

The Seven Chinese Brothers

Narrator: Long, long ago, when Ch'in Shih Huang was emperor of all China, seven brothers lived in a house together on a beautiful hillside. They were remarkably alike. They walked alike and they talked alike. They looked so much alike that it was hard to tell one brother from the next. With all their similarities though, there was one big difference between each of the brothers. One thing set each brother apart - each had his very own amazing power all his own.

First Brother: I am First Brother. I have amazing ears. I can hear a fly sneeze from a hundred miles away.

Second Brother: I am Second Brother. I have amazing eyes that can look right across the hundred miles and see the fly sitting on the Great Wall of China, sneezing and feeling very sorry for itself.

Third Brother: I have super strength. I can walk across China in a straight line, lifting up any mountains that get in my way and then put them carefully back behind me.

Fourth Brother: I am strong too. I am Fourth Brother. My bones are so strong they are like iron. They won't break, buckle, or bend.

Fifth Brother: I am Fifth Brother. I have legs as tall and wide as trees.

Sixth Brother: I am Sixth Brother. I can work and work all the day long under the hot sun, but I stay cool.

Seventh Brother: I am Seventh Brother, the last and youngest of the brothers. When I cry, my tears are like saltwater lakes, big enough to drown an entire village. My brothers work hard to make me smile and be happy, so my tears don't come.

Narrator: The seven brothers lived very happily together, and Seventh Brother never once had anything to cry about. But one day as they worked on their hillside, First Brother lifted his head with those sharp ears of his and said . . .

First Brother: I can hear moaning and groaning! It's 100 miles away, all the way over by the Great Wall of China. Second Brother, will you look hard and tell me what the trouble is?

Narrator: Second Brother looked with his far-seeing eyes at the Great Wall.

Second Brother: Oh my! There is an enormous hole in the wall! There are a 100 men working on it. They look tired, and hungry, and weak. They are not allowed to rest until the hole is repaired.

Narrator: The sadness of this was too much for the Seventh Brother. He was almost brought to tears.

Third Brother: Don't cry! I'll go and help them.

Narrator: And so off went third brother as quickly as he could, and got there in less than a minute. He set to work at once, tossing great stones from one hand to the other as if they were feathers. By the time darkness came, the hole was fixed, and the Third Brother lay down for a nap. But when the emperor heard that a single man had repaired the hole in one afternoon, he was worried rather than grateful.

Emperor: A man as powerful as that is more trouble than he's worth. Strong men can be very useful to an emperor, but this one is too strong. One army may not be enough to catch him. I had better send two.

Narrator: When Third Brother woke up from his nap, he found himself surrounded by two armies! They were there to execute Third Brother and began to carry him off to the dungeon. Third Brother burst into tears, but a hundred miles away on the hillside, First Brother heard Third Brother crying.

First Brother: Third Brother is in trouble!

Second Brother: Third Brother has been taken to the palace! He's surrounded by two armies! They are going to execute him in the morning. No wonder he is crying.

Fourth Brother: Don't worry! I'll take his place. Let them try to behead me. They can't cut through my bones.

Narrator: So off he went as quickly as he could, and got there in less than a minute. He crept in between the two armies, snuck over to Third Brother, and changed places with him. Third Brother went home, and Fourth Brother took his place. All the next day the officers of the two armies tried and tried to behead Fourth Brother, but weapon after weapon bent and broke on his iron bones. Finally, there was nothing left to do but tell the emperor that no matter what, they couldn't behead their prisoner.

Emperor: A man with bones of iron? Drown him in the sea! Tomorrow he will die in the sea!

Fourth Brother: Uh, oh. My iron bones will not break, but they will sink in the sea.

Narrator: Fourth Brother burst into tears. But a hundred miles away on the beautiful hillside, First Brother heard Fourth Brother begin to cry.

First Brother: Fourth Brother is crying.

Second Brother: Tomorrow morning they are going to drown Fourth Brother. No wonder he is crying.

Fifth Brother: Don't worry. I will change places with him. The mighty emperor can try to drown me as many times as he likes.

Narrator: Off he went, as quickly as he could, and got there in less than a minute. He tiptoed past the guards to Fourth Brother, who was awake and waiting for him. Swiftly, they switched places, and Fourth Brother went home.

Narrator: All the next day, the soldiers of the two armies tried to drown Fifth Brother. They threw him into the deep sea, but as he sunk down, his legs grew and grew. They grew so quickly that the water only came up to his knees. They threw him deeper into the water, but still it only reached as far as his waist. Finally, they threw him into the very deepest part of the sea. Still, the waves barely reached his chin.

Fifth Brother: Ahhhhh, I love the sea. How lovely and cool it is in the deep.

Emperor: He is much more dangerous than I imagined. He won't drown, but that doesn't mean he won't burn. Into the fire with him, tomorrow morning!

Narrator: Fifth Brother burst into tears when he heard about the fire, but far away on the beautiful hillside, First Brother heard Fifth Brother's cries. Second Brother looked right across the hundred miles.

Second Brother: Fifth Brother is crying because tomorrow morning they are going to burn him alive.

Sixth Brother: Don't worry! I know exactly what to do. I will take his place, and the splendid emperor can bake me all day long if he likes.

Narrator: Off he went. He soon found Fifth Brother, who was awake and waiting for him. Fifth Brother went home, and Sixth Brother took his place. The next day the two armies were busy. They ran to and fro, bringing kindling, grasses, brush, driftwood – anything that would burn. They built a gigantic fire, and there, basking in the heat of the blaze, Sixth Brother sighed with happiness.

Sixth Brother: How kind of the noble emperor to let me warm myself in his very own fire!

Emperor: Send the royal archers! In the morning, we will shoot this man full of arrows.

Narrator: Sixth Brother burst into tears. Of course, First Brother heard Sixth Brother crying.

First Brother: Second Brother, what do you see?

Second Brother: Oh, no! Tomorrow morning they are going to shoot Sixth Brother full of arrows!

First Brother: We cannot leave Sixth Brother to die alone. Let's all go to the emperor. He can shoot arrows through all of us. We may die, but at least we'll be together.

Narrator: The brothers started their journey to the Palace, but poor Seventh Brother was so upset that tears started to roll down his cheeks. His first salty tear was as big as the longest river in China. His second salty tear was as big as the second longest river. A great ocean of warm saltwater swept down the road ahead of the brothers. It swept on for a hundred miles. Seventh Brother's first gigantic tear swept one army north. His second gigantic tear swept the other army south. As for the emperor, he was tossed so high and so far that he is still trying to return to his palace. Seventh Brother's flood of tears swept over the Great Wall of China, flowed all the way out into the Yellow Sea, and all the way back again in less than a minute. Sixth Brother was Free! He hurried back up the road while his six wonderful brothers hurried down the road. They were reunited at the Great Wall.

Fifth Brother: Fish!

Narrator: The wave had washed hundreds of glistening fish ashore.

Third Brother: Wood!

Narrator: And he began gathering a forest full of wood to start a fire.

Fourth Brother: Fire!

Narrator: Then Fourth Brother snapped his iron finger and his iron thumb. A spark leaped out and set the fire blazing.

Seventh Brother: Oh I'm so hungry. Now that we are all together again, we can have dinner and forget our troubles. I promise never to cry again, unless I absolutely must."

Narrator: So the seven Chinese brothers sat themselves down around the warm fire and feasted on delicious fish... for it had been a long, worrying week and they were all very, very hungry.

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