

# A single shard

1. What is the setting of the book?  
*"A small village on the west coast of Korea, mid-to late 12<sup>th</sup> century"*
2. Find Korea on a world map.

## Chapter 1:

### Vocabulary words

- |                   |                         |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. perusal (p4)   | 6. slats (p8)           |
| 2. glean (p4)     | 7. gourd (p9)           |
| 3. oblivious (p4) | 8. worried (p9)         |
| 4. ruefully (p5)  | 9. paulownia tree (p10) |
| 5. don (p5)       | 10. sluggardly (p11)    |

### Revision Questions

1. What did Crane-man mean when he asked Tree-ear "Have you hungered well today?"?  
*The rich always greeted one another with the question "Have you eaten well today?", so for their own little joke, and because they were poor, they asked greeted one another with the question "Have you hungered well today?"*
2. What good news did Tree-ear bring home with him?  
*Tree-ear scored a bag full of rice, not just the usual carrot-tops or chicken bones.*
3. Where did Tree-ear get the rice from?  
*A passing-by farmer's woven rice basket had a hole in from which the rice was leaking and Tree-ear called the farmer's attention to it. Out of gratitude (and laziness) the farmer left the rice for Tree-ear to collect.*
4. What is a *jiggeh*? Find a picture of one.  
*A jiggeh is an open-framed backpack made of branches.*
5. Why did just *looking* at the farmer's straw box make water rush to Tree-ear's mouth?  
*Tree-ear, just like the other poor people, were only allowed to glean the fallen grain from the bare fields at the end of the harvest, which was months away, and thus a proper bowl of rice to fill their tummy was months away too.*
6. What would you have done had you been in Tree-ear's shoes? Would you have told the farmer, or would you have left it so you could have the rice for yourself?
7. What does it mean that the farmer had an "easygoing nature"?  
*The farmer wasn't too concerned with the leaking rice, and neither with the fixing of the container.*
8. "Work gives a man dignity, stealing takes it away" (p6). Do you agree?
9. Why was Tree-ear the boy's name?  
*He was named after the mushrooms that grew on dead or fallen tree trunks, "emerging from the rotten wood without benefit of parent seed", fitting for an orphan.*
10. What physical disability did Crane-man have?  
*He was born with a shrivelled and twisted calf and foot.*
11. Why did Crane-man live under the bridge?  
*Because he was unable to work, he had to sell his possessions, even his house.*
12. How old was Tree-ear?  
*He was about twelve.*
13. What happened to Tree-ear's parents?  
*They died of fever.*

14. What was the “feast” they had for breakfast?  
*Rice boiled to a gruel and two empty chicken leg-bones.*
15. Where did Tree-ear go after breakfast?  
*He went to watch Min, the potter, work.*
16. What did it mean for potters to have a “throwing” day?  
*It was when they would throw the clay on the turntable to be shaped into a vase or pot.*
17. Why was the celadon ware so prized by collectors?  
*The clay from which it was made contained exactly the right amount of iron to produce the gray-green colour that made it valuable.*
18. Find some pictures of celadon-ware.
19. What “secrets” did the potters usually guard?  
*Perhaps the new shape of a teapot, or a new inscribed design.*
20. Why was Min not really bothered about keeping secrets?  
*He was confident enough in his own skill that no-one would be able to imitate it.*

## Chapter 2

### Vocabulary words

1. emboldened (p14)
2. peered (p14)
3. communal (p19)
4. precariously (p20)
5. disarray (p21)
6. frenzy (p21)
7. cautiously (p22)
8. placid (p22)
9. wincing (p23)
10. sternly (p24)

### Revision Questions

1. What, according to the potters, was the “leather-hard”-stage?  
*It was when the items they made from clay were set to dry by air, but were not yet glazed or fired.*
2. Why did Min attack Tree-ear?  
*Min thought Tree-ear was stealing the items he made from clay.*
3. Why would Tree-ear not be able to pay Min for the broken box?  
*Tree-ear was very poor.*
4. How did Tree-ear offer to pay for the broken box?  
*He offered to work for Min.*
5. Would you have done the same (offer to work for something you broke by accident), or would you have left the situation as is?
6. Do you think Ch'ulp'o is a real place?  
*Yes, it is a village in Daehoji County, Dangjin City, Chungcheongnam-do, South Korea.*
7. Why did Min have to chop wood for the kiln if it was used by all the potters?  
*The potters took turns using the kiln and keeping up the supply of fuel.*
8. What was Tree-ear's first job?  
*He was ordered to gather a whole cart full of dry wood deep into the mountains.*
9. What happened to Tree-ear on his way back to Min's place from the mountain?  
*The cart kept tipping over, and eventually while flinging the wood back into it, a rough log scratched the blister on his hand open and blood ran from the wound.*
10. Do you know how to take care of blisters and cuts? If you don't, learn how to.

