

The Greedy Monkey

There was once a very greedy monkey who lived in the forest. He had a lot of brothers and sisters and although they always asked him to play with them, he had far more important things to do. He liked to spend his time eating. He would swing through the trees looking for juicy leaves, nuts or, if he was very lucky, some delicious fruit. He was pretty good at swinging through the trees – he could even do it one-handed at speed.

One day, he ate a particularly big breakfast and was so full that he moved through the trees more slowly than usual. Suddenly, he spied a tasty-looking banana on the ground. “What good luck,” he said to himself as he swung down to the forest floor to pick it up. He was about to eat it when he thought: “I’m so full after my breakfast. I can’t eat it yet.” But because he was so greedy, he didn’t want to leave it. Instead he took it with him to eat later.

He hadn’t gone very far when he saw a large, ripe mango lying on the ground. “What a feast I shall have,” he thought as he swung down to pick it up. “I’ll save that for later, too.” But when he tried to hold the fruits in his left hand, leaving his right free to swing through the trees, he realised that he couldn’t carry them both. Which one should he take with him? He chose the mango because it was much bigger – and left the banana lying on the ground.

A little further on, he saw a beautiful golden pineapple lying on the ground. Again he was forced to make a difficult decision. He wanted to keep the mango and the pineapple, but he couldn’t carry both. So, he chose the pineapple and dropped the mango onto the ground. The pineapple was quite big and its prickly leaves made it difficult for him to hold onto with one hand as he moved through the trees, but he just about managed it.

Then he saw a large, juicy melon lying on the ground. He really wanted it, but he couldn’t work out how to carry both the pineapple and the melon at the same time. So, reluctantly, he dropped the pineapple. The melon was very heavy. “If I use both hands to carry it, I’ll have to walk along the ground and the other monkeys will come and take it off me,” he thought. But he managed to wedge it into the crook of his arm and went on his way.

As he came to a clearing, he saw a little rabbit running along the ground. Now, monkeys are mostly vegetarian, but sometimes they do like to eat a little bit of meat as a treat. Almost without thinking, the monkey dropped the melon to the ground and dashed after the rabbit. But the rabbit disappeared quickly into its burrow. The monkey chased after him, and before he knew what was happening, his head was stuck fast in the rabbit hole.

Teresa Saunders, education journalist and children’s writer

