

# The Grand Plan to Fix Everything Activity Kit!



## The Grand Plan to Fix Everything

By  
Uma Krishnaswami

Illustrated by  
Abigail Halpin

Dini and her best friend, Maddie, love Bollywood movies. Their favorite actress of all time is the amazing Dolly Singh. Dini and Maddie are excited to go to two whole weeks of Bollywood dance camp together over the summer, but then Dini's mother drops a bombshell—they are moving to India for two whole years! And not to Mumbai, which true fillum fans like Dini and Maddie still refer to as Bombay, the home of Bollywood. No, Dini is moving to a tiny town far from the fillum universe—Swapnagiri!

But could it be true that Dolly herself is in Swapnagiri? Will Dini meet her in person? Can Dini hatch a plot to save the day when all hope seems lost?

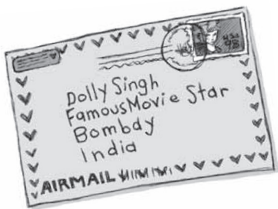
Uma Krishnaswami's charming novel will have young readers tap-tap-tapping their toes as the colors and music of India dance through the madcap romp that is *The Grand Plan to Fix Everything*.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ✿ Maddie and Dini love Bollywood movies, even though they can't understand all the words of the songs and read the dialogue in subtitles. Have you ever watched a foreign film? What universal themes can be found in movies regardless of where they're made or what language they're in?
- ✿ Dini has to move half a world away from her best friend, Maddie. Have you ever had to leave friends behind or have you had friends move away? How did you feel? Did the friendship survive the distance?
- ✿ Coincidence is a big theme in *The Grand Plan to Fix Everything*. It's a coincidence that Dini's incompletely addressed letter to Dolly falls into Lal's hands, the postal carrier in Mumbai who also happens to be a huge Dolly fan and knows her apartment is on his route. It's a coincidence that Dolly happens to be in Swapnagiri, the tiny town Dini is moving to.

"There it is again, that thing that most people call coincidence. Lal prefers to think of it as kismet. Some people would say kismet means fate, but really it is a far more beautiful idea—it is the idea that in spite of all the obstacles, some things are meant to be."

Discuss the difference between coincidence and kismet. What other examples of coincidence or kismet can you find in the story?



- ✿ Think about how post offices and mail boxes are described in the book, and how the mail is delivered. How is this different from the post office, mail boxes, and mail delivery in your neighborhood? How does the postal system seem the same as the one you know?
- ✿ Monkeys wreak havoc in Dini's family's water tank in Swapnagiri. Where else do they cause mischief in the story? What animals cause problems like this in the U.S.?

- ✿ How does Dini feel when she first meets Priya? Why does Dini think Priya doesn't like her at first? How does Dini's relationship with Priya affect her relationship with Maddie?
- ✿ How does Dini react when Dolly Singh comes to her house for the party? How would you feel if you just met your favorite movie star? Did you expect Dolly to come to the party? Why is the party a disaster?
- ✿ Dini sees her world like a movie script. The problems between Dolly and Mr. Chickoo Dev can be solved if Dini can get the story line to where it needs to go. Discuss how the film metaphor runs throughout the novel. Who are the stars of this story? How do the various plot lines intersect?
- ✿ Swapnagiri means "dream mountain." What dreams do the residents and visitors make there? Do they come true?



# ACTIVITIES



## WRITE A FAN LETTER

Dini and Maddie are huge fans of Bollywood star Dolly Singh. Dini decides to write a fan letter to Dolly in the hopes of finding out more about her. Are you a fan of a musician? An actor or actress? A famous athlete? Write a fan letter to someone whom you really admire. Dini just addresses her letter to Dolly Singh, Famous Movie Star, Bombay, India. You will need a real address in order to mail your letter! Check out the website of the person you admire. There may be an address that you can use to mail your fan letter. Who knows? The person you admire may write back to you!



