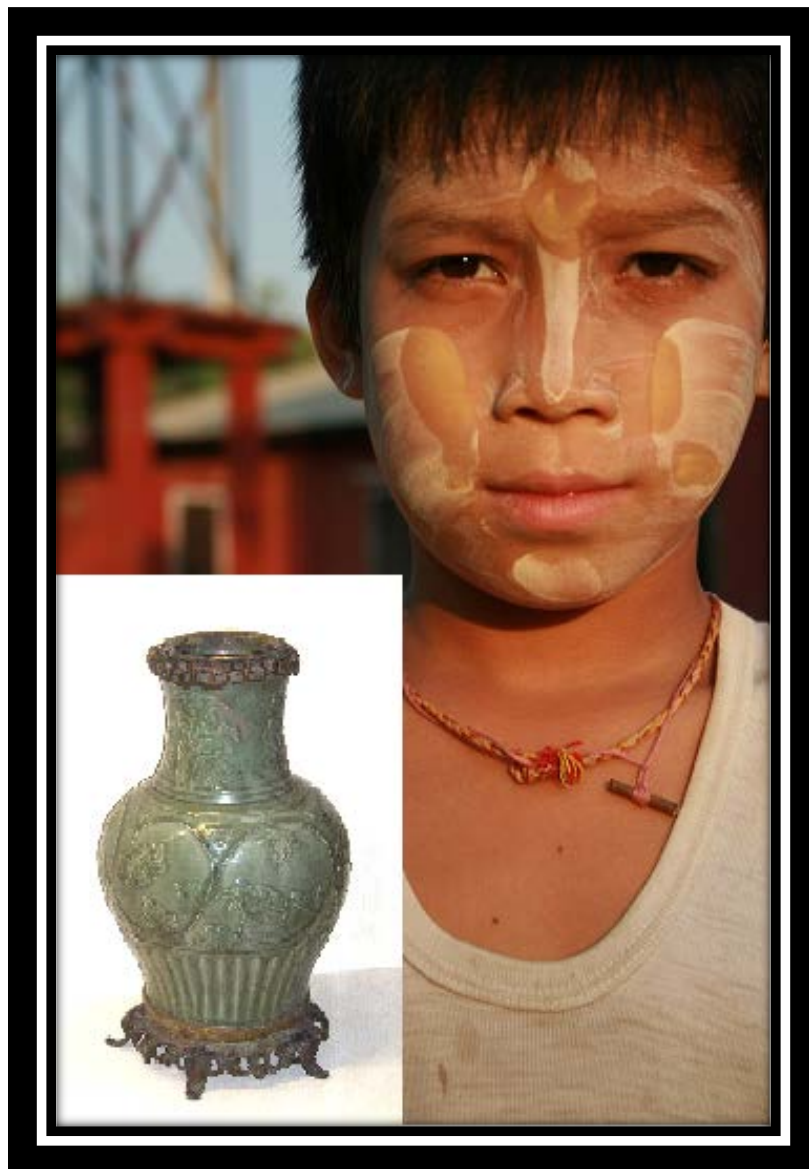


# A Single Shard

By Linda Sue Park



Adapted Text

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Vocabulary: Tree-ear, Crane-man, orphan, crutch, Min, master potter, celadon pottery

## Chapter 1



<sup>1</sup>“Eh, Tree-ear! Have you hungered well today?” calls Crane-man. It is their joke on the polite greeting used by well-fed villagers in Korea during the 12<sup>th</sup> century. They greet each by asking, “Have you have eaten well today?”

<sup>2</sup> Tree-ear and Crane-man are friends. Tree-ear and Crane-man live together under a bridge. Tree-ear is 12 years old. His parents died of fever when he was a baby and he was sent to live in the temple. But the fever was in the temple, too. Tree-ear lived with Crane-man until the fever was gone. When the monks came to take him to the temple, he didn’t want to go with them. He wanted to stay with Crane-man.

**Tree-ear and Crane-man live together under a bridge.**

<sup>3</sup> Tree-ear is an orphan because he doesn’t have any parents. He got his name from a mushroom that grows on dead trees without a parent seed. Crane-man got his name because he was born with only one leg. He stands on one leg like a crane and walks with a crutch. Crane-man likes his name because cranes are a symbol of long life. He wants to live a long time like the crane.

<sup>4</sup> Tree-ear looks for food in the trash every day. Then he goes to Min’s house to secretly watch him work. Min is a master potter. Today is a “throwing” day and Min is outside making pots. Tree-ear dreams of being a master potter like Min one day. Tree-ear watches Min from behind a tree, hidden from sight.

