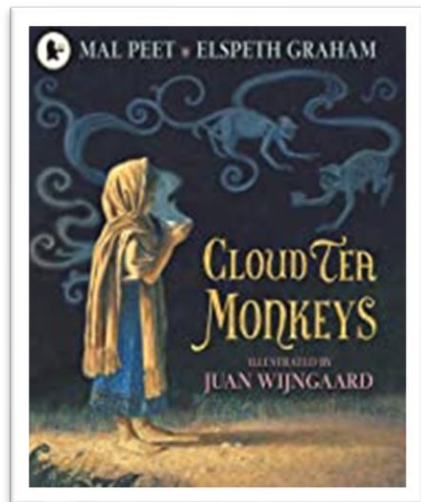


Read for Pleasure

Cloud Tea Monkeys

By Mal Peet, Elspeth Graham and Juan Wijngaard



When her mother falls ill, it is left up to Tashi to go to the plantation and start picking tea in order to pay for a doctor.

But she is too small to reach the tender green shoots, and the cruel Overseer sends her away empty-handed.

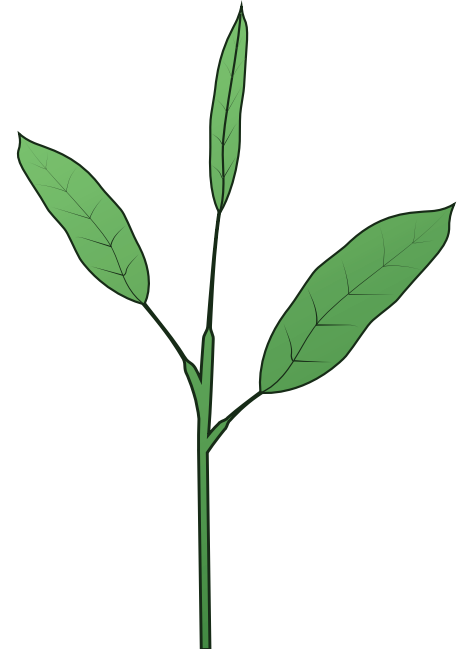
Tashi needs a miracle.

But miracles do happen and one day, something extraordinary occurs...

Cover Chat

Let's first look at the cover of this picture book.

- Where do you think this story is likely to be set? Why?
- What is the little girl wearing?
- What is she not wearing? Why might this be?
- What do you think she is holding?
- Why do you think she is holding it with both hands?
- What do you notice in the steam of the hot tea?
- What might this suggest about the story itself?



Title Talk

The title of this story is: *Cloud Tea Monkeys*.

- Where does the title suggest the tea that the little girl is drinking comes from?
- Would this tea be easy or difficult for a little girl to collect alone?
- How valuable would this make the tea? Why would this be?

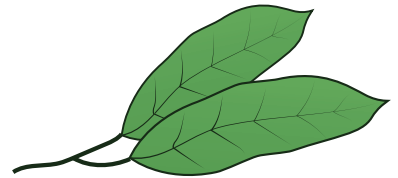
- Who do you think will help the little girl collect her precious tea?
- Why might they want to help her?

Page 1-2

- How cold and dark is it when Tashi wakes from her sleep?
- Why do you think her mother has lit a fire and is boiling water?
- As Tashi takes her bowl of sweet tea outside, what does she see? Describe the beauty of this scene.
- How is this depicted on page 2?
- However, all is not well. What happens in the final sentence that signals a warning to the reader?
- How powerful a warning is this? Discuss.

Page 3-4

- Where do Tashi and her mother begin walking to?
- Who accompanies them? What are they carrying?
- Why does Tashi describe this as being a happy time?
- Again, we are warned that this happiness will be short-lived, that the kind sun will turn cruel. Why do you think we are told this?
- What might this mean for the story ahead?



Page 5-6

- Who greets Tashi and the others when they arrive at the plantation?
- How is this character described? What might this mean for the tea pickers?
- How well does this description match how the Overseer is illustrated on page 5?
- What does the Overseer remind the tea pickers they must do?
- As the sun rises and the day grows long, what happens to the morning's mist?
- Why does this remind Tashi of two things she is afraid of?
- How is the vastness of the tea plantation depicted on page 6?

