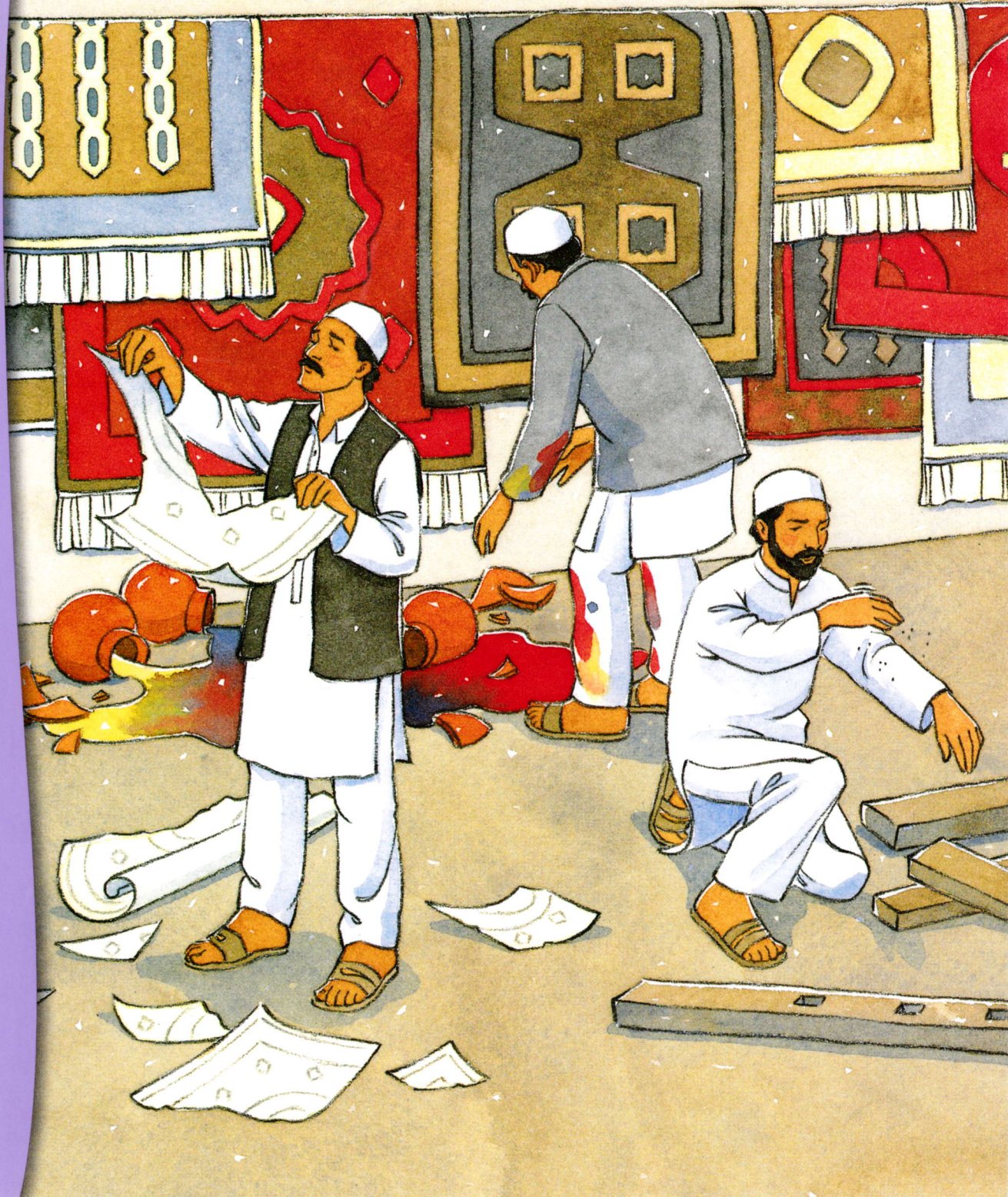


A Bundle of Sticks

retold by Katherine Evans



- 1 Once there lived an old Persian rugmaker and his three sons.
- 2 One day the old man called his sons—Tashi, Mashi, and Sashi—to him.
- 3 “My sons,” he said, “it is time that I turn my shop over to you. Remember, in all Persia there are no better rugs than ours.”
- 4 From then on, Tashi made the patterns, Mashi mixed the beautiful dyes, and Sashi worked at the loom.
- 5 Now it happened that the prince of Persia was going to marry a lovely princess of Baghdad.
- 6 The prince wondered what gift he could give the princess that would please her most. He thought and thought and decided on a rug. “That’s the very thing,” he said. “In all the world Persia is known for its beautiful rugs.”
- 7 So the prince ordered the rugmakers of Persia to set to work. Each rugmaker was to bring their finest rug to the palace on the wedding day. The princess herself would choose the finest rug. A rich prize would go to its maker.
- 8 When Tashi, Mashi, and Sashi heard of the prize, their eyes sparkled. They said, “If we win the prize, we will be known all over Persia. Everyone will buy our rugs.”
- 9 The wedding day was six months away. Tashi began to plan the pattern. As he worked, he thought, *How wonderful it would be if I alone should have the prize. It is I who makes the pattern. Everything depends upon me!*
- 10 When at last Tashi finished his pattern, Mashi and Sashi said, “Show us!”
- 11 “No,” said Tashi. “I have worked hard, and this is a beautiful pattern. It is sure to win the prize for me. After all, without my pattern where would you be?”
- 12 “Where would we be, indeed?” said Mashi with anger. “Would there be a rug at all without my colors? It is I who should have the prize!”
- 13 Sashi shouted, “There can be no rug if I do not weave it! I should have the prize!”
- 14 And so the three sons quarreled while other weavers were busy. Many beautiful rugs were soon finished. However the old rugmaker’s sons just kept quarreling.
- 15 Things went from bad to worse. In a rage, Tashi tore his pattern to bits. Mashi gave Sashi a push toward the dye. All the bright colors spilled on the floor and flowed into one ugly brown puddle. Sashi shoved Mashi against the loom. It cracked and broke.
- 16 Now the wedding day was but a month away. Tashi had no pattern, Mashi’s colors were spilled, and Sashi’s loom was broken.
- 17 The old father saw that something must be done. He called his sons and ordered them to bring him some sticks. Holding out one stick, he asked each son, “Can you break this one stick?”
- 18 “Easily,” laughed the sons.
- 19 Next the old man took all the sticks and tied them into a bundle.
- 20 “Now,” he said, “break the sticks.”
- 21 Each son tried, and each failed. The bundle of sticks was too strong.
- 22 “My sons,” said the old father, “you can see for yourselves. One stick is weak. But three together are strong. It is the same with people. Alone you are weak. Together you are strong.”
- 23 The sons did see—each needed the others. Although time was short, the sons worked together to try for the prize.
- 24 On the day of the wedding the three sons took their rug to the princess. The colors flashed in the sun. The pattern pleased the eye. The weaving was smooth and perfect.
- 25 “Here is the rug I want,” the princess said to them. “The prize is yours. You have won it by working together.”
- 26 Even to this day Sashi, Mashi, and Tashi keep a bundle of sticks hanging from a peg in their shop.

