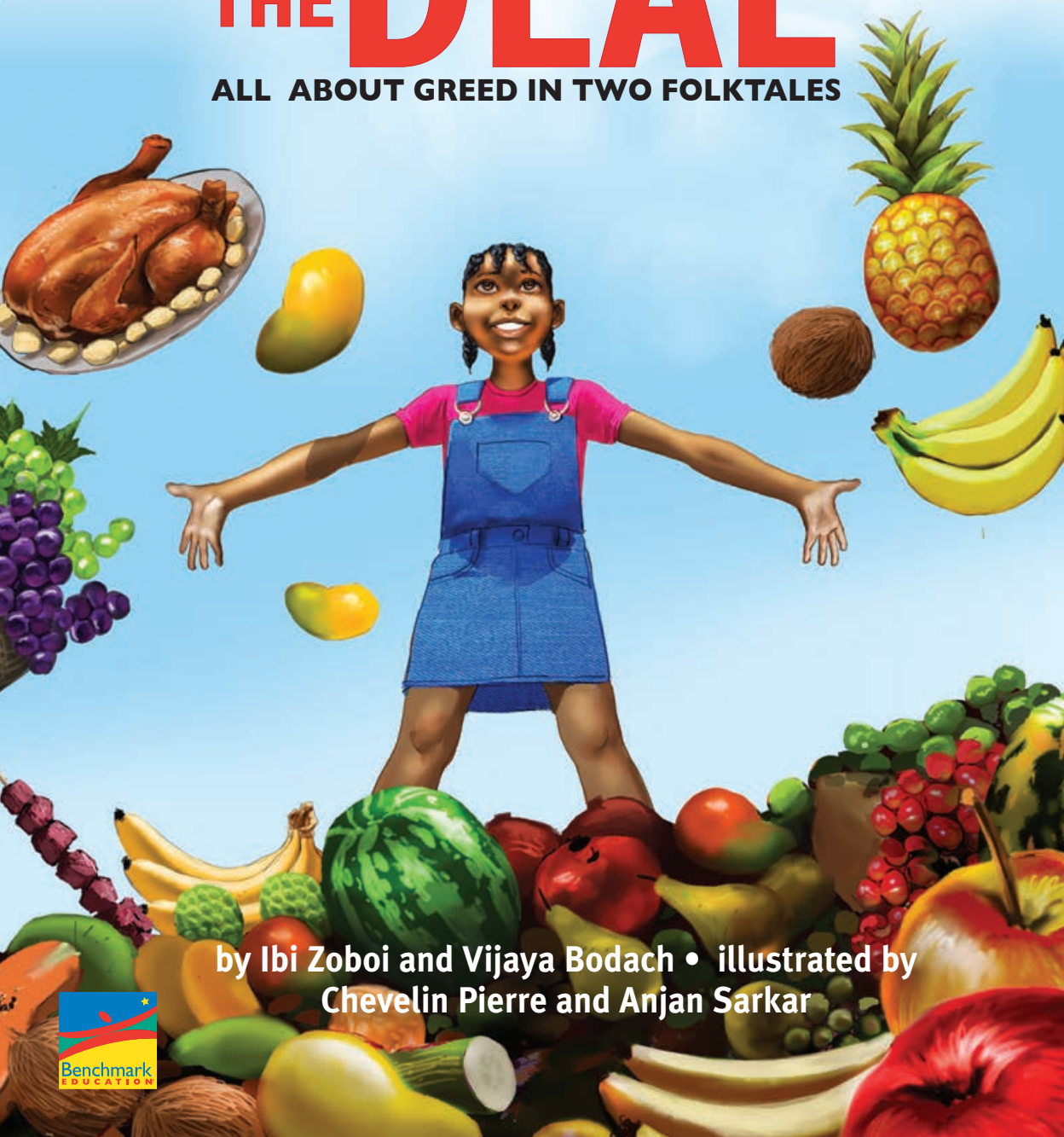


THE MEAL AND THE DEAL

ALL ABOUT GREED IN TWO FOLKTALES



by Ibi Zoboi and Vijaya Bodach • illustrated by
Chevelin Pierre and Anjan Sarkar

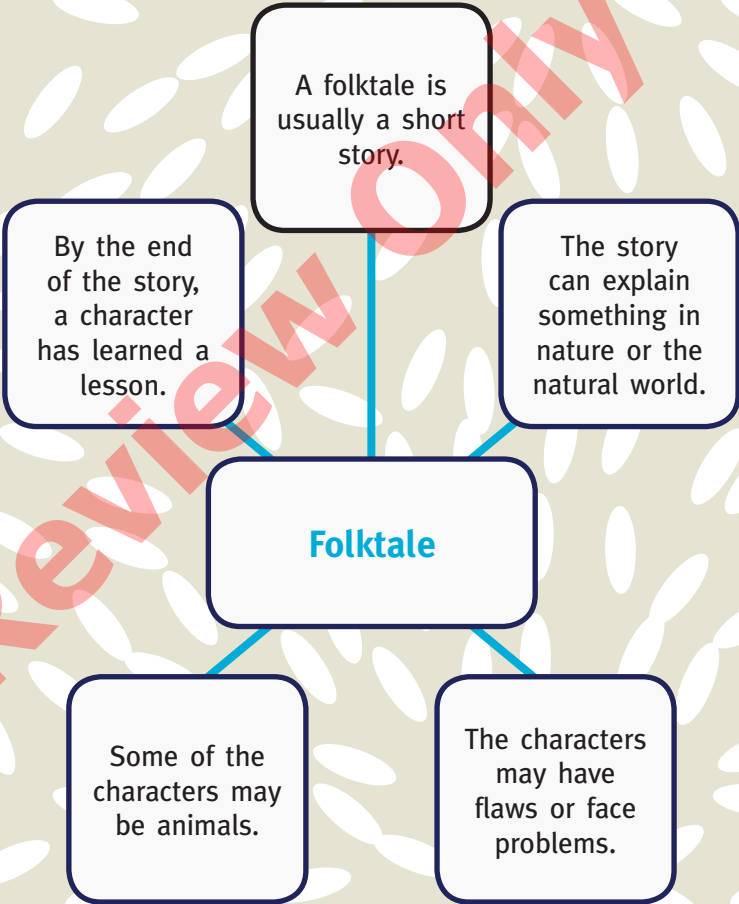
**FOLKTALE
LITERATURE**

Level N/30
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The two folktales retold in this book are from Haiti and India.

Folktale

Look for the genre features noted below as you read this book. Use the features to help you understand the text.



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A TALE FROM HAITI

CORA AND THE CRAB



The door swung open to Godmother's house with a loud, screeching sound. The wooden floor creaked beneath Cora's feet as she walked in. She was glad to finally be there after a tiring journey.

The day had come for Cora to go live with her godmother, deep in the dark forest, while her mother and father looked for work in the big, bright city.

She had walked a long time without seeing another human being. The animals of the deep, dark forest had kept her company, peeking around bushes and trees to smile at and welcome her.

Godmother was not so kind and welcoming. When Cora opened the door, she found her godmother sitting there, much taller than any grown-up Cora had ever known.

Godmother sat in the kitchen behind a long wooden table, eating the most delicious meal Cora had ever seen. The table was covered with fruit, vegetables, and meat.

A pile of breadfruit, callaloo, and yucca nearly touched the ceiling. A circle of pineapple, mango, guava, and papaya decorated the edges of the tabletop. Fried goat, baked chicken, and stewed beef filled large calabash bowls.

The food was plentiful. Cora took a chair to join her. But Godmother shook her head and, with a mouthful of food, sang,

“No, no, no, my dear Cora. This food is mine, all mine! Before you can have this meal, we’ll make a little deal. You’ll have to learn my true name. That’s how we’ll play this game.”

Cora was tired and so very hungry. She didn’t understand what Godmother had said. She reached out to pick up a sweet slice of pineapple.

But Godmother stood from her chair and, with a loud, booming voice, sang once again,

“No, no, no, my dear Cora. This pineapple is mine, all mine! Before you can have this meal, we’ll make a little deal. You’ll have to learn my true name. That’s how we’ll play this game.”



