

THE MONKEY AND THE CLAM

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A CAT and a rooster were once strolling together along the seashore, when they saw a clam half-buried in the sand. They had been good friends for a long time, but when they saw the clam, they began to quarrel for its possession.

"I saw it first," snapped the cat, "therefore it is mine."

"But I picked it up first," answered the rooster, "and so you have no right to claim it."

The cat was about to scratch the rooster's comb while the rooster was on the point of pecking the cat's nose when, luckily, a monkey came along.

"Well, well," the monkey said cheerfully, "I thought you were very good friends."

"I can not be a friend to a greedy fellow," said the cat angrily.

"Neither can I, to a thief," retorted the rooster.

The two continued to quarrel, each keeping a firm hold of the clam.

"Peace, peace," spoke the monkey. "Tell me, do you wish me to give my judgment?"

"Oh, yes!" cried the cat, thinking that the monkey would be on his side.

"Yes, yes," said the rooster, believing that the monkey would support his claim.

"Before I give the judgment," spoke the monkey, "both of you must promise me one thing. You must promise me that you would abide by my decision."

The cat and the rooster promised to be satisfied with whatever the monkey decided to say.

"Now, give me the clam," the monkey said. And then opening it, he plucked its meat, and before the cat and the rooster could stop him, he had placed it in his mouth and swallowed it. The monkey then gave one shell of the clam to the angry cat and the other to the enraged rooster.

"But you have eaten the meat!" both cried helplessly.

"That was my fee for being your judge," the monkey said, smiling with mischief. "You have promised to be satisfied, and now quarrel no more."

Then the monkey went away, leaving the cat and the rooster to comfort each other.

EXERCISES

1. Do you know what a clam is? Have you eaten a clam?
2. What kind of a judge was the monkey?
3. Do you remember another story in which a monkey was judge?

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