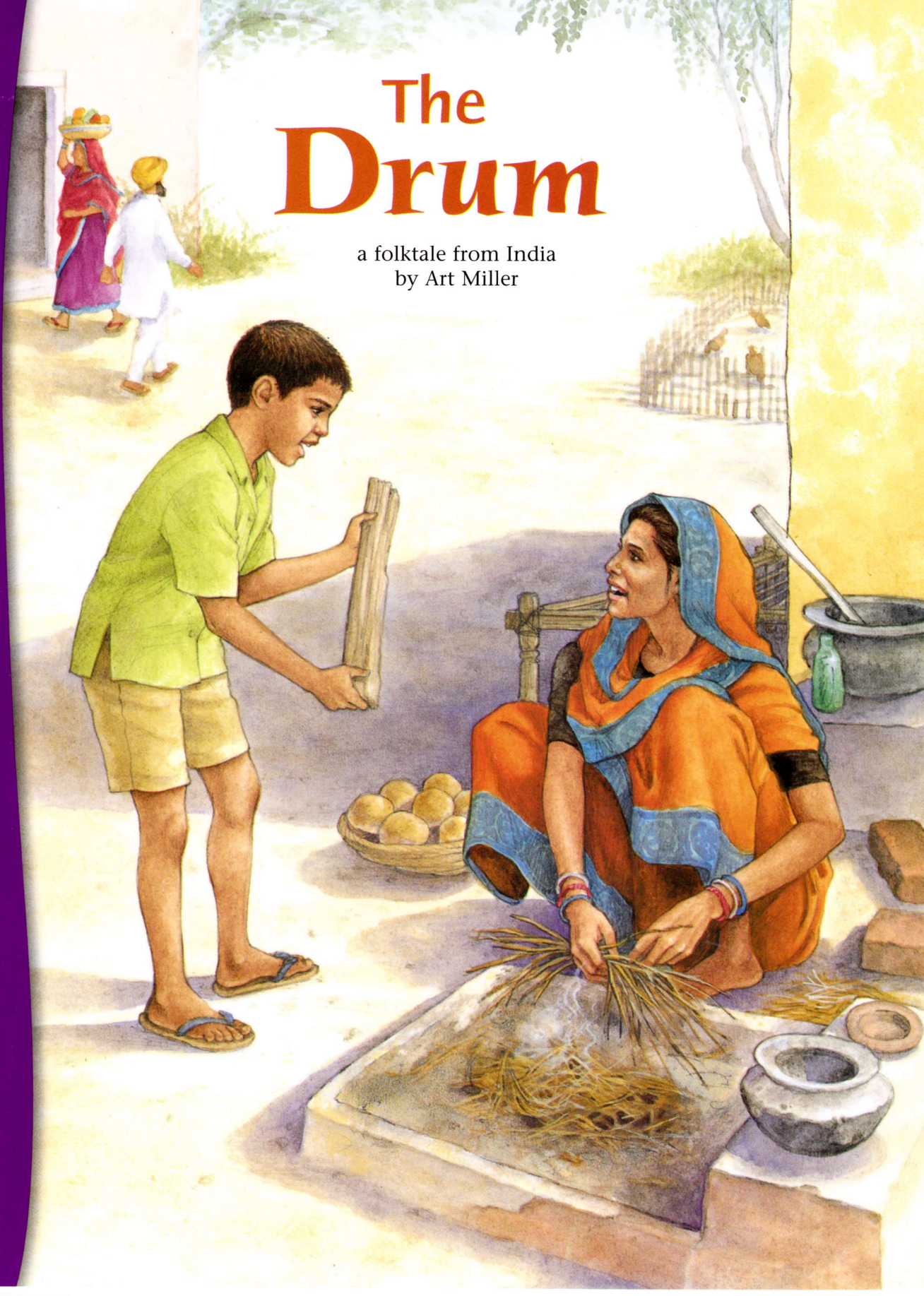


# The Drum

a folktale from India  
by Art Miller





- 1 Long ago a mother and her son lived in a tiny village. The mother worked hard but was paid only a little rice each day. Though they had little, the mother and child were content.
- 2 One day the mother asked the boy, "What would you like from the market?"
- 3 He replied, "I've been dreaming of only one thing, but we cannot afford something so unnecessary."
- 4 "What is it you wish, child?" his mother gently coaxed.
- 5 "A drum," he answered.
- 6 Now the mother was truly sad because she knew she'd never be able to buy a drum. As she walked to the market, she saw a chunk of wood. She picked it up and gave it to her son on her return. The son did not know what he would do with the wood, but he kept it with him always.
- 7 One day as the boy walked through the village, he saw a woman trying to start a fire with grass but having no luck. A cloud of smoke surrounded her, and she was coughing. The boy saw her problem and offered his wood. She used the wood to start her fire and gave the boy a piece of fresh bread.
- 8 Walking farther, he saw the wife of the village potter. In her lap was a crying toddler. The boy asked what was wrong with the child, and the woman said he was hungry and she had neither food nor money to buy food. So he gave her the bread. With gratitude, the young mother gave him a pot.
- 9 Down the road, the boy was distressed to hear a couple arguing. He realized that

the man washed clothes for a living. The man was angry because the woman had broken the pot he used to boil clothes in. The boy stepped up and timidly said, "Please don't argue. You can have this pot." The man accepted the pot and in return, gave the boy a coat.

