A Single Shard Quotations

Directions: From the selection below, choose the quotes for your expository essay that best support your evidence and support your thesis statement. At a minimum, paragraphs 2-4 of your essay will each need one strong quote. Select each carefully.

Honor/Honesty/Integrity

“Foraging in the woods and rubbish heaps, gathering fallen grain-heads in the autumn—these were honorable ways to garner a meal, requiring time and work. But stealing and begging, Crane-man said, made a man no better than a dog.” (p. 6)

“Tree-ear stood slowly, shame hot in his breast. It was true. He could never hope to pay Min for the damaged box…But on hearing the old potter’s mutterings, he lifted his head and turned back toward him. ‘Honorable potter? Sir? Could I not work for you, as payment?’” (p. 18)

“How was it that in enjoying his noontime meal Tree-ear had forgotten his friend? He should have saved some of the food for Crane-man. If it had been the other way around, Crane-man would never have forgotten.” (p. 36)

“Tree-ear had once been tempted to eat all the food at midday, knowing in his heart that the bowl would be refilled. But the very thought frightened him. How quickly one became greedy! [This would be] taking advantage of the kindness of others.” (p. 47)

“Was it wrong to give away a gift that had only just been given him…He thought of Min’s wife, and decided it would not displease her if he chose to give the jacket to his friend.” (p. 57)

“Failure. The most dishonorable failure. He had been unable to keep the vases safe…What would it be like? To leap off and sail through the air as those women had…He thought of his promise to Ajima, and besides, Crane-man was waiting for him. It was his duty to return.” (p.126)

Self-discovery/Self-worth/Purpose

“Scholars read the great words of the world. But you and I must learn to read the world itself.” (p. 7)

“But I [Crane-man] think it is a waste for either of us to spend too much time in sorrow over something we cannot change.” (p. 36)

“Tree-ear had come to appreciate his lowly status, for people tended to ignore his presence entirely and on the rare occasions when they did notice him, usually spoke as if he weren’t there.” (p. 45)

“The other children of Ch’ulp’o had long spurned him, for orphans were considered very bad luck…the other potters’ assistants tolerated his presence, but a friendly greeting was still a rarity.” (p. 60)

“If a man is keeping an idea to himself, and that idea is taken by stealth or trickery…it is stealing. But once a man has revealed his idea to others, it is no longer his alone. It belongs to the world.” (p. 64)
“Tree-ear’s eyes filled with tears. Tree-ear was kin to no one, and yet Min’s wife wished for him to call her Ajima [Auntie]. He did not even know if he could say the word.” (p. 91)

“Crane-man had never even hinted that Tree-ear should not make the journey. He had been proud of Tree-ear’s courage…Memories layered themselves in Tree-ear’s mind…The tears came then.” (p. 145)

“Tree-ear had already turned to leave when the full import of Min’s words reached his understanding. A wheel of your own? Min was going to teach him to throw pots!” (p. 146)

“Tree-ear, if you would live with us from now on, I would ask a favor of you…We would like to give you a new name…It was an honor bestowed on siblings. No longer would Tree-ear go by the name of an orphan.” (p. 147)

“How long would it be before he had skill enough to create a design worthy of such a vase? One hill, one valley…One day at a time, he would journey through the years until he came upon the perfect design.” (p. 148)

**Overcoming Obstacles**

“If there was more to having a home than Crane-man and the bridge, Tree-ear had neither knowledge nor need of it.” (p. 9)

“The pillow of fluid that had formed on his palm during the long hours of wielding the ax had burst. Blood ran from the wound, mixing with dirt and small bits of bark. Tree-ear stared at it [his injury], and he could not stop the tears that pressed hot behind his eyes.” (p. 21)

“By the time the cart was loaded, Tree-ear wore mud like a second skin. Even raising his eyebrows was difficult, for his forehead was stiff with dried clay. And he was so exhausted that he could hardly bear the thought of wheeling the now-heavy cart back to Min’s house. (p. 33)

“The flame of hope that burned in him was smaller now, but no less bright or fierce, and he tended it almost daily with visions of the pot he would make.” (p. 52)

“Tree-ear rose before first light now, spending an hour or so in the fields before going to work. At the end of the day, he returned to the field again, collecting rice even after darkness had rendered his eyes useless.” (p. 53)

“Of all the problems you may meet on your journey, it will be people who are the greatest danger. But it will also be people to whom you must turn if ever you are in need of aid.” (p. 107)

“Stop your struggle, worthless one…We mean only to rob you, but it would not be past us to harm you if you prove too much trouble.” (p. 123)

“…he slept outside a house and accepted whatever was offered in the way of food. If there was no village, he slept in a ditch by the side of the road or under a tree in the forest. He ate perhaps once every two days…” (p. 131)
**Confronting Fears**

“Foxes were dreaded animals…they were known to be fiendishly clever. Some people believed that foxes possessed evil magic… Even to say the word [fox] made a trickle of fear run down Tree-ear’s spine.” (p. 82)

“How could he possibly think of making such a journey…He might well lose his way. And who knew what perils awaited him? Robbers, wild animals, rockslides…What had he been thinking?” (p. 92)

“Your mind knows that you are going to Songdo. But you must not tell your body. It must think one hill, one valley, one day at a time. In that way, your spirit will not grow weary before you have even begun to walk.” (p. 93)

“I have a journey to make…Over a road unknown to me. A thousand things could go wrong.” (p. 102)

“We are afraid of the things we do not know—just because we do not know them.” (p. 115)

“Go climb the Rock of the Falling Flowers…But remember that leaping into death is not the only way to show true courage.” (p. 117)

“Tree-ear bowed low. As he bent down, his courage suddenly fled, leaving his knees as weak as reeds…He had been a fool. First a failure, now a fool…” (p. 136)

“Amid his despair, Tree-ear still felt grateful—grateful that the emissary had not laughed in his face for the stupidity of traveling all that way with only a single shard to show.” (p. 137)

**Other Memorable Quotes**

“…a well-kept tradition can be stronger than law.” (p. 97)

“My friend, the same wind that blows one door shut often blows another open.” (p. 97)

“Why was it that pride and foolishness were so often close companions?” (p. 102)

“There were some things that could not be molded into words.” (p. 139)