



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Naughty Jocko

Louise M. Alcott

"A music-man! A music-man! Run quick, and see if he has got a monkey on his organ," cried little Neddy, running to the window in a great hurry one day.

Yes; there was the monkey in his blue and red suit, with a funny little cap, and the long tail trailing behind. But he didn't seem to be a lively monkey; for he sat in a bunch, with his sad face turned anxiously to his master, who kept pulling the chain to make him dance. The stiff collar had made his neck sore; and when the man twitched, the poor thing moaned and put up his little hand to hold the chain. He tried to dance, but was so weak he could only hop a few steps, and stop panting for breath. The cruel man would n't let him rest till Neddy called out,--

"Don't hurt him; let him come up here and get this cake, and rest while you play. I've got some pennies for you."

So poor Jocko climbed slowly up the trellis, and sat on the window-ledge trying to eat; but he was so tired he went to sleep, and when the man pulled to wake him up, he slipped and fell, and lay as if he were dead. Neddy and his aunt ran down to see if he was killed. The cross man scolded and shook him; but he never moved, and the man said,--

"He is dead. I don't want him. I will sell him to some one to stuff."

"No; his heart beats a little. Leave him here a few days, and we will take care of him; and if he gets well, perhaps we will buy him," said Aunt Jane, who liked to nurse even a sick monkey.

The man said he was going on for a week through the towns near by, and would call and see about it when he came back. Then he went away; and Neddy and aunty put Jocko in a nice basket, and carried him in. The minute the door was shut and he felt safe, the sly fellow peeped out with one eye, and seeing only the kind little boy began to chatter and kick off the shawl; for he was not much hurt, only tired and hungry, and dreadfully afraid of the cruel man who beat and starved him.

Neddy was delighted, and thought it very funny, and helped his aunt take off the stiff collar and put some salve on the sore neck. Then they got milk and cake; and when he had eaten a good dinner, Jocko curled himself up and slept till the

next day. He was quite lively in the morning; for when Aunt Jane went to call Neddy, Jocko was not in his basket, and looking round the room for him, she saw the little thing lying on the boy's pillow, with his arm round Neddy's neck like a baby.

"I can't allow that," said the old lady, and went to pull Jocko out. But he slipped away like an eel, and crept chattering and burrowing down to the bottom of the bed, holding on to Neddy's toes, till he woke up, howling that crabs were nipping him.

"Now, he will go to walk with me, and all the children will see my new pet," said Neddy, as he marched off with Jock on his shoulder.



Every one laughed at the funny little fellow with his twinkling eyes, brown hands, and long tail, and Neddy felt very grand till they got to the store; then troubles began. He put Jocko on a table near the door, and told him to stay there while he did his errands. Now, close by was the place where the candy was kept, and Jocko loved sweets; so he hopped along, and began to eat whatever he liked. Some boys tried to stop him; and then he got angry at them for pulling his tail, and threw handfuls of sugarplums at them. That was great fun; and the more they laughed and scrambled and poked at him, the faster he showered chocolates, caramels, and peppermints over them, till it looked as if it had rained candy. The man was busy with Neddy at the other end of the store; but when he heard the noise, both ran to see what was the matter. Neither of them could stop naughty Jocko, who liked this game, and ran up on the high shelves among the toys. Then down came little tubs and dolls' stoves, tin trumpets and cradles, while boxes of leaden soldiers and whole villages flew through the air, smash, bang, rattle, bump, all over the floor. The man scolded, Neddy cried, the boys shouted, and there was a lively time in that shop till they caught him.

Neddy was much ashamed, and told the man his aunt would pay for all the broken things. Then he took his naughty pet, and started to go home and tie him up, for it was plain this monkey was not to be trusted. But as soon as they got out, Jocko ran up a tree and dropped on to a load of hay passing underneath. Here he danced and pranced, and had a fine time, throwing off the man's coat and rake, and eating some of the dinner tied up in a cloth. The crusts of bread and the bones he threw at the horse; this new kind of whip frightened the horse, and he ran away down a steep hill, and upset the hay and broke the cart. Oh, such a time! It was worse than the candy scrape; for the man swore, and the horse was hurt, and people said the monkey ought to be shot, he did so much mischief. Jocko didn't care a bit; he sat high up in a tree, and chattered and

scolded, and swung by his tail, and was so droll that people couldn't help laughing at him. Poor Neddy cried again, and went home to tell his troubles to Aunt Jane, fearing that it would take all the money in his bank to pay for the damage the bad monkey had done in one hour.

As soon as he was alone Jocko came skipping along, and jumped on his back, and peeped at him, and patted his cheeks.

Jocko was tired; so he went to sleep, and all was quiet till dinner-time. They were ready for the pudding, and Neddy had saved a place for a good plateful, as he liked snow-pudding, when shrieks were heard in the kitchen.

They all ran; and there sat that naughty monkey on the table, throwing the nice white snow all over poor cook.

Kate wailed; but Aunt Jane and grandpa laughed, and Neddy chased Jock into the garden with the broom. They had to eat bread and jelly for dessert, and it took the girls a long time to clear up the mess the rascal made.

"We will put his collar and chain on again, and keep him tied up all the time till the man comes," said Aunt Jane.