Cora didn't know what to do. But she was very clever, so she looked around the house for a true clue that would help her with Godmother's name game. Godmother's song had rhymed. Maybe rhyming was a clue.

Cora stood up from her chair. *Chair* rhymed with *Claire*. "Is your name Claire?" she asked.

Godmother smiled and shook her head.

Cora looked at the table. *Table* rhymed with *Mable*. "Then your name must be Mable!"

Godmother smiled and shook her head.

She looked at her godmother's plate. *Plate* rhymed with *Kate*. "I think your name is Kate!"

Godmother smiled and shook her head.

Cora stared at the bananas. *Banana* rhymed with *Ana*. "I know what it is! It's Ana!"

Godmother let out a deep laugh and continued eating her meal.

Finally, Cora left the house to search for more clues that would help her win her godmother's name game.



Cora met Rabbit at the edge of the forest. Rabbit was thin, and his fur was dull. He slowly chewed on a hibiscus flower.

“Brother Rabbit, would you please help me?” said Cora. “I am looking for one true clue so I can guess my godmother’s name.”

Rabbit looked up and said,

“No, no, no, my dear Cora. That food is hers, all hers. We, the rabbits of the deep, dark forest, have already made our deal, so we can never have the meal. We don’t know her name, and we can’t help you win the game.”



Rabbit hurried along, leaving Cora to walk deeper into the darkest part of the forest, where she met Fox.

Fox was digging into the ground, looking for some callaloo leaves to eat.

“Sister Fox, would you please help me? I am looking for one true clue so I can guess my godmother’s name.”

Fox stepped closer to Cora and whispered,

“By the light of the full moon, you will hear a tune. Listen for her true name so you can win this game. When you hear that singing voice, you will have to make a choice.”

“Choice? What choice?” Cora asked. But Fox ran deeper into the forest, leaving Cora all alone.

As darkness settled over the forest and the moon crept up in the sky, Cora heard a faint song. Godmother was singing a tune!

She quickly ran toward the house to hear the words to Godmother’s song. But as soon as she got close enough, the singing stopped.