Page 7-8

- What happens later that morning that frightens the women and angers the Overseer?
- What does the Overseer do to try and scare the monkeys away?
- Tashi calls the leader of the monkeys Rajah. Look this up using an online dictionary. What does it mean? Might this name be significant?
- Why do you think Tashi grabs her lunch-bag and follows the monkeys?
- Where do you think they will meet?

Page 9-10

- Is this the first time Tashi has sat with the monkeys at lunchtime?
- What does Tashi share with the young monkeys?
- Do the other monkeys trust Tashi? Why might this be?
- How is this mutual trust and respect depicted on page 10?
- When the day ends, Tashi and the other tea pickers walk home. Is this an easy journey for them to take?
- For who is this return home more difficult? Why is this?
- What are we left wondering as we finish this part of the story?

Page 11-12

- Why does Tashi wake to find no fire has been lit or water boiled?
- How sick is Tashi's mother? Why is this situation very serious?
- The problem with being sick when you have to pay to see a doctor is described as being like a snake with its own tail in its mouth. What do you think this means? Discuss.
- Why does this situation frighten Tashi?
- What does she decide to do to try and help?

Page 13-14

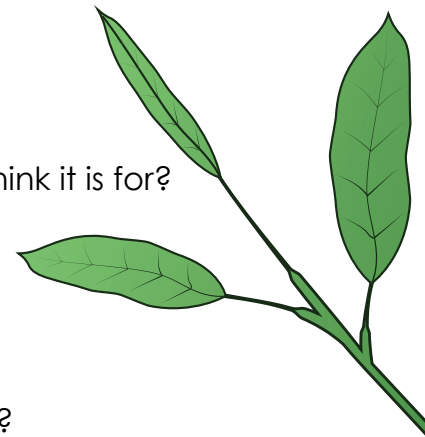
- When Tashi arrives at the tea plantation, who is it that first meets her?
- How does the Overseer treat Tashi? Why is this particularly cruel?
- Aunt Sonam watches as this happens but does not step in and help. Why might this be?



- What does it tell us about A] the Overseer and B] the life of a tea picker?
- Who do you feel sorrier for: Aunt Sonam or Tashi? Discuss.

Page 15-16

- At a time of great distress, Tashi retreats to a place where she knows she will find shade and will be able to cry without being seen. Where do you think she will go?
- Why might we be told that Tashi wept for her mother AND Aunt Sonam? What does tell us about the character of Tashi?
- Why do you think Tashi tells the monkeys what has happened, even though they won't understand any of the words she speaks? Discuss.
- Why do you think Rajah moves towards Tashi?
- What is it that Rajah reaches for?
- After feeling the basket, what does Rajah do next?
- What do you think his message might be? Who do you think it is for?



Page 17-18

- What do several adult monkeys do next?
- Who leads the way as they do this? Why is this important?
Remember: the name Rajah means a male Indian ruler.
- Think about where these monkeys have gone. Now think about the title of this book. Do you think the two are linked? How so?
- Despite her sadness, Tashi takes care of the baby monkeys. What does she do to help them? Why do you think she does this?
- Soon she falls asleep. What do you think she will find when she wakes?

Page 19-20

- How noisy is this part of the story? Why is this?
- Rajah ignores this and, instead, stands beside the basket as if to summon Tashi to come and take a look. What does Tashi find when she decides to peer inside?
- How is this depicted on page 20?
- Where does Tashi take her basket? Why would she take it there?

Page 21-22

- As Tashi waits in line with her basket full of Cloud Tea, what catches her attention?
- How is this person dressed? Look at the illustration on page 22.
- Might this person be important? Why do you think this?

Page 23-24

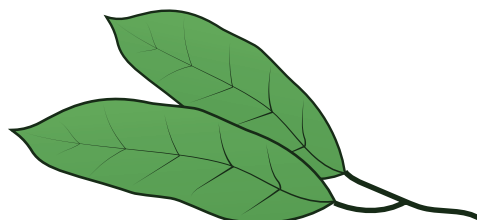
- The Overseer tells us who this important person is. Who does it turn out to be?
- What is the role of a Royal Tea-Taster?
- How does the Overseer speak to him? Why might he speak in such a way?
- How fine a clothing does the Royal Tea-Taster wear?
- What does this tell us about how important tea is to His Royal Excellency?