"But I can't catch him," sighed Neddy, watching the little imp whisk about in the garden among the currant-bushes, chasing hens and tossing green apples round in high glee.

"Sit quietly down somewhere and wait till he is tired; then he will come to you, and you can hold him" said Aunt Jane.

So Neddy waited; and though he was much worried at his new pet's naughtiness, he enjoyed his pranks like a boy.

Grandpa took naps in the afternoon on the piazza, and he was dozing comfortably when Jocko swung down from the grape-vine by his long tail, and tickled the old gentleman on the nose with a straw. Grandpa sneezed, and opened one eye to brush away the fly as he supposed. Then he went to sleep again, and Jocko dropped a caterpillar on his bald head; this made him open the other eye to see what that soft, creepy thing could be. Neddy couldn't help laughing, for he often wanted to do just such things, but never dared, because grandpa was a very stern old gentleman. Jocko wasn't afraid, however; and he crept to the table, stole the glasses lying there, put them on, and taking up the paper held it before him, chattering as if he were reading it, as he had seen people do. Neddy laughed out loud at this, and clapped his hands, Jocko looked so like a little old man, in spite of the tail curled up behind. But then grandpa woke up and he demanded his glasses back.

But Jocko tossed the paper in his face, and jumped on the back of old Tom, the

big yellow cat, who lay asleep close by. Scared half out of his wits, Tom spit and bounced; but Jocko held fast to his collar, and had a fine race round the garden, while the girls laughed at the funny sight, and Neddy shouted, "It's a circus; and there's the monkey and the pony." Even grandpa smiled, especially when the cat dashed up a tree, and Jocko tumbled off. He chased him, and they had a great battle; but Tom's claws were sharp, and the monkey got a scratch on the nose, and ran crying to Neddy for comfort.

"Now, you naughty fellow, I'll chain you up, and stop these dreadful tricks. But you are great fun" said the boy.

Jocko ate some lunch, took a nap in the grass, and then was ready for more frolics. Neddy had fastened him to a tree in the garden, so that he could enjoy the sun and air, and catch grasshoppers if he liked. But Jocko wanted something more; and Neddy, who was reading in his hammock on the piazza, heard a great cackling among the hens, and looked up to see the monkey swinging by his tail from a bough, holding the great cock-a-doodle by his splendid tail, while all the twenty hens clucked and cackled with wrath and fear at such a dreadful prank.

"Now, that's too naughty" said Neddy, running to save his bird from destruction. But before he got there poor cocky had pulled his fine tail-feathers all out in his struggles, and when set free was so frightened and mortified that he ran away and hid in the bushes, and the hens went to comfort him.

Jocko had also picked every one of the sweet peas Aunt Jane was so fond of, thrown all the tomatoes over the fence, and let the parrot out of his cage. The sight of Polly walking into the parlor with a polite "How are you, ma'am?" sent Aunt Jane to see what was going on. Neddy was fast asleep in the hammock, worn out with his cares; and Jocko, having unhooked his chain, was sitting on the chimney-top of a neighbor's house, eating corn.

"We will not live to the end of the week if this sort of thing goes on. I don't know what to do with the little beast; he's as bad as an elephant to take care of," said the poor lady, in despair, as she saw Jocko throw his corncob down on the minister's hat as that stately gentleman went by.

As none of them could catch him, Miss Jane let him alone till Neddy woke up and could go and find some of the big boys to help him.

Jocko soon left the roof, and skipped in at a window that stood open. It was little Nelly Brown's play-room, and she had left her doll Maud very ill in the best bed, while she went down to get a poppy leaf to rub the darling's cheeks with, because she had a high fever. Jocko took a fancy to the pretty bed, and after turning the play-house topsy-turvy, he pulled poor Maud out by her hair, and stuffing her into the water-pitcher upside down, got into the bed, drew the lace curtains, and prepared to doze deliciously under the pink silk bed-cover.

Up came Nelly, and went at once to the dear doll, saying in her motherly little voice,--

"Now, my darling child, lie quite still, and I won't hurt you one bit."

But when she drew the curtain, instead of the lovely doll in her ruffled nightcap, she saw a naughty little face staring at her. Nelly gave one scream, and flew downstairs where her mother was having a tea party. She clung to her mother, wailing,--

"A bogie! a bogie! I saw him, he snarled at me, and my dolly is gone!"

"Go and see; it's in my dolly's bed,--I found it there, and darling Maudie is gone."

Then twenty-five ladies flew across the hall to behold Jocko sitting on the great cake in the middle of the table, his feet bathed in cream from the overturned pitcher, while all around lay the ruins of custards, tarts, biscuits, and sauce, not to mention nice napkins made into hay-cocks, spoons, knives, and forks, on the floor, and the best silver teapot in the fireplace.

Aunt Jane decided it was time for the monkey to go.

Neddy was quite willing to let him go; but in the morning poor Jocko was found dead in a trap, where his inquisitive head had been poked to see what the cheese tasted like.

So he was buried by the river, and every one felt much relieved. But he had not lived in vain; for mischievous Neddy behaved much better, and Aunt Jane could always calm his prankish spirit by saying, as her finger pointed to a little collar and chain hanging on the wall,--

"If you want to act like naughty Jocko, say so, and I'll tie you up. One monkey is enough for this family."

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