

PLAYS FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

A PARTNERSHIP OF SEATTLE CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY-MINNEAPOLIS

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A Single Shard

Based on A Single Shard
by **Linda Sue Park**

Adapted for the Stage by
Robert Schenkkan

A Single Shard was first presented by Seattle Children's Theatre for the 2011-12 season.

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Characters:

- Actor 1
- Master Potter Kang
- Master Potter Min
- Fisherman
- Tree-Ear
- Housewife
- Apprentice 1
- Apprentice 2
- Crane Man
- Farmer
- Min's Wife
- Emissary Kim
- Man 1
- Man 2
- Guard 1
- Guard 2
- Yee

ACT ONE

THE SET is a large, swooping wooden platform. There is a high point in one corner (the ROCK OF FALLING FLOWERS and THE BRIDGE) underneath which is an actable playing area (BELOW THE BRIDGE). The rest of the stage gently gives way to a flat playing area which (if possible) is trapped in two places: one large space for the VEGETABLE PIT and the KILN, and another, much smaller trap, which when opened allows a "Potter's Wheel" to be revealed.

Behind the set is an enormous SKY CYCLORAMA on which rear projections - video and stills - can be projected. LIGHTS UP on stage. On the CYC, the jagged hillside of KOREA. From far US, a group of MASKED DANCERS, SINGERS, and MUSICIANS (a Talchum troupe) appear in Korean costumes singing a song to the audience. One of them carries a large silk CRANE PUPPET which hangs from a bamboo pole and "flies" through the air.

ENSEMBLE "A SINGLE SHARD!"

The song/dance finishes. The GONG (Sangsoe) and the DRUM (Changgo) are struck...

Behind them, in Korean cursive, the words, "A SINGLE SHARD" writes across the CYC. ACTOR#1 (who plays CRANE MAN) faces the audience.

ACTOR#1 The village of Ch'ulp'o! Famous for its potters.

ACTOR#1 claps his hands and immediately there is a bustle on-stage as our SINGER/DANCERS/MUSICIANS become the citizens of Ch'ulp'o: POTTERS, FISHERMAN, FARMERS, HOUSEWIVES, MERCHANTS, etc.

ACTOR#1 And the most famous of its potters was...

MASTER POTTER KANG steps out of the crowd...

MASTER POTTER KANG (to the audience) Master Potter Kang!

Crowd stops and looks at ACTOR#1.

ACTOR#1 (gently correcting) Master Potter Min.

MASTER KANG Min?!

MASTER POTTER MIN, a very severe-looking old man steps out of the crowd.

MASTER KANG (confiding to audience) The old man's lost his touch. Maybe more than that. You'll see.

KANG leaves the stage. Crowd scene resumes. As MASTER POTTER MIN crosses the path of a FISHERMAN they greet each other with the traditional Korean salutation...

FISHERMAN Hello, Master Potter Min. Have you eaten well today?

MASTER POTTER MIN Very well, I thank you. And you?

FISHERMAN (The FISHERMAN raises his string of fish.) As you can see.

MIN exits. TREE-EAR, a twelve year old orphan boy, comes running on-stage with excitement, almost running into the FISHERMAN.

FISHERMAN Out of my way, boy!

TREE-EAR Yes sir! Sorry sir.

TREE-EAR bows repeatedly and almost backs into someone else.

HOUSEWIFE Watch where you're going!

TREE-EAR Yes, ma'am.

APPRENTICE#1 Hey! Orphan Boy!

TWO APPRENTICES stop TREE-EAR.

APPRENTICE#1/APPRENTICE#2 (chanting) Orphan Boy! Orphan Boy! Ragged clothes. Runny nose. Who were his parents, nobody knows!

TREE-EAR stoically endures their teasing. The two APPRENTICES walk off, laughing, leaving TREE-EAR alone on stage. HE calls out to his friend and mentor, the cripple, CRANE-MAN, with whom he lives BENEATH THE TOWN BRIDGE.

TREE-EAR Hey, Crane-Man, have you hungered well today?

CRANE-MAN emerges from beneath the bridge, laughing, his crutch raised in salute.

CRANE-MAN I do not think I have hungered so well in years!

This parody of the traditional greeting is an old joke between them that the two friends make of their constant poverty and acute hunger.

CRANE-MAN See how my friendly stomach is embracing my backbone.

TREE-EAR Not tonight!

TREE-EAR pulls out a worn cloth bag from beneath his tattered jacket and holds it up. The bag is bulging.

CRANE-MAN What is it? (CRANE-MAN opens the bag) Rice! Rice!
By all the Gods, how did you come by this good
fortune?

TREE-EAR joins CRANE-MAN in their "home" beneath the bridge. While they talk, CRANE MAN will cook their dinner. [As both man and boy are always one step from starving, the cooking dinner will never be far from their thoughts.]

TREE-EAR Pure luck. I had found nothing to eat all day and
was very depressed, walking back to our home
beneath the bridge...

CRANE-MAN ...Our noble mansion!

TREE-EAR It's a bridge.

CRANE-MAN Depends on how you look at it. To others, yes, a
simple bridge, but to us, home sweet home.

TREE-EAR Damp. And cold. Do you want to hear the story of
the rice?

CRANE-MAN Continue!

TREE-EAR I saw a farmer on the road.

A FARMER appears OS, carrying a woven straw container on his back. TREE-EAR follows the farmer acting out his story as he narrates it for CRANE-MAN who watches the "tale" with keen interest.

TREE-EAR There was a hole in the bottom of his pack and
rice was falling out. I didn't know what to do.
Should I tell him? Or...don't say anything, and
then, after he goes, I'll be able to pick up all
that fallen rice for us.

CRANE-MAN Hmmm. A difficult choice. What did you do?

The ENSEMBLE gathers behind TREE-EAR, a "Chorus of Conscience" while he agonizes over the rice.

CHORUS OF CONSCIENCE Look at the rice!/It's not yours./Think
how tasty a hot bowl of rice would be!/If you
don't say anything it would be just like
stealing./You can practically smell it
cooking!/What about the farmer's family?/Farmers
eat well all the time!/Hmmm, Rice!/Tasty
Rice!/Delicious Rice!/RICE! RICE! RICE!

TREE-EAR suddenly interrupts.

TREE-EAR (To the FARMER) Honorable sir! (a moment) As I walked behind you, I noticed you were marking your path with rice.

The CHORUS disappears. The FARMER stops and examines his pack. HE laughs ruefully.

