

YAMASHITA'S GOLD

(an interactive story by Mark White)

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1. THE TALLEST GIRL IN THE CLASS (“be” verbs)

This is the story of a very tall, beautiful young Japanese woman. Her name is Naoko. She is the tallest girl in her class at elementary school. Is she the most intelligent? Is she the most hardworking? She is also the tallest girl in her school when she goes to high school. Is she the cleverest? Is her school a good school? Is it a private school?

Naoko is the most beautiful woman in her hometown. Is her hometown very big? She is the most beautiful woman in her prefecture. Is her prefecture beautiful? What is the most beautiful prefecture in Japan? Some people say Naoko is the most beautiful woman in all of Japan. Are most Japanese women beautiful?

Naoko is also the tallest woman in her hometown. She is taller than most of the men. She cannot find a boyfriend because the men do not like tall women. She is tall and beautiful but she is lonely. Are you lonely?

One day there is a car accident. Naoko’s parents die. She goes to live with her uncle. He is single. He reads a lot and he has a shop in the city. He sells antiques. His name is Uncle Taro. Is he very tall? Is he her mother’s brother or her father’s brother?

Uncle Taro takes care of Naoko but she misses her parents a lot and she cries every day. Uncle Taro comforts her. Why is Uncle Taro not married?

One night Naoko has a dream. In the dream she sees her mother and her father. Is her mother happy? Is her father happy? She talks to her parents. She feels good. In the morning she wakes up and she feels ok. She is ready to continue her life. She gets up and she gets dressed and she goes to school. Is it far to school? What is the name of her favorite teacher?

2. THE FOOTBALL PLAYER (there is/are)

Naoko is the most beautiful girl in her class but she cannot find a boyfriend because she is too tall. How many people are there in her class? How many boys are there? Naoko is taller than all the boys. What is the name of the tallest boy in her class?

One day she meets a guy from another class. His name is Yuji. Is he handsome? Yuji is a football player and he is a nice guy but he is not very interesting. He talks about football all the time. He plays football and he watches football on television and he talks about it. His whole life is football. What kind of football does he play? How many people are there in a team? Is Yuji the captain of the team? Is he a good player? How many teams are there in the league?

Yuji is a little shorter than Naoko but they are almost the same height. She goes out with him because she is lonely. They go to a movie. Is it about football? The cinema is very crowded. About how many people are there in the cinema? How many ushers are there? After the movie, Yuji takes Naoko to a coffee shop. He talks about football then he sees his friends. He leaves Naoko by herself. Suddenly she feels very lonely. How many people are there in the coffee shop? Is it Starbucks? Is the coffee good?

Naoko goes home. She sits at home for a while then she goes out again. She goes to Uncle Taro's shop. Are there any customers in the shop? Uncle Taro is at the back of the shop. Is he in a good mood? Is his shop clean? Is there any background music?

Uncle Taro loves Naoko very much. He talks to her and he cheers her up. He tells her jokes and he makes her laugh. Are his jokes funny? Why is he single? Are there any lovers in his past? He talks to Naoko about her future. Is the future bright?

3. THE BEARDED FOREIGNER (present tense)

It is Monday. It is a school day. Naoko has to go to university. How many classes does she have on Monday? What time do they start? What subject are they? It is a cool day so Naoko brings a coat. What color is it? Is it long? Does it have a hood?

Naoko takes the train then she takes the bus. Does the train have a “ladies only” carriage? She sees Yuji at school. Does he see her? Naoko does not want to see Yuji again. She wants to forget him. Does he want to see her again? After school she goes to Uncle Taro’s shop again. Are there any customers in the shop? Naoko talks to Uncle Taro. He tells her a joke? Does she get it? Is it funny? Does she laugh? Does she tell him a joke?

Suddenly a man comes into the shop. He is a foreigner. Does he speak Japanese? His eyes are very dark and he has a long black beard. He seems nervous. He has an old Chinese vase. He wants to sell it. Does it have handles? Does it have a lid? What color is it?

