

Chapter 15 of 'The Monkey King'

Adopted from the classic Chinese tale

Breakfast Serials
Good Books Unbound

Goddess Guan-yin's idea

STORY SO FAR: With the defeat of his army, and Monkey still free, Jade Emperor listens to the advice of Goddess Guan-yin.

"I think," Goddess Guan-yin had whispered to the Jade Emperor, "You should send the Magician Lang to catch Monkey."

Now, although you would not know it to look at her, the Magician Lang was called upon only for the most desperate of heavenly emergencies. She was a very pretty, delicate-looking woman, with a pale face, finely arched eyebrows, and a small red mouth. She tied back her shining black hair, which reached her heels, with a yellow silk scarf, and she wore a long silk gown as white and soft as duck down.

Jade Emperor informed her of his problems and sent her down to Earth.

When she arrived at the Mountain of Flowers and Fruits, Monkey King's scouts rushed back to report the news.

Monkey strolled out to meet her. "Ah. A pretty woman." He bowed. "You would be better off finding a husband," he mocked. "You can't win against me."

Magician Lang's smooth pale face showed no emotion. "If you are so sure of yourself," she said, "I shall bet you that I can defeat you in five rounds."

"Five rounds?" Monkey

laughed and snapped his fingers. "I accept!"

In a flash, Magician Lang turned herself into a giant, fifty thousand feet tall, with scarlet hair and a blue face with enormous teeth. In her massive hands, she held a club as big as a tree. Now she ran at Monkey, screaming, and began to bring her club straight down upon his head!

At the last moment, Monkey jumped aside. "Round one," he declared, laughing. "She's playing the transformation game. That's my specialty!"

Instantly he changed himself into a sparrow and darted into the leaves of a tall pine.

Magician Lang just as swiftly turned herself into a hawk and flew after him.

The sparrow wove in and out of the trees with blinding speed, flying now high, now low. But the hawk followed in close pursuit.

Suddenly the sparrow veered and dove into a dense thicket. The hawk put on an extra burst of speed to barrel through, but got tangled in the thick underbrush.

"Round number two!" the sparrow declared. He flew down toward the ocean and changed himself into a fish.

The hawk turned herself into a shark and followed.

Deeper and deeper the fish swam, the shark right behind him. As the shark began to catch up, the fish saw a cuttlefish just ahead and swam right between the tentacles. Following madly, the shark crashed into the cuttlefish, which squirted black ink into its face, making it impossible for her to see which way to go.

"Round number three," the fish shouted cheerfully as he swam toward the shore. Leaping onto land, he changed himself into a green snake and slithered into the forest among the sticks and leaves.

Meanwhile, the shark washed off the cuttlefish ink, reached land, and turned herself into a gray crane, with a long, sharp black beak shaped like a hook.

The snake zigzagged under the leaves while the gray crane swooped behind him. She had nearly nipped his tail with her wicked black beak when the snake darted into a tiny hole in the ground.

"Round number four," the snake giggled as he disappeared.

The gray crane was

about to lose her temper. She took a deep breath and changed back into her original form. Now she spied an ancient temple on a nearby hilltop. It had one door, two windows, and a Buddha statue in the middle. Could Monkey be hiding in there?

Magician Lang was about to enter the temple when she came to a halt. She studied the building closely for a moment. Then she sat down, crossed her legs, and waited. After two hours one of the temple windows blinked.

Magician Lang jumped to her feet and pulled out a magic sword. "Just as I thought!" she cried. "You can't fool me, Monkey! Your mouth is that door. You hoped to bite me as I walked in. Let's see what will happen if I smash those windows!"

"Oh no you don't!" cried Monkey and he transformed back to himself, took up his magic staff, and rushed upon Magician Lang.

How they fought! Great clouds of dust darkened the air. Nine days and ten nights passed in furious battle.

High above them, on a cloud just outside the Southern Gate of Heaven,

A Breakfast Serials story

CHAPTER

15

Activity Guide

Just the Facts

1. Goddess Guan-yin told the Jade Emperor about someone who could catch Monkey. Who did she recommend?
2. What challenge did Magician Lang make to Monkey?
3. What was Magician Lang's first transformation?

Between the Lines

4. Why didn't Magician Lang look like a powerful fighter?
5. What was the outcome of each of the five rounds between Monkey and Magician Lang?
6. How did the Jade Emperor finally capture Monkey?

Let's Discuss

7. If you were Magician Lang and could transform yourself into anything, what would you do to defeat Monkey?
8. Make a prediction: What will the Jade Emperor do with Monkey?



VOCABULARY

finely **arched** eyebrows, (adjective)
curved like an arch
enormous, (adj)
huge, extremely large
gray crane, (noun)
a long-necked bird with a long, tapering bill
mischief, (n)
trouble
close **pursuit**, (n)
chasing
veered, (verb)
changed direction
wicked black beak, (adj)
dangerous, scary

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In the Real World

Look at news stories, ads and comic strips to find five animals you would transform into, if someone were chasing you. Explain each of your choices.

Competition

Hey kids!!! Send in your answers to the Activity Guide for each chapter and win great prizes, with the compliments of Vijitha Yapa Bookshops. The best entry each week will be awarded a book voucher for Rs. 1,000.

These weekly entries will also be eligible for lots of exciting prizes at 'The Monkey King' Grand Competition at the end of the serial story. (See page 9 for details)

World Association of Newspapers