

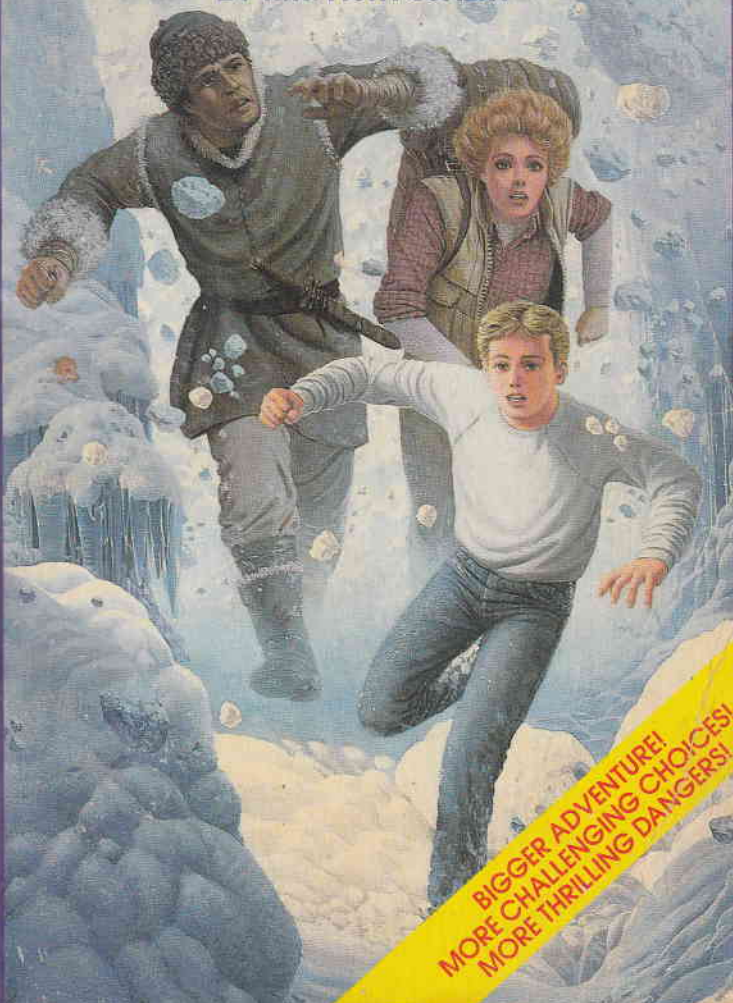
CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE®

Jesse

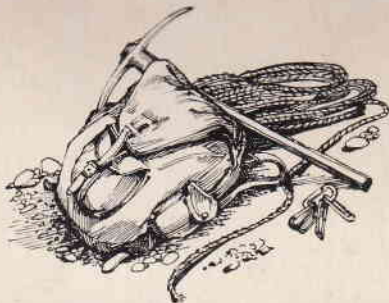
SUPER ADVENTURE #2

DANGER ZONES

BY R.A. MONTGOMERY



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If you hunt for the lost caravan, turn to page 125. If you search for the secret documents, turn to page 6. If you take off for Hong Kong, turn to page 11. Watch out! Each trip has deadly surprises in store. Only fate and your wits will keep you alive in the danger zones!

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CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE®
SUPER ADVENTURE
DANGER ZONES

BY R.A. MONTGOMERY



ILLUSTRATED BY LESLIE MORRILL



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Dear Reader:

Writing Choose Your Own Adventure books is an adventure in itself; and I like doing it. Often I travel to the places I write about. When I'm home in northern Vermont with three feet of snow piled up against the door of my study, imagination takes over and the adventures unfold.

The book you are about to read is my first super adventure. It will take you to far away places where danger abounds—the Himalayan mountains, the Hong Kong underworld, and the infamous Asian desert called the Takla Makan. I haven't been to the desert, but I have hiked and climbed in the Himalaya and explored the crowded streets and lovely hills and harbor of Hong Kong. Each of these places is a setting of great beauty and mystery.

I'm glad you're on these adventures with me, and I hope you enjoy *Danger Zones*.

Yours,
R. A. Montgomery



WARNING!!!

Do not read this book straight through from beginning to end. These pages contain many different adventures you may have as you accompany one of your brothers on a mission to a faraway and dangerous region. From time to time, as you read along, you will be asked to make decisions and choices. Your choices may lead to success or disaster.

Your adventures are the result of your choices. You are responsible because you choose! After you make your choice, follow the instructions to see what happens next.

Think carefully before you make a move. In the danger zones, your safety cannot be taken for granted!

Good luck!

You have three older brothers. They are explorers, involved in fascinating but often dangerous adventures all over the world. Many times you have begged them to let you come along on one of their adventures. But you always get the same answer: "You're too young, wait until you've grown up."

You hate feeling like a little kid.

"I could do it if they'd only give me a chance," you say to yourself over and over again. "It's so hard being a kid."

Recently, though, you've had a birthday. Now you're a teenager. "That should make a difference," you think. And it does!

Your brothers invite you to dinner at your favorite restaurant.

The four of you leave your large, comfortable house and head for Al's, a hamburger house near a lake on the outskirts of town.

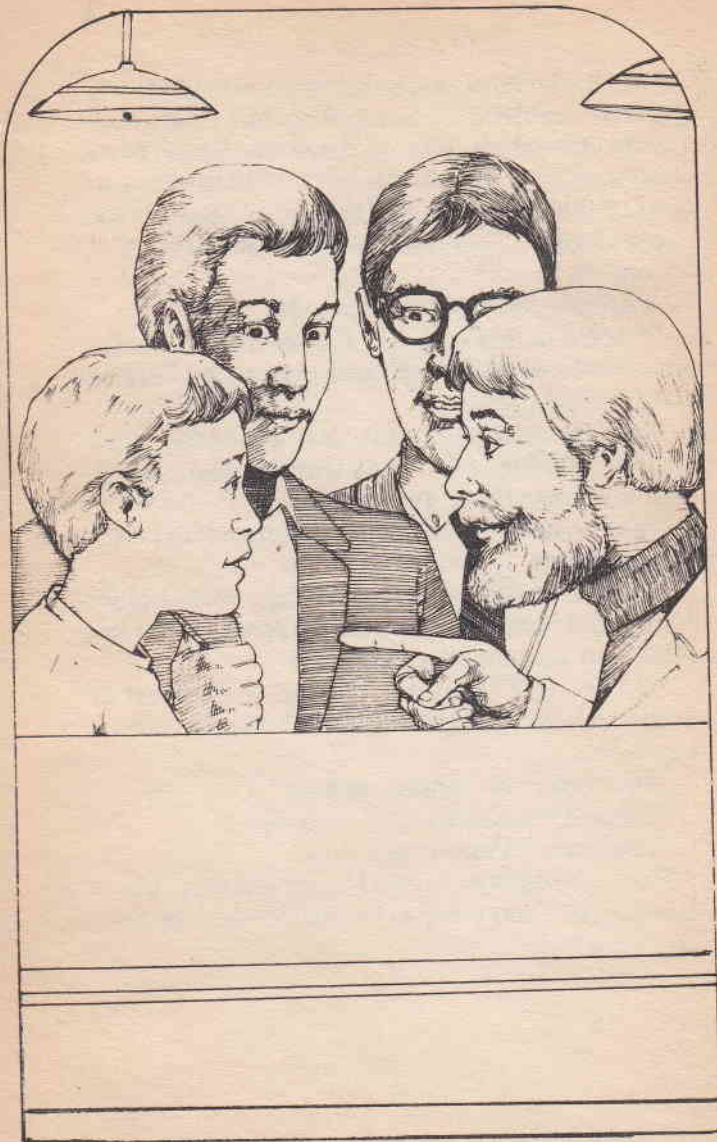
"What's up?" you ask Michael, the oldest of your brothers, as he steers through the downtown traffic.

"Ask Pete," he replies, smiling.

"Okay, Pete, what's up?" you ask.

"Ask Sam," Pete replies.

They all laugh in a good-humored way, but it annoys you. You want to be treated like a grown-up, not a kid.



Finally you're seated at Al's, and the waitress has taken your orders—burgers and fries all around.

Michael raps a glass with his knife and says, "Quiet all, the Society of Adventurers is now in session. May we hear from Pete?"

Pete looks directly at you and says in his most serious voice, "After a long and heated debate, we have decided to invite you on one of our trips."

"All *right!*" you exclaim. Several people in the restaurant look over at your table, and you blush a little.

Sam takes up where Pete left off.

"Pete and Michael and I are going on different trips at the same time this year. You can choose the trip you want to go on. So, I turn the meeting over to Michael, to let him describe his trip first."

You can't believe it's finally going to happen, but there is Michael looking at you, ready to describe his upcoming trip.

The man uses the paddle well, and after twenty minutes, the boat touches a sandy beach.

"You may get out now," he says, in the same kind, hypnotic voice. "Follow me."

A narrow trail leads through beautiful woods. The smell of night-blooming jasmine fills the air and increases your sense of being in an unreal world.

"Stop here," he commands, still in a friendly tone.

Through the trees, you can see the outline of a Hindu temple. In the courtyard, a butter lamp burns, illuminating carvings of two Hindu gods.

"Yii-eeeeee!" A sharp scream severs your dreamlike state.

If you run, turn to page 27.

*If you stay, pretending to remain in the trance,
turn to page 46.*

"Let me lure you to a dazzling and dizzying world of mountain climbing where the air is thin and the slopes are steep," Pete says.

You look at him excitedly.

"You did well the last two summers when we taught you basic climbing skills on that vacation out in the Grand Tetons," he continues. "Now you can put those skills to work on an unclimbed ridge on Annapurna in the Nepalese Himalayas.

"The task of this expedition is to recover documents—secret age-old writings from Tibetan temples—that were apparently lost in an escape attempt by three Tibetan monks four years ago. The monks were bringing the documents out of Tibet, away from the Chinese conquerors, and lost their way in bad weather."

"You mean they were in Nepal and safe, but they didn't know it?" you ask.

"Right," Pete replies. "The story goes that, in a delirium caused by high altitude and fatigue, they tried to cross the Annapurnas instead of following the river valley. They were last seen heading for the unclimbed ridge on Annapurna's northeast side."

Turn to page 17.

You decide you'd like to go with Pete, and before you know it, you're on your way.

"How much longer, Pete?" you ask, peering out the window of the jet at the ground thirty-five thousand feet below.

"Not long now. Another hour and we'll be in Katmandu, capital of Nepal."

It's hard being patient after twenty-six hours of flying from New York to India and on to Katmandu. Nepal is the home of Everest, Annapurna, Dhaulagiri, and other giant mountains. Out the window of the plane, you see the snowcapped Himalayas. This mountain chain stretches for nineteen hundred miles, a fortress between Tibet, China, and India.

Turn to page 15.

"Go ahead, Sam. I'm hungry anyway," you say. "I'll stay here."

After an eleven-course meal, washed down with many cups of green tea, you look at your watch only to realize that three hours have passed. Nothing has happened. Mr. Chou and his servants never appeared, you have eaten an ordinary meal in an ordinary restaurant in bustling Hong Kong.

"I hope Sam comes back soon. I want some action," you say to yourself, finishing yet another cup of the odd-tasting green tea. Presently, you realize that you feel drowsy, and as sleep overtakes you, you are surrounded by a band of men from the Dragon Tong who carry you away. You are powerless to resist.



Turn to page 53.

The mysterious beauty of the lake, the glow of mountains in moonlight, and the romance of India lead you to talk with this stranger. You step out onto the deck, being careful not to wake Michael. You are certain that he would disapprove of this man, but a little talk won't hurt, you think.

"This way. This way. Yes. Yes, my young friend. Not to be afraid. Come with me." The voice is kind and repetitive. There is a hypnotic quality to it as the man softly repeats the words over and over. Soon you feel dazed, as if you were in a trance.

A small canoe rests snugly beside the houseboat. The man motions you into it. Your will and judgment have melted away.

The canoe moves swiftly and silently over the water, following a narrow reflection of moonbeam across the lake. You want to ask where you are going, but your ability to speak has vanished.

"I'm going into the Takla Makan Desert in Chinese Central Asia in search of a treasure caravan lost two hundred years ago."

"Sounds great, Michael. I'm ready," you say.

"Not so fast. The Takla Makan is the world's most treacherous desert. It's dry death where moving sands create dunes three hundred feet high. It's a forgotten area where 'hell lets loose its fury,' as they used to say. Entire caravans were lost there in the fierce sandstorms called Black Hurricanes. And the Great Silk Route lost many of its greedy travelers as they crossed the more treacherous stretches through the desert."

Michael pulls out a map showing Central Asia.

"You see, the Takla Makan Desert is bordered to the west by the Pamir Mountains and by the Karakoram to the south. On the north side are the Tien Shan Mountains, and to the east, the Gobi Desert, never known as a friendly place."

You look at the map, imagining high, icy, snow-capped peaks surrounding a sandy sea of blazing hot days and frigid nights.

"If caravans were buried or swallowed up by sandstorms, how can we ever hope to find one lost over two hundred years ago?" you ask.

High clouds brush the peaks, leaving silver streamers.

Six Land Rovers ferry you; Pete, Sangy, your Sherpa guide; three other climbers named Chris, Loren, and Cathy; your gear; and the porters over a tortuous winding road, along a beautiful river valley, and finally to the town of Pokhara, the jumping-off place for the expedition.

This season, bad weather has plagued other expeditions, causing several deaths from avalanches and exposure.

"It looks like the monsoons are hanging in late this year," Pete says, gazing up at the mountains, their crowns smothered in white clouds. "When that happens, the snow builds up and 'white death' threatens everyone. That's what probably got our Tibetan friends four years ago. This could be a wild-goose chase. If they were buried by an avalanche, we'll never find them."

Chris, who has been studying the map of the Annapurna range, looks up. "Yes. That could be. Then again, they might have dug a snow cave on the ridge. Avalanches could have covered it and then uncovered it. The documents could be found there—in good shape. It's a long shot but worth a try."

Turn to page 25.

"I hope Michael and Pete aren't mad at me for choosing to go with you," you say a week later, as you and Sam sit having tea at a restaurant atop the highest hill in Hong Kong. The sight of the jade green bay below, the islands, and mainland China are beautiful. You wonder how crime could flourish in such a lovely place.

"Don't worry. They'll understand. And you'll get a chance to go with them another time," answers Sam.

"Yeah, I guess you're right," you reply.

"Right now we have a major choice to make. We can either go to the U.S. Consulate here and get their help, or we could contact the Dragon Tong, a notorious Chinese gang. They deal in information as well as everything else. I know it's dangerous to talk to them, but we do know that Bill Foote and Mario Molitto, the two Americans, had an introduction to the Dragon Tong from a branch of the gang in San Francisco. The odd thing about all this is that the Foote and Molitto families are reluctant to explain what they were doing here in Hong Kong in the first place."

*If you choose to see the Dragon Tong first,
turn to page 16.*

*If you choose to go to the U.S. Consulate first,
turn to page 74.*

"I'd like to help set up camp," you say.

Six days later, you, Pete, and Sangy, the guide, approach the high open amphitheater called the Annapurna Sanctuary. The meadowlike land is ringed by towering giants more than twenty-four thousand feet high. The entrance to the sanctuary is guarded by a jagged peak known as Machapucharre.

"This will do for base camp," Pete says, pointing out a flat piece of ground tufted with yellow-brown grass. "Altitude here is sixteen thousand feet." He points to a high, fluted ridge on the northeast flank of the sprawling Annapurna. "That's the spot. They were last seen on that rocky outcrop on the ridge. Then a storm came in. They weren't seen again."

"It looks tough," you say, staring in awe at the gigantic mountain glittering in the sun. High winds whip streamers of snow off the summit.

