



The Invisible Seam



ANDY WILLIAM FREW illustrated by JUN MATSUOKA

CULTURE CLUB

Honesty policy

A children's book imparts a gentle lesson in personal integrity.

The best children's books tell a good story, of course, and have fun pictures to look at. But the most engaging books also give youngsters something to think about — nothing too complicated or high-handed, but a small lesson to nurture their spirit.

The Invisible Seam, the story of a young Japanese girl at the beginning of the twentieth century, by Andy William Frew, does just that. The book's heroine, Michi, learns about the importance of integrity when she goes to work as a seamstress for a kimono-maker and encounters a group of jealous girls who try to sabotage her work. Michi wishes her young colleagues were nice to her, but she knows that her solemn promise to do her best work is more important than being liked by her peers.

Frew, a third-grade teacher at Providence's Community Preparatory School, sees how peer pressure influences children. "No matter where or when they've lived, a child's only real defense against peer pressure has been personal integrity," he says. "The best way I know how to teach it is by example."

He found that example right in his own family. The story is based on the childhood experiences of Frew's wife's great-grandmother a century ago in Japan.

The book, from Moon Mountain Publishing, in North Kingstown, is a sweet read for six- to ten-year-olds, with beautiful pictures by Japanese illustrator Jun Matsuoka. Find it at area bookstores or at www.moonmountain.com, for \$15.95.

—Paula M. Bodah