



Finding Dragon Island

Let's  Read

 The Asia Foundation



'Boooong!' Hearing the bell ring, Srey Lek grabbed the bright yellow book from her bag and dashed for the classroom door. 'Srey Lek, want to play? I've got a surprise for you,' her friend Rachana called after her. 'Sorry, gotta go!' Srey Lek yelled back as she ran out to the schoolyard. 'Important things to do!'



'It has to be there, it just has to be!' Srey Lek thought as she ran across the yard to the school library. Srey Lek had just finished Dragon's Egg, the latest book in her favorite series. She couldn't sleep last night, it was so good.



Mr. Phan had promised to order the next book, Dragon Island, when it was released last week. But since there was no full-time librarian and he volunteered only a couple of days each week, Srey Lek wasn't sure.



Srey Lek burst through the door, breathless. 'Mr. Phan! Do you have it?! Please tell me you have it.' 'I think I remember putting Dragon Island on the shelf,' said Mr. Phan said with a smile. 'Let me check.' 'It's the one with the bright red cover!' Srey Lek called out.



Mr. Phan looked on the shelf, opened drawers, and searched under piles of books. But Dragon Island was nowhere to be found.



'Sorry,' Mr. Phan said.
'Someone must have already borrowed it. You'll just have to wait until it's returned.' 'Not again! This happened last time I really wanted a book,' Srey Lek said. 'Who has the book? When will it be returned?' 'I'm afraid I don't know,' responded Mr. Phan. 'I wasn't here yesterday and there's no note about who took it.' 'We need a better



system,' sighed Srey Lek, as she turned to leave.



Srey Lek slowly made her way back across the school yard, her head hanging low in disappointment. 'Srey Lek, I almost marked you absent!' Ms. Sida said, noticing her sad look. 'Oh. Does Mr. Phan not have the book you want again?' 'No,' responded Srey Lek. 'He doesn't even know who borrowed it. How can we not know where the books are?'



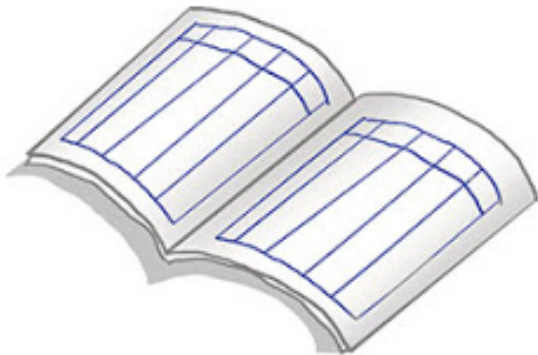
'Maybe you can figure out a system to track to the books,' suggested Ms. Sida. 'We need to attach a Drago Tracker to each book,' Srey Lek said. 'Just like Danalle did in Dragon's Egg.' 'That would work. But it might be tough to get them delivered here from the land of Dragonia,' Ms. Sida said with a wink.



Ms. Sida pointed out all of the ways their class kept track of things. She reminded Srey Lek of the chart on the wall that kept track of the students' multiplication table progress. She pointed to their assignment list on the blackboard. She even showed Srey Lek her own 'to-do' list on her desk.



'So could we just write the students' names and books down somewhere?' Srey Lek said. 'That's a good start, Srey Lek. It's just what a real database manager might do!'



'Don't databases have to do with computers? We're just writing down names,' replied Srey Lek. 'Yes, there's more to being a database manager, but the idea is the same: organizing lots of information so that it's useful for people,' Ms. Sida said.



Srey Lek was convinced. She turned around and marched straight back to the library, dragging Ms. Sida behind her.



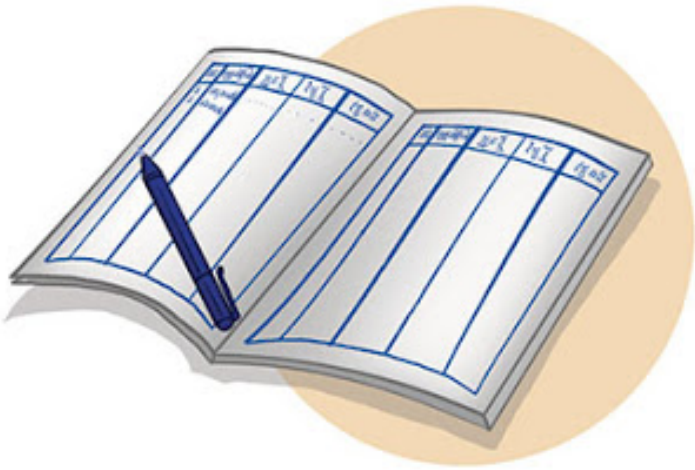
'Mr. Phan,' she said, 'We need a database. We need to know where Dragon Island is.' 'That would be great,' Mr. Phan said looking around at the piles of books. 'But how? We don't have a computer.'



'We don't need one,' said Srey Lek, pointing to the wall. 'We can use the white board to write down the names and the books. Then you erase it when they bring the book back!' She started to write Dragon Island on the board. 'But, what if someone accidentally erases the board?' asked Ms. Sida. 'Well...' Srey Lek started. 'What about a big notebook instead? Kind of



like what you do with our class attendance.'



'That will work,' Mr. Phan said. 'We should also add when the book was borrowed, so we can see how long it's been out.' 'Then I'd know when Dragon Island would be returned!' exclaimed Srey Lek. 'They should be able to read it in two days, maybe three tops!' Ms. Sida laughed. 'Well, we might want to give people a little longer than that.' 'And lastly, we'll need

to show when the person has returned the book,' said Mr. Phan.





Grabbing an empty notebook from the desk, Mr. Phan wrote the four pieces of information across the top. 'How should we maintain our database?' Ms. Sida asked. 'I'm not sure what you mean,' Srey Lek said, confused. 'How will we make sure that the names, books, and dates are being written down?' Ms. Sida replied. 'Can you enter the information?' Srey Lek asked



Mr. Phan. 'When I'm here,'
Mr. Phan said. 'And I can
teach everyone else how to
enter the information, so it
works even when I'm gone.'
'We can also have a check-
in pile,' Srey Lek suggested,
pointing to the messy stacks
of books lying around.



That afternoon Mr. Phan finished setting up the notebook while Srey Lek organized the books and made a "CHECK OUT HERE" sign. 'Now we'll know where all of the books are!' said Srey Lek. 'But it won't help me read Dragon Island now. I guess I just need to be patient.' Just then, Srey Lek's friend Rachana walked into the library. 'Hi Ms. Sida. Hi Mr. Phan. What are you up



to, Srey Lek?' 'Srey Lek built a database, so we can keep track of who borrows books from the library,' said Ms. Sida.



'Oh, I borrowed a book yesterday,' said Rachana. 'I saw this on the shelf and thought I'd grab it for you, Srey Lek.' Srey Lek gasped. 'Dragon Island! Oh, thank you.'



'Let's get your name into the database, so everyone knows that you now have Dragon Island,' said Ms. Sida. Srey Lek was excited to start reading. She knew just how it began, 'The fog rolled over the island..''



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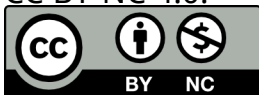
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Original Story

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