



RICK RIORDAN PRESENTS

# DRAGON PEARL



EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

Disney • HYPERION

## ABOUT THE BOOK

Thirteen-year-old Min comes from a long line of fox spirits, but you'd never know it by looking at her. To keep the family safe, Min's mother insists that none of them use any fox magic, such as Charm or shape-shifting. They must appear human at all times. Min feels hemmed in by the household rules and resents the endless chores, the cousins who crowd her, and the aunties who judge her. She would like nothing more than to escape Jinju, her neglected, dust-ridden, and impoverished planet. She's counting the days until she can follow her older brother, Jun, into the Space Forces and see more of the Thousand Worlds.

When word arrives that Jun is suspected of leaving his post to go in search of the Dragon Pearl, Min knows that something is wrong. Jun would never desert his battle cruiser, even for a mystical object rumored to have tremendous power. She decides to run away to find him and clear his name. Min's quest will have her meeting gamblers, pirates, and vengeful ghosts. It will involve deception, lies, and sabotage. She will be forced to use more fox magic than ever before, and to rely on all of her cleverness and bravery. The outcome may not be what she had imagined, but it has the potential to exceed her wildest dreams.

## WHILE READING

### FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE CHART

**Directions:** Author Yoon Ha Lee uses many examples of figurative language throughout *Dragon Pearl* to paint vivid and memorable scenes from Min's adventures. As you read the book, complete the chart and include 3–4 examples for each type of figurative language that you encounter. Include the page numbers where you find the information. As an extension activity, work with a partner or group to discuss how the examples aided your comprehension.

<b>Simile</b> A comparison that uses "like" or "as"	<b>Metaphor</b> A direct comparison that doesn't use "like" or "as"	<b>Personification</b> Giving human characteristics to nonhumans	<b>Idiom</b> An expression that means something other than what the words say	<b>Symbolism</b> A picture or object that stands for something else such as an idea or quality	<b>Theme</b> The moral message or meaning. Stories may have multiple themes.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 “I had a pretty dismal life on Jinju. I was counting the days until I turned fifteen. Just two more years left before I could take the entrance exams for the Thousand Worlds Space Forces and follow my brother, Jun, into the service. That was all that kept me going” (p 1). Min’s greatest hope at the beginning of the book is to leave Jinju. What is her daily life like? What does she expect to find so far away from home? (*Chapter 1*)
- 2 Who were Min’s ancestors? What had happened to the family’s fortunes? (*Chapter 1*)
- 3 Describe the legend of the Dragon Pearl. (*Chapter 1*)
- 4 “Foxes can smell each other’s magic” (p 6). What did Min detect about her mother? Why was this hypocritical? (*Chapter 1*)
- 5 Mom defends Jun automatically when the investigator states that he is under suspicion of deserting. He says, “People change, especially when they are presented with certain . . . opportunities” (p 7). What was the investigator implying? When he explained more bluntly, what was Min’s reaction? What does this tell you about Min? In what other ways do you see a duality in Min? (*Chapter 1*)
- 6 According to legend, what did the Dragon Pearl have the power to do? Why would this be beneficial for a planet like Jinju? (*Chapter 2*)
- 7 The investigator says, “That’s why they needed the cadet” (p 16). What was he insinuating? Why was this not a “normal distrust” of foxes? (*Chapter 2*)
- 8 Min feels justified, even heroic, in what she did to the investigator. However, Mom sends her straight to kitchen duty to clean up the mess she’s created. What does this tell you about Mom’s thoughts on family roles—specifically, for children? (*Chapter 2*)
- 9 What is unique about her cousin Manshik? What did most foxes choose to be? Why did Manshik choose differently? (*Chapter 3*)
- 10 “If it weren’t for this portrait, which Jun had left with me, I wouldn’t remember Dad’s face at all” (p 27). We don’t hear much about Min’s dad. What was he like and why do you think Mom looks sad when she sees Min working with his tools? (*Chapter 3*)
- 11 “The enormity of the task before me was overwhelming. But I refused to allow myself to get discouraged. I’d just have to take it one step at a time” (p 31). How does this show a surprising amount of preparedness and maturity for a thirteen-year-old? (*Chapter 4*)
- 12 Min imagines Jinju—which means “pearl”—transformed by the Dragon Pearl. What does that image look like? The city of Hongok means “ruby,” but Min sees that it’s very different at the street level. Jinju and Hongok are places with underdeveloped or overexaggerated, potentials. How do these places mirror the characters in the story? (*Chapter 4*)
- 13 Does Min feel any regret for the way she left home? Why does she dismiss these feelings? (*Chapter 4*)
- 14 When Min cannot escape the guards at the Market District, what plan does she hatch? How does she use Charm to enact the plan? (*Chapter 5*)
- 15 Min escapes the guards, but what does she accidentally leave behind? How will this impact her? (*Chapter 5*)
- 16 Min thinks back to Jun’s message, which said: “Together we’ve been exploring a new world, just like Dad.” What clue did this give Min regarding her brother’s disappearance? (*Chapter 6*)
- 17 What did the fox lore say about tails and their link to power? (*Chapter 6*)

