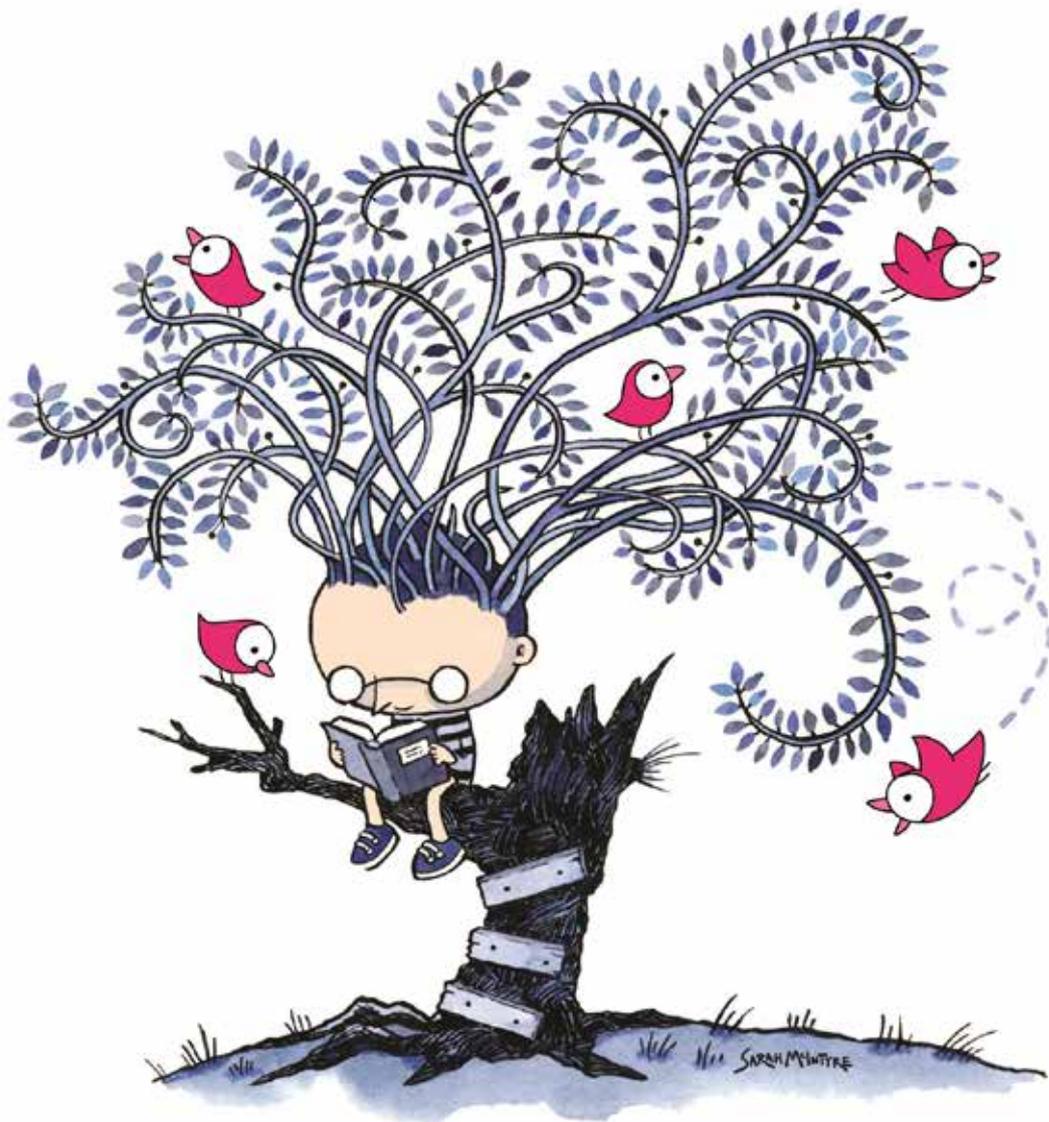


Just Imagine Book Guide

A Dollop of Ghee and a Pot of Wisdom

Written by Chitra Soundar



Just Imagine...

About the Author



Chitra Soundar

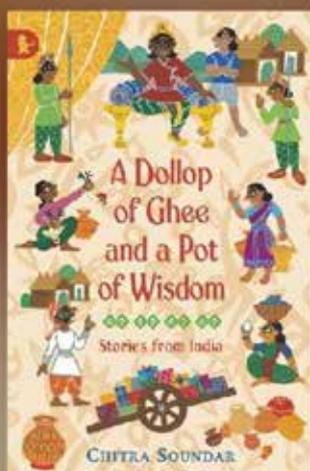
Chitra Soundar is from the culturally colourful India where the traditions, festivals and mythology are a way of life. Chitra now lives in London. Her latest picture book *Pattan's Pumpkin* is a story from the Irular Tribe in southern India. In her newest book *A Jar of Pickles and a Pinch of Wisdom*, readers can once again follow the adventures of Prince Veera and his friend Suku, who return to solve more tricky cases. You can read more about her books and watch an interview with Chitra on her website www.chitrasoundar.com

About the Book

*Here is a bunch of
Dung-dropping,
Sweet-stealing,
Luck-jinxing villains!*

The collection of traditional Indian folktales follows the adventures of young Prince Veera and his friend Suku as they settle a range of problems in his father's court. From greedy sweetshop owners to thieving, dishonest cooks, Prince Veera needs all his wits about him if he is to solve these crimes with his customary honesty and compassion.

