

How Monkey Looked for Trouble



Illustrations by **Matt Evans**

Story adapted by **Matt Evans**

This story comes from **Trinidad.**



In a tiny village in Trinidad there lived an old woman who made the most delicious sweets. People would come from all around just to buy her candies at the village's market.





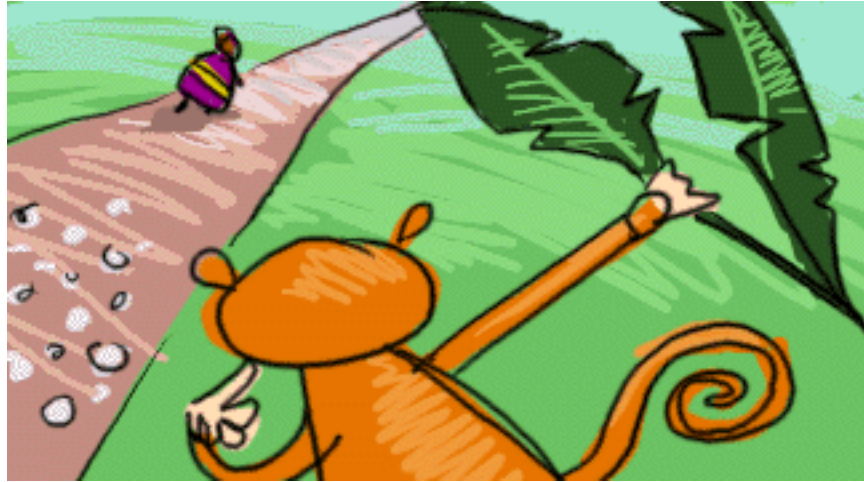
One day, while walking to market, the old lady stubbed her toe on a stone and dropped her gourd to the ground. The gourd split open and her coconut cakes spilled everywhere.





"Oh look at this trouble here," she said. "I can't believe what trouble I've got. Now I'll have to go right back home!"





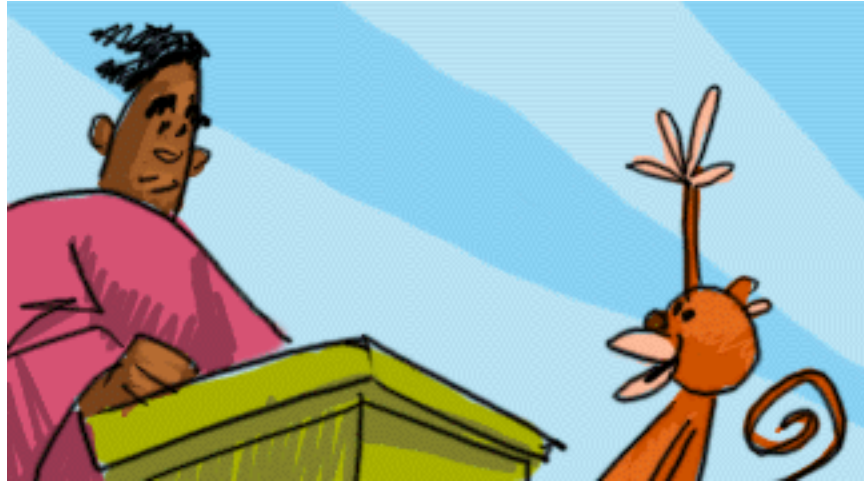
Monkey was sitting in a tree above the road and saw and heard everything. As the old woman left he began to grow curious about her trouble.





He scurried down the tree and went to the trouble sprawled across the road. He tasted one of the coconut cakes and exclaimed, "This trouble is most delicious! I shall go buy some more for myself!"





Monkey marched right into town and went to the nearest merchant. "I'd like to buy some trouble," he said.

The merchant looked strangely at the little creature and asked, "Do you know what trouble is?"

"Yes, yes," Monkey said impatiently. "Give me all you have and be quick about it."





The shopkeeper shook his head with a little smile and soon brought out a large bag. Monkey paid for it and left.





As he dragged the bag down the road, he began to grow tired.

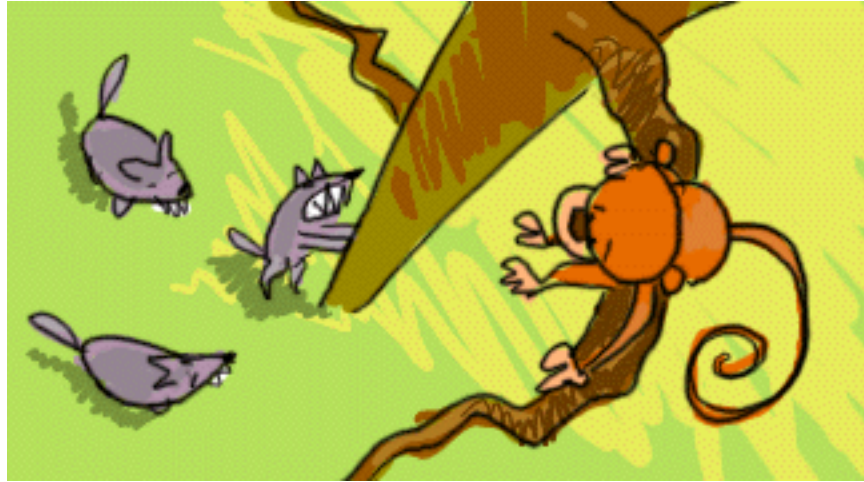
"My my, but this trouble is heavy. And what strange sounds it makes." He eventually came to a clearing and decided to open the bag and enjoy his treat.





Licking his lips, he loosened the top of the bag. Suddenly three fierce dogs burst from the bag, barking and flashing their sharp teeth.





Poor Monkey ran up the nearest tree and sat on a high branch, shaking with fear as the dogs below barked and yapped at him.





He grew hungrier and hungrier and eventually picked a strange fruit from above his head. He stuffed it in his mouth, not knowing that he was in a pepper tree. Oh! How that pepper burned his poor little mouth. And he could not go get water until the dogs left the tree.





Eventually they did leave and Monkey was able to run to a nearby pond to cool his burning tongue.

And to this day Monkey stays high up in the treetops, far away from trouble.



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Tiger and the Big Wind



Illustrations by **Gina Triplett**

Story adