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How the Monkey Became a Trickster

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Once upon a time, there was a beautiful garden in which grew all sorts of fruits. Many beasts lived in the garden and they were permitted to eat of the fruits whenever they wished. But they were asked to observe one rule. They must make a low, polite bow to the fruit tree, call it by its name, and say, "Please give me a taste of your fruit." They had to be very careful to remember the tree's correct name and not to forget to say "please." It was also very important that they should remember not to be greedy. They must always leave plenty of fruit for the other beasts who might pass that way, and plenty to adorn the tree itself and to furnish seed so that other trees might grow. If they wished to eat figs they had to say, "O, fig tree, O, fig tree, please give me a taste of your fruit;" or, if they wished to eat oranges they had to say, "O, orange tree, O, orange tree, please give me a taste of your fruit."

In one corner of the garden grew the most splendid tree of all. It was tall and beautiful and the rosy-cheeked fruit upon its wide spreading branches looked wonderfully tempting. No beast had ever tasted of that fruit, for no beast could ever remember its name.

In a tiny house near the edge of the garden dwelt a little old woman who knew the names of all the fruit trees which grew in the garden. The beasts often went to her and asked the name of the wonderful fruit tree, but the tree was so far distant from the tiny house of the little old woman that no beast could ever remember the long, hard name by the time he reached the fruit tree.



At last the monkey thought of a trick. Perhaps you do not know it, but the monkey can play the guitar. He always played when the beasts gathered together in the garden to dance. The monkey went to the tiny house of the little old woman, carrying his guitar under his arm. When she told him the long hard name of the wonderful fruit tree he made up a little tune to it, all his own, and sang it over and over again all the way from the tiny house of the little old woman to the corner of the garden where the wonderful fruit tree grew. When any of the other beasts met him and asked him what new song he was singing to

his guitar, he said never a word. He marched straight on, playing his little tune over and over again on his guitar and singing softly the long hard name.

At last he reached the corner of the garden where the wonderful fruit tree grew. He had never seen it look so beautiful. The rosy-cheeked fruit glowed in the bright sunlight. The monkey could hardly wait to make his bow, say the long hard name over twice and ask for the fruit with a "please." What a beautiful colour and what a delicious odour that fruit had! The monkey had never in all his life been so near to anything which smelled so good. He took a big bite. What a face he made! That beautiful sweet smelling fruit was bitter and sour, and it had a nasty taste. He threw it away from him as far as he could.

The monkey never forgot the tree's long hard name and the little tune he had sung. Nor did he forget how the fruit tasted. He never took a bite of it again; but, after that, his favourite trick was to treat the other beasts to the wonderful fruit just to see them make faces when they tasted it.

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