

Yang the
Second and
Her Secret
Admirers



California
Standards

Standards to
Achieve

Reading

- Use roots and affixes (R1.4)
- Inferences/ generalizations (R2.4)

Honoring Your Heritage

What is a **heritage**? Where does it come from? Why is it important?

A heritage is a collection of **traditions** passed down through many generations. It includes the special customs and values that children learn from their parents and grandparents.

In *Yang the Second and Her Secret Admirers*, one character deeply values her Chinese heritage. Eating *dim sum*, listening to Chinese **opera**, wearing Chinese clothes — these traditions are all part of her heritage.



In the Chinese meal called *dim sum*, diners are served a wide variety of small dishes, one after the other.

Think about the culture of your grandparents — or of their grandparents. What traditions have you learned from them? Perhaps there is a dish from a family recipe, an old song you sing, or a dance that you perform on holidays.

Sometimes many cultures may contribute to your heritage. Think about the sports you play, the foods you eat, the music you listen to, and the languages you speak. How many different cultures are part of who *you* are?

The Chinese characters *Chuán Tǒng* mean "heritage."

传统



Chinese opera presents plays based on Chinese history and folklore.



Traditional Chinese instruments include the *erhu*, a stringed instrument related to the violin.

Lensey Namioka

Yang the Second and Her Secret Admirers



Illustrated by Kees de Kieffe

Strategy Focus

Who is Yang the Second? Who secretly admires her? As you read the selection, use what you discover about characters and events to create more **questions** that you can ask your classmates.

As the oldest daughter in her family, Second Sister clings to her Chinese heritage and refuses to make any friends. But her younger brother and sister have a plan, which they have practiced at the home of their friend, Kim O'Meara. What if Second Sister overhears them saying that Paul Eng, her classmate, likes her? And what if Paul overhears them saying that Second Sister likes him? Who knows what might happen next?

By the next day I was beginning to have second thoughts about our plot. It could turn out to be really embarrassing for Second Sister.

She looked so unhappy sometimes that I thought it might be mean to play a trick on her. Once, Second Sister, Third Sister, and I were at a shopping mall, and we went into a restaurant for refreshments. Third Sister saw some of her friends there, and she went over to their table. Soon we heard them talking and laughing.

Second Sister sat with her head down, sipping her drink, and she suddenly looked very forlorn. In China she had lots of friends, and she would be sitting with them, talking and laughing. She could have made friends here, too, but she preferred to stay home like a grouch.

But Second Sister isn't always a grouch, and I remembered the times when she was kind to me. Like the days when my family still wanted me to play the violin, for instance. Father, Mother, and Eldest Brother had all thought that I played so badly because I wasn't trying hard enough. Second Sister wasn't like the rest of them. She thought that I had it in me to be a good musician, but that I gave up playing so that my friend Matthew could play in our family string quartet. We all knew that Matthew had real musical talent. Second Sister thought I was being noble and letting Matthew take my place because of our friendship. It was just the kind of thing she would do for her own friends. She simply refused to believe that a member of the Yang family would have a terrible ear. It wasn't in our genes.

I wanted to get Third Sister alone and discuss whether we should go on with our trick. But I didn't get a chance. Third Sister came home just before dinner, and we all sat down around the dinner table. Mother had cooked my favorite dish: pork stewed with yellow turnips. Normally I eat so much of this dish that I get scolded for hogging it (can you hog a dish of pork?).

But I was too busy with my thoughts to eat much. I jumped when Mother said, "What's the matter, Yingtao? Aren't you feeling well? You aren't eating your favorite."

"I'm fine," I muttered. Hurriedly, I took a big helping.

Eldest Brother began to ask Second Sister about the demonstration she had given that day in school. Her class was studying different types of entertainment in countries all over the world, and she had offered to talk about Chinese opera.