Uncle Taro buys the vase. How much does he give the man for it? The man takes the money then he leaves very quickly. Uncle Taro puts the vase at the back of the shop. He is hungry. He goes out to buy some noodles. What kind of noodles does he buy?

Naoko minds the store. Does she enjoy minding the store? She sits at the back. She looks at the new vase. It is very beautiful. It is very old. What dynasty is it from? She looks inside it. There is a piece of paper there. She takes it out and she looks at it. It is a map. It is very old. The paper is yellow. Naoko looks at the map for a while then she puts it in a book. Uncle Taro returns. He has some noodles for Naoko. He gives her the noodles. She eats them. Do they taste good? Is the broth hot? Are there any onions in the broth? Suddenly two more foreigners run into the shop. They shout at Uncle Taro. Is he afraid? Does he shout back?

4. THE TWO ANGRY MEN (present continuous)

Two foreigners are in Uncle Taro's antique shop. They are shouting at him. Is he shouting back? Naoko is afraid. Uncle Taro tells her to go home. She leaves the shop. Outside in the street there are a lot of people. They are going home from work. Some of them are wearing suits and some of them are wearing casual clothes. What is Naoko wearing?

Naoko looks back at the shop. She looks in the window. She can see Uncle Taro. Is he smiling? He is holding the old Chinese vase. Is he holding it with both hands? Naoko can see two foreigners. Uncle Taro is talking to them. Are they smiling? What are they wearing? Naoko waits outside the shop for a while then she goes home. Uncle Taro stays at the shop for a long time. Naoko waits for him at home. Uncle Taro comes home very late. He is very tired. Is he carrying a bag? Is he hungry? What is he wearing? Does he have a headache?

Naoko is sitting on the couch when Uncle Taro walks in. What is she wearing? She is reading a book, eating, watching television and listening to music at the same time. What kind of book is she reading? What is she reading? What song is playing? The volume on the television is very low. What program is Naoko watching?

Uncle Taro sits down. He tells Naoko about the two men. They have the vase now. They are looking for a map. Suddenly Naoko remembers the map. It is in a book. She tells Uncle Taro about the map. The map belongs to the bearded foreigner. His name is Mr. Silberstein. He is from Israel originally but he is living in the Philippines now. Is he living in Manila? Uncle Taro and Naoko talk for a long time. They talk about the Philippines and they talk about Israel and they talk about Chinese antiques. Naoko goes to bed. In the morning she wakes up and she finds Uncle Taro on the couch. Is he sleeping in his clothes? Is he snoring?

5. THE DUTCH GUY (present perfect tense)

It is Tuesday morning. Naoko has to go to university. What time does she have to leave? She is tired because she stayed up late last night. She is very late for class. Has she ever been late before? What time does class start? What time does it finish?

Naoko only has one class today. After class she goes to a coffee shop. Has she been to that shop before? She sits down by herself. There are some other people in the coffee shop. Some of them are studying. One of them is talking in a very loud voice. It is Yuji. Is he talking about football? Is he wearing a football jersey? Naoko is sitting with her back to Yuji but she can hear his voice. A tall blond guy is sitting across from her. Has Naoko ever seen him before? What is he wearing? What is he drinking? Is he reading? Has he been to this shop before?

Naoko thinks about her life. She thinks about her mother. Her mother and father have been dead for a long time but she still misses them. Has she been to their grave recently? Has she dreamed about them recently? She thinks about her parents and she thinks about Yuji and suddenly she feels very, very lonely and she starts to cry. The tall blond foreigner stands up. He walks over to Naoko. He gives her a handkerchief. Has a stranger ever given her a handkerchief before? Has she ever cried in public before?

The tall guy talks to Naoko. Does he speak to her in English or in Japanese? He is Dutch. Has Naoko ever met anybody from the Netherlands before? The guy's name is Herman. He is a foreign student. He is studying environmental science. How long has he been in Japan? Has he been to other countries in Asia? Has he been to other countries in Europe? What countries has Naoko been to? Has Yuji ever been to another country? Naoko talks to Herman for a long time then she goes home. Is Uncle Taro at home? What time does he usually come home?

