

Rusty Plays Holi

In the early morning hours, when it was still dark, Ranbir stopped in the jungle behind Mr Harrison's house, and slapped his drum. His thick mass of hair was covered with red dust and his body, naked but for a cloth round his waist, was smeared green; he looked like a painted god, a green god. After a minute he slapped the drum again, then sat down on his heels and waited.

Rusty woke to the sound of the second drumbeat, and lay in bed and listened; it was repeated, travelling over the still air and in through the bedroom window.

Dhum!... a double beat now, one deep one high.

Rusty remembered his promise that he would play Holi with Ranbir; meet him in the jungle when he beat the drum. But he had made the promise on the condition that his guardian did not return. He could not possibly keep it now.

Dhum-dhum spoke the drum in the forest; dhum-dhum, impatient and getting annoyed.

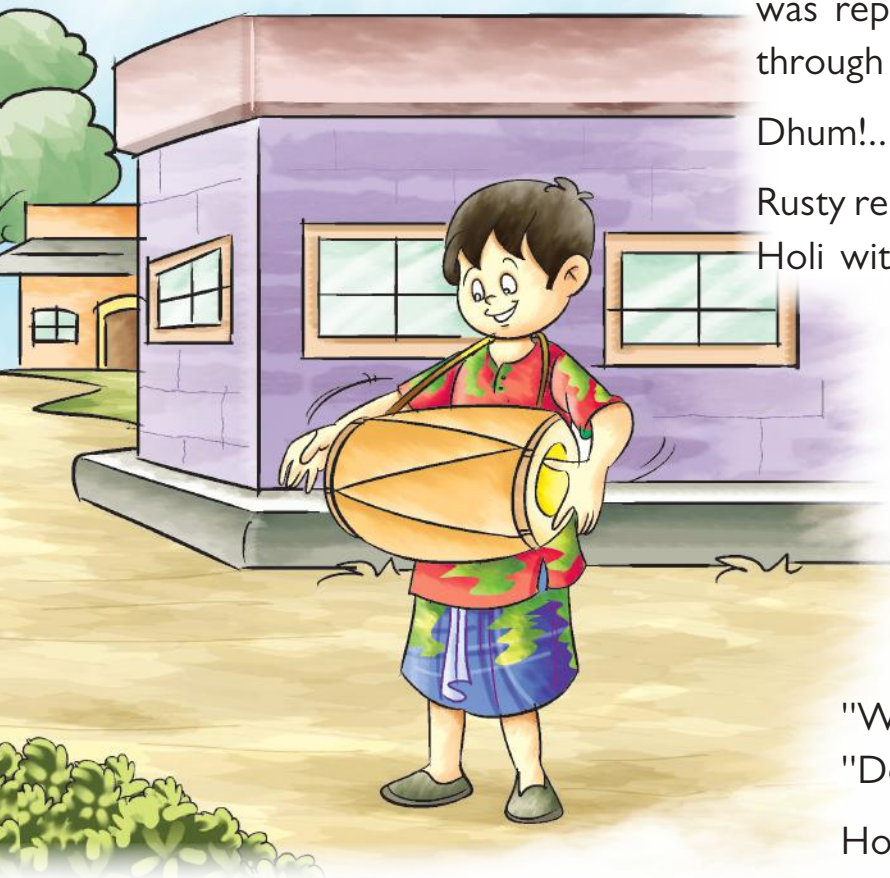
"Why can't he shut up," muttered Rusty.

"Does he want to wake Mr Harrison...?"

Holi, the festival of colours the arrival of spring, the rebirth of the new year, the awakening of love, what were these things to him? They did not concern his life, he could not start a new life, not for one day ... and besides, it all sounded very primitive, this throwing of colour and beating of drums.

Dhum-dhum! The boy sat up in bed.

The sky had grown lighter.



From the distant bazaar came a new music, many drums and voice, faint but steady, growing in rhythm and excitement. The sound conveyed something that belonged to his dream world, and on a sudden impulse he sprang out of bed.