FARMER Impatience! I knew I should have made this container with a double wall but it would have taken more time and I was in a hurry. Now I pay for not waiting.

TREE-EAR hands him some leaves.

TREE-EAR Here, sir, you can patch the hole with these leaves.

FARMER Very clever. I know you, you're that orphan boy...

TREE-EAR ...Tree-Ear...

FARMER ...lives under the bridge with the cripple, what's his name.

TREE-EAR Crane-man.

FARMER Crane-man. He's always smiling, that one, like he has a big secret. Well, good deserves good, urchin. The rice on the ground is yours, if you can be troubled to pick it up.

TREE-EAR Thank you, kind sir! Thank you!

The FARMER wanders off. TREE-EAR "returns" to the Bridge. CRANE-MAN applauds.

CRANE-MAN Well done!

TREE-EAR But he might have not given us anything.

CRANE-MAN Then you would still have done the right thing.

TREE-EAR And gone to sleep hungry. *Again.*

CRANE-MAN Not tonight! Tonight we feast. I, too, have had a good day. Look what I found! Can you believe people would throw this away? (*CRANE-MAN makes a big show of revealing two skinny chicken leg bones. TREE-EAR is practically salivating.*)

TREE-EAR Chicken bones!

CRANE-MAN Look. Look at that one there. On the end.

TREE-EAR (awed) There's still some meat.

CRANE-MAN Our lucky day.

*TREE-EAR sits down beside his friend as dinner continues to cook.
CRANE-MAN gestures to the fire and the bay beyond.*

CRANE-MAN Two things a man never grows tired of watching -
 fire and water.

*Night will fall and the stars will emerge through the rest of this
scene.*

TREE-EAR (Re the rice) Is it ready, yet?

CRANE-MAN You think I have a magic pot to cook in?

TREE-EAR I'm hungry!

CRANE-MAN Learn patience. Like the farmer.

TREE-EAR Tell me a story while we wait then.

CRANE-MAN You know all my stories.

TREE-EAR A good story bears re-telling; you've said so
 yourself, many times. Why are you called, "Crane-
 Man?"

CRANE-MAN I don't remember.

TREE-EAR You're lying!

CRANE-MAN It's an old story.

TREE-EAR Old stories are the best.

CRANE-MAN (smiling) Well, let's see. When my family first
 saw my twisted leg at birth, nobody thought I
 would live. But I did. As I went through life,
 hobbling on my one good leg, they thought I looked
 like a crane. I didn't mind that so much; Cranes
 are a beautiful bird, a symbol of long life and
 reverence. I have lived long. Outlived my own
 family! But, unable to work, I had to sell all my
 things, finally, even my hut. And that is how I
 came to live under this splendid bridge.

TREE-EAR And how did I come here?

CRANE-MAN Ahh, now that is interesting. A monk brought you. Your parents had died in a fever when you were very young. Nobody even knew your name, so I called you, "Tree Ear," like the mushroom that grows on dead trees. A good name for an orphan. So, this monk...

TREE-EAR ...was supposed to take me to a monastery!

CRANE-MAN (mock anger) Who is telling this story?!

TREE EAR You are.

CRANE-MAN If you can tell it better, please do so...

TREE-EAR ...No one can tell a story like you!

CRANE-MAN Go ahead; be my guest.

TREE-EAR Please!

CRANE-MAN Well, the monk was supposed to take you to a monastery but there was sickness there, too. So, he brought you here and asked me to look after you. And when he came back, six months later...

TREE-EAR ...I wouldn't leave you!

CRANE-MAN You clung to my good leg like a monkey to a tree!
(They both laugh) Ah, dinner is served! The two eat happily, with great gusto, savoring every grain of rice and gnawing the chicken legs.

TREE-EAR After your family all died, why didn't you ever go to the monks to live?

CRANE-MAN That is a little embarrassing. I was supposed to.

US of them, an ACTOR portraying the YOUNG CRANE MAN starts walking.

CRANE-MAN But as I was walking up the mountains to join the monks...I saw a fox.

Another ACTOR wearing a FOX MASK appears. SOUND of flute.

TREE-EAR *(genuinely afraid)* A fox! Did he try to put a spell on you?!

The TWO ACTORS perform a short stylized dance to flute and drums with the Fox stalking Tree-Ear.

CRANE-MAN I was terrified that he would do just that, and then lead me away to my death as they have done to so many others. He stood there, in the middle of the path, his devilish eyes glowing. I could feel myself coming under his power. His broad tail was swishing back and forth, slowly, back and forth, as he crept closer to me...

TREE-EAR Enough! What happened?

CRANE-MAN I tore my eyes away from him...and then turned and ran as fast as my poor legs would let me, all the way back to the village!

The YOUNG CRANE-MAN limps OS pursued by the FOX. CRANE-MAN and TREE-EAR laugh.

CRANE-MAN That night, I slept under this bridge. Days later, I thought of trying again to go to the monastery but I was still scared of the fox and the bridge had come to seem like home. Days became months. Months became years. And then you came along. Between the fox and you, I was destined never to become a monk.

TREE-EAR I'm glad.

CRANE-MAN One door closes, another opens.

TREE-EAR *(re: the bridge)* If we had any doors.

THEY both laugh. CRANE-MAN suddenly looks up at the sky.

CRANE-MAN Did you see that?! A shooting star!

TREE-EAR Where?

CRANE-MAN It's gone now.

TREE-EAR What will you wish for?

CRANE-MAN Hmm. I wish...I wish that tomorrow you find another impatient farmer! (yawns) What else did you do today?

TREE-EAR Nothing.

CRANE-MAN Nothing? You didn't spy on Master Potter Min?

TREE-EAR I don't spy! (off CRANE-MAN'S look) I watch secretly...so as not to disturb the Master.

CRANE-MAN (smiling) As you say. But I wouldn't let the old man catch you! Good night, my friend.

CRANE-MAN lies down. A MOMENT. TREE-EAR looks up at the sky.

TREE-EAR I wish. I wish...

HE gives up. Closes his eyes.

A TEMPLE BELL sounds the beginning of the day. Sunrise. LIGHTS UP on yard beside MIN'S HOUSE. POTTER MIN comes out and sits at his wheel and begins to work, humming as he does so. TREE-EAR leaves the BRIDGE and moves to his hiding place near MIN'S HOUSE. LIGHTS DOWN on the BRIDGE. While TREE-EAR secretly watches, he "talks" to CRANE-MAN.