"It is tough. Winds, avalanches, low temperatures, lack of oxygen—all make it dangerous. Being careful and thoughtful, and having a good deal of courage, is how you survive at these altitudes. Also, knowing when to turn back is important."

You nod in agreement.

"Hey, what's that?" you say, pointing at a shimmering light cascading down the flank of Annapurna.



Turn to page 19.

A shot smacks **against the houseboat**. Then another. A window **breaks**.

Return shots are **fired by the police**.

"Aii-yee!" yells **the man in the boat**, holding his shoulder. "I am hit."

"About time we **got him**," says one of the officers. "He is **nothing more** than a thief claiming to be part of a **revolutionary group**. He probably asked you to join **them**, didn't he?"

"Why, yes. He did," you reply. "How did you know he'd be here?"

"We have been following you since your arrival in New Delhi. We put out false information that you two were revolutionaries pretending to look for the lost caravan. It was a trap for this gang. We're sorry for the trouble it caused you. We had you covered all the time. You were in no real danger," the officer says.

"You're safe now," Michael says. "But next time don't go off on your own."

"I was hypnotized, Michael. Honest. I was hypnotized," you reply.

"Well, we won't argue about it. Just watch out. There are dangerous places. Tomorrow, on to the Takla Makan."

The End

A whirlwind of activity pushes you through the next three days as you check the supplies for the expedition: climbing ropes, ice axes, crampons, fuel, food, down parkas and pants, boots, gloves, hats, sunglasses, snow goggles, and medical equipment.

"How will we ever get this up the mountain?" you ask Pete.

"No problem. On our backs with the aid of porters." You look up at the rim of mountains surrounding the city.

You return to your hotel room to prepare for a visit to the Tong.

"The Dragon Tong probably know we're here, and they probably know why," Sam tells you. "Don't be too surprised at anything they say. We'll meet them at the Bear Paw Restaurant, okay?" The Foote family's lawyer told me that the Bear Paw is supposed to be the headquarters of the Tong. Why don't you call and make arrangements?"

"Sure thing," you reply.

"Here's the number. The contact's name is a Mr. Chou."

Nervously you dial the number Sam gave you and wait as it rings.

Turn to page 70.

"What's so important about these secret documents?" you ask.

"They're historical records of ancient Tibet, a treasure of their cultural history. The refugee community in Nepal and India desperately wants them back," Pete replies.

"Haven't others tried to find them?"

"Yes, but without success."

You can't believe your ears. Your brother is actually ready and willing to take you along as a *real* member of his group.

"Wow, I've always wanted to climb with you, Pete," you say.

"Wait until you hear what Sam has up his sleeve before you decide," Pete suggests.



Turn to page 22.

You take the package to Mr. Sims. It's no bigger than a pack of cards and slips easily into the pocket of your jacket. You feel nervous, never having done anything like this before. You feel as though everyone in the restaurant knows exactly what you are up to. It seems to take an age to cross the room and walk out the front door. Finally, you and Sam are on the street hailing a cab. Minutes later, you are at the Star Ferry headed for the Peninsula Hotel across the bay in Kowloon.

"Sam, I don't like this. I think we're being set up. Something is wrong. He didn't ask us enough questions about who we are. He just trusted us right off."

Sam agrees, but wants to go on. "Remember, we've got the backing of the authorities. I'm sure they have agents tracking us at this very moment. Relax."

You leave the ferry, walk to the Peninsula Hotel, and enter the spacious lobby.

Turn to page 66.

"I don't know," answers Pete.

"There it is again," you say.

Both you and Pete strain to see the arcing yellow light that radiates from the distant slope.

"Flares. Emergency flares. Someone's in trouble," Pete says, rummaging in his knapsack for binoculars.

"Look, you can see with these," he says, handing them to you.

You spot a red tent high on the ridge. A figure crouches by the tent waving a flag. Then the figure fires another flare.

"He's not that high," Pete says. "He's just about where we were going to climb to anyway. We could reach him. It wouldn't be too rough."

If you decide to make a rescue attempt immediately, turn to page 24.

If you decide to wait for the rest of your party (it could be six or eight hours before they arrive), turn to page 49.

"Good question," Michael replies. "Recently, a twin-engine plane was lost over the Takla Makan, and an air search crew spotted what seems to be the remains of a huge caravan. They were flying at ten thousand feet, though, so who knows. Whatever they saw apparently has been uncovered by recent storms. We could get there only to find it buried again or to find that it wasn't a caravan at all."

Michael pauses to take a bite of his hamburger, and Pete takes his turn.

Turn to page 5.

"Do you expect trouble, Sam?" you ask.

Sam fiddles with the tape recorder a bit more and then answers. "Truthfully, I don't know what we're getting into. Okay, I'm set. Let's go to the Bear Paw a little early and check it out."

At that moment the phone rings. You pick it up.

"Hello. Yes, this is room four-oh-two. . . . No. . . . Yes, I'm sure. No problem." You hang up. "Wrong number," you tell Sam.

"That's strange," he says. "I have a feeling that was a call to find out if we're in the room. I smell trouble. What do you think we should do? We're vulnerable if we stay here."

If you recommend sitting tight anyway and seeing what happens, turn to page 29.

If you recommend leaving by the fire escape outside the window, turn to page 108.

Sam puts down his cup of coffee very carefully, looks at each one of you seated around the table, and says, "I am searching for two lost Americans who were last seen at the Mandarin Hotel in Hong Kong. Here are their pictures. Their families have offered me a half-million-dollar reward if I can find them and bring them back safe and sound."

"I don't have many clues," Sam continues, "but there are enough for a start. The search will involve danger. Hong Kong is a city of intrigue. Smuggling, drug dealing, and political kidnappings are common. They play for keeps. We have to be careful not to create an international incident. Remember, China surrounds Hong Kong and the people are wary of any non-Chinese snooping around. I will try to keep you out of really dangerous spots, but I could use you, your quick mind, and your keen ideas."

"It's up to you," Michael says.

If you decide to search for the lost caravan in the Takla Makan Desert with Michael, turn to page 125.

If you decide to search for the lost secret documents in Annapurna with Pete, turn to page 6.

If you decide to join Sam in searching for the two lost Americans, turn to page 11.

Chodak nods his head, avoiding looking at you. He pours another cup of the steaming hot tea, which is made with butter and salt added to the dark tea leaves.

"People talk and rumors fly, but it is best not to heed them," he replies.

"Who would have murdered them and why?" you ask, unsatisfied with Chodak's response.

"Who knows? Chinese agents, perhaps. Thieves. People who wanted the secret documents, the treasure of Tibet."

"I heard the name of a place, a town perhaps, where they were supposed to have been seen. It was Ghorapani, wasn't it?"

"Rumors, only rumors," says Chodak.

"Well, I say we start there. How about it, Chodak?"

"If you seek trouble, you will find trouble, my friend. There are feelings and emotions that are hundreds of years old. It might be best to avoid this trouble. We could search higher up the gorge."

If you decide to go to Ghorapani, turn to page 143.

If you decide to go up the gorge of the Kali Gandaki, turn to page 119.

"No time to wait, Pete," you say. "I think we should go ahead now. If we wait for the others, it'll be dark. It's now or tomorrow, and tomorrow might be too late."

Pete nods in agreement and busies himself getting ropes, ice axes, food, and sleeping bags from the supplies that you, he, and Sangy have brought up.

"Let's go," you say, shouldering your pack.

The three of you cross the glacial debris and climb up the snow slope directly below where you spotted the tent and flares. Already, afternoon shadows are lengthening.

Sangy is sturdy and experienced. The Sherpa people are famous for their skill in the mountains.

"Mountain is sad today," Sangy says.

Peter agrees with him. Then he sets to cutting steps with his ice ax on a steep section of ice wall. A chilly breeze slips down the mountain, making you glad for your parka. From high above is the creak and groan of ice and snow moving—the threat of an avalanche.

Turn to page 52.

"How about the story that they made it out of the Annapurna Sanctuary and were lost down in the Kali Gandaki River Gorge? Maybe we should search there, too," you add.

"Good idea," Pete says. "Some of you could go on a search of the Kali Gandaki with Chodak,"—Pete's Tibetan friend from Pokhara—"while the rest of us set up base camp and wait out the monsoon. What do you want to do?" Pete asks.

If you decide to go with the group to set up base camp, turn to page 12.

If you decide to search the Kali Gandaki River Gorge with Chodak, turn to page 30.

"Michael! Hey, Michael. Wake up. There's someone here on deck."

Sounds come from Michael's bed. "What? What's going on?" he asks, emerging sleepily.

The figure slips over the side of the houseboat and, with powerful, short strokes, glides away in a slender canoelike boat. You stand on deck and watch him depart. Then you explain to Michael what happened.

"The East is a strange place," he tells you. "You have to be on watch all the time. Fortune-tellers, soothsayers, they all have some intriguing thing to offer you. I suggest steering clear of them, especially when you're alone."

You break through the bushes next to the trail with a powerful surge of energy. There is enough moonlight to see by, and you head for the lake.

"After him. He's escaping!" shouts the voice, and it is no longer soothing or kindly. You hear the footfalls and cursing of three or four people, all in hot pursuit.

"Don't let him escape! Get him! He'll warn the others!"

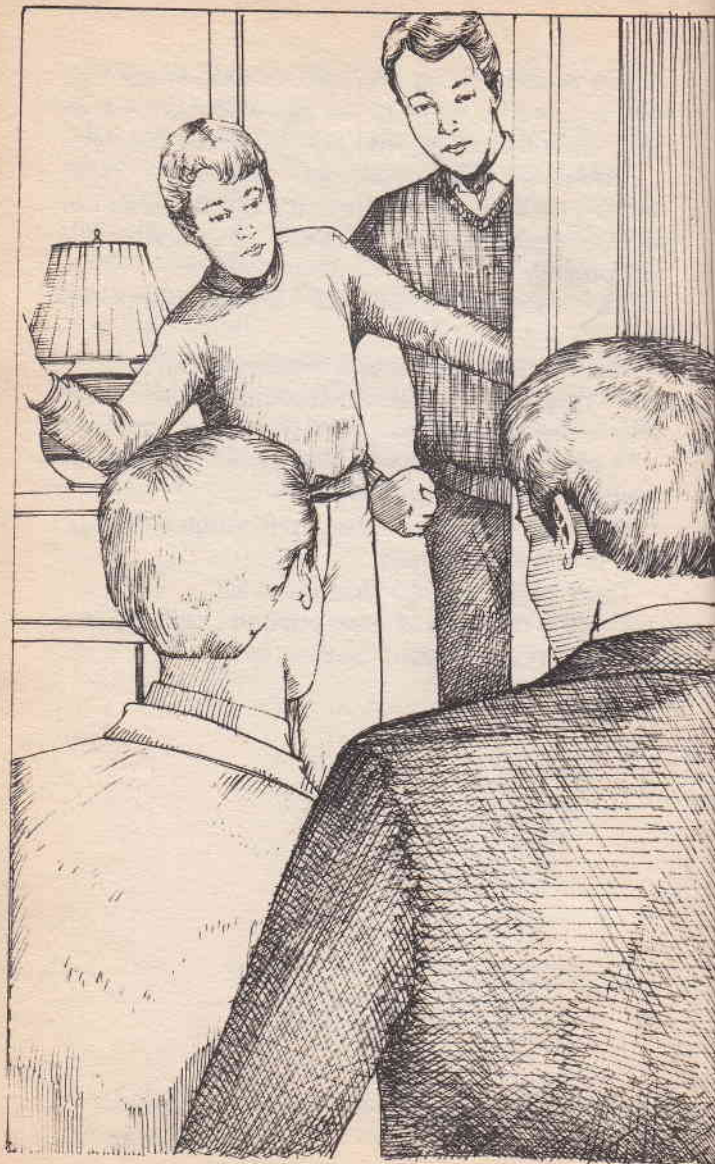
Your lungs feel as though they are about to burst from your frantic dash for freedom. There is no time to be afraid.

"I must go on. I can't stop now," you say to yourself.

You run over a small stream, through a thicket, and between two trees.

Then suddenly you stop dead still.

There is no noise of your pursuers, only silence and the sound of your beating heart.



"Okay," says Sam. "There's plenty of time before our meeting."

"Shouldn't we be more prepared in case they come to make trouble, though?" you ask. "Maybe we should alert the police."

"Not now. Let's just wait."

You fidget with the television, get a lemonade from room service, and try to relax. You wish it were time to go to the Bear Paw Restaurant.

Suddenly someone knocks sharply on the door.

"Who is it?" you and Sam both shout, almost in unison.

"A message from Mr. Mario Molitto," comes the reply.

You stare at each other in disbelief.

"Excuse me?" you say.

"A message for you from a Mr. Mario Molitto."

"Okay, open the door," Sam says.

You are on your feet in a flash. You open the door. Instead of a uniformed bellboy with a message from the hotel desk, you are confronted by two unsmiling men in their early twenties. They look very tough.

You like the looks of Chodak when you meet him. He has a kindness that seems to radiate from his eyes; his voice is soft, yet firm.

"Yes, I have heard tales of the three monks who were trying to save the secret teachings of our beloved Tibet," Chodak says to you.

"But haven't you searched for them before?" you ask Chodak.

"Of course we have, my young friend, but the Kali Gandaki River Gorge is a huge place—steep, often dangerous."

"What time of year was it when they were last seen?" you ask.

"Springtime. Late spring, and the avalanches and winter snowmelt filled the gorges. The river became fierce and angry. If they weren't lost in the mountains and they made it to the river, they could have been lost there just as easily. The documents would have been destroyed."

"It's the Dragons for me, Sam. Let's meet back here by ten o'clock tonight, or call if we can't make it," you suggest.

"Okay, but watch out. Even with undercover agents you can never be completely safe."

"Sure, Sam. I'll be careful," you reply.

The meeting is easy to arrange. The Dragons are anxious to get together and readily agree to a meeting in the small park. They do say, however, that you must (a) come alone, and (b) come by taxi and not by the cable car.

The taxi swerves around the curves and switch-backs of the road to the top of the hill. You try to relax and enjoy the view, but between the drive and the anticipation of the meeting with the Dragons, you can't concentrate on anything except a certain level of fear and excitement.

Finally you reach the top, pay the driver, and enter the little park.

You and Sam go to the table, introduce yourselves, and take a seat. San-Koe-In-Sen appraises you in a slow, thoughtful way and then speaks.

"If you want to do business with me, you'll have to prove yourselves first. You may either deliver this package to a Mr. Gregory Sims at the Peninsula Hotel, take the money he gives you, and return here immediately, or you may go with Ya-Ma-Ton, my right-hand man, to pick up a package down at the dock."

If you decide to deliver the package to Gregory Sims at the Peninsula, turn to page 18.

If you decide to go with Ya-Ma-Ton, turn to page 64.

"The Takla Makan! That's it," Michael says.

Two other Land Rovers, which are part of your team carrying supplies, radio equipment, and a large reserve of water, finally catch up with you. After spending almost half an hour viewing the scene, you begin the slow, careful descent to the valley.

Brakes burn and gears agonize as they are shifted down. You can hardly wait to get to the desert. Hours pass, and finally you are down the mountains and moving over a bumpy terrain toward the desert.

One of the Land Rovers overheats. Steam rises from its radiator in a plume.

Turn to page 41.

"Stop, Abdullah," you shout. But running as hard as you can in the sand is exhausting, and Abdullah dashes ahead, shouting and stumbling.

With a pounding heart and aching muscles, and gasping for breath, you push on and on. Michael is close behind you.

You run by dune after dune, not knowing why, just responding to the moment and the figure ahead.

Abdullah runs up a huge dune and sits on the top. His eyes are glazed, his arms are stretched out. No sound comes from him, except labored breathing.

