

The Empty Pot

A Reading A-Z Level N Leveled Book

Word Count: 679



Connections

Writing

Pretend you are a child other than Chen from the story. Write a journal entry telling what you gave to the emperor and why.

Social Studies

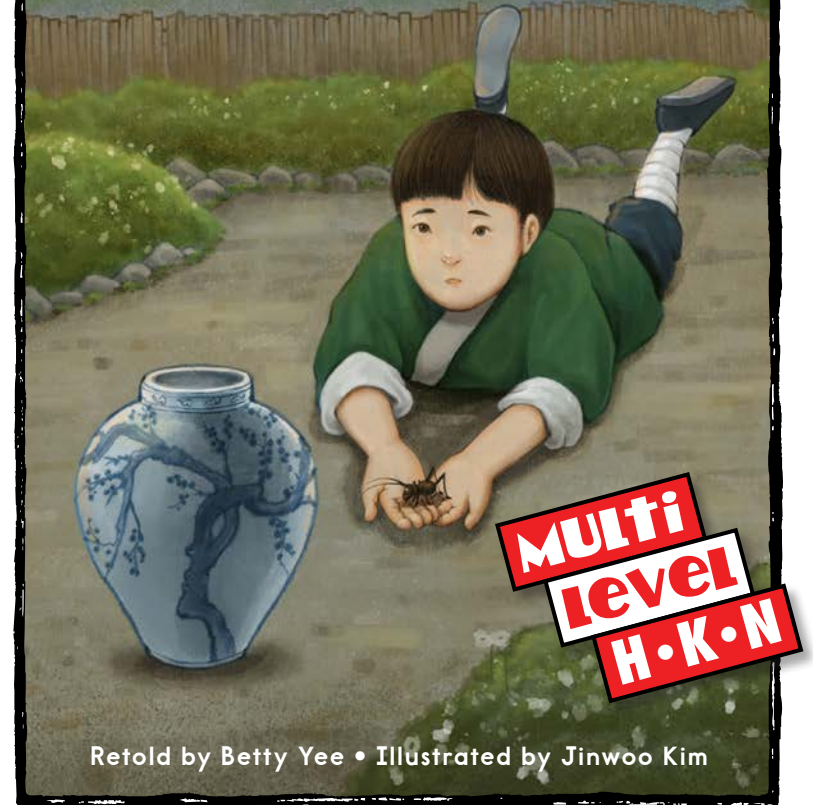
Draw a map of China. Label the capital city and five important landmarks.

Reading A-Z

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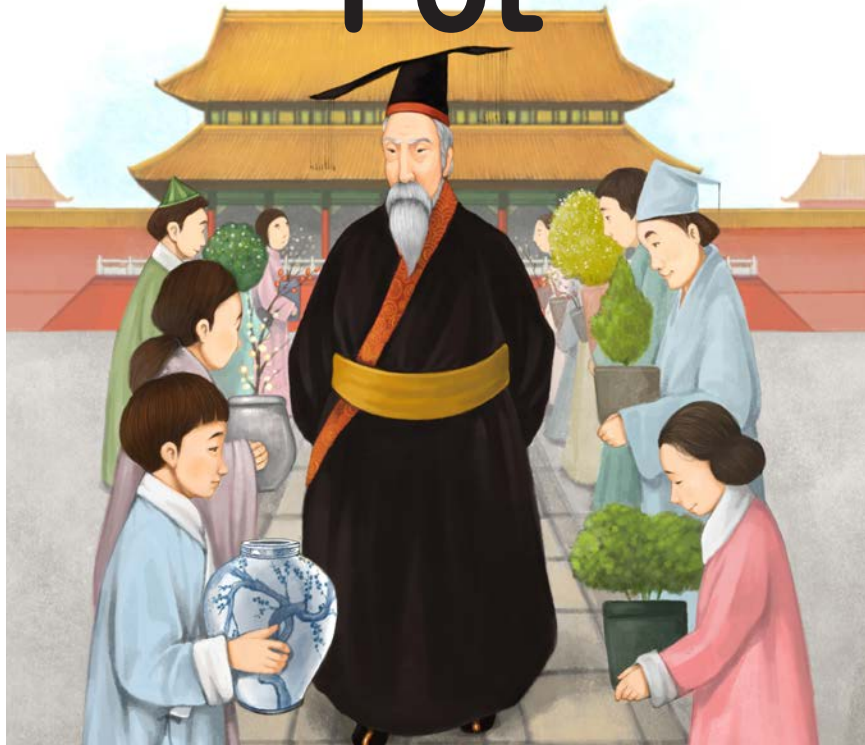
The Empty Pot



Retold by Betty Yee • Illustrated by Jinwoo Kim

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Focus Question

What lesson does Chen learn?

