



The Boy and the Drum

A folktale about giving and kindness transforms into a lively play! This versatile and adaptable piece can be performed on stage or in the classroom. Hours of fun and learning guaranteed!



**PRATHAM
BOOKS**

A Book in Every Child's Hand

The Boy and the Drum

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This play is based on a modern form of theatre called Body Theatre. The beauty of this form is that it can be done impromptu, at any place, with as many or as few actors as convenient, with or without props. You will find suggestions on how to perform this play at the end of the book. And now the play!

The

Boy

and

the

Drum

Narrator/s

(stepping out to one corner of the stage): A poor woman had a son. She worked hard as a gardener in wealthy houses in their town. They gave her some grain in return.

One

child

mimes

the

mother,

while

other

children

form

groups

of

the

well-to-do

families.

The

mother

goes

to

each

group

and

mimes

gardening

for

these

groups.

Having

created

this

30-second

scene,

all

the

groups,

including

the

mother

freeze

in

their

positions.

Narrator:

But she felt bad because she could never afford to buy nice clothes or lovely toys for her son.

A

young

boy

comes

running

through

the

chorus,

singing

a

song

and

playing

mime

cricket.

He

freezes

with

a

pose

at

the

centre

of

the

stage.

Narrator:

The little lad was bright and cheerful. Not having any toys or nice clothes did not bother him. After a hard day's work, the mother was going to the market to sell the grain she had received.

The

mother

steps

towards

the

boy

and

the

rest

of

the

frozen

actors

go

back

to

the

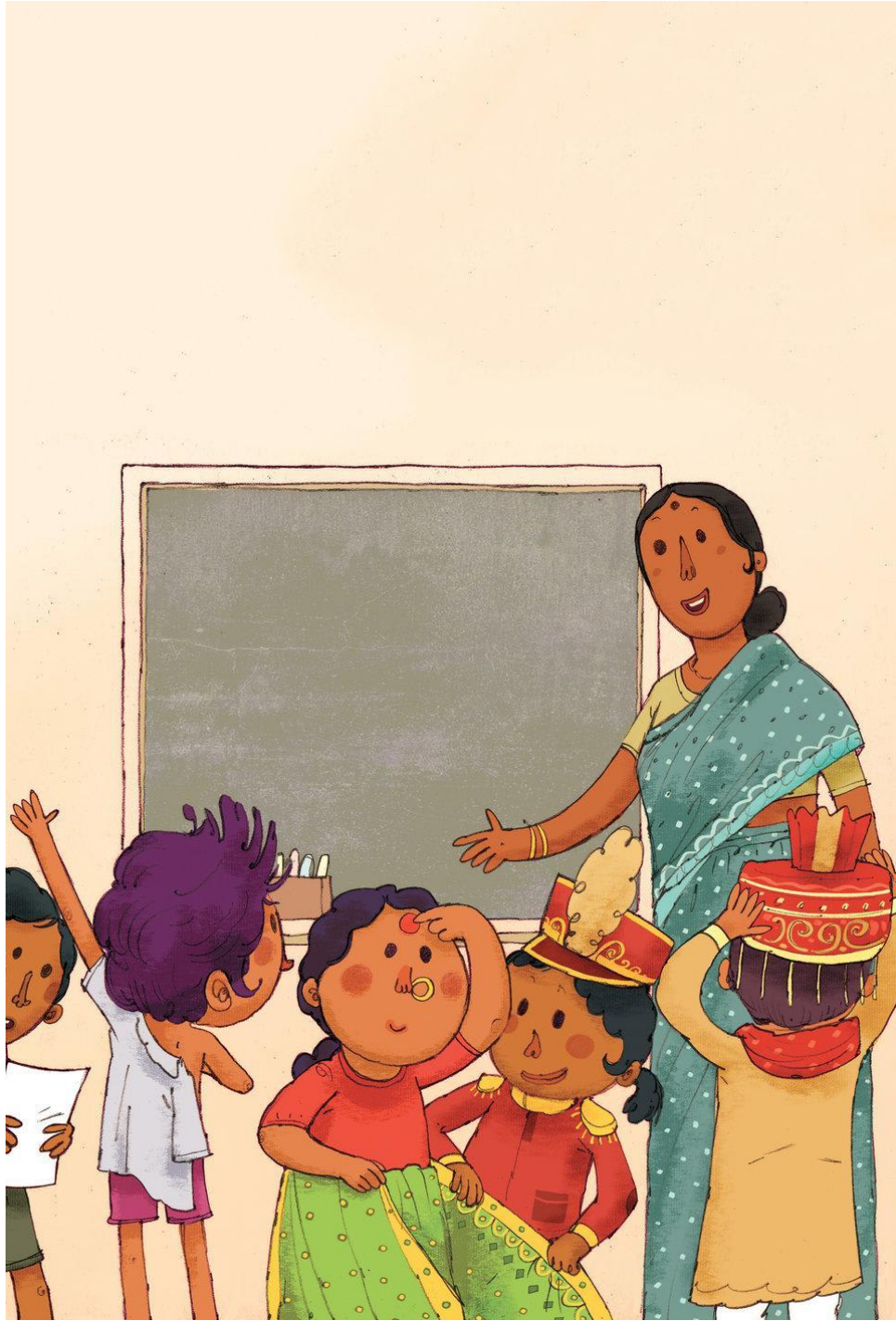
chorus.

