

Rikki-Tiki-Tavi.

This tale is of a brave mongoose, named Rikki-tikki-tavi, and his great fight to help a family that saved him. It all took place in the far-off land of India. It began on the first sunny day after many days of darkness and rain. A young English boy, Teddy, went outside to explore. There he found a mongoose in the road. A mongoose is a small animal, a bit like a cat and a bit like a weasel. This mongoose, Rikki-tikki, had thick hair and a bushy tail that made him look like a cat. His skinny head and the way he moved his feet were just like a weasel. His wiggly nose and eyes were pink. But when he got mad, his eyes turned deep, deep red. A big summer flood had washed Rikki-tikki out of the hole where he lived. The water carried him along and dumped him in a ditch just outside Teddy's house. This was how Teddy found him. "Look, Mummy, a dead mongoose," Teddy said as he carried Rikki-tikki inside. "Let's have a funeral." "No Teddy," said his mother. "Maybe he's just wet. Why don't we dry him off?" Teddy's father wrapped the animal in a towel to warm him up. The towel tickled Rikki-tikki's little pink nose. The mongoose sneezed and then looked around. Rikki-tikki was very curious. Rikki-tikki ran up to Teddy and rubbed his wet head under the boy's chin. "Hey, that tickles," Teddy cried. "He wants to be your friend," Teddy's father laughed. "Wow, how amazing," said Teddy's mother. "He's a wild animal. I guess he's so tame because we've been kind to him." "As long as we don't pick him up by the tail, or put him in a cage," said Teddy's father, "he'll be happy here." Then Rikki-tikki spent the whole day running through Teddy's house making himself at home. At bedtime, he climbed up into bed right next to Teddy. The next morning Rikki-tikki went out into the garden. It was a large yard with rosebushes and plenty of tall grass. Rikki-tikki heard a sad song coming from the trees. He looked up and saw Darzee, the songbird. One of her eggs had fallen out of her nest and a snake had eaten it. "Those snakes, Nag and Nagaina, are evil," Darzee cried. The snakes were cobras, some of the biggest, deadliest snakes around. "I'm sorry," said Rikki-tikki, "but I am new here. Who is Nag?" Just then, a big snake slithered up through the tall grass. It hissed a low breath that was harsh like steam from a radiator. Rikki-tikki was so scared by the sound that he jumped two feet.