

Bamboo Rescue

David lived in a small village in a large bamboo forest in China. For miles around his village, there was nothing but bamboo. David loved his beautiful home, but he often found himself wondering if he would ever experience any excitement living as he did in such a small village.

People in David's village had everything they needed. They had fresh water to drink. They had plenty of food - wild vegetables, nuts, fruits, and fish from the stream. They had entertainment - musical instruments made from bamboo and village gatherings every night where they sang and told stories. But David sometimes wished he lived someplace exciting like the cities he read about in books. Nothing new ever seemed to happen where he lived.

One day, however, that all changed. David had been out collecting feathers from the brilliant red roost-birds that flocked to the bamboo forest in the spring. On that day, he had followed the birds to the edge of the bamboo forest before he decided he'd better head back home.

As David turned, he heard a distant roaring. He rushed back to the edge of the forest and peered out. Across the rice fields and small villages that spread out in all directions, he saw a wide open plain of dirt with giant machines tearing up the land. He felt his heart begin to race as he thought about those machines pushing the bamboo down and tearing up the soil. Horrified, he knew he had to try to do something.

David ran to the nearest village, looking for someone he knew. He came across Liana, a young woman who weaved beautiful clothes. David was gasping for breath as he slid to a stop before her.

"What's going on, Liana?" David panted.

"Oh, you must mean the developers," Liana said, handing David a water jug to drink from. "Here, take a drink, you must have been running. They're coming to build on all of this land. First they tear up the land, and then they put up huge buildings and giant houses and wide roads to go between them - and they call it 'development.' They're coming to develop the whole valley."

The water sprayed right out of David's mouth. "The whole valley? That means the forest and our village too! They can't do that!"

Liana looked at David with pity. "You must not have heard," she said with a frown. "I'm sorry to give you the bad news. But, yes, I'm afraid they can do it. They have a paper from the government saying they have permission to develop this land. They told us last

week that we would need to move further to the south."

David couldn't believe what he was hearing. "But, Liana, why don't you stop them?" he asked.

She shrugged. "What can we do? We must leave, and we don't have much time to pack. If we spend time trying to fight the government, we may not be able to get all our things together before the machines reach our village." As she said these words, Liana leaned down and picked up a large basket. She gave David one last sad look and told him, "You'd better get on home now. I have work to do."

David ran back home with the news. "We've got to do something! We may lose our home!" he shouted as soon as he got close enough for people to hear.

All the people gathered to listen to what David said. The village elders stepped out of the crowd to stand in front of everyone. It was their job to make sure everyone had a chance to speak their ideas and to ask the most important questions to help the people decide what to do.

After a lot of discussion, Tia, the eldest elder, asked the most important question: "What is it worth to keep our home?" Everyone paused to reflect on that question, and soon they had an answer everyone could agree on. They immediately went to work.

A group of young people headed straight for the capital city. They brought gifts of feathers, bamboo instruments, and some of their best stories to share with the people at the local television station. A group of adults began to build large structures out of bamboo - using lots of bamboo poles tied tightly together. The elders began to walk to the other villages surrounding the bamboo forest to talk to the elders of those villages. David was sent to sit atop the highest bamboo stalks at the edge of the forest to watch for the developers and call down when he saw them coming closer.

Within a few days, all of their plans began to take shape. The group of youths returned to the village, smiling and laughing with the news reporters, who carried their cameras and microphones. The youths guided the reporters around to see their village, the beautiful bamboo forest, and their way of life, all the while treating the reporters like royal guests and joking and laughing with them.

When the reporters interviewed David, he was surprised to find he had a hard time getting words out. The elders had advised everyone to make sure the reporters were impressed by how wonderful life in the village was. David tried to smile when he talked about the bamboo forest, but it seemed like every time he started to explain how he felt, his tongue would freeze, and he had to blink to keep tears from escaping. "How can people destroy the natural world?" he wanted to ask. "How can they take our land?" But David was afraid that the elders would be disappointed in him if he didn't smile for the camera.