Narrator:

She asked her son:

Mother:

What can I get for you from the market, little one?



Narrator:

Now the boy was fascinated with the sound of a drum. So he said:

Boy:

A drum, mother, I would love to have a drum to play with.

During

the

following

narration,

the

boy

continues

to

be

frozen

in

his

position

while

the

mother

circles

the

stage.

She

meets

one

actor

who

steps

out

of

the

chorus

as

the

merchant

to

whom

she

sells

the

grain,

another

from

whom

she

buys

flour,

and

on

the

way

she

picks

up

a

piece

of

wood,

and

goes

back

to

the

boy.

Narrator:

The mother knew she would never have enough money to buy a drum

for her son. She went to the market, sold her grain and bought some gram flour and some salt. While returning home, she felt sad that she would have to face him empty-handed. So when she saw a nice piece of wood on the road, she picked it up and brought it home.

The son did not know what to do with the piece of wood. Yet he happily carried it with him when he went out to play. A happy song sprang to his lips and he went along singing it:

Boy moves around the stage while chorus watches him.

Boy:

Tum-ti-tee Tum-ti-tee-Tum-ti-tee-Tum-ti-tee- Tum-ti-tee- Tum-ti-tee Tot

Tum-ti-tee

Tum-ti-tee-Tum-ti-tee-Tum-ti-tee- Tum-ti-tee- Tum-ti-tee Tot!

I asked for a drum and look what I got,

A lovely piece of wood!

I asked for a drum and look what I got,

I think my luck is good!

Tum-ti-tee Tum-ti-tee-Tum-ti-tee-Tum-ti-tee- Tum-ti-tee- Tum-ti-tee Tot

Tum-ti-tee Tum-ti-tee-Tum-ti-tee-Tum-ti-tee- Tum-ti-tee- Tum-ti-tee Tot!



Towards the end of the song, an old man emerges from the chorus. He mimes trying to light his stove. As he coughs, the entire chorus coughs, thus amplifying the effect of his condition.

Narrator:

And as he went skipping along on his way, he came across an old man. The old man was trying to light his stove using some cow-dung cakes. The fire was not catching and there was smoke all around. The smoke made the man's eyes water and he was coughing. The little boy ran up to him and said:

Boy:

What is the matter Grandpa? Can I help you in any way?

Old

Man:

Ah! Little one, I am trying to cook some food, but I am unable to start a fire.



For you see,

My fire will just not start

I need to cook. Oh! Take a look

My fire will never start! Can somebody start this fire?

My eyes are red, my arms are tired.

I need to eat, I need some food.

Oh! For a dry piece of wood!

Boy:

Here, Grandpa, you can use my piece of wood to start your fire.

The

following

actions

are

mimed

as

the

narrator

speaks.

Narrator:

The old man was very pleased. He lit his fire, made some bread and gave a piece to the boy.

The

old

man

steps

back

into

the

chorus.

The boy skipped along singing his song:

Boy: La-la-la-la- La-la-la-la- La-la-la-la- LaLa-la-la-la- La-la-la-la- La-la-la-la- La!

My piece of wood got me some food.