TREE-EAR Maybe it's wrong for me to watch Master Potter Min like this, Crane-Man, but I can't help it. He's so different from all the other potters in Ch'ulp'o. For one thing, he works outside. Other potters are worried their secrets might be stolen but Min doesn't care. It's as if he was saying, "Go ahead, watch me. You won't be able to imitate my skill!" And oh, what skill, Crane-Man. It is magic, what he does with clay. The way a lump of muddy dirt is transformed into a beautiful pot...!

MIN considers the pot he has made.

MASTER MIN Pah!

Disgusted, HE scoops up the clay and collapses it back onto the wheel.

TREE-EAR ...And back again. He's terribly hard on himself; destroys most of what he makes but what he makes, is beautiful.

MIN exits into his HOUSE. TREE-EAR sneaks over to examine some of the work he has out "air drying." HE picks up a beautiful square box. Suddenly, MIN reappears.

MASTER MIN Thief! How dare you touch my work!

TREE-EAR is so startled he drops the box. MIN begins beating him with his cane. TREE-EAR drops to his knees, protecting himself from the blows.

TREE-EAR Please, honorable sir. I was not stealing your work - I come only to admire it!

MIN stops beating him.

MASTER MIN You've been here before? Perhaps you are the one who breaks the twigs of my paulownia tree over there?

TREE-EAR Yes, Honorable Sir; I come often to watch you work.

MASTER MIN To steal it!

TREE-EAR I would never steal! Stealing makes a man no better than a dog!

MIN considers the boy.

MASTER MIN Maybe you are a thief and maybe you aren't but my pot is still broken. And I know better than to ask payment from you, orphan boy, for what you have ruined.

MIN picks up the broken box and throws it away.

MASTER MIN Three days work and for what? Nothing. I am behind; the order will be late.

TREE-EAR Could I not work for you as payment? Save you some time?

MASTER MIN And what can you do, untrained as you are? I have no time to teach; you would be more trouble than help.

TREE-EAR (eagerly) I've watched you for many months now. I know how you mix the clay, turn the wheel...

MASTER MIN "Turn the wheel!" Ha! He thinks he can sit and make a pot - just like that!

MIN starts to leave. TREE-EAR runs and kneels prostrate in front of him. MIN changes direction; TREE-EAR runs and kneels in front of him again. MIN considers him.

MASTER MIN (grudgingly) All right, then. Three days it took me to make that box, so nine days you will work. I cannot even begin to think how much greater the value of my work is than yours but no matter. Here is an axe. Fill this cart with wood for the kiln! Pieces no bigger than my arm, mind you. And dry wood, not green.

TREE-EAR Yes, Master Min! Thank you! You won't regret it!

MASTER MIN I do already! *Go!*

LIGHTS DOWN on MIN HOUSE. TREE-EAR excitedly pushes the cart up into the MOUNTAINS. SPOT also on CRANE-MAN under the Bridge.

TREE-EAR I have a job, now, Crane-Man! A real job!

CRANE-MAN Wonderful! Every man needs real work to feel useful.

TREE-EAR takes the axe and begins to enthusiastically chop wood.

CRANE-MAN Is it very difficult, what you do?

TREE-EAR Not at first; my heart is so happy. But so many potters have been cutting trees for so many years that I have to walk a long way into the mountains to even find wood. Then, hours of chopping on an empty stomach leave me more tired than I have ever been in my life. And finally, at the end of the day, pushing the heavy cart home...

TREE-EAR lifts the now "loaded" cart and struggles to push it across the stage. The wheel catches, the cart overturns, and Tree-Ear falls down.

TREE-EAR Aaaahh!

HE rises, furious, starts throwing wood into the cart, then HE tears a blister on his hand and he HOWLS even louder.

TREE-EAR AAAHHH! NO!

TREE-EAR joins CRANE-MAN under the bridge. CRANE-MAN tries to examine his hand.

CRANE-MAN Let me see.

TREE-EAR It hurts!

CRANE-MAN That's why we must clean it properly. The demons of sickness are no doubt already scheming to enter your body through such a door.

CRANE-MAN cleans and re-bandages the wound. As he works...

CRANE-MAN Maybe I should come with you tomorrow, and help you work.

TREE-EAR tries to think of a polite refusal.

TREE-EAR Your offer... is kindness itself but if it is all the same to you, it is far better for me to return

here to a meal you have already cooked. I can't imagine greater help than that.

CRANE-MAN grunts, not entirely convinced by TREE-EAR's excuse. TREE-EAR quickly changes the subject.

TREE-EAR A strange thing happened in the mountains. (off CRANE-MAN's look) As I was working, I had this feeling that I was being watched.

CRANE-MAN A fox!

TREE-EAR That's what I was afraid of! I felt all the hair on my neck stand up. I looked all around, very carefully, and even though I couldn't see anything, I still felt... I felt... eyes watching. I got very still, so still I could hardly breathe. And then...

An ACTOR carrying a DEER PUPPET appears.

TREE EAR ...Then I saw it! The most beautiful deer, not twenty feet away from me. It had been standing right in front of my eyes all the time but I hadn't seen it, and then it just appeared there, like magic.

CRANE-MAN looks at his friend.

CRANE-MAN (softly) There is beauty all around us, just like your deer, but so many people can't see it because they don't know how to look.

LIGHTS down on CRANE-MAN. TREE-EAR picks up the cart and rolls it to the KILN where other APPRENTICES and POTTERS are working, including MASTER POTTER KANG. TREE-EAR isn't sure what to do with his wood.

TREE-EAR Is it all right to put my wood here?

APPRENTICE#1 Did you hear something?

APPRENTICE#2 You mean sort of like an annoying buzzing sound, like a fly or something?

APPRENTICE#1 Yes, exactly. A fly, like you would find around garbage.

The APPRENTICES laugh. TREE-EAR begins unloading his wood and stacking it.

MASTER KANG You are Min's new boy?

TREE EAR (bowing) Yes, Master Potter Kang.

MASTER KANG High time the old man got himself some help. The last few times he did not bring anywhere near his proper share of wood for the Kiln.

The Apprentices try to ingratiate themselves with Kang.

APPRENTICE#1 Min, the tortoise-potter! Every year a new pot. ONE new pot.

APPRENTICE#2 The price of one of his vases - two oxen, a horse, and your first-born son!

MASTER KANG *Show some respect!* Min may be old, he may not be as good as some of us now, but he was great in his time.

APPRENTICE#1 and #2 immediately bow. KANG walks off. As soon as he is gone.