## Chapter 3

### Vocabulary words

1. scolding (p25)
2. insolence (p30)
3. trundled (p31)
4. heaved (p31)
5. whittling (p36)

### Revision Questions

1. What was Tree-ear scolded for first thing the next morning as he arrived at Min's house?  
*Min was scolding him for having left the cart of wood without a word, and not having taken it to the kiln to unload it.*
2. Why did Min's orders for the day blow Tree-ear's joy into nothingness (p26)?  
*Tree-ear thought he might be taught how to make a pot, but instead he had to fetch wood again, and this time made sure to unload it at the kiln site.*
3. Why, did Kang reason, was it about time that Min got himself some help? (p28)  
*He reckoned that Min didn't bring his proper share of wood.*
4. Why, after Tree-ear completed his debt of work, did he want to continue working for Min?  
*He badly wanted to learn how to make a pot, and the only way he could do that is if he continued in his relationship with Min.*
5. What was Tree-ear's first job after his debt was paid off?  
*He had to collect clay from the river.*
6. What was kimchee?  
*Pickled cabbage, seasoned with red pepper, green onions and garlic.*
7. Have you ever worked for payment? How did your payment differ from Tree-ear's "feast"?
8. What happened to Crane-man's crutch?  
*Out of frustration and anger for not being able to collect a fish at the flounder run, he had struck his crutch against a rock and it broke.*
9. Why did Tree-ear feel ashamed at learning about Crane-man's failed attempt to catch a fish?  
*Tree-ear had forgotten all about Crane-man at the time he had his meal, not saving him any of the food, and thinking how Crane-man had to struggle to get back home without a catch, made Tree-ear feel ashamed.*
10. What did Tree-ear mean when he said that when some left this world they would have four good legs? (p36)  
*He was referring to how he was feeling for not saving Crane-man some food, and felt like a dog.*

## Chapter 4

### Vocabulary words

1. gourd (p38)
2. felicitous (p41)
3. sludge (p42)
4. winnowed (p42)
5. hues (p44)
6. patriarch (p45)
7. aptness (p45)
8. apprentices (p46)
9. jest (p46)
10. derision (p46)
11. banter (p46)

### Revision Questions

1. Why did Tree-ear bring his own bowl this time?  
*He meant to eat only half his food, hide the bowl and take the rest of the food home to Crane-man at the end of*

the day.

2. What happened that Tree-ear again couldn't take food home to Crane-man?  
*Some animal had discovered the bowl and ate all its contents.*
3. What did Tree-ear do to ensure he'd be able to take food to Crane-man and that other wild-animals wouldn't be able to eat it?  
*He dug a hole closer to Min's house, in which he buried the bowl and covered it with a large flat rock.*
4. What odd discovery concerning his hidden bowl did Tree-ear make?  
*After a few days in hiding his bowl, he returned to find it filled again.*
5. Do you think Min was easy to work for? Why or why not?
6. Why did Tree-ear have to drain the clay multiple times?  
*It depended on the application of the clay. The more times it was drained, the smoother was the clay.*
7. Why did Crane-man say that Tree-ear was like "the ears of a scrawny little tree, noticed by none but hearing all"?  
*Tree ear was able to hear about events in people's houses, or read the signs of special events without anybody actually telling him, which meant that the food they threw out would be of more value to Tree-ear and Crane-man.*
8. Why did Min lose him many opportunities for sales?  
*Min insisted on perfection in his work, which caused him to work much slower and sometimes miss deadlines.*
9. How did Tree-ear thank Min's wife for the extra food?  
*Whenever he had spare time, he hung around Min's house, doing little chores like weeding the garden, sweeping the yard, and filling the water barrel.*

## Chapter 5

### Vocabulary words

1. "slip" (p50)
2. mousy (p51)
3. translucent (p51)
4. prunus (p52)
5. stark (p52)
6. arduous (p53)
7. imps (p55)
8. borne (p55)
9. pantaloons (p56)
10. donned (p56)
11. sparse (p57)
12. burlap (p57)
13. garb (p58)
14. knothole (p58)