## DESIGN A PAGE IN A FILM FAN MAGAZINE

Dini keeps updated about the life and work of her favorite actress Dolly Singh through a popular Indian film magazine. Create a magazine article about a person you admire. What is new in the person's life? What are fans' opinions about your favorite person's latest accomplishments? Add photos of your person from the Internet or from other magazines to illustrate your article.

## SWAPNAGIRI SIGNS

Typical road signs are not to be found on the twisting mountain roads that curl up the mountain to the village of Swapnagiri. Dini notes signs that say, "Too fast? Why tempt fate?" and "Arrive alive." Create a list of other unusual or funny signs that could remind drivers of how to drive safely on twisty mountain roads.

## YOU OUGHT TO BE IN PICTURES

Dini views life as if it were a movie with plot twists and possible happy endings. Dolly Singh provides a happy ending with a big Bollywood-style dance number on the rooftop at the end of the book. Create a colorful illustration of this happy ending using the following excerpt from the book as your guide:

"And soon there is Dolly leading the entire company in a giant extravaganza of a group dance on the roof of cottage number I, Sunny Villa Estates. People and goats, peacock and babies, everyone is stepping along. . . . Mrs. Chellapa's little dog, Inji, barks in time. Even the miniature green birds that hang upside down in the bottlebrush trees are flapping their wings in time to the beat."

## BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE

A very revered Indian political and spiritual leader named Mahatma Gandhi once said, "You must be the change you want to see in the world." Dini is required to write an essay entitled "How I Want to Change the World" as part of her entrance exam to enter school in India. What are your thoughts about how our world could be changed for the better? Describe your ideas and plans for a better world.

## BOLLYWOOD DANCE STEPS

With an adult's help, rent a Bollywood film that's appropriate for your age or watch dance scenes from Bollywood films on the Internet. Look for *Aladin* starring Amitabh Bachchan or even one of the many Bollywood dance workout videos available. Try your hand—and feet—at traditional Indian dance moves!



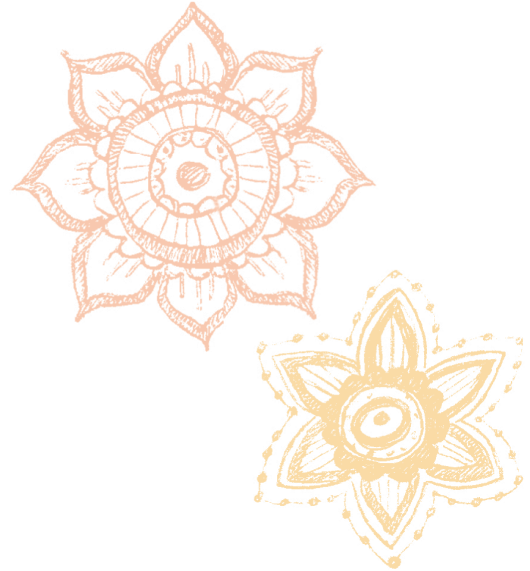
# A RECIPE FOR CURRY PUFFS



Mr. Mani makes delicious curry puffs in the Dreamycakes Bakery. With an adult's help, try making your own curry puffs. Put on some Indian music—a Bollywood fillum soundtrack, perhaps—to put you in the proper mood while you cook! You can buy Indian spices (masala) in specialty grocery stores or from websites such as [www.ishopindian.com](http://www.ishopindian.com).

## Ingredients

A package of puff pastry sheets from the freezer section of your grocery store  
¼ cup all-purpose flour  
1-2 potatoes, peeled and chopped  
1 small package of frozen mixed vegetables (carrots, peas, green beans, corn, or any combination you like)  
½ Tbsp garam masala  
½ Tbsp chat masala  
½ Tbsp curry powder  
A pinch of red chili powder (optional)  
A pinch of unsweetened cocoa (Mr. Mani's secret ingredient!)  
Salt, to taste  
1-2 tsp oil



Preheat oven to 400°. Thaw the puff pastry sheets and sprinkle with flour. Roll with a rolling pin until they are each about doubled in size, approximately half as thick as they were originally. Cut each sheet in thirds along the fold lines; cut each section into three squares. You should have 18 squares after preparing both sheets of pastry.