**Tree-ear and Crane-man live together under a bridge.**

<sup>5</sup> Tree-ear watches as Min begins a pot. First, Min throws a lump of clay onto the center of the wheel. He uses his foot to spin the base of the wheel. Then, Min places his dampened hands on the lump and the clay rises. Last, Min steps back and looks at it when it is finished. The pot must be flawless. If it is not perfect, Min slaps it back onto the wheel and starts over. Min always rejects the first pot and repeats the whole process again.

<sup>6</sup> The village's location and soil make it important for ceramics. The sea provides an easy route to China where the pottery is sold. The clay contains exactly the right amount of iron to produce the gray-green color of celadon pottery. Celadon pottery is prized around the world and many people want it.

**Tree-ear and Crane-man live together under a bridge.**

Vocabulary: thief, shatters, admiring, payment, kiln, herbs, medicine

## Chapter 2



<sup>1</sup> Tree-ear goes to Min's to watch him make pots. Tree-ear thinks it is a "throwing" day, but Min is not outside working. Tree-ear decides to have a closer look at Min's pottery. He sees a large plain box and looks inside. To his delight, inside the plain box are five smaller boxes. Tree-ear picks one of the small boxes up and wonders how Min makes the boxes fit together so perfectly.

<sup>2</sup> Suddenly, the old potter shouts, "Thief!" Tree-ear drops the small box. It shatters on the ground. Min hits him. Tree-ear drops to his knees and raises his hands to ward off the potter's blows. Min accuses him of stealing his work. Tree-ear says he is not stealing his work. He is admiring it. Min says it is the same to him. He cannot sell the box now because it is ruined.

**Finally, Tree-ear will learn to make pots.**

<sup>3</sup> Tree-ear offers to work for Min as payment. Min agrees. He tells Tree-ear to come the next day at daybreak. He is to work for nine days as payment for the broken box. Tree-ear is sorry he broke the pot. But, Tree-ear is excited to work for Min because he will learn to make pots.

<sup>4</sup> At daybreak, Tree-ear goes to the potter's house to work. But Min does not show Tree-ear how to make a pot. Instead, he gives Tree-ear a cart. He tells Tree-ear to go deep into the forest and cut wood for the kiln. The kiln is a large oven where the potters in the village fire their pottery.

**Finally, Tree-ear will learn to make pots.**

<sup>5</sup> Tree-ear works hard all day to fill the cart with wood. He is tired and sore when he finishes. His hand is bleeding where he cut it on the rough wood. With the full cart, he carefully makes his way back to Min's house and leaves the cart.

<sup>6</sup> Tree-ear's hand is still bleeding when he gets home. Crane-man finds some herbs in the woods to make some medicine for Tree-ear's hand. Then, he puts a new bandage on it to keep the cut clean. Crane-man is a good friend.

**Finally, Tree-ear will learn to make pots.**

Vocabulary: reluctant, debt, overjoyed, rehearsed, spade

### Chapter 3



<sup>1</sup> The next morning, Min is angry. He says Tree-ear should have taken the wood to the kiln instead of leaving it at Min's house. If this is the kind of helper Tree-ear is, Min does not need him. Tree-ear apologizes and asks for another chance. Min is reluctant, but finally he agrees to let Tree-ear be his helper.

<sup>2</sup> The next eight days are like the first. Tree-ear takes the empty cart into the woods. He chops wood until the cart is full. Then he takes the wood to the kiln. Each day the cut on his hand spits open and bleeds. Each night, Crane-man puts medicine on it.

#### **Tree-ear works hard for Min.**

<sup>3</sup> On the tenth day, Tree-ear goes to Min's house. When he arrives, Min asks what he wants. He has worked for nine days. His debt is paid. Tree-ear has rehearsed what he will say. He asks Min if he can keep working for him. Min says he cannot pay him. Tree-ear is overjoyed because that is the same as saying yes. He tells Min that to work for a master potter is payment enough.

<sup>4</sup> This day Min sends Tree-ear for clay, not wood. He uses the same cart, but goes to the digging area near the river. Tree-ear watches others filling their carts with clay. They use a spade to cut the clay into squares. A spade has a flat iron blade on one end and a wooden handle on the other. He uses his foot to press the iron blade into the clay.

#### **Tree-ear works hard for Min.**

<sup>5</sup> Tree-ear is slow. He presses the spade into the clay too deep and it gets stuck. His hand begins to bleed again. By the time the cart is full of clay, he wears mud like a second skin.