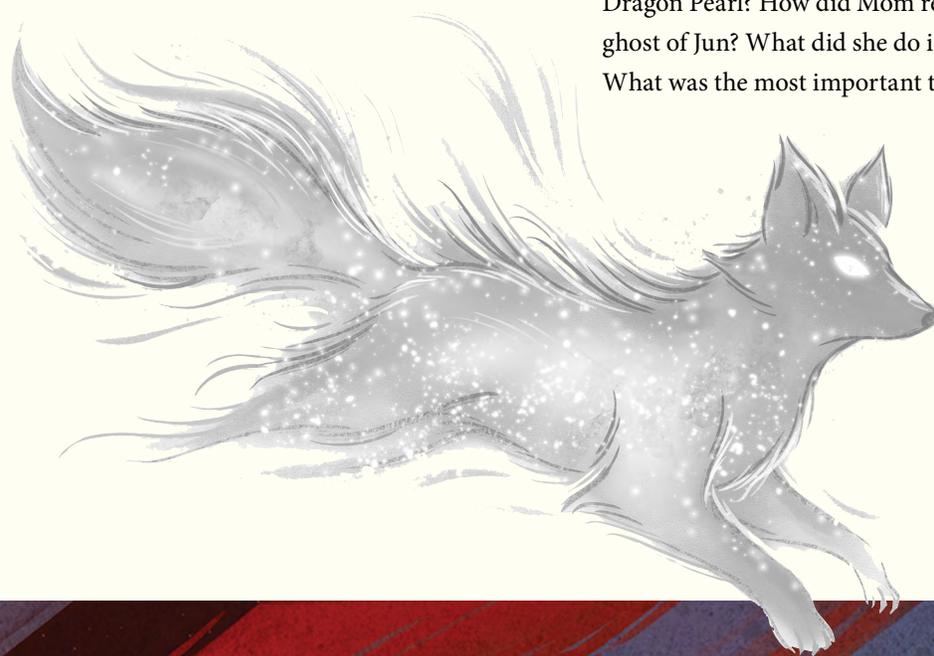
- 18 What were some clues about Nari's true identity that Min picked up on right away? (*Chapter 6*)
- 19 "You have the look of Areum and her sisters. But your magic smells the most like Seonmi's" (p 50). What was so shocking about Nari's comment? What did Nari reveal about herself? (*Chapter 6*)
- 20 What additional information does Min learn about the family? What is she angered by? (*Chapter 6*)
- 21 Why did Min feel happier working at Nari's? (*Chapter 7*)
- 22 "I was starting to get an idea of why Mom had chosen to leave the gambling parlor behind" (p 57). Why was Min beginning to feel uneasy about using her Charm? (*Chapter 7*)
- 23 Jumping Gates caused travelers to see visions. Min saw a vision of her father: "He opened his mouth as if to say something, and I leaned forward, eager to hear it" (p 72). What came next? What did this foreshadow? (*Chapter 8*)
- 24 At the end of Chapter 7, Min dreams a tumultuous dream of her brother. What does this portend about her journey? (*Chapter 8*)
- 25 Why was Min grateful for her experience in having to fix things around the house? How did her skills prove to be helpful? (*Chapter 9*)
- 26 How did Min take advantage of the fact that she had woken up on the *Pale Lightning*? What was the deal that Jang and Min made? (*Chapter 10*)
- 27 Min meets two other central characters: Sujin and Haneul. Describe them and their supernatural strengths. How are they similar and different from each other? (*Chapter 11*)
- 28 Min takes on the form of a boy, Jang, and Sujin has a gender-neutral status. What do these characters reveal about the author's position on gender roles and identity? Discuss some of the societal prejudices and pressures that young people face regarding their gender identity. (*Chapter 11*)
- 29 Describe gi and its importance for the *Pale Lightning*. (*Chapter 11*)
- 30 Give examples of how Min is relying on Charm more and more. Are there any inherent dangers? (*Chapter 12*)