Below and ahead and around is a pulsing light. It expands and engulfs you, Michael, and Abdullah.

"The future has arrived!" cries Abdullah. "Accept it!"

The light grows into a wave of musical sounds, a cloak of warmth and good feeling. You lose fear; awe and wonder disappear. Happiness flows through you. You no longer care about your expedition. You have found your own caravan.

The End

You'd rather go on and help set up camp. But before you have a chance to say anything, Michael speaks.

"Look, maybe it would be better for me to stay. The bandits go back to an age-old tradition of caravan raiding. We're just a modern version of a caravan."

"But, Michael, if it's dangerous, forget the gear in the Land Rover. Just come with us," you reply.

"You have a good point, but it's not *that* dangerous. It's just better to be prepared. We need this gear if we want to be safe."

"Okay, okay. I'm convinced. Be careful. We'll set up camp. I guess our guide knows the best spot."

"It's here on the map," Michael says.

Reluctantly you pile into the Land Rovers and Abdullah slowly drives off, leaving Michael behind. Your brother waves, smiling. You hope it's not the last you see of him. You can't seem to get over a funny feeling of doom.

"Sangy and I can go to the French camp," you say.

"How long has the French expedition been here?" you ask Sangy.

"One week, maybe more," he replies. "Porters told me the bad weather has held them back. Too much snow. Too dangerous. They wait for the weather. Now perhaps it will be good."

You and Sangy set out across the rubble where once a great glacier stretched its long arm, now a dry bed of rock. The crossing is quick, and soon you reach the other side. Lights are already winking in the French base camp, which is now in the late afternoon shadow cast by the great peaks surrounding it.

Within an hour you reach the cluster of orange and red tents.

"Hello!" you call out.

Only wind blowing down from above reaches you.

"Anyone here?"

"Who is there?" shouts a voice from the largest tent. A wiry bearded man in a blue down parka emerges. "Welcome, welcome. My name is Jules Daumal, base camp chief of this pitiful expedition to Fang."

"We're the American Annapurna team," you reply. "We need help."

"But no! Not already. You have just arrived."



After conferring with his colleagues for several minutes, he replies.

"You could pose as drug dealers and try to contact Molitto or Foote or their captors, if indeed they have been kidnaped. Or you could join our special antismuggling team, which is part of the Hong Kong police and British antidrug squads. It's up to you, of course."

*If you choose to pose as drug dealers,
turn to page 45.*

*If you choose to join their antismuggling team,
turn to page 65.*

"I'll go back and tell Abdullah what I saw," you say to yourself, plodding through the sand.

It takes longer than you thought to return to camp, but finally you make it, glad to take a load off your feet. You are weary from the trip, which began four days before in the States.

"Abdullah, have you ever seen lights over the desert?" you ask your guide.

"But of course, my young friend," he replies, his face half-hidden by a cloak.

"What could it be? It looked like signals or something."

Turn to page 101.

It's useless to try to sleep now. The night is beautiful, so you and Michael watch the moon and stars trade places with the sun. When dawn arrives you leave the houseboat and Srinagar to begin the difficult trip over the Karakoram Pass to the Takla Makan Desert.

Your driver and guide is a middle-aged man named Abdullah. He steers the Land Rover skillfully and carefully over the nineteen-thousand-foot pass. Snow and ice glitter in the sun as you climb the torturous miles to the top of the pass. Once there you gaze out and down on a jumble of high peaks. Beneath the peaks is a broad yellow sea.

Turn to page 33.

"Somebody should stay with it and guard our gear until we can send back one of the other Land Rovers to pick up the supplies," says Michael. "There are bandits here. It's the tradition of the desert and the Great Silk Route. Bandits have always been part of the game. How about it? You or me?" he asks.

If you decide to stay and guard the disabled Land Rover, turn to page 97.

If you decide to go on and let Michael stay, turn to page 35.

Two police officers break down the cabin door. With them are two Americans. They are Mario Molitto and Bill Foote.

"How—?" is about all you can say.

The police lieutenant casually smiles and explains: "You were bait used to track the smugglers to their boat. We suspected Foote and Molitto were prisoners of this gang, but we couldn't get close enough. You two were the perfect decoys."

"Well, you should have warned us," you say.

"Sorry," is the officer's reply. "Thanks for your help."

The End



The drive, although bumpy and dirty, is uneventful. You are so locked up in your own thoughts that you don't even talk with the others. Hours later you pull to a stop.

"Here is the campsite," says Abdullah.

His voice stirs you from your thoughts. Evening has fallen. Pinpoint stars dot the sky. A chill has descended on this land that borders the vastness of the Takla Makan. Immediately after unloading, one of the Land Rovers is sent back to pick up Michael and the extra gear. Tents are set up. Hot food is made and served. Cups of steamy tea are consumed.

Restless, you wander tentatively out into the desert. You feel like a beginning swimmer going into the deep end of the pool.

You convince Sam that the two of you should pose as drug dealers.

"You certainly got us into a good one this time," Sam says two days later as you and he are sitting in a dark, smoky jazz club. It's close to midnight and the club is jammed with people—tourists, sailors from a destroyer in port, Chinese, and the human flotsam and jetsam that washes up in international ports of the world.

"It looks like a movie set," you comment.

"Sure does, but these people aren't playing around," Sam says. "The stakes are high, and lives aren't as important as the money drugs bring. We'll have to watch our step. Let's talk to the bartender. It's a start, anyway."

The bartender is a large, friendly-looking man, but when you casually mention drugs, even in a joking tone, there is a sudden hardening of his eyes. He glares at the door, sweeps the room with a practiced glance, and nods to a table in the corner of the room away from the glare of lights and the main mob of people.

"San-Koe-In-Sen is the man you want. That's him over there," he says under his breath.

You remain as still as possible, barely breathing. The man who led you to this temple disappears into the back. Moments later, he reappears, this time with two figures whose faces are hidden by black masks. One of them is a woman.

"Come here!" the man commands.

You obey with what you think are appropriate trancelike movements—slow and mechanical.

"Follow us."

You follow them to the back of the temple. A wooden door opens into a room with two desks, a single sideband radio set, maps on the wall, walkie-talkies, and a stack of rifles and cases of ammunition.

SNAP! The man snaps his fingers in front of you. Probably to break the trance, you think.

"We run the revolutions in this part of the world. Not you and your mob. Get it?"



You learn that Foote and Molitto are pawns in a drug-smuggling game between the rival gangs. You have little time to recover from the fear and surprise at your capture when the world around you explodes with sounds and people.

"POLICE. HANDS UP! POLICE," comes a stern voice over a bullhorn. Doors fly open, and khaki-clothed police fill the room as weapons are drawn.

The tailor, three heroin technicians, and two thugs who had locked you up in the room with Foote and Molitto are rounded up, handcuffed, and led off.

"Nice work. They took the bait," the grinning police captain says to you, shaking your hand.

"Nice work, my eye," you say out loud. "I could be dead!"

"No chance. We had it in hand," he replies.

You decide to think things over carefully before getting involved in one of these adventures again.

The End

"We'd better wait," you say. "We're tired and we'd need support."

"I agree," says Pete.

You both watch the speck that is the tent high on the ridge. No more flares, no more activity marks the spot. Only the silence of the mountains fills the void.

"I wish we could help," you say, more to yourself than to Pete and Sangy.

"Something's happening up there, but we can't help it now," Pete replies.

Finally the porters and other climbers arrive. Cathy leads them over the last slope to the camp area. You greet her and she immediately says, "Did you hear about the German climbers? They won't give up. They've been waiting for a break in the weather, and this may be it. They've been in a tent on a ridge in Annapurna for twelve days. Stubborn lot, aren't they?" Cathy says. "We met a group on the way in who told us about them."

"I think we know where they are," you reply, pointing to where the tent is perched on the distant ridge. "They're in trouble," you add.

Cathy scans the ridge with the binoculars you give her.

"Maybe we should radio the Royal Nepalese Army for a helicopter pickup," you suggest.

"Or," says Pete, "perhaps we should join up with the French team beyond the glacier and ask them for help. They're trying to climb Fang, that peak over there," he says, pointing to a sharp peak on the skyline.

If you vote for the helicopter, turn to page 56.

If you volunteer to go with Sangy, your guide, to the French camp, a long scramble over rock and glacier, turn to page 36.

"If we can take the gear in the Land Rover with us, a ride to the campsite would be helpful," you say.

"Yes, of course," is the response.

Rapid orders are given in Chinese, and in an amazingly short time, your Land Rover is stripped, and the gear is repacked in one of the trucks.

A soldier offers you a cup of tea, pouring it from a large flask decorated with colorful flowers.

"This is good," you say, swallowing the rich black tea.

More orders are given and the small convoy of trucks moves off. The men in the truck are jovial and friendly. The driver speaks some English and the sergeant is fluent. They talk of their homes in China and their love of their land.

"China is our mother. She is also our grandparents. She is also our children and their children, too."

Turn to page 69.

The red and blue nylon rope linking the three of you looks fragile against the ice and the crystal snow. Up you go, moving swiftly for the altitude which is now well over seventeen thousand feet. Your breath comes in short gasps, but the long trek in to Annapurna Sanctuary has acclimatized you well.

"Watch out for that overhang," Pete says, twisting an ice screw into blue ice and clipping on with a carabineer to the rope.

"Right," you reply, looking anxiously at the projecting lip of snow, ice, and rock over which Pete is now disappearing. Moments later, you have cleared the obstacle and are standing beside him, waiting for Sangy.

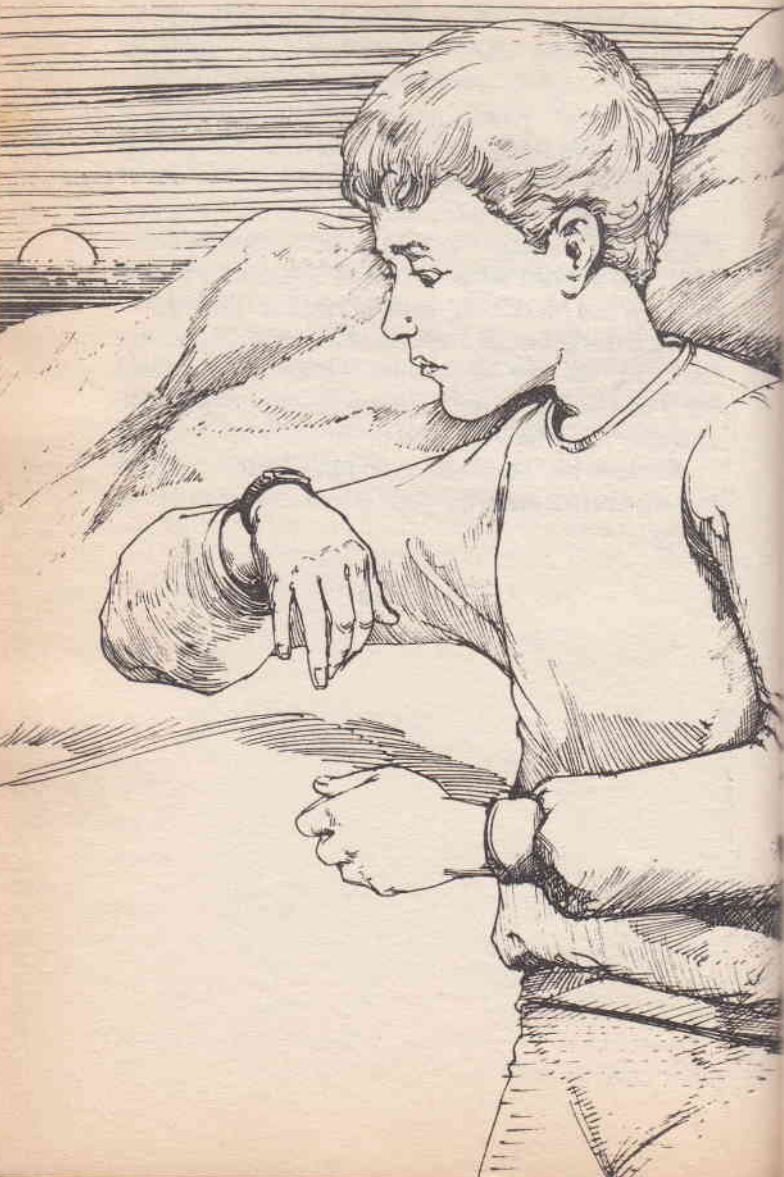
Days later, still drowsy from the drugs, you survey the narrow, dark room where you are kept. One door leads to a hallway. It is locked, and you know that a guard sits outside, awake and vigilant.

Two hours later, you are visited by the pudgy manager of the Bear Paw Restaurant.

"When you run with the big dogs, do not yap like a pup," he says, smiling in an unfriendly fashion. "We should slit your throat and dump you in the bay, but Mr. Chou, with whom the Tong occasionally trade favors, has requested that you be set free. So, we will let you go. However, you and your brother must leave Hong Kong tonight. The Dragon Tong has spoken."

He claps his hands, and old Mr. Chou shuffles in to help you arrange for your departure from Hong Kong.

The End



You look closely at everyone who walks by, hoping for some sign of recognition. "Who are the undercover agents? Who are the Dragons?" you keep asking yourself.

The hour of the meeting, two-thirty P.M., arrives and passes. Nothing.

You wait and wait.

The sun follows its usual course, setting in the South China Sea. Still no contact.

You look at your watch time and again. It's now eight-twenty P.M. Still nothing. There are no people in the park. The lights of the city look like fireflies below you. Jets take off and land at the airport across the bay.

And still nothing.

Reluctantly you return to the U.S. Consulate in time for the meeting with Sam. Sam arrives almost at the same time. He had the same luck. Nothing.

"We'll have to try something else," you conclude.

"Right. There's always another day," Sam adds.

The End

"The Royal Nepalese Army is good at rescue," you point out.

"Right," says Pete, "but we might not be able to reach them with our radio. Atmospherics. Anyway, you have to go back down the trail an hour or so to get a clear line of sight to the nearest contact station."

"I'll go," you say.

The radio is compact and slips easily into your pack. Cathy decides to accompany you.

"Be careful," Pete calls. "It's getting dark."

You, Cathy, and Chodak are waiting on a bench outside the schoolhouse of the Tibetan refugee center in Pokhara. Steaming cups of Tibetan tea rest on a small table. The sun is high in the sky, and in the distance you can see the white peaks of the mountains. Below is the luxurious green of the rich agricultural valley.

"There were rumors about their being murdered," you say.

"Come on Sam, let's follow!" you cry, jumping to your feet.

You haven't gone very far before an explosion rocks the room. Broken glass, shattered furnishings, and bits of plates and plants and food fly through the air.

You are knocked down by a piece of table. Blood wells from a severe cut on your forehead, and you lose consciousness. Later, when you awake to find yourself in a hospital room with Sam in an adjoining bed, you sleepily ask, "What happened?"

A lieutenant of the Hong Kong narcotics squad explains: "A rival drug ring wanted to scare customers away from your dealer. Nasty business. I'd stay away from it, if I were you."

You have no choice, thanks to broken ribs, a concussion, and internal injuries. You are out of the running for at least four weeks.

Foote and Molitto will have to fend for themselves, you think.

The End

"Got it, Mr. Holbrook. We're ready," you say. Sam nods his agreement. It's odd, you think, how easily Sam has let you become the leader so far in this adventure. Perhaps it's his way of training you for leadership, you decide.

