

The Mango Tree and other stories



Rachna Srivastava

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To my little “angel”, whose sweet and beautiful activities fill my heart with joy and warmth. You are my inspiration.

Mommy loves you.

- Rachna

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The Mango Tree

The holidays were here, and Andy's parents decided to make a visit to his uncle's place in Florida. Andy loved Florida; it was a great place to have the holidays. He was also excited to see his cousin Ryan again. Ryan was a little older than Andy, but they had great times together whenever they met.

Andy's parents booked the flight and the family flew to Florida in no time. Everybody was happy to see each other. Andy and Ryan had so many things to talk about: their new games, toys, friends, and hobbies. Talking and playing together was great fun for both of them.

One day after breakfast, they were playing in the backyard. Ryan said, "Andy, last week I planted a mango seedling. Would you like to see it?"

"Sure," Andy replied. "I would love to."

Ryan showed Andy his small mango seedling, planted in a corner of the backyard. Andy saw it and said, "It's beautiful. I am sure you are taking very good care of it."

Ryan smiled and said, "Yes, I try to. Plants also need care and attention."

"When will it grow mangoes? I wish I could see those," asked Andy curiously.

Ryan started laughing and said, “Oh, Andy! It takes years to give fruit. It will grow into a big tree first, and then it will grow mangoes.”

“Years?” Andy said. “Who wants to wait for so long?”

Ryan replied, “It is not that long. Time will pass quickly, and soon it will start bearing fruit.”

“Good luck, buddy!” Andy said. “I hope we get mangoes next time I come.”

Ryan smiled and they got busy playing once again.

Everybody in the family was having a nice time. The days were filled with fun and food. Soon, the holidays came to an end and it was time to go back. Andy went with some nice souvenirs and fond memories.

School started before long, and he got busy with his studies. Over time, he forgot all about the mango tree.

A few years later, Andy’s family went to Florida for the holidays again. Andy and Ryan were once again happy to see each other after such a long time. They were soon discussing new things all over again. Now they were teenagers, and had many more things to talk about.

Later that day, when they went to the backyard to play basketball, Andy saw a big tree in the corner, full of mangoes. He said to Ryan, “The

mango tree is beautiful. It has so much fruit. Is it the same one that you planted when I visited you last?”

“Yes, Andy. It’s the same tree,” Ryan replied with a smile. “Now we and the whole neighbourhood are enjoying its fruit!”

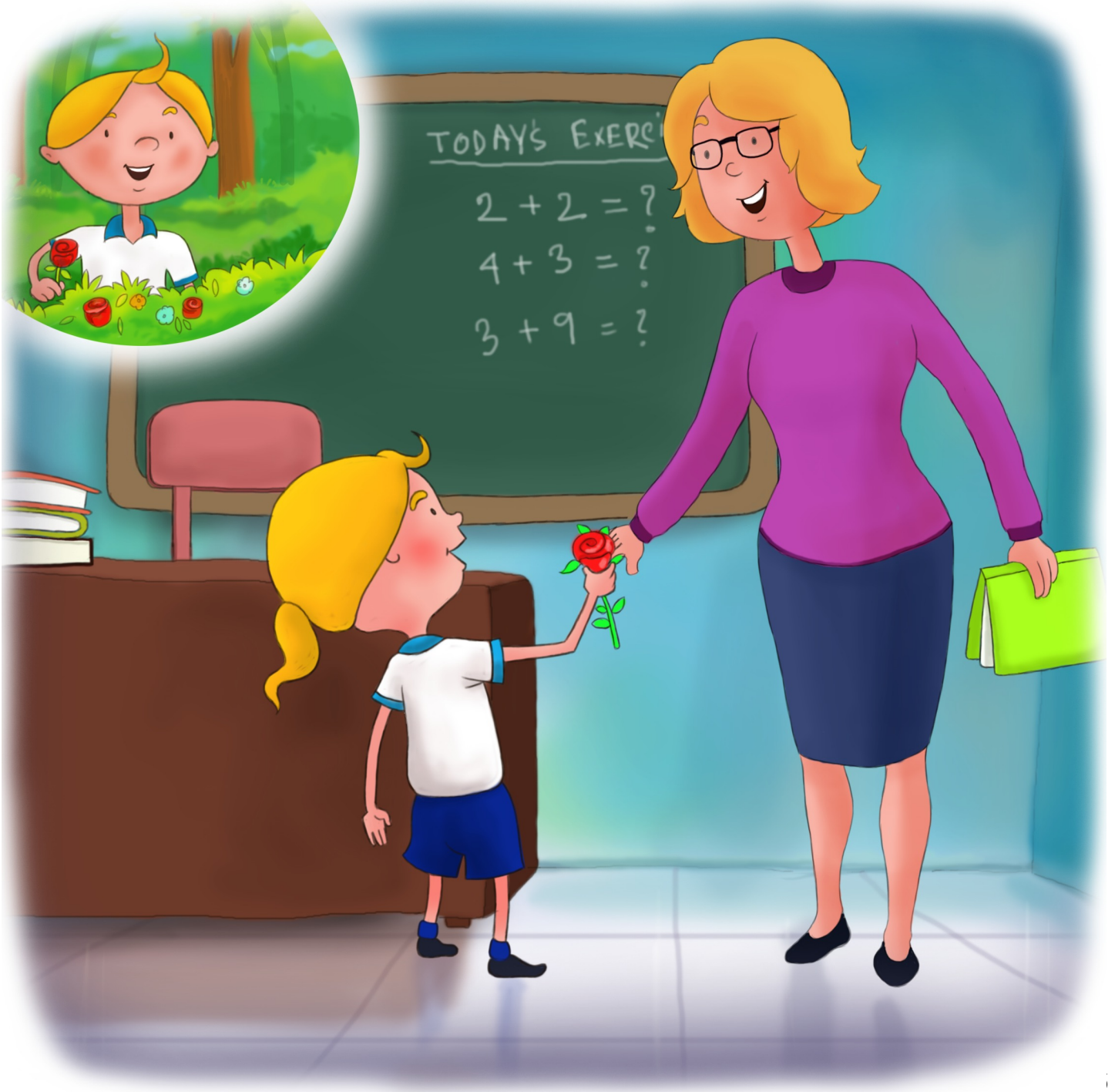
Ryan got some mangoes and said “Andy, why don’t you try some? I’m sure you will like them.”