Page 25-26

- What does the Tea-Taster do to check how fine a quality the tea from this plantation is?
- Which word does the Tea-Taster use to describe the tea from this plantation?
- What would it mean to have such ORDINARY tea? Discuss.
- Do you think the tea inside everyone's basket is ordinary? In whose basket might this not be the case? Why would this be?

Page 27-28

- Interestingly, the eyes of the Tea-Taster remind Tashi of Rajah. Might this be significant?
- What alerts the Tea-Taster to Tashi's basket?
- Why do you think he presumes this basket belongs to Aunt Sonam?
- How happy are we that Aunt Sonam tells the truth as to who the basket belongs to?
- Why do you think the Tea-Taster lifts his hand and clicks his fingers?



Page 29-32

- The next few pages describe how the Royal Tea-Taster makes a cup of tea from leaves taken from Tashi's basket. Why do you think this process is described in so much detail? Discuss.
- How does he feel when he has finished tasting this tea?
- He then asks Tashi to come with him. Where might he want to take Tashi and why might this be?

Page 33-34

- Has the Royal Tea-Taster ever tasted Cloud Tea before?
- Why has he only tasted it twice, the last time being many years ago?
- What question does this leave the Royal Tea-Taster wondering?
- How is this part of the story depicted on page 34?
- Do you notice the Overseer in the background? What is he doing? What might he be thinking?

Page 35-36

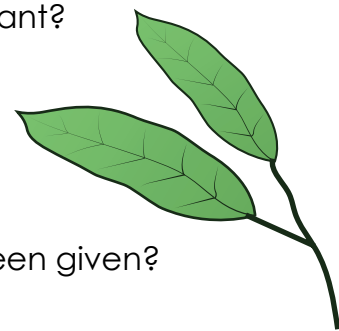
- Is Tashi right not to tell the Royal Tea-Taster where she got the Cloud Tea from? Discuss.
- What does the Royal Tea-Taster promise Tashi?
- What does he give her to seal his promise? Why is this significant?
Remember: Tashi's mother is still at home gravely ill.

Page 37-38

- What did Tashi do with one of the gold coins that she had been given?

Page 39-40

- What did Tashi use another gold coin for exactly one year later?
- Why would she fill a basket with the finest fruit and take it to where the monkeys lived?
- What does this tell us about Tashi?
- When the monkeys have feasted, Tashi once again falls asleep, what do the adult monkeys do and why do you think they do this?

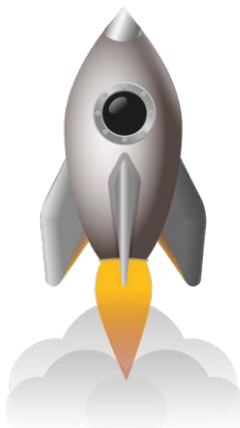
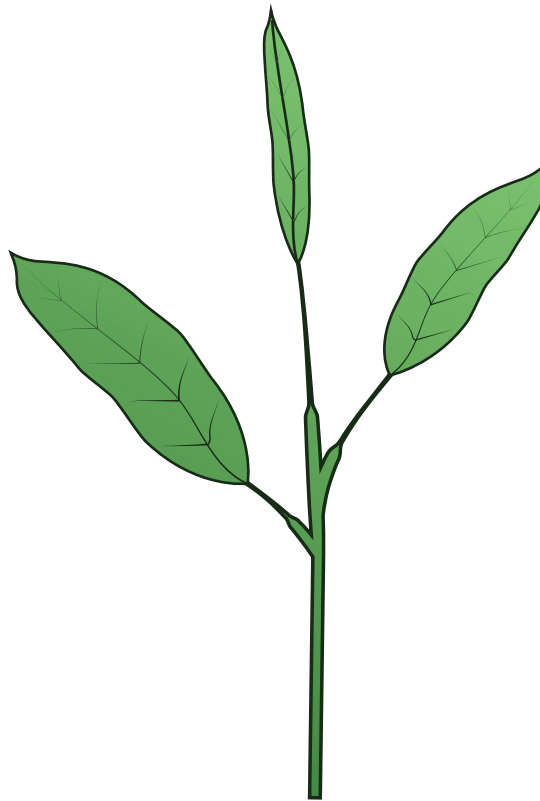


Page 41-42

- There are only three people in the world who drink Cloud Tea.
One is the Empress. Who are the other two?
- How does this make us feel? Why?

Think about the story as a whole:

What do you think the moral of this traditional Indian folktale might be?



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