

a single shard linda sue park

a single shard linda sue park is a critically acclaimed historical novel that has captivated readers with its rich storytelling and vivid depiction of 12th-century Korea. Written by Linda Sue Park, this award-winning book explores themes of perseverance, artistry, and cultural heritage through the journey of an orphaned boy named Tree-ear. The novel not only provides an engaging narrative but also offers insights into traditional Korean pottery and the societal structure of the period. This article delves into various aspects of "A Single Shard" by Linda Sue Park, including its plot, characters, historical context, literary significance, and educational value. Readers will gain a comprehensive understanding of why this work remains a staple in children's literature and historical fiction. The following sections will outline key elements of the novel to enhance appreciation and academic discussion.

- Overview of "A Single Shard"
- Plot Summary
- Main Characters
- Historical and Cultural Context
- Themes and Literary Significance
- Educational Importance and Awards
- Conclusion and Impact

Overview of "A Single Shard"

"A Single Shard" is a novel authored by Linda Sue Park, first published in 2001. It is set in 12th-century Korea during the Goryeo Dynasty and tells the story of a young orphan named Tree-ear who aspires to become a master potter. The book is renowned for its detailed portrayal of Korean ceramics craftsmanship and its exploration of human values such as dedication, integrity, and hope. Linda Sue Park's vivid descriptions and well-researched historical setting offer readers both an engaging story and a cultural education.

Author Background

Linda Sue Park is an American author known for her contributions to

children's literature and historical fiction. Her works often explore Korean culture and history, reflecting her heritage and scholarly interests. Park's writing style is characterized by clarity, depth, and a strong sense of place, which is evident in "A Single Shard."

Genre and Style

"A Single Shard" falls within the historical fiction genre, specifically tailored for middle-grade readers. The narrative style is straightforward yet evocative, combining adventure with educational content. The book balances storytelling with cultural exposition, making it accessible and informative.

Plot Summary

The narrative of "A Single Shard" follows Tree-ear, an orphan living under a bridge in a small Korean village famous for its ceramics. Tree-ear becomes an apprentice to Min, a master potter, and embarks on a quest to deliver a special pottery shard to the royal court. Throughout the story, Tree-ear faces numerous obstacles that test his resolve and character.

Key Plot Points

- Tree-ear's life as an orphan and his fascination with pottery
- His decision to apprentice with Min despite cultural and social challenges
- The journey to deliver a delicate ceramic shard to the capital city
- Encounters with adversity and personal growth
- Recognition of Tree-ear's dedication and the fulfillment of his dreams

Conflict and Resolution

The central conflict revolves around Tree-ear's struggle to prove himself in a rigid society and to fulfill his promise to Min. His perseverance leads to not only personal success but also the recognition of the artistic value of Korean pottery. The resolution emphasizes the rewards of hard work and loyalty.

Main Characters

The characters in "A Single Shard" are crafted to embody the themes of the novel and to provide insight into the social dynamics of the period. Each character contributes to Tree-ear's development and the unfolding of the plot.

Tree-ear

The protagonist, Tree-ear, is an orphan with a strong desire to learn and succeed. His innocence, determination, and respect for tradition drive the story forward. Tree-ear represents the virtues of humility and perseverance.

Min

Min is a skilled potter who initially resists taking on an apprentice but eventually recognizes Tree-ear's potential. He symbolizes mastery, discipline, and the transmission of cultural heritage through craft.

Addi

Addi is Tree-ear's friend and a fellow orphan who supports Tree-ear's ambitions. His character adds depth to the narrative by illustrating themes of friendship and loyalty.

Historical and Cultural Context

"A Single Shard" is set during the Goryeo Dynasty, a period known for its exquisite celadon pottery. The novel accurately reflects the social hierarchy, artisanal traditions, and daily life of 12th-century Korea. Linda Sue Park's meticulous research enhances the authenticity of the setting.

Korean Ceramics

The story highlights the intricate process of creating celadon pottery, a highly prized art form during the Goryeo period. The novel explains various aspects such as clay preparation, wheel throwing, glazing, and firing techniques, providing readers with an educational glimpse into this ancient craft.

Societal Structure

The novel portrays the class distinctions and expectations prevalent in

Korean society at the time. Tree-ear's status as an orphan and apprentice reflects the challenges faced by lower social classes in pursuing personal and professional goals.

Themes and Literary Significance

"A Single Shard" is rich in themes that resonate with readers of all ages. It explores the importance of dedication, the pursuit of excellence, the value of mentorship, and the significance of cultural heritage. The novel's literary qualities and thematic depth contribute to its standing as a significant work in children's literature.

Major Themes

- **Perseverance:** Tree-ear's unwavering commitment to his goals despite obstacles.
- **Artistry and Craftsmanship:** The reverence for traditional pottery making.
- **Mentorship and Learning:** The relationship between Tree-ear and Min.
- **Cultural Identity:** Preservation and appreciation of Korean history and art.
- **Social Mobility:** Overcoming class limitations through talent and effort.

