

# Mirandy and Brother Wind

by Patricia McKissack

## Classroom Favorites



Teacher's Guide by Vashti Ivy

A Perma-Bound Production

**Note to the Teacher:** please see the author's note in the front of the book for background on the cakewalk contests.

### Synopsis

In order to win the junior cakewalk Mirandy knew her kicks, swirls and turns had to be better than anyone else's, so she decided to capture the wind and make him her partner.

Capturing the wind was another problem and Mirandy sought help from various people. Mr. Jessup told her to use black pepper. Mis Poinsettia the conjure woman gave Mirandy a special spell to capture Brother Wind.

But, alas all the advice and special spells failed. As time drew near for the cakewalk jubilee, Mirandy grew disheartened and upset because she couldn't catch Brother Wind. While Mirandy sat moping on the porch hours before the dance, Brother Wind swooped into the barn, and Mirandy slipped up on him and slammed the barn door.

After finding Ezel the butt of Orlinda's joke, Mirandy declared Ezel her partner. Rushing home Mirandy asked Brother Wind to grant her wish. That night Ezel and Mirandy danced as they never danced before and won the junior cakewalk. Later Grandma Beasley stated "Them chullin' is dancing with the Wind!"

### About the Author

Patricia L'ann Carwell McKissack was born on August 9, 1944, in Nashville, Tennessee. She received her Bachelor's Degree from Tennessee State and her Master's Degree from Forest Park College in Missouri.

Mrs. McKissack's books cover a variety of topics for children including religious stories, biographies of black historical figures and a series on Native Americans.

Mrs. McKissack makes her home in St. Louis, MO.

### Critic's Corner

A delightful story of how Mirandy captured Brother Wind and had him to help her win the junior cakewalk with her friend Ezel.

*Mirandy and Brother Wind* is a Caldecott Honor Book, and the winner of the Coretta Scott King Award for Illustrations.

### Other Books by the Author

*Flossie and the Fox*

*Abram, Abram, Where Are You Going*

*Aztec Indians*

*The Maya*

*The Inca*

*Martin Luther King, Jr: A Man to Remember*

*Nettie Jo's Friends*

### Objectives

1. To acquaint students with the southern tradition of a cakewalk
2. To introduce southern dialect
3. To introduce southern folktale

### Word Study

**Chile:** Southern dialect for the word *child*

**Ma Dear:** Southern dialect for *mother dear*

**"Studied on the notion":** Thought about the problem.

**Conjure:** The practice of magic

**Cakewalk:** A strutting dance in which those performing did complex and unusual steps

**Chullin:** Southern dialect for *children*.

### Discussion Questions

1. Where did Mirandy live?  
(*in Ridgetop*)
2. How was Brother Wind dressed?  
(*he was dressed in his finest, a top hat and cane, and trailing a silvery wind cape behind him.*)
3. Why did Mirandy want to capture the wind?  
(*Mirandy felt that if she captured the wind and made him her partner, no one could beat her at the junior cakewalk.*)
4. What happens if one captures the wind?  
(*The wind must to that person's bidding.*)
5. What was Grandma Beasley's philosophy on capturing Brother Wind?  
(*That no one could shackle (hold) Brother Wind, because he was special and needed to be free.*)

## Vocabulary Development

6. Ezel was hoping that Mirandy would be his partner. What made him change his mind?  
(*Mirandy told him Brother Wind was going to be her partner.*)
7. What were some ways that Mirandy tried to capture the wind?  
(1. *she used pepper and a quilt*)  
(2. *she used cider and rain water in a crock.*)
8. How did Mirandy finally capture Brother Wind?  
(*When Brother Wind swooped into the hen house Mirandy slammed the door.*)
9. Why did Mirandy end up with Ezel as her partner?  
(*Orlinda was poking fun at Ezel, so Mirandy, taking up for her friend, said he was to be her partner at the cakewalk.*)
10. What was Mirandy's wish of Brother Wind?  
(*To help her and Ezel to dance like the wind*)

### Student Activities

1. *English:* Read the Poem "Who Has Seen the Wind." Discuss with students the meaning of the poem.
2. *Math:* Have students bring in recipes for layer cakes. Plan a lesson on measurement. (example: a cake recipe can feed 24 people using 12 eggs, 6 cups of flour, 3 cups of sugar, 2 cups of milk and 1 teaspoon of flavoring. If you only need to feed 12, how would you divide the recipe?)
3. *Dance and Physical Education:* With help of the dance teacher or physical education teacher. Have students perform a cakewalk. Invite parents, of course the prize would be a cake.
4. *Home Economics:* Help students to prepare a cake.
  1. Visit a bakery to observe how cakes are made and decorated.
  2. Invite a cake decorator to school to demonstrate and teach cake decorating techniques.
5. *Science:*
  1. Using a variety of cake recipes discuss the nutritional value of the ingredients in the recipes.
  2. Research the advantages of the wind and the disadvantages of the wind.

