Out of the Way! Out of the Way!

ACTIVITY KIT

Out of the Way!
Out of the Way!

BY
Uma Krishnaswami

ILLUSTRATED BY
Uma Krishnaswamy

A YOUNG BOY spots a baby tree growing in the middle of a dusty path in his village. He carefully places rocks around it as the local mango seller rushes past shouting, “Out of the way! Out of the way!” As the tree grows bigger, people and animals traverse the path until it becomes a lane, flowing like a river around the tree. Over time, the lane becomes a road, and a young man crossing the road with his children remembers the baby tree from long ago. By the time he is an old man, the tree has become a giant. The city traffic continues to rattle past, noisier and busier than ever, but sometimes the great tree works its magic.

Although their names are almost identical, author Uma Krishnaswami and illustrator Uma Krishnaswamy are two different artists with a shared passion for storytelling. Their seamless collaboration on this simple, lyrical picture book will delight readers of all ages.

Explore the hustle and bustle of this charming story with the fun activities in this kit!
Activities

Author Uma Krishnaswami uses rich description to portray the life of the tree as the road grows around it. Hunt through the story for several words and phrases that you find particularly vivid or interesting to create a “Found Poem.” Make a list of these selected words and phrases keeping them in the order in which you found them. Read over your list to get a feel for how these found phrases work together. You may have to change your poem a bit by changing tenses, possessives, or plurals. Read your poem aloud to a friend to see how it sounds. Now think like a poet and decide how you want the words arranged on the page to echo the feeling you want to create. Where will you put the line breaks? Will some words need to stand alone? Will some words need to be in boldface or italics? Will you shape your poem to represent a tree or a road?

The tree in this story became a meeting place for the people of the village, a spot where children could play and grownups could talk. The boy grows into a man as the tree grows from a sapling to maturity. The man describes how breezes that rustle the tree’s leaves remind him of stories of other trees that his father, mother, and grandfather told him about long ago. Do you know of a special tree that holds a story for you? A tree that you climbed? A tree that provided shade for picnics? Write your tree story and share your story with your friends.

Author Uma Krishnaswami grew up in India and illustrator Uma Krishnaswamy lives there still. What elements in the text and illustrations place the setting of the story in India? In essence, this is a universal story about progress and tradition. Imagine the story in different settings: the American West, a Peruvian hill town, a Russian village. What details would you change for each setting? What would stay the same regardless of locale?

The tree in the story is home to crows, parakeets, and flycatchers. What do you know about these types of birds? Research them at the library or on the internet. What types of birds are common in your neighborhood? Consider participating in The Great Backyard Bird Count sponsored by Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Learn more about it at www.birdsource.org.

The story starts on a dusty path through a village and ends up with a road bustling with traffic. Artist David Hockney was inspired by a famous road in Los Angeles when he created the painting Mulholland Drive: The Road to the Studio. Hockney’s painting is quite large (86” x 243”) and depicts how the road snakes through life in the hills of Hollywood. Create your own Hockney-style road mural to depict the events in Out of the Way! Out of the Way! Take several sheets of 12- x 18-inch white construction paper and outline a road with black marker that connects from sheet to sheet. Make sure to number each road panel so that they can be reassembled in order after each is decorated. Work with partners to draw the events in the story from the beginnings of the baby tree in the path to the mature tree in the middle of the swarming traffic. Reconnect your road panels to display the story of the tree in the middle of the road.
Colorful India

Uma Krishnaswamy’s illustrations in Out of the Way! Out of the Way! are a charming mix of vibrant color and line art. Compare the illustration below with the opening spread in the book. Use markers, crayons, or art pencils to add color and fill in the landscape in your own way.
Thank a Tree!

In *Out of the Way! Out of the Way!* the tree in the story grows tall and plays an important role in the village despite the modern road that goes around it. In the leaves below, list the important things that trees provide for people and animals.
Words and Images

Think about the story and the illustrations in *Out of the Way! Out of the Way!*
Write a word or phrase that begins with each letter below that expresses an element of the story or the way the story makes you feel.

O ____________________________
U ____________________________
T ____________________________
O ____________________________
F ____________________________
T ____________________________
H ____________________________
E ____________________________
W ____________________________
A ____________________________
Y ____________________________
R ____________________________
G ____________________________

**Simile Search**

A simile is a comparison using “like” or “as.” Example: He was as strong as an ox. Similes are one of the tools that writers use to make their images come to life for their readers. Uma Krishnaswami uses two similes in *Out of the Way! Out of the Way!* Look back through the story and find them. List them below and create an illustration for each.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIMILE</th>
<th>ILLUSTRATION</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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**Bonus!**

Practice writing your own similes.

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The next time you write a story, try using similes to make your imagery more vivid!
Transportation Migration

In *Out of the Way! Out of the Way!*, over time the dusty path becomes a curving lane, and then a busy road. Look back at how many modes of transportation are described or pictured traveling the road. How many can you list?

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Draw a picture of your favorite one.