He went to the door and listened—the house was quiet, he bolted the door.

The colours of Holi, he knew, would stain his clothes, so he did not remove his pyjamas. In a old pair of flattened rubber-soled tennis shoes, he climbed out of the window and ran over the dew-wet grass, down the path and behind the house, over the hill and into the jungle.

When Ranbir saw the boy approach, he rose from the ground. The long hand drum, the dholak, hung at his waist. As he rose, the sun rose. But the sun did not look as fiery as Ranbir who, in Rusty's eyes, appeared as a painted demon, rather than as a god.

"You are late, mister," said Ranbir.

"I thought you were not coming."

He had both his fists closed, but when he walked towards Rusty he opened them, smiling widely, a white smile in a green face. In his right hand was the red dust and in his left hand the green dust. And with his right hand he rubbed the red dust on Rusty's left cheek, and then with the other hand he put the green dust on the boy's right cheek; and then he stood back and looked at Rusty and laughed. Then, according to custom, he embraced the bewildered boy.

"Come," said Ranbir, "let us go and make the town a rainbow."

Children formed groups. They were armed mainly with bicycle pumps, or pumps fashioned from bamboo stems, from which was squirted liquid colour.

And the children paraded the main road, chanting shrilly and clapping their hands. The men and women preferred the dust to the water.



Ranbir was met by some friends and greeted with great hilarity. A bicycle pump was directed at Rusty and a jet of sooty black water squirted into his face.

Blinded for a moment, Rusty blundered about in great confusion.

Then his eyes cleared. He blinked and looked wildly round at the group of boys and girls who cheered and danced in front of him.

Then, one by one, Ranbir's friends approached Rusty. Gently, they rubbed dust on the boy's cheeks, and embraced him. Rusty could not distinguish one from the other. But this gently greeting coming so soon after the stormy bicycle pump attack, bewildered Rusty even more.

Ranbir said: " Now you are one of us. Come," and Rusty roamed the town and countryside with Ranbir and his friends.

For one day, Ranbir and his friends forget their homes and work and the problem of the next meal, and danced down the roads, out of the town and into the forest. And for one day, Rusty forget his guardian and the missionary's wife and ran with the others through the town and into the forest.

—Ruskin Bond

Word Treasure

Spoke the drum : sounded the drum

bewildered : confused

His eyes cleared : he could see properly

impatient : restlessly eager

embraced : hold someone in arm's closely

squirted : cause to be ejected from a small opening in a thin, fast stream or jet

missionary : preacher.

primitive : ancient

Great hilarity : extreme joy

smear : slander

impulse : a sudden strong desire to act

shrilly : emitting a sharp high pitched tone



EXERCISE TIME

Comprehension Skills

A. Tick (✓) the correct option :

1. Ranbir stopped at the back of Mr. Harrison's house with his dholak because :
 - a. He wanted to play the drum and wait for Rusty
 - b. He was waiting for Rusty and his guardian
 - c. Mr. Harrison told him to stop there

2. Ranbir was looking like a green god because he :

- a. Was looking powerful like a god
- b. Was wearing green clothes
- c. He was covered with green colour

3. Rusty made a promise :

- a. To go with Ranbir
- b. To give some clothes to Ranbir
- c. To play Holi with Ranbir

4. Ranbir rubbed the red dust of Rusty's left cheek and :

- a. Blue dust on his right cheek
- b. Green dust on his right cheek
- c. Yellow dust on his right cheek

B. Tick (✓) the correct and cross (X) the wrong statement :

- 1. Rusty stopped in jungle behind Mr. Harrison's house.
- 2. Rusty promised to play Holi with Ranbir.
- 3. Rusty was playing the drum to call Mr. Harrison.
- 4. Mr. Harrison was Rusty's Guardian.
- 5. Rusty went out and plays Holi with Ranbir.

C. Who said to whom :

- 1. "Does he want to wake Mr. Harrison?"
- 2. "I thought you were not coming."