- 31 What is the significance of having female authority figures like Lieutenant Hyosu in the Space Forces? How do they contrast with some of the male authority figures, especially Captain Hwan, whom we meet later? (*Chapter 12*)
- 32 Min finally meets Captain Hwan. Describe him and their first encounter. How does Min know that he is a supernatural? (*Chapter 13*)
- 33 “What do you think serving in the Space Forces is about?” What answer was Hwan looking for? Why did Captain Hwan ask this of Min? (*Chapter 13*)
- 34 Give some examples of how Min is becoming attached to Sujin and Haneul. (*Chapter 14*)
- 35 Lieutenant Hyosu says, “The Dragon Pearl might not be as powerful as the legends claim, but we can’t risk it falling into the wrong hands” (p 122). What is Hyosu referring to? (*Chapter 14*)
- 36 Sujin and Haneul have a discussion about Jun’s disappearance. Where do they differ in their theories? (*Chapter 15*)
- 37 Why did Min say that she “felt almost like I wasn’t pretending anymore” (p 135)? (*Chapter 16*)
- 38 How did the flow of bad luck affect Min? (*Chapter 17*)
- 39 What does Captain Hwan know about what is causing damage to the ship? (*Chapter 17*)
- 40 How did Min hear the conversation between Captain Hwan and Lieutenant Commander Ji-Eun? Was Min discovered, and if so, by whom? (*Chapter 18*)
- 41 Who does Hwan think the mercs were working for? Why? (*Chapter 18*)
- 42 What does Hwan confess to doing? How do you think Jang feels about it? (*Chapter 18*)
- 43 Min and Sujin are sent to a shift on the bridge. Min finds out how being stuck at the Gate can affect the ship. What wasn’t adding up about the theories circulating about Jun and the deserters? (*Chapter 19*)
- 44 Min makes the decision to break into the captain’s quarters. How does she plan for this? (*Chapter 20*)
- 45 What happens to Sujin? Why did Min say she was risking her life in taking up her friend’s station? Why doesn’t Min want to let anyone down? (*Chapter 20*)
- 46 “Whenever I wasn’t sure what to do, I just trusted my instincts. Sure, it might have been dangerous, but it was producing good results. I could almost see the flows as a tapestry I was weaving” (p 161). What was starting to happen to Min as she managed the flows of the ship? Even with her fears, why does Min agree to do this job? (*Chapter 20*)
- 47 “Somewhere in the Thousand Worlds there must be people who would be willing to help restore Jinju. If I have to, I’ll visit every world to find them” (p 166). What do Jun’s words tell us about his determination to find the Dragon Pearl? (*Chapter 21*)
- 48 Why did Hwan write “The fox cadet is aware of the risks. Short of myself, no one has a better chance of helping the team survive” (p 173)? (*Chapter 21*)
- 49 Why does Min tell Byung-Ho the truth about Bora? What made Min blush? Who was she thankful toward? (*Chapter 22*)
- 50 Why do you think Hwan made the *Pale Lightning*’s crew endure a 17-hour battle that risked much damage and casualties? (*Chapter 22*)
- 51 Why does Min start to feel dubious about using so much Charm? Why does she keep using it anyway? Why was she beginning to forget her purpose in all of this? (*Chapter 22*)