<sup>6</sup> Tree-ear is so tired. How will he ever get the heavy cart back to Min's? Then he remembers that masters give workers like him a meal in the middle of the workday. The thought of food helps Tree-ear hurry back to Min's house with the clay. Min's wife has a meal ready for him. Tree-ear eats the food and returns the cleaned dish to Min's wife. He appreciates the food, but he worries that he has no food for Crane-man. Crane-man depends on him to find food for them both.

#### **Tree-ear works hard for Min.**

Vocabulary: bowl, sieve, glaze, formula, royal commission, abroad

## Chapter 4



<sup>1</sup> The next day, Tree-ear gives Min's wife a gourd bowl he brought from home. That way, he can eat half the meal and save the other half for Crane-man. After his meal, he hides the bowl with Crane-man's food in a safe place. One day, someone fills the bowl full again while Tree-ear is working. Tree-ear is delighted! A full bowl means both Crane-man and Tree-ear will eat tonight.

<sup>2</sup> Now Tree-ear is learning to drain clay. It is a slow process. First, he stirs water into the clay. Next, he pours it through a sieve to remove tiny pebbles. Last, the clay sits and the water drains away. The process is repeated until the clay is right for its purpose.

**Min feels the clay between his fingers.**

<sup>3</sup> Min can tell if the clay is right by feeling it between his fingers. Tree-ear watches his master. He closes his eyes like Min and feels the clay. He can tell the difference between one draining and three drainings. But he cannot tell the difference between five draining's and six draining's.

<sup>4</sup> One draining might be enough to make a sturdy teapot. Three draining's might be needed to make a gift for the temple. But for clay used to make the celadon glaze, it might take six draining's or more. Only the smoothest clay is used for the celadon glaze.

**Min feels the clay between his fingers.**

<sup>5</sup> The glaze gives pottery its color. The color of celadon glaze is like the sea on a cloudy day. It is a mixture of green, blue, gray, and violet. To make the color, potters mix clay with water and wood ash. Each potter does it a little differently. They keep their formulas secret.

<sup>6</sup> Min is the best potter in the village. Each piece he makes must be perfect. But he only makes a few pieces a year. Min dreams of a royal commission. Only the finest potters are given a royal commission. They make everyday items for the King's household, art for the temple, and gifts to send abroad.

**Min feels the clay between his fingers.**

Vocabulary: curious, glean, scarce, inscribes, chrysanthemum, royal emissary

## Chapter 5



<sup>1</sup> Tree-ear sees Kang going to the kiln early. He thinks Kang is hiding something. A few days later, Tree-ear sees Kang with two bowls of glaze. One bowl holds red glaze and the other holds white glaze. Sometimes potters experiment with other colors of glaze. But, it is hard to get the glaze right. Tree-ear wonders again what Kang is doing.

<sup>2</sup> Tree-ear spends his days chopping wood, cutting clay, or draining clay. Occasionally, Min sends him to the sea shore for shells. Shells hold the pottery off the kiln floor during firing. Min says very little to Tree-ear. Tree-ear still hopes Min will teach him to be a potter.

**Tree-ear still hopes Min will teach him to be a potter.**

<sup>3</sup> Winter is coming. Tree-ear gleanes rice left in the fields after harvesting. He and Crane-man will eat the rice during the winter when food is scarce. Crane-man makes sandals for Tree-ear from the rice straw. Soon, Tree-ear and Crane-man move into a cave for winter. They will move back to the bridge in spring.

<sup>4</sup> Min's wife gives Tree-ear a warm jacket and pants. The clothes belonged to their son. He died of fever when he was about Tree-ear's age. Tree-ear finds it hard to imagine that Min once had a son. He thanks the potter's wife. The pants fit well, but he jacket is a little big. Tree-ear keeps the pants and gives the jacket to Crane-man. Now they will both be warm this winter. Crane-man says that together they make one finely dressed gentleman.

**Tree-ear still hopes Min will teach him to be a potter.**

<sup>5</sup> One night, on the way home, Tree-ear sees light coming from Kang's shed. He sneaks closer to spy on Kang through a hole in the shed. Tree-ear watches Kang working on a small wine cup. He inscribes a simple chrysanthemum design on the cup. Then he fills the depression with white glaze. Tree-ear is more curious than ever.

<sup>6</sup> Tree-ear watches the kiln to see the wine cup after firing. Even though many days pass, he doesn't catch a glimpse of the wine cup. But, while in town he does hear some exiting news. A royal emissary is coming to the village to give a royal commission to make pottery for the King.

**Tree-ear still hopes Min will teach him to be a potter.**

Vocabulary: royal emissary, dilemma, novelty, stealth, stall, replicas, mar, harbor

## Chapters 6-7



<sup>1</sup> Tree-ear has a dilemma. Should he tell Min about Kang's new idea? Min is a better potter. He could take Kang's idea and win a royal commission. But it is Kang's idea. Even though he is not as good a potter, the novelty of his idea might be enough to win a royal commission.