Andy ate one mango and was amazed. He said, “Ryan, wow! It is so sweet and juicy. Your patience has really been rewarded. You waited for so long, and now you have such tasty fruit. You deserve to eat these delicious mangoes.”

“Yes, Andy,” said Ryan. “Sometimes we just need to do our work at the beginning, and have patience for the big result.”

Andy smiled and said, “Now I truly understand the phrase, ‘Good things come to those who wait.’”

And both of them went inside happily to have their supper.



The Mathematics Contest

Tina came downstairs for breakfast, looking quite happy. She found her parents sitting around the kitchen table and greeted them at once. “Good morning, Dad! Good morning, Mom!”

“Good morning, sweetheart!” said Mother, as she got Tina’s breakfast together. We have your favourite cereal for breakfast today. You’ll have to eat quickly, or you’ll be late for school.”

Tina smiled and started eating her cereal. Her dad looked at her over his newspaper. “Tina, you look excited today. Is something going on at school?” asked Dad.

“Yes, Dad!” replied Tina. “Yesterday I had my science test, and I did quite well. Today I have my English test, and I think I’ll do well in that, too.”

“That’s great Tina. Keep it up!” said Dad with a smile. “A beautiful rose is blooming out in the garden. Have you seen it? That’s yours, sweetie.”

Tina loved roses and she spent much of her free time out in the garden. She always loved to pick the flowers, but her parents told her that she shouldn’t pick so many. She knew that she needed let them grow. She was very happy to hear that she could have one. “Thanks, Dad!” Tina beamed, and she got busy eating breakfast again.

“And how about your math test, dear?” asked Mother, as she washed dishes in the sink. “Is it done or still coming up?”

Tina fell quiet. She didn’t like to talk about math. “It’s over, Mom,” She said after a moment. “It was fine. I don’t want to talk about it.”

Tina’s mother could tell something was wrong, but before she could say anything more, Tina finished her breakfast and ran upstairs to get ready for school.

Tina hadn’t done well in most of her recent math tests. Her friends didn’t seem to have so much trouble with math, and she didn’t know why it was so hard for her. She didn’t talk about it, even with her best friend, Jenny. She and Jenny were on the athletics team together, and she would run the long-jump, the high-jump, and the hurdle race with Jenny, but if Jenny started talking about math, Tina would excuse herself right away.

One day, Tina and Jenny were going home together after school. “Tina, my grandma gave me a cool mathematical puzzle book for my birthday,” Jenny said. “Would you like to see it?”

Tina became worried. “Not today, Jenny,” she told her. “I just remembered some work which mother asked me to do. Maybe I can come over some other day, but I have to go home now.”