APPRENTICE#1 "Not as good as some of us!" Did you hear that? Kang's just jealous. Not nearly as good a potter as Min.

APPRENTICE#2 Who is? But Min's so sloooow. Everything has to be perfect! Customers won't wait anymore. He'll go broke one of these days if he doesn't get a Royal Commission.

TREE-EAR How do you do that?

APPRENTICE#1 Do you hear that fly buzzing again?

TREE-EAR How do you get a Royal commission?

APPRENTICE#2 No, it's not a fly!

APPRENTICE#1 Not a fly?

APPRENTICE#2 No, it's that smelly old orphan boy who lives under the bridge.

APPRENTICE#1 Whew, what a stench!

TREE-EAR (gritting his teeth) Please, sirs; educate me.

APPRENTICE#2 Ignorant creature. Once every five years, a Commissioner from the Royal Court in Songdo makes the long journey all the way here. He is very, very picky but - if you are chosen - your fortune is made and your pottery will be used by Kings!

The two APPRENTICES run off. TREE-EAR watches them go, thinking hard.

TREE-EAR rolls his cart to MIN'S HOUSE and knocks on the door. To his surprise, MIN'S WIFE opens it. HE quickly bows his head.

TREE-EAR (kindly) Is the Master at home?

MIN'S WIFE He is at his breakfast; you may wait outside.
(quietly) It was a good thing, your chopping the wood for the kiln. He is not as young as he once was...

SHE stops herself as MIN exits the house and goes to his wheel.

MASTER MIN What are you doing here, boy? Your time is up; your debt is discharged. If you came to hear me say it, you may go. Go.

TREE-EAR I beg the honorable potter to pardon my insolence. I wish to express my gratitude...

MASTER MIN Yes, yes, what is it?

TREE-EAR It would be a great honor for me to continue working for the potter.

MASTER MIN I'm sure it would.

MIN sits at his wheel, ignoring him. TREE-EAR glances up at MIN'S WIFE. SHE smiles encouragingly, urging him on.

TREE-EAR As your apprentice...

MASTER MIN Apprentice!

TREE-EAR ...I could chop wood. Lots of wood. And dig clay. Draw water. Whatever you need.

MASTER MIN I don't need anything.

MIN'S WIFE Last year you hurt your back carrying wood down from the mountains; you couldn't work for weeks.

MASTER MIN So, I'm too old to work now!

MIN'S WIFE No.

MASTER MIN No, I am not!

MIN'S WIFE But you're too old to chop wood.

MASTER MIN No more! We will not discuss this anymore, wife.

MIN'S WIFE I agree.

MASTER MIN Not another word.

MIN'S WIFE Absolutely.

MASTER MIN Enough!

MIN'S WIFE No more talking!

MASTER MIN Did you hear what I said?

MIN'S WIFE I couldn't agree more.

MIN looks at his wife. She smiles back at him, not giving an inch. MIN sighs, and looks at TREE-EAR.

MASTER MIN I cannot pay you.

TREE-EAR To work for such a master is payment enough.

MASTER MIN If you work as smoothly as you talk, you will be a wonder. Temple Bell until sundown, every day. You may start now by digging clay!

TREE-EAR remains standing dumbstruck with joy.

MASTER MIN Go on, orphan-boy, or are you a statue with your feet frozen to the ground?

TREE-EAR THANK YOU!

TREE-EAR grabs the cart and rolls it to the muddy RIVER where the other APPRENTICES are digging clay from the bank. SPOT appears on CRANE-MAN as well.

CRANE-MAN Congratulations, my friend - an Apprentice! You are rising fast in the world.

TREE-EAR I can't believe he said yes.

CRANE-MAN A wise man knows talent when he sees it. This new job of yours, digging clay, is that harder than cutting wood?

TREE-EAR Harder than I thought. It certainly looked easy when the others did it...

TREE-EAR watches as the other apprentices quickly and efficiently cut neat slabs of clay and load them into their baskets. Gingerly he steps into the River and "wades" across.

TREE-EAR The water is very cold and the bottom
 is...slippery!

TREE-EAR almost falls. HE recovers and reaches the far bank. HE raises his spade and sinks it into the mud. Excellent! Then he tries to pull the spade out. It's stuck! He tries one way and then another. [a silent comic bit]. Then finally has to dig the head of the spade out with his hands! A mosquito gets in his eyes and TREE-EAR slaps at him, covers himself in mud, loses his footing, and finally falls in the river.

The other APPRENTICES laugh.

APPRENTICE#1 No, no, orphan boy, the mud goes *in the cart* - you
 don't wear it!

APPRENTICE#2 I disagree. I don't think orphan boy has ever
 looked better!

TREE-EAR MY NAME IS NOT ORPHAN BOY!

Furious, TREE-EAR storms out of the water and the APPRENTICES run off. A moment. TREE-EAR shakes his wet clothes.

CRANE-MAN (gently) Did the other Apprentices help you?

A moment.

TREE-EAR Oh, sure.

CRANE-MAN It's good to have friends.

TREE-EAR just nods, too embarrassed to admit his loneliness.

TREE-EAR But they were done very quickly. Me, it took me
 all morning. And I think I had as much clay on me
 as I did in the cart. But then I remembered the
 most wonderful thing. Apprentices...*get food!*

TREE-EAR quickly rolls his cart back to MIN'S HOUSE. MIN and his WIFE are waiting for him. MIN glances briefly at the cart.

MASTER MIN You were long enough in returning. I will not be
 able to do any more work until after my midday
 meal.

*MIN goes inside the house. MIN'S WIFE smiles and holds out a
parcel tied in cloth.*

MIN'S WIFE Eat well, work well.

TREE-EAR takes it and bows. MIN'S WIFE leaves. HE unfolds the cloth slowly.

TREE-EAR (in wonder) Rice. And dried fish. And *kimchi!*
(stuffing his face) Delicious! Every mouthful is
like a song! HmMMM. HmMMM! I have never eaten so
much. Eaten until my belly was full. Imagine that,
full!

TREE-EAR suddenly stops, stricken with guilt; he has forgotten
completely about his friend.

TREE-EAR *Crane-man.* I am a greedy pig, who thinks only of
himself.

*LIGHTS up on BRIDGE. TREE-EAR hurries over but stops when he sees
that CRANE-MAN is whittling a new crutch.*

TREE-EAR What happened to your crutch?

CRANE-MAN Stupidity happened to it. Very often fatal. There
was a run of flounder at the beach, hundreds of
the tasty fish swimming up on the shore, and I
tried to catch us one. I know how much you love
fish. Only I couldn't catch one because I was too
slow!

