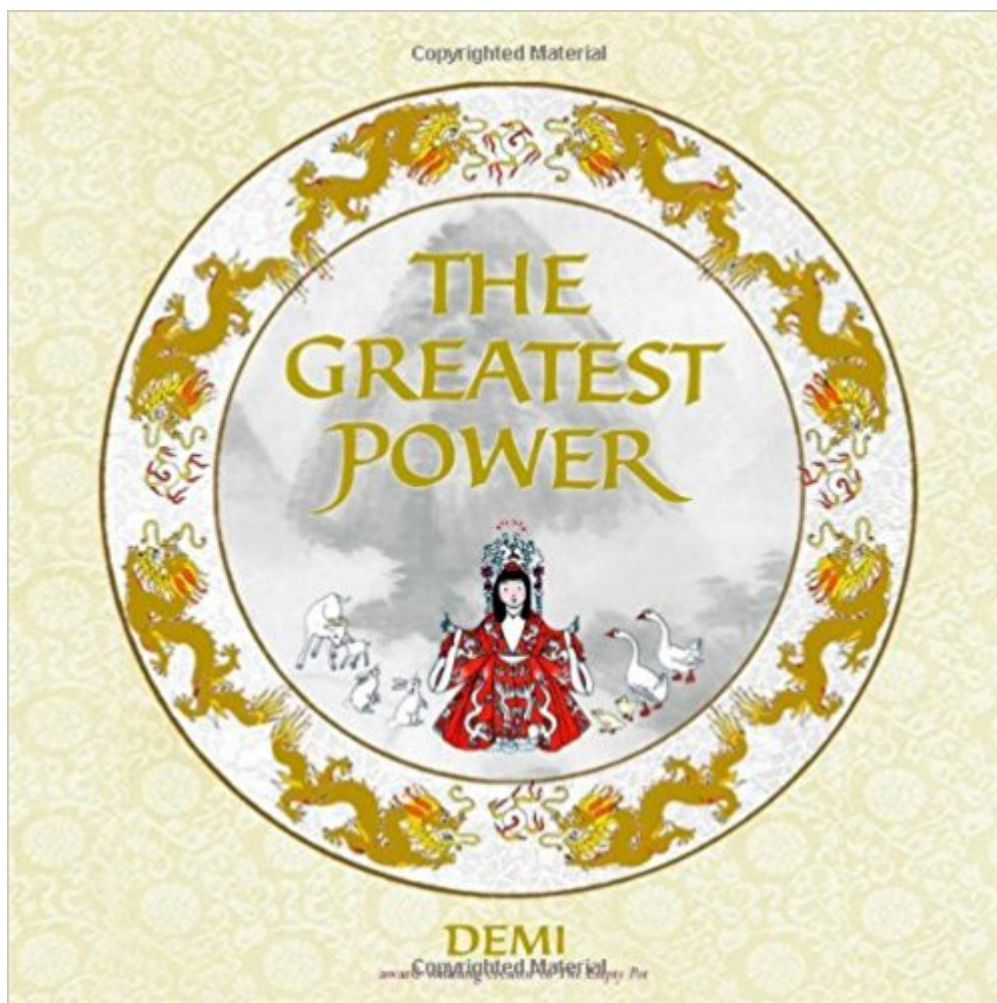


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The Greatest Power



Synopsis

Emperor Ping, the boy emperor known for his love of harmony, sets a challenge to the children of his kingdom: show him the greatest power in the world. "To know the greatest power in the world is to know the greatest peace," Emperor Ping announces. "Whoever knows this harmony will become the new prime minister." The children get to work right away and have many bright ideas. The greatest power must be weapons! It must be beauty! It must be money! But as a young girl named Sing reflects upon the challenge, she wonders how any of those things, which cannot last forever, could be the greatest power in the world. She is certain there is something even more powerful, and the source of this power will surprise and delight her. A companion to Demi's stunning picture book *The Empty Pot*, *The Greatest Power* continues the story of Ping now that he has become an emperor. With striking artwork and a lovely, lyrical text, this next chapter in Emperor Ping's life is sure to enrapture young readers.