The days passed like this, and Tina tried her best to escape math. But it would have to catch up with her eventually.

One morning, Tina's math teacher, Ms. Laura, came to class and made an announcement. "Hello everyone! I have important information to share with you. I am sure you will be happy to hear this. We are going to have a mathematics quiz contest in school next week, and the winner of the contest will receive a new bicycle. So study hard, everyone! You all are welcome to participate."

Ms. Laura made this announcement and suddenly the class erupted. All the students were discussing it. Some talked about the puzzles they had solved recently. Some crooned over the new puzzle books in the library, and some about the bicycle.

Every day after this, students were given an hour in class to discuss the contest amongst themselves. Everybody was enjoying the preparation, except Tina. While the other kids were busy getting ready, Tina sat quietly. Ms. Laura noticed that Tina was excluding herself, and seemed to be taking no interest in the other children's discussions. She went to her and asked, "Tina, what's the matter? Why are you sitting so quietly? Are you not going to participate in the contest?"

"Ms. Laura, I love quizzes and contests, but I am very bad at math. I can't perform well in this contest, so I don't want to participate," replied Tina.

Ms. Laura smiled and said, "Tina, you can surely do well! You just need to practice and keep your confidence high."

She thought for a little longer and came up with an idea. She said, “Tina, have you ever seen an ant?”

“Yes, Ms. Laura, I have seen them,” Tina said. “They are very small and always moving around.”

“That’s right, they are very small. But they are very hard-working and determined, too. Would you like to listen to an ant story?” Ms. Laura sat on the bench next to Tina.

“Sure, Ms. Laura,” Tina replied. “I would love to.”

Ms. Laura began to tell her the story.

“Once upon a time, an ant was carrying a grain of corn that she found in the corner of a field. She wanted to bring it to her home, a hole beneath a bush, on the other end of the field. Along the way, the ant came upon many obstacles. Every time she encountered an obstacle, she changed her direction and went around it.

When she grew quite close to her home, a long, thick wooden stick blocked her way. At first she was scared. She waited there for some time but eventually decided to cross over the stick. It was not an easy task. She tried to climb, but she slipped and fell. But she did not give up. She tried again and again. Finally, in one last try, she was successful. Jumping for joy, she reached home and enjoyed her sweet corn, the prize for all her hard work.”

Ms. Laura looked at Tina. “And that’s the end of it. Did you like the story?”

“Yes, it was a nice story,” Tina replied. “The ant was small, but it was able do big things.”

“Yes, Tina. This ant’s story comes with a very important message: hard work is the key to success. You should do your work and not to be afraid. Fear takes you nowhere. If you are afraid of failing, you will never try, and if you never try, you can never succeed. Not trying is not winning. Succeeding or failing is part of life. So don’t be afraid to try.” Ms. Laura patted Tina with a smile.

Ms. Laura’s kind words made Tina feel better, and she nodded.

Ms Laura added, “Tina, if an ant can conquer its fear and be successful, I am sure you can do it. You are bigger, stronger, and more intelligent. Just keep your confidence and work hard.”

Tina felt unstoppable now. She said, “Ms. Laura, I would love to participate in the contest now, and I’ll try to do my very best. Thank you so much for supporting me!”

Ms. Laura smiled and said, “That’s the spirit! Good girl! Now go prepare for the contest.”

Tina went home happily and told her mother about the math contest. At first, Mother couldn’t believe that Tina was suddenly so enthusiastic

for a math contest, but she was very happy to see this change. She helped Tina to prepare.

Tina worked hard to get ready. She talked actively in all the class discussions. Tina and Jenny solved many mathematical puzzles together. She now understood that there was no reason to be afraid. She felt confident.

Tina tried hard in the contest. She did not win the bicycle, but that didn't get her down. She performed quite well and was proud of herself. When she saw her parents cheering her on, her happiness knew no bounds. She promised herself she would never be afraid of anything, and would always try to do her best.

The day after the contest, Tina picked the red rose from her garden and gave it to Ms. Laura. It was very beautiful and she couldn't think of a better way to say "thank you" to her wonderful teacher.



Innocence

Every time Mother called Charlie a, “Big Boy,” it made him very happy. He was five years old now. He had questions for everybody about everything. At times, his funny questions would fill his home with laughter. He was the cute chatter-box of the house and a delight to talk with. He would try to help his mother in all the household chores. He especially loved to help her take care of plants in backyard. He enjoyed watering the plants and taking out weeds.

One day at breakfast, Mother gave him his usual glass of milk.

