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Tikki Tikki Tembo



Synopsis

Tikki tikki tembo-no sa rembo-chari bari ruchipip peri pembo! Three decades and more than one million copies later children still love hearing about the boy with the long name who fell down the well. Arlene Mosel and Blair Lent's classic re-creation of an ancient Chinese folktale has hooked legions of children, teachers, and parents, who return, generation after generation, to learn about the danger of having such an honorable name as Tikki tikki tembo-no sa rembo-chari bari ruchipip peri pembo. Tikki Tikki Tembo is the winner of the 1968 Boston Globe - Horn Book Award for Picture Books.

Book Information

File Size: 13298 KB

Print Length: 48 pages

Publisher: Henry Holt and Co. (BYR); Reprint edition (October 30, 2012)

Publication Date: October 30, 2012

Sold by: Macmillan

Language: English

ASIN: B008JNUKE6

Text-to-Speech: Not enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Not Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Not Enabled

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Customer Reviews

If you, like my pretty self, grew up reading (or being read) the tale of Tikki Tikki Tembo, then you already know exactly the correct cadences and tones to use when pronouncing his name. Come on, everybody! Say it along with me... Tikki Tikki Tembo-No Sa Rembo-Chari Bari Ruchi-Pip Peri Pembo. Whew! It's a mouthful, which is of course the point. In this book (originally published, I kid you not, in 1968) we learn about the dangers of over-monikering one's own offspring. Two boys live

with their mother near an old well. The eldest is considered the more important of the two, and his is the extraordinarily long name. His younger brother is named Chang. Chang and Tikki love one another, and when Chang falls into the well his brother rushes off to save him. Tikki fetches the old man with the ladder, who rescues the sodden boy. Later (not the same day, thankfully) the boys play around the well again and this time it's Tikki who has fallen in. When Chang attempts to tell his mother what has happened, it's all he can do to spout out that enormous mouthful of a name. When his mother finally understands, he too is sent to the old man with the ladder and a very similar scene occurs. In the end Tikki is rescued, though his prolonged well-exposure leaves him sick for a little while. Hence (according to this tale and, yes yes, not historically accurate in the least), "the Chinese have always thought it wise to give all their children little, short names instead of great long names". When I was read this book as a kid I remember disliking small sections of it (whilst enjoying the entire thing as a whole). I felt bad for Chang, a boy whose name translated roughly to "little or nothing". Yet Chang and Tikki don't engage in any sibling rivalry or bad feelings.

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