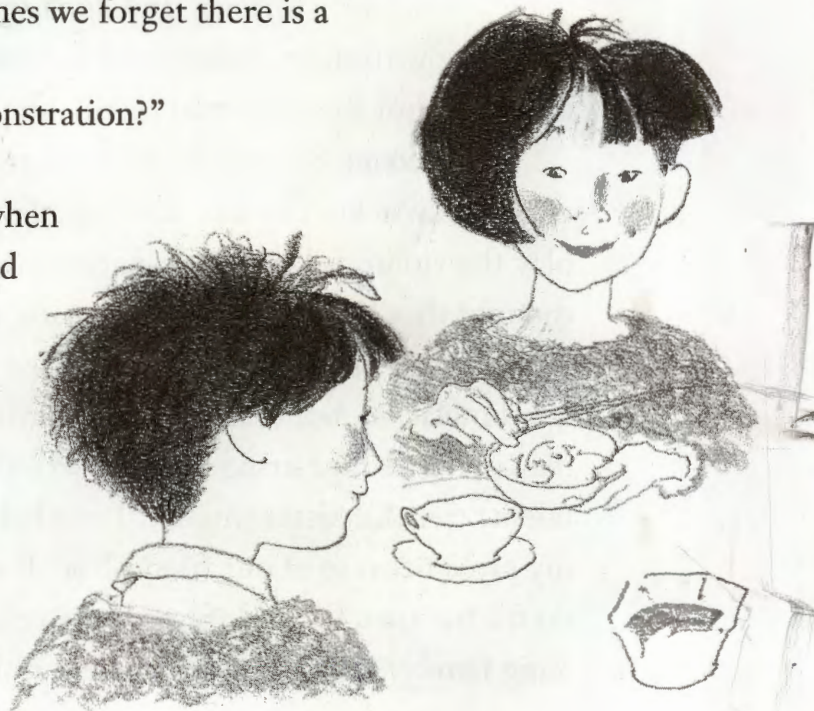
To demonstrate background music in opera, Second Sister brought in an *erhu*, a kind of Chinese violin with two strings, and played it to her class. She usually played a viola, but she jumped at this chance to show how a traditional Chinese instrument sounded.

Father beamed. "I'm glad you did it. We concentrate so hard on playing Western music that sometimes we forget there is a long tradition of music in China."

"Did the class enjoy your demonstration?" asked Eldest Brother.

"A few of the kids made faces when I hit the high notes on the *erhu*," said Second Sister. "But most were very interested. Afterward some of them came up and wanted to try it."

Then she frowned. "You know that boy Paul Eng? He told me he had never seen or heard the instrument before!"



I had to defend Paul. “What’s so strange about that? I bet very few people in this country have seen one!”

Second Sister’s lips curled scornfully. “Maybe that’s true of your average American. But you’d think somebody like Paul Eng would care more about his Chinese heritage!”

Lately Second Sister has been using the word *heritage* a lot. I’m not quite sure what she means by our Chinese heritage. Does she mean being as Chinese as possible? But her own instrument is a viola, a Western instrument. Or does she mean clothes? Is that why she likes to wear her cloth jacket with the high collar and buttons down the front? Maybe she means eating Chinese food with chopsticks. But Paul ate Chinese food — the whole Eng family had been eating *dim sum* in Chinatown just the other day.





Listening to the scornful way Second Sister talked about Paul, I decided it would be a great joke after all to get the two of them together, like that couple in the movie. My eyes met Third Sister's, and we nodded to each other.

In our family Third Sister and I do the dishes, while Second Sister and Eldest Brother help Mother with some of the cooking. As Third Sister scraped the garbage into the disposal, I filled a big pan with hot, sudsy water and began putting the dishes in.

The chopsticks I washed by rubbing them against one another: You hold a bunch of them and roll them between your two hands, making a *burrrrr* sound. The rubbing makes the chopsticks really clean.

Once I even did it in time to music. Eldest Brother was practicing a piece, and I added a rhythmic part with the chopsticks. I have a terrible ear for pitch — that is, I'm no good at telling high from low. But I've got pretty good rhythm. Eldest Brother enjoyed my chopsticks accompaniment. It was the only time he ever said anything good about my music making.

"Shh! Not so loud with the chopsticks," whispered Third Sister. "I think Second Sister is finished in the pantry. Let's start when she goes up the stairs."

I dropped the chopsticks into the pan, and after a minute Third Sister winked at me in a signal to begin our act.