Finally, he just shook his head when the reporters asked him if he wanted to comment and climbed back up to his perch high in the bamboo to keep watch.

Fortunately, others in the village were able to share how much they loved life in their village. The adults sang as they worked on the long bamboo walls that they carried to the outskirts of the forest. At the end of each day, everyone laughed and joked as they prepared their evening meal. The reporters watched it all, filming scenes they thought their viewers would enjoy watching. They filmed the elders coming back with news that the other villages wanted to work together to save their homes. They filmed David on his tall perch watching the developers moving closer to Liana's village.

A few days after the reporters had left, word came that a story about their village was going to show on television. The elders smiled when they heard the news. In the meantime, the adults continued to work with the people of the other villages to put up bamboo walls and dig the wall supports deep into the ground, all along the path that the developers were taking toward their homes. The elders of all the villages continued to plan how their people were going to stand together against the oncoming machines. David watched the walls go up and the developers come closer, and when the giant digging dozers began to move within sight of the walls, he cried out with all his might to warn everyone below.

A group of youths ran to warn the news reporters. David came down to join the other villagers banding together to stand hand-in-hand behind the walls that blocked the machines. They formed a human chain as wide as the fields and villages, and ten or twenty people deep. Meanwhile, the elders grouped front and center, ready to speak with the developers if they requested a meeting.

The machines did not wait long to start crashing against the walls. They must have thought the walls would be weak, because they came slowly. The walls of thick bamboo were terribly strong, however, and the machines kept crashing and bashing, harder each time, only to find that the walls did not give an inch. The villagers waited like this for hours, all the time fearing the walls would break. David was torn between feeling terrified and feeling as strong as those walls, and stronger than any machine, as he stood there hand-in-hand with his neighbors.

Eventually, however, the walls began to make loud crunching sounds, and David had to choke back tears as he began to see places where the machines were starting to break through. The villagers held their hands together strongly and stood closer together, ready for anything! Looking around him, David felt incredibly proud of his friends and neighbors.

Suddenly, they heard a loud sound overhead. David looked up to see a helicopter with the news station logo on it! With the coming of the helicopter, the machines slowed down

and stopped. Eventually, a man in a suit squeezed through a crack in the wall. He wanted to speak with the elders privately.

They spoke for what seemed like hours to David, but when the elders came back their eyes were shining, and they walked with a spring in their steps. The man in the suit had said that he was a spokesperson from the developers. They had seen the news story about the forest and the village, and they were afraid to continue to dig up the valley. They didn't want people saying bad things about them. The developers agreed to leave the rest of the valley alone if the villagers did not follow them or try to stop them from developing land anywhere else. This was a tough decision for the elders, but they knew that it was possible that people in other places had already learned how to save their homes by watching how they had done it on the television news.

When they heard the elders' news, everyone started to cheer and hug each other. They found David, put him up on their shoulders, and paraded him around all the villages. As he witnessed the celebrations in each of the villages, David reflected that maybe his life had plenty of excitement in it after all. He smiled as he thought about how much he loved life in the small village. "No," he thought to himself, "I don't think I need to explore city life!"

1. At the beginning of the story, where did David wish he could live?

- A. In a big city.
- B. In a new forest.
- C. In a new village.

2. What was David doing near the edge of the forest when he saw the developers?

- A. Collecting bird feathers.
- B. Collecting wild vegetables.
- C. Collecting bamboo branches.

3. How did Liana feel about the developers coming into the valley?

- A. She was angry and thought it was time to move.
- B. She was excited to start packing and move south.
- C. She felt helpless and the situation was hopeless.

