

The Missing Festival Drum



Yavuz DEMİRKIRAN

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In a cozy village surrounded by green hills, everyone was busy preparing for the annual celebration. Banners fluttered, and the smell of sweet cakes filled the air. The great festival drum, tall as a child and painted with red and gold zigzags, stood proudly in the square. It had started the celebration for generations. This year, Mia, a curious nine-year-old with two puffy hair buns, couldn't wait to hear its deep boom.



Mia wore her yellow polka-dot dress and carried a small canvas satchel for collecting clues. She loved solving mysteries, and today she hoped for a good one. Grandpa Osei, the village drum keeper, smiled at her. His white beard glowed in the sun, and his carved drum pendant swung as he walked. 'A good detective always watches and listens,' he said. Mia nodded, her dark brown eyes sparkling.



Suddenly, a shout came from the square. 'The drum is gone!' cried a baker, waving her apron. Everyone rushed to see. The drum's spot was empty, and only a few rope fibers lay on the ground. The traveling musicians, who had just arrived, looked confused. 'We didn't take it!' they said. But some villagers pointed at them anyway. Mia saw fear in the musicians' eyes and felt something was wrong.



Mia stepped forward. 'Let's not blame anyone yet,' she said. 'We need clues.' Grandpa Osei agreed. 'Mia is right. Trust and understanding are better than quick accusations.' The crowd quieted. Mia pulled out her magnifying glass and began to search. She found a small piece of rope and a faint mark on the ground. 'Someone moved the drum in a hurry,' she thought.



Mia followed the marks across the square and behind the bread stall. There, she found a trail of tiny wood shavings. 'Interesting,' she murmured. 'Someone was working with wood.' She looked closer and saw a small footprint in the dust. It was much smaller than a grown-up's. 'Children?' she wondered. Her heart beat fast with excitement.



The trail led to a quiet corner behind the schoolhouse. Mia heard whispering. She peeked around the wall and saw Tavo, a boy with curly hair and a tool belt, standing with two other children. They looked worried. 'We have to fix it before anyone finds out,' Tavo said, his voice shaky. Mia stepped out. 'Fix what?' she asked gently.



Tavo jumped, then hung his head. 'The drum,' he whispered. 'We moved it. We didn't mean to cause trouble.' Mia saw the bandage on his finger and the wooden mallet in his hand. 'Why?' she asked. Tavo explained, 'The drum's surface had a crack. We wanted to repair it as a surprise for the celebration. But now everyone thinks the musicians took it.'



Mia thought for a moment. 'Show me,' she said. Tavo led her to a small shed behind the school. There stood the drum, its goat-hide surface showing a patched crack. 'We tried to fix it,' Tavo said, 'but we didn't know how. We were afraid to tell anyone because we thought we'd get in trouble.' Mia smiled. 'You were trying to help. That's a good thing.'



Just then, Grandpa Osei appeared at the shed door. His amber eyes were calm. 'I thought I'd find you here,' he said. Tavo looked scared, but Grandpa Osei knelt beside him. 'You moved the drum to fix it?' Tavo nodded. 'The crack was getting worse. We wanted it to sound perfect for the celebration.' Grandpa Osei examined the patch and smiled. 'You had good hearts.'



Mia explained everything to the villagers. At first, some looked angry, but Grandpa Osei raised his hand. 'These children saw a problem and tried to solve it,' he said. 'They were afraid to tell us, but their intention was kind. Let's help them finish the repair.' The villagers murmured, then nodded. The musicians smiled with relief. 'We can help too,' they offered.



Everyone gathered around the drum. Grandpa Osei showed Tavo how to stretch the hide properly, and Mia fetched water and cloths. The musicians sang a rhythmic song as they worked, and the children joined in. The crack was carefully sealed, and the drum's surface grew smooth and tight. 'It looks better than ever!' Mia said. The villagers cheered, and Tavo's shy grin widened.



When the repair was done, Grandpa Osei lifted his walking stick. 'Now let's test it,' he said. He handed Tavo the mallet. Tavo hesitated, then struck the drum. BOOM! The sound rolled across the village like thunder. Everyone laughed and clapped. 'It works!' Tavo shouted. Mia beamed. 'You fixed it!' The drum seemed to hum with happiness.



The day of the celebration arrived. Flowers decorated every doorway, and the whole village gathered in the square. The traveling musicians played their flutes, and the children danced. Then Grandpa Osei announced, 'The drum is ready!' Tavo, Mia, and the other children stood proudly beside it. 'Would you like to start the celebration?' Grandpa Osei asked them. They nodded eagerly.



Tavo raised the mallet and struck the drum. BOOM! BOOM! The sound was louder and richer than ever before. The villagers cheered and clapped. 'It sounds wonderful!' cried the baker. The musicians played along, and everyone danced and sang. Mia twirled in her yellow dress, her hair buns bouncing. She caught Tavo's eye and gave him a thumbs-up. He grinned back.



After the celebration, Grandpa Osei gathered everyone around. 'Today we learned something important,' he said. 'We almost blamed the wrong people. But Mia's detective work and Tavo's honesty showed us the truth. Trust and understanding are always better than quick accusations.' The villagers nodded. Tavo's mother hugged him. 'I'm proud of you for trying to help,' she said.



From that day on, the village celebrated not just with the drum, but with open hearts. Mia kept her magnifying glass handy, always ready to solve a mystery with kindness. Tavo often helped Grandpa Osei care for the drum, and the musicians became honored guests each year. And whenever the drum boomed, everyone remembered: helping others with kind hearts makes the whole village cheer.