"Isn't it touching," said Third Sister in a loud whisper, "the way Paul Eng went up to Second Sister after her demonstration?"

This wasn't the opening line we had planned, but it was a good one. I did my best to play up to it. "Yeah, he must have been really hurt when she didn't say anything friendly back to him."

We paused and listened. Second Sister's steps paused at the foot of the stairs. Instead of going up to her room to practice, she was stopping to hear more.

"Are you sure he likes her?" asked Third Sister. Now we were using the lines we had rehearsed. "After all, she hasn't been nice to him at all. In fact she's been awfully mean every time his name comes up."

There was no sound from Second Sister. She must have been listening intently. I risked a short pause, and washed a few plates. Then I sighed heavily. "Poor Paul. I asked him once about his batting stance. He was very nice to me and explained everything patiently." I paused to wash a couple of rice bowls before continuing. "Then he looked at me sort of anxiously. He asked me whether Second Sister ever went out with boys — you know, on dates."

"So that *proves* he likes her!" exclaimed Third Sister. "What did you tell him?"

"I had to tell him the truth," I said, and sighed again. "I told him Second Sister wouldn't look at a boy who didn't speak Chinese."

"Poor Paul!" Third Sister said. The two of us were beginning to repeat ourselves, so we didn't say anything more and went on washing dishes. Besides, we had said enough.

Our ears were eagerly cocked, and sure enough, we could hear Second Sister's steps going slowly up the stairs. They sounded thoughtful.

Arranging for Paul to overhear Kim and Third Sister wasn't easy. The trouble was that neither our family nor the O'Mearas knew the Engs outside of school. Besides, Third Sister, Kim, and I went to elementary school, while Paul went to the same high school as Eldest Brother and Second Sister. Except at school concerts or baseball games, we just didn't run into the Engs much.

Days passed, and I almost gave up hope. I noticed that Second Sister sometimes had on a peculiar expression. Her face would be screwed up, like she was trying to get a piece of gristle out from between her teeth. She must have been chewing over our remarks she had overheard.

That meant the first part of our scheme was working. But what good did it do if we couldn't carry out the second part?

Our chance came at last. It was our spring vacation, and as a treat Mrs. O'Meara took Kim, Third Sister, and me to visit the Pacific Science Center.

Mrs. O'Meara said she was sick and tired of having kids underfoot all the time. "Jason is acting really strange," she said. "He goes around mooning and bumping into things!" So she chased him out of the house with orders to practice soccer with his friends. It was the first time she ever had to order him to practice.

Mrs. O'Meara offered to drop Kim and Third Sister at the Science Center. I had hoped to play with my friend Matthew, but he had to go to the dentist. He protested that it was totally unfair for someone to see a dentist during vacation. "Life is totally unfair," said his mother as she dragged him off.

So Mrs. O'Meara took me along with Kim and Third Sister, who didn't mind me tagging along. It turned out to be a good thing we went together.



The Science Center is a big museum with lots of buttons to push. Things go squirting and squeaking and beeping and gurgling. We're supposed to learn important scientific facts from all this. In spite of that, it's loads of fun.

While Kim and Third Sister played with machines that speeded up their voices and made them sound like Donald Duck, I went over to look at a box containing poisonous spiders. Next to that was a tall glass case with a section of a beehive in it. I was just about to go over when I saw Paul Eng standing behind the case, looking at the bees.

I rushed over to Third Sister and grabbed her arm. "I saw Paul over there!" I whispered. "Come on! This is our chance to carry out our plan!"

Third Sister and I hurried over to the case of bees, and she began her speech. Then she stopped. Kim had to be in the act, too, and she was still back at the sound machine, making like Donald Duck!