A lovely piece of bread.

My piece of wood is not a drum, but it
Got me bread.

A lovely piece of bread.

La-la-la-la- La-la-la-la- La-la-la-la- LaLa-la-la-la- La-la-la-la- La-la-la-la- La!

Narrator:

The boy walked on till he came upon a potter's wife. She had her baby in her arms. The baby was wailing and flailing her arms.

As

before,

the

potter's

wife

emerges

from

the

chorus,

as

if

with

a

baby

in

her

arms.

While

the

mother

tries

to

pacify

the

baby,

the

chorus

hums

a

lullaby

softly.

This

lullaby

can

be

a

regional

song.

The boy said:

Boy:

Dear lady, why is your daughter crying?

Potter's Wife:

My little one is hungry. She has not had anything to eat since morning. I cannot give her anything as there is nothing in the house. I wish I had some bread to give her.

Narrator:

The kind hearted boy gave the lady his bread. She gave the bread to her child who ate it eagerly and stopped crying. She was so pleased with the boy that she gave him a large pot.

The

above

actions

are

mimed

as

the

narrator

voices

the

lines.

After

the

action,

the

woman

with

the

baby

goes

back

to

the

chorus

while

the

boy

continues,

carrying

his

pot.

The boy went along humming his funny song:

Boy:

Tum-ti-tee Tum-ti-tee-Tum-ti-tee-Tum-ti-tee- Tum-ti-tee- Tum-ti-tee Tot
Tum-ti-tee Tum-ti-tee-Tum-ti-tee-Tum-ti-tee- Tum-ti-tee- Tum-ti-tee Tot!

I gave my bread away and

Look what I got!

I gave my bread away and

Got a lovely pot!

Tum-ti-tee Tum-ti-tee-Tum-ti-tee-Tum-ti-tee- Tum-ti-tee- Tum-ti-tee Tot
Tum-ti-tee Tum-ti-tee-Tum-ti-tee-Tum-ti-tee- Tum-ti-tee- Tum-ti-tee Tot!



Narrator:

The little boy skipped along until he came upon a strange scene at the river bank.

The

chorus

can

move

their

hands

all

together,

symbolizing

the

flowing

river.

The

washerwoman

and

his

wife

emerge

from

the

chorus,

arguing

in

mime.

Their

actions

are

exaggerated

but

their

voices

are

not

heard.

A washerman was quarreling loudly with his wife. The boy stopped and asked:

Boy:

Dear Sir, what is the matter? Why are you quarreling with your wife?

