Helping your children choose books they will love

I reading

Lovereading4kids.co.uk is a book website created for parents and children to make choosing books easy and fun

Opening extract from

Old Dog, New Tricks

Written by

Bali Rai

Published by

Barrington Stoke Ltd

All Text is Copyright © of the Author and/or Illustrator

Please print off and read at your leisure.

Lovereading4kids.co.uk

OLD DOG NEW TRICKS

BALI RAI

First published in 2014 in Great Britain by
Barrington Stoke Ltd
18 Walker Street, Edinburgh, EH3 7LP

www.barringtonstoke.co.uk

Text © 2014 Bali Rai

The moral right of the author has been asserted in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988

ISBN: 978-1-78112-347-8

Printed in China by Leo

Barrington Stoke

1

The first time I met Mick, I knew he was a grumpy old git. He came and rang the bell, on our first night in our new house. He lived next door, and he looked angry.

"Have you seen my budgie?" he growled. His accent was pure Leicester and really strong – when he said 'budgie', it came out like 'budgeh'.

"Your budgie?" I asked. "What – like a bird?"

"You taking the piss?" he replied.

My mum must have heard us because she joined me at the door. "What's up?" she asked.

"My budgie flew away and I thought you might have seen it," said our neighbour.

"No," said Mum. I could see she was trying not to laugh. "No budgies in our house. I think I'd notice."

The old man mumbled something under his breath.

"I'm sorry?" said Mum. "What did you say?"

"Oh, bugger off!" he snapped. Then he turned and walked away.

Mum's eyes widened and her mouth dropped open. "You can't talk to me like that!" she yelled after him.

"I know what he said," I told her. "He said we'd probably made the budgie into a curry."

Mum's expression relaxed and we burst out laughing.

The second time we met, two days later, Mick was worse. We had some of our family over for the weekend – Dad's youngest sister's lot. We were having a barbecue – the whole family was milling around the garden. My little cousin, Arjun, was messing about when he kicked my football too hard. It flew over the fence and smashed a pane of glass on Mick's greenhouse. Arjun looked shocked. He was only seven. He froze to the spot, his eyes watered, and his bottom lip trembled.

"It's OK," I told him, as my dad came over.

The fence between Mick and us was tatty and broken, and one whole panel was missing. I watched as Mick came storming out of his house, his cheeks scarlet with rage.

"You effing little moron!" he yelled across the wrecked fence.

"Oi!" I shouted back. "Don't talk to him like that – it was an accident!"

Mick ignored me and went on shouting at Arjun. "I saw you! You did it on purpose!"

"No I didn't!" Arjun protested. Then he ran to his mum, crying his eyes out.

My dad tried to calm things down. "Hi," he said to Mick. "I'm Indy Singh. What seems to be the matter?"

"That kid has just destroyed my greenhouse!" Mick yelled. He glared at my dad.

"Oh." My dad shook his head. "I'm really sorry. I'll pay for the damage."

"Stuff yer apology," Mick said. "This street was lovely before your lot started moving in."

Dad raised an eyebrow. "What you on about?" he asked. "Whose lot?"

Mick pointed to the rest of our family. "Look at you all!" he said. "Bloody infestation – that's what you are!"

"Are you being racist, mate?" Dad demanded.

Mick smirked at us. “Racist?” he said. “I’m no racist. People like you are just scum – nothing to do with yer race, mate.”

That was how I met him …