

Pre-Assessment—Excerpt from *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*, Chapter 1,  
Good Luck Signs

1 Sadako was born to be a runner. Her mother always said that Sadako had learned to  
2 run before she could walk.

3 One morning in August 1954 Sadako ran outside into the street as soon as she was  
4 dressed.

5 The morning sun of Japan touched brown highlights in her dark hair. There was  
6 not a speck of  
7 cloud in the blue sky. It was a good sign. Sadako was always on the lookout for  
8 good luck signs.

9 Back in the house her sister and two brothers were still sleeping on their bed  
10 quilts. She poked  
11 her big brother, Masahiro. "Get up, lazybones!" she said. "It's Peace Day!"

12 Masahiro groaned and yawned. He wanted to sleep as long as possible, but like  
13 most fourteen-  
14 year-old boys, he also loved to eat. When he sniffed the good smell of bean soup,  
15 Masahiro got up. Soon Mitsue and Eiji were awake, too.

16 Sadako helped Eiji get dressed. He was six, but he sometimes lost a sock or shirt.  
17 Afterward,  
18 Sadako folded the bed quilts. Her sister, Mitsue, who was nine, helped put them  
19 away in the  
20 closet.

21 Rushing like a whirlwind into the kitchen, Sadako cried, "Oh, Mother! I can  
22 hardly wait to  
23 go to the carnival. Can we please hurry with breakfast?"

24 Her mother was busily slicing pickled radishes to serve with the rice and soup.  
25 She looked sternly at Sadako. "You are eleven years old and should know better,"  
26 she scolded. "You must  
27 not call it a carnival. Every year on August sixth we remember those who died  
28 when the atom  
29 bomb was dropped on our city. It is a memorial day."

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30 "Sadako chan," her mother said softly, "we aren't leaving until seven-thirty. You  
31 can sit quietly until it is time to go."

Sadako plopped down with a thud onto the *tatami* mat. Nothing ever made her

parents hurry.

While she sat there a fuzzy spider paced across the room. A spider was a good luck sign. Now Sadako was sure the day would be wonderful. She cupped the insect in her hands and carefully set it free outside.

"That's silly," Masahiro said. "Spiders don't really bring good luck."

"Just wait and see!" Sadako said gaily.