This is a refreshing, fun read with each short story offering an excellent basis for discussion about what is right and wrong and the decisions we must face as we grow up. It is perfect for newly confident readers and the language sparkles with exotic details, wit and humour. In addition to this, Prince Veera is a likeable character that young readers will relate to. The stories also offer an excellent way for children to explore another culture in a colourful, exciting manner.





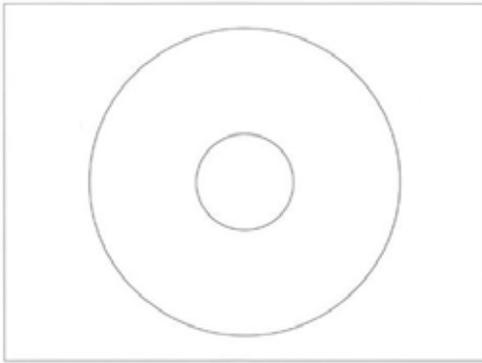
Before Reading

Cover the title of the book. Ask the children what they think the title might be and why. Reveal the title.

- What kind of book do you think this is and why?
- Now ask the children to look at the front cover.
- In pairs, encourage the children to talk about everything they see.
- Are there any clues about what might happen in the stories?

Making connections

- What do you already know about the India?
- Can you find India on a map?



Before reading *'A Dollop of Ghee and a Pot of Wisdom'*, write down what you think you know about India in a circle map (Davd Hyerle, 2008). Write where you learned this information in the rectangle (frame of reference). Share your ideas with your partner and add any new ideas to your diagram.

Review what the children know collectively. Provide some background knowledge.

Wisdom

Ask the children to list their associations with the word 'wisdom'.

First encounters

Allow some time for the children to explore the book up to page 8. You can use a paperclip to secure the pages so that the children don't read past this page. If it is possible for the children to have their own copy, they can read at their own pace and write down their responses.

- Is there anything that puzzles them about the book?
- Do they have any questions?
- Is there an image they like or dislike?

Use the children's questions to initiate a discussion – they will be more engaged if it is something they are genuinely interested in. Some questions might be answered easily, whilst others may need to be explored at a later date or after further exploration of the book.

During Reading

At all stages, invite the children to share their ideas and responses. Avoid asking too many leading or closed questions. The prompts below are intended to be used as supplementary questions. Please select or adapt the questions which you think are most appropriate for the children you are working with. They will ask and answer many of their own questions, if they are encouraged to look closely at the text and discuss their ideas.

Prince Veera's First Case



- How old is Prince Veera?
 - Write down three subjects or activities that Prince Veera is taught.
 - What is the name of the farmer's son?
 - Why can't the king hold court on New Moon Day. Use an iPad or Encyclopaedia to find out what laddus, jalebis and soan papdi look like.
 - Make a story map showing the events in this chapter. Re-tell the story to a partner.
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- What impression are we given of King Bheema? Can you use evidence to support your opinion?
 - Prince Veera is best friends with a farmer's son. What might this tell you about Prince Veera?
 - What does the verb 'scampered' (page 11) suggest about how the two boys are moving?
 - Write down what Veera might be thinking and feeling on page 17.
 - Read up to page 27. What do you think Veera is going to do?
 - Can you draw a picture of what you think the palace looks like, using clues and language from the text?
 - What do you think Veera has learned at the end of the first story?
 - What can you tell about the viewpoint of the author?
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- Veera and Suku were wrong to spy on the king's court. Do you agree?
 - What advice would you give to Meetaram?

Who stole the Laddus?

Ask the children what they think a laddus is. Does it sound like any other words they know?

- What could Veera smell as he sat outside the sweet shop?
- What do the servants have to do to prove they are innocent?
- What does the verb 'lodged' (page 34) mean? What does this indicate about the smell?
- Find and copy word on page 34 that is closest in meaning to 'delightful' or 'lovely'.
- Why do you think Veera sat outside the sweet shop for so long? (page 36)
- Read up to page 39. Can you predict what will happen next?
- Write down what the liar and thief might be thinking and feeling at the end of the story.
- Could the king be described as a bully? Use evidence from the text to support your opinion.
- Lying is worse than stealing. Do you agree?
- How is this story similar to the previous story?