Literary Style

Linda Sue Park employs a clear and engaging prose style that combines descriptive detail with emotional depth. The language is accessible to young readers while maintaining literary sophistication through symbolism and thematic layers.

Educational Importance and Awards

"A Single Shard" is widely used in educational settings to teach history, culture, and literary analysis. Its inclusion in curricula supports cross-disciplinary learning, combining social studies with literature. The novel has received numerous accolades, underscoring its quality and impact.

Notable Awards

- Newbery Medal (2002)
- ALA Best Book for Young Adults
- School Library Journal Best Book

Use in Education

Educators utilize "A Single Shard" to introduce students to Korean history and art, encourage discussions on perseverance and ethics, and develop reading comprehension skills. The novel's historical accuracy makes it a valuable resource for cultural studies.

Conclusion and Impact

"A Single Shard" by Linda Sue Park remains a powerful and inspiring novel that combines historical authenticity with timeless themes. Its portrayal of a young boy's journey to mastery and dignity continues to resonate with readers and educators alike. The book's contribution to children's literature and cultural education secures its place as a classic for future generations.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main theme of 'A Single Shard' by Linda Sue Park?

The main theme of 'A Single Shard' is perseverance and determination, as it follows a young boy's journey to achieve his dream despite numerous obstacles.

Who is the protagonist in 'A Single Shard' and what is his goal?

The protagonist is Tree-ear, an orphaned boy who dreams of becoming a potter and creating beautiful ceramics.

Where and when is 'A Single Shard' set?

'A Single Shard' is set in 12th-century Korea, specifically in a small village known for its pottery.

What role does pottery play in the story 'A Single Shard'?

Pottery is central to the story, representing artistry, tradition, and Tree-ear's aspirations as he learns the craft and strives to succeed.

Why did Linda Sue Park write 'A Single Shard'?

Linda Sue Park wrote 'A Single Shard' to share a story about Korean culture and history, emphasizing values like hard work, honesty, and hope.

What awards has 'A Single Shard' won?

'A Single Shard' won the Newbery Medal in 2002, recognizing it as an outstanding contribution to children's literature.

How does Tree-ear show growth throughout 'A Single Shard'?

Tree-ear grows from a helpless orphan to a skilled and responsible young man, learning patience, courage, and the importance of dedication.

What is the significance of the title 'A Single Shard'?

The title refers to a single piece of pottery that symbolizes Tree-ear's dream and the fragile yet beautiful nature of his journey and achievements.

Additional Resources

1. A Single Shard by Linda Sue Park

This Newbery Medal-winning novel tells the story of Tree-ear, an orphan boy living in 12th-century Korea. Determined to become a potter like his mentor, he embarks on a journey filled with challenges and perseverance. The book beautifully explores themes of dedication, craftsmanship, and hope.

2. The Kite Fighters by Linda Sue Park

Set in 15th-century Korea, this story follows two brothers with very different talents who strive to win a kite fighting contest. Rich in cultural details, the novel highlights family bonds, rivalry, and the importance of working together. It offers a vivid glimpse into traditional Korean life and customs.

3. When My Name Was Keoko by Linda Sue Park

This historical novel is set during the Japanese occupation of Korea in World War II. Told from the perspectives of a brother and sister, it reveals the struggles and resilience of Korean people under oppressive rule. The book is

a poignant exploration of identity, courage, and survival.

4. *Project Mulberry* by Linda Sue Park

A contemporary story about a Korean-American boy who takes a silk-making project for his school science fair. Through his experiences, the novel delves into cultural heritage, family relationships, and personal growth. It's a heartwarming tale about understanding and embracing one's roots.

5. *The Firekeeper's Son* by Linda Sue Park

Set in the Joseon Dynasty, this novel follows a boy who becomes the firekeeper for the royal palace. As he learns about responsibility and loyalty, he faces political intrigue and personal challenges. The story combines history and adventure with a strong sense of duty and honor.

6. *Seesaw Girl* by Linda Sue Park

This historical novel centers on a young girl in 17th-century Korea who dreams of a life beyond traditional expectations. Through her friendship and family struggles, the story explores themes of gender roles, education, and self-expression. It provides a rich cultural backdrop and inspiring characters.

7. *The Heart of a Samurai* by Margi Preus

Though not by Linda Sue Park, this book complements her work by telling the true story of a Japanese boy in the 19th century who travels to America to learn about Western culture. It shares themes of courage, exploration, and cultural exchange, resonating with readers interested in Asian history and identity.

8. *Dragon Pearl* by Yoon Ha Lee

A fantasy novel inspired by Korean mythology, it follows a young fox spirit on a quest through space to find her missing brother. Combining adventure with traditional folklore, the story explores themes of family, loyalty, and self-discovery. It's a captivating read for fans of Korean culture and imaginative storytelling.

9. *Pachinko* by Min Jin Lee

This multi-generational saga traces the lives of a Korean family living in Japan throughout the 20th century. The novel addresses themes of identity, discrimination, and perseverance in the face of hardship. It offers a profound look at the Korean diaspora and cultural resilience, complementing historical perspectives found in Park's work.

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