TREE-EAR (feeling guilty) I don't mind.

CRANE-MAN Well, I do! I was so angry, I slammed my crutch
against a rock. Not too surprisingly, the rock was
fine but my crutch broke. So, now, we are not only
without dinner, but I am also without a crutch.
Brilliant.

TREE-EAR I am sorry about the flounder.

CRANE-MAN You must mean, "I am sorry about your stupidity"
because that is the reason for our fish-less
supper. And after all your hard day's work, now
you have to go to bed hungry! I am a poor friend
but I think it is a waste for either of us to
spend too much time in sorrow over something we
cannot change.

TREE-EAR Maybe. And maybe not.

*CRANE-MAN rises and tests his new crutch. SPOT out on CRANE-MAN.
SPOT on MIN'S WIFE, standing by the house. TREE-EAR approaches
her, bows, and offers up a bowl.*

TREE-EAR I have brought my own bowl today, so as not to
 inconvenience the honorable potter's wife.

MIN'S WIFE looks at him curiously.

MIN'S WIFE It is no inconvenience.

TREE-EAR That you should have to wash my bowl? No, please,
 honorable Lady, I could not dream of such a thing.
 And your bowl is much too good for the likes of
 me.

*It's clear that MIN'S WIFE doesn't believe him but she puts her
food into TREE-EAR'S bowl.*

TREE-EAR Thank you. Thank you so much.

As soon as she exits, TREE-EAR starts searching the stage...

TREE-EAR (to CRANE MAN) Is telling a lie to one person in
 order to help another person a bad thing?

CRANE-MAN A very good question. What do you think?

TREE-EAR It was a very small lie. And I didn't tell it in
 order to trick Min's Wife out of anything.

TREE-EAR hides his bowl in the bushes.

TREE-EAR See, I will hide my bowl here while I work and
 only eat half my food at lunch, and then bring the
 other half home to you, my friend!

SPOT up on MIN, standing near the DRAIN PITS.

MASTER MIN Boy! BOY! WHERE ARE YOU BOY!

TREE-EAR hurries up beside him.

TREE-EAR Here, sir!

MASTER POTTER MIN startles.

MASTER MIN Why are you always sneaking up on a person! Today,
 you will learn to drain the clay you've collected.
 Put it into the pit here with water and then stir
 it *very carefully* until it is well mixed.

TREE-EAR starts to work. SPOT up on CRANE-MAN as well.

CRANE-MAN This sounds much easier than cutting clay from the
 river bank.

TREE-EAR mixes the mud in the pit with his hand.

TREE-EAR That's what I thought, but like everything about pottery, it's harder than it looks!

TREE-EAR begins transferring mud from the first pit and draining it into the second pit without dropping any of it.

TREE-EAR After I mix it, I have to pour the mud through a sieve many times to remove impurities. After it dries, it is ready for inspection...

MIN picks up a pinch of the refined clay in his hands and rubs it between his fingers with his eyes closed. TREE-EAR imitates him without really understanding what he is doing.

TREE-EAR It's difficult because Master Potter Min never really tells me exactly what to do. But I always know when I am wrong.

MIN exclaims in disgust and throws his sample of mud back into the pit.

TREE-EAR I am usually wrong.

MIN walks off. TREE-EAR goes to find his hidden bowl.

On the CYC the trees on the mountains change colors. It is FALL. TREE-EAR walks over to the BRIDGE where CRANE-MAN is waiting eagerly.

CRANE-MAN What did Mistress Min make for lunch today?

TREE-EAR Wait 'till you see!

CRANE-MAN opens the package of leftover food that TREE-EAR has saved.

CRANE-MAN Ahhh, bean curd! With cucumber *kimchi* as well. Truly a felicitous combination. Soft bean curd - crunchy cucumber. Bland bean curd - spicy cucumber. That woman is an artist.

TREE-EAR Something very strange happened today.

CRANE-MAN (eating) What?

TREE-EAR I ate half of my lunch as always and saved the other half for you. But when I went to pick up my bowl at the end of the day - it was full again.

CRANE-MAN Amazing

BOTH MEN look at MIN'S WIFE. SHE smiles.

MIN'S WIFE A magic bowl.

SHE enters the house. LIGHTS OUT on HOUSE.

CRANE-MAN You need new sandals, my friend.

TREE-EAR So do you.

CRANE-MAN And I will make myself a pair but you first! You need them more because of your work. Here, let me take a measurement.

CRANE-MAN takes a piece of string out of his pocket and measures both of TREE-EAR'S feet. HE carefully ties a knot at the right length for each one.

TREE-EAR Do you think Master Potter Min will ever teach me to make pots, like a proper apprentice?

CRANE-MAN Why don't you ask him?

TREE-EAR I could never do that!

CRANE-MAN (shrugs) If you try, it is true, you might fail; but if you don't try, you will surely fail.

TREE-EAR Easy for you to say. Master Potter Min is...very stern. (a moment) I don't think he likes me very much. At all.

CRANE-MAN I'm sure that's not true.

TREE-EAR (shrugging) His wife is different; she's very kind. But for Master Potter Min, nothing I ever do is right.

CRANE-MAN That is how a Master teaches his Apprentice.

TREE-EAR Would it be so hard for him to tell me once, just once, that I did something well?

A moment.

CRANE-MAN If he would teach you, and you became a master potter, what kind of pots would you make?

TREE-EAR I don't know.

CRANE-MAN Go on! Dream a little. Nothing ever happens but you must dream it first.

TREE-EAR If that were true, you wouldn't be a cripple and I wouldn't be an orphan.

CRANE-MAN (angry) Those are magic wishes, for things that cannot be changed; not what I'm talking about at all! Dreams are for things that are possible but just haven't happened yet.

A moment. TREE-EAR considers.

TREE-EAR I would make something...something simple, at first. Simple but elegant. A vase. A *Prunus Vase*.

CRANE-MAN For a single branch of flowering plum?

On the CYC behind them, an image of TREE-EAR's vision of a Prunus vase appears.

TREE-EAR Exactly. Tall and well proportioned. Rising up, graceful as a flower. Mouth opened, as if in surprise. A perfect "O".

CRANE-MAN Beautiful.

TREE-EAR (almost a sigh) Yes.

CRANE-MAN Why a vase?