Boil the potatoes in water until just tender; drain. Heat oil in a large skillet or frying pan. Add the curry powder to the oil. Add potatoes and frozen vegetables and stir to mix. Cover and let them cook for a few minutes on medium heat. Toss vegetables with the remaining spices and a pinch of cocoa and stir to coat. Once the vegetables are cooked, remove from heat.

Put a spoonful of filling on the top half of a square of pastry. Use a finger dipped in water to wet the edges of the square. Fold one half over the other and seal the edges. You should have a rectangle of pastry dough with the filling in the middle. Repeat with the rest of the pastry squares and filling. Move the prepared puffs to a parchment-lined baking sheet, leaving approximately one inch between puffs. Bake for 20 minutes or until golden brown.

Serve hot with chutney!



# "NIFTY EXPRESSIONS"

Dini's father is fond of using idioms or figures of speech when he speaks with her. Complete the chart below to discover the difference between an idiom's literal and figurative meanings.

Idiom	Draw a <i>sketch</i> of the literal meaning of the idiom	Describe in words what the idiom means in concept
Two peas in a pod		
The trail had gone cold.		
Facing the music		
Turn over a new leaf		
(Being a kid in a grown-up world is) no bowl of mangoes.		
A needle in a haystack		
(Feeling) right as rain		
Mending broken fences		
A sight for sore eyes		

# SARI ART

The traditional Indian dress for women is the beautifully colored sari. Dolly Singh wears one in *The Grand Plan to Fix Everything*. Look in books or on websites for photographs of saris (try [www.exoticindiaart.com/textiles/saris](http://www.exoticindiaart.com/textiles/saris)) and notice the striking colors and patterns. Using colored pencils, create a beautiful sari worthy of Bollywood sensation Dolly Singh!



# A GRAND WORD SEARCH



The key words and phrases from *The Grand Plan to Fix Everything* that are listed at the bottom of this page are hidden within the letters below. Words can appear backward, frontward, and diagonally. Can you find them all?

H U I W M Y X H X R S V P F D M N E S Q M M N N A D D Q L Q  
 E K S N W O Q Q A F T G N J S R X M Z W F O R M L R J A K W  
 P K M K D N C W F Z O O B W A U E W L D W N U G L E A L G M  
 Z B O M E Z N U R T V D A K A A C A G P N K G H I A H A F D  
 W H P O F S P D V U A P I F E O Z P M Z L E N M V M B H A D  
 U X U E H Y W M F C N Z T Q I E V S K M C Y U Y Y Y M R X K  
 Z A X S R G M N N A J A K L G Q C G K T O S I W N C Y M G Y  
 M R R R Z N N H G Y E G G P V P R H S W R U H E N A T R M G  
 O I U M R G P I B O M B A Y E Z Q G Y Z H H N M U K G O D U  
 P C W M W X R K S M H W M A A S O O M S T Q O T S E Q S W S  
 U T J M Z I X E M Y B S C S E L G N A B T E D K A S K I M G  
 R E T S A M T S O P L O H K F J I L W J Q Y L R A I G M V V  
 Z R F E X L U B T Y C L L Y S G E W U W Y C S I I X N S F V  
 T C L H K O M J T K X I O O L G F I F E Z K U G O M O A U M  
 J D Y Y N I V C Y R E I S D B Z C V Q S V I J G D U R U U G  
 M F H T I Y Q M Y V Y V N I X C O F T F K G D U S L O N C U  
 N L V Z W R O X Z V U K M Y C W Z T S C J R C Z X L P X V X  
 L G N P H F K D N I Z Y P S E J K H S J U B R T H I B L I D  
 C X Q O B R S H H Z D I K G M X E P R V T W C A B F O L D P  
 N C T I F C V L V A M N Y Z B P F O F U C X P U Y C W M Q A  
 Q U C Z Y I H L L B S P B I P Z C S B Y F Q V I K J F U H F  
 G F Q J M S A O X Q N I J S K O C K R S S M H V T I Y N Y H  
 T I E Y Z G A B C V D L N G K J A L B V K A L U P M X V T G  
 I H K R X I Z Z M O C R P R T T O H Q I P H P W Z I Y E M E  
 C B L D M L A M P U L D H D M Z H N J M O Q N X C C M J Y O  
 I Y N Y A O Y G U O M A D K G O H T B V P K L Z N S A Y S V  
 V I B L B T W D D I D Q T S Q I Y O Y C Y X D Z I E X J W Y  
 K R Z S X X A O A B K A T E O D J J B O O N K K M H H U Q I  
 W E H Z G E D G H T L K Y Q K W V R V G V N B R J P A L L K  
 B O L L Y W O O D Q S I U O T D W Y B B T Q E L X Q G J N N