“Mom, I don’t want to drink milk,” said Charlie. “Why do you give me milk every day?”

She insisted, “Charlie, milk is very important for our bodies. Come on, finish it quickly and be a good boy.”

Charlie did not want to drink milk and asked instead, “Mom, if I do not like milk, then why should I drink it?”

Mother tried to explain this to Charlie. “Milk is very important for our fitness. It makes us grow fast, and healthy, and strong,” she told him. “Your dad and I also drink milk every day.”

Charlie always wanted to grow big fast, so that he could play lots of field games. He was convinced without another word, and finished his milk quickly.

One morning, a week later, Mother came in from the backyard and called Charlie's dad. She said, "The saplings I planted last month are dying. I see lots of bugs and ants nesting around the plants. They are eating up the roots."

Charlie's father also found this quite strange and said, "Why would bugs and ants be eating the plants?"

Mother sat on the sofa, frowning and said, "I have absolutely no idea why it is happening. I see no reason for it."

Charlie cared a lot for his mother's plants, so when he heard this discussion he came running. He asked, "Mom, what has happened to the plants?"

Mother replied, "Charlie, ants are eating up the plants and they are dying."

Hearing this, Charlie burst into tears. He muttered, "How can they die? I take very good care of them."

Mother said "Calm down, Charlie. I know you love the plants a lot and you take very good care of them."

Charlie sobbed. "I gave them milk to drink every day! That way they could grow up fast, and healthy, and strong! They can't die," said Charlie. "It's not possible, Mom."

Mother heard Charlie and understood what had happened to the plants. She calmed Charlie down and gave him a candy to eat.

When Charlie felt better, she said, "Charlie, you put milk in the plants?"

"Yes, Mom. I gave milk to the plants everyday so that they would grow up like you said," Charlie replied innocently. "I wanted them to grow fast."

Mother smiled and hugged Charlie. "It was very thoughtful, Charlie. But milk is for us. Plants do not drink milk."

"But why can't plants drink milk? If we can drink milk to be healthy, can't the plants do it too?" asked Charlie with a curious look.

Mother glanced toward Charlie's father and smiled. Both of them couldn't help but be delighted at Charlie's innocence.

"Charlie, ants are highly attracted to sweet things. They can smell sugar very well," replied Mother. "When you put milk in plants, the soil and the roots get sugar around them. The ants nest around the plants and eat up the roots to get the sugar. This is why the plants are dying."

Charlie understood at once. "Mom, I did not know that ants would come to eat the plants if I put milk on their roots," he said. "I thought the

plants would become healthier. I am really sorry, Mom. Please forgive me.”

Mother patted Charlie on his cheek and said, “It’s alright, Charlie. I will get us some new plants, and we can take very good care of them.”

Charlie nodded with a smile.

She added “Charlie, always remember that what works for one may not work for all. Everybody needs different things in life. Something that is healthy for people may not be healthy for trees.”

“Sure, Mom, I understand. I won’t forget!” Charlie replied. He hugged his mother tightly with a sweet smile on his face and said, “I love you, Mom. Thank you for not being mad.”

Mother kissed Charlie and he went outside happily to play.



Change is Life

Peter's family moved to Toronto when his father took up a new job there, and Peter absolutely loved it. His family had lived in Mexico ever since he was born, but he always loved visiting big cities. Now he was living in one!

Peter was completely in awe of the city from the moment he first visited down-town with his parents. The car drove down the road and he was amazed to see the high-rises and skyscrapers on both sides, drawing the city's skyline. Suddenly he exclaimed with joy, "Dad, look at that tower! That's amazing."

"That's the CN Tower, Peter. We will visit it sometime," said Peter's dad with a smile.

"This is a very nice city, Dad. I love this place," said Peter cheerfully.

Peter's father got a nice house with a big backyard in the first week there. It was a little far from the city, but it was in a scenic neighbourhood. The backyard was full of lush grass and beautiful trees. Peter liked it much more than the apartment buildings he'd always lived in before. There had not been many trees around those, and the neighbourhoods were all densely packed together.

Of all the trees, Peter's favourite was a maple tree. He tied a swing to one of its lowest branches and built a tree-house on the higher ones. The whole summer was fun; it was the best he'd ever had.

Summer soon passed by though, and fall began setting in. The trees started changing colours and the bright green leaves turned yellow and brown. Meanwhile, Peter and his parents visited his grandmother; she had been missing them for quite some time.

When he came home, he was completely shocked to see what had happened to the maple tree. It had lost all its leaves and stood there like it was a dried and dead tree.