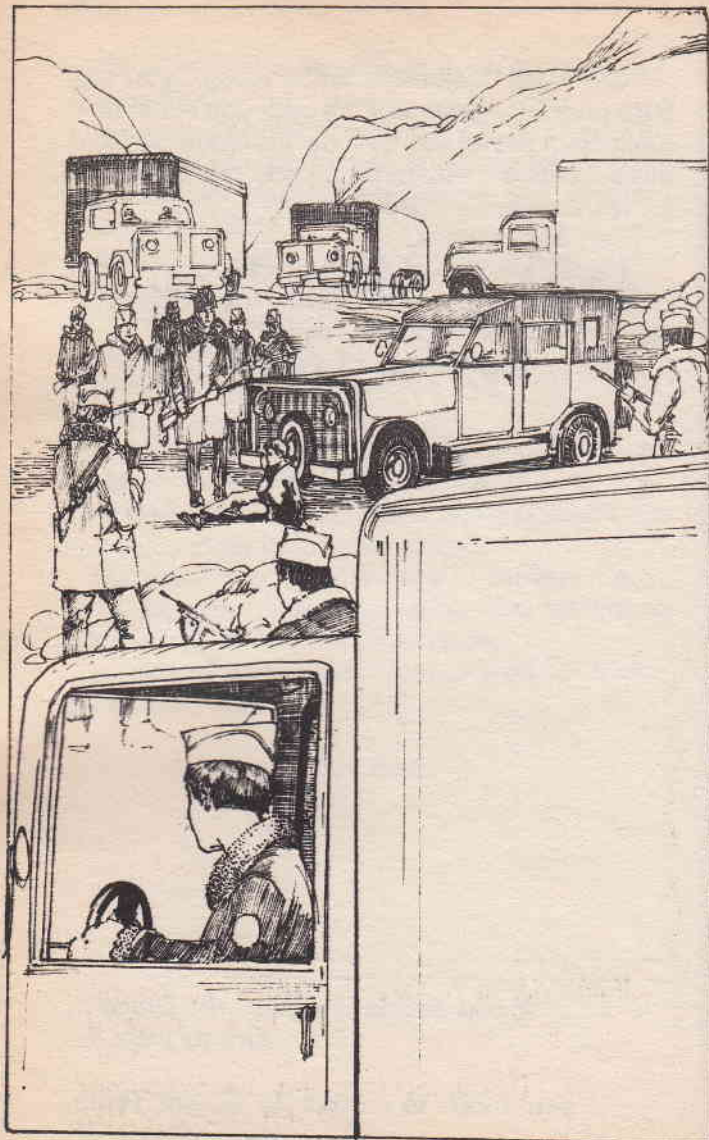
Then Sam speaks.

"Maybe we should split up. One of us could contact the Dragons and the other the Golden Petals. It might speed up the matter."

Holbrook agrees that it's a good idea.

*If you decide to contact the Dragons,
turn to page 31.*

*If you decide to contact the Golden Petals,
turn to page 71.*



You open your eyes! You are surrounded by six eight-wheel trucks. Their engines are rumbling, and the clean air is now mixed with diesel exhaust. A group of men in green uniforms and wearing peaked caps with red stars stand around you.

"What do I do now?" you ask yourself.

One of the soldiers speaks. "There has been a report of bandits in the area. They have been murdering their victims. If you wish, you can come with us to your campsite. We will protect you. The bandits would never bother Mother China. They wouldn't dare."

If you decide to take the soldiers up on their offer, turn to page 51.

If you decide to stay where you are, turn to page 107.

You nod in partial agreement, and the discussion seems to be over. Your sleeping bag is comfortable and warm. Tonight you sleep under the stars.

Toward morning, Michael arrives with the gear from the Land Rover. He is excited to be in the desert at last.

"So, what do you think of this?" he says to you, spreading his hand out to the sand surrounding your camp.

"Awesome!" is your half-awake reply.

"Hey, look," he shouts, pointing to the desert.

"Well? What's this, Lobel?" asks an immaculately dressed man.

Lobel is the receptionist. He answers quickly. "I thought I should bring them in at once, sir. They're here after Foote and Molitto. They check out with CIA Central. They're okay."

A dreadful silence fills the room for several moments as the three at the table stare at you in an authoritative way.

"Foote and Molitto. eh? Well, it just so happens that we were discussing those two at this very moment. Join us." He nods to two empty chairs at the table. You and Sam sit.

"Okay, Ya-Ma-Ton. Lead the way. We're with you," you say.

He nods and smiles through thin lips exposing a row of even, bright teeth. He wears a Mickey Mouse T-shirt with Disney World, Orlando, Florida, written on the back in Day-Glo pink.

"Sure thing, boss. No problem. A-Okay. Follow me," says Ya-Ma-Ton rapidly.

The taxi ride to the docks seems to take an eternity, but finally you arrive at the jumble of freighters, steamers, junks, warships, pleasure boats, and luxury cruise ships nudging each other in the crowded dock space, or at anchor in the bay. A light wind ripples the water, and the boats sway a bit at their moorings.

"That's ours," Ya-Ma-Ton says, pointing to a large motor cruiser. "They'll be expecting us."

A launch takes you to the cruiser which is riding at anchor away from the other boats.

When you tell him you'll join the antismuggling team, Holbrook says, "Your cover will be exactly what you were hired to do—search for the missing Americans. If we are right in believing that they have been kidnaped by a rival smuggling gang, you might lure the gang out by the prospect of a large ransom." Holbrook looks at the others seated at the large table. There are nods of agreement.

"How about the Dragon Tong?" you say to Holbrook. "The lawyer for the Foote and Molitto families told us to get in touch with them."

"Dragon Tong is a tough group. They and the Golden Petal are two of the toughest gangs around. If you try to set up a meeting with them, we'll put undercover agents all over the place for safety. Tell the Dragons that you wish to meet *them* on top of the hill in the little park away from the cable-car station. Tell them also that you will be contacting the Golden Petals. That will get them steaming."

After inquiry at the desk you learn that Mr. Sims is in room 1206. You call him on the house phone.

"Mr. Sims, we have a package for you," you announce.

"Fine. I'll be right there. Wait for me in the coffee shop. I'll be carrying a copy of the *Asian Wall Street Journal* and wearing a striped tie."

Fifteen minutes later, Sims enters the restaurant, holding the newspaper close to his chest. Suddenly a look of terror crosses his face. He drops the paper and runs from the room. Two men follow him.



If you join the chase, turn to page 58.

If you stay put, turn to page 104.

The three are waiting anxiously for your reply, but you take your time, playing on their nerves with the suspense. Finally, you speak in a hushed voice.

"If the price is high enough, you can have my services as a double agent. I serve no one but myself."

There is a hush in the room. You stand your ground, straightening your back and squaring your shoulders. A hurried conversation, in what you assume to be a Northern Indian dialect, takes place.

The woman moves forward ever so slightly, and looks you carefully in the eye.

"Your price is your life," she says with bitterness. "We believe in our cause. Our revolution is the *true one*. Your revolution is a false one, doomed to fail. It could carry us with it unless we can stop your people."

You tell them about the United States and where you live and about your family and friends. You are proud to speak of your land and what it means to you.

Hours later, you approach the campsite that Michael has set up in the dune lands of the Takla Makan Desert.

"Goodbye, my friends," you say to the Chinese. You exchange small gifts, tokens of your friendship. From you to them, a Swiss army knife and two Beatles tapes. From them to you, a peaked cap with the red star and the thermos with the flower design.

Then they are gone. The desert awaits you.

The End

"Hello! May I help you?"

"Mr. Chou?" you ask.

"Yes. Mr. Chou. Yes. Who is it, please?"

"I'm an American. My brother and I have come to talk about a certain subject," you reply.

"Ah! Americans. Good-good. We can talk very soon. I like Americans. The sooner the better. Is six p.m. all right?" Mr. Chou asks.

"Yes. Fine," you reply.

You are proud that Sam has let you handle this important call.

"It feels good to work with you, Sam," you say.

Sam nods. He is equipping himself with a small tape recorder, strapping it to his lower leg.

"I don't want to miss a word they say," Sam tells you, demonstrating how he can turn the tape recorder on by pretending to scratch his leg. "It's easy to use this," he goes on, "but we have to be careful. The Tong play rough."

"Sam, I'll give the Golden Petals a try. Who knows? They could be the key to this whole thing."

The Hong Kong police have provided you with several known hangouts of the Golden Petals. You have luck with the very first try!

When you enter a tailor shop off the esplanade near the British Yacht Club, you tell the elderly tailor that you are looking for some "special tailoring, a flowered kimono."

He glances up, appraising you, because the request for "special tailoring" is a coded signal for the Golden Petals given to you by the police.

He takes your measurements and asks question after question concerning your needs. You tell him, "My needs are as common as the rain on a Golden Petal," and that signal finally convinces him that you are "safe" to deal with.

Without waiting for an invitation, the young men push into your room, almost knocking you over. One of them shuts the door and ominously locks it.

"Hey, what's going on?" Sam shouts, advancing on the two.

He doesn't get very far before a series of lightning-fast Tae Kwon Do moves has Sam seated unceremoniously on the couch.

"Remain seated and quiet, please," one of the men says. "We will do the speaking. Any attempt to interrupt or escape will be treated with much less care than you have already received."

You and Sam exchange looks. The message you read in Sam's face is to remain calm, centered, and watchful. You back slowly away from the men and position yourself between the window and the telephone table. The door to the other bedroom in the suite is open. You survey your chances of escaping through that room.

Turn to page 96.

"I have never been a real part of the group I am with," you say. "I don't believe in their goals. Tell me more about your group and perhaps I will join you."

They nod, talk among themselves in a language you do not understand, and finally turn back to you.

"To prove yourself, you must submit to our rules and perform a test of braveness. Do you agree? Are you willing to be tested?"

"Well, I don't really know what you have in mind, but I'll give it a try," you say, scared out of your wits. It's as if someone else is speaking for you.

"The first test is easy, at least in comparison to the others."

"What is it?" you almost scream out, now that fear has finally gripped you.

"It's the test of the snake goddess," is the reply.

If you run now, turn to page 95.

If you submit to the test, turn to page 159.

Two Marine guards in dress blues stand at the entrance to the U.S. Consulate. A small plaque on the wall states the office hours: ten a.m. to five p.m.

"Well, we're in time. Let's go in," says Sam.

Inside, at the end of a long, dark corridor is a desk. The receptionist, a man in his early twenties, wearing a neat, well-pressed gray business suit, greets you.

"May we help you today? Anything special on your minds?" he asks in a pleasant tone. There is a note of underlying boredom in his voice. You don't like it.

"Yes. We want to talk with the consul about the two missing Americans, Foote and Molitto," you say.

Instantly his manner changes from unconcerned to serious. "Let me see your passports," he commands.

After scrutinizing them for several minutes, he excuses himself and enters a room off the hall marked Communications.

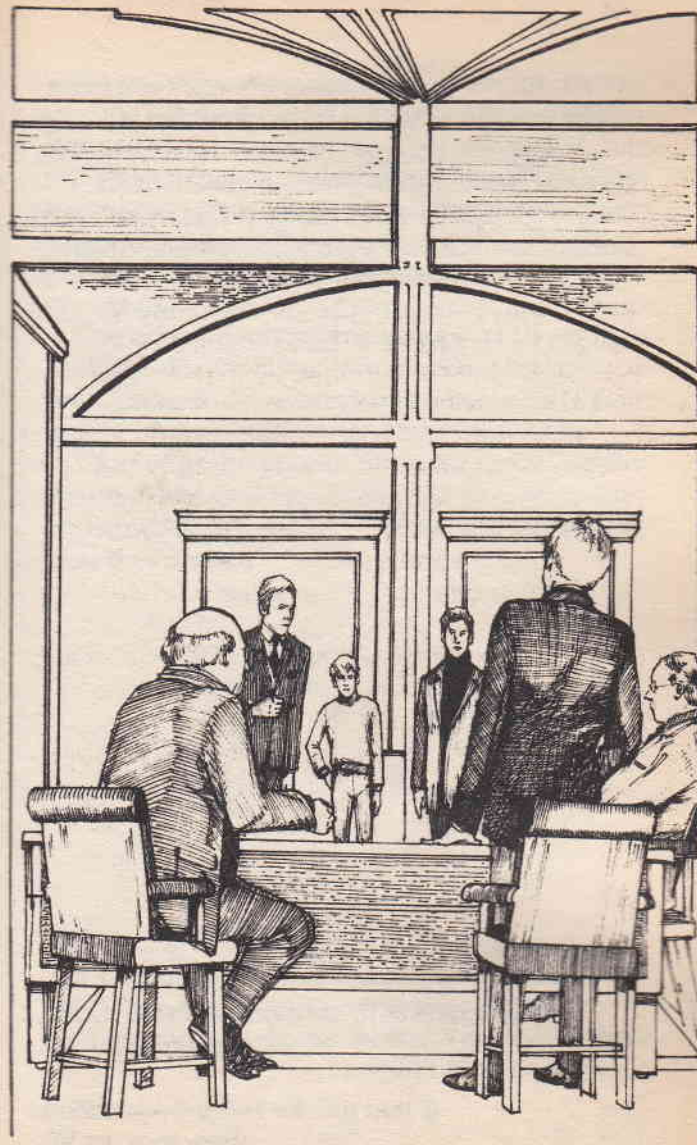
You and Sam wait nervously for close to fifteen minutes.

"They're running a security check on us," Sam guesses.

Then the man returns.

"Come this way," he says.

You and Sam follow him through an oak door to the right of his desk. It leads into a large, high-ceilinged room. It is the consul's office. Seated around a massive desk are three people. They look up at your sudden appearance.



Turn to page 63.

"Sit, sit. People are always in such a rush. But I will be brief. I know from my sources that you seek the Americans, Foote and Molitto. I can be of help, possibly, but in return I want a special favor. This favor does not involve money, drugs, or anything like that. It involves my granddaughter. If I guarantee the finding of Foote and Molitto—alive and well—will you promise to help my granddaughter? Her name is Lan Ping."

*If you decide to go along with Mr. Chou,
turn to page 81.*

*If you ask for more information,
turn to page 90.*

"We need help in finding two lost Americans," you tell the man. "And we were told you'd help. Will you?"

"You have come to the right people. There's not much going on in Hong Kong that we don't know about. That is, if the price is right." The blue-shirted one looks at his fingernails, carefully avoiding your stares.

The other man remains silent.

"How do we know you're who you say you are?" you ask. "We were told to meet a Mr. Chou. You're pretty young to be part of the Tong."

"You're pretty young, too, you know," replies the man. He sits down. "Open the door for them," he commands the other. He turns back to you. "Go if you wish."

*If you decide to try to deal with these
people, turn to page 99.*

If you walk out, turn to page 140.

"Message received. Give details, please," comes the reply.

"Emergency flares sighted on northeast ridge of Annapurna, elevation approximately nineteen thousand feet. Small tent. One person sighted. No sign of activity since sighting," you reply.

"What help do you request?" the Nepalese officer asks.

"Helicopter rescue and evacuation team," you reply.

"We will if we can. Weather is deteriorating rapidly. Stand by."

Chodak jumps to his feet and before you know it, he has grabbed the package, unwrapped it, and slashed the leather thongs with a knife.

"It's the secret papers! It's the papers!" he cries.

He holds up page after page of parchment covered with careful Tibetan script. Some of them are colored in faded crimson and gold paint. Chodak is close to tears.

"I knew they would come back one day. I knew it. These are important papers for the safety of my people. With them we will grow and survive the terrors of the Chinese occupation of our homeland. Without them, we would not be able to. They represent our beliefs and heritage."

You look off at the nearby village, wondering who brought the papers back and why. And who issued the warning.

"But it's not important," you say to yourself. "What is important is that they are back."



"I'll stay right where I am," you say to yourself. "They could see me out there. If I'm quiet, they won't spot me . . . maybe."

Minutes drag by. You become aware of sounds in the woods that draw closer. The sounds turn into words, shouts, orders, commands.