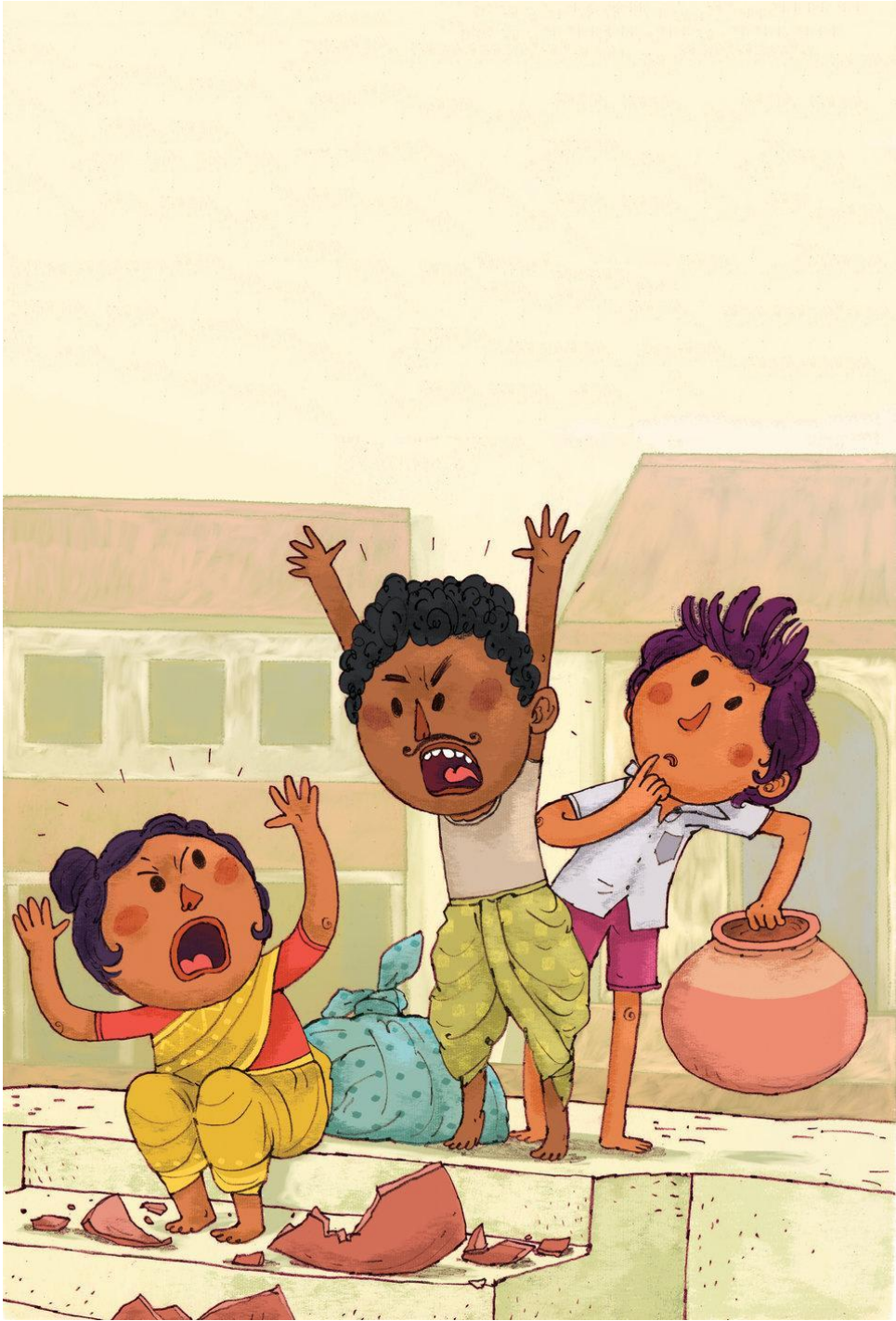
Narrator:

The washerman said:

Washerman:

You see, son, it was like this,
I gave her a pot, I gave her a pot.

And what did she do?
I gave her a pot, it cost a lot.
She went and broke it too!



She broke the pot, the last of my lot,
And now I feel so sore!
I gave her the pot, the pot she broke.
The pot I need to boil my clothes.
Without the pot, my clothes will rot.
Oh, they will remain soiled!
So you see, I have nothing to boil my clothes in before I wash them. And
because of her, my trade will suffer.

Boy:

Dear Sir, don't quarrel with your wife. Please take this pot of mine and
use it.

Narrator:

The washerman was very happy with the pot. He was so pleased with
the boy's good nature that he gave him a nice coat in return.

The

entire

chorus

praises

the

coat,

'Wah,

what

a

nice

coat!

Look

at

the

colour!

Seems

very

cozy!

So

soft

and

warm!’

The

washerwoman

and

his

wife

make

their

way

back

to

the

chorus.



The boy ran along singing his funny song.

Boy:

As I walked along,
With my pot in hand, I met a washerman. Who gave me this coat so
grand!

Oh so funny indeed!

People looking for things,

And I have what they need!

Narrator:

The boy walked on, all the while admiring his grand coat. He soon came
to a bridge, and there he was alarmed by what he saw.

For

the

following

narration,

the

chorus

makes

the

sound

of

a

cold

wind

blowing.

A

man

emerges

from

the

chorus,

shivering.

He

sits

down,

curled

into

a

ball.

A man was shivering in the cold and he was not even wearing a shirt. He seemed to be hurt and was moaning in pain. The boy was very concerned and ran up to the man and said:

Boy:

You seem to be bleeding,

You seem to be hurt! I'll try and get you some help. You also need a coat.

Narrator:

The boy asked the man how he came to be in such a sorry state. The man said:

During

the

following

lines,

the

action

is

mimed.

A

group

of

actors

emerges.

They

chase

another

actor

(playing

the

man),

corner

him,

and

rob

him.

Man

: I was riding my horse in a hurry.

I was riding my horse to the city.



A crowd of thieves, they came and GOT me! They got me down, they got me out.