- 10 Soon the boy saw a man wearing few clothes, shivering and wet, holding the reins of a horse. The boy inquired as to what had happened. The man explained that a robber had taken his clothes and pushed him into the river. Then the robber ran off and left the horse. The boy felt sorry for the man and gave him the coat. The man appreciated the coat and told the boy he had no use for a horse. He asked if the boy might take it away, and the boy agreed.
- 11 Just then the boy encountered a bridegroom, his family, and musicians waiting to start their wedding procession. The boy saw that the bridegroom had no horse and knew it was unacceptable for a groom to arrive on foot. He asked where his horse was, and the groom's father grumbled something about a man being late. The boy offered them his horse, which they accepted with enthusiasm. In his happiness, the groom's father said to one of the musicians, "Give this boy a drum." And so he did.
- 12 The boy couldn't believe his good fortune. He took the drum, thanked the man, and ran all the way home to tell his mother the story of how he got the drum. It all started with a small piece of wood.

## COMPREHENSION

**A** Choose the best ending for each sentence. Write *a*, *b*, or *c*.

- 1 Another good name for this story is
  - a** The Good Son.
  - b** Kindness Leads to Kindness.
  - c** A Walk through the Village.
- 2 The mother's problem was that
  - a** she did not have enough money to buy a drum.
  - b** she didn't have a job.
  - c** her son was greedy.
- 3 Each person the boy met had a problem, and each problem was solved when the boy
  - a** gave them money.
  - b** gave them whatever he had.
  - c** went to the store for them.

- 4 Each person in the story gave the boy something to show that he or she
  - a** was thankful.
  - b** felt sorry for him.
  - c** had something he needed.
- 5 If the boy had never given away his wood, he
  - a** might have sold it.
  - b** could have made something out of it.
  - c** would not have the drum.

## 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.

- 1 small group of houses (1)
- 2 prodded; encouraged (4)
- 3 young child (8)
- 4 state of being thankful (8)
- 5 feeling great pain and sorrow (9)
- 6 in a shy way (9)
- 7 met; came upon; saw (11)

**C** A word may have more than one meaning. Its meaning will depend on how it is used.\*

The *fly* buzzed around the room.  
The bird will *fly* to its nest.

Look at each word in **bold type** below. Note the paragraph number. Look back at the paragraph. Which meaning does the word have there? Write *a* or *b*.

**8 content** (1)

- a** what is inside a package or book
- b** comfortable and happy

**9 couple** (9)

- a** two items that are alike
- b** husband and wife

**10 fortune** (12)

- a** luck
- b** large amount of money

## THINK ABOUT IT

**D** Read each set of sentences. Which word in **bold type** is the best ending? Write the word.

- 1 The mother knew she would never be able to buy her son a drum. She felt \_\_\_\_\_.

**angry happy sad**

- 2 The son did not know what he would do with the wood, but he kept it with him. He felt \_\_\_\_\_.

**silly grateful sorry**

- 3 The first woman could not get a fire started. She felt \_\_\_\_\_.

**tired frustrated content**

- 4 The bridegroom's father did not know where the man with the horse was. He felt \_\_\_\_\_.

**angry worried thoughtful**

- 5 The boy finally got his drum. He felt \_\_\_\_\_.

**content tired thrilled**

**E** unread = **un** + read  
misread = **mis** + read

The letters *un-* and *mis-* are called prefixes. A prefix is added to the beginning of a word. It changes the word's meaning. *Un-* sometimes means "not." The word *unread* means "not read." *Mis-* sometimes means "wrongly." The word *misread* means "read wrongly."

Read each set of sentences. Choose the word in parentheses ( ) that makes sense. Write the word.

- 6 *Coaxed* is an easy word to spell incorrectly. It is often (unspelled, misspelled).  
7 The son was very good and never behaved wrongly. The young boy never (unbehaved, misbehaved).

- 8 It was not acceptable for a groom to be on foot in his wedding procession. For the groom to walk was (unacceptable, misacceptable).

- 9 The boy knew it was not healthy for someone to breathe in smoke. It was (unhealthy, mishealthy).

- 10 None of the objects the boy got was used wrongly. Nothing was (unused, misused).

**F** They *collect* folktales.  
They have a *collection*.

Adding the letters *-ion* to a verb like *collect* changes it into a noun—*collection*. If the verb ends in *e*, the *e* is dropped before *ion* is added.

dictat~~e~~ + **ion** = dictation

Add *-ion* to the word in **bold type** to complete the second sentence. (Remember to drop the final *e*.)  
Write the new word.

- 11 In this story, the boy did one kind **act** after another. Every \_\_\_\_\_ was kind.

- 12 All the people in the story did **appreciate** the help the boy gave. They showed their \_\_\_\_\_ by giving him something in return.

- 13 Hearing the man and wife arguing made the boy **tense**. It caused a lot of \_\_\_\_\_.

- 14 After the boy got the drum, he wanted to **celebrate**. Of course, he would play his drum at the \_\_\_\_\_.

- 15 This story is entirely **correct**. It needs no \_\_\_\_\_.