- 52 One of the prisoners seems scholarly. What does he explain about the Fourth Colony's history that makes Min frightened? Why would one be scared of pox spirits? (*Chapter 23*)
- 53 Who hired the mercenaries? Why does Chae-Won want the Dragon Pearl? Why does this make Min's mission even more urgent? Why does this revelation make Min angry about the people in power? What is the author trying to say about world leaders and the responsibility they have toward their citizens? (*Chapter 23*)
- 54 Why are Sujin and Haneul softening toward Min? What does Sujin gift Min with? Despite all this, Min has a plan to leave the ship. What is it and why does the plan itself make Min feel more sadness? (*Chapter 23*)
- 55 Why do you think Min felt physically ill when she sabotaged the *Pale Lightning*? (*Chapter 24*)
- 56 How did Min get the prisoners past the guards and back onto their ship? What does this tell you about Min and her confidence in herself? How does this differ from her feelings at the beginning of the book? (*Chapter 24*)
- 57 What caused Min to feel a "sense of pressure I hadn't even been conscious of eased from my bones. I couldn't relax, exactly, but I felt more comfortable" (p 208)? (*Chapter 25*)
- 58 Why did Min feel disgusted by Chul and by her own actions? What did she remember about Nari's? (*Chapter 25*)
- 59 Who did Captain Hwan send in to accept Chul and Min's surrender? What did Min ultimately do? (*Chapter 26*)
- 60 Why did Jang leave Min? What did his departure do to Min? (*Chapter 27*)
- 61 What happened to Min once she met Hwan? (*Chapter 27*)
- 62 Describe Min's dream about Jun and why it disturbed her. (*Chapter 27*)
- 63 Why did Hwan come to talk to her privately? Why do you think he asked Min to take on her heritage form? How do you know that Min was proud to change shape? What does this tell you about how Min's pride in her heritage and self-image has evolved? (*Chapter 27*)
- 64 Sujin told Min that they betrayed Hwan because "some things are right and some things are wrong. We had to do what was right." Later on, what does Min realize about this statement? (*Chapter 28*)
- 65 What about the physical description of the Fourth Colony tells you that it's a dangerous planet? (*Chapter 29*)
- 66 Why were there forceful winds from the start? What do we know about ghosts, especially the ones who live on the Fourth Colony? Why would the ghosts not want the group to go toward a certain direction? (*Chapter 29*)
- 67 Why did the winds seem "less cruel" when Min stopped to admire the forest? (*Chapter 30*)
- 68 What did walking through the Fourth Colony make Min dream for Jinju? (*Chapter 30*)
- 69 Why did Min feel tremendous guilt when she saw Jun? What other thoughts raced through her mind? (*Chapter 31*)
- 70 Min thought, "All my dreams—his dreams, *our* dreams—were over." Why did she think this and was it true? (*Chapter 31*)
- 71 Why was it even more personal and urgent for Min to find the Dragon Pearl? How did it differ from her original reason for the quest? Why had Jun brought them here? What did it make Min realize she had to do? (*Chapter 31*)
- 72 Why had Jun betrayed Min to the other ghosts? How does Min know that Jun is truly on her side now? (*Chapter 32*)
- 73 Describe what the Dragon Pearl looked like to Min from her vantage point. What did its colors symbolize? What was surprising about its size? (*Chapter 33*)

- 74 Why did the ghosts sabotage Hae's plan to obtain the Pearl? (*Chapter 34*)
- 75 Min asks Jun to stay close and protect her but he says she doesn't need him. Why? (*Chapter 34*)
- 76 What does Min pick up on about the ghosts? What does she infer that they want? How does Min try to appease them? How does Hwan respond? (*Chapter 34*)
- 77 Min decides against using Charm this time—why? What does she offer the ghosts? (*Chapter 34*)
- 78 What did Min whisper to the Pearl? What happened? (*Chapter 35*)
- 79 After the group swears to fulfill their promise to the ghosts, what does the Pearl begin to do? Is the orb an object or an entity, capable of thinking and feeling? What effect did the Pearl have on Haneul, Sujin, Hwan, and the ghosts? What began happening to the Fourth Colony? (*Chapter 35*)
- 80 Why was Jun's ghost still lingering? What did he want from Min? Why was Min quite all right with the arrangement? (*Chapter 35*)
- 81 "Nothing turned out as we expected, did it?" (p 300). Why did Min not want to hear those words from Jun? Why was it important that they spent an hour talking, some of it about mundane things? (*Chapter 36*)
- 82 "None of it had changed, and everything had changed. It wasn't just that Jun had died. We had traveled into a world of stars and magic and brought some of both back with us, just not in the way we'd hoped" (p 301). In her journey, Min finds the legendary Dragon Pearl but loses her beloved brother. The sadness amid the joy begins to sink into her. Do you think Min would have gained as much from her journey if she had not experienced such loss? How does loss and tragedy shape our characters and our outlook on life? What do you think would have happened if Min had found her brother but not the Pearl? (*Chapter 36*)
- 83 How did Min get the orb to glow again? What does that tell you about the Pearl's "feelings" toward Min? (*Chapter 37*)
- 84 What is the "alternative" that Seok offers to Min? What does she add to the agreement? What would Min receive from the arrangement? What would Jun? (*Chapter 37*)
- 85 Even if the Dragon Council took Min's request seriously, why would it be difficult to terraform Jinju? What did Min look forward to? The author describes in detail how difficult it is to live on such a barren world like Jinju. What sort of message is she the author sending to readers about our own planet? What does the author hope we will take away from Min's commitment to her planet? (*Chapter 38*)
- 86 Min and Jun finally arrive at their home. What kind of emotions and thoughts do you think were swirling within Min? How did Mom respond when Min showed her the Dragon Pearl? How did Mom respond when she saw the ghost of Jun? What did she do in "typical Mom fashion"? What was the most important thing to her? (*Chapter 38*)