"Get him! Don't let him escape!" shouts one voice. You recognize the voice of the man who led you on this nightmare. Anger surges in you, and you are tempted to go after him.

"Calm down, calm down," you tell yourself. "Stay put and be quiet."

A hand reaches out and encircles your waist. Another hand is clamped over your mouth!

"Got you!" you hear a voice shout.

"I don't know what we're getting into," you whisper to Sam, "but let's do it."

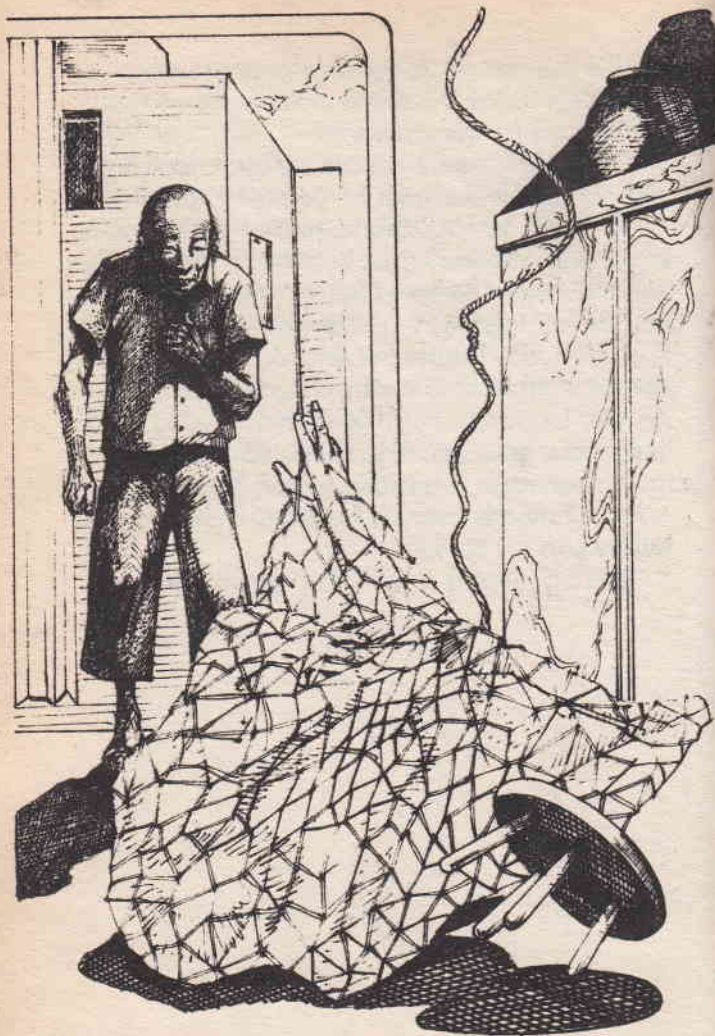
He nods in agreement.

"Well, Mr. Chou, what can we do for you?" you say, taking the seat that he points to at the table.

"The task is very simple, really," Mr. Chou replies. "My granddaughter Lan Ping is eleven years old and refuses to travel to the United States with her mother to study in a very good school in San Francisco. She is afraid of the 'round eyes' as you non-oriental Americans are called by some of our people. Convince her that no harm will come to her in your great country. That is all I ask. I will use my resources to return Foote and Molitto."

Mr. Chou sits back in his chair with a look of satisfaction on his face.

"Well, it's worth a try," you say to Sam.



"Excuse me," you say, getting to your feet. "I just want to stretch my legs."

"Not so fast, my young friend," replies the tailor.

Before you can do anything, a light fishnet made of silk drops from a concealed spot in the ceiling, encircling you in its folds.

"Help!" you scream.

But the only one to hear you is the old man. All you can do is hope that the Hong Kong police have been on your trail.

The End

Cathy stays with the radio, keeping the channel open. You return to Pete and the others. During the night, clouds cover the mountains, wind and snow beat the peaks. Near dawn there is the awesome rumble of a large avalanche. When daylight arrives and there is a break in the clouds, you see no trace of the small tent on the ridge.

Sangy looks at you and says, "Mountain is mountain."

Now begins a long wait in stable weather. The storms rage about the peaks. You fear the documents will never be found.

The End

On the back of the paper is a fingerprint in what might be blood.

In the distance, you see smoke rising from the chimneys of houses in a small community. You are a day's hike from Ghorapani.

"So I did hear someone. Someone did come to our camp last night."

You rouse Chodak and Cathy and tell them what happened.

"We're on the right track. I'm sure of it now, Chodak. Don't you agree?"

Chodak looks even sadder than before. "I told you we would only cause trouble. We must be careful now. There are spirits in these mountains who do not want us here."

You look at him and then turn to the mountains. Sunlight has washed over the flanks and shoulders of the great mountains. You feel a wonderful sense of peace.

"What's this?" Cathy says. She is holding a large package wrapped in what looks like aging yak skin tied with leather thongs.

"I found it next to me," she says.

"What have I gotten into?" you ask yourself. Your breath comes in huge gasps, your heart beating so strongly you feel sure that anyone within twenty yards can hear it.

Slowly, you begin to move again in the direction of the lake. The sounds of night return: insects and small nocturnal animals. You try your best to become one with the world around you. You step along, careful not to disturb a branch or dislodge stones underfoot.

Peering into the forest, with only the moonlight that comes through the trees as your guide, you reach the lakeshore. In the distance, you can see the sparkle of lights on houseboats. They represent safety, but they're so far away!

Turn to page 93.

The other two are staring at you. You can see the obvious dislike in their eyes through the veils of their masks.

"Sure. Sure. Anything you say," you reply.

"We will offer you a choice," the man says. "It is this: become a double agent for us, informing on your group as they progress, or join us right now."

"And if I do neither?" you ask.

The three shake their heads and do not speak.

If you decide to pretend to become a double agent, turn to page 68.

If you decide to play along by joining the group to find out as much as you can about them, turn to page 73.

It doesn't take long to get to the Bear Paw. It's on the second floor of a large shopping mall not far from the hotel. The mall is crowded with people, and you have to wait in line to ride an elevator to the second floor.

The red and green lacquered door of the Bear Paw Restaurant opens with a gentle push. You are greeted by a short, pudgy, round-faced Chinese man dressed in a black tuxedo. He holds menus in one hand, and extends the other in greeting.

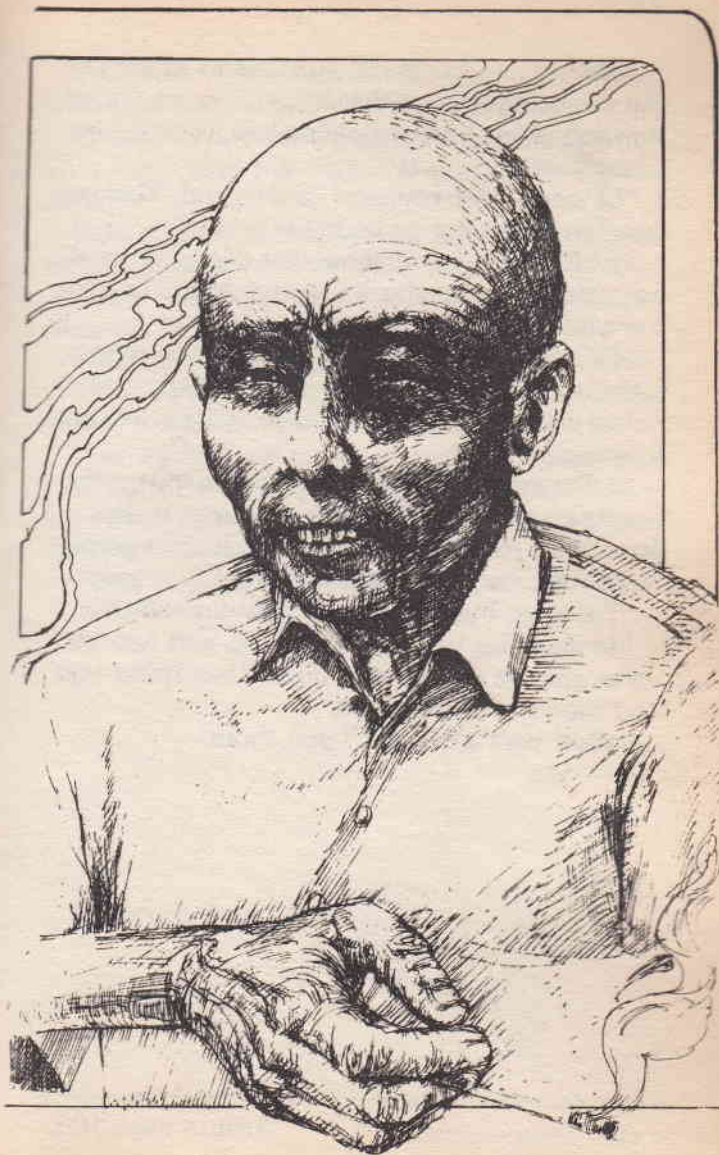
"Welcome to the Bear Paw."

"Thank you," you reply. "We're looking for a Mr. Chou."

"Right this way, right this way." He walks rapidly through the crowded dining room to the back of the restaurant.

"Mr. Chou awaits you," he says, with a slight bow.

You enter a dimly lit room and see a frail, elderly man seated at an oval table. He is smoking a cigarette. When he smiles and welcomes you, you notice several gold teeth.



Turn to page 76.

"We just can't commit ourselves to something like this without more details and a better understanding of what we are getting into," you tell Mr. Chou.

"Of course, of course! I understand. You are very smart for one so young in years."

"Well, I don't know about that. My brothers always taught me to check things out first. They're the wise ones," you reply.

"Do not sell yourself short," Mr. Chou replies, half-concealing a knowing and friendly smile. "Shall we proceed then? What would you like me to explain?"

At that moment, the door opens and the pudgy restaurant manager in the black tuxedo rushes to Mr. Chou. He bends down and whispers something in his ear. A moment later, Mr. Chou speaks.

"I'm sorry, but you must go now. Immediately."

He claps his hands three times, and two servants emerge from a side door. They usher you and Sam out of the room.

"Wait! Wait a minute," you shout.

The man flips a micro-cassette tape to Sam, who catches it neatly.

"By the way, I hope it fits the tape recorder on your leg," says the man. "If not, I'll lend you mine."

Sam angrily rips the tape recorder from his leg, ejects the cassette, and replaces it with the new one. He hits the playback button, and you lean closer to hear what's on it.

There is a hissing noise, followed by the sound of a door being closed, and then a familiar voice, that of the man in the blue shirt.

"Go ahead, read the message," the voice says.

"This is Bill Foote and next to me is Mario Molitto. We are prisoners, but we are all right. Please do what they ask."

Click. The message comes to an abrupt end.

You struggle, but it is no use. Two other men bind your arms and legs with rough rope. It cuts into the flesh of your ankles and wrists. They carry you to the temple in the woods.

You are brought before an angry-looking man.

"Try to escape once more and you will pay in a most unpleasant way."

You reach deep down into yourself for courage and calmness. Your very survival may rest on how you act in the next few moments.

"Now tell us about the plans!" the man orders.

"What plans?" you ask. "The plans for the Takla Makan?"

"What are you talking about, Takla Makan? We don't care about the desert. I mean the plans for the revolt! You are a foreign agent, a spy. We know it. You can't escape. Now tell us about the plans!"

"But I'm *not* an agent," you cry. "I'm just an explorer looking for a lost caravan on the Takla Makan."

"Take this spy away. We will wait until the will to talk returns, or we will trade this spy for one of our people held by them. Enough, be gone."

The End

You make out a wooden boat house by the water. It is not large. There are no lights or signs of life. The moonlight illuminates the stretch of land from forest to boat house. You wonder whether you should leave the relative security of the dark woods for the small chance that there might be people in the boat house to help you.

A branch cracks behind you and to your left. It seems fairly close. You hear another crack.

*If you decide to risk going to the boat house,
turn to page 98.*

If you decide to stay put, turn to page 80.

You make a dash for the door, only to get caught in a web of fishnet. You struggle, but to no avail.

"Fool!" cries a harsh voice. "We will keep you hostage now. Maybe someday you will be useful in a trade for one of our people. Maybe not."

You are locked in a small room. A guard is posted outside your door. From the windows of the room, you can see the Himalaya Mountains, so near, yet so far. So free, yet so unreachable. You wonder if you will ever see Michael again.

The End



"Don't even think of it," says one of the men. He is wearing a dark blue silk shirt.

You edge closer to the telephone table.

"Now, we will have a nice little chat, the four of us," he goes on. "We are from the Dragon Tong."

"We're supposed to meet you at the Bear Paw Restaurant at six o'clock," you say.

The man in the blue shirt shakes his head.

"That was a phony meeting. Old Mr. Chou is not a Dragon Tong, but we use him when we want to get time to look people over."

"Well, you've had your look. Now what?" you ask.

The man smiles ever so faintly and replies, "You two aren't professional enough to be CIA. You are brave enough. You've got good *chi*—energy—but we don't like people snooping around."

"I'll stay with the Land Rover, Michael."

"Okay, but *be careful*. I'll send someone back for you and the gear once we make camp. Probably be five, six hours. Maybe longer."

You sit in the sun, leaning against the Land Rover's tire as Michael and the two other Land Rovers drive away to establish camp down the Karakoram Highway at a point close to the Takla Makan Desert.

The sun sinks toward the horizon, and a coolness spreads, causing you to put on your parka. A wind from the high mountains meets a wind off the desert. Clouds form and spin rapidly over the peaks. You are content within this strange and beautiful world. You doze off.

Dreams crowd your mind. In one of them you are surrounded by giant, green Chinese army trucks.

The sounds of approaching footsteps convince you to try for the boat house. Slowly, with your heart rising up to your throat (or so it seems), you step out from the cover of the woods. Sand crunches underfoot. Moonbeams strike you, and you are frightened by their brightness.

You expect to be thrown to the ground by four or five people—or even worse. But nothing happens! You proceed cautiously through the moonlight to the side of the boat house. The door is large, with an old-fashioned iron bolt. It looks firmly shut and probably locked.

"I'll give it a try," you say.

You unbolt the door and it swings open on well-oiled hinges, revealing a room. Beyond the room, in a slip, sits a high-powered speedboat. Outside in the woods you hear the sounds of people thrashing about, then several shouts and the sharp report of a rifle.

Turn to page 130.

"So. What do you want from us?" you ask, trying your best to sound calm.

Sam rises slowly from the couch and moves over to the window to look at the skyline of Hong Kong. For several minutes no one talks or moves. Only the noise of the busy town intrudes upon you. Finally, the man in the blue shirt answers, "We want one hundred fifty thousand U.S. dollars deposited to a certain account in a bank in Geneva, Switzerland. It must be there forty-eight hours from now." He looks at his watch. "Shall we say, no later than four p.m., Thursday. Do that, and we will give you Molitto and Foote."

He gets up and moves toward the door.

"Hey, wait a minute! What proof do we have that Molitto and Foote are alive and that you can get them back?" you ask.

"Try this for proof," the man says.

Turn to page 91.

You wonder exactly what these two revolutionary groups are all about. "Michael will help me figure this all out," you say to yourself, "that is, if I get back alive."

"Now take this oath. Hold out your arm!"

You stretch out your arm, and a sharp knife cuts into the skin. A drop of your blood is placed on a gold statue of a demonic god.

"Fail us and Kali will kill you," says the woman.

"Strange things happen in the desert," he says, looking off into the night sky. "Very strange things. It could be the lost caravan we are looking for, come alive."

"You've got to be kidding," you reply.

"As I say, strange things happen out here. You must be open to receive things, You must not always reject."

"Who's there?" you ask.

No response. Only the wind. You peer into the half-light of dawn. The other two are asleep.

"I'm probably just imagining things," you say out loud, hoping one of the others will awaken. They don't.