They took my purse, got all my money.

I tried to put up a good fight.

But they beat me up, they beat me bad.

They left me in pain, they left me hurt.

They took it all, even my shirt!

As

the

song

ends

the

acting-robber

group

goes

back

to

the

chorus.

Narrator:

The boy said:

Boy:

Your need is greater than mine. Please take this coat. It will help you keep warm.

Narrator:

The man was touched by the little lad's kindness. He thanked the boy profusely and presented him with the big fine horse he was riding.

The

robbed

man

goes

into

the

chorus,

while

the

entire

chorus

mimes

the

riding

of

the

horse

with

the

sounds.

A

drum

can

accompany

the

rhythm.

The

chorus

mimes

the

riding

on

the

spot,

while

the

boy

rides

his

horse

across

the

stage.

The boy was very happy and led the horse along, singing his song.

Boy:

Oh so funny indeed!

People looking for things,

And I have what they need!

A man needs a shirt,

But all he has is a big fine horse!

I gave him my coat, what did I get?

His big fine horse, of course!

The "

horsing"

of

both

the

boy

and

chorus

stops.

Another

group

emerges

from

the

chorus.

These

include

the

bridegroom,

his

relatives,

and

the

drummers

of

the

party.



Narrator:

As he was walking along with his horse, he came upon a large party of gaily dressed people. They were part of a big wedding party with the bridegroom, and musicians. They seemed ready to go in a wedding procession, but all of them were sitting under a tree with long faces.

At

this

point,

both

the

groom's

party

and

the

remaining

chorus

actors

sing

a

popular

wedding

song,

but

in

a

slow

and

sad-sounding

manner.

The boy stopped and asked them what made them look so depressed.
The groom's father said:

Groom's

father:

You see, son, it's like this. We are all set to go in the wedding procession.

But we need a horse for the groom. The man who was supposed to bring it hasn't turned up, the auspicious hour is almost gone.

Narrator:

And the groom himself stepped up to the boy and said:

Groom:

I am the groom.

Waiting to see my bride,

But I'm stuck in here Just hoping for a ride!

I just can't go there on my feet.

My horse is late and so is the hour.

My guests are all waiting to eat.

I'll miss my wedding for sure!

So you see, what I need right now is a horse! I need a horse! A really quick horse!

Chorus:

He needs a horse, he needs a horse! He needs a really fast horse!



Narrator:

And so the boy, being helpful as ever, offered his horse to the groom. The groom was very happy and he asked the boy what he could give him in exchange for his horse.

The boy looked around among the musicians and quickly spotted the drummer.

He said:

Boy:

A stitch in time they say saves nine. And what indeed did save the day,
Was this splendid horse of mine!

All I want from you is

That fine little drum that you play!

Oh, make my dreams come true!

Please make my dream come true!

The

drummer

steps

forward

with

his

drum,

and

hands

it

over

to

the

boy

during

the

following

lines.



Narrator:

The groom requested the drummer to hand over the drum to the boy. The drummer knew he would easily get enough money to buy himself a brand new drum. He willingly gave his drum away.

The

groom's

actors

and

everyone

else

return

to

the

main

body

of

the

chorus.

All

sing

the

wedding

song,

but

now

it

is

happy

and

up-tempo.

Narrator:

The boy rushed home singing his song and playing his new drum. He could not wait to tell his mother how she had helped him to get his drum.

The

boy

and

the

mother

meet

at

the

centre

of

the

stage.

Boy:

My piece of wood did a lot of good!

It got me bread as food.
My piece of bread lasted not,

But gave me a lovely pot.

My pot got me a lovely coat.

The coat did help a needy man.

I got me a big fine horse to ride.
With that horse, I got a groom his bride!

So you see it is simple indeed

A little bit of give and take,

Will a lot of people happy make!

So when you meet your friends today,

Try and make their day!

The

last

verse

is

sung

again

by

the

entire

chorus,

which

sings

and

dances

around

the

boy.

