

Chapter 3 of 'The Monkey King'

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Breakfast Serials
Good Books Unbound

Monkey behind the waterfall

STORY SO FAR: Stone Monkey comes to the Monkey clan. They challenge him to go through the Great Waterfall and find what's on the other side. If he does, he shall be King.

A Breakfast Serials story

Monkey burst through the waterfall, landed on his feet and opened his eyes. He was in a vast cave illuminated by soft light.

Everywhere he looked, he saw stunning gardens and gurgling streams. Clusters of nuts and luscious fruit, including pink peaches, his absolute favourite food, hung from thousands of flowering trees. Multicoloured birds flew through the air, singing songs that filled his heart with joy.

"Oh my," murmured Monkey. "This is a hidden paradise. And it was I who discovered it."

After crossing over a beautiful iron bridge bathed in brilliant light, he came to the edge of one of the gardens. There he spied a gateway covered by flowering

vines. More and more curious, he passed through a gate and found himself in a great chamber. He gazed about, amazed.

There were delicate tables and chairs, dishes and cups, beds and couches, all carved out of the finest pale green marble, all ready to be used. There were blankets spun from the softest, the most sheer silk imaginable. There were books, full of pictures that seemed to come alive when he glanced at them. There was even a throne covered with glittering jewels.

"What is this place?" Monkey wondered as he explored room after room. Eventually he found himself outside again. It was then he noticed something he had not seen before: an inscription etched in

the marble over the gateway. It read, THIS BLESSED CAVE OF THE WATER CURTAIN LEADS TO HEAVEN! "Leads to Heaven!"

Stone Monkey exclaimed, utterly overcome with joy. "This palace must be meant for me. After all, I am the stone monkey, born of Heaven and Earth. This is my kingdom, for I am now the King of the Monkey Clan!"

Monkey did a little dance, leaped up, somersaulted four times, then ran back to the waterfall as fast as he could. Meanwhile, on the other side of the waterfall, the monkey clan waited anxiously. As time passed they became convinced that the bragging monkey had indeed drowned. "Serves him right," said one. "It's too bad," said another monkey, shaking his head. "If only he had not been so arrogant. What's that?"

A golden shadow had darted out of the curtain of water and flew over their heads. It rolled into a perfect somersault and landed right behind them. The entire monkey clan shouted. It was Monkey!

The other monkeys crowded around him. "Is the water very deep? Did you see anything interesting? What's it like on the other side?"

"Ah, my friends, you would not believe it," Monkey began. "I found..." He paused slyly.

"What? What? What did you see?" The monkeys begged him to continue.

Monkey burst into laughter. "I found a paradise for all of us. Come with me!"

And so the monkey clan put aside their fear and followed Stone Monkey to the thundering waterfall. One by one they crouched, just as he had done, closed their eyes, and jumped straight into the water.

"My goodness!" they cried when they came out on the other side. Never had they imagined anything like the beautiful sight

that greeted them. Looking this way and that, they rushed across the iron bridge. Now screaming and laughing with excitement, they reached the vine-covered gateway and the green marble palace. Once inside, they snatched up dishes and cups and fought to get into the beds. They climbed on top of each other, pushing, shoving and squabbling gloriously.

"Monkeys!" called a booming voice. They all turned around. There was Monkey, sitting on the jewelled throne. He looked very serious.

"Well, what do you think?" he asked. "It is beautiful! Wonderful! We are so lucky," the monkeys said.

"Words are as good as gold," Monkey said. "You made a promise that whoever was brave enough to go through the water would be your king. Now what do you say?"

"Our king! Our king!" The monkeys began

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