6. A ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP (comparatives)

It is a cold day in Japan. Is Japan colder than Holland? A young Japanese woman is sitting on the bank of the river with her boyfriend. She is very, very tall but he is taller than her. He is Dutch. Dutch people are the tallest people in the world. The guy's name is Herman and his girlfriend's name is Naoko.

Naoko is wearing a coat but it is not very warm. Herman is wearing a coat too. Is his coat warmer than her coat? Naoko is cold so Herman gives her his coat. He does not feel cold. Is Holland colder than Japan? The two lovers look at the water. Naoko tells Herman about her life. Herman listens carefully. Do they speak English or Japanese? Has Herman taught Naoko any Dutch words? How long has he studied Japanese? Has he studied German or French? Is French harder than English? Which is closer to English, Dutch or German?

The two lovers look at the water in the river. The river is flowing slowly. The weather is cold. Winter is coming. Is this month colder than last month? There are some flowers growing on the bank of the river. There are red flowers and there are yellow flowers and there are tiny blue flowers in the grass. The yellow flowers are taller than the red flowers. Which ones are more beautiful, the red ones or the yellow ones? Which ones are more common?

After a while the Naoko and Herman stand up and walk along the river. They are hungry. There are two restaurants by the river. One of them is a normal Japanese restaurant and the other one is an ethnic restaurant. Which one is cheaper? Which one is bigger? Which one has better food? Which one do Herman and Naoko go to? How does Dutch food compare to Japanese food? After dinner Naoko goes home. How long does it take to get home? Uncle Taro is at home. He has a bruise on his face and he has a black eye too. He talks to Naoko about the map.

7. THE TREASURE MAP (“would” conditionals)

Naoko and her Uncle Taro are sitting on the couch. They are talking about a treasure map. The map belongs to Mr. Silberstein from Israel. He comes from Israel but he lives in the Philippines. Would you live in Israel? Would you live in the Philippines? If you had to live in one of those countries, which one would you choose?

Mr. Silberstein is a treasure hunter. He has a diving company. His divers look for treasure on sunken ships. Would you do scuba? Would you work for a treasure hunting company? Mr. Silberstein is in the Philippines but his treasure map is in Japan. Uncle Taro has it. Mr. Silberstein wants his map. If you were Uncle Taro, would you give the map to Mr. Silberstein?

The two other men want it too. Would you give it to them? Would you give it to the police? Would you call the police? The two men have been to Uncle Taro’s shop twice to look for the map. They have threatened Uncle Taro and they have beaten him up but they cannot find the map because it is in Naoko’s book.

The next day Naoko meets Herman and he comes to Uncle Taro’s shop. Naoko tells him about the map. She introduces him to Uncle Taro. Would you introduce your boyfriend to your uncle? Naoko has the map. She shows it to Herman. Would you show it to him? Herman looks at it. He understands it. It is a map of the Philippines. Would you go to the Philippines? The map shows small islands in the Philippines. Herman recognizes the map because he is a diver and he has been to the Philippines many times. Suddenly the two men run into the shop again. They grab the map. Herman hits one of the men. Would you do that? The other man hits Herman. Herman hits him again. He hits Herman again. Herman falls down. He gets up. The two men run away. Naoko helps Herman up. Uncle Taro runs after the two men but he cannot catch them. Would you run after them?

8. DINNER WITH UNCLE TARO (future “going to”)

A young Dutch guy is talking to his girlfriend. She is crying. She is crying because he is going to leave Japan. Would you cry if you were her? Would you cry if you were him? He is going to leave in one month. He is going to return to the Netherlands. Is he going to fly with KLM? Is he going to have a stopover? How long is the flight going to take? Is his girlfriend going to visit him in Europe?

The guy and his girlfriend are on a train. They are going into the center of the city. They are going to visit a travel agent. Herman is going to book a ticket. How much is it going to cost? That night Herman and Naoko are going to meet Uncle Taro in a restaurant. What time are they going to meet? What kind of restaurant are they going to go to? Is it going to cost a lot? Are they going to split the bill?