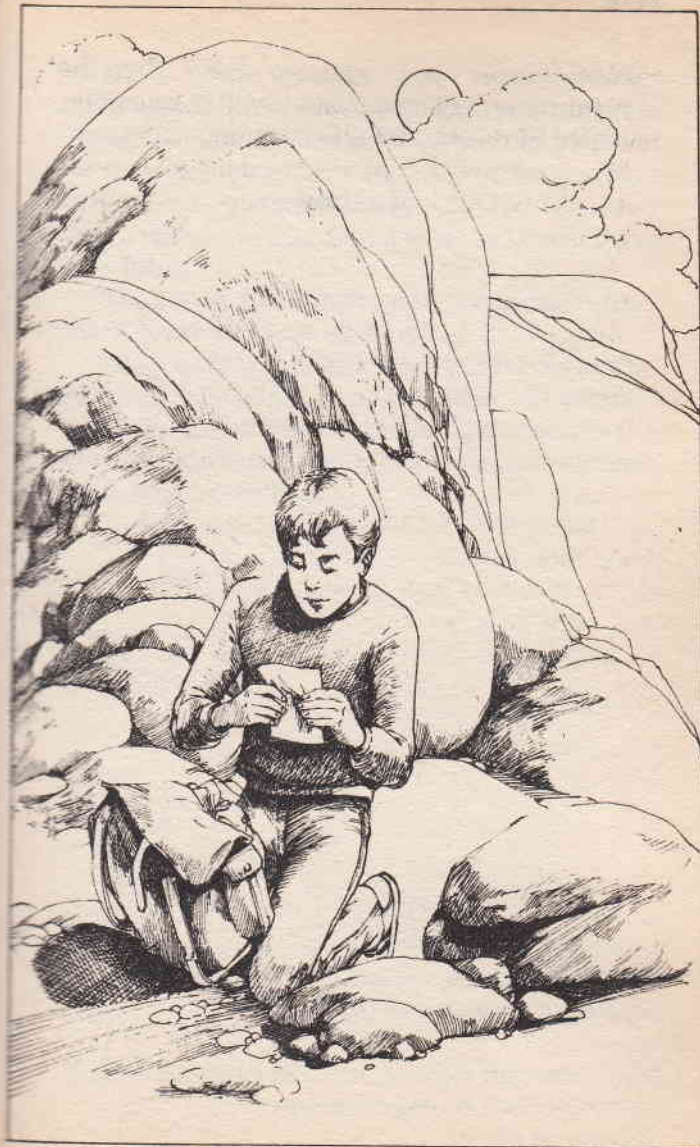
You can't go back to sleep, and you toss and turn, trying to find a comfortable spot on the bumpy ground beneath the sleeping bag. The thin air mattress isn't much help.

Finally you give up and stumble out of the sleeping bag. Streaks of gold are lighting the peaks of the mountains. A rooster welcomes the sun. You search in vain for your flashlight.

"Drat! I thought I left it right by the sleeping bag," you think.

You reach for your rucksack, and there you discover the note pinned to the front of it.

"GO BACK NOW, OR ELSE," it says in bold print.



Turn to page 85.

For a moment you watch the chase. Then the blast from the plastic explosive bomb that was destined for Sims obliterates your thoughts forever.

The End

"There is not time! Be gone." Mr. Chou vanishes behind a closed door, and you and Sam stand awkwardly in the crowded main dining room of the restaurant. The man in the tuxedo is busy showing patrons to their tables. He shoots angry glances at you, trying to make you hurry up and leave.

"Hey, Sam. Look there, near the escalator. Isn't that Chou? I'm sure it's him."

"Maybe we should split up," Sam replies. "One of us will follow that man. The other will stay here and keep a watch on the place. They want us out, but they can't very well kick us out if we sit down for a meal, can they?"

If you decide to follow Mr. Chou—if it is Mr. Chou—turn to page 126.

If you decide to let Sam go after the man while you stay on watch in the restaurant, turn to page 7.

"Nothing ventured, nothing gained," you say to yourself. "It can't be too far to that light. Just over the next two or three dunes."

You are equipped with a flashlight and a parka, and in its pocket are three bars of a high-energy emergency ration made of raisins, sesame seeds, soybeans, and honey.

"That's plenty," you say.

The dunes are much higher than they looked. The first one is almost two hundred feet high and a quarter of a mile in length. You give up trying to climb it and try to walk around it. Time slips by. Walking in the sand is exhausting.

"Maybe I made a mistake," you say. "Oh, well. I can always follow my footsteps back." You look behind you, and sure enough, you can see your footprints in the sand. They look like black spots on a silver plate.

The second range of dunes is smaller and easier to climb. From the top you spot the lights. They look as though they are coming from just beyond the next dune.

You hear faint music.

"I'll stay with the Land Rover. My friends will be back soon. Thanks anyway."

The Chinese soldier nods and orders his men back into their trucks. Within minutes, the only sign of them is a dust cloud in the nearby hills.

You relax again, trying not to worry about the bandits. A good book, your tape deck, and a bag of pistachio nuts make the time pass.

"I wonder where Michael is?" you think.

In the distance, another small dust cloud grows on the horizon.

"Maybe that's him," you say, getting up and stretching.

"I'm all for getting out of here, Sam," you say. "If we use the door we'll be followed. Let's head for the window."

The window sticks, but the two of you push hard, and finally it gives way just enough so that you can squeeze out onto the narrow iron fire escape four floors above the lovely interior garden of the hotel.

"Follow me," Sam says, hurrying down the fancy black and red steps that lead to the garden.

"Looks like no one has seen us," you say.

"For now anyway," Sam replies.

You reach the ground level and quickly pass through the garden with its small pagoda surrounded by a reflecting pool. There is a door leading to a busy street in front of the hotel. You check behind you to be sure you are not being followed, then step into the traffic-jammed street. The hot sun beats down on you, and within minutes you feel sweat running down your back. Sam finally slows down about four blocks from the hotel.

"Okay. Let's head to the Bear Paw Restaurant."

"Right. Lead the way," you reply.

"Let's follow him in the Land Rover, Michael."

"Went a bit off his head, didn't he?" Michael says.

"I guess so. I've never seen anything like that," you reply.

The light over the distant dunes has stopped growing and changing. But it continues to glow.

As dawn invades the night sky, you, Michael, and the three other men hurry the Land Rover over the sand, following Abdullah's tracks. It isn't hard to do. His tracks are deep and almost in a straight line toward the light. You drive around the bigger dunes and, sure enough, you always find Abdullah's tracks on the other side. The sun climbs high in the sky. Its rays merge with the light you and Abdullah have been chasing.

You drive around a huge dune. There it is!

Not too far away you see a light. It flashes. Then there is a bright flash as if from an explosion. You see more lights. You are entranced by the eerie waves of the sand, the dark night sky, and the flashing light.

"Maybe I should have a look," you say to yourself.

Hurrying, you mount the third and highest ridge of dunes. With each step up, you slide almost half a step back. The sand seems to be your enemy. Your legs burn, your breathing is rapid. It is cold outside now, but you are sweating with the exertion.

Finally you reach the top of the dune and look down.

"A caravan! It's a caravan! Right out of the books. Camels, tents, people in robes. Fires."

There is a sudden *whoosh* as fireworks rocket into the sky. Shouts and cheering accompany the firing. Firecrackers explode. Music comes from a group of men playing stringed instruments and a drum.

You stand on top of the dune now, bathed in moonlight. You have no idea where the caravan came from, or even if it's real. You're just glad to be alive and part of life on spaceship earth.

The End

If you decide to investigate the mysterious lights, turn to page 106.

If you decide to return to camp and seek Abdullah's advice, perhaps waiting for Michael before starting a nighttime desert search, turn to page 39.

The elevator stops at the third floor, then the second floor. At last it comes to a stop in the lobby.

When the door opens and you step out, three strange men greet you.

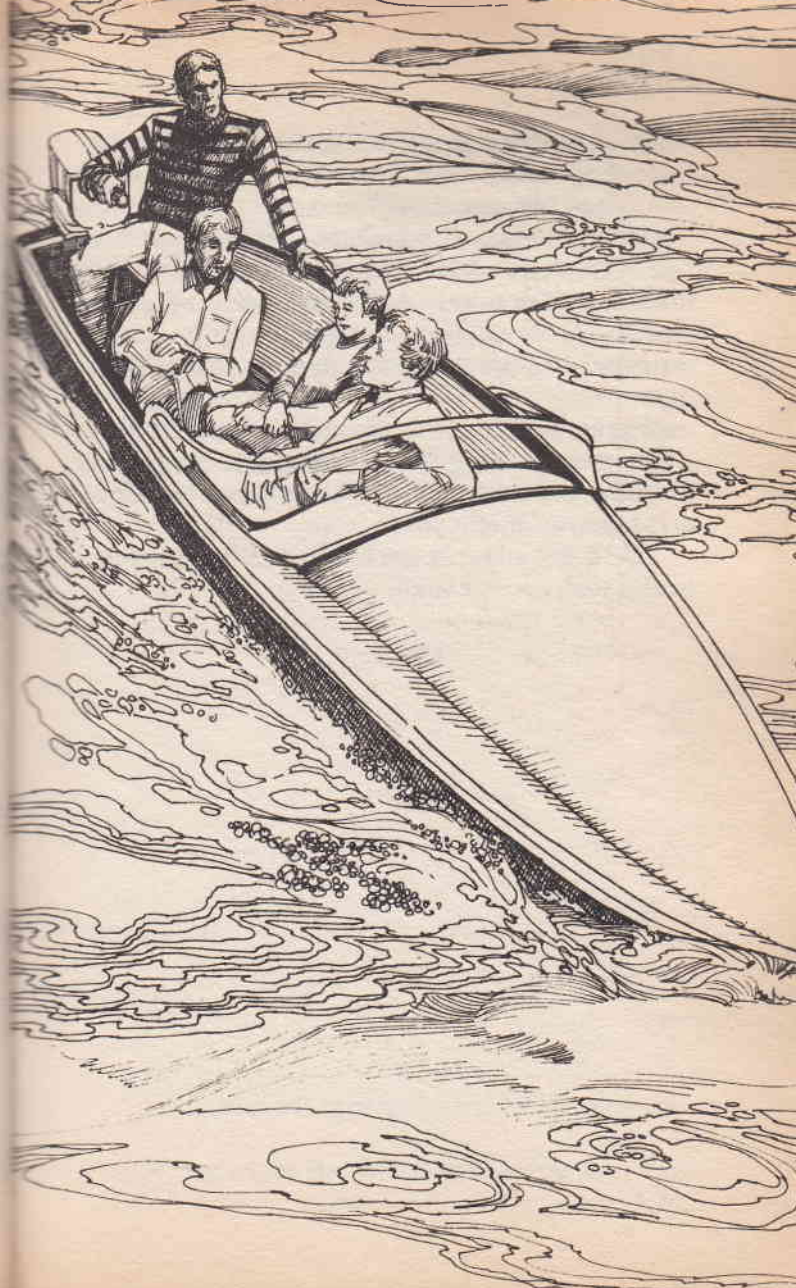
"Not so fast, my friends," one says. "We seem to have unfinished business. Come with us."

You are huddled into a waiting limousine and rushed through downtown Hong Kong to the waterfront. There you are ferried out to a large motor cruiser anchored in the harbor. It is painted fog gray, perfect for smuggling.

You and Sam are locked into a small cabin below deck. Next to you in a similar cabin are Foote and Molitto. They have been there for six weeks.

"I told you it could be dangerous," Sam says, shrugging his shoulders. "We'll just have to wait this out."

The End



The cloud moves nearer quickly. You squint into the failing sunlight.

"It's not Michael. Drat!"

Moments later, an old military personnel carrier rushes into view. It skids to a halt next to you. Six men in native dress—turbans, burnooses, and shawls—leap out. They are armed with automatic weapons, Russian Kalishnikovs by the look of them.

"Hands up high! Don't move," one orders.

You are searched. The Land Rover is emptied of everything of value. You are then slapped in chains and taken to their vehicle.

"We'll get a good price for you," says their leader with an evil laugh.

The End

A bright light shines and grows in intensity, turning from white to brilliant sun-orange. It hovers above a giant dune out where you had seen the other lights. Abdullah bows down on the sand, murmuring what sounds like a prayer: "Om nama shivaya, om nama shivaya, om nama shivaya." He repeats it over and over again.

"What is it, Abdullah?" you and Michael ask at the same time.

"The future is here," he replies. Then he jumps to his feet and runs into the desert as if crazed.

If you try to stop him, turn to page 34.

If you rouse the others and follow him in a Land Rover, turn to page 109.

Clouds gather and fill the giant amphitheater. Winds whip driving snow that stings your face. The plans for a nighttime rescue are called off. You and the others solemnly eat, then retire to your tents and the warmth of sleeping bags. A system of two-hour watches is established. You draw the twelve midnight to two A.M. shift.

When your turn comes, the fury of the storm has lessened. The new snow high on Annapurna rumbles down in an avalanche. You offer up a Buddhist prayer taught to you by Sangy for the climbers trapped in the ridge. "Om Mane Padme Hum." There isn't much hope for them.

The End

Every now and again pieces of ice and snow bounce crazily down the slope, spinning in lazy arcs and crashing to the glacier floor in a shower of crystals.

"Watch out, those little ones can kill you," Pete says seriously.

"Okay," you reply, adjusting the chin strap on your yellow climbing helmet. "Let's move to the left. The route looks better over there."

"Good idea. That slope is fairly gradual and seems stable. It leads to the ledge below the tent."

"Still no signs of life," you report.

Sangy is in the lead now, gracefully swinging his ice ax, cutting steps in the ice. You coil the rope twice over your shoulder, taking up slack to belay in the event of a slip. You position your feet in a firm stance, feeling the sharp twelve-point crampons bite into the ice.

"Mr. Chou, are we to believe that you kidnaped the two Americans? Is that why you can return them?" you ask.

Mr. Chou looks at you knowingly and replies, "No. I have kidnaped no one, but I am in possession of knowledge about where they are."

For the time being you can do nothing more than accept what he says. The old man seems too sure of himself and too well-informed to be taken lightly. But you have lingering doubts.

You hold a whispered conference with Sam. Then you turn back to Mr. Chou.

"Let's meet Lan Ping," you say.

"Okay. Let's try the gorge first. But remember, if we don't find much, I want to go to Ghorapani."

"All right," agrees Chodak, and you, Cathy, and Chodak head out on a seldom-used track that leads to the valley floor and the Kali Gandaki Gorge.

Huge trees line the trail, giving way to bamboo forests and finally ending up in a tangle of bushes and scrub. The mountains are lost from view.

For two days you wander up the river, scrambling over boulders and around fallen trees, crossing the milky, cold glacier stream when you have to. Sheer cliffs rise on either side of you. Shadows fall early in the gorge, and the rumble of water is almost deafening.

"I think we're on a wild-goose chase," you say to Chodak, impatient with the search.

"Watch out," Cathy yells.

"Michael! They're after me!"

A sleepy Michael comes out of his cabin.

"What's this all about?" he asks.

"I don't know," you reply. "Trouble."

"Come aboard. We'll sort this out in the morning. Where'd you get the boat?" he asks.

"No time to wait. They're after us," you reply. But all is silent on the lake. Dawn brings a beautiful day. You return the boat, and later you and Michael leave for the Karakoram Highway. You never do find out who was after you or why.