Words to Know

boiled	qualities
emperor	shame
encouragement	sprout
glum	weeping
honest	

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Level N Leveled Book
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Correlation

LEVEL N

Fountas & Pinnell	M
Reading Recovery	20
DRA	28



A long time ago in China, there was a boy named Chen. He lived with his mother in a wooden house in a countryside village.

Their house was very small, but their garden was always full of beautiful flowers and other plants. Chen's mother had planted the garden before Chen was born. She taught him everything she knew about gardening.

The **emperor** of China was a very old man who had no children of his own. He worried about who would become the next emperor and what would happen to his country.



He decided to choose the next emperor from among the children of his empire. One day, the emperor announced that the people of China should bring their children to his palace.



The emperor revealed his plan to the crowd that had gathered.

He declared, "I will provide a flower seed to any child who wants one.

Take your seed home and plant it in a pot. In a year's time, come back to the palace with your pot, and I will select the next emperor."

Chen lined up with the other children to get a seed. He could hardly contain his excitement.



Chen treated his seed with great care. He carried it home in a silk pouch. He planted the seed in a little clay pot in his garden, covered it with soil, and gave it water.

Days passed, but the little seed didn't sprout.

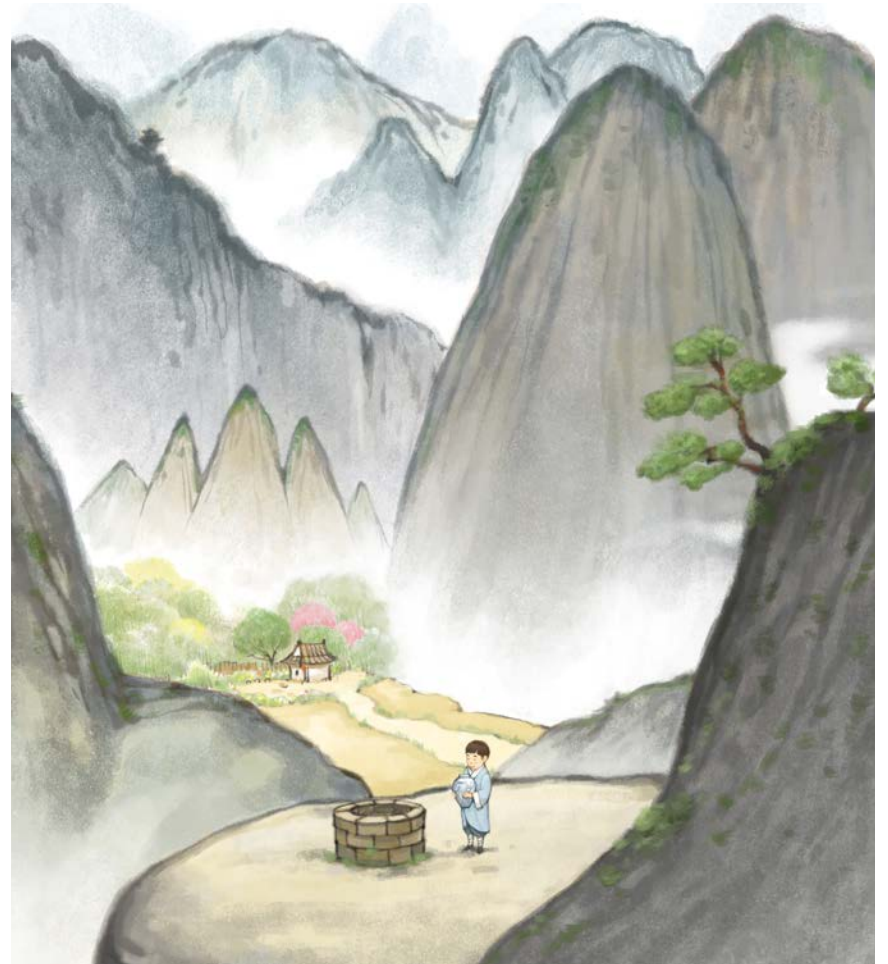


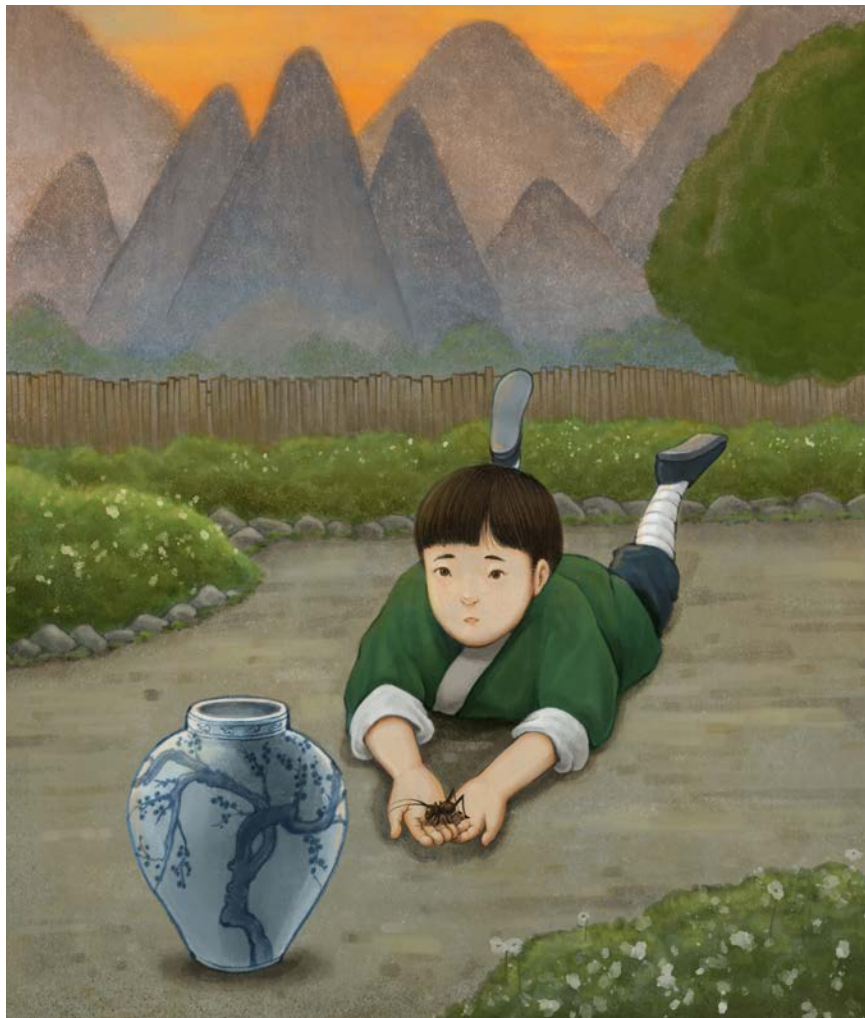
Chen put the seed in a bigger pot made of fine china. He moved the pot to the sunniest corner of the garden.

Weeks passed, but the little seed didn't sprout.

Chen carried his pot five miles to a well that was famous for having sweet, fresh water.

Months passed, but the little seed didn't sprout.





He kept his pet cricket next to the pot so the seed could hear its sweet nighttime chirps.

Seasons passed, but the little seed still didn't sprout.

A year went by.

It was time to bring the pot back to the emperor's palace. Chen felt downcast and **glum**. His seed hadn't sprouted at all.



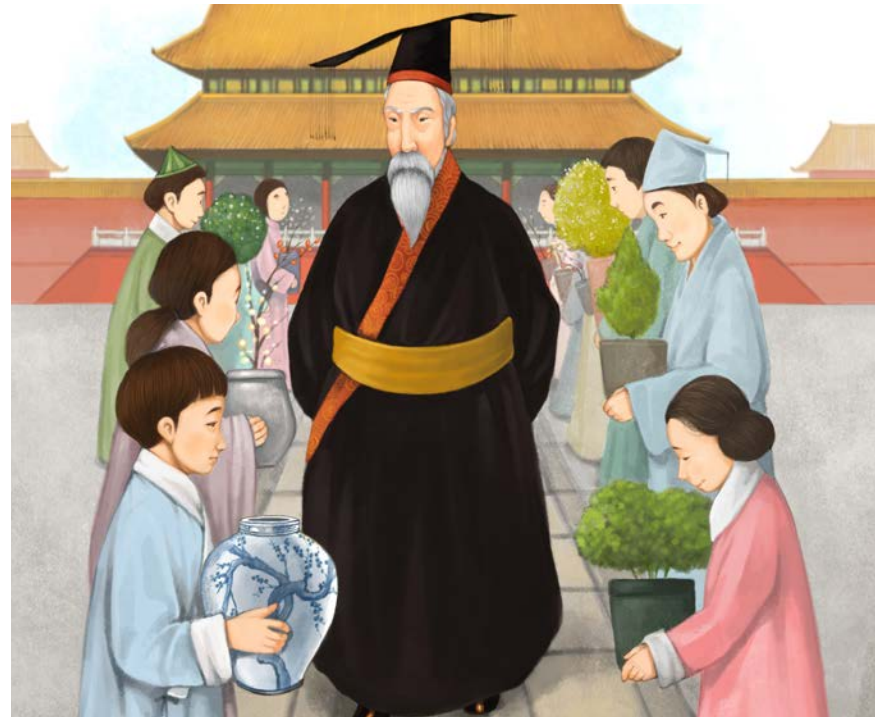
His wise mother found him **weeping** in the garden.