### Revision Questions

1. Why was Kang acting so secretly?  
*He was using a new technique with his pottery and didn't want anyone to steal his ideas.*
2. What was so peculiar about the red and white slip that Kang had carried?  
*The potters all used the gray-brown clay, and stayed away from the white and red clay because it did not make the transformation to celadon green when it was fired. Yet Kang was using it.*
3. Why did Tree-ear not anticipate any day to be the day Min would allow him to sit at the wheel to make something out of clay?  
*Every day's errands were the same: he had to collect wood or clay or drain clay, or even collect shells, never did Min indicate that he'd teach Tree-ear.*
4. What was a prunus vase used for?  
*To display a single branch of flowering plum.*
5. Find a picture of rice fields in Korea. Can you understand why it was an arduous task to glean the rice?

6. What skill did Crane-man possess?  
*He had taught himself to plait rice straw to make mats and sandals.*
7. Find a picture of rice straw hats and sandals used in Korea.
8. Why was Crane-man disappointed when he finally finished Tree-ear's sandals?  
*Tree-ear had grown in the mean time and the sandals were too small.*
9. Where did Crane-man and Tree-ear usually get their winter clothes from?  
*Some monks sometimes passed on clothes that were donated.*
10. Where did Crane-man and Tree-ear stay during winter months?  
*In a dug out vegetable pit on the edge of the village.*
11. How long did they usually stay in the dugout?  
*About two months.*
12. What did Min's wife "scold" Tree-ear for?  
*For not being able to work properly if he was getting cold.*
13. What did Min's wife give Tree-ear?  
*She gave him warm, padded trousers and a jacket.*
14. What did Tree-ear do with the jacket?  
*He gave it to Crane-man to wear.*
15. Do you think it was wrong for Tree-ear to give away a gift he had just received? Had you been in the same position, what would you have done?
16. How did Tree-ear convince Crane-man to accept the jacket?  
*He said that if Crane-man wouldn't wear the jacket, he himself wouldn't wear the sandals Crane-man was busy making him again.*
17. What did Tree-ear do at Kang's place one night?  
*He could watch him work and saw what he was doing, how he applied his new design and technique.*

## Chapter 6

### Vocabulary words

1. congregated (p60)
2. hailed (p60)
3. spurned (p60)
4. connoisseur (p64)
5. stealth (p64)
6. taut (p65)
7. debris (p65)
8. entourage (p66)
9. invective (p66)
10. feigning (p69)
11. dejection (p72)
12. lugubrious (p72)
13. commiserated (p72)
14. demise (p72)

### Revision Questions

1. What was the commotion at the wine shop one evening?  
*The news of the coming of a royal representative had reached the village, and everyone was excited, because his coming would mean a royal commission to one (or more) very lucky potter. A commission only happened once in a few years.*
2. Why did the other children of the village not mix with Tree-ear?  
*Tree-ear was an orphan, and orphans were considered bad luck.*

3. Why did Kang look like he had a secret in the wine shop?  
*Kang had been experimenting with a new technique, and he was sure it would secure him the commission. And nobody knew about this technique, so it was actually a secret.*
4. What was bothering Tree-ear so much that he couldn't sleep?  
*Tree-ear badly wanted to tell Min about Kang's secret, but he didn't know if it was stealing, since Kang didn't in particular share the idea with him.*
5. Why did Min want to stand with his back to the sea, leaving the emissary facing the sea when he inspected Min's work?  
*The colour of the vessels would display the colours of the sea, making them appear more beautiful.*
6. What secret did the bowl of the water pot hold?  
*Tree-ear had secretly made a petal from clay himself and had replaced one of Min's with his own, and it was used on the bowl.*
7. What idea did Tree-ear have that improved Min's pottery display?  
*Tree-ear ran to fetch two flowering plum branches to put inside the vases to display how they are used better.*
8. What was Kang's secret after all?  
*He had used the slip to paint white chrysanthemum flowers on all his work, and the display was remarkable.*

## Chapter 7

### Vocabulary words

1. harangued (p73)
2. feigned (p73)
3. incising (p76)
4. detracting (p76)
5. exulted (p77)
6. ferocity (p78)
7. eaves (p78)
8. curt (p79)
9. fiendishly (p82)
10. placid (p84)
11. suffused (p85)
12. marred (p85)