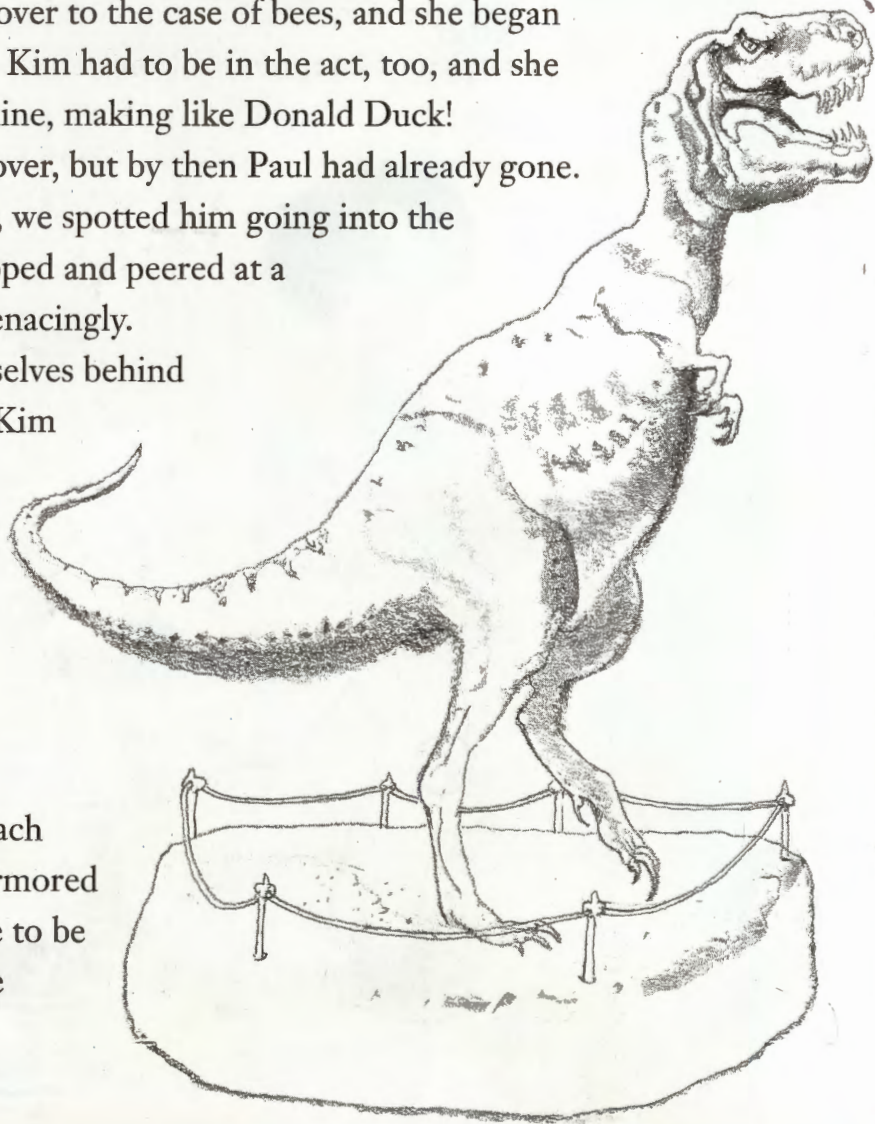
We ran back and got Kim over, but by then Paul had already gone.

Looking around frantically, we spotted him going into the dinosaur exhibit room. He stopped and peered at a tyrannosaurus, which roared menacingly.

We quickly positioned ourselves behind the dinosaur. Third Sister and Kim opened their mouths and tried to start our script.

ROAR, went the tyrannosaurus. The three of us looked at one another and shook our heads. This wasn't going to work.

I waited until I saw Paul reach one of the quiet dinosaurs, an armored stegosaurus. There was no time to be lost. "Come on!" I hissed to the other two.



Again we got ourselves into position, and Kim cleared her throat. “So what makes you think your sister likes Paul Eng?” she asked.

“Well, she was impressed by the way he played in that ball game,” said Third Sister, “and she isn’t usually interested in American sports.”

I came in with my lines. “And I thought she didn’t like him! I thought she only liked boys who spoke Chinese.”

“That’s what I thought, too,” said Third Sister. “Second Sister told me what really changed her mind was how good he is in math. He’s in her math class, you know.”

As I listened to our act, the lines suddenly sounded really stiff and unnatural. How could anyone believe something as lame as this?