Book Information

Hardcover: 40 pages

Publisher: Margaret K. McElderry Books; 1st edition (March 1, 2004)

Language: English

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 7 customer reviews

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Age Range: 5 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

Customer Reviews

Grade 3-6--This companion to Demi's *The Empty Pot* (Holt, 1990) continues the story of Ping, who is now emperor. He desires to bring the harmony of the heavens, which he views through his telescope, to his kingdom. He issues a proclamation inviting all of the children to participate in a quest culminating in a year's time, when "we shall have a great parade, and… each of you will

show me what you think is the greatest power in the world." The emperor concludes cryptically, "A wise person must be able to see the unseen and know the unknown." Some youngsters determine that weapons are the answer, while others suggest beauty, technology, or money. Only young Sing ponders Ping's words. In the end, she is inspired by the lotus seed and breaks it in two for the emperor, showing him that the greatest power is life: "The nothing in this seed is the space in between where life exists." This cycle of life is perfect harmony. Ping is pleased and declares her prime minister. As in the earlier book, this one has a rich palette, attention to detail, and delightful depictions of youngsters. Though the concept of this offering is worthy of discussion and reflection, the story teeters too heavily on the abstract. The Empty Pot was a magical tale--simple, poignant, and easily understood by young and old. The Greatest Power can spark philosophical discussion but not with a clear and accessible story.--Linda M. Kenton, San Rafael Public Library, CA Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

K-Gr. 3. This companion to *The Empty Pot* (1990) continues the story of the life of Ping, the young emperor who wants to bring harmony to his kingdom. Ping sends all the children in the kingdom on a year-long quest to find the greatest power in the world, telling them, "A wise person must be able to see the unseen and know the unknown." The boys believe the power is great weapons; the girls, great beauty; the students, great technology; and the practical children, great amounts of money. When the children come to show the emperor what they have discovered, the last child in line, a little girl named Sing, remembers Ping's words. She presents a lotus seed as the powerful force of eternal life, and Ping names her the new prime minister. The text and the handsomely designed, richly colored artwork, which is touched with gold leaf, are set within a circular motif that reinforces the idea of eternity. As usual, Demi ably combines striking artwork and a meaningful story, with quiet dignity and wisdom. Julie Cummins Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

This book has such a powerful simple message that adults need just as much as children. Beautiful book about the value of life and putting your faith in true power and not just deceptions of power.

This is a nice story. I don't recommend it to read to a group of lower elementary students - they can't sit long enough for it. I tried it once and they got fidgety. But the story is wonderful and it sends a great message!!

Since this is by Demi, it can be taken almost as a given that the drawings are both beautiful and inventive. I did have one problem with it that would make me hesitant to read it to a child, because I couldn't explain the answer. It's a spoiler, so read no further unless you want to know the answer to the question of what is the greatest power. SPOILER: After all the children have presented representation of money, the emperor, the empress, beauty, weapons, etc., one little girl comes along with only a lotus seed in her hand. She breaks the seed upon and show Emperor Ping the Nothing inside, and says that is the greatest power. When Ping asks how Nothing can be the greatest power, she replies that Nothing is the source of life, which renews itself endlessly. I admit to an unfamiliarity with lotus seeds, but I don't understand how it contains nothing. Maybe they are hollow. But it is the seed itself, the embryonic plant that represents life (or did until she broke it and now it might not grow.) It reminds me of the Taoist idea that usefulness arises from the void, but if someone asked me to explain how a seed is Nothing, I don't think I could. Picky, picky, picky, or just too literal minded.

Such a powerful tale, that can help teach many life lessons as well as spiritual lessons. Depicts a wise young leader, and a thoughtful, confident, patient girl who sets herself apart without even 'trying' to -- TRUE beauty... Side note: i have sons, and although the characters in Demi's books (that i've read) tend to be female, I don't mind. I like reading these to my sons so they know women to be capable and intelligent! I was worried for a moment at the end that it might take a turn to "they fell in love...." but Demi came through once again with a tale spun to perfection. For ages 5/6+ -- it's rather long.

This is a continuation of the story told in "The Empty Pot". The story of "The Greatest Power" unfolds in a similar fashion. I like "The Empty Pot" more (I gave it 5 stars), but "The Greatest Power" is not bad. Both books have lovely illustrations. My family and I have read several of Demi's books and recommend them.

This book will make children really think about what is really important in this new world dominated by great technology.

This book is my first exposure to Demi, now I am hooked and will read all her books to my children who are quite young now but the message and illustrations will last for ages, from preschool to adult. Adults as well will delight in the gorgeous illustrations and deep spiritual message found in the

text. A children's book of superb quality with a multicultural, philosophical and spiritual perspective.

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