

THE EMPTY POT
Libretto by Oakwood 2nd Graders

CAST OF CHARCTERS

Narrators:

1
2
3
4

Village Children:

1 6
2 7
3 8
4 9
5 10

Ling

Emperor

Mother

Father

Fu 1

Fu 2

Attendant 1

Attendant 2

Dragon

Flowers:

1 6
2 7
3 8
4 9
5 10

Messenger 1

Messenger 2

NARR #1

Today, my friends, we have a story to
tell of Ling!

A gentle boy with a thumb so green!

NARR #2

A miraculous story of how one so small
became so great.

NARR #3

Long, long ago in China, in a small
village by the Sapphire Sea, lived Ling-
A most amazing gardener.

NARR #4

**He could grow a tree in the wink of an
eye.**

**He could make a plant sprout as easy
as pie.**

ALL NARR

Flowers sprang up like magic!

All the villagers loved to walk through
his garden and gaze at...

VILLAGE CHILDREN

**Rising golden sunflowers,
Dainty yellow buttercups,
Red hot roses,
Woodland violets.**

**Glad gladiolas,
Sad calendulas.**

**Cute little pansies,
Sunny marigold,
Red amaryllis
Spectacular and bold.**

**Grass with eyes of blue,
Lily of the Valley, too!
Fragrant honeysuckle blossoms
Under green bamboo.**

(Ling is in his garden.)

LING

**I love the emerald bushes.
I love the snapdragons.
I love the violets' perfumed scents.
La ti a da, La ti a do
La ti a da, Loo.**

VILLAGE CHILD #1

I love your dancing tulips, Ling!

LING

(bows)
May the sun shine upon you!
And your tulips, too!

**I love the scarlet roses.
I love the peach blossoms.
I love the tulips,
Every shade and hue.
La ti a da, La ti a do
La ti a da, Loo.**

VILLAGE CHILD #2

You have magnificent blooming trees,
Ling!

LING

May you reap a good harvest, too!

**I love the poppies,
Scarlet and crimson, too.
I love the pussywillows
Singing out with joyful mews.
La ti a da, La ti a do
La ti a da, Loo.**

VILLAGE CHILD #3

Enormous lupines, Ling!

LING

May your garden know many seasons,
too!

MOTHER

Ling! Lai lai!
Wash up!

It's time for lunch!

LING

A minute please.
My plants are thirsty.

FATHER

Ling! Ling! Come chop some wood!

LING

Soon I'll come.
I've got to plant this chrysanthemum.

MOTHER AND FATHER

Ling loves that garden a little too much.
Ling!

LING

Coming! Just another weed to pull.

MOTHER AND FATHER

Ay yo! Ay yo!

FLOWERS

**Such lucky flowers are we,
Growing tall and fast and free.
Ling planted our seeds in the richest
soil,
Mei hwa, mei hwa.**

**Under shining sun and silvery rain,
We sprang up to the sky again,
Tai go, tai go.**

**Never would you find an awful weed
Showing its leaves above.
Just butterflies and ladybugs
And lots of love!**

**We Gladiolas are happy.
We Sunflowers shine.
We Snapdragons are snappy.
We Mums go "Sh Sh Shh" all the
time.**

(Flower dance)

(GONG)

NARR

Meanwhile...

In the Imperial City, under the curved roof of the palace, the kind and mighty emperor sat watering his lovely garden. But, sadly, he was frowning.

ATTENDANTS

**Dear Emperor,
What troubles you?**

ATT 1

Can I set some tea to brew?

ATT 2

Are you hot, Majesty?

ATTENDANTS

We will fan you with a cool breeze!

EMPEROR

**No fans! No tea!
It is a terrible worry!**

**The ancient dragon legend
Is about to come true.
Just one more year
And the kingdom is through.**

**A successor to the throne
Must be found!
Or the dragon will turn this land
Into barren ground!**

**I have no daughter
I have no son.
Who will I choose
When the year is done?**

ATTENDANTS

Come, Master!

**Let's walk among the green
Through the climbing vines
To your beloved garden scene.**

**The blossoms, the blue flax
Will soothe you and
Give you ideas like magic!**

Everything will be alright!

(Aside)

This could be a very long night!

DRAGON (up on the hillside)

**Only one more year
And this land around here
Will melt with fire and brimstone!
For the emperor does not have
A successor to the throne!**

(They approach the garden, where the dogs stop them.)

FU 1

I'm Fu 1, and he's Fu 2.

FU 2

**And we guard the royal gardens
All day through.**

BOTH

**If you have a lying heart,
We growl at you.
If your heart is pure
We Howl!
We're Fu 1 and Fu 2.**

(Dogs howl, emperor and attendants enter garden.)

FLOWERS

**Such lucky flowers are we,
Growing tall and fast and free.
Our seeds were planted in the richest
soil,
Mei hwa, mei hwa.**

**Under shining sun and silvery rain,
We sprang up to the sky again,
Tai go, tai go.**

**Never would you find an awful weed
Showing its leaves above.
Just butterflies and ladybugs
And lots of love!**

**We Lilies are patient.
We Roses are wise.
We will help our dear Master
A grand test to devise.**

(They dance around the emperor to
inspire him.)

**EMPEROR
I've got it! How le!
I've got the perfect plan.
A splendid idea has come
From my garden friends.**

**The flowers suggest it is best
If I let them choose
Oh yes, do help me, precious flowers
To know who will walk in the
Emperor's shoes.**

**DRAGON
Let the flowers choose?
Ridiculous! Absurd! Bu shing!
One year more and then I'll scorch
The land with burning flame!**

**EMPEROR
Send messengers a plenty!
Send messengers galore!**

**Tell every child in the land
To come at sunrise with an open hand
To the palace, to the palace.
Go!**

**MSSN #1
Children of China, far and near.
Be of good hope, be of good cheer.**

The Emperor would have you hear this
message.

