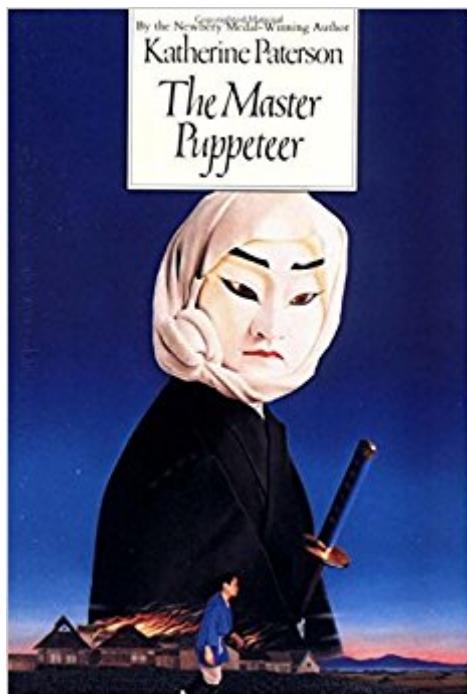


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# The Master Puppeteer



## **Synopsis**

Who is the man called Sabura, the mysterious bandit who robs the rich and helps the poor? And what is his connection with Yosida, the harsh and ill-tempered master of feudal Japan's most famous puppet theater? Young Jiro, an apprentice to Yosida, is determined to find out, even at risk to his own life. Meanwhile, Jiro devotes himself to learning puppetry. Kinshi, the puppet master's son, tutors him. When his sheltered life at the theater is shattered by mobs of hungry, rioting peasants, Jiro becomes aware of responsibilities greater than his craft. As he schemes to help his friend Kinshi and to find his own parent, Jiro stumbles onto a dangerous and powerful secret....

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"Excellent writing and irresistible intrigue." (Starred review)--" School Library Journal" A brilliant novel. Compelling drama, swift and exciting."--" Publishers Weekly

Katherine Paterson is one of the world's most celebrated and beloved authors. Among her many awards are two Newberys and two National Book Awards, and she was recently named a "Living Legend" by the Library of Congress. She has been published in more than 22 languages in a variety of formats, from picture books to historical novels.

A great one that is full of surprises and shows great examples of friendship at times. Unlike some other books with hard vocabulary, this one is mostly filled with easy to understand vocabulary. There would be some vocabulary that most people wouldn't know well because of the Japanese setting. I like the plot of this book for many reasons, but mostly because it is just a great book is

general because of the story, not the morals or other things. Long story short, I enjoyed this book very much.

I enjoy this author, so I was interested in reading this book as well as the others I have enjoyed. It is an interesting way to learn of Japanese history and culture; the mystery was well written with many twists, turns, and of course, surprising revelations. I think young mystery readers may enjoy this book.

Bought this to use for homeschooling. Has synopsis, background story information, Japan map from time period, glossary, pre-reading activities, chapter questions, crossword puzzles with words and definitions, literary elements and devices, vocabulary, venn diagrams, cloze activity, post reading activities and suggestions for further reading. In typical black and white style assignments. No pictures except for one map. Very happy with purchase.

Unexpectedly awesome!

I'm always trying to keep a good supply of entertaining and worthwhile books for my well-read 11-year old. He said that he learned a bit about Japan and thoroughly enjoyed the story of The Master Puppeteer.

This is a copy/paste from my Goodreads review where two stars="It was OK" At least ten years have passed since I last read this book and couldn't remember a thing about it although I do remember reading Of Nightingales That Weep in which the protagonist was a girl. In this second of Paterson's historical fiction novels, set in 18th century Japan, a young boy is driven by hunger and his family's desperate poverty to apprentice himself to a puppet theater. He makes friends with the other boys, particularly the theater owner's son, and is a quick enough learner to earn a promotion from curtain puller to foot operator. Meanwhile, a Robin Hood-type character anonymously stirs up revolts by robbing the rich food merchants and distributing the food to the hungry poor. Older readers won't have much trouble discerning the true identity of this character and figuring out the mystery. With all the foreign names in this large cast of characters to keep track of, it can be hard to keep everyone straight. The story drags in places before a rushed ending earns this book the two star rating I gave it. It is merely OK for anyone curious to learn more about the history and culture of Japan and for being a suitable enough story for readers of all ages. This is not Katherine Paterson's best book but

luckily she has many other excellent works of children's literature out there for readers to discover and enjoy. I recommend those first.

I liked this book because the story was on a very unique subject, puppeteers and a famine that leads the whole country of Japan to hunger. I also enjoyed that there were lots of highly intensive vocabulary words. One thing I didn't like was the illustrations. The cover kind of freaked me out when I first saw it. Through out the book I saw more creepy drawings such as the lady with the guitar in the beginning of the book, Saburo, and Okada. If it wasn't for the drawings it would have a five-star book.

The Master Puppeteer is a great choice to use in an upper elementary or middle school classroom. Katherine Paterson does a great job of describing the inner workings of a traditional Japanese puppet theatre, while at the same time weaving a "Robin Hood" type story in that is sure to keep the students interested, as well as attempting to solve the mystery of just who our "Robin Hood" or in this case Saburo. In my own classroom I use it to first explore elements of culture, and secondly to introduce elements of the theatre. The students can attempt to recreate some of the puppet shows described in the book, although with less elaborate puppets. Besides this the book has some important lessons to teach. As Young Jiro, the protagonist, is learning to become a puppeteer and to be a man, he is faced with many difficult decisions about right and wrong and being able to trust those around him. Students can relate to many of the moral dilemmas Jiro finds himself in, both with his peers and his mother. I definitely recommend bringing this one to class.

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