

Each Mango Matters





Gran says the same speech each time we pick a mango. She is **emphatic**.

'Each. Mango. Matters.' She says it so much that Dog can tell. He sits under the big mango tree, sniffing, as if he can count each one.

The branches hang low. I can just reach one. I tell the birds up top, 'No bites! Each mango is for us!'

Harvest day is the best day ever. I carry a fat mango sack, and it takes real **oomph**. One slip and splat! Gran will be mad for a week. Girl in yellow dress hugs a mango to her chest, soft as can be. Ray runs to the trees. 'I win each time!' he yells. 'Ray drops a mango each time,' I say. Dog trots beside me, and his tail swings and swings.



Ray dashes up the tree. I go up after him and pick slowly. Careful, careful. Ray is not careful. He grabs a big bunch. 'Look! No hands!' he yells. A mango slips and spins down, down... Gran catches it in the basket. She does not look up. **Phew!** 'Don't drop that mango!' she calls. Girl in yellow dress grins. Dog trots by the trunk, hoping the next one falls his way.





Gran cuts up the mangoes for lunch. We sit by a big plate heaped with gold mango bits. Ray takes a big bite. Sticky drips run down his chin, down his neck, down his shirt. 'What a sticky chin, Ray!' I say. He just grins and takes a bigger bite. I chew the skin and suck the pip clean. Yummy! Gran points at me. She is **emphatic**. 'That is the way. Not a bit goes to waste.'

After lunch, pals come by, and the yard gets loud and busy. My pal rolls up in his seat with a big grin. 'Let me catch!' he yells, waving. Gran sits by a tray heaped with gold mangoes and smiles. 'A big team has many hands,' she says. 'And many hands can...' 'Drop a mango!' we all yell. We can say that speech by now. Gran is **emphatic** each time. Dog barks, as if he is joining in.





I have a plan. **Phase** one: fill the basket. **Phase** two: send it down on a rope, slowly. The pal in the seat reaches up and catches the basket. 'Got it!' he calls. Not one dent. He is the best catcher on the farm. Below, Ray and Girl in yellow dress sort the batch on a blanket. 'This one has a dent,' says Ray. Girl in yellow dress checks it. 'That is a Ray dent!'

Dad packs the best mangoes into the truck and we drive to the stalls. My chest thumps. This is the big test. We pile the mangoes high under the shade, like a gold hill.

A shopper picks one up. The shopper sniffs it and turns it round and round. I hold up the top mango like a **trophy**. 'No dents. No marks. Not one drop.' The shopper smiles. 'I will take ten.'





The stall on land is just **phase** one. The next **phase** floats! We load the mangoes in a boat and row out to sell and swap. Boats bump us on each side. Food here, a flower there, bundles in pink and green. Ray stands up to wave, and the boat rocks! Girl in yellow dress grabs the mangoes. I grab Ray. 'Sit down, Ray!' 'Don't drop that mango!' calls a seller in the next boat with a big grin. Each seller can tell the rule.

The harvest ends. Each mango picked, sorted, sold, or swapped. Not one dropped. Well, not one that Gran can spot. We go up the big tree, not to pick, just to rest. Girl in yellow dress naps on a wide branch. Ray lies below her, still at last. Dog stands beside us, tail up. 'Next harvest,' I whisper, 'I bet we pick a bigger lot.' Dog grins like a little **prophet**.





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Every mango matters to Gran, and she says it emphatically every single harvest. A girl balances a full sack on her head, watching a mischievous boy race ahead, grab too many at once, and send one tumbling through the branches toward Gran's waiting basket below. Will it survive the fall, or end up a sticky splat on the ground? Written for Jolly Phonics classrooms (Step 3, Unit 1: ph as in phone), this book practices words like 'phase', 'emphatic', 'oomph', 'pew', 'trophy'.

Phonics Focus: <ph>

emphatic, oomph, phase, pew, prophet, trophy

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