_____ said to _____
_____ said to _____

E. Write the answers of the following questions :

- 1. Describe how was Ranbir looking when Rusty saw him?
- 2. What was the promise that Rusty made with Ranbir?
- 3. Why did Rusty not go immediately to meet Ranbir?
- 4. What did make Rusty to go and play Holi?
- 5. How did Ranbir and other children greeted Rusty?

Essential Grammar

F. Change the following sentences into indirect speech :

- 1. The master said to his servant, "Go to the market now".
The master ordered his servant to go to the market then.

2. Satish said to the Headmaster, "Pardon my fault,."

3. The teacher said to the students, "Work hard and be regular in your studies".

4. I said to my mother, "Take care of your health".

5. I said to Monika, "When is your partner coming"?

6. Mukesh said to Binay, "Please go to Patna Market with me".

7. The saint said to him, "Trust in God and do the right."

8. The elders said to the children, "Do not waste your time".

Fun with Words

G. Write the meaning of the following idioms and use any 5 in your own sentences :

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| 1. To have an axe to grind | _____ |
| 2. To blow one's own trumpet | _____ |
| 3. To carry the day | _____ |
| 4. To throw dust in a man's eyes | _____ |
| 5. To throw mud at | _____ |
| 6. To rise to the occasion | _____ |
| 7. To strain every nerve | _____ |
| 8. To provide against a rainy day | _____ |
| 9. To turn over a new leaf | _____ |
| 10. To be on the horns of a dilemma | _____ |

Essential Writing

H. Read the following passage and answer the given questions :

Kichaka was a prince. He was the brother of the Virata Queen. He was very wicked. He was the strongest man in the kingdom. He was very powerful too. His sister the

queen loved him very much. Everyone feared and respected him. He was the most favoured among the courtiers.

At one time the Pandavas were at the court of kind Virata but no one knew that they were the pandavs because they were in disguise. Draupadi served the queen as a maid, under the name Sairandhri. Bhimasena served the king and the queen as the head cook by cooking delicious food. Draupadi was always suspicious of Kichaka. One day Kichaka asked Drupadi to marry him. The Queen supported her brother in his wicked plan. He began to press Sairandhri to marry him. Draupadi was on great trouble. Bhimasena decided to put an end to Kichaka. He dressed himself up as Sairandhri and met Kichaka in a dark place. Before Kichaka realised who he had in front of him, Bhimasena hit him hard on the head. Kichaka was furious when he came to know that he had been tricked. He picked up courage and attacked his enemy. The two fought fiercely for a long time in the end, Bhimasena killed Kichaka and rid the world of that wicked man.

1. Who was Kichaka?
2. Why did anyone not recognize the Pandavas?
3. What did Draupadi do at the palace?
4. What did Bhimasena do at the palace?
5. How did Bhimsena tricked Kichaka to kill him?

Listening Skills

For Teacher : Listen to the sentences and try to fill in the blanks with the help of options.

1. When children finished their homework _____ watched TV :
a. They b. She
c. It d. He
2. I read an _____ story about a magician :
a. Excite b. Excitement
c. Exciting d. Excitingly
3. There was a large _____ of sheep in the field :
a. Herd b. Flock
c. Group d. Crowd

4. There was a _____ of papers on the table in the study room :

a. Bunch

b. Pile

c. Pack

d. Hard

5. My school always _____ at 9'o clock :

a. Is starting

b. Start

c. Are starting

d. Starts

Essential Speaking

Manager : How can I help you?

Student : I want to apply for loan.

Manager : Where are you studying now?

Student : I am studying in Government Engineering College, Lucknow.

Manager : What branch have you chosen?

Student : I have chosen mechanical branch. I need a loan of Rs 2,00,000/- for my education.

Manager : What is your father?

Student : My father is Inspector of Police in Lucknow.

Manager : I will sanction a loan of Rs 150,000/- only. It is the limit.

Student : Shall, I bring my father tomorrow?

Manager : Yes. Meet me tomorrow morning with your father.

Fun to Do

I. Share your experience of your favourite festival with your friends :