In
the
end,
the
actors
all
freeze
in
the
positions
of
the
various

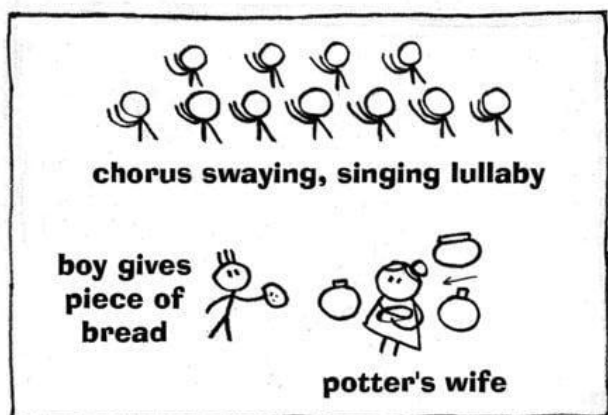
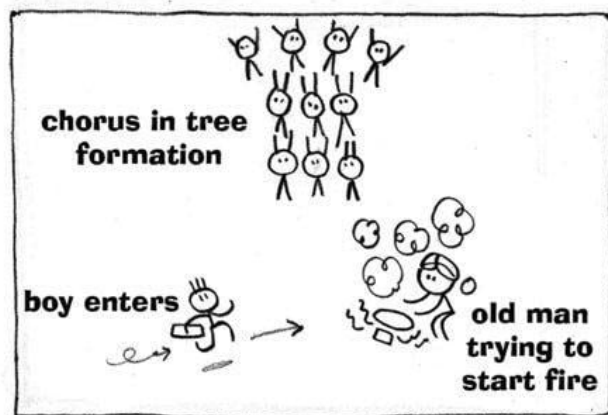
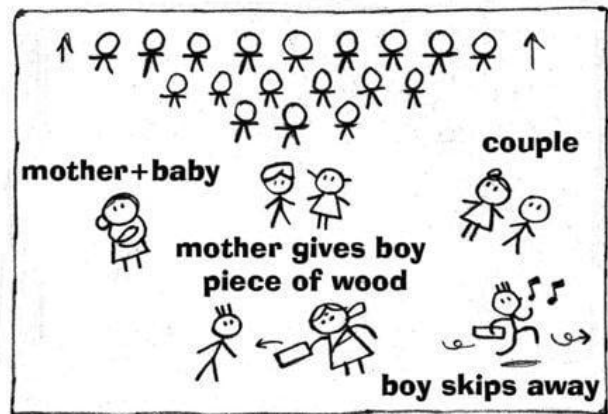
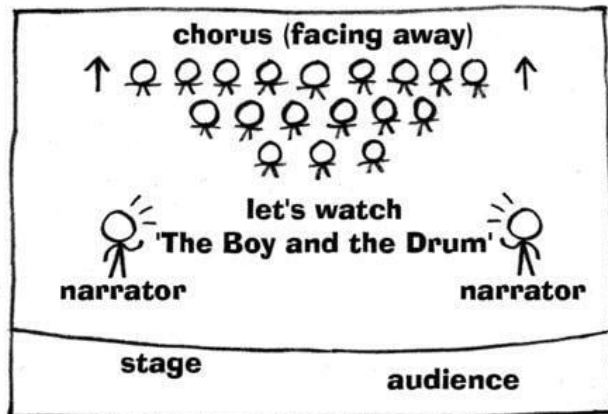
characters

