

A Single Shard

Linda Sue Park

Reviewed by: Linda, Mark, Regan and Trevor

Appropriate Grade Level:

Grades 4-7

Potential Comprehension Problems:

- 1) The historical and cultural context of the novel may prove to be challenging for certain students. Perhaps those in younger grades and those students who are unfamiliar with the culture would find the book difficult to follow.
- 2) Additionally, young girls may have a problem relating to the characters in the novel because there is a strong male presence through the story and the only female character is marginal and of a different generation.
- 3) Furthermore, some of the vocabulary in the novel may need to be explained so it does not act as a hurdle for some students. (For example: Insolence; Felicitous; Arduous; Invective; Lugubrious; Noxious; Pinioned).

Interdisciplinary Connections:

- 1) Language Arts: Obviously, as a novel, this book can be used to teach many different language arts ideas; however, it was apparent throughout the reading that metaphors and similes could easily be a topic of study.
- 2) Social Studies: Due to the cultural and historic nature of the novel, it could be used to study both Korean history and culture. Furthermore, through this study, Buddhism could be addressed.
- 3) Science: The process of creating celadon clay artifacts is incredibly scientific. From the harvesting of clay, to the firing of the work there are many different chemical and physical reactions that occur and could easily be researched and studied by a class.
- 4) Art: This book lends itself to an art lesson quite easily. There is a very strong descriptive nature to the text and you could easily have your students pick nearly any scene in the book and draw a picture of it. You could also have students imagine how the different pottery items look and you could have them make representations of those. Moreover, this book could easily be used as a starting point for an art lesson involving clay.
- 5) Social Responsibility: Much of the novel explores ethical and moral dilemmas, which can help stimulate discussions involving social responsibility.

Contentious Issues:

Certain issues are addressed such as poverty, homelessness, orphaned children and death. Though these issues seem substantive, the nature of the writing may help familiarize younger audiences without overwhelming them.

Honours:

- A Newbery Medal award winning book
- An ALA Notable Book

- An ALA Best Book for Young Adults
- A School Library Journal Best Book of the Year
- A Booklist Editors' Choice

Teaching Strategies:

- Novel study
- Lit circles
- Read-aloud
- Reader journals
- Reader's theater
- Stations