

## Novel Resource for Young Hoosier Book Authors 2007-2008

### *Project Mulberry*

**By: Mary Sue Park**

**Publisher:** Yearling, a division of Random House Children  
**Copyright:** 2005

**Genre:** Realistic Fiction

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Park earned one dollar when she was first published at age 9 for a poem she wrote. She was born and raised in Illinois to Korean immigrants. She is married and lives in New York with her family. She is a graduate of Stanford where she earned a degree in English and was on the gymnastics team. She won the 2002 Newberry Award Medal for *The Single Shard*.



#### Connection to Project Mulberry

Mrs. Park says everything inspires her from the people she meets to the things around her. Writing she says has made her a better observer. She says you never know what will inspire the next story.

Park is a Korean American like her main character. She uses many names that are based on people she knows. She also relates her experiences of witnessing racism while growing up. She had her family raise silkworms to help her do research for the book because she has a worm phobia just like Patrick.

#### Other books by this author:

*A Single Shard, The Kite Fighters, Seesaw Girl, When My Name was Keoko*

**Annotation:** Julia and Patrick are best friends with many of the same interests who spend a lot of time together. Why not join the Wiggle Club together. It is a club that is supposed to teach kids about farming. Now they need to come up with a project idea. They know they don't have room to raise an animal and they can't agree on anything else. Finally Julia's mom suggests raising silkworms. Patrick thinks this is a fabulous idea, Julia wants something more American. After overcoming several obstacles they find that it isn't so easy to raise silkworms and it takes a lot of determination and effort. And, maybe it's more American than what Julia thought at first. Linda Sue Park weaves into her story many issues the characters have to face and discover. From lessons on farming, loyalty and honesty to dealing with racism Project Mulberry includes issues relevant to most adolescents. The author even exposes the reader to the process of writing with conversations with Julia in between the chapters. A great read for those interested in a variety of topics.

**Booktalk:** Julia hates kimchee, a Korean food. Her best friend Patrick loves it and he's not even Korean. That's not the only thing that makes them different but they get along great. That is until they need an idea for their Wiggle Project. Julia's mom suggests they raise silkworms and Patrick thinks that is a fabulous idea. Julia thinks it's too Korean and wants to do something more American. The battle begins as Julia secretly tries to thwart the plan. Will they ever agree? Discover all the things they learn about themselves and others as they figure it out.

<b>Characters:</b>	<u>Name and Age</u>	<u>Relationship to main and/or other characters</u>	<u>Personality traits</u>
Julie	7th grade	Main character, Korean American	Loyal, creative
Patrick	7th grade	Julia's best friend and neighbor	Studious, thoughtful, optimistic
Kenny	10 years old	Julia's brother	Disagreeable, funny
Mr. Dixon	elderly	Owner of Mulberry tree, neighbor	Hospitable, friendly
Mom		Julia's Mom	Protective, reserved, prejudice

**Conflict:** Julia and her best friend Patrick have a lot in common except when it comes to deciding what to do on their Wiggle Project. They are already behind most of the other groups and can't decide on a course of action. Then Julia's mom suggests they raise silkworms. Julia hates it, Patrick loves it. Julie thinks it is too Korean. After all, the Wiggle club is based on the all-American farming principle, she wants to do something more American. Secretly Julie internally struggles to try to stop the project's advancement. And, Patrick has a phobia of worms. Then there is the external conflict between the chapters involving Mrs. Park and Julia.

**Conflict Resolution:** After much internal struggle by Julia, she and Patrick finally go forward with the silkworms. Now, they have to figure out the external conflict of how to find a Mulberry tree so the silkworms will have food. With much perseverance and determination Julia and Patrick figure out how to make their project successful. While exploring thoughts and feeling about many things from farming to race relations the characters and the author find out more about themselves.

**You will also love these books:**

Same genre/ interest level: Sook Nyul Choi, *Year if Impossible Goodbyes*,  
Lensy Namioka, *Yang the Third and Her Impossible Family*  
By the same author: *The Kite Fighters and When My Name was Keoko*

sources:	<a href="http://www.perma-bound.com">www.perma-bound.com</a>	<u>Bound to Stay Bound</u>	<a href="http://www.lexile.com">www.lexile.com</a>
<b>Interest Level:</b>	grades 4-7		
<b>Reading Level:</b>	4.3		690L

**Read-Aloud pages/passages:**

Chapter and page #:  
Chapter 6, pages 64 and 65

between chapters 13 and 14,  
pages 174 and 175

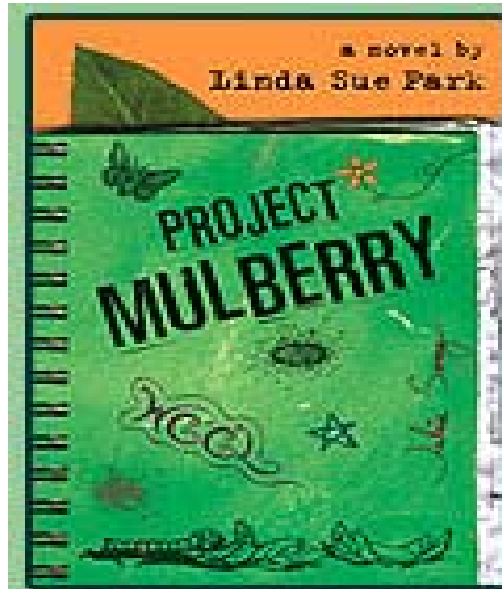
Description of action:  
Julia and Patrick are about to meet the owner of the Mulberry tree. He isn't what Julia expected.

Mrs. Park is trying to get Julia to talk to her but she is upset about the killing of the silkworms.

**Setting:** Plainfield, IL and Julia's neighborhood, present day

**Point of view:** First Person

**Theme:** The main character Julia, a Korean American and her best friend Patrick overcome many obstacles in their quest to earn a ribbon at the state fair. Project Mulberry has many themes including prejudice, racism and loyalty. It also involves a story within the story as the reader learns about the writing process of a novel from conversations between Julia and Mrs. Park. The choice of the title directly relates to the main characters' school project of raising silkworms and their search for a mulberry tree.



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