

I am Najar-Am-Radh

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Did you know that trees are the greatest storytellers?

Once there were many like me. But then a sad and strange thing happened. My tree friends lost all their stories. Soon, I was the only storyteller left.

Big Wind, the clouds and Rain brought me news of exciting new happenings across the seas. I tell these stories. They say my stories can stop the fiercest wind in its tracks. Halt a storm like magic. Make cows yield more milk. I don't know. I just like to make up stories.

One day as I sat telling a story, I saw a strange face in the crowd. Big eyes. Long, black, snake-like hair. A hungry mouth.

It was the wicked Wizard of Tantrapuri! He was the one who had stolen the stories from all my friends.

And now he was trying to steal mine. As I told my stories, I could see the words twist and twirl and move towards him. Gently, he plucked the words from the air. Once all the words of my story were in his hand, he muttered LABAKA-DOBAKA-PULIYA-CHOOM! And all my words jumped into a tiny tamarind seed, which he quickly popped into his bag.

How could I save my stories?! Luckily for me my friend Big Wind had a plan. He moved gently through the people who had come to listen to my story, whispering his plan into their ears.

Then I started telling my best story - the one about the magician's mirror. But there was a man in it, just like the Wizard of Tantrapuri. Big eyes. Long, black, snake-like hair. A hungry mouth. In fact, it was the Wizard of Tantrapuri!

The wizard loved my story! Greedily, he began to pluck my words from the air, each and every letter, muttering, "LABAKA-DOBAKA-PULIYA-CHOOM!"

His magic swirled around my story. I felt it being dragged away from me. I grinned. You see, he didn't know that he was in the story too. When my words jumped into a tamarind seed, he was in it too. Before he knew what was happening, he was trapped inside the tamarind seed!

“Save me!” cried the wicked Wizard of Tantrapuri. “Please save me!”

I felt sorry for him. But what could I do? Then I had an idea. “With so many stories inside you, you will make the best story tree in the world,” I said. The tamarind seed jumped. “I’d like that!” it squeaked.

Now, if you come to our village, you will find the tamarind tree near the bus stop. Many people come to listen to its stories. And believe it or not, the Tamarind Story Tree is my best friend now!

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