you doing?

**Villager 1:** We're working, sir.

**Soldier:** No, the boy with the paintbrush. What were you doing?

**Liang:** I was painting a picture of a frog, sir.

**Soldier:** Let me see your picture then.

**Liang:** I, I, I can't, sir. It jumped away!

**Villager 1:** It happened so quickly! It was very strange ...

**Villager 2:** Yeah, the painting came to life and jumped away!

*(The soldier looks at them in amazement - he does not quite believe them.)*

**Soldier:** I don't believe you. Paint me a picture right now!

*(Liang starts to paint a picture of a bird on the same flat stone. Just as he finishes and lifts up his brush, it comes to life and flies off.)*

**Soldier:** Are you playing a trick on me, boy? Now you must come with me to see the Emperor.

**Liang:** But, but, but ...



### Scene 3 (In the palace)

*(The soldier takes Liang to the Emperor. Liang is kneeling on the floor in front of the Emperor with his paintbrush.)*

**Emperor:** Boy, this soldier has told me about the trick you played on him. If you do not want to be punished, you must paint me the most beautiful picture you can.

*(Liang picks up his paintbrush and immediately starts to paint a picture of a bird on a piece of paper. Just as he finishes and lifts up his brush, it comes to life and flies off.)*

**Emperor:** Is this another trick, boy? Let me see your paintbrush.

*(Liang hands the Emperor his paintbrush.)*

**Emperor:** Where did you get this paintbrush?

**Liang:** An old man in my dream gave it to me.

**Emperor:** Do you think I'll believe that?

**Liang:** I'm not lying, Your Majesty. He said that it was a special paintbrush.

**Emperor:** Hmm, a special paintbrush, eh? Well then, paint me a picture of a mountain of gold.

*(The Emperor gives Liang his paintbrush back. Liang does not start painting.)*

**Emperor:** Paint me a picture of a mountain of gold, now!

*(Liang does not start painting. The Emperor is very angry.)*

**Emperor:** Soldier, take away this boy's paintbrush and lock him up in jail. Don't give him any food!



**Soldier:** Yes, Your Majesty.

**Liang:** No, please don't take away my paintbrush. I'll paint your picture right now, Your Majesty.

**Emperor:** Soldier, let the boy go.

**Soldier:** Yes, Your Majesty.

*(Liang starts drawing a picture of a big mountain of gold. Just as he finishes and lifts up his brush, there is a big mountain of gold in the room. The Emperor is very happy and plays on the mountain of gold.)*

**Emperor:** I'm rich, I'm rich! I'm the richest person in China! With this paintbrush, I can have anything I want.

*(While the Emperor and the soldier are talking, Liang continues to paint. He paints a big gold snake that chases the Emperor and the soldier away. Nobody ever sees them again.)*

**Liang:** My gold snake has chased away the greedy Emperor forever. I'll use this magic paintbrush to paint beautiful pictures and help poor people. It'll always be a special brush to me.