Maybe Kim and Third Sister felt that way, too. Their voices petered out and stopped. Then without another word, we began to shuffle off. I didn’t dare to look behind me at Paul to see how he had taken our words.



We went to the food court, where we were supposed to wait for Mrs. O'Meara to pick us up. For a while the three of us sipped our drinks without saying anything. I broke the silence and got the last drop of my drink with a loud slurp. "Do you think he fell for the act?"

"I don't know," muttered Kim. "It was okay when we were practicing the other day, but it sounded awfully phony just now."

Third Sister and I nodded. We both knew what she meant. In a way, I was almost relieved.

Suddenly Third Sister grabbed my arm. "Isn't that him over there?" she hissed.

She was right. Paul was standing at the pie counter, buying some refreshments. He was also buying something for his companion, the girl standing next to him.

It seemed that we had been wasting our time: Paul already had a girlfriend!



I felt a kick on my leg from Third Sister. She had seen Paul's girlfriend, too. I nodded and pointed out the couple to Kim.

The three of us sighed in unison. "I'm sorry," I said. "I should have found out whether Paul already had a girlfriend before we started all this."

We sat around glumly and thought about all the time and energy we had wasted. Then I heard a step behind me, and a soft cough.

"Hello," said Paul Eng's voice.

I spun around and stared. Paul and his girlfriend were standing by our table.

"Hi, Paul," I said weakly. Then I said the first thing that came into my head, "I'd give anything to hit a home run!"

Third Sister had better manners. "Hi, I don't know if you remember me. I'm Mary, and this is my friend Kim."

Paul looked embarrassed. That wasn't surprising, after the conversation he had overheard. In his place, I would have avoided the Yang family like chicken pox.

But for some strange reason, Paul didn't go away. He just stood there. Three months seemed to go by as we all waited and squirmed.

Finally the girl with Paul poked him. He cleared his throat, swallowed, and said, "This is my sister, Melanie. You met her at the *dim sum* restaurant, didn't you?"

Now I realized that the girl looked familiar. She wasn't his girlfriend at all. She was his sister! There was still hope our trick might work.

Melanie poked her brother again, and again Paul cleared his throat. "You have another sister, don't you? Her name is Yinglan, right?" His voice sort of died off.

Third Sister and I nodded solemnly. "That's right," I acknowledged. "I do have another sister, called Yinglan."

There was a pause. The five of us stared at one another some more, and three more months passed.

It's hard for Americans to remember Chinese names. Unlike Third Sister, Second Sister refused to give herself an English name. I thought it was a good sign that Paul knew Second Sister's name, since that meant he had really paid attention to her — even before we played our trick.

Melanie poked Paul for the third time, and for the third time he cleared his throat. A family of frogs must have set up housekeeping with his tonsils. “Er . . . I noticed Yinglan in my math class,” he began. “But she's only a sophomore, isn't she?”

“She got put a year ahead,” admitted Third Sister. Then she added quickly, “It's not that she's a math genius, or anything. It's just that Chinese schools are more advanced in math.”

“Very good, very good . . .,” said Paul absently. Then he must have realized that he sounded foolish, and his voice faded. Suddenly he took a deep breath and said in a rush, “Does your sister ever go out with boys, you know, on dates?”

We did it! Our trick had worked. I caught Third Sister's eye, and we both smothered an urge to laugh. Paul's words were almost exactly the same as the ones Second Sister had overheard while we were doing dishes!

Paul must have seen the laughter in our eyes. He turned red as a sunset. Dragging Melanie after him, he rushed out of the food court. He almost crashed into Mrs. O'Meara, who had come to pick us up.

“Who was that?” asked Mrs. O'Meara, staring after the Engs.
“Friends of yours?”

“I hope so,” Third Sister said slowly. She looked at me and then at Kim. The three of us beamed at one another and silently congratulated ourselves on our success.



