



# Under the Great Plum Tree

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

Deep in the Indian jungle live Miss Bandari and Mr Magarmach, a golden-hearted monkey and a crocodile. Mr Magarmach is too old and slow to catch his own food any more so kind Miss Bandari throws him some fruit from her tree. One plum leads to another and soon the unlikely pair are the best of friends. Mr Magarmach is a great storyteller and Miss Bandari enjoys hearing about the past, when he was strong enough to battle pythons, lions and human hunters.

One day Mr Magarmach suggests repaying Miss Bandari's kindness with an outing, so she jumps onto his back and off they go. Along the way Dame Hati the elephant warns Miss Bandari about King Crocodile who lives in the swamp. 'He will eat you!' she trumpets, but Old Magarmach tells everyone not to be silly. King Crocodile simply wishes to see Miss Bandari's golden heart!

Does that sound *likely*? Miss Bandari thinks quickly and tells Old Magarmach that she's forgotten her golden heart and they'll have to return to her tree to fetch it. But as soon as she's safely home again, the wily monkey tells the old crocodile that she's no longer willing to be his guest, and Mr Magarmach is forced to confront a very angry Crocodile King.

The story could end here, but happily it doesn't. Old Magarmach isn't the villain he appears to be and when pushed, finds the courage to stand up for Miss Bandari - even though it results in his expulsion from the swamp and a life of misery. Or does it? When Miss Bandari spots him looking cold and lonely, she takes pity on him and their friendship is rekindled.

This engaging fable is attractively illustrated by Iranian artist Reza Dalvand using intricate and delicately patterned images inspired by traditional Gujerati designs. In writing the story, Sufiya Ahmed drew on her mother's tales about the Indian jungle - which were, in turn, based on fables from the Panchatantra, an ancient Indian story-collection dating to 300 B.C.E.

Versions of this fable are known from Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana, China, Japan and the Caribbean and this book is part of the **One Story, Many Voices** series from Tiny Owl, highlighting global story connections.

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