### **A royal emissary is coming to the village.**

<sup>2</sup> Tree-ear asks Crane-man for advice. Crane-man says that if a man is keeping an idea to himself, it is stealing to take the idea by stealth or trickery. Tree-ear learned of Kang's idea by stealth. He spied on him that night in his shed. He cannot tell Min about Kang's idea.

<sup>3</sup> The day of the show arrives. Tree-ear helps Min set up his stall. A crowd gathers around Kang's stall. The glaze Tree-ear thought was red turns black during firing. The contrast of the white and black against the jade green is beautiful. Kang is certain to win a royal commission.

### **A royal emissary is coming to the village.**

<sup>4</sup> After looking at everyone's work, the emissary wants to see more of Kang's and Min's work. Then he will decide. Kang showed his idea to the world. Tree-ear tells Min about the inlay work and the red glaze that changes to black when fired. Min takes the new idea and prepares new pieces for the emissary. He makes five replicas of the same piece. Because many things can go wrong during the firing, Min makes several replicas to improve his chances that one will turn out right.

<sup>5</sup> The next morning, Tree-ear sees five piles of shattered pottery on the ground. Min smashed all the pieces. Tree-ear looks closely at one of the larger pieces. The inlay work is flawless, but brown spots mar the finish. Something went wrong in the firing. Tree-ear knows there is no time to make new pieces. Even now, the emissary's boat might be in the harbor.

### **A royal emissary is coming to the village.**



Vocabulary: messenger, Songdo, Ajima, regrets, jiggeh (a backpack made from branches), journey

### Chapters 8-9



<sup>1</sup> A messenger comes to Min's house to see if Min has new pieces to show the emissary. Min has no new pieces to show and waves him away. News blows through the village like a sudden sea breeze. Min did not win the royal commission - Kang did. Kang's idea is new, but his work is not as good as Min's.

<sup>2</sup> The emissary tells Min that his work is exceptional – the best he's ever seen. The emissary invites Min to make new pieces with the unusual inlay work. If he brings new pieces to Songdo, the emissary will consider it for a royal commission. Min is an old man and cannot take the new pieces to Songdo. Tree-ear offers to make the journey for him. Min's wife asks Tree-ear to return to the village quickly and to start calling her Ajima. Ajima means "Auntie". Her requests surprise Him, but he agrees.

#### **Tree-ear asks Min to teach him.**

<sup>3</sup> Tree-ear still wants to learn to make a pot. He has worked a year for Min. He asks Min to teach him. Min angrily tells him no. The potter's trade is passed from father to son. Tree-ear he is not his son. He is an orphan. Min should be teaching his son to be a potter, but his son is dead.

#### **Tree-ear asks Min to teach him.**

<sup>4</sup> Tree-ear doesn't understand why only the sons of potters can be potters. Crane-man tells him a story about potters and their sons. Long ago, potters made objects for use, not beauty. Making pottery was a poor trade. No potter wished his son to have such a lowly life. Year after year, sons left the trade. Soon there were not enough potters to supply the needs of the people. Then, the King decreed that sons of potters must become potters themselves.

<sup>5</sup> Tree-ear still works hard for Min, but the desire to be a potter has dimmed. As usual, Min's work takes much longer than predicted. Summer is turning to fall when he finishes the pieces. Tree-ear makes a special jiggeh, or backpack, to carry the vases on his back. Min is still worried the vases will break. Ajima suggests making a straw container to protect the vases. Tree-ear knows just the person to make the container – Crane-man.

Tree-ear will be gone a long time. Ajima asks Crane-man to help her while Tree-ear is gone. She will give him food to eat every day as payment. At first, Crane-man says no. Then, Tree-ear tells him it would be a great favor to him because Ajima has come to depend on him.

**Tree-ear asks Min to teach him.**

Vocabulary: veers, steep, stranger, devastated, shards

### Chapters 10-11



<sup>1</sup> Before leaving, Tree-ear gives Crane-man a small monkey he made from clay. Crane-man hangs it around his neck. In return, Crane-man gives Tree-ear a gift of words. He says people are the greatest danger he will meet on his journey. But, it will also be people who will help him. He will travel well if he remembers this.

<sup>2</sup> Tree-ear keeps track of the days he travels on the jiggeh. He makes a mark with a sharp stone for each day he travels. His journey is as Crane-man had predicted - one village, one day. The days go by. He eats the food Ajima packed for him unless someone invites him to dinner. At night, he makes a fire to keep warm and sleeps on the ground with the jiggeh near.

