

• FOLK TALES FROM AROUND THE WORLD •

# The Empty Pot

A Chinese Folk Tale



written by Charlotte Guillain 🌞 illustrated by Steve Dorado

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# Characters



**Cheng, a  
hardworking  
gardener**



**Emperor**

**Wei and the other  
boys in Cheng's  
village**





He decided to hold a contest. He invited every boy who wanted to be emperor to the palace.

Many years ago in China, there was an emperor who had no children. As he grew old, he needed to choose someone to take over his throne when he died.







One of the boys, a poor boy called Cheng, was a very good gardener. He always worked hard, weeding and watering his garden. Cheng took his seed home very carefully.



But as time passed, there was no sign of Cheng's seed growing.



Cheng planted his seed in a pot and watered it every day. All the other boys in his village did the same.

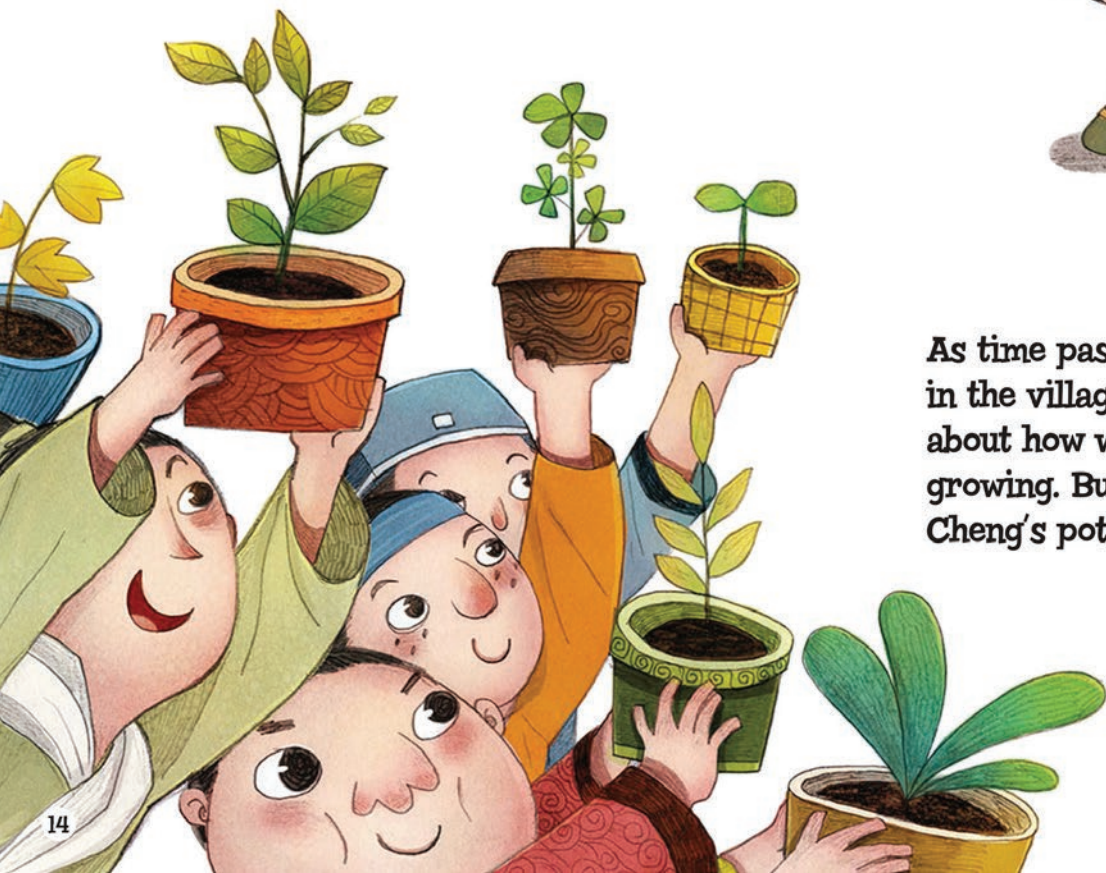






One day a boy called Wei told everyone in the village that his seed was growing quickly. He boasted about how big his plant would be. Wei was sure he would be emperor because nobody else's seed was growing at all.





As time passed, all the boys in the village started to talk about how well their seeds were growing. But still the seed in Cheng's pot did not grow.



As months went by, the other boys' plants grew tall and leafy.



Still Cheng's seed did not grow.  
He tried putting it in a bigger pot,  
but nothing happened.



Wei laughed at Cheng and his empty pot. Cheng decided to ask his parents for advice. They simply told him that he was caring for the seed as well as he could.







After six months, the emperor called all the boys back to the palace. The other boys arrived, carrying huge plants covered in leaves, flowers, and fruits. Cheng only had his empty pot. But when the emperor saw Cheng's empty pot, he smiled!





"The seeds I gave you had all been cooked. None of them could grow into anything!" the emperor told the other boys. "Cheng is the only honest boy among you. He shall be the next emperor!"



So Cheng and his family moved into the palace and lived happily ever after. And when Cheng grew up, he became one of the greatest emperors that China had ever seen.

The end

# The Moral of the Story

Many traditional stories have a moral. This is a lesson you can learn from the story. The moral of this story is that it is better to be honest than to cheat. Honesty will bring real rewards.



## The Origins of *The Empty Pot*

Nobody knows who first told the story of *The Empty Pot*, but the story comes from China. People used to tell stories like this for entertainment before we had TV, radio, or computers. The story has been passed on by Chinese storytellers over hundreds of years, with different storytellers making their own changes to it over time. Eventually, people began to write the story down, and so it has spread around the world.

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# The Empty Pot

A Chinese Folk Tale

This book tells the story of the Empty Pot, a traditional Chinese folk tale. In it, the hero of the story learns that it is better to be honest than to cheat and that honesty will bring real rewards.

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Each book in this beautifully illustrated series presents a different folk tale from around the world. Although the collection includes tales from around the world, like all good folk tales each story has a moral lesson highly relevant to young readers.

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### About the author

Charlotte Guillain is an experienced children's author and editor. She has written nearly 100 books, both fiction and nonfiction.



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