TREE-EAR (shyly) I don't know. Pots are made of clay, a kind of dirt, really, and water. And then, in a sort of...magic, they are changed through fire into something else entirely. Strong. And beautiful. To put a flower, a beauty that fades, into a vase, a beauty that will last forever, that will never die, is pleasing, somehow.

CRANE-MAN Maybe pottery is what clay dreams of.

TREE-EAR Maybe.

On the CYC, the VASE image fades into a GREY SKY. SOUND of a wind and the honking of GEESE flying overhead. CRANE-MAN shivers.

CRANE-MAN Winter is coming soon.

TREE-EAR shivers

TREE-EAR walks to MIN'S HOUSE. HE knocks on the door. MIN'S WIFE appears.

MIN'S WIFE (mock sternness) Tree Ear! How can you work properly for the honorable potter if you are shivering with cold? Have you thought of that?

TREE-EAR (confused) No, I, I guess I haven't.

MIN'S WIFE Well, what are you going to do about it?

TREE-EAR I don't know.

MIN'S WIFE Hmmm. Try this. Go on.

MIN'S WIFE holds out a BUNDLE. TREE EAR unfolds it to discover a soft padded cotton JACKET and PANTS. SHE holds up the jacket against him.

MIN'S WIFE This should be just the right size. Yes?

TREE EAR puts the jacket on. MIN'S wife touches it gently.

MIN'S WIFE Ahhh. Good. Our son...

SHE stops.

TREE-EAR You have a son?

MIN'S WIFE We had a son. His name was Hyung-gu, but he died of a fever when he was about your age. These clothes I made for him but they were never worn. Wear them in good health.

TREE-EAR bows deeply, very moved.

TREE-EAR Deepest gratitude to the honorable Potter's wife. I have ...never in my life, had new clothes before.

MIN'S WIFE Then it was time.

MIN'S WIFE smiles. MIN walks up. HE stops when he sees TREE-EAR in his son's clothes. HE looks at his wife. A moment.

MASTER MIN We talked about this.

MIN'S WIFE Yes, we did.

A moment. MIN turns to TREE-EAR. Very brusquely.

MASTER MIN This is her idea, not mine. Don't let it put ideas in your head.

MIN'S WIFE (gently) Min...

MASTER MIN Enough. (to TREE-EAR) I need sea shells, Orphan Boy, just like these, a basket full, for the pots to sit on in the kiln when we fire them.

TREE-EAR starts off.

MASTER MIN Only good ones, mind you! None of your rubbish!

TREE-EAR walks towards the beach but a crowd of POTTERS/APPRENTICES at the village WINE SHOP call over to him.

APPRENTICE#2 Hey! Tree-Ear!

TREE-EAR hesitates - it's the first time the other APPRENTICES have ever made any friendly gesture towards him.

APPRENTICE#1 Come on, we're celebrating! (noticing his clothes) Where did you get clothes like that?

TREE-EAR From the wife of Master Potter Min.

APPRENTICE#1 You look good.

APPRENTICE#2 Who cares about his clothes. Have you heard the news? A Royal Emissary comes to Ch'ulp'o!

TREE-EAR A Royal Emissary?

APPRENTICE#1 He arrives next moon.

APPRENTICE#2 Only one reason for that.

APPRENTICE#1 It has to be to give Commissions for the palace!

TREE-EAR How many Commissions will there be?

KANG stands up; he's a little drunk.

MASTER KANG One or two. Maybe only one. Only for the very best potter! Tell your Masters they shouldn't even waste their time trying this year. That Commission is mine!

KANG downs his rice wine and walks off.

APPRENTICE#1 He's certainly confident.

APPRENTICE#2 Enough rice wine and every man's a genius!

TREE-EAR Only one Commission?

APPRENTICE#1 The last time the Royal Commissioner came, that was, let me see, five?

APPRENTICE#2 No, six years ago!

APPRENTICE#1 And *no one* in the village got a Commission that time.

APPRENTICE#2 That was then; this is now. No one makes better pottery than the potters of Ch'ulp'o!

THEY all raise their glasses.

ALL CH'ULP'O!

TREE-EAR slips out of the WINE BAR and sneaks over to KANG'S HOUSE. It is NIGHT.

SPOT up on KANG, inside his POTTERY SHED, sitting at his wheel, carefully incising an air-dried cup by the light of a lamp. TREE-EAR spies through a hole in the wall.

TREE-EAR Maybe it's wrong but I have to find out what Kang is up to. He's doing something different- cutting his pots...and then painting with...two different colors.

KANG suddenly stops, as though he had heard a SOUND. KANG grabs the lamp, rises, and steps out the door. TREE-EAR freezes in the darkness.

MASTER KANG Who's there?! Is somebody out there! SHOW YOURSELF!

KANG looks around but he doesn't see TREE-EAR. Finally, KANG exits. TREE-EAR heaves a sigh of relief.

TREE-EAR hurries over to the Bridge

TREE-EAR Crane Man! I have such news!

CRANE MAN whistles with appreciation when he sees the new clothes.

CRANE-MAN I can see you do! Who is this finely dressed gentlemen?! Is it the Emperor? Welcome, your Highness!

TREE-EAR stops, embarrassed but pleased.

TREE-EAR These were a gift from Min's wife. I think the jacket sleeves are a little long on me but I bet they would fit you well.

TREE-EAR takes off the jacket.

CRANE MAN Oh, no. Those were a gift to you!

TREE-EAR That's right! They were given to me and that makes them mine to do with as I please, and I want you to wear the jacket. I'll keep the pants.

CRANE-MAN No.

TREE-EAR If you won't wear the jacket, then I won't wear the new sandals you're making me.

CRANE-MAN Ha! Stubborn monkey, I have been making you new sandals every winter since you came here - and you would refuse them?

TREE-EAR Your choice.

TREE-EAR holds out the jacket. CRANE-MAN puts it on, despite his protests he is secretly pleased. The two friends look at each other, their new clothes in sharp contrast to their raggedy old clothes.

CRANE-MAN Apart, we look strange enough, but together we are as properly dressed as any one man! (THEY both laugh.)

TREE-EAR My news! The Royal Commissioner will be here in one moon!

CRANE-MAN Ahhh. Well, I'm sure Master Min will be chosen.

TREE-EAR shrugs, not so confident.

TREE-EAR Maybe.

CRANE-MAN What demon scratches under your skin?

TREE-EAR A question demon.

CRANE-MAN Well, let us hear it then and perhaps the demon will leave you in peace.

TREE-EAR Is it stealing to take from another something that cannot be held in your hands?

