



THE MONKEY AND THE WEDGE

Once upon a time there was a wonderful jungle and in that jungle lived a few monkey families. The monkeys spent whole days climbing trees and swinging on branches, but most of the time they just ate bananas and other fruits. Every time one of the monkeys found a new banana tree full of fresh, tasty bunches, all the primates soon knew about the discovery, thanks to the loud screeching of their friend.

One day, some people started building a temple not far from the jungle where the animals lived. There were many carpenters, bricklayers and other skilled craftsmen fulfilling their tasks every day from early morning. At noon, they always took a break and had lunch together. After lunch they went back to work and worked and worked until late in the evening, repeating the same routine day by day for several weeks.

Sounds from the construction carried far into the forest and the monkeys quickly noticed it. Since monkeys are one of the most curious creatures in the world, they were of course eager to see where all the noise was coming from and what was causing it. It didn't take them long to muster up the courage and go exploring, jumping all the way to the site of the future temple and up the closest giant tree, watching the men immersed in their work from high above.

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The monkeys were most interested in a nearby pair of carpenters struggling with a gigantic beam. They had been hacking away at it for quite some time already, still unable to chop it in two. But then, out of the blue, everybody stopped working. It was lunchtime and all the workers including the two carpenters had to take a break. They quickly drove a large wedge into the huge half-chopped beam, so that the wood wouldn't close up again. Then they joined the rest of the crew to have something to eat after such difficult work.

Soon there was no one left, the site completely abandoned. That was when the monkeys decided to climb down the tree and investigate up close. They jumped around the beams and even played with tools they found lying on the ground, rattling and clattering. They had never seen anything like it and they were truly intrigued.

One of the naughty monkeys was fascinated by the beam with the wedge, ran up to it and, unable to resist, saddled the trunk like a horse. After a while the monkey climbed into the cut in the beam, grasped the wedge and started wiggling it right and left and pulling it out. Of course, the other monkeys from the scouting group started encouraging their friend in this remarkable activity and cheered her up with great passion, jumping, running around and screeching.

In the heat of the new game, the monkeys naturally hadn't bothered to think about the consequences. The wedge in the trunk suddenly came loose, the gap instantly shrinking and the beam snapping close on the monkey's long tail that was still in the gap. In pain, the poor monkey started screaming and screeching like mad. Her fellow primates fell silent and helplessly watched their friend in her miserable agony.

Luckily, the terrified workers soon came running. Once they noticed the badly injured monkey, they started working on her rescue, using the wedge to free her clamped tail.

After this frightful experience, all the monkeys quickly jumped up into the trees and hurried back home to safety.

The injured monkey learnt first hand that it does not pay to poke one's nose into other people's business and mess with someone else's work.