作者

MEET THE AUTHOR

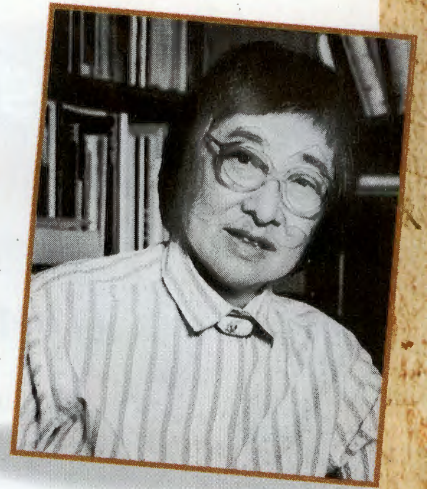
Lensey Namioka

Chinese Heritage: Born in Beijing, China, Namioka moved to the United States at the age of nine. She started school before she could speak English.

Like Author, Like Character: Namioka, like Second Sister, excelled at math in school. She went on to teach math at Cornell University.

Hobby: Music. She says: “[I] prefer to make it myself badly than to hear it performed superbly.”

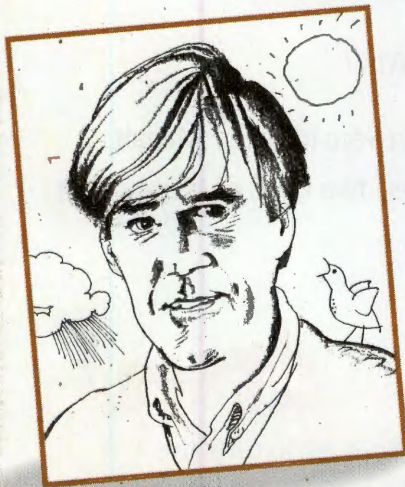
Bylines: Namioka began her literary career by writing humorous articles for a newspaper. She then turned to children’s books. Read her other books about the Yang family: *Yang the Youngest and His Terrible Ear*; *Yang the Third and Her Impossible Family*; and *Yang the Eldest and His Odd Jobs*.



MEET THE ILLUSTRATOR

Kees de Kiefte

插圖



Dutch Heritage: “I was born in a small medieval town alongside a river in Holland a long time ago.”

Advice: “Sit down in a city center and observe people, sometimes making note-like drawings and adding word-like notes. . . . Doing this you LOOK as well as REMEMBER.”

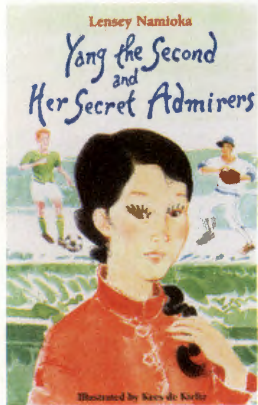
On Himself: “I am a clumsy dreamer coming to life while drawing.”

Internet



To find out more about Lensey Namioka and Kees de Kiefte, visit Education Place. www.eduplace.com/kids

Responding



Think About the Selection

1. If you moved to a new country, like *Second Sister*, what reminders of your heritage would you hold on to? What traditions would you miss?
2. What advice would you give *Second Sister* to help her feel more comfortable with life in the United States?
3. Compare and contrast the way *Second Sister* and Paul Eng react after they hear the false rumor.
4. Do you think Yingtao and his sister should have tricked *Second Sister* and Paul as they did? Explain.
5. On page 405, the author writes: "The five of us stared at one another some more, and three more months passed." Explain this silence.
6. What do you think will happen next in the story? Why?
7. **Connecting/Comparing** Yingtao plays a trick on *Second Sister*. *Mariah* misleads Lynn in *Mariah Keeps Cool*. How are these two kinds of trickery alike and different?

Summarizing

Write a Personal Introduction

It is your job to introduce Paul Eng to *Second Sister*. Write an introduction of one or two paragraphs, telling one of the characters what the other is like.

Tips

- Begin by listing the characters' interests and talents.
- Decide which features should get the most emphasis.
- Be sure your introduction includes each character's name, grade, and age.

Social Studies

Learn About Traditions

Second Sister plays an *erhu*, a Chinese violin with two strings. Look through the story to find other details about Chinese traditions. With a partner, do research to learn more about these traditions. Then write and illustrate a report sharing what you learned.

Listening and Speaking

Act It Out

With five classmates, act out the end of the selection, beginning with the scene at the Science Center. Decide who will play the parts of Yingtao, Third Sister, Kim, Paul, Melanie, and Mrs. O'Meara. Look for clues in the story to help you figure out what each character says or does.