#### **Tree-ear runs down the mountain to find the vases.**

<sup>3</sup> On his way to Songdo, he veers from his journey to climb the Rock of Falling Flowers. Crane-man had told him the story of the women who had leaped to their death to show their courage. He wants to see the place Crane-man told him about.

<sup>4</sup> The path is steep and Tree-ear struggles to climb to the top with the heavy load on his back. On the way up, he meets a stranger. Tree-ear hurries on, but the stranger robs him. He thinks the jiggeh is loaded with rice and he is hungry. When he sees that all Tree-ear has are two vases, he throws them off the side of the mountain. Tree-ear hears one shatter on the rocks below.

#### **Tree-ear runs down the mountain to find the vases.**

<sup>5</sup> Tree-ear is devastated. He lost the vases and failed Min. He thinks about jumping off the mountain like the women. But he remembers Crane-man saying that leaping into death is not the only way to show true courage. He runs down the mountain to find the vases. Maybe one of them has survived.

<sup>6</sup> He finds two piles of shards. Both vases are destroyed. But the pieces of the second vase are bigger. Its fall was cushioned by the sand near the river. Tree-ear picks one of the largest shards. He knows what he must do. He continues his journey to Songdo.

#### **Tree-ear runs down the mountain to find the vases.**

Vocabulary: appointment, reluctant, summon, scrolls

## Chapter 12



<sup>1</sup> Tree-ear arrives at Songdo. Songdo is a large, busy city. It is the city he was born in. Tree-ear wonders if he could find anyone who knew his parents. Then he remembers why he came. He must see the royal emissary of pottery.

<sup>2</sup> He goes to the palace gate and tells the guard he has an appointment with the royal emissary. The guard is reluctant to let him enter. He does not believe he has an appointment with the emissary. Tree-ear is polite, but insistent. He will not go away until he sees the emissary.

### **Tree-ear is amazed by the city.**

<sup>3</sup> Finally, the guard lets him enter. Inside the gate is another smaller city. Tree-ear is amazed that the palace roof is made from celadon tiles. The guards take him to the emissary's office. The emissary is sitting at his desk. He asks to see Min's piece. Tree-ear tells him that the pieces were destroyed by robbers. All he has to show his master's work is a single shard from one of the vases.

### **Tree-ear is amazed by the city.**

<sup>4</sup> The emissary looks at the shard a long time. Then he goes to his desk and writes quickly on a scroll. He does not speak until he is finished. Tree-ear has not been dismissed so he stays. The emissary says Min's work is the best he has ever seen. The emissary gives Min a royal commission.

<sup>5</sup> He asks Tree-ear how long he has worked for his master. Tree-ear replies that he has worked for Min 1 1/2 years. Then the emissary asks how many pieces he could expect from Min a year. Tree-ear tells him he could expect ten pieces in a year. The emissary arranges for Tree-ear to travel by boat back to the village. He is to tell Min about the royal commission.

### **Tree-ear is amazed by the city.**

Vocabulary: gestures, jostled

## Chapter 13



<sup>1</sup> The trip to the village is much faster by boat. When he arrives, Tree-ear tells Min about the royal commission. Min sighs and gestures for Tree-ear to sit next to him. Tree-ear knows something must be wrong. Min should be happy.

<sup>2</sup> Min tells him that Crane-man is dead. It was an accident. A farmer was crossing the bridge with a heavy load. The railing was rotten. Crane-man was bumped and jostled. He fell into the icy water. He was an old man. It was too much for his heart.

**Tree-ear misses his friend.**

<sup>3</sup> When they pulled Crane-man out of the water, he was holding a ceramic monkey in his hand. It was the ceramic monkey Tree-ear had given him. Min tells Tree-ear it is fine work. Ajima tells Tree-ear he will stay with them for the night. Tree-ear is so sad, he barely hears them. The next day, Tree-ear goes to their home under the bridge. He says goodbye to Crane-man. He does not know how he will live without him.

**Tree-ear misses his friend.**

<sup>4</sup> All he can do is go to work. Min is waiting for him with the ax and cart. He tells him to get large logs to make a cart of his own. He needs help now that he has a royal commission. Tree-ear does not believe he is hearing right. Min is going to teach him to be a potter!

<sup>5</sup> Then Ajima asks him to live with them. Tree-ear is truly fortunate. Min will teach him to be a potter and he will live with Ajima and Min. Then Ajima asks one more favor. Would he accept a new name – Hyung-pil? It is their family name. Tree-ear happily agrees.

**Tree-ear misses his friend.**