### Revision Questions

1. What happened the fifth time Tree-ear drained the clay? What did he realize?  
*For the first time he felt the clay feel smooth, fine and pliant, and knew that one or two drains will leave the clay perfect for inlay work.*
2. What made a pot or vase attractive and popular to others?  
*The colour and the smooth shape.*
3. Why did Tree-ear smile when Min told him he was taking too long with draining the clay?  
*Tree-ear knew that Min was satisfied with the texture that time, and it was the first time Tree-ear did it right without any further prompting from Min.*
4. Why was there so much anxiety going on with Min and the other potters?  
*All of them wanted to prepare in time for the emissary's return, and time was running out.*
5. Why did the warming of the kiln take a whole day?  
*The potters knew if they put their vessels in too early, they would crack.*
6. How long did it usually take from start to finish to fire a series of vessels?  
*5-6 days.*
7. Why did Crane-man not go to the temple for help after he lost all his belongings?  
*Foxes were dreaded animals, believed to possess evil magic. On his way to the temple, Crane-man had an encounter with a fox, and came to spend the night under the bridge. Days later, when he could journey again to the temple, the bridge had come to feel like home to him.*

8. What terrible sight greeted Tree-ear the day after they'd removed the vessels from the kiln?  
*Min had smashed all the vessels to pieces because the glaze was stained brown, and some vessels had brown spots on them.*

## Chapter 8

### Vocabulary words

1. noxious (p88)
2. remiss (p88)
3. tumultuous (p89)
4. faltered (p91)
5. frenetically (p94)

### Revision Questions

1. Why did Emissary Kim visit Min?  
*He came to tell Min that if he could present the inlay work in his pottery, he had another chance of receiving a commission from the royal court for his work. He only had to find a way to take it to Songdo to present it there to the court.*
2. What did Tree-ear request from Min's wife?  
*That she would speak to Min on his behalf to take Min's work to Songdo to present it there to the royal court.*
3. On which two conditions did Min's wife agree to speak to Min about Tree-ear's journey to Songdo?  
*That he would travel and return quickly and safely, and that Tree-ear would call her Aunt.*
4. How long has Tree-ear been working for Min by now?  
*Longer than a year.*
5. Why did Min not want to teach Tree-ear how to make a pot?  
*The potter's trade was passed on from father to son, and Tree-ear was not Min's son. Min was full of grief for the death of his own son still.*

## Chapter 9

### Vocabulary words

1. endeavor (p100)
2. bafflement (p101)
3. scavenging (p101)
4. ebbed (p103)
5. secreted (p105)m

### Revision Questions

1. Why was Tree-ear considering leaving Ch'ulp'o?  
*He really wanted to learn how to make objects out of clay, and since Min was not going to teach him because he was not his son, he meant to find somewhere else to learn the trade.*
2. "My friend, the same wind that blows one door shut often blows another open" (p97). Have you had a time in your life when a door seemed to close for you, and another open? Tell about it.
3. What was Tree-ear's "second door" that blew open?  
*He realized that there were more than one way to work with clay – using the wheel for symmetrical objects, as well as moulding. He could mould and then didn't need to learn to use the wheel.*
4. What favour did Ajima ask from Crane-man?  
*She asked him to fill in for Tree-ear, doing his daily tasks around her house while he was gone.*
5. Why was Tree-ear angry at Crane-man?  
*Crane-man had refused Ajima's offer out of pride. Tree-ear needed Crane-man provided for, and Ajima helped out with her tasks because she was old, and Crane-man's refusal upset him.*



6. What gift did Tree-ear give Crane-man the night before he left?  
*A small monkey Tree-ear had moulded from clay.*

## Chapter 10

### Vocabulary words

1. luscious (p109)
2. trepidation (p109)
3. studiously (p112)
4. stoutly (p112)
5. grimacing (p115)
6. ruefully (p115)
7. concubines (p116)
8. jostled (p118)
9. precariously (p118)