in

the

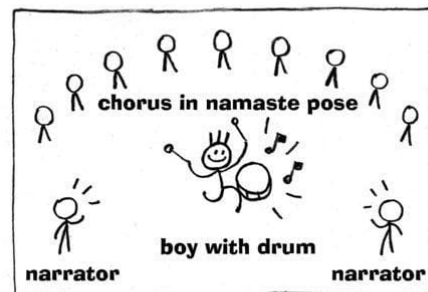
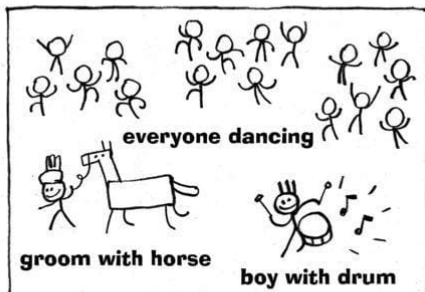
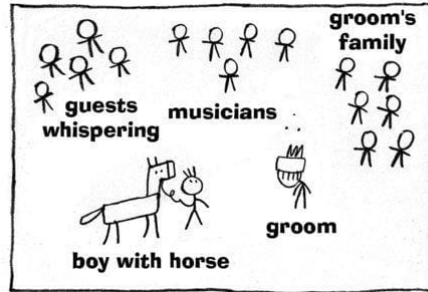
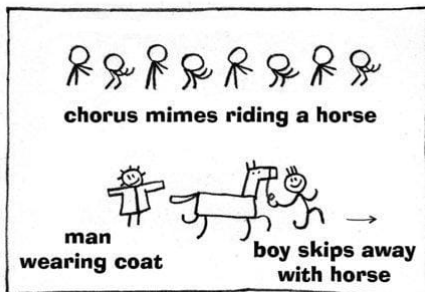
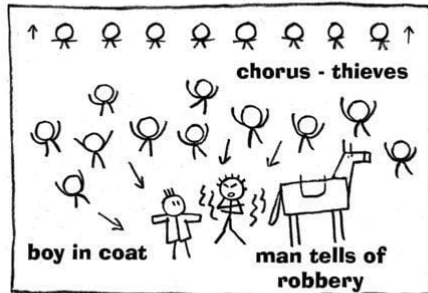
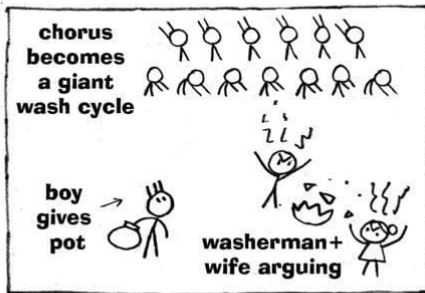
play.

Curtain



Stage setting:

The boxes below suggest a possible design for the play. Think of each of these boxes as a photograph of a particular scene. You could have the props, costumes, and musical instruments for the play on a bench placed against the back wall, and you could make use of them during the changing of the scenes behind the chorus.



Suggestions

for

the

cast

The play can be performed by a cast of six to thirty children. With more children, the role of the narrator and the boy can be assumed by many children, besides the other characters. For a cast of four to six children, the roles of the boy and the mother can be fixed, while the other children can take on the various other roles in the play. The stage directions given in the play are only meant as a suggestion or possibility. Please adapt the play to suit your needs in terms of availability of space (stage, classroom, hall etc.), props, sets and costumes.

Possible

costumes:

Regular comfortable clothes like t-shirts and pants or salwar and kameez, OR school uniform.

Possible

props:

Drum, stick, pot, dupattas, depending on availability. The entire play can also be done without any props, all of which can be mimed.

Simple

musical

instruments:

Simple musical instruments can be used or the chorus itself can make the appropriate sounds.

Suggested stage directions for a group of about 20 to 30 children.

Suggested stage directions for a group of about 20 to 30 children

All the children are facing away from the audience in three equal lines. A couple of narrators come in a very dramatic fashion. For example, the two of them can be playing a game of catch and suddenly they look at the audience, welcome them, and speak a little about the play together as a chorus: "The story of the boy and the drum, a story about sharing, a story about values, a story about people and not things."

The whole group turns to the audience and shouts out the title as one big chorus. The group stays in the three lines, now facing the audience.

From now on, the characters will step out of the chorus to the stage space in front and then back into the chorus when they are done with their part in the play.

The mother can wear a colored dupatta, which she gives to the boy when she gives him the piece of wood. All the other characters can also wear dupattas, which they exchange with the boy at the appropriate time. This action can symbolize sharing and giving, although this is not essential to the play's action.



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Boy playing the drums and children dancing behind him

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Woman speaking to a group of children who are dressing up

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People watching a smiling boy drum on wood

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Old man coughing from smoke, boy watching

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Boy handing over a piece of roti to a lady on the street

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Boy watching a man and woman argue furiously

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Boy in an oversized shirt dancing as other children watch him

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Boy offering a shirt to a shivering man out in the street

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Boy leading a horse

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A worried groom at his wedding

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A drummer of a wedding band offering the drum to a young boy

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The Boy and the Drum
(English)

A folktale about giving and kindness transforms into a lively play! This versatile and adaptable piece can be performed on stage or in the classroom. Hours of fun and learning guaranteed!

This is a Level 3 book for children who are ready to read on their own.

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