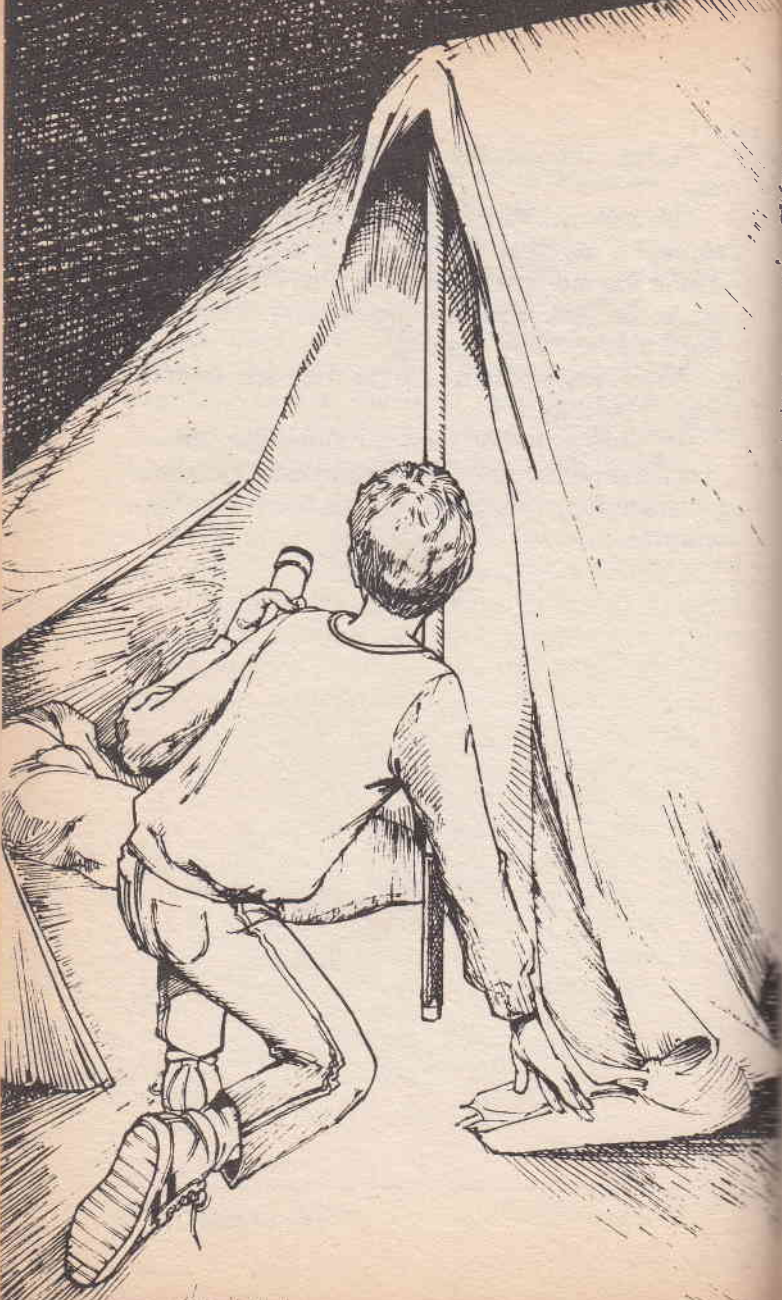
The End

"Look. You can see the tent clearly now," you say.

"It's still two to three hours away," Pete says, surveying the steep route to the isolated rib of rock where the red tent is perched. There is no sign of life at the tent. You have been gone three hours since the first flare sighting.

"That's just about where the Tibetans were last seen," Pete says.

An eerie sensation runs through your body as you think of the three lost, frightened Tibetans on the ridge four years ago. Who is there now? you wonder.



Two hours later, just as the final rays of the Himalayan sun sneak by the mountain peaks, you, Pete, and Sangy reach the ledge and peer into the tent.

"Hey, anyone here?" you say, pushing aside the nylon and flashing a light inside.

No one is there. Two sleeping bags lie in a jumble. A cooking pot and stove are mute reminders that people were there just recently.

"No one," you say in a state of shock.

Pete nods solemnly and points to tracks leading ever higher above this tiny outpost.

"They've gone," he says. "Nothing we can do except hope."

Sangy fixes ice screws, and the three of you rappel down the ice and snow slopes quickly and efficiently. Soon you are safely back at base camp.

"Mountain is mountain," Sangy says, looking to the great Annapurna.

"I wonder if they were after the same thing we're after," you say. "It looks like they disappeared, just like the three Tibetans. Maybe there's a curse on those documents, a curse designed to protect them from falling into the wrong hands. They would be safe locked up in the snows of this great mountain."

The three of you become silent, lost in your private thoughts.

The End

Before they can recover from the unexpected refusal, you and Sam stroll out the door. Once you're in the hallway, you make a dash for the elevator. Fortunately, it's on your floor and the door is open.

"Quick! Keep going, Sam!" you yell.

The two of you join the other hotel guests in the elevator. Sam jabs the button for the lobby.

Three days later, you and Michael are aboard a jet which is about to land at New Delhi, India. This is the first leg of your journey to the Takla Makan Desert. You gained entry permits from the Chinese before you left. That in itself was a difficult job. Michael is used to the administrative details of expedition travel, but you are not. You have been helpful planning for this trip, though. You have studied maps, reviewed existing accounts of the Great Silk Route, and gotten together needed equipment, particularly survival gear for desert conditions.

At last you land in New Delhi. You spend a day resting from your flight, then take a plane to Srinagar in the Vale of Kashmir. From there you will depart for the Karakoram Pass and the Karakoram Highway that skirts the region of the Takla Makan Desert you're interested in.

That night you stay in a houseboat on a lake, watching the sun set over the Himalaya Mountains that ring the Vale of Kashmir. Michael has gone to sleep, but you remain awake for hours, enchanted by the beautiful lake and the surrounding mountains.

"I'll go after Chou," you tell Sam. "We'll meet back here at the Bear Paw in three hours, unless I'm onto something. I'll try to call if I need you."

"You watch out for yourself. We might be in over our heads," Sam cautions.

"Okay. You, too," you reply, slapping him lightly on the shoulder.

You rush out of the restaurant, almost knocking over two people. You reach the escalator and run down it two steps at a time, just as the man who looks like Mr. Chou leaves the building.

Darting for the door, you see him running down the street that leads to the Star Ferry to Kowloon across the bay. You see the man purchase his ticket and board the ferry. You get a ticket and make it aboard just seconds before the ramp is pulled up.

"Now what?" you say to yourself, surveying the crowd, trying to get a glimpse of the man. "He's gone."

Just then, you see him on the dock, smiling and waving at you. The ferry is pulling away from its slip with a powerful surge of the propellers.

If you decide to jump for it, turn to page 162.

If you decide to pull the emergency stop handle on the cabin wall, turn to page 151.

"It appears that your two friends are in trouble, to put it mildly," he says.

"They're not our friends, exactly, sir," you reply.

"No matter. It appears that we share mutual concerns. Smugglers, pure and simple. Heroin and opium. Not a very nice business, is it?"

"All we know is that they're missing, and we've been hired by their families to find them," you offer as explanation to these three.

"Fair enough. You wouldn't have come here if you were in on their scam. So let's see if we can help each other. You want them alive, we want them caught and indicted. Are you two willing to work with us as undercover agents of a sort? My name, by the way, is Holbrook. Ned Holbrook, U.S. Consul in Hong Kong."

"Glad to meet you, Mr. Holbrook. I'm sure we'd like to help. Right, Sam?"

Sam nods a yes.

"What do you want us to do?" you ask Holbrook.

Turn to page 38.

Mr. Chou claps his hands, and an attendant enters. Chou whispers in his ear, and the attendant departs, only to return some minutes later with a young girl.

"This is Lan Ping," Mr. Chou says, smiling broadly.

Lan Ping stares at the two of you, and then runs from the room. Mr. Chou lifts his hands in annoyance. "What can I do?" he says.

"Well, that didn't start out too well, did it?" Sam asks.

You shake your head.

"I'll go after her," you say and quickly leave the room. You find Lan Ping in the main dining room sitting with a man, a woman, and three other children.

"No! I don't want to go! I won't go!" Lan Ping says in a tearful voice as you approach her table.

The man at the table invites you to sit down, explaining that he and the woman next to him are Lan Ping's parents.

Abdullah runs to the caravan where he is greeted by three men. Immediately, the caravan begins to fade before your eyes. In a minute, it is gone. Only unmarked sand stretches before you.

Then the wind begins to howl. The dreaded Black Hurricane has started.

The End

A bullet smashes into the wood of the door frame just inches above your head.

Now the people are shouting and running. There is no time for reflection. You must act!

With three bounding steps you are in the boat. What a relief—the keys are in the ignition! The engine roars to life.

Cast off lines fore and aft!

Reverse!

The boat skids out onto the lake with a roar and a surge of water.

Forward! Full throttle!

You head down the lake with a plume of water billowing behind you, silver in the moonlight. Reaching the houseboat you left barely an hour before, you slow the boat into reverse and then stop and yell for Michael.



The boarding ramps of the cruiser are down, and two tough-looking characters in blue sailor sweaters and khaki pants stand on deck, acting very much like guards.

Ya-Ma-Ton scrambles up the ramp with you and Sam in tow. He gives a curt nod of acknowledgment to the guards and hurries to a cabin on the second deck. He ushers you and Sam inside.

"Wait here," he says in his pleasant voice, but the key turns in the lock once he is outside the cabin.

You look at Sam in alarm. "Hey, this isn't the way it's supposed to go," you say. "We're prisoners!"

At that moment, although you can't see them, three police helicopters appear directly over the cruiser. Police scramble down lines suspended from the choppers, and within minutes the crew of the boat is captured. There is no resistance that you can hear.

"Hey, we're in here," you yell, banging on the door.

"We want only the best for her," he explains. "Her grandfather says the best would be school in the States. He is worried because Hong Kong becomes a part of China again in nineteen-ninety when the British give it up."

You turn to Lan Ping, who is huddled close to her mother.

"You and your family speak excellent English right now, it appears. I don't blame you for wanting to stay at home. That's what you really want, isn't it? All of you?"

Lan Ping looks at you and says, "Yes. I don't ever want to leave home. China is where I belong. My parents want me here, too. It is only grandfather who wishes this."

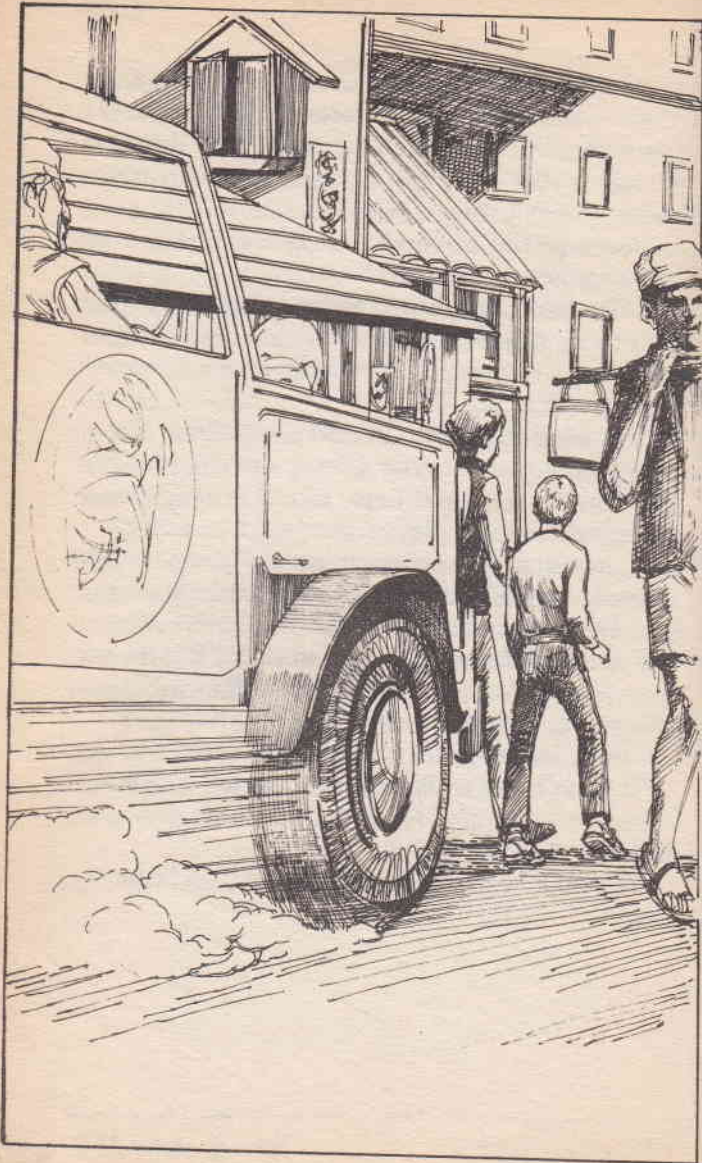
"Then stay. I'll do my best to convince your grandfather that your wish to stay in Hong Kong is good and correct."

Lan Ping's father whispers to you, "Did the old man try to make you believe he is with the Dragon Tong?"

"Well, we were told he is," you reply.

"He isn't. Not really. He is connected with them, and does small things for them as now with you; but he is not a criminal."

You nod. You have reached a dead end with Mr. Chou.



"They can't stop us," you say to Sam. "They don't have a warrant for our arrest. Let's get going."

Sam hesitates for just a moment, looks at the two, shrugs his shoulders, and follows you out of the hotel into the late afternoon sunlight.

"What now?" he asks.

"I vote we go back to square one and get the U.S. Consulate involved in this. I think we're in over our heads."

"Great idea," he says, "but it's just more red tape. Let's see what we can do on our own. We'll give it one more try."

"All right. Let's get a cup of tea. There's a tea shop across the street."

"Great," Sam replies.

As you and Sam start across the busy street, the driver of a large, silver delivery truck loses control turning the corner trying to avoid a taxi. He runs into you and Sam. Your last memory is of curious faces peering down at you.

"Is this one alive?" asks a voice.

"I don't think so," is the answer.

The End

Then the tailor asks you if you would like to visit the shops where the "most precious silks of all" are stored.

"Yes, I would like that very much," you reply, but then you stop to think. There's something quite sinister about this old man.

If you decide to try for a back exit out of the tailor shop, turn to page 83.

If you decide to go to the silk shop with the old man, turn to page 146.

As a child, you invented a private language that you used at home with your brothers. It comes in handy at a time like this. Quickly you tell Sam your decision *not* to pay the ransom.

"Na raamro. Ali ali matra dinos."

Sam nods in agreement. "Okay, we'll play it your way," he tells you.

Blue shirt waits, confident that Americans always pay, and he is shocked when you tell him, "Take a walk, buster. No deal."

Turn to page 124.

From high above you a giant rock and snow slide comes tumbling down. Within minutes your party of three is lost forever in the Kali Gandaki.

The End



"Come on, Sam. We're leaving," you say, trying to sound calm and relaxed. It's all an act. Your heart is beating so hard that you're sure the men can hear it.

"Like I said, as you wish. But you'll be back," blue shirt replies.

His words go unanswered as you and Sam cross the threshold, enter the hall, and simply walk away.

Down in the lobby you are confronted by two men, neatly dressed in business suits.

"Police. Come with us. Don't make a fuss," one of them says, flashing an official-looking I.D. card.

If you go with them, turn to page 145.

If you ignore them and continue out of the hotel, turn to page 135.

A message comes in on the radio, and the two masked people turn toward it. Your guide speaks to you.

"I will return you to your houseboat. Tell no one of this meeting or of this place. I will contact you each night on the lake by your houseboat. We want names, dates of attacks, places, and names of government officials who are sympathetic to your cause. If you are faithful, you will be rewarded."

The trip back to the lakeshore is quick. Then you are in the canoe and finally back at the houseboat. Once on deck, your guide whispers, "Remember, you are ours now."

Michael appears on deck, holding a bright light.

"Hey, what's going on here?" he asks.