BANGLES  
 BOLLYWOOD  
 BOMBAY  
 CHOCOLATE

CURRY PUFFS  
 DOLLY SINGH  
 DREAM MOUNTAIN  
 DREAMYCAKES

FILLUM  
 KISMET  
 MONKEYS  
 MUMBAI

PEACOCK  
 POSTMASTER  
 SUNNY VILLA  
 SWAPNAGIRI

Word Search solution found on page 8

*The Grand Plan to Fix Everything* This page may be reproduced for free distribution. Illustrations © 2011 by Abigail Halpin All rights reserved.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Uma Krishnaswami** has written many books for children. She was born in India, and when she was young, she lived in a house named Sunny Villa with blinky-looking shutters, in a town just like Swapnagiri. Now she lives in New Mexico, but she returns to India often to visit friends and family.

She teaches courses on children's book writing at the Vermont College of Fine Arts.

Learn more about her life and work at her website: [www.umakrishnaswami.com](http://www.umakrishnaswami.com)

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

**Abigail Halpin** works as an illustrator and graphic designer. She lives in New England, a stone's throw from the Maine coastline. Her illustrations are a blend of traditional and digital media, incorporating watercolor, ink, pencil, scanned textures, and more. She loves bright colors and sharp pencils. Learn more about her life and work at her website: [www.theodesign.com](http://www.theodesign.com)

## Praise for *The Grand Plan to Fix Everything*

"A Grand Plan, a grand read! A modern-day fairy tale whose crazy threads tie up perfectly in the end. Truly a delight!" —LINDA SUE PARK, Newbery Award-winning author of *A Single Shard*

★ "Hooray for Bollywood. . . Full of references to Bollywood movie traditions and local customs, this is a delightful romp with a fresh setting and a distinctive and appealing main character." —KIRKUS REVIEWS, starred review

★ "Krishnaswami perfectly captures movie-star infatuation, best-friendship, geographical displacement, and youthful determination in this exuberant blend of American tween life and Indian village culture. . . An out-of-the-ordinary setting, a distinctive middle-grade character with an unusual passion, and the pace of a lively Bollywood 'fillum' make this novel a delight." —PUBLISHERS WEEKLY, starred review