1.                    C    \_\_\_\_\_
2.                    \_ A    \_\_\_\_\_
3.    \_\_\_\_\_ K    \_\_\_\_\_
4.    \_\_\_\_\_ E    \_\_\_\_\_
5.    \_\_\_\_\_ W    \_\_\_\_\_
6.                    \_ A    \_\_\_\_\_
7.    \_\_\_\_\_ L    \_\_\_\_\_
8.                    \_ K    \_\_\_\_\_

1. The practice of magic
2. What Brother Wind trailed behind himself
3. What papa had stuffed inside the barn
4. Another name for Mother Dear
5. A strutting dance with complex steps
6. What Mis Poinsettia gave Mirandy to wear
7. Southern dialect for child
8. Prize for winning the cakewalk

## TEST

### Vocabulary

Find the correct definition for each italicized word below. Write the letter of the correct definition in each blank.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. dressed in his finest and trailing that long silvery wind *cape* behind him.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. "Can't nobody put *shackles* on Brother Wind, chile."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. "Ask her and find out," say Mirandy, and *strutted* away.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. his wind cape *hovering* gentle-like over the grasses.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Then, *flickering* the tail of the wind cape, he vanished.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Mirandy was helping him *restack* it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Mirandy was *moping* on the front porch.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Mirandy figured if Mis Poinsettia was up on her *conjure* she ought to know why.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Mirandy *commenced* to grinding pepper.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. His eyes sparkled like sun *glints* on branch water.
- a metal band used to hold the ankle or wrist of a prisoner
  - to put back in a neat pile
  - to start, begin
  - remaining in or near one place in the air
  - depressed or sulking
  - to call forth spirits, practice magic
  - a short gleam or flash of light
  - quick light strokes, snap lightly
  - a conceited walk
  - a sleeveless garment worn around the shoulders

## Multiple Choice

Circle the number that completes the sentence.

1. Brother Wind came back to Ridgetop in the
  1. fall
  2. summer
  3. spring.
  
2. Mirandy wanted Brother Wind to be her partner at
  1. the junior cakewalk
  2. the May day celebration
  3. the church picnic.
  
3. Who told Mirandy to use pepper to capture Brother Wind?
  1. Grandma Beasley
  2. Mr. Jessup
  3. Ma Dear
  
4. Ezel was Mirandy's
  1. brother
  2. cousin
  3. friend.
  
5. While Brother Wind was busy sneezing, Mirandy tried to slip
  1. a box over him
  2. a quilt over him
  3. a bottle over him.
  
6. Mis Poinsettia was said to be a
  1. conjure woman
  2. doctor
  3. dancer.
  
7. Mirandy set the bottle on the tree's
  1. south side
  2. west side
  3. north side.
  
8. Mirandy captured the wind in
  1. her father's barn
  2. the crock bottle
  3. under a quilt.
  
9. The cakewalk was held at
  1. the church
  2. the schoolhouse
  3. Mirandy's father's barn.
  
10. Mirandy's partner for the cakewalk was
  1. Ezel
  2. Brother Wind
  3. Elder Thomas.

## True and False

Mark the following statements either T for true or F for false.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Mirandy captured Brother Wind with salt and pepper.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Ezel was Mirandy's clumsy friend.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Mis Poinsettia lived in a whitewashed cottage.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Mis Poinsettia's spell captured Brother Wind for Mirandy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Brother Wind was dressed in a cape and top hat.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Orlinda didn't want Ezel for a partner.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Mirandy captured Brother Wind in her father's barn.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Ezel and Orlinda won the cakewalk contest.

## Fill in the Blanks

Fill in the word or words which complete each statement.

shackles          wind cape          conjure          clumsy          black pepper mill  
potion          cakewalk jubilee          fiddler          commenced

- 1. Mirandy rushed home and got the \_\_\_\_\_ and one of Ma Dear's quilts.
- 2. I need a \_\_\_\_\_ to help me catch Brother Wind . . . .
- 3. The \_\_\_\_\_ was working.
- 4. "dressed in his finest and trailing that long, silvery \_\_\_\_\_ behind him."
- 5. "Can't nobody put \_\_\_\_\_ on Brother Wind, chile."
- 6. Somebody drew a big square in the middle of the floor, and the \_\_\_\_\_ began.
- 7. Mirandy \_\_\_\_\_ to grinding pepper.
- 8. The \_\_\_\_\_ stood in one corner, and Grandma Beasley and other elder folk sat in the judges' seats.
- 9. She didn't even have to look around to know it was that \_\_\_\_\_ boy Ezel.

## **Short Answers**

1. How did Mirandy attempt to capture the wind?

2. Describe Mirandy and Ezel at the cakewalk.

## ANSWER KEY

1.	C O N J U R E	True or False
2.	C A P E	
3.	C R A C K S	1. F
4.	M A D E A R	2. T
5.	C A K E W A L K	3. T
6.	S C A R V E S	4. F
7.	C H I L E	5. T
8.	C A K E	6. T

### Vocabulary

1. J
2. A
3. I
4. D
5. H
6. B
7. E
8. F
9. C
10. G

### Multiple Choice

1. 3
2. 1
3. 2
4. 3
5. 2
6. 1
7. 3
8. 1
9. 2
10. 1

### Fill in the Blanks

1. black pepper mill
2. potion
3. conjure
4. wind cape
5. shackles
6. cakewalk jubilee
7. commenced
8. fiddler
9. clumsy

### Short Answers

1. First she tried to capture him with black pepper and a quilt. Next she tried a conjure from Mis Poinsettia. Mirandy mixed water from the rain barrel with cider, and set it on the north side of a willow tree and waited for Brother Wind.
2. Mirandy was picture pretty, dressed in yellow with two colorful scarves tied 'round each wrist. Ezel never stood taller or held his head higher. They pranced around the floor cutting corners with style and grace. When the music changed to a fast gait, they arched their backs and kicked their heels and reeled from side to side.



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