### Revision Questions

1. What was the *gokkam* that Tree-ear discovered in his sack of food?  
*Dried persimmons, a fruit that grows on a tree in Asia and looks like an orange.*
2. Tree-ear had “hoped to come across a hunter’s lean-to” (p110). What was it he had hoped for?  
*A hunter’s shelter, a makeshift shelter consisting of a roof attached against some sort of wall and held up with a strong stick.*
3. Have you ever spent a night camping and/or making a campfire? Tell about it.
4. What creature came to Tree-ear’s campsite in the forest that night? Why was it a great concern to Tree-ear?  
*A fox. Tree-ear thought the fox would hypnotize him to follow it to its den and then devour him.*
5. Why did Crane-man tell Tree-ear to stop at the city of Puyo on his way to Songdo?  
*Puyo had a history of when China overtook it and its king; Crane-man wanted Tree-ear to experience the place where the king of Korea’s concubines had sacrificed themselves instead of being taken prisoner, showing great courage.*
6. How did Puyo differ from the villages Tree-ear had thus far encountered?  
*Puyo was very crowded, busy and noisy, and the people were impatient.*
7. What was *onggi*?  
*Brown stoneware pots used for storing food.*
8. What did Tree-ear discover at Poyo that left his mouth hanging open?  
*He discovered celadon wine bowls, inlaid with chrysanthemums, such as that of Kang – people were already making copies of his work.*

## Chapter 11

### Vocabulary words

1. plateau (p120)
2. quell (p121)
3. pallor (p122)
4. contorted (p123)
5. grimace (p123)
6. pinioned (p123)
7. jovial (p125)
8. retched (p125)
9. donned (p126)
10. barking (p128)
11. peony (p129)



## Revision Questions

1. What was a *toduk-nom*?  
*They were "bandits who hid throughout the countryside and on the outskirts of cities, emerging only to rob weary travellers".*
2. What did the *toduk-nom* want with Tree-ear? Why was he disappointed?  
*He wanted to rob him, but only found the vases, which were worthless to him.*
3. What did the robbers do with the vases? Why, do you think, they did this if they only intended to rob Tree-ear?  
*They threw them down the cliff.*
4. "The pain was welcome; he deserved far worse" (p127). Did Tree-ear really deserve falling on his face and worse punishment? Why did he feel that in fact he did?  
*Tree-ear was disappointed in himself for being robbed, he felt he failed Min and was deserving of punishment.*
5. Why did Tree-ear decide to go look for the vases at the bottom of the cliff?  
*He hoped that the second vase was not broken and that he could still take it to Songdo.*
6. Why did Tree-ear handle the shard of the vase with such care?  
*He decided to still take it to Songdo and show it to the emissary, and didn't want it to be damaged in any way.*

## Chapter 12

### Vocabulary words

1. crooning (p132)
2. dignified (p133)
3. garbed (p133)
4. intricate (p135)
5. incredulous (p136)
6. scepticism (p138)
7. abruptly (p138)
8. reeling (p138)

## Revision Questions

1. Why would the official at first not let Tree-ear in to see Emissary Kim?  
*It was his jobs to handle the smaller issues as not to bother Kim, because he was a very busy man.*
2. Why did the official finally take him to Kim?  
*Tree-ear insisted on explaining and showing the shard only to Kim.*
3. What was Emissary Kim's response when Tree-ear presented him the shard of the vase?  
*Kim was surprised that it was only a piece and not a complete item, but admired the work Min had done, and assigned him a commission to produce pieces for the palace. He also ordered Tree-ear be taken back to Ch'ulp'o by sea and that he be fed and taken care of until the ship left.*
4. How many pieces, did Tree-ear say, would Min be able to produce in a year?  
*Only 10 or a few more.*

## Chapter 13

### Vocabulary words

1. scampered (p141)
2. subdued (p142)
3. surreptitiously (p142)
4. crude (p143)
5. muffled (p145)
6. girth (p146)
7. welter (p147)
8. dignified (p148)

### Revision Questions

1. What was Min's response on the good news Tree-ear brought about the commission?  
*He simply sighed a sigh of relief.*
2. What shocking news did Min break to Tree-ear? What happened?  
*Crane-man had been bumped off the bridge, fell into the water and died.*
3. What was the first ever compliment that Min gave Tree-ear?  
*Min had seen the moulded monkey Tree-ear made and gave to Crane-man, and said it was fine work.*
4. Why did Tree-ear throw rocks and sticks and leaves and clods of dirt wildly into the river?  
*He was upset about Crane-man's death and blamed himself for not being there for him.*
5. What did Min want such large logs for?  
*Tree-ear was getting his own wheel to make objects out of clay.*
6. What favour did Ajima ask of Tree-ear, since he was going to stay by them from now on?  
*She wanted to call him by a new name, Hyung-pil, which is a family name, not like Tree-ear that was an orphan name.*
7. How, did Tree-ear decide, would he become skilled enough to create a perfect vase?  
*One hill, one valley at a time, just like his journey to Songdo (one day at a time)*