



# The Empty Pot

*Demi*

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An IRA-CBC Children's Choice.

*An American Bookseller "Pick of the Lists."*

When Ping admits that he is the only child in China unable to grow a flower from the seeds distributed by the Emperor, he is rewarded for his honesty.

## The Empty Pot Details

Date : Published September 15th 1996 by Henry Holt & Company (first published January 1st 1990)

ISBN : 9780805049008

Author : Demi

Format : Paperback 32 pages

Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Cultural, China, Historical, Historical Fiction



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# From Reader Review The Empty Pot for online ebook

## midnightfaerie says

A great educational book for your children of all ages. My 5 yr old loved it as well as my 3 yr old twins. Lots of good information with beautiful pictures that will help keep children engaged. It was recommended as additional reading to my child's history lesson on China, and we all loved it. This legend from China is a wonderful story even adults will love. You'll also appreciate the subtle lesson embedded in the book. Can't wait to pick up more by Demi. A great addition to any children's library.

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## Jennifer says

Our read aloud for the morning.

I loved this story, and so did my boys! We were already familiar with the folklore plot, but the pictures and the way the story was told added depth and meaning. My children talked about the meaning of the book as they walked to class.

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## Chyina says

This was a wonderful little book about honesty. I found it so very heart-warming and a story that holds true in it's portrayal, even today. I great book for children with a good lesson, and a brilliant little read for adults too, who want something enjoyable but quick.

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## Lindsay says

I have always really liked The Empty Pot! I read it aloud to my students each year to teach them both the importance of courage and honesty. While I plan to continue this tradition, I also plan on using this text to expand my students awareness to Chinese culture and discuss how the culture is represented in this story.

The Emperor of China, seeks finding is successor. Children are challenged to grow the best flowers in one year with the seeds they receive from the Emperor. Ping, the main character, puts dedication and hard work into caring for his plant all year long. When it is time to present his pot to the Emperor, he shamefully displays his empty pot while the rest of the children share their pots full of gorgeous flowers. Ping is rewarded with his honesty and is named the next Emperor as the children learn that the seeds they received were cooked and could never grow.

Children's Books in Children's hands state, "Although Demi was not born Chinese, her thoroughness of research is evident, and readers who are Chinese find that her work reflects the perspective of insiders" (Temple, Martinez, Yokota, 114). This is apparent in Demi's illustrations and words. Her illustrations display the architectural design of buildings and style and design of clothing. Demi shows how China has a leader different from the United States called an Emperor as well as how integrity is valued in China. These details

are unobtrusive to the story. The only question that I am still pondering is how a child reading this book on their own would know that an emperor's successor is not actually picked based on the seed challenge. This is a great teaching moment for a teacher to use with the book, but will students have misconceptions after reading this book on their own if they are unaware of this fictional part of the story?

I love the illustrations in this book especially the framed circular format. Line is used especially well to show movement like blowing tree branches and moving children. I especially liked the pages when the emperor asks the boy why he brought an empty pot. The only illustration is the emperor and Ping without any background or additional objects. This emptiness helps the reader feel Ping's shame and loneliness since he is the only child with an empty pot.

I look forward to continuing to read this book in my class, while adding an emphasis on the cultural perspective of China. The teachable moments in this book are endless!

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### **Karen says**

The Empty Pot by Demi demonstrates an authentic experience of a Chinese boy named Ping. The author was not born in China, but her inner perspective of the culture becomes evident in her book. The story takes place in China. The book shows Chinese children and an Emperor. The illustrations are colorful, accurate and true to the time period portrayed, and all details of each illustration are chronologically accurate.

As we read the book it moves us into Ping's experience on trying so hard to get a seed to sprout into a flower. His disappointment and determination are profound as he finds himself failing on a task he has mastered his entire life. Since his passion and strength are growing beautiful flowers and trees, once in his life he finds presenting himself in front of others and the Emperor with an empty pot. The pot containing only the seed that the Emperor gave him and that he did not grow. To everyone's surprise, he is rewarded instead of punished. He is also complimented for his honesty, courage and efforts.

The book demonstrates cultural details that make the story rich. The compassion that reader feels for the character Ping is similar to the compassion we would feel for any child that struggles on a given task. The story can easily inspire students to share and discuss their experiences about being honest or sharing their struggles on things they prevailed on or things they failed on. The language used in the story is not authentic, but the understanding and empathy that we develop for the main character is. The story illuminates the experience of members of a particular group and the text requires that characters be of a particular culture. This culturally specific book takes the reader's imagination into China teaching the moral lesson that it takes courage to be honest, but honesty makes us worthy persons.

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### **Aladdin Jones says**

This is a great tale for younger children...really even for those who are starting in the 1st grade. This is a tale that speaks to the characteristics of self-worth as well as honesty. Young Ping, the main character of the story, learns that he has a unique talent for nurturing a garden. But when given the opportunity to take part in a competition, he realizes that there are others whose results and talent appears to be better than his own. This, of course, brings him to the point of discouragement. He is later reminded that throughout the race to

the top, he has done nothing but given his all and that he should not belittle himself for the effort he has made. I believe that one of the concepts the author wanted their readers to realize is how we should not base our own worth on other people's actions, thoughts, or success. We should take pride in who we are and know that if we continue to thrive to reach our goals, we can do nothing but improve upon ourselves day by day.

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### **Sheeba Virani says**

Wow, one of the best children's books that I have read! This book emphasizes the fact that it is important to do your best always. If you have honestly worked hard and tried your best you will succeed. It shows children how honesty and perseverance pays off for the little boy Ping and makes him emperor. It helps children understand the value of truth, hard work and courage.