## Solution to Word Search

H	U	I	W	M	Y	X	H	R	S	V	P	F	D	M	N	E	S	Q	M	M	N	N	A	D	D	Q	L	Q	
E	K	S	N	W	O	Q	Q	A	F	T	G	N	J	S	R	X	M	Z	W	F	O	R	M	L	R	J	A	K	W
P	K	M	K	D	N	C	W	E	Z	O	O	B	N	A	U	E	W	L	D	W	N	U	G	L	E	A	L	G	M
Z	B	O	M	E	Z	N	U	R	T	V	D	A	K	A	A	C	A	G	P	N	K	G	H	I	A	H	A	F	D
W	H	P	O	F	S	P	D	V	U	A	P	I	F	E	O	Z	P	M	Z	L	E	N	M	V	M	B	H	A	D
U	X	U	E	H	Y	W	M	F	C	N	Z	T	Q	I	E	V	S	K	M	C	Y	U	Y	Y	Y	M	R	X	K
Z	A	X	S	R	G	M	N	N	A	J	A	K	L	G	Q	C	G	K	T	O	S	I	W	N	C	Y	M	G	Y
M	R	R	R	Z	N	N	H	G	Y	E	G	G	P	V	P	R	H	S	W	R	D	H	E	N	A	T	R	M	G
O	T	U	M	R	G	P	I	B	O	M	B	A	Y	E	Z	Q	G	Y	Z	H	N	M	U	K	G	O	D	U	
P	C	W	M	W	X	R	K	S	M	H	W	M	A	A	S	O	O	M	S	T	Q	O	T	S	E	Q	S	W	S
U	T	J	M	Z	I	X	E	M	B	S	C	S	E	L	G	N	A	B	T	E	D	K	A	S	K	I	M	G	
R	E	T	S	A	M	T	S	O	P	I	O	H	K	F	J	I	L	W	J	Q	Y	L	R	A	I	G	M	V	V
Z	R	F	E	X	L	U	B	T	Y	C	L	L	Y	S	G	E	W	U	W	Y	C	S	I	I	X	N	S	F	V
T	C	L	H	K	O	M	J	T	K	X	I	O	O	L	G	F	I	F	E	Z	K	U	G	O	M	O	A	U	M
J	D	Y	N	I	V	C	Y	R	E	I	S	D	B	Z	C	V	Q	S	V	I	J	G	D	U	R	U	U	G	
M	F	H	T	I	Y	Q	M	Y	V	Y	V	N	I	X	C	O	F	T	F	K	G	D	U	S	L	O	N	C	U
N	L	V	Z	W	R	O	X	Z	V	U	K	M	Y	C	W	Z	T	S	C	J	R	C	Z	X	L	P	X	V	X
L	G	N	P	H	F	K	D	N	I	Z	Y	P	S	E	J	K	H	S	J	U	B	R	T	H	I	B	L	I	D
C	X	Q	O	B	R	S	H	Z	D	I	K	G	M	X	E	P	R	V	T	W	C	A	B	E	O	L	D	P	
N	C	T	I	F	C	V	L	V	A	M	N	Y	Z	B	P	F	O	F	U	C	X	P	U	Y	C	W	M	Q	A
Q	U	C	Z	Y	I	H	L	B	S	P	B	I	P	Z	C	S	B	Y	F	Q	V	I	K	J	F	U	H	F	
G	F	Q	J	M	S	R	O	X	Q	N	I	J	S	K	O	C	K	R	S	S	M	H	V	T	I	Y	N	Y	H
T	I	E	Y	Z	G	A	B	C	V	D	L	N	G	K	J	A	L	B	V	K	A	L	U	P	M	X	V	E	G
I	H	K	R	X	I	Z	Z	M	O	C	R	P	R	T	T	O	H	Q	I	P	H	P	W	Z	I	Y	E	M	
C	B	L	D	M	L	A	M	P	U	L	D	H	D	M	Z	H	N	J	M	O	Q	N	X	C	C	M	J	Y	O
I	Y	N	A	O	Y	G	U	O	M	A	D	K	G	O	H	T	B	V	P	K	L	Z	N	S	A	Y	S	V	
V	I	B	L	T	W	D	I	D	Q	T	S	Q	I	Y	O	Y	C	Y	X	D	Z	I	E	X	J	W	Y		
K	R	Z	S	X	X	A	O	A	B	K	A	T	O	D	J	J	B	O	O	N	K	K	M	H	H	U	Q	I	
W	E	H	Z	G	E	D	G	H	T	L	K	Y	Q	K	W	V	R	V	G	V	N	B	R	J	P	A	L	L	K
B	O	L	L	Y	W	O	O	D	Q	S	I	U	O	T	D	W	Y	B	B	T	Q	E	L	X	Q	G	J	N	