The Case of the Greedy Moneylender

Before reading....How can a moneylender be greedy.

- Can you create a timetable to show Veera's busy schedule?
 - What has happened to Suku? Why?
 - How much does Suku's father owe the moneylender?
 - What is the name of the moneylender?
 - What excuse does Veera give as to why he was late returning the pots
-
- Why do you think Suku's family are reluctant to accept the prince's help at first?
 - Look at page 61. What impression do you get of the moneylender?How do you think the author would like us to feel about him?
 - Find and copy a word on page 67 that suggests Angar is angry.



- Read up to page 69. What do you think will happen next?
- Use thought clouds to write what Angar might be thinking and feeling on page 73. Share your ideas and explain them.
- Look at page 62 up to ‘Then Veera whispered a plan to his friend.’ How does the author create tension and excitement? Is she successful in doing so?
- What role has fragrance and smell played in all the stories so far?

The Unfortunate Case

- What are the main events in this story?

How does the atmosphere and setting of the mangrove forest near the palace differ from the market? Use a table to record the differences.

<i>Mangrove forest near palace</i>	<i>Market</i>

- Why do you think the Prince enjoys his visits to the market more than living in the palace?
- What might Veera be thinking and feeling as his father sentences the unlucky man to 25 years in prison?
- Can someone spread bad luck?
- Is there anything different about this last short story?
- Why do you think the author kept this short story until the end of the collection?



After Reading

Theme cards

After reading *A Dollop of Ghee* and *a Pot of Wisdom*, read the big ideas below. Talk to your partner about which of these big ideas is the most important in the story and why. Share with your partner what these ideas mean to you.

You should always speak the truth, even if it gets you in trouble

Those in power must look after those less fortunate than themselves

Children have a lot to teach adults

When deciding on what is right or wrong, do not let your emotions get in the way

Greedy people are usually lonely too

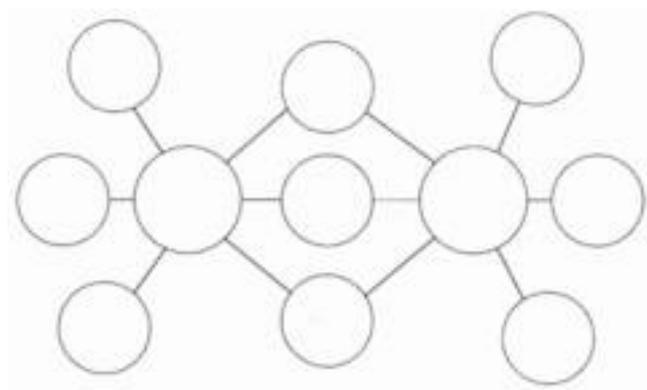
Treat others how you would like to be treated

Comparing texts

Ask the children to compare two of the stories in the collection.

- Which features are similar?
- Which features are different?
- Which story do you prefer and why?

They can use a double bubble thinking map to record the similarities and differences.



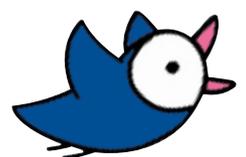
Vocabulary journal

Identify a set of target words for teaching. Suggestions are given below, but choose those most appropriate for your class or group.

Ask the children to read through the list of words with their partner. Find each of the words or phrases in *A Dollop of Ghee* and *a Pot of Wisdom*. Write down the sentence in the story in which each word appears.

Discuss in pairs what they think each word means.

Share their ideas, directing attention to where they may have heard or seen the words before.



Next, use a dictionary to check ideas, then write down a definition. Use more than one dictionary to check for nuances of meaning

Reread the text and decide which meanings make the best sense to the story. Finally ask them to write their own sentence. (Best printed in landscape).

New Word	Sentence in story	What I think it means	Looks like or sounds like	Dictionary definitions	My own sentence
forbid (page 20)					
reformed (page 25)					
dismounted (page 56)					
discreet (page 79)					

India

Ask the children to use maps, books and the internet to research some of the places mentioned in the stories. They could create their own travel brochure, using publishing software, persuading people to visit India and explore some of the famous places and monuments there.

R.E

India is known as a land of spirituality and philosophy, with Hinduism being the country's main religion. Encourage the children to find out about different Hindu and Sikh gods, what happens during Diwali, the life of Gandhi and Mother Teresa and explore Hindu creation stories.

Art, cooking and DT

Encourage the children to design their own Rangoli patterns using bright colours. They could also draw around their hands and create a Mehndi design. Indian food is colourful and uses many spices. Why not teach the children how to cook samosas, ghee or the sweet and delicious galub jamun?

If you liked this book, you might enjoy...

Chitra Soundar *A Jar of Pickles and a Pinch of Justice*

Madhur Jaffrey *Seasons of Splendour*

Jatinder Verma *The Story of Diwali*