Herman and Naoko arrive at the travel agent. Are there many people there? Herman books his ticket. There is a French man in the travel agent. Where is he going to fly to? Herman talks to him. What language do they speak? Would you talk to him? What do they talk about? When is the Frenchman going to leave? Is he going to come back? How long has he been in Japan?

That night Herman and Naoko meet Uncle Taro at the antique shop. They go to a restaurant. How many people are there in the restaurant? What kind of restaurant is it? One of the waiters is very rude. Herman gets angry but Uncle Taro laughs and he makes jokes. Naoko feels very, very happy. Is she going to miss Herman when he leaves? During dinner, Herman and Naoko and Uncle Taro talk about the treasure map. Uncle Taro has received a letter from Mr. Silberstein. Mr. Silberstein wants the treasure map but Uncle Taro does not have it. Suddenly, Naoko says, “Yes, you do. You do have it! I made a copy. It is in my room.” Is Uncle Taro going to send a copy of the map to Mr. Silberstein?

9. THE ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENTIST (gerunds)

A young Dutch guy is in his room in Amsterdam. He is reading the newspaper. He is looking for a job. Is finding a job hard? The guy is an environmental scientist. Is being an environmental scientist interesting? The guy's name is Herman. He has studied in America, Japan, France and Holland. Is studying abroad interesting? Is it fun? Herman has a girlfriend in Japan. He misses her. How often does he ring? How often does he email? Which is cheaper, sending an email or making a phone call?

Meanwhile in Japan, Naoko is sitting in Uncle Taro's shop. They are talking about the Philippines. Uncle Taro wants to go to the Philippines. He has a treasure map from the Philippines. He wants to look for the treasure. Is traveling in the Philippines safe? Is flying to the Philippines expensive? Is searching for sunken treasure dangerous?

Naoko and Taro decide to go to Manila during their vacation. Naoko emails Herman and tells him. That night he phones her. He has a new job. It is in Laos. He is going to be an environmental scientist in Laos. His new job is going to start in two months. He wants to go to the Philippines with Taro and Naoko first. They are going to meet in the Philippines.

The next day Herman goes to a travel agent. He buys a ticket to Manila. Is flying from Amsterdam to Manila expensive? Is getting a visa difficult? After that he goes to the gym. Is keeping fit important? How does Herman keep fit?

Meanwhile in Japan Naoko is at university. Suddenly she sees her old boyfriend. What is his name? He likes talking about football. Is talking about football interesting? Is watching football on television fun? Is playing football popular in Japan? Naoko talks to her old boyfriend. What do they talk about? Does he know Herman?

10. MEETING UP IN MANILA (mixed patterns)

Naoko and her Uncle Taro are on a plane. They are flying from Osaka to Manila. Which airline are they flying with? Does Naoko have a window seat? Would you want a window seat? What is Uncle Taro's seat number? Is he sitting next to her?

The plane circles Manila Bay then lands at the airport. The airport is not very big. There are a lot of Arabs at the airport. A lot of Arab airlines make stopovers in the Philippines. What are the names of some Arab countries? Naoko and Taro get off the plane and go through customs and immigration then they take a taxi to a hotel. Is the taxi expensive? How much does the hotel cost?

Uncle Taro calls Mr. Silberstein and he comes to the hotel. They talk about the map. Uncle Taro agrees to give the map to Mr. Silberstein but he wants to take part in the hunt for the treasure. Mr. Silberstein agrees. Would you agree? After that the three of them go to a restaurant to eat. How many people are there in the restaurant? Has Naoko eaten Filipino food before?

There are three Arabs at the next table. They are speaking Arabic. Do they all come from the same country? One of them is eating meat. Is it pork? Do Muslims eat pork? Are all Arabs Muslims? One of the Arabs is wearing a long robe but the other two are wearing normal western clothes. What exactly are they wearing?

That night Herman arrives from Amsterdam. Does he have jet-lag? Naoko and Taro go to the airport to meet him. Do Naoko and Herman sleep in the same room? Does Taro sleep in a separate room? The next day the three friends walk around the shops of Manila. What do they buy? What would you buy? Are there beggars in the streets?

