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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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The Jellyfish and the Monkey

Long, long ago, in ancient Japan, the Kingdom of the Sea was ruled by a magnificent king. He was called Rin Jin, or the Dragon King of the Sea. His power was great, for he was the ruler of all sea creatures. Rin Jin's palace lay on the bottom of the sea. It was so beautiful that it cannot be described.

But the Dragon King of the Sea, despite his wealth and power, was not happy. He thought a bride could make him happier. Therefore, he sent his advisors to search for a young Dragon Princess to marry. His advisors brought a beautiful young dragon. Her scales were glittering green like the wings of summer beetles, her eyes cast glances of fire, and she was dressed in beautiful robes.

The Dragon King of the Sea fell in love with her at first sight. They got married, and the wedding was the most beautiful celebration ever held in the sea. The Dragon King and his bride lived very happily for a while. They loved each other deeply, but one day, the Dragon Queen became very ill. The king called the best fish doctors, but the young queen showed no signs of recovery and got sicker by the day.

The Dragon King asked the doctor if there was no medicine that could cure her, and the doctor said that the cure existed, but it was impossible to find it in the sea. The king asked what it was, and the doctor said

that the liver of a live monkey would save the queen's life.

The Dragon King was aware that it would be very difficult to find a live monkey from the sea. Then the doctor told him that in the south, there was an Ape Island, where many monkeys lived. But even then, it would be impossible to catch a monkey. The monkeys lived on land, while the sea creatures could only survive in the water. The doctor asked the Dragon King if there was no one among his countless servants who could go ashore to catch a live monkey.

The king's smartest servant had an idea. There was a sea creature, a jellyfish, who was known for bragging that he was proud he could walk on land with his legs like a turtle. The jellyfish was then summoned to the king and was told by His Majesty what was required of him. When the jellyfish heard about the unexpected mission that would be entrusted to him, he looked very worried and said that he had never been to the island in question, and ... because he had no experience in catching monkeys, he was afraid he would not be able to get one.

"Well," said the clever servant, "if you rely on your strength or dexterity, you will never catch a monkey. The only way is to fool one!"

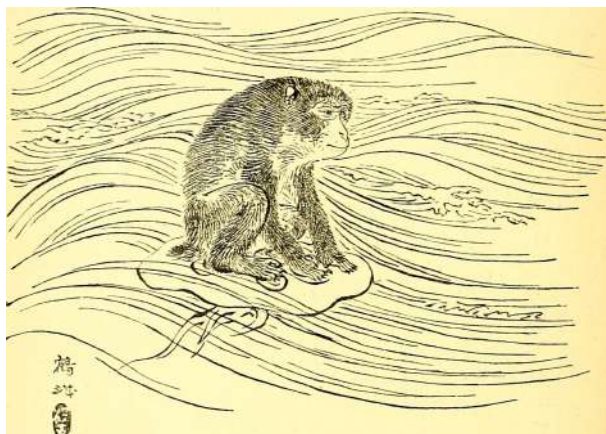
"How can I trick a monkey? I don't know how to do it," said the bewildered jellyfish.

"This is what you have to do," said the clever servant.

"When you approach the Ape Island and meet some, try to become very friendly with someone. Tell him that you are a servant of the Dragon King and invite him to

come and visit you and see the palace of the Dragon King. Try to vividly describe the greatness of the palace and the wonders of the sea to arouse his curiosity and make him desire to see everything!"

"But how do I get the monkey here? You know monkeys don't swim?" said the jellyfish.



"You have to carry him on your back!" said the servant.

"Will he not be very heavy?" asked the jellyfish again.

"You should not mind, for you work for the Dragon

King," came the answer.

"Then I will do my best," said the jellyfish, and he swam away from the palace and set off for Ape Island. When he arrived, he saw not far away a large pine tree with hanging branches, and on one of those branches was exactly what he was looking for: a live monkey.