COMPREHENSION

- A** Choose the best ending for each sentence. Write *a*, *b*, or *c*.
- In this story the brothers learn that
 - quarreling is a waste of time.
 - people must work together.
 - Both **a** and **b**
 - Tashi, Mashi, and Sashi's main trouble was
 - thoughtfulness.
 - selfishness.
 - laziness.
 - The father had to do something so
 - his sons could get back to work.
 - his sons might win the prize.
 - Both **a** and **b**
 - After they talked with their father, the brothers had to
 - fix the loom, remake the pattern, and remix the colors.
 - get each stick from the bundle and try to break it.
 - Both **a** and **b**
 - The bundle of sticks represented
 - how many rugs had been made.
 - the strength of three people working together.
 - the prize that the brothers had won.

LEARN ABOUT WORDS

- B** Often you can find out the meaning of a word by seeing how it is used in a story. The other words in the story give you clues.

Find the word in the story that best fits each meaning. (A paragraph number tells you where to look.) Write the word.

- colorings for cloth or yarn (4)
- a design (9)
- make; put threads together to make cloth (13)
- fury; great anger (15)
- pushed (15)

- C** **too** = also

two = the number after *one*

Words that sound alike but have different spellings and meanings are called homophones. *Too* and *two* are homophones.

Look at each word in **bold type** below. Note the paragraph number. Look at the paragraph and find the homophone. Which of the two words fits in the blank in the sentence? Write the word.

- 6** **suns** (1)

The man helped his _____.

- 7** **hours** (3)

Weavers worked for many _____.

- 8** **brake** (17)

It is easy to _____ one stick.

- 9** **week** (22)

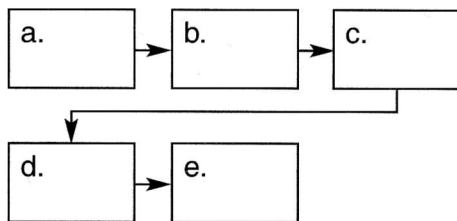
It takes far longer than a _____ to weave a rug.

- 10** **I** (24)

The rug pleased the princess's _____.

THINK ABOUT IT

- D** Look at the story map below. Complete the story map by writing the letter that tells in what order each event happened.



- 1 The princess gave the prize to the three sons.
- 2 The prince ordered all Persian rugmakers to make a beautiful rug.
- 3 The three rugmakers fought and ruined their equipment.
- 4 Their father taught them a valuable lesson about cooperation.
- 5 Tashi, Mashi, and Sashi each wanted the prize for himself.

- E** *Sashi's* loom is broken.

You add an 's' to a noun to show that someone owns something. There are also special pronouns that show the same thing.

His loom is broken.

Read the sentences. Which word or words does each underlined pronoun stand for? Write *a* or *b*.

- 6 The father gave the shop to the sons. It was theirs.
 a The father's
 b The sons'
- 7 The sons wanted to make a rug for the prince. It was their chance to be famous.
 a The sons'
 b The prince's

- 8 Mashi told Tashi, "Your pattern is not important!"

- a Mashi's
- b Tashi's

- 9 Sashi told Mashi, "My loom is broken because of you!"

- a Mashi's
- b Sashi's

- 10 The princess looked at the rug made by the sons. She thought their rug was best.

- a The sons'
- b The princess's

- F** The words *a*, *an*, and *the* are called articles. You use *a* if the next word tells about one thing and begins with a consonant.

Did Tashi make *a* pattern?

You use *an* if the next word tells about one thing and begins with a vowel.

Their father wanted *an* answer.

You use *the* if the next word names a particular person, place, or thing. You also use *the* if the next word tells about more than one.

The sons made *the* best rug.

Read the sentences. Which article in parentheses () fits each sentence? Write the word.

- 11 Mashi broke (the, an) loom.
- 12 The prince was to marry (a, an) princess of Baghdad.
- 13 He wanted to give (a, the) princess something special.
- 14 The sons had (a, an) argument.
- 15 Then (a, an) wonderful thing happened.