CRANE-MAN Ahh, a riddle-question. What is this thing that cannot be held?

TREE-EAR A...an idea. A way of doing something.

CRANE-MAN A better way than others now use?

TREE-EAR Yes. A new way, one that could lead to great honor.

CRANE-MAN considers this carefully.

CRANE-MAN If a man is keeping an idea to himself, and that idea is taken by stealth or trickery - I say it is stealing. But once a man has revealed his idea to others, it is no longer his alone. It belongs to the world. Does that ease your Demon?

TREE-EAR shrugs, more uncertain than ever.

TREE-EAR What if you...took something...

CRANE-MAN ...stole something?

TREE-EAR ...stole something, but you didn't take it for yourself, you took it for a friend. To help somebody else. Would that still be a bad thing, you think?

CRANE-MAN I think, stealing is stealing.

TREE-EAR (miserable) Yes.

CRANE-MAN Was there something you wanted to tell me?

TREE-EAR hesitates, then...

TREE-EAR No.

CRANE-MAN lies down to go to sleep but TREE-EAR remains awake - he cannot tell MIN about KANG's discovery.

LIGHTS SHIFT. SUNRISE. ONE MONTH LATER. Temple bells SOUND.

TREE-EAR leaps up and runs to MIN's HOUSE where MIN is waiting impatiently, his WIFE beside him holds a lantern. The hand cart is now stuffed with MIN's precious pottery.

MASTER MIN Boy! Boy! There you are! A month of work, all towards this day, and you are late. Come on! I know exactly the spot I want when the Royal Emissary inspects my work. We must hurry before someone else takes it.

MIN'S WIFE touches his shoulder, a soothing gesture.

MIN'S WIFE Every success, husband. I know the Emissary will choose your work.

MASTER MIN (pleased but nervous) You should not say such things; you will bring me bad luck!

MIN'S WIFE Of course.

MASTER MIN Even if it is true.

MIN'S WIFE The words never left my mouth. (HE nods approvingly) But they remain in my heart.

MIN and his WIFE smile at each other and we can see, beneath the bluster, they love each other very much. MIN takes the lantern and gestures brusquely to TREE EAR...

MASTER MIN Hurry! What are you waiting for!

TREE-EAR gently lifts the cart and starts to roll it towards the beach, where all the pottery will be exhibited.

MASTER MIN I want my stall set up so that my back is to the sea and my pottery is displayed in front of me.

TREE-EAR So the Emissary will see how beautifully your pots capture the colors of the waves!

MIN growls, not displeased with the compliment.

MASTER MIN Yes, something like that. Watch that stone there, to the left! Keep the cart even. Stupid boy. This way - the path is smoother here. NO! What's the matter with you? Can't you keep from bumping even for one second? You will ruin my work, pig-head!

THEY arrive at the BEACH. KANG is setting up his stall also, and already, a crowd of curious bystanders has gathered to watch him. When KANG sets out his first piece of pottery, there are gasps. MIN pretends not to notice but he does and it makes him nervous.

MASTER MIN Some people are like crows; any shiny thing catches their eye. You would do well to remember that, boy.

TREE-EAR Yes, Master.

TREE-EAR sets up a simple shelving unit and MIN puts his pieces on them. TREE-EAR watches anxiously. Then, HE has an idea.

TREE-EAR Master, may I be excused for one moment?

MIN hardly hears him, just shoos him away and continues making minute adjustments to his display. TREE-EAR runs to the side of the stage and retrieves two beautiful BRANCHES OF FLOWERING PLUM. HE runs them back to MIN.

TREE-EAR Here, Master.

MIN almost looks pleased. Almost. As HE examines the branches...

MASTER MIN Hmmm. Yes, it would do well to show the prunus vases as they should be used.

MIN studies TREE-EAR for a moment.

MASTER MIN That is not a terrible idea.

MIN abruptly returns one branch to TREE-EAR.

MASTER MIN But *this* branch, does not have enough blossoms. You see? Why did you not bring more? Always you are in too much of a hurry, boy! Slow down. "Fast" only makes a broken pot. Pay attention to what you are doing. Only in that way do you...

There is a roll of DRUMS and TRUMPETS

TREE EAR It is the Emissary! He's here!

MIN quickly puts the branch in one of his prunus Vases. EMISSARY KIM enters.

EMISSARY KIM is a tall dignified man, wearing beautiful court robes. HE is accompanied by his assistant, YEE. The EMISSARY stops at KANG's display. TREE-EAR moves over to watch. The CROWD parts briefly and now the Audience can see KANG's new, secret pottery. TREE-EAR is stunned.

TREE-EAR (to the audience) *Chrysanthemums. Dozens of them. Pure white blossoms on every vessel. And stems and leaves of purest black. All against the celadon. New. Different.*

TREE-EAR is very nervous now.

MASTER KANG (modestly) It is inlay work, Honorable Sir.

EMISSARY KIM nods and silently examines a piece of pottery.

MASTER KANG Similar to those who apply brass to wood, or mother of pearl to lacquer-ware.

EMISSARY KIM continues to study the piece.

MASTER KANG But something new to pottery; something no one has ever seen before!

EMISSARY KIM nods thoughtfully but says nothing. TREE-EAR returns to Min's stall while the EMISSARY continues to examine Kang's work. A moment.

MASTER MIN So, would you be telling me about it, or must I guess?

TREE-EAR Inlay work.

MASTER MIN (nervous) Inlay? Interesting. The pattern?

TREE-EAR Chrysanthemums. White and black.

MASTER MIN (depressed) Chrysanthemums.

TREE-EAR Yes, Master. But very ugly ones.

MIN suddenly throws back his head and laughs.

MASTER MIN Ha! What else could Kang do, that bumble-fingered excuse for a potter? (a moment) But he is clever. You have to give him credit for that.

The EMISSARY now moves to MIN's stall and the CROWD and TREE-EAR move with him. EMISSARY KIM picks up a MELON VASE.

EMISSARY KIM Would this be the potter who made the wine pot we used at last night's dinner?

YEE Yes, sir.

EMISSARY KIM The melon shape is common enough now - I see it often. And yet this work is unmistakable. I knew this jug could be by no other than the same man who made the pot. Magnificent.

EMISSARY KIM smiles. MIN bows in appreciation of the compliment. KIM starts to say something, then thinks better of it. HE walks away. MIN watches him go, horribly uncertain of where he stands.

LIGHTS DOWN on BEACH. SPOT on TREE-EAR and CRANE-MAN.

