

# Roses Sing on New Snow

Paul Yee  
1992  
New York: Macmillan

**HONESTY**  
Canada/Chinese  
Folktale  
Reading time: 9 minutes

## CONCEPTS

Honesty  
Justice  
Courage

## SUMMARY

**This story, set in turn-of-the-century Vancouver's Chinatown, is about honesty and deception. Maylin, a young Chinese girl, cooks delicious dishes, but her father gives the credit to her brothers. As the story unfolds, Maylin's talents, honesty, and wisdom are revealed. Enjoyment of this tale is enhanced by Harvey Chan's bright watercolor illustrations, especially in the detail he gives to facial expressions.**

## OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to identify, define, and discuss honesty, justice, and courage as they apply to this story. Students will become aware of how courage and honesty are related to each other in the story and in their own lives.

## Interdisciplinary Ideas

### LANGUAGE ARTS

1. Add an interactive component to your honesty bulletin board. On long strips of paper write your own proverbs about honesty. Put them inside paper or manila fortune cookies\* with ends of slips exposed, and post on an honesty bulletin board for others to read and put back inside.
2. Like Maylin, use imagination to create delicious dishes. Write recipes for healthy snacks that require no cooking. Name the snacks, list ingredients, and write directions. If possible, bring supplies for your recipes to school and demonstrate how to make them. Compile recipes to create a classroom "Make Your Own Snacks" cookbook.

3. Look closely at the illustrations in the book. Study the facial expressions and body language. Select a page and describe how each character felt.
4. The prefix "re" means to do again. Together make a list of words with the prefix "re." Discuss their meanings.

### ART

Research to learn about Chinese seals called "chops." (Keyword: Chinese chops) The author's "chop" is printed in red on the title page of the book.

### SOCIAL STUDIES

1. With a parent or school volunteer, research Chinatowns in the U.S. to find activities you might enjoy on a visit. Report back to your class. (Keyword: Chinatown family fun)
2. Make sticky rice in a rice cooker and try eating with chopsticks. (Keyword: how to use chopsticks) Research the history of chopsticks and report findings to your class. (Keyword: chopsticks history)

- \* Visit [www.heartwoodethics.org](http://www.heartwoodethics.org) and choose Teaching Heartwood, Activities, Primary for comic strip paper and fortune cookie pattern.

# After the Story

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### DISCUSSION

1. What makes Maylin and her dishes so special? Who appreciates her efforts? How do you think Maylin feels when her brothers get credit for her cooking?
2. Think about Maylin's father and brothers. How does the saying "One lie leads to another" apply to this story?
3. Maylin is described as honest and wise. Give examples of these attributes in the story.
4. How does Maylin show courage when she meets the governor of South China?
5. Talk about injustice and justice in the story. Discuss how the saying "The truth will out" applies to the story.
6. Have you ever been treated unfairly? For example, how might you feel if someone copied your work or got credit for it? How could you handle unfair situations?

### ACTIVITIES

1. Locate South China and Vancouver, British Columbia on a world map. Find other cities in North America with large Chinatowns. (Keyword: Chinatown cities North America)
2. Maylin knew she could cook well. Be honest with yourself. Write three things you can do well. Write three things you would like to do better.
3. Talk about how honesty and courage are related. Tell why it takes courage to tell the truth. Share examples from the story and from your own experiences. With a partner, create honesty comics\* of these and other examples and post on an honesty bulletin board (see Wrap-up #3).
4. Hold a meeting to discuss honesty in the classroom. When is it okay to share ideas and answers? When is it not okay?

### EXTENSION

1. Retell the story at home. Discuss with your family the importance of honesty in communicating with each other.
2. Ask your family their attitudes about honesty and loyalty to family members.

### WRAP-UP

1. Choose one of the following to write about and illustrate in *My Heartwood Journal*:
  - Write about honesty, justice, or courage in the story.
  - Write about honesty, justice, or courage in your own life.
  - Write about how honesty and courage are related. Give examples.
2. Together write a recipe for honesty on large paper. (See *Teacher's Guide*, Reproducibles) Post for all to see.
3. Create an honesty bulletin board titled, "Honesty is the best policy." Add honesty journal entries, stories, poems, comics, and fortune cookies from Language Arts #1.

### VOCABULARY

**praise**  
**wok**  
**banquet**

**demonstrate**  
**recreate**  
**impostor**

**transported**  
**delectable**