Behind him are two police officers. Their guns are drawn, and they command the man in the boat to put his hands above his head.

"Never!" he yells.

Turn to page 14.

"Not for us. For someone up on that ridge," you say, pointing to the spot where you saw the flares. "We don't know who they are. But they need help. We thought you could join in."

Jules shakes his head. "Sadly, I am the only one here. The others are at Camps Two and Three high on Fang. Even now, I am expecting radio contact with them. In the morning, perhaps, we can bring them down for a rescue attempt. Now it soon will be night and unsafe to move, I regret."

You agree with him, and accept his offer of a cup of hot coffee. It tastes good in the cold, high-altitude air.

"Tomorrow, then," you say, and you and Sangy return to your camp.

"I know it's a long way to Ghorapani, and I understand your reluctance to stir up old troubles, but I want to check on that rumor. We can't just ignore it."

Chodak gives you a pained look, but agrees. "The trail is long. We must leave at once," he says.

You, Cathy, and Chodak struggle into heavily loaded packs—enough food and supplies for at least five days out in the river gorge, if that's where you end up.

Footstep after footstep measures the time as the three of you head up the long trail. Hours pass, punctuated by stops for the hot tea brewed over a mountain stove, and for oranges and biscuits. When you look up, you see the mountains with their vast white coats.

That night you sleep under the stars. Toward dawn, you are awakened by a presence—a living, breathing presence.

The lost caravan is in front of you. Locked in time, it was a caravan of two hundred souls, four hundred camels, dogs, and Tibetan ponies. Bales of silk, tea, and spices are spread out before you, freed from the clogging sand of the dreaded Black Hurricane.



"It's moving!" you yell. "It's moving."

Abdullah is kneeling in the sand. He is offering up his prayer. "Om nama shivaya."

He turns toward you and speaks.

"You have only to believe. Time, places, things have no real value. This caravan was never lost; only time was lost for it. We must join them. Their journey is to the stars. Come! Come quickly before it is too late."

Turn to page 129.

"Okay, what do you want, officer?" you ask.

"Let's sit down over here," he replies, moving toward a cluster of chairs gathered around a small table in one corner of the ornate lobby. Once seated, he lights up a slender cigar and carefully blows the smoke upward to avoid your face.

"We want those men," says the officer, "but we need proof that they are Dragon Tong. You can supply the evidence, if you are willing to go back up to your room and finish whatever deal you were making."

"Wait a minute. How do you know we were making a deal?" you ask.

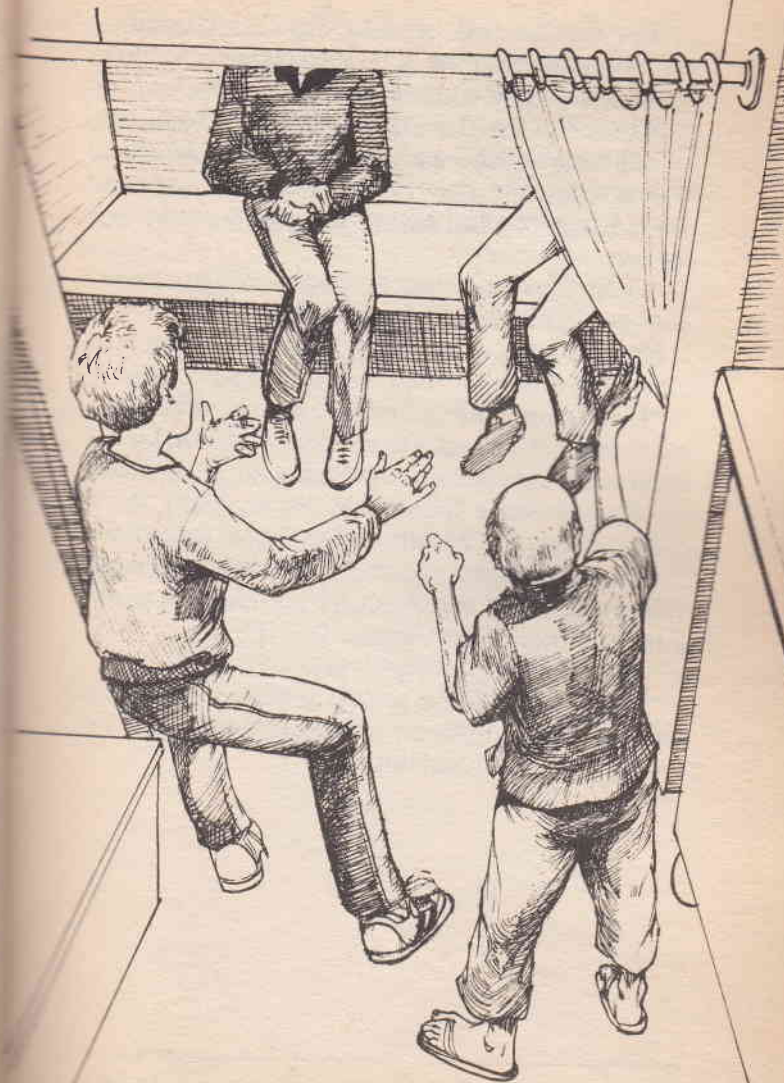
Turn to page 161.

The silk shop is in a section of Hong Kong beyond the city limits. It takes time to get there in an old car that seems on the verge of breaking down.

"This is strange," you say to yourself. "This man seems like an ordinary old Chinese tailor. I don't think this is leading anywhere."

Time, however, proves you wrong, and when you finally arrive at the Xong Li Silk Shop, you are frightened at what you find!

The shop is a front for a heroin manufacturing operation. And, you are their latest hostage. You now join Foote and Molitto!



"Oh, they're there all right. Don't worry about that. They're confident that you will be back. They think that they're the only game in town."

"Okay. We'll make a deal with them," you say. "You'll have to cover us, though. They look mean. And by the way, what do you know about Foote and Molitto?" You pause, waiting for their response.

"Only," replies the officer, "that you'll find them, all right. We'll make sure of that."

Minutes later, you reenter your room and find blue shirt sitting on the couch, smiling at you.

"I knew you couldn't refuse. So, no more playing around. The deal is this: we want you to take a certain package back to the States for us. You two are clean-looking Americans. No problem. We'll deliver Foote and Molitto to the airport tonight for the nonstop flight to L.A. Here's the package. When you arrive in L.A., you'll just hand it over to a man named Billy. Simple. Got it?"

"Where's the package?" you ask.

"You'll get it at the airport tonight," blue shirt replies. "Seven-fifteen sharp at the departure lounge of United Airlines."

Exhaustion begins to set in. It's been a long day, and the altitude, cold, and exertion draw heavily on your energy reserves. Pete hands you a piece of chocolate. You feel a surge within minutes of eating it. "It won't last long," you say to yourself. "I have to conserve my strength and energy. No sense in having to be rescued on this rescue mission."

The next afternoon, you and Sam are back at the hotel having tea. The afternoon paper reports the return of two missing Americans who say they were lost on a small boat for three weeks in the South China Sea. You have no idea whether their story is the truth, but you're glad Foote and Molitto are safe.

"Well, it looks like this trip is over," says Sam.

"Yeah, let's go home," you reply. "Enough adventure for now."

The End



Instant action! Foghorn blares! Lights flash! The ferry shudders as its great engines are jammed into reverse.

Crew members rush everywhere. Several pairs of hands grab you. Excited voices scream at you in Chinese. You are marched up to the bridge and presented to the captain of the ferry and a police officer.

"Please explain your action," the captain says to you.

"Well, you see, it's this way . . ." And so begins a long and tangled story that finds you in jail overnight, in court for a day, and finally deported from Hong Kong, courtesy of the British government, with a firm suggestion not to return to the royal colony.

"It's okay, kid. Good try," Sam says, as the plane takes off from Hong Kong, headed for Tokyo. "Molitto and Foote will have to take care of themselves. The police have solid evidence that they're drug dealers. We're out of it now. Serves them right."

The End

"Got it?" the man asks, a discernible edge of bitterness to his voice.

"We got it," you reply, feeling your anger swell. Kidnaping is one of the nastiest crimes there is, you think.

"So," Sam says, "either we arrange for the money, or we tell these characters to 'fry ice,' as our mother used to say. But we don't know whether that voice was Foote's. What's the proof that they are the two Americans we're after?"

The man in the blue shirt hands you a picture showing Foote and Molitto seated next to him. Their hands are tied.

You agree and the two leave. It's a long and nervous wait with the police in a private room at the airport control center. Finally you and Sam go to the departure lounge at the appointed time. There you meet blue shirt, Foote, and Molitto.

Blue shirt hands you the package.

"Police," shouts a man dressed as a ticket agent. "Hands up," shout two more people posing as passengers. Blue shirt makes a dash for the exit and runs smack into a squad of officers. It's all over in a matter of minutes.

Foote and Molitto are officially expelled by the Hong Kong police for drug dealing.

"Well, how did you like that?" Sam asks on the plane home.

"Fine for a start," you reply, wondering where the next adventure will lead.

The End

*If you decide to pay the ransom,
turn to page 160.*

*If you decide to refuse to pay,
turn to page 137.*



Near two o'clock in the morning, you hear a scuffling sound on deck. A man appears. He motions you to be quiet. Then he whispers, "I can show you treasures beyond your wildest dreams, beyond an ancient caravan buried under sleeping sands."

He waits on deck, his face covered by the hood of his loose robe. A light wind ripples the surface of the lake, and the houseboat moves slightly to the movement of the waves.

If you decide to investigate this man and his offer, turn to page 8.

If you decide to wake Michael, turn to page 26.

Sam takes your arm and whispers, "Easy, easy."

"No, I'll be as hard as nails. That's the only way to deal with these two," you reply.

Blue shirt talks nervously with his partner. A hurried phone call follows, and minutes later you're talking to a person who claims to be Bill Foote.

"We're all right. Yes, they kidnaped us in the China Sea. Took us right off a boat we had chartered. Yes, we were trying to smuggle drugs. Get us out of here!" Foote says.

"Listen, it serves you right, Foote. Drugs kidnap a lot more people than crooks ever do. Maybe we should just forget about you and Molitto. Maybe we should let you stay right where you are."

Click. You hang up.

"Sam, what do you say? You were listening on the extension. Do we bail them out or not?" you ask.

"Let's think about it," he replies. "Let's think about it."

The End

"Sure thing," you say, and the two of you set off at a quick pace down the steep rock and gravel trail leading out of the big sanctuary. Twice you slip, once almost giving your ankle a bad twist, but luck is with you and no harm is done. Cathy is more surefooted and has no problem with the trail.

An hour later, you arrive at a spot where radio transmission will not be blocked by the mountains. Contact with the Royal Nepalese Army is made.

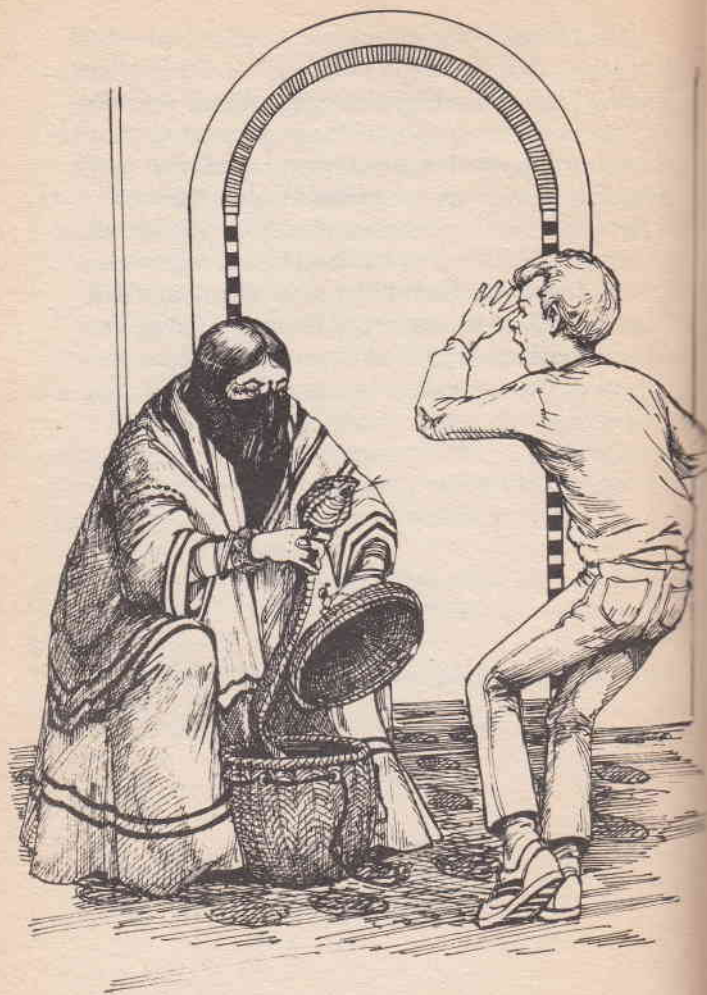
"Mountain emergency. Request help. Annapurna Sanctuary. Over," you say into the microphone of the compact radio.

The woman with the black mask lifts a cobra from a basket on the floor. It coils around her arm, hood flaring, tongue darting out, hissing, staring at you with bright eyes.

She comes closer and closer. Suddenly—

You awake in the houseboat, the victim of a nightmare.

The End



You and Sam huddle together in the corner of the room for a quick conference.

"I don't think we can risk their lives, Sam. Let's pay the ransom and get them back safely. Remember, their families said that money is no object."

"I know, I know, it's just that I hate being had by these creeps. I don't trust them," Sam replies.

"We have no choice. It's lives for money," you say.

Finally Sam agrees with you and you turn to the two.

"All right. Forty-eight hours. The money will be given to you here in Hong Kong at a place of your choosing. Take it or leave it," you say in a cold and steady voice.

"Hey, wait a minute! We're the ones running this show! Not you," blue shirt shouts.

"That's what you think, loudmouth. Take it or leave it. Also, we want Foote and Molitto on the phone now and we want them at the hotel in forty-eight hours. No Foote and Molitto, no money. Got it?"

"We know from Interpol that you and your brother are after Foote and Molitto. We also know that the Dragon Tong probably have them. It's very simple. We have been following you since you arrived in Hong Kong. We just need more firm evidence that the Tong are involved in the kidnapping."

He draws on his cigar again and scrutinizes you and Sam.

"I don't know," Sam replies. "They're tough customers. We were lucky to get out when we did. Anyway, how do you know they're still in the room?"

A brave try, but you are sucked in by the propellers. Although no one can see it in the dark, the water at the stern of the ferry turns a muddy red for a few moments before it resumes its usual brilliant jade color.

The End

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

R.A. MONTGOMERY is an educator and publisher. A graduate of Williams College, he also studied in graduate programs at Yale University and New York University. After serving in a variety of administrative capacities at Williston Academy and Columbia University, he co-founded Waitsfield Summer School in 1965. Following that, Montgomery helped found a research and development firm specializing in the development of educational programs. He worked for several years as a consultant to the Peace Corps in Washington, D.C., and West Africa. He is now both a writer and a publisher.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

LESLIE MORRILL is a designer and illustrator whose work has won him numerous awards. He has illustrated over thirty books for children, including the Bantam Classic edition of *The Wind in the Willows*. Mr. Morrill has illustrated *Indian Trail*, *Attack of the Monster Plants*, *The Owl Tree*, *Sand Castle*, *Light on Burro Mountain*, and *Home in Time for Christmas*, in the Skylark Choose Your Own Adventure series, and *Lost on the Amazon*, *Mountain Survival*, *Invaders of the Planet Earth*, and *The Brilliant Dr. Wogan*, in the Choose Your Own Adventure series. Mr. Morrill also illustrated the first Super Adventure, *Journey to the Year 3000*.

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