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Tortoise and the Magical Drum

By Idenze Ezeme

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TORTOISE AND THE MAGICAL DRUM

Tortoise and the Magical Drum

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One day, the tortoise was walking through the forest when he saw a tall palm tree full of ripe palm kernels. He was very hungry and wanted to eat them, but they were too high to reach. So, he picked up a long stick and shook the tree until some palm kernels fell to the ground.

But before he could pick them up, the kernels rolled into a hole. He shook the tree again, and more kernels fell, but they also rolled into the same hole. The tortoise decided to go after them.

He entered the hole and walked for a long time, looking for the fallen kernels. After hours of walking, he found himself in a strange village. He had entered the spirit world!

As he looked around, he saw a spirit eating the last palm kernel. The tortoise shouted, "That is mine! Give it back!"

The spirit apologized and explained that he didn't know the kernels belonged to the tortoise. To make up for it, he offered the tortoise a special drum. He took the tortoise to a building full of drums and told him to choose one. There were many sizes, but the tortoise picked a small drum that was easy to carry.

When the tortoise returned to the forest, he sat under a tree to rest. Out of curiosity, he picked up the drumstick and hit the drum. To his surprise, a feast appeared before him! There was every kind of food he loved. He ate until he was full and then fell asleep under the tree.

The next day, he went home and invited all the animals to his house. When they arrived, the tortoise beat the drum again, and another

feast appeared. Everyone was happy and ate together.

The animals kept coming to the tortoise's house every day for food. After a while, the tortoise got tired of playing the drum, so he asked the elephant to do it. But when the elephant hit the drum, it broke—and the feast disappeared!

The tortoise had no choice but to return to the spirit world for another drum. He went back to the same palm tree, shook more palm kernels down, and threw them into the hole before following them.

When he arrived in the spirit world, he saw the same spirit and accused him of eating his palm kernels again. The spirit, confused, showed him that all the kernels were still there. But the tortoise insisted some were missing and demanded compensation.

The spirit once again told the tortoise to choose a drum. This time, the tortoise picked the biggest drum he could find. He thought a bigger drum would create even more food, and it would be perfect for the elephant to play.

Dragging the heavy drum back home took several days, and the tortoise was extremely tired and hungry. As soon as he arrived, he picked up the drumstick and hit the drum. But instead of food, hundreds of whips appeared!

The tortoise panicked and tried to run, but the whips chased him all the way home, beating him as he ran.

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Nze is an Igbo history and culture enthusiast with an in-depth passion for exploring the rich cultural heritage, traditions, and historical narratives of the Igbo people. His works is mostly focused on pre-colonial Igbo societies, traditional belief systems, leadership systems, and the impact of European colonialism.



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