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### Jungle Drums

Sandra L. Tidwell

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Base, Graeme. *Jungle Drums*. Harry N. Abrams, 2004. ISBN 0810950448. \$18.95. 40 pp.

Reviewer: Sandra L. Tidwell

Reading Level: Preschool, Primary, Intermediate

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Picture Books;

Subject: Jungle Animals--Juvenile Fiction; Drums--Juvenile Fiction; Magic--Juvenile Fiction; Books--Reviews;

Ngiri Mdogo was the smallest warthog in Africa. That wouldn't be so bad, but all the other warthogs make fun of him. And why did they unleash their criticism on one of their own kind? Well, they envy the Other Animals who are more beautiful and impressive with their spots, stripes, and plumage. The Other Animals, who carry themselves with pride and dignity as they participate in their annual Grand Parade, are no kinder than the warthogs. They also tease Ngiri for being so small and plain. Seeing Ngiri's sadness, Old Nyumbu the Wildebeest, gives Ngiri a set of wish-producing jungle drums. Ngiri sadly passes the night playing the drums while wishing with all his heart. The next morning, he hasn't changed, but the Other Animals have and, after another night of playing his drums and wishing, things become even more mixed up. Everyone in the jungle is upset and they want things the way they were! Soon, even though things are not exactly back to normal, the jungle beasts put away their insecurities, stop their fault-finding, and begin to get along with each other.

Base is an accomplished artist and author. His illustrations are stunning and impressive while the animals' motions are clearly depicted. In addition to the story being just plain fun, it carries a powerful message about how selfishness and envy cause discord while tolerance and acceptance of differences promotes unity and appreciation. As in other Base titles, each reading of *Jungle Drums* has more for the reader to discover. The reader will also automatically learn a little Swahili along the way, as Base has given the animals their Swahili name. A pronunciation guide and answers to hidden animals puzzles and other jungle secrets are located at the back of the book.