# POST-READING ACTIVITIES

## STORY ELEMENTS CHART

**Directions:** *Dragon Pearl* is a story that takes us through different timelines and planets, Korean history and culture, and space travel. Consider how the author Yoon Ha Lee weaves a seamless tale through such a variety of settings. With a partner or small group, complete the story elements chart and discuss how each element added to the overall story.

<b>Characters</b> Names and descriptions	<b>Setting/Mood</b> Time, place, tone, and feeling	<b>Rising Action</b> Conflicts and complications leading up to the climax	<b>Conflict</b> The major problem in the story
<b>Climax</b> The major event and turning point of the story	<b>Falling Action</b> Events that are a result of the climax	<b>Resolution</b> Final outcome of the story	<b>Plot</b> The major events in the story

## CHARACTER ANALYSIS CHART

**Directions:** *Dragon Pearl* is a bildungsroman, or a coming of age story, for the main character Min. Throughout the book, she surprises herself and those around her with displays of bravery and strength. She and her young friends find themselves being tested by their circumstances and they experience setbacks as well as victories. Choose five characters from *Dragon Pearl* to analyze. Complete the chart and include the page numbers where you find information about each of the characters.

<b>Character</b> Are they primary or secondary, static or dynamic, protagonist or antagonist?	<b>Internal Traits</b> What can you infer about their character?	<b>External Traits</b> What is their physical appearance?	<b>Actions</b> What do they do that portrays their traits?	<b>Speech &amp; Thoughts</b> What do they say and think that support their traits?	<b>Dialogue</b> What do others say and think about the character?

## WRITING PROMPTS

- 1 Dragons can be found in both Western and Eastern folklore and mythology. Asian myths describe dragons as benevolent beings who bring rain for crops and are connected with bodies of water, like rivers and lakes. This was especially important in an agrarian society like Korea. Historically, what does this reflect about the Asian people's attitude toward dragons? Is the depiction of dragons as a water creature different from European images and tales?
- 2 Part of Korean dragon mythology states that lesser dragons, or Imugis, could become true dragons upon obtaining an orb called the Yeouiju, which had the power to create life. Is Min an Imugi who evolves only when she finds the Dragon Pearl? Or does she find purpose and strength hidden within herself?
- 3 *Dragon Pearl* is a story about a young girl who longs to find her true identity after having to deny her heritage for so long. Why did Min's mom discourage her from using Charm or assuming her heritage form? What does Min discover about her own mother's past and why is it so surprising? How does Min feel when she is finally able to develop her Charm and take on her heritage form? In the end, what does she discover about Charm that deters her from using it?
- 4 "All my life I'd been cautioned not to show off the fox magic that was our heritage" (p 4). What was the bad reputation that foxes couldn't seem to overcome in the Thousand Worlds? How did Min feel about the prejudice that she and her kind faced? How is her family's heritage inextricably tied to realizing her own identity? Min's own family would probably describe her flaunting her heritage as foolishness, but why would others describe this as pride? How should we respond when we are faced with prejudices about our background?
- 5 Min and her family believe fiercely in upholding the family honor. How do Min and the adults (her mother and aunties) differ in the way they choose to guard the family honor? Is there only one way?
- 6 Describe the traits of the supernaturals: dragons, goblins, tigers, and foxes. If you could be a supernatural, which one would you be and why? What good could you accomplish with your powers? On the other hand, what possible temptations and dangers could there be?
- 7 Min and Jun feel a strong connection to the land and to their planet Jinju, which is the Korean word for pearl. Why is the name both ironic and prophetic? Describe their home, the planet, and the residents. How did Jinju end up the way it did? Why did both Min and Jun feel so strongly about bringing the Dragon Pearl to Jinju?
- 8 In Korea, age establishes one's position in the family and society. Most of Min's young life has been about following orders from her mother and aunties. Even her dream of exploring the Thousand Worlds and joining the Space Forces has been shaped by her older brother, Jun. At what point did Min begin making decisions and forging her own destiny? How did her thoughts and emotions change as she did so? When did she feel fully confident to make her own decisions and what gave her the courage to do so?
- 9 In *Dragon Pearl*, Min shape-shifts multiple times, from her female cousin Bora, to male cadet Jang, to her true heritage form, and then to a soaring hawk. How do these transformations enable Min to succeed in her quest for the Dragon Pearl? What role does the shape-shifting play in her personal journey of discovering her identity and place in the Thousand Worlds?

