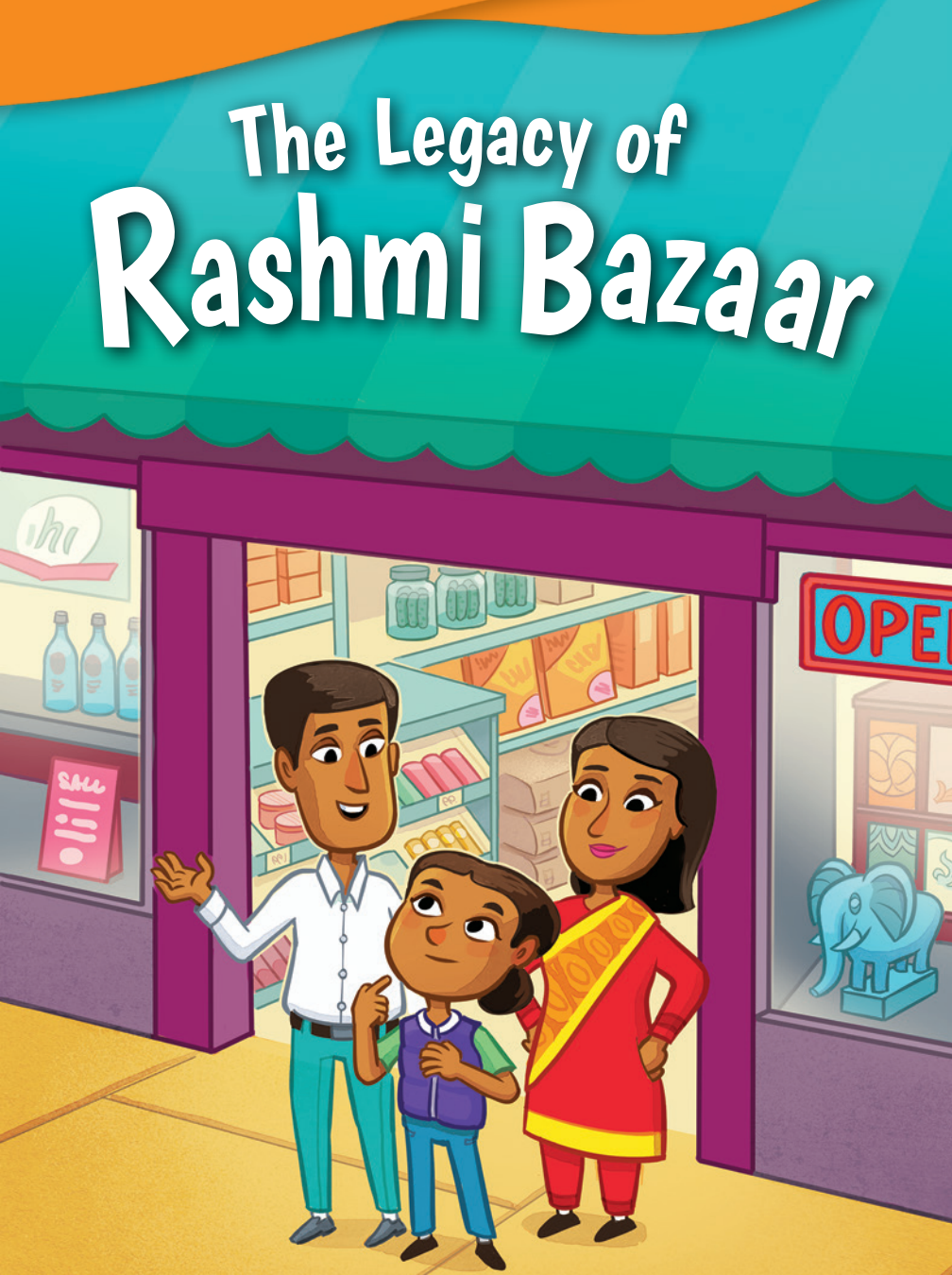
The Legacy of Rashmi Bazaar



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TCM Teacher Created Materials

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CHAPTER ONE



No Time for a Rotten Situation

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Rashmi sulked as she followed her parents through the parking lot. It was Saturday morning. Everywhere she looked, children were having fun—except her.

Whiz, ding, ding. Teenage bicyclists stopped to peek into a music store. *Rumble, rumble, bump.* A skateboarder rolled down the sidewalk. On a nearby bench, children munched doughnuts and licked powdered sugar from their fingers.

"It isn't fair. Why do I have to work?" Rashmi complained as she reached her parents' store.

Rashmi Bazaar was the only Indian store in town. Every day after school and on weekends, Rashmi worked there. Her friends got to dribble basketballs, ride horses, and zip-line instead. Rashmi craved adventure too.

But Mom said, "Everyone in our family needs to help, especially today. It's our busiest day of the week."

"One day, you'll inherit this shop. You need experience to manage it," Dad said, fiddling with his keys. *Rattle, rattle, click.* He unlocked the door.

A stench blasted out, forcing them to back away for a moment and cover their

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noses. Rashmi had forgotten to check the vegetable bins last night.

She sighed and slunk inside, wanting only to escape.

"We'll lose customers!" Mom complained, searching for the smelly culprit.

Rashmi paused, slowly filling with hope. "If we don't have customers, can we leave?"

"No, our customers rely on us," Dad answered. "And we need money to stay in business."

Rashmi frowned. Her parents always worried about money. She had overheard their discussions. Mom and Dad often sent money to relatives in India. The money paid for medical care and schooling. Meanwhile, her parents rarely splurged on themselves.

Rashmi studied her own designer sneakers and swallowed a lump of guilt. "I'm sorry. I promise I'll fix this problem."

She sniffed and followed the odor

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past shelves of salty snacks and pickle jars. She and her parents walked past boxes of ripe mangoes, ginger root, and bitter melons.

Trying not to breathe, they stopped and picked through the potatoes, where the smell was strongest. Rashmi wrinkled her nose when she touched something slimy.

Thud, thump, thump. Rotten potatoes tumbled into the trash can.

Rashmi heaved the garbage outside to the dumpster. For a moment, the sunshine kissed her cheeks, just before she shuffled back into her dungeon.

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CHAPTER TWO



Chores

It was almost opening time. Rashmi propped the back door open, while Dad started a fan and Mom lit incense sticks. Plumes of perfumed smoke curled up, filling the shop with the scent of sandalwood.

Rashmi reviewed her task list, which Mom had scribbled on a board in the office.

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Rashmi still didn't understand why she had the longest list of chores. How could it possibly be an equal split of duties? She debated whether to mention it to her parents. The last time she had complained, Mom had offered to switch jobs—from sweeping to cleaning the bathroom. Rashmi did not enjoy scrubbing toilets.

"Nobody will notice if I only dust once a week instead," Rashmi tried to persuade Mom.

"It only takes one person to spot dust and gossip to friends during teatime." Mom handed Rashmi the duster. "Clean stores attract customers, but dirty stores don't."

Mom grabbed the inventory book off the desk. She bustled around the store, checking which items were low in stock. Dad tallied the money in the cash register.

And Rashmi, groaning with frustration, went to work on her endless list of tasks.

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Book Club Questions

1. How does Rashmi try to solve the problem of boring chores? What would you do?
2. What does the author mean on page 8 when she writes that Rashmi "shuffled back into her dungeon"?
3. What are some ways you might welcome someone new to your country or school?
4. In this book, what struggles did immigrants face? How did having a sense of community help them?
5. What other struggles might immigrants face in real life?
6. What do you want your legacy to be? What can you do to make it happen?

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