"Lucky me!" thought the jellyfish. "Now I must flatter the animal and try to entice him to come back with me to the palace, and then I will have my peace back!" So the jellyfish slowly walked to the pine tree. In those ancient times, a jellyfish had a hard shell like that of a turtle. When he arrived at the pine tree, he raised his voice and said:

"How do you do, Mr. Ape? Isn't it a beautiful day?"

"A very beautiful day," replied the ape from the tree.

"I've never seen you in this part of the world before. Where do you come from, and what is your name?"

"My name is Jellyfish. I am one of the servants of the Dragon King of the Sea. I have heard so much about your beautiful island that I came here to see it," replied the jellyfish.

"I am very glad to see you," said the ape.

"By the way," said the jellyfish, "have you ever seen the Palace of the Dragon King of the Sea where I live?"

"I have often heard of it, but I have never seen it!" answered the ape.

"Then you must come for sure. It's a great pity to go through life without seeing it. The beauty of the palace defies all description - it's certainly the most beautiful place in the world in my opinion," said the jellyfish.

"Is it really that beautiful?" asked the surprised ape.

The jellyfish felt he would succeed in his mission and described the beauty and grandeur of the palace. The ape became more and more interested, and as he listened, he descended step by step from the tree so as not to miss a word of the wonderful story.

"I finally got him!" thought the jellyfish, and he continued: "Mr. Ape. I must go back now. Since you have never seen the Palace of the Dragon King, will you take advantage of this great opportunity and come with me? I will be your guide to show you all the sights of the sea, which will be even more wonderful for you - a landlubber."

"I would like to go," said the ape, "but I cannot swim, as you surely know!"

"That's no problem, I can carry you on my back. You can sit on my shell."

And so it was that the ape climbed onto the back of the jellyfish and went with him into the sea on the way to the Palace of the Dragon King. When they were halfway there, the jellyfish, who had no knowledge of the anatomy of animals, began to wonder if the ape had his liver with him or not. "Mr. Ape, tell me, do you have something like a liver with you?"

The ape was very surprised by this strange question and asked what the jellyfish wanted with a liver. "Oh, I'll tell you later," said the jellyfish.

The ape became increasingly curious and urgently asked the jellyfish why he had asked this question, and he told the jellyfish that it all worried him very much. The jellyfish saw how concerned the ape looked and took pity on him and told him everything: how the Dragon Queen had become ill, and how the doctor had said that only the liver of a live monkey would cure her, and how the Dragon King had sent him to find one.

The ape was naturally frightened by this, but he was a clever ape. He told the jellyfish that he was sorry the jellyfish hadn't just asked him for a liver. After all, he had several hanging from his pine tree. It wouldn't have been a problem for him to give one if it could cure the Dragon Queen.

"Did you leave your liver behind?" asked the jellyfish.

"Yes," said the ape. "I didn't know you needed one?"

Then the ape convinced the jellyfish that if he would take him back to the island, he would choose his best liver to take to the Dragon King. When the ape climbed

back up his pine tree, he threw some pine cones at the jellyfish. The jellyfish asked if he would now give him his liver, but the ape laughed and said he couldn't afford to lose his liver. "But you promised," begged the jellyfish.

"I just broke that promise," replied the ape, and he told the jellyfish that it would have cost him his life if he had gone with him. And that it would have been the jellyfish's fault for bringing him to the palace with lies. "Of course I won't give you my liver!" shouted the ape. "Come and get it if you can!"

The jellyfish had no choice but to return to the palace of the Dragon King of the Sea and confess his failure. Meanwhile, the Dragon King, the doctor, and all the servants were impatiently waiting for the jellyfish's return. When he told them his story of how he had brought the ape halfway across the sea and how foolish it was to tell the ape the secret of his mission, the jellyfish was punished.

They took away his shell!

This story clearly shows that jellyfish used to have a shell, but since the punishment carried out on the order of the Dragon King of the Sea, jellyfish have been completely soft from head to toe, just like the ones you still find on the beach today.