"The Golden Kite, the Silver Wind"
by Ray Bradbury - Published in 1953

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C Block English
Ray Bradbury

American author of *Fahrenheit 451*, Ray Bradbury is best known for his work with fantasy, horror, and science fiction novels. He decided at age twelve to devote his life to writing, hoping to leave a legacy that will influence generations after him. Ray Bradbury continued to write in his 80s with the help of one of his four daughters. In addition to *Fahrenheit 451*, some of his most well known works include *The Martian Chronicles* and *Something Wicked This Way Comes*. 
Additional Facts

1. Bradbury was born on August 22, 1920.
2. He is from Waukegan Illinois
3. At age 91, Bradbury died on June 5, 2012 in Los Angeles
4. Ray Bradbury wrote over 600 short stories and over 27 novels
5. His works sold millions of copies and have been translated into numerous languages
Setting

This short story takes place in the orange shaped town and Kwan-Si, the pig shaped town, later renamed the Town of the Golden Kite and the Town of the Silver Wind. No specific time period is given, but the context shows signs of it taking place in ancient Asia as the characters believe in omens and they have an emperor to rule them. The setting is important to the story because in ancient times many things were about competing and the ongoing battle to have the best wall design sets a mood of competition.
Primary Characters

- Mandarin - worrisome, determined, and impulsive, superstitious
  - protagonist
  - major character, dynamic, and round
- Mandarin’s daughter - clever, resourceful, a problem solver
  - major character, dynamic, flat
- Mandarin of Kwan-Si - competitive, old, determined
  - major character, dynamic, flat

Secondary Characters

- The messenger - worried
  - minor character, static, flat
- The Stone Masons/Architects/The people - hard working, fatigued
  - minor characters, static and flat
Mandarin receives word that Kwan-Si has built their walls in a shape of a pig, while their town walls are in the shape of an orange, which pigs may devour.

He worries Kwan-Si’s new walls bestow a bad omen on his town.

As Mandarin’s daughter suggests, Mandarin changes his town walls to a club.

Kwan-Si → bonfire
Mandarin → lake
Kwan-Si → mouth

Mandarin → needle
Kwan-Si → sword
Mandarin → scabbard

With depleted resources, both towns become poor and sickly.

Both Mandarins come together to hold an intervention and decide to rebuild their walls once more in the shapes of a kite and the wind.

The towns recover their health and wealth and coexist happily as The Town of the Golden Kite and The Town of the Silver Wind.
Inciting Incident:
The city of Kwan-Si builds a wall around their town in the shape of a pig.

1. The mandarin senses this as a threat and his daughter tells him to have stonemasons change wall to a club to ward off the pig and other animals.
2. Kwan-Si makes their wall a bonfire to burn club.
3. Mandarin changes wall to a lake to douse fire.
4. Kwan-Si makes their wall a mouth to drink lake.
5. Mandarin changes wall to a needle to sew mouth shut.
6. Kwan-Si makes their wall a sword.
7. Mandarin changes wall to a scabbard as a sheath for the sword.
8. Kwan-Si makes their wall lighting to destroy sheath.
9. Sickness starts to spread and populations of both cities slowly diminishes. Everyone is too consumed with rebuilding walls making no time for anything else, leading shops to close.
10. Kwan-Si makes their wall an eagle.
11. Mandarin changes wall to a net to catch eagle.
12. Kwan-Si makes their wall a sun to burn net.
13. Mandarin changes wall to a moon to eclipse sun.
14. The Mandarin falls ill and so does his daughter, the whisperer behind the silk screen.
15. The daughter tells her father to send for the Mandarin of Kwan-Si.
16. The Mandarin’s daughter comes up with the idea of having walls that compliment each other.
17. The Mandarin’s daughter tells her father to send for the Mandarin of Kwan-Si.

Climax: Both Mandarins, in the presence of the townsfolk and the Mandarins of neighboring towns, agree they need to put an end to their "competition" for the sake of their cities.

Resolution: The towns become the Town of Golden Kite and the Town of Silver Wind because each without the other is nothing spectacular but together they are beautiful.

Exposition: the Mandarin receives news that Kwan-Si is building a wall because they have finally grown into a large enough town to do so.
Point-of-View

The Golden Kite, the Silver Wind is written from the perspective of a third person limited omniscient. In the story the thoughts and feeling of the Mandarin are visible to the reader, but only this character which makes it a limited point of view. This is significant to the story because from this perspective it appears as though the Mandarin is the protagonist and the other Mandarin is the antagonist. This is not the case because each one is equally responsible for the sickness of their towns due to their constant changing of the city's' walls in attempt to best the other.
Prominent Techniques

Ray Bradbury employs many literary techniques in this short story, a major one being irony. Irony, specifically dramatic irony, appears as the reader can easily distinguish that the two towns’ attempts to rebuild their walls in order to conquer the other town’s wall is futile and not a promising venture. The characters, however, take a long time continuing to rebuild their walls time after time before identifying the truth of the situation.

The Mandarins’ frequent construction on their town walls is also quite ironic as they are rebuilding the walls in order to protect their towns from being cursed with evil days and poverty. However the rebuilding of the walls is the factor that ends up causing both of their towns to become poor and sickly.
Symbols

The Wall: Throughout the story the most important symbol is the wall. Three words that demonstrate the wall well are protection, competition and conflict. The wall is used to protect the city from invaders and attackers and it reassures the city folk that they are safe from the outside world. The wall also signifies competition & conflict. The Kwan-Si and orange shaped town have many conflicts about the shape of their wall. Their rivalry is very significant and it it wasn’t for the wall competition the rising action and climax would not occur.

The Golden Kite and Silver Wind: This is another important symbol that occurs towards the falling action and resolution of the story. It represents harmony, peace and interdependence.

Sickness of the People: The people’s sickness is also an important symbol representing the effect of competition.
Theme

One should not get so caught up in trying to be better than others that one loses sight of what is truly important.

This is significant to the story because each Mandarin interprets the changing of the walls as a threat to their city and they are consumed by trying to make their wall better. They use all of their resources, manpower, and energy trying to win, without realizing the effects on their town.

“But why should a wall two miles away make my good father sad and angry all within the hour” (Bradbury 179).

“Our people do nothing but rebuild our cities to a different shape every day, every hour. They have no time to hunt, to fish, to love, to be good to their ancestors and their ancestors’ children” (Bradbury 181).
We gave “The Golden Kite, the Silver Wind” two out of a possible three stars. We did this because we appreciated the theme that was taught and the message received after reading text. The reason we didn’t give it three out of three stars was because the rising action was slow; the way the story was written, it took time to interpret the author's meaning. Overall we enjoyed the short story very much!
Citations