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Yoon Ha Lee** ([www.yoonhalee.com](http://www.yoonhalee.com)) is a Korean American who grew up in both Texas and South Korea, learning folktales of wily foxes, shape-shifting tigers, and benevolent dragons. Yoon was inspired to write about foxes in space because everything is better in space—except the ice cream. Yoon is also the author of the *Machineries of Empire* trilogy: *Ninefox Gambit*, *Raven Stratagem*, and *Revenant Gun*. For more information, follow Yoon on Twitter @motomaratai.



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## AUTHOR Q&A

**Q:** *Dragon Pearl* centers on Korean culture and mythology. Was there a particular tradition, myth, or legend that inspired you? What was the research process like?

**A:** Mostly I was inspired by folktales centering on creatures and animals. There's a long tradition of animals that either take human shape to interact with humans (tigers, foxes), or talk with humans (dragon, swallows, others). While there are some gods, there isn't really a pantheon as with Greek or Norse mythology.

My research mainly consisted of rereading Zong In-Sob's quirky collection of Korean folktales and skimming through a book on the Korean feng shui tradition (called *pungsu jiri*) by Hong-Key Yoon, plus badgering my mom to find out more about *pungsu jiri* and funeral customs since I had ghost characters. My mom's used to fielding weird research questions from me; she'll tell you all about the time she helped me research the Battle of Hangan-do for a history class I took at Cornell years ago!

**Q:** How did you find the experience of weaving together Korean folklore and mythology with futuristic space adventures?

**A:** The world building was a ton of fun! I wanted to depict a meld of technology and magical traditions. So while Min has access to levitating scooters and starships, she also has to contend with ghosts that can bring bad luck as well as ley lines—lines of mystic power inspired by feng shui—that affect the starship's functioning.

**Q:** Min's actions can be considered brave or reckless depending on your viewpoint. Is there a fine line between the two? How do we achieve the right balance?

**A:** Well, keep in mind that Min is young and impetuous. So she very definitely skirts over that line several times, and it gets her into trouble each time! I think in real life it's often helpful, where circumstances permit, to do some cost-benefit thinking (I am much more risk-averse than Min is), but Min doesn't yet have the life experience to consider the consequences realistically.

**Q:** The main character disobeys her mother and other authority figures, putting herself in danger time and time again but by doing so, Min discovers she is much stronger and braver than she thinks. When do you think it is okay for someone to disobey and break the rules?

**A:** In my opinion, there is a distinction between what is legal/lawful and what is morally correct. A lot of laws or rules exist as a sort of social contract and are not necessarily good or evil in themselves, so at that point you have to decide for yourself whether you value social convention or pursuing what you see as a higher benefit. And of course there are laws that are actively evil; just because an authority figure says to do something a certain way doesn't make it morally correct.

At the same time, rule breaking isn't inherently good either. You have to consider for yourself what your ethical compass is . . . I feel that a more complete answer to this would be in the form of a philosophers' debate taking up volumes and volumes of books!

**Q:** Min doesn't feel bound by location, age, gender, or status in pursuing the Dragon Pearl. What message do you want to send to young people about fulfilling their hopes and dreams?

