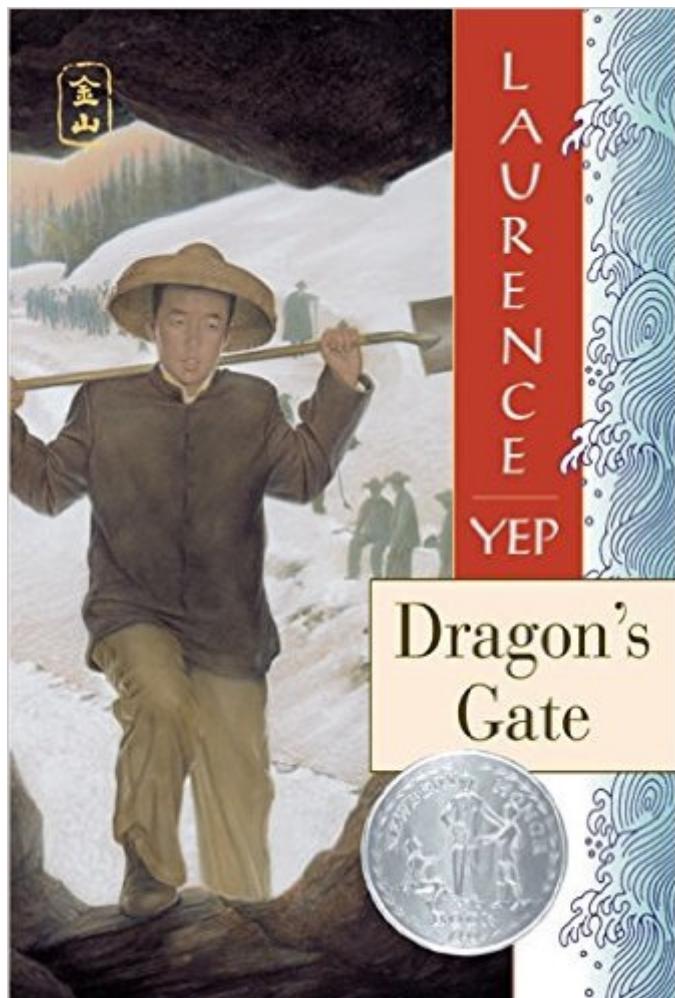


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# Dragon's Gate (Golden Mountain Chronicles, 1867)



## **Synopsis**

In 1867, Otter travels from Three Willows Village in China to California -- the Land of the Golden Mountain. There he will join his father and uncle. In spite of the presence of family, Otter is a stranger among the other Chinese in this new land. And where he expected to see a land of goldfields, he sees only vast, cold whiteness. But Otter's dream is to learn all he can, take the technology back to the Middle Kingdom, and free China from the Manchu invaders. Otter and the others board a machine that will change his life -- a train for which he would open the Dragon's Gate.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Dragon's Gate is a very well written book that includes varying sensations that range from love to hate and from frustration to pride. Through this book you become conscious of many things that you would have disregarded if this book were not written. This book gives you a clear understanding of the hardships and discrimination faced by Chinese workers whilst building the railroad. The author, Laurence Yep's use of figurative language is what I like most about this book. He makes inanimate objects come alive through personification. At one point in the story, he calls the cold a living thing and has it snatch the warmth from one of his characters' bodies. Yep compares different things in an almost poetic manner. He compares the wooden bunks on a ship to coffins and another line from the book is: '...I saw him like a black shadow within the swirling snow.' I also like the way Yep uses Chinese superstitions in his book. These Chinese sayings make it easier for you (the reader) to

connect with the characters in the book, as they are Chinese. I would recommend this book to people between the ages of 10 and 16. I believe that people older than 16 will find this book really boring because this book is written at a Middle School level. Children under the age of 10 however will not be able to understand the depth of the book and they may not understand the concept of discrimination - a concept which is crucial for the text. In my opinion, the book is great just as it is and any changes may ruin the book.

Dragon Gate is a heartbreakingly story about a young Chinese boy's life in America. Otter had to move to America after he got into some trouble in China, and worked on the railroad during the industrial revolution. This compelling story is about the hardships, clash of cultures, and discrimination that Otter had to deal with. It is a deeply moving story that I enjoyed immensely. It is a story that many people can relate to, which is why I encourage that it should be read. The themes and lessons in this book are very poignant, and relate to everyone on some level. The characters are very life like and seem almost like real people, and you start to see a little of yourself in Otter. You can't help but put yourself in the characters shoes, and imagine what you would have done in their place. The words and descriptions pull you into the story and make you feel as if you were there; going through every thing Otter was going through. I would recommend this book to anyone above middle school level and to teenagers especially. Older readers can identify more with the feelings of change, loss, and not fitting in that Otter goes through. At one point in our lives we all have an idol that we try to emulate, and sometimes when that idol does not live up to are high standards we feel let down and betrayed. Otter goes through these feelings with his Uncle Foxfire, and the story makes you realize that our idols are only people and that we should allow them to make mistakes. Even though the book seems simple it is the hidden messages in it that make it such a good read. The story teaches us the lesson of forgiveness, of standing up for what you believe in, but it also enlightens us that it is okay to be scared and make mistakes along the way.

I'm a Yep fan, and Dragon's Gate only increased my appreciation for his ability as a storyteller. Since I'm also always interested in the 1850s during the Gold Rush and the building of the Trans-Continental Railroad, this was a perfect story for me. Yep paints a cold picture of how the Chinese labored under wicked conditions--little food, severe weather, grueling back-breaking labor and discrimination. A proud man from China was treated as less than human, paid less than his Anglo co-workers, and worked longer almost unendurable hours. But inside this story is another one, one about a young Chinese boy who learns about life from two perspectives--his own and that

of the western world. I loved the flawless prose and beautiful characters that emerged from this writer's pen.

Dragon's Gate is a truly enlightening book that I have had the pleasure of reading. Both the plot and the excellently mastered figurative language in this novel make it a great book to read. Laurence Yep has beyond the doubt mastered the art of personification, transforming inanimate objects into living and breathing things. Although figurative language is a valuable asset to any story, it alone cannot alone create a page turner. That's where an elaborately planned out storyline based on non-fictional information and events that occurred in history play a major role. This gives a flavor of reality to the story making it all the more enjoyable. Laurence Yep begins off his novel by sweeping the reader away into the exotic orient of a land known as the Middle Kingdom (now known as China). We look through the eyes of a wealthy young man with what some may consider a dark past. An outcast at his own home, Otter truly seeks acceptance and struggles to find his own identity in a world built on racial discrimination. We follow Otter through the darkest and brightest of days and gradually grow close to this novel's protagonist as we find that we can relate to him in many different ways. This is the main reason I that I (personally) found this novel so compelling. I would recommend this book to readers with exceptional reading skills (grade 6 and up) in order to really appreciate the excellent figurative language used in the story. I would also recommend this book to people who are unfamiliar to the abuse and mistreatment that the Chinese faced while building the transcontinental railroad. I think this book is great the way it is and would not change a single word in it for I think everybody would enjoy it the way it is.

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