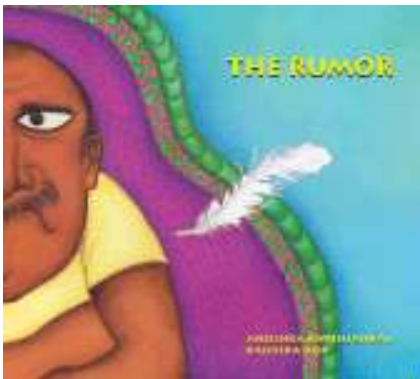




SOUTH ASIA BOOK AWARD
for Children's and Young Adult Literature

Teaching resources and lesson/activity ideas for
The Rumor
by *Anushka Ravishankar* and illustrations by *Kanyika Kini*



"In the village of Baddbaddpur, the people like to tell tales, "so tall that if you put them one on top of the other, they would reach the stars." Pandurang, the fruit-seller, is so dour that he can make milk turn sour. One day he coughs up a feather. As the story of Pandurang's feather is passed from one person to another it grows and grows and grows until it can hardly be recognized. And that's when the story weaves its magic on the ill-tempered Pandurang. An international version of "broken telephone" this is a funny cautionary tale about the nature of rumors."

Story description from the book's dusk jacket

Explore the book's setting

The book takes place in a fictitious village called Baddbaddpur (or Gossip Town) in the real Sahyadri mountains (also called the Western Ghats) of India.

- Have your students locate India on a world map (and also the Western Ghats if you have a map or atlas of India's physical geography).
- Have students catalogue the flora and fauna that is vividly depicted throughout the book. Familiar things can be named (like tiger or elephant) and unfamiliar ones can simply be described (like tree with oval leaves and red fruit or bird with blue wings and white body).

More details on the Western Ghats, including a beautiful photo gallery, can be found here: <http://www.arkive.org/eco-regions/western-ghats/image-H29>

Play the broken telephone game!

The book's publishers describe it as "an international version of *broken telephone*." In this well-known game, which is also called *grapevine* or *whisper down the line*, a sentence or short statement is given to the first person of a group who then whispers in the ear of the second person, who then whispers it to the third and so on. By the time final person hears the sentence/statement it has usually changed significantly, often comically.

Have your class play this game, which, like the story, illustrates how rumors can grow and get out of hand. Try using a line from the book like *Pandurang, the fruit-seller, is so dour that he can make milk turn sour*. Then make up some on your own. Have fun!

Try reading and writing nonsense verse

As the people of Baddbaddpur tell and retell the rumor about Pandurang they speak in a whimsical rhyming style called *nonsense verse*. Have your class read aloud the passages in the book that are written in this style so that they can fully enjoy its rhythms and humor. One possibility is to have different students read the passages in the order that are presented in the story (Pandurang, his wife Gangu, her sister Sakhu and so on). In this way it would be almost like presenting a play or a reenactment of the events in the village.

Once your students are familiar with nonsense verse as it is presented in the book, a good activity might be having them try their hands at writing a few lines or stanza themselves.

Other resources

A short bio of the book's author, Anushka Ravishankar,

http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/397954.Anushka_Ravishankar

An article about the book's illustrator, Kanyika Kini

http://www.hngnews.com/sun_prairie_star/community/features/article_da255360-40d1-11e3-8399-001a4bcf6878.html

A summary of several useful reviews of *The Rumor*

<http://karadionline.blogspot.com/2012/08/reviews-of-rumour.html>