

## **Tashi and the Bandits**

'Enough!' shouted the Bandit Chief to his wife. 'This boy is not like our son. He sings like a crow, he tangles your hair, he loses the rice, he scatters the horses, he warns our enemies – and now he has spoilt our dinner. This is too much.' And he turned to Tashi.

'You must go home to your village now, Tashi. You are a clumsy, useless boy with no more brain than the ducks you ruined.'

Tashi smiled inside, but put on a sorrowful face and turned to the Bandit Wife. 'I'm sorry that I wasn't like your son,' he said, but she was already on her way down to the river to fetch some more water.

Tashi turned to go when a rough hand pulled him back.

'You don't deserve to go free, Duck Spoiler,' snarled Me Too. 'Say goodbye to this world and hello to the next because I'm going to make an end of you.'

But as he turned to pick up his deadly nose-hair plucker, Tashi shook himself free and tore off into the forest. He could hear the bandit crashing through the trees after him, but if he could just make it to the river, he thought he would have a chance.

He was almost there when he heard a splash. He looked up to see the Bandit Wife had slipped on a stone and had fallen into the water.

'Help!' she cried when she saw Tashi. 'Help me, I can't swim!'

pp. 50–55