



Full Text

THE MONKEY AND THE TURTLE

Translated into English by Paolo Ven B. Paculan and Kristine Anne P. Valdellon from “Un Mono y Una Tortuga” by Dr. José Rizal, a story that appeared in *Rizaliana for Children: Illustrations and Folk Tales by Rizal, edited by Alfredo Navarro Salanga*. Quezon City: Children’s Communication Center. 1984.

A monkey and a turtle found a banana tree on a river. They fished it out and because each wanted the tree for himself, they cut it in half.

Now the monkey, being the stronger one, took the part with leaves despite the turtle’s protests, and carefully planted it in his backyard. The turtle did the same for his part.

But because the part the monkey got had no roots, it died, while the turtle’s lived and sprouted leaves.

One day, the monkey visited the turtle and they talked about their banana plants.

“Alas! My banana tree is dead!” wailed the monkey tearfully. “And yours?”

“Alive, and bearing fruit! But because I can’t climb up...”

“Don’t worry!” interrupted the monkey. “I’ll climb up for you.”

The turtle became very happy and accompanied the monkey to the place where the banana tree was. The monkey climbed the tree at once and started eating, filling both cheeks.

“Give me some, too,” begged the turtle.

“Krrr! Not even the peels!” answered the monkey.

So, to get even with the monkey, the turtle nailed thorns and *susông-paitan* (a kind of snail with a small and pointed shell as its house) on the trunk of the banana tree, and went to hide under a coconut shell.

“Ow! Ow!” said the monkey as he came down from the tree, and with much pain, went to sit on the coconut shell to tend his wounds.

But while he was pulling out the thorns and snails, his restless tail went inside a hole in the coconut shell. The turtle, who saw a good opportunity, bit it. The monkey jumped and saw stars from the pain.

“So it’s you!” exclaimed the monkey coarsely as he lifted the coconut shell. “Now I will make you pay for everything you did!”

You shall die!

But how?

Ah!

Do you want me to crush you in this mortar or throw you into the river?”

“Crush me in the mortar but please don’t throw me in the river: I don’t want to drown!”

“Aha! So, you’re afraid of drowning? I guess I’ll have to drown you then!”

And into the river he threw the turtle who swam away happily.

As the saying goes:

The monkey may be smart yet he can still be fooled.

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