CRANE-MAN Did Master Min get a Commission?

TREE-EAR We will know everything tomorrow.

CRANE-MAN Hard to wait for such news.

TREE-EAR Master Potter Min is twice the potter Kang is!

CRANE-MAN Of course.

TREE-EAR Just because something is new, doesn't make it better! (CRANE-MAN nods) If Kang gets a commission and my Master doesn't...it wouldn't be fair!

CRANE-MAN Ah, my friend. If Life were "fair", I would dance, you would be a Prince, and our bridge would be a Palace. Life is what it is; we can only do our best.

TREE-EAR walks over to MIN'S house. MIN'S WIFE exits with a basket of laundry.

MIN'S WIFE No work today, Tree Ear. Master Min is resting inside.

TREE-EAR Is Master feeling alright?

MIN'S WIFE (whispering) I think he's a little nervous, is all. Everyone expects him to get a commission. He expects to. If he doesn't, I don't know what he will do. (SHE shakes her head.)

TREE-EAR May I help you?

MIN'S WIFE Thank you.

TREE-EAR and MIN'S WIFE begin to hang up laundry.

MIN'S WIFE There is something very pleasant about laundry drying in the sun, don't you think? Like the sails of ships.

TREE-EAR Or like the wings of giant Cranes.

MIN'S WIFE That's a beautiful thought...

SHE stops. EMISSARY KIM and his assistant YEE have appeared.

YEE Emissary Kim would speak with Master Potter Min.

Nervous, MIN'S WIFE bows and goes into the house. Almost immediately, MIN comes out, followed by his WIFE.

EMISSARY KIM This inlay work of your colleague's. It is something new and will be of great interest to the court. (MIN nods politely) I will speak with no veil over my thoughts. Other aspects of Master Potter Kang's work are - how can I say it? - not as much to my taste. Kang has been given what I will call a limited Commission. He will produce work for the court for one year, to see if it pleases His Majesty. (A moment) I would far rather have given you the honor of a Royal Commission but I would be remiss in my responsibilities to ignore this new technique - it must be presented to court and I only have one Commission to offer now. Undoubtedly, soon this new technique will be everywhere. Perhaps, if you were to produce something using this inlay style, and bring it to me in Songdo, I could guarantee you a very careful consideration of the work.

MASTER MIN The Royal Emissary honors me with his words, and I wish to disappoint no one but I am an old man now. I could not possibly make the journey to Songdo. I thank the Emissary for his consideration and beg his understanding for my failure.

A moment.

EMISSARY KIM It is my wish that you find a way somehow, Master Potter Min. It would be a great sorrow to me if this were to be the last time I saw your fine work.

MIN bows. KIM and YEE leave. MIN looks at his WIFE, then goes back into the HOUSE.

TREE-EAR I have a request to make of the honorable potter's wife.

MIN'S WIFE Please.

TREE-EAR If the Master would make a vessel he considers worthy of the court's attention, it would be my greatest honor to be allowed to take it to Songdo for him.

MIN'S WIFE hesitates. Then...

MIN'S WIFE I will ask the Master, under one condition. No, two conditions. The first is that you return to Ch'ulp'o quickly and safely. The journey is a difficult one, full of hazards, and nothing, not even a Royal Commission is worth the life of a young boy.

TREE-EAR bows, puzzled.

TREE-EAR I will travel as fast as I can. And the second condition...?

MIN'S WIFE The second condition is that from now on, you will call me *Ajima*.

TREE-EAR is staggered.

TREE-EAR *Ajima*? Only a...a family member, may call you that.

MIN'S WIFE Do you think I don't know that? Maybe you think I'm an old woman who has gone soft in the head.

TREE-EAR No.

MIN'S WIFE No, I'm not! Those are my conditions. Do you agree?

TREE-EAR I agree...*Ajima*.

LIGHTS DOWN on HOUSE as TREE EAR runs to BRIDGE where CRANE-MAN is waiting, whittling a chopstick.

TREE-EAR CRANE-MAN! I will be going on a journey soon!

CRANE-MAN A journey, eh? It is a good thing for a man to see the world. Where will you go?

TREE-EAR Min has some work to be transported to the Royal Court and he has agreed to let me carry it.

CRANE-MAN An audience at the court? Wonderful!(studies TREE-EAR) Is there more news.

TREE-EAR Min's wife told me, from now on, I must call her *Ajima*.

CRANE-MAN (softly) You see? Sometimes life can be more than "fair." It can be wonderful.

LIGHTS DOWN on BRIDGE. UP on HOUSE. TREE-EAR arrives, whistling happily. MIN is already working at his wheel while his WIFE watches.

MASTER MIN More clay. Both plain and colored!

TREE-EAR Yes, Master! Right away.

TREE-EAR starts to go, then stops.

MASTER MIN What? What is it now?

TREE-EAR bows.

TREE-EAR Master. It is now more than a year that I have had the honor of working for you.

MASTER MIN A year, yes. So?

TREE-EAR I hope that my work has been helpful.

MASTER MIN I have known worse. And?

TREE-EAR I was wondering, if the Master would be so good, if he thinks my work worthy...

MASTER MIN Ask your question, boy, or leave me in peace!

TREE-EAR If you would one day be teaching me to make a pot.

MIN glances at his wife.

MASTER MIN This is your doing. Putting ideas in his head.

TREE-EAR (confused) Ajima didn't tell me to ask you.

MASTER MIN Ajima?! How dare you...

MIN'S WIFE (defiantly) ...*That* was my idea.

MASTER MIN (to his WIFE) You had no right. Bad enough you give him the clothes...

MIN'S WIFE ...He was my son, too...

MASTER MIN ...so that every time I look at him, I remember...

MIN'S WIFE ...remembering is good...

MASTER MIN It hurts too much! (quietly to TREE-EAR) Know this, orphaned one, if ever you learn to make a pot, it will not be from me.

TREE-EAR Why? Why will you not teach me? What have I done?

MASTER MIN Because the potter's trade goes from father to son. *Father to son*. I had a son once. My son, Hyung-gu...

MIN slams the clay he is working with down on the wheel, obliterating its shape.

MASTER MIN When the pot is broken, you can never remake it the same. It is foolish to try. It is gone. *Forever*.

MIN'S WIFE (a gentle appeal) Husband...please...

MASTER MIN FOREVER! (back to TREE EAR) My son is dead. He will never come back to me. It is him I would have taught. You...you, I will never teach, because you are not my son, and you will never be.

END OF ACT ONE