That night the three of them meet Mr. Silberstein for dinner.

11. THE TRIP TO THE OUTER ISLANDS (general patterns)

It is a fine sunny day in the Philippines. What is the language of the Philippines? Do many people speak English? Mr. Silberstein and Herman and Naoko and Taro are all on a boat. They are traveling east. They are going to a small group of remote islands. They are going to look for sunken treasure in the islands. Herman has been to the Philippines before but he has not been to these islands. Which islands has he been to? Herman is a diver. How long has he been a diver? Has Naoko ever dived? Has Taro ever dived? Is learning to dive expensive?

The crew of Mr. Silberstein's boat is Filipino. There are three crew-members. Are they from Luzon? How long is the boat? How many engines does it have? It takes two days to get to the remote island chain. There are a lot of ship-wrecks in this area. Some of them are Spanish, some of them are Dutch and some of them are Japanese and American wrecks from World War Two. When was World War Two? Would you go to war? How many wars has Japan been in since 1900? Is war wrong?

When the boat arrives, one of the crew drops the anchor. Mr. Silberstein and Taro go below and study the map. An hour later Herman and Mr. Silberstein and Taro and one of the Filipinos dive into the water. They are all wearing scuba gear. Are they wearing wetsuits? The four divers descend slowly. They see a shipwreck below them. How deep is it? The four divers swim into the hold. Would you swim inside a sunken shipwreck? Have you ever seen a movie about scuba-diving on a shipwreck?

The four divers have torches. They look around the wreck. They find boxes of gold coins and old statues and old vases dishes. There is a lot of treasure. Suddenly the four of them hear the boat start. The four of them swim to the surface. The boat is gone. They can see it in the distanced. It is moving away. Are they afraid?

12. THE CASTAWAY (general patterns)

Four divers are treading water in the middle of the ocean. Is treading water tiring? Their boat has left. They are in big trouble. Are they wearing fins? One of the divers is a Dutchman called Herman. In the distance he can see a small island. The four men swim slowly towards the island. It takes them three hours to reach the island. When they arrive, they are exhausted. They lie on the beach and rest. It is a beautiful island. What color is the sand? Are there any coconut trees? Do they see any mountains in the middle of the island? Have any of them ever been to a small island like this before?

The four divers are from Israel, the Netherlands, Japan and the Philippines. What is the name of the guy from the Philippines? Which part of the Philippines does he come from? How many people are there in his family? Has he ever left the Philippines?

Herman and Taro and Silberstein and the Filipino diver take off their diving gear and walk up the beach. They cannot see any people. Are they afraid? Would you be afraid? What would you do in this situation? The Filipino guy looks for some food. Herman lights a fire. Mr Silberstein and Taro walk along the beach.

Suddenly a man runs out of the jungle. He is holding a very old rifle. Is it rusty? He is wearing a tattered uniform. Are there holes in the trousers? Are there holes in the shirt? Is he wearing a helmet? The old man shouts and cries and laughs. Uncle Taro looks at him and listens to him carefully. Suddenly he realizes the man is speaking Japanese. He is a soldier from World War Two. He has been on this island since 1944. How long has he been there? How old is he now? Which prefecture does he come from? Uncle Taro talks to the man in Japanese. The five men sit around a fire together and eat and talk. The old man is a survivor of World War Two. He has never been back to Japan.

13. YAMASHITA'S GOLD (past simple tense)

When did World War two start? When did it finish? Who fought alongside the Japanese? Who fought against the Japanese? Which countries did Japan invade?

The Imperial Japanese army took treasure from Korea, China, French Indo-China, Thailand, British Burma and Malaya and also Singapore. They put all the treasure in ships and sent it back to Japan but the ships never reached Japan. The treasure went missing. It has been missing since the end of World War Two. How long has it been missing? The man in charge of the treasure ships was General Yamashita. He is dead now and his treasure is lost.