"You did your best," she said to Chen with **encouragement**. "I am very proud of you. Bring your pot to the emperor and tell him what happened."



Children arrived at the emperor's palace with their pots full of flowers. Each pot seemed to hold flowers more beautiful than the last. Chen looked down at his own empty pot and wanted to run back home. He calmed himself down, remembering his mother's words. He decided to stay where he was.

The emperor walked slowly through the crowd of children and flowers, studying each child and pot as he went.



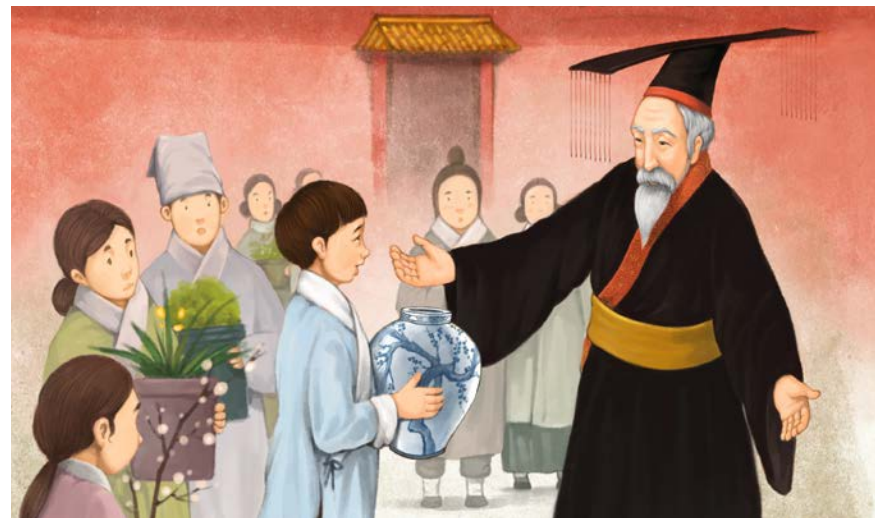
Something was wrong. The emperor didn't look pleased. In fact, it seemed as though the prettier the flower, the angrier he became. At last he came to Chen and his empty pot.



“What’s this?” the emperor demanded. “Why is your pot empty?”

Chen hung his head in **shame**.

“I’m sorry. I put the seed in a pot, but it didn’t grow. I put it in a bigger, fancier pot, but it still didn’t grow. I made sure it had plenty of sunlight. I gave it the freshest water. I even let my cricket keep it company at night! Still, it would not grow. I tried my best.”



Suddenly, to his surprise, Chen heard the emperor shout, “I’ve found him! I’ve discovered the child worthy of becoming the next emperor! I don’t know how the rest of you grew your flowers. The seeds I gave everyone were **boiled**. They could never have sprouted. But this **honest**, brave child told me the simple truth. He used his best effort to try to grow the seed. These are the **qualities** I want to see in the next emperor.”

Chen and his mother went to live in the palace. Every day, the emperor and Chen worked in the palace garden together. When Chen became emperor, he cared for China just as he had always cared for his own garden.



Glossary

boiled (<i>v.</i>)	heated in a liquid that has become hot enough to bubble (p. 14)
emperor (<i>n.</i>)	a man who rules a group of countries (p. 4)
encouragement	helpful support (p. 10)
glum (<i>adj.</i>)	sad or gloomy (p. 10)
honest (<i>adj.</i>)	truthful (p. 14)
qualities (<i>n.</i>)	features that help identify something or someone (p. 14)
shame (<i>n.</i>)	a strong feeling of sadness or guilt caused by believing one has done something wrong (p. 13)
sprout (<i>v.</i>)	come out of a seed and begin to grow (p. 6)
weeping (<i>v.</i>)	crying, often because of a feeling of deep sadness (p. 10)