**A:** While most of us aren't literal shape-shifters (I wish!), I hope folks come away with the idea that it's possible to go after your dreams no matter who or where you are. There are many variables in life you can't control, like where you're born or to what kind of family, but I have learned that you can get a lot of mileage out of concentrating on the things you *can* control and working on those.

**Q:** Is Min or any of her adventures based on yourself or your own experiences? If so, please share some stories from childhood!

**A:** Heh, Min is braver than I ever was! I used to dream of running away from home, not because I was unhappy but because I wanted to go on an adventure! After reading the Narnia books in elementary school, I spent years looking into closets at home and at my grandmother's hoping that one of them would take me there. No such luck, alas!

**Q:** You were raised in both Texas and South Korea. What was your bicultural experience like? What were some of the challenges that you faced? How do you think biculturalism shaped your character and outlook on life? How would you encourage those who are struggling to maintain a balance in their identity?

**A:** It was very disorienting! My parents ping-ponged back and forth for reasons that still aren't entirely clear to me (Texas to Missouri to Korea to Texas to Korea, and then I left for college), and as a result I was constantly off-balance. Korean and American cultures are very different in their expectations, and of course the USA is diverse in a way that Korea isn't. I spent a lot of my childhood accidentally offending people because I was using the wrong rules for the culture I was living in. For example, in fifth grade I really insulted a teacher who asked us to ask her a question about herself by asking her age. In Korea that would have been perfectly reasonable, since it's very Confucian and knowing your place in the hierarchy means you need to know people's ages. She responded that you never ask a lady her age, which no one had bothered to tell me before! Whoops.

On the other hand, now that I've survived, I'm glad I got to experience life in two very different cultures. It really broadens your view of the world and how much variety there is in how human beings organize their societies. For folks who have more than one culture in their life, I would say that finding that balance is a lifelong process, and it's okay not to figure it out all at once. I certainly still wrestle with it myself.

**Q:** There are some unique and endearing characters in the story, especially in the form of Min's friends. Were they inspired by any real-life characters?

**A:** I try to avoid basing story characters off real-life people—that can be a whole can of worms—except for maybe one or two small quirks or traits, so not really, no!

**Q:** How do you hope young readers all over the world will respond to this space story about a shape-shifting fox based on Korean mythology?

**A:** I hope they'll enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it! And if anyone's inspired to find out more about Korean culture or mythology or science fiction or astronomy, even better!

## GLOSSARY

**Baduk:** a board game utilizing black and white stones. The objective is to surround your opponent to capture their stones.

**Banchan:** side dishes served with rice during meals

**Dokkaebi:** from Korean mythology, goblins who can help or hurt humans

**Geomdo:** a martial art based on swordsmanship

**Gi:** life energy that flows through the body's meridian system

**Gimchi:** a staple banchan made of fermented cabbage, spices, and seasonings

**Gukhwaju:** alcoholic drink made with chrysanthemum

**Gumiho:** from Korean mythology, a fox with nine tails that can change shapes

**Haetae:** from Korean mythology, a lion with scales and a horn on its head with protective abilities

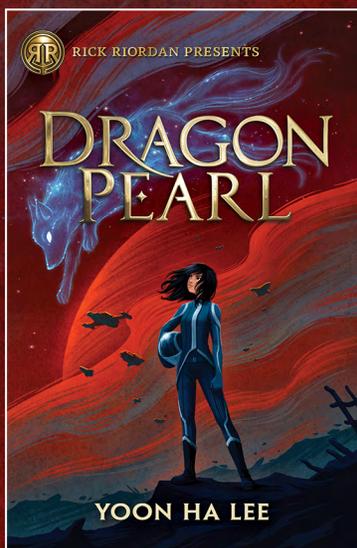
**Janggi:** Korean chess

**Jinju:** pearl



About the guide writer: Veronica Kim was born in Korea and raised in NJ in a bilingual, bicultural home. She graduated from Johns Hopkins University, where she focused on East Asian Studies and Writing, and holds an MAT from Fairleigh Dickinson University. She is an ESL teacher and enjoys working with her students and learning about their cultures and diverse backgrounds. She loves a good story and her favorite section of the bookstore is children's literature.

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## DRAGON PEARL

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