

The Mill at the Bottom of the Sea
From
How & Why Stories: World Tales Kids Can Read and Tell
A Story from Korea
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Formatted for Readers Theater by Lois Walker

- READER 1: Long ago, there lived a king who had a very unusual grinding mill.
- READER 2: It was good for grinding anything the king wanted to grind.
- READER 3: When the king ground wheat, the mill gave him flour for making bread.
- READER 4: When the king ground coffee beans, the mill gave him coffee for his coffee pot.
- READER 5: The mill worked and looked like any other hand mill...
- READER 1: But it also had special powers! It was a magic mill.
- READER 3: If you wanted something, all you had to do was tell the mill, crank its handle, and you'd get just what you wanted.
- READER 4: If you asked for gold, gold would come out.
- READER 5: If you asked for rice, rice would come out.
- READER 1: Whatever you wanted, the mill would give it to you.
- READER 2/THIEF: I am a thief and I want to steal the king's magic mill! First I will have to find out where the king hides the mill.
- READER 3: So, the thief dressed like a wealthy man and visited with one of the king's counselors.

- READER 4: When he arrived at the counselor's house, he found two other counselors were also visiting.
- READER 5: The men chatted about this and that, and finally the thief said,
- READER 2/THEIR: I heard that the king buried his mill in the ground because he doesn't trust his counselors.
- READER 1/
COUNSELOR 1: That is not true!
- READER 3/
COUNSELOR 2: The king trusts all of his counselors completely!
- READER 4/
COUNSELOR 3: Where did you hear such silly talk?
- READER 2/THIEF: I heard it from the people in the countryside. They say the king dug a deep hole and buried the mill because he is so afraid one of his counselors will steal it.
- READER 1/
COUNSELOR 1: That's nonsense!
- READER 3/
COUNSELOR 2: The king's mill is right where it has always been.
- READER 4/
COUNSELOR 3: Of course it is! It's buried beside the lotus pond in the inner court.
- READER 5: The thief was delighted to hear this news. He could hardly control his excitement.
- READER 2/THIEF: Oh, really? Are you sure?
- READER 1/
COUNSELOR 1: No one would dare try to steal the king's hand mill...

- READER 3/
COUNSELOR 2: especially since it is sitting where there are always lots of people coming and going.
- READER 5: The thief was so excited that all he could say was...
- READER 2/THIEF: Yes, of course! I am sure you are right!
- READER 5: Finally the thief left the counselor's house.
- READER 1: For many days the thief watched and waited.
- READER 3: Then one very dark night, he climbed the palace wall and stole the hand mill.
- READER 2/THIEF: I've got the mill hidden under my coat, but where am I going to hide myself?
- READER 4: The thief knew that everyone in the city and on the roads would be questioned once the king realized the mill was gone.
- READER 2/THIEF: I know what to do. I'll steal a boat. No one will be able to question me out on the water.
- READER 1: And so the thief stole a boat.
- READER 3: Once at sea, the thief was able to relax. He began to sing and dance as he thought about how rich he was going to be.
- READER 4: Then he thought about what to request from the hand mill.
- READER 2/THIEF: Oh no, I can't ask for gold because once I get back to land, people will wonder how I suddenly became wealthy.
- READER 5: Then he had what he thought was a brilliant idea.

- READER 2/THIEF: I've got it! I'll ask for salt! Everyone needs salt. I can sell it and become a rich man. I'll be the richest man in the country.
- READER 1: The thief fell down on his knees and began turning the hand mill. He shouted...
- READER 2/THIEF: Salt! Make me some salt!
- READER 3: And sure enough, salt began to pour out of the mill.
- READER 4: The thief danced about the boat, thinking about the big house he would soon by.
- READER 5: However, he didn't realize the hand mill was still turning and turning. Salt spilled over the sides of the small boat.
- READER 1: Finally, The boat was so full of salt that it sank to the bottom of the sea.
- READER 2/THIEF: Oh no! HELP!!!
- READER 3: And since then, no one has told the hand mill to stop.
- READER 4: Even today it is turning and making salt.
- READER 5: And that is why the sea is salty!