**MSSN #2
Your emperor, so kind and wise,
Wants you at the palace at the next
sunrise.
There, dear children, he will make it
known.
How he'll choose a successor to the
throne!**

**VILLAGE CHILDREN
Hen how! Hen how!
We are so anxious today!**

**We'll put on our best Khudzuh,
Tie the silk sash low.**

**Then lovely shedzuh upon our feet,
Soon the emperor to meet!**

(GONG)
(Children's procession to the emperor)

**EMPEROR
Oh young children,
Gather round me.
Come and receive a spectacular seed.**

**ATT #1
Put it in a pot**

**ATT #2
A pot!**

**ATT #1
Don't let it get too hot.**

**ATT #2
Too hot!**

**ATT #1
Tend it well, do not fail,**

**ATT #2
Or emperor you will be not!**

ATT #1
Be not!

EMPEROR
**The child who brings
The best flower of spring
In one year's time
Will be the new emperor and have
All that is mine!**

**Great successor to my throne,
I'll see you when your seed has grown!**
(Smiles knowingly.)
(Bows to children)

CHILDREN (Bowing)
Sheh-sheh!

DRAGON
**Silly emperor!
What a foolish plan!
Flowers cannot choose,
Soon I will have this land!**

VILLAGE CHILD #4
Oh ho, who will it be?

VILLAGE CHILD #5
I hope it will be me!

ALL CHILDREN AND LING
I will grow the best flower
In all of China.
You will see!

LING
**Oh, little tender seed.
If you grow into an amazing plant,
You can share the palace with me!**

**Into a lovely pot you'll go
of deep dark soil
Then sprinkle you with crystal water.
O'er you I will toil.**

**In a spot so sunny.
I will take good care of you.
With ladybugs and preying mantis
All day through!**

(The seasons go by to make a year.)

NARR #1
The huge summer sun
Rises over young Ling
And his flower seed,
But there is not a sprout, not one!

LING
Precious seed, why oh why aren't you
growing?

**If you would grow a tiny sprout,
Oh how happy I would be.
Can you not? Will you not
Grow a sprout for me?**

NARR #2
Copper leaves now
Drift gently down off the trees of
Autumn
And still Ling's flower can't be found.

LING
Tender seed, why oh why are you still
sleeping?

**Oh how sad that you won't waken.
How can this be?
Can you not? Will you not
Grow a plant for me?**

NARR #3
Crystal snowflakes freeze like clear ice
In the cold sapphire skies.
Winter! And Ling's seed
Still does not rise!

LING
Little seed, don't you know that I am
crying?

**.If I saw one budding leaflet.
All my sorrows soon would flee.
Can you not? Will you not
Grow a flower for me?**

NARR #4

Daffodils are growing under tall
bamboos
Spring again has sprung.
But Ling, alas, is oh so sad
His pot is still an empty one!

LING

Ay yo!

(GONG)

MESSENGERS

**Come, young children,
A year has passed.
It is time to bring your glorious
flowers
To the palace.**

**Bring them Kwai!
Bring them fast!
The challenge has begun at last!**

LING

Oh, Mama! Oh, Baba!
How can I go?
My seed did not grow!

How can I bring such a thing
To the emperor so fair.
An empty pot so bare?

MOTHER AND FATHER

Go, dear Ling.

**You're honest, you're brave.
You're loyal and true.
Tell the emperor you tried,
But nothing grew.**

We know that you're ashamed to go
But hurry still to the flower show.

(Dance of the Flowers)

DRAGON

**Look at all those flowers!
Too many flowers!
The emperor cannot possibly choose
just one.
Then I will have won!**

EMPEROR

My, what lovely zinnias!
(Dogs growl)
Wonderful tulips and daffodils.
They steal my heart away!
(Dogs growl)
I love your purple violets.
(Dogs growl)
Ah-orange chrysanthemums!
(Dogs growl)
But wait- what's this?
(Dogs howl as Ling approaches the
emperor)

ATTENDANTS

**Here comes an empty pot!
What a lot of nerve he's got!**
(laughing)

**Wait, it is the young boy Ling
With the thumb so green!**

CHILDREN (mocking)

**Poor Ling! Poor Ling!
His head hangs so low!
With no flower to show,
No flower to show.**

LING

**I am sorry, my Lord,
I failed your test.
Even though I tried my best.**

**I gave it better soil and a bigger pot
But grow a lovely flower the seed did
not.**

Now I come in humble shame
And obedience to you. Forgive me,
Majesty.

EMPEROR
**Ling, honest Ling.
Raise your head high.
Do not cry.**

**You came in shame,
Now receive your princely fame.**

For an empty pot is what I sought!

ATTENDANTS
Huh?

EMPEROR
**Oh, children.
How you grew your gorgeous flowers
I do not know,
For cooked were the seeds I gave you
So not one of them could grow.**

**My successor holds a pot that's bare.
I see the pure heart standing there.
Only an honest soul would dare
To bring an empty pot to the
emperor's chair!**

ATTENDANTS
**For it's Ling!
Honorable Ling!
Let the people sing.
The dragon's plan is defeated.
Let the royal bells ring!**

DRAGON
**Oh no, oh woe, I fall!
That tricky emperor didn't have to
choose a flower at all!**

**Only an empty pot.
What a clever test!
To find one so honest.**

**Away, I must go away
In a puff of smoke and haze
To my secret crystal cave.**

ALL
**Hooray for Ling!
Honor to Ling!
The one with the thumb so green
And the purest heart that could ever
be seen.
Only he was courageous enough to
bring
A flower that could not be seen.**

END