Peter was standing at the window and looking outside. When his mother saw Peter acting so quiet, she asked, "Peter, what happened? Why do you look so sad?"

"Look, Mom! What happened to the Maple tree? It lost all of its leaves and it's just standing there like a dried piece of wood." Peter said. "Is it dead? Didn't we water it enough?"

Peter's mother looked outside at tree and said, "Don't be sad, Peter. The tree is fine. It will get its leaves back in spring. It is just preparing itself for winter. That is the way of nature; all the trees' leaves fall down before winter, and they come back in spring."

"But Mom," Peter interrupted. "It must be feeling very sick without leaves."

"I understand your worries, but imagine how happy it will be when it is decorated with beautiful new leaves in springtime!" Mother replied.

She continued, "Peter, that's how life is, a combination of fall and spring, good and bad. We only really understand happiness when we find it after hard times. If there was only happiness, every day would be the same. We would forget to enjoy happiness and life will become dull and tiresome. Bad and good must be balanced for us to appreciate the good things when they come."

She hugged him and said "So, be happy. You will get your beautiful tree back in spring and you can play with it again."

Peter kissed his mother and went happily to play with toys in his room.



Better Late Than Never

Charlie had become quite too lazy to brush his teeth these days. He found it boring and thought it was waste of time. He looked for every possible opportunity to skip brushing his teeth.

Mother noticed Charlie's behaviour, and she tried several times to make him understand the importance of brushing. She told him that if he did not brush properly, his teeth would start decaying and might ache. But all her efforts were in vain. Charlie paid no attention.

One evening, after having dinner Charlie went to his room, jumped into his bed, and started reading a book. Mother saw that he had not brushed his teeth, so she went to his room and reminded him. Charlie tried to give some silly excuses, but finally got up, brushed his teeth and got back to reading again.

Mother went back to the kitchen and worked at her household chores. After some time, Charlie's grandparents called on the telephone. Mother picked the phone and went to her room to talk to them.

Charlie heard that mother was talking on the phone and thought that it would be a good time to have some candies. He sneaked into the kitchen and grabbed a few from the jar. He tiptoed back to his room and quickly finished them off. Charlie knew that candies stick in your teeth, mother always told him that, and he knew that he should brush after eating them. But he ignored this and went to sleep.

While sleeping, Charlie had a bad dream. He had the feeling that all his teeth had decayed and were falling out. He tried hard to hold onto them, but soon there were no teeth in his mouth.

Charlie got scared and started screaming. Mother came running to his room and noticed that Charlie was sweating badly. Mother took Charlie in her arms and asked, "What's the matter, Charlie? Why did you scream?"

Charlie, who was still half asleep, held Mother tightly. "All my teeth fell out! They're all gone!" he cried.

Mother hugged him tightly and assured him his teeth were still there. She said, "You are alright, Charlie. Nothing has happened to your teeth. I think you had a bad dream."

Charlie opened his mouth and touched his teeth and said with excitement "Oh yes, Mom, my teeth are perfectly fine! They have not fallen out. It was surely just a very bad dream."

He clung to his mother and said, "Mom, in my dream I saw that my teeth fell out. There were no teeth left in my mouth!"

"Son, it was only a bad dream; forget it and sleep," said mother.

Charlie replied, "Mom, I am sorry. This dream has made me understand the importance of caring for my teeth. I was so scared by the

thought of losing them in my dream. What would happen if I really lost them? I promise I will always take good care of my teeth."

Mother smiled, kissed him, and said, "I am sure you will. Now sleep well sweetheart, you have to get up early for school tomorrow."

About The Book

The Mango Tree and Other Stories is an original collection of children's stories that emphasizes life lessons and morals. Each tale discusses an important aspect of childhood and how a child might come to understand it. Young readers will be able to easily relate to the honest and innocent characters, and enjoy the situations those characters find themselves in. The lessons they will learn comprise an important part of growing up.



About The Author

Rachna Srivastava is an author of children's books. She strives to convey everyday morals and sensitivities in young minds. Her stories use simple characters and sometimes animals as characters to allow children to imbibe the values from the stories easily. She enjoys watching cartoons movies, reading and writing children's books. To know about other books from the author and to access free e-books and stories, visit her website: <http://rachnasrivastava.com>



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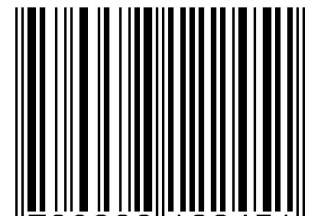
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