

Chapter 9 of 'The Monkey King'

Adopted from the classic Chinese tale

Breakfast Serials
Good Books Unbound

STORY SO FAR: Monkey, having saved his clan from the Demon of Havoc, brings the monkeys home but promises he will now do something very important.

Upon arriving home, the Monkey King called a meeting of all the monkeys.

"Dear friends," he said, "As your king, my most important duty is to protect you. In my fight with the demon, all I had were my fists and my brain. I was lucky to win. I need a real weapon. Not just any weapon, however. Since I'm special, it must be special too."

Old Grandmother monkey stood up. "Your Majesty, my grandfather told me that he learned from his grandfather, that at the bottom of the Eastern Sea there lives a Dragon King who has many special weapons. But as you see, the trouble is, he lives underwater."

"Underwater!" cried Monkey. "A small matter. Of course I can visit this Dragon King. That's the kind of king you have."

So saying, he ran to the iron bridge, recited a spell, and jumped into the churning stream. At once, a whirlpool caught him up and carried him right to the bottom of the Eastern Sea in front of the Dragon Palace.

How beautiful it was! The

palace was made entirely of white coral and was studded with thousands of gleaming pearls. Millions of crabs mounted on the backs of sea horses stood guard, commanded by bright red lobster generals. But the Dragon King himself was the most magnificent sight. Majestic and dignified, he surveyed his kingdom from his throne, which was the back of a gigantic sea turtle.

The Dragon King looked surprised to see Monkey, and felt a little nervous too. Only a greatly powerful being could appear at the bottom of the sea.

"Welcome, sir," he said politely. "What can I do for you?"

"It's embarrassing to ask you a favour on my first visit," Monkey said, grinning. "But I am the Magnificent Monkey King. I need a suitable weapon for myself, the better to defend my clan. I was told you had many magical weapons to spare."

What a rude request! Dragon King did not like Monkey, but dared not refuse. "I don't have so many weapons to spare," he said. "But for you... let the Hammer Head Shark come forth!"

The Hammer Head Shark swam forward and offered his hammer.

Monkey King shrugged. "A hammer is too ordinary a weapon for me," he said. "Surely you can do better."

Twin spirals of smoke bubbled out of the Dragon King's nose. But he only said, "Let the Sword Fish enter!"

The Sword Fish swam into view and offered his sword.

"No, no. That's much too ugly," said Monkey King. "It's not even worth touching."

Dragon King turned blue with anger. But he said, "Let the Nar-Whale enter."

A Nar-Whale arrived, and offered his pointy head spike.

Monkey King looked it over, only to wave it away. "I'm afraid not," he said.

Dragon King was nearly spitting fire. He glowered at Monkey. "I have nothing else to show you."

"I know you can do better," soothed Monkey. He had noticed a golden light coming from a room behind the Dragon King's throne.

"What's that?"

Without waiting for an answer, he barged into the Dragon King's Treasure Hall. Monkey paid no attention to the jewels. His eyes were drawn to a thick iron pillar in the centre of the room. It was about a hundred feet long and glowed with innu-

merable beams of golden light.

"That," said Dragon King, "Is the magic pillar that holds up an island on the sea surface. It weighs thirteen thousand, five hundred pounds."

"Ah," said Monkey. "Is that so? It would be the perfect weapon for me except that it's too long and too thick."

Instantly the pillar became shorter and thinner.

Everyone was astonished, including Dragon King.

"It's magic!" Monkey cried. "How convenient. A little shorter and thinner," he commanded, staring at the pillar. It shrank until it was the size of a toothpick.

"Now larger... A little larger... Ah!" When it was big enough to fit comfortably in his paw, Monkey grabbed it and examined it closely. It was made of coal black iron, with golden clasps.

Monkey tested it with a few thrusts and passes. Golden beams shot through-out the Treasure Hall.

"Splendid, splendid! Thank you, Dragon King!" Monkey turned to leave.

"But the island!" Dragon King shouted. "It's going to float away!"

"I hope it has a good voyage," Monkey said, laughing as he ran out.

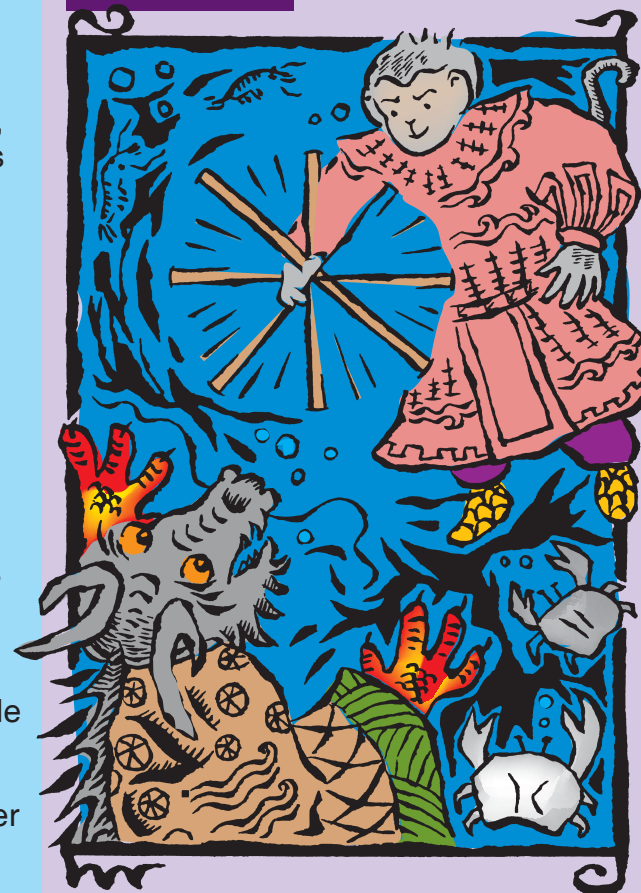
"Stop that thief!" cried Dragon King.

Monkey goes to the sea

A Breakfast Serials story

CHAPTER 9

Activity Guide



Just the Facts

1. According to Monkey, what was his duty toward the monkey clan?
2. Who lived at the bottom of the Eastern Sea and had many special weapons?

Between the Lines

3. How does Monkey learn about the Dragon King?
4. Why was Dragon King nervous about Monkey's appearance at his underwater palace?
5. What did Monkey say was wrong with each of the weapons the Dragon King offered him?
6. What weapon did Monkey take?
7. What problem was created when Monkey took the iron pillar?
8. How did Monkey escape from the Dragon King?

Let's Discuss

9. Was it a good idea for Monkey to take the iron pillar? Why or why not?
10. How would you have tried to get the Dragon King's weapons?
11. Make a prediction: What will happen next to Monkey?

In the Real World

Look through newspaper ads to find five items that you could use to travel on or under the water. Total the costs of your items. How much would you have to spend?

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)

VOCABULARY

churning stream, (adjective)

stirred up, moving rapidly

golden clasps, (noun)

something used to hook objects together

coral, (n)

a rich material made up of the skeletal deposits produced by anthozoan polyps (a marine animal)

innumerable beams, (adj)

too many to count

Nar-Whale, (n)

(also narwhale) a large whale, about 20 feet long; males have a long twisted ivory tusk

pincers, (n)

claws that pinch together

twin spirals of smoke, (n)

turning in a circular motion, like a coil

thrusts and passes, (n)

lunging or pushing forward, as if you were fencing with a sword

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