- 4. Why did David refuse to talk to the reporters when they were in the village?**
- A. He didn't think he was a very good speaker and was embarrassed.
 - B. He didn't want to leave his post high in the bamboo to talk to them.
 - C. He didn't want his negative feelings to be seen by the reporters.
- 5. What did the villagers do to try to protect their village?**
- A. Young people built bamboo walls, adults went to the city, and elders spoke to other villages about the situation.
 - B. Young people went to the city, adults built bamboo walls, and elders spoke to other villages about the situation.
 - C. Young people spoke to other villages about the situation, elders went to the city, and adults built bamboo walls.
- 6. How did the villagers manage to build the bamboo walls so quickly?**
- A. They were efficient because of the elders' organization.
 - B. They worked very hard and fast because they were scared.
 - C. They got help from other villages so they had more people.
- 7. What is the main idea of this story?**
- A. Family and friends are more important in people's lives than the land that they live on.
 - B. Working together can help people overcome problems they couldn't solve individually.
 - C. If people listen to the elders in their communities, everything will turn out for the best.
- 8. At the end of the story, where did David wish he could live?**
- A. In his own village in the bamboo forest.
 - B. In a big city outside the bamboo forest.
 - C. In another village near the bamboo forest.

- 9. When did the developers change their minds about developing the valley?**
- A. When the news station helicopter flew overhead.
 - B. When they couldn't break down the bamboo walls.
 - C. When they saw the human chain made up of villagers.
- 10. Why did the villagers laugh, joke, and sing while they were preparing the protective bamboo walls, even when they knew they were about to fight the developers?**
- A. They were pretending to be happy for the new reporters, hoping it would make the developers angry.
 - B. They loved working with each other and hoped their work would make a difference for the village.
 - C. They were sure the walls would keep out the developers, so they were happy to build them.
- 11. Where did the villagers get the vegetables, nuts, fruit, and fish they ate?**
- A. They traded with nearby villages.
 - B. They raised them within the village.
 - C. They gathered them from the wild.
- 12. What caused the development company to change its mind?**
- A. The bamboo walls that were built were too thick for them to get their machines through.
 - B. The news reports about how the people of the village were organizing against the development company.
 - C. The elders had meetings with the development company and asked them to change their minds.
- 13. How would the elders probably have reacted if David had told the reporters how he really felt about the developers coming?**
- A. They would have been angry he didn't act in harmony with the rest of the village.
 - B. They would have been disappointed in him for not acting happy for the camera.
 - C. They would have been proud of how deeply David cared about his village.

- 14. What did the developers ask for in return for not developing the valley?**
- A. The villagers wouldn't tell anyone else about what had happened that day.
 - B. The villagers wouldn't try to stop the developers from working in other places.
 - C. The villagers would have to pay the developers a small sum of money.
- 15. Why was it hard for the elders to take the developer's offer?**
- A. They were angry and wanted to ruin the development company by causing problems at other sites.
 - B. They weren't positive that villages outside the valley would know how to deal with the development company.
 - C. They felt it would be cowardly to accept the offer just to save the villages in their valley.
- 16. What is probably the reason the village chose to have the youths take the reporters around the village?**
- A. The youths would be more energetic and enthusiastic about the village, which would impress the reporters.
 - B. The youths weren't strong or knowledgeable enough to build the walls, so they talked to reporters instead.
 - C. The youths would encourage people to be more sympathetic towards the village since they seemed more innocent.
- 17. Why did the elders listen to what David had to say, even though he was just a kid?**
- A. It was their job to make sure everyone had a chance to speak and be heard.
 - B. They felt he had good solutions to offer to help the village's problems.
 - C. David was shouting and demanding everyone's attention, including the elders.
- 18. How were the people of David's village like the bamboo walls they built?**
- A. They lived wild in the forest just as the bamboo plants did.
 - B. They obtained strength from coming out of the bamboo forest.
 - C. They were stronger than the developers expected them to be.

19. What was the main problem in the story?

- A. David had to make a decision about whether to live in a village or city when he grew up.
- B. The development company was given the right to develop the valley where the village was.
- C. David had to grow up quickly to try to figure out how to save his village on his own.

20. Why would the developers care if people said bad things about them?

- A. They would have a harder time developing land in other places if they were criticized.
- B. They were afraid that the government wouldn't give them rights to develop more land.
- C. They didn't realize the harm they were doing and wanted to do what was right.