Internet

E-mail a Friend

Would you recommend *Yang the Second and Her Secret Admirers* to a friend? Send an e-mail to a friend telling what you liked or didn't like about it.

Art Link

Skill: How to Read a Magazine Article

Before you read . . .

- Read the title and, if available, the introduction, headings, and captions.
- Think about the topic of the article, and predict what you will learn about it.

As you read . . .

- Look for the main ideas in each section.
- The headings can help you figure out the main ideas.
- Think about how the main ideas fit together.

California
Standards

Standards to Achieve

Reading

- Understand text features (R2.1)
- Discern main ideas (R2.3)

Hands &



The orange crane Lauren is holding takes her about 15 minutes to fold. It's worth the effort, though, says Lauren. According to her grandmother, cranes bring good luck!

Hearts

By Candace Purdom



Read about three girls and their grandmothers who, like Yinglan, keep alive skills that are part of their heritage.

Folds & Creases



Lauren Okada can turn a piece of paper into a duck! She does it through *origami* (or-uh-GAH-mee), the Japanese art of paper folding. Two years ago, Lauren's grandmother Mary began teaching Lauren how to fold, tuck, and crease colorful paper to make an origami box. "At first it was pretty hard," says the ten-year-old from Ohio. "If you don't fold it evenly, it comes out pretty bad!" But Lauren loved making the shapes appear as if by magic. So she spent many more hours with her grandmother, learning to fold stars, birds, balloons, and other intricate shapes.

Lauren's grandmother learned origami from *her* mother, who brought the art with her from Japan. As a girl, Mary often gave her friends the paper objects she made. Now Lauren does the same thing! For one birthday party, Lauren folded each guest a box that she filled with candy. She and her grandmother also made origami ornaments to hang on their Christmas tree. They have a colorful collection that they add to each year. It's a tradition Lauren and her grandmother love to share.





Grandy Jean, Morgan, and a fellow quilter, Louise Carter, add stitches to a Double Wedding Ring quilt, a design often made for new brides.

Bits & Pieces



More than a century ago, Morgan Friday's great-great-grandmother stitched together pieces of fabric to make colorful patchwork quilts. Today, Morgan and her grandmother, Grandy Jean, carry on the tradition at old-fashioned quilting bees in their Texas town.

When Morgan, 12, first joined the quilters, she helped out by threading needles and organizing the quilting supply cabinet. But soon the women invited her to sew. In the beginning, Morgan was nervous. She remembers asking, "What if I

mess up?" The women answered, "Just take out the stitches and start again!"

During bees, Morgan helps connect the top, middle, and bottom layers of the quilt with tiny stitches. Sewing around every piece on the top layer can take the group 20 to 24 hours! But Morgan loves sitting and listening to the stories the women share as they stitch.

Morgan's grandmother has a saying: "When you give somebody a quilt, tell them to count the stitches and they'll know how much you love them." Morgan agrees; "It means a lot because you put a lot of work into it!"

Twists & Coils




Cynthia Burns, 10, loves going to the Charleston Market with her grandmother. That's where they make and sell sweetgrass

baskets, a craft that's been in her family for centuries. Cynthia's ancestors came to South Carolina from Africa as slaves. They brought with them the special basket-making technique that her family still uses today.

Sweetgrass grows in nearby marshes and is known for its sweet smell. Cynthia began twisting the grass into baskets when she was seven. Her Grandma Helen starts

each one by tying a bundle of long pine needles in a knot — needles that she and Cynthia rake up together in the forest. Cynthia then twists bunches of sweetgrass and bulrushes. She connects the coils of twisted grass, one row on top of the other, using skinny palm leaves.

Most baskets take Cynthia a few weeks to complete. She signs the bottom of each one she makes. Cynthia is proud of her talent and her family tradition. "My grandma always tells me to pass it down," she says, "and to someday tell my daughter to pass it down, too!"



Cynthia learned to make sweetgrass baskets by watching her grandmother (right) and her mother. The first basket Cynthia made sold for \$35!