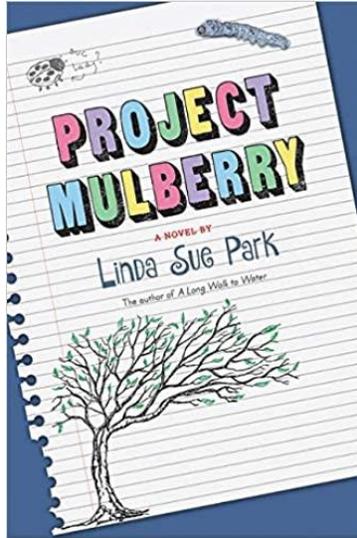


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***Project Mulberry* Book Discussion Guide**



Introduction

Project Mulberry, written by Linda Sue Park, was published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt in 2005. Originally, this book was printed in hardcover in 2003 by Clarion Books. *Project Mulberry* is a stand-alone novel recommended for readers age nine and up.

Linda Sue Park is a well-known author with many books on her resume. Her book *A Single Shard* won the Newberry Medal in 2002, along with many other awards, elevating her recognition even more. Coming from a Korean family, many of her books echo her Korean culture and heritage through the characters, history, and traditions included in her writing.

Book Summary

Similar to the real-life National 4-H program, Wiggle Club members choose projects to bring to the state fair in order to receive ribbons and recognition for their hard work and presentation. The Wiggle Club, or Work-Grow-Give-Live! (WGGL), started out as a way to

teach youth about farming. It evolved into a project-based club to encourage youth to complete a variety of projects for a chance to attend the fair.

In this story, Julia and Patrick are looking for a fun and unique project to take on together for their fair entry. Stemming from Julia's Korean heritage and her mother's suggestion, Patrick proposes raising silkworms in order to learn about the lifecycle of the silkworm and make their own silk thread. In this way, they could enter two categories: Animal Husbandry and Domestic Arts. Julia doesn't really want to use silkworms because it is too "Korean." She would much rather stick to something more "American" to keep the spotlight off of her different background. There are a few obstacles that Julia and Patrick must overcome in order to complete their project, including obtaining the mulberry leaves that silkworms require to survive and grow. They find a solution with a neighbor and end up befriending him over his love for his mulberry tree. Despite Julia's hesitation, she ends up having fun and learning more about the lifecycle of this interesting insect, while forming new friendships with unlikely characters. This story touches on many topics, including entomology, teamwork, friendship and the value of cultural differences.

Discussion Questions

1. How did Julia and Patrick become friends? Why do you think it would be beneficial to have friends who are different than you?
2. If you were a member of the Wiggle Club, what project would you like to complete to enter into state fair competition?
3. Why was Julia hesitant about using silkworms for her and Patrick's project?
4. At the end of each chapter, the author engages in conversation with Julia. Why do you think the author added this component into the book? Was it useful to you while reading?
5. Patrick often leaves his belongings at Julia's house for safekeeping. Why does he do this? How do you think he could work through this conflict with his siblings?

6. Why is embroidery such a challenging project? How is it different than sewing?
7. Julia's mom seemed to have some reservations about Mr. Dixon. What could Julia do to help her mom overcome this unease?
8. Towards the end of Julia and Patrick's project, Julia learns something sad about silkworms. She does overcome this disappointment, but what would you do if you were facing the same situation? Would you forego the embroidery part of the project or complete the project in its entirety?
9. What did you learn about silkworms in this story? Are there other insects you would like to learn more about?
10. During the class field trip to the farm, Mr. Maxwell talks to the kids about sustainable farming. Do you know of anyone that practices sustainable agriculture? What can you do in order to be more agriculturally and environmentally sustainable?