Some people say the treasure is in caves in the mountains. Some people say it is hidden in tunnels. Some say Ferdinand Marcos found it and now it is in a bank account in Switzerland. Who was Marcos? Would you live in Switzerland? Some say it is in sunken ships at the bottom of the sea. Is finding treasure at the bottom of the sea difficult?

The castaway from the Imperial Japanese Army says he saw the ships sink. How many ships were there? How many tons of gold were there on the ships? Were there any Ming Dynasty vases on the ships?

When did the castaway first come to this island? What branch of the military was he in? What was his rank? Did he serve in China? Did he serve in any other Asian countries?

When did America invade Japan? Where are the American bases in Japan now? Should Yamashita's gold belong to the finder or the original owner? Should Hitler's treasure belong to the original owners?

14. THE PLAN (general patterns)

Five people are sitting on a beach on an isolated island in the Philippines. One of them is a Dutch environmentalist called Herman. One of them is a Japanese antique dealer called Taro. One of them is a Filipino diver called Marvin. One of them is an Israeli treasure hunter called Mr. Silberstein. The other one is a World War Two Japanese soldier called Kenzaburo. What are they all wearing?

The old soldier talks about the search for Yamashita's treasure. He has seen many boats. How many has he seen? Recently he has seen a big boat with divers. The divers have brought up part of the treasure. The crew of the same boat has stolen Mr. Silberstein's boat and kidnapped Naoko and the other three crew members. Is Uncle Taro worried? Would you be worried if you were him?

The five castaways make a plan. That night they sleep in Kenzaburo's house. Is it a large house? Is it on stilts? Does the roof leak? Are there mosquitoes? Is there a fireplace in the house? How many rooms are there? What is the house made of?

In the morning the five men eat coconuts and bananas and mangoes. Is eating fruit healthy? Is it difficult to get enough food on the island? Is Kenzaburo in good health? After breakfast, Herman and Marvin build a raft. Kenzaburo has tools. In the afternoon the treasure hunters boat returns to the site of the shipwreck. The boat anchors and some divers go down and begin to bring up the treasure.

Herman and Marvin float out towards the boat on the raft. It takes two hours to reach it. The treasure hunters think Herman and Marvin are dead. Late in the afternoon Herman and Marvin sneak onto the boat. Suddenly somebody sees them. There is a struggle. Herman fights like a tiger. Marvin fights like a wild monkey.

15. THE FIGHT (present perfect passive and active)

It is a hot day in the Philippines. In an isolated part of the sea, a Dutch guy and a Filipino are on a boat fighting for their lives. Are they fighting with sticks? Are they fighting with knives? Are they using their fists? Are they using their teeth? The Dutch guy's name is Herman. The Filipino guy's name is Marvin. The two of them fight like wild animals. A big ugly guy with a beard attacks Herman. Herman punches him. Have you ever punched anybody? Have you ever been punched?

Below deck Herman finds four prisoners. They are his girlfriend, a Japanese girl called Naoko, and three Filipino divers called Gill, Melvin and Raymond. They are locked up. Have you ever been locked up? Have you ever locked anybody up?

Under the water, some divers are looking for Yamashita's gold. The divers come up. Herman and Marvin tie them up. They tie everybody up. Do they tie them up with rope or chains? Have you ever tied anybody up? Have you ever been tied up? Marvin goes to the helm. He starts the boat. Have you ever driven a boat? The boat motors to a nearby island. A Japanese antique dealer called Taro and an Israeli businessman called Mr Silberstein and a World war two Japanese soldier called Kenzaburo are waiting on the beach. Mr Silberstein shouts at the prisoners. Have you ever been shouted at? Have you ever shouted at anybody? Kenzaburo ties the prisoners to a tree. Have you ever been tied to a tree? Have you ever tied somebody to a tree?

Naoko wants to go home. Marvin wants to kill the prisoners. Mr. Silberstein wants to look for the treasure. Herman wants to call the police. They argue. What would you do? Are the police in the Philippines corrupt? Are the police everywhere corrupt? Would you be corrupt if you were a cop? Is being a policeman a good job? What should they do with the treasure?