Extension- Provide children with a small foam cup each labelled with their name. Help them plant some flower seeds. Explain to them that plants need nurturing as well to grow. Place these cups in a corner in the classroom near a window. Ask each child to take care of his or her plant by watering them every day. Put up a chart or graph near the window where children can record their weekly observations about their plants.

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### **Vaishali says**

I haven't read 5-star fiction in a while, but you know it when you see it. BAM!

Warm, innocent, magnetic, tender, and full of truth.

A climax which brought tears to my eyes.... hands down the best part of my entire day.

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### **Heather Mcgrath says**

Summary:

"The Empty Pot" is a book set in China. A boy named Ping loved flowers. Everything he touched bloomed as if by magic. Everyone in the kingdom loved flowers too, even the Emperor. One day the Emperor decided he needed to find a successor to his throne. He came up with a plan to give each child in the kingdom a seed and see who could grow the best flower. The child who could grow the best flower would be who the Emperor would choose to succeed him. All of the children came to the palace to get their own flower seeds. All winter Ping tried to grow the most perfect flower, but nothing would grow. He tried better dirt and a bigger pot and still the seed would not grow. He watered it everyday and still the seed would not grow. Finally on the day the children were to present the Emperor with the flowers they had grown, every child had pots filled with beautiful flowers, but Ping did not. He was very sad and when he was to go and show the Emperor his empty pot his friends asked him why he would even want to show the Emperor his empty pot. Ping was very sad, however, he still wanted to show the Emperor. After the Emperor looked at all of the beautiful flowers he find Ping and asked him why he was showing an empty pot. Ping said as he was crying, "I planted the seed you gave me and I watered it every day, but it didn't sprout. I put it in a better pot with better soil, but still it didn't sprout! I tended it all year long, but nothing grew. so today I had to bring an empty pot without a flower. It was the best I could do." As it turned out, the Emperor had given all of the

children seeds that had been cooked, therefore, none of the seed could have grown. They had all cheated. The Emperor was so impressed with Ping. The Emperor was impressed with Ping's courage and honesty and rewarded him with making him Emperor of all the land.

Response:

This book deserves a 5 star rating. This book has all of the qualities of children's literature as outlined in Children's Books in Children's Hands. (TMY, 2010, p. 9):

- expands awareness
- an enjoyable read that doesn't overtly teach or moralize
- tells the truth
- embodies quality
- has integrity
- shows originality

Classroom Connection:

Use this book to introduce integrity. A good lesson for the whole class.

Awards:

An IRA-CBC Children's Choice  
An American Bookseller "Pick of the Lists"

Lexile/ 630

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### **Aamina says**

Such a wonderful story but I wasn't fond of the illustrations.

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### **Cynthia Egbert says**

Such a beautiful reminder of the importance of honesty and the power contained with being true to yourself and your efforts. I love this book so much and wish that every family could share it and discuss its truths.

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### **Judy says**

A kingdom where everyone loved flowers, especially a young boy named Ping who could make anything grow ... all of which is good to see in a story for children.

Ultimately, honesty is rewarded.

The art fits the story beautifully.

I wish Demi had included a note explaining the origins of the tale.

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### Shanna Gonzalez says

A wonderful story about the importance of telling the truth. Ping is the subject of a Chinese emperor who is exceptionally gifted at growing things. When it is time for the old king to choose his successor, he tests the children of the land by giving them each a seed to cultivate and bring to him within a year. Ping is unable to get this seed of all seeds to grow, and brings his empty pot to the king, whereupon the king reveals his wisdom in a surprise ending.

This is an aesthetic, moral story with an enjoyable mystery and very nice illustrations. Caring for plants is a central part of the story, and the ability to get a plant flourish may be symbolic for nurturing a kingdom. Although he gives his best, Ping fails at getting the seed to grow. Nevertheless, he demonstrates courage in presenting his empty pot, and his honesty is well rewarded.

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### Ronyell says

I have been reading many works by Demi lately and now I wish to share my excitement about a Chinese folktale I have recently read called “The Empty Pot.” “The Empty Pot” is a Chinese folktale by Demi which is about the Emperor of China making a proclamation throughout China that whoever can plant him the most beautiful flower will be the successor for his throne. “The Empty Pot” is truly one of the most clever folktales about honesty that was ever created!

A Long time ago in China, there lived a boy named Ping who grew the most beautiful flowers in all of China. Now, Ping was not the only person in China who loved flowers since all the people loved flowers, especially the Emperor. Unfortunately, the Emperor was getting old and he needed a successor for his throne and so he decided to issue a proclamation that whoever can grow the most beautiful flower from the seed he gives out will be the successor to his throne. All the children in the kingdom received their seeds from the Emperor and they all started planting their seeds, including Ping.

Brilliant and beautiful this book is all about! Demi has done an excellent job at both writing and illustrating this book about the importance of being honest with others. What I really loved about this book was how the Emperor used the flower contest as a way of seeing who is worthy of being his successor and I loved the fact that Demi brought out the message that honesty is what makes a good ruler and I totally agree! I also loved the character Ping as he is honest and he tries his hardest to grow a beautiful flower and the honest characteristic is what I loved the most about Ping! Demi's illustrations are just simply beautiful, especially of

the images of the blossom trees around China and I also loved the appearances of the children themselves as they are extremely cute and they always wear a smile on their faces, especially at the idea of growing the most beautiful flower to impress the Emperor!

All in all, “The Empty Pot” is a brilliant book about the importance of honesty and anyone who loves Chinese folktales will definitely enjoy this book! I would recommend this book to children ages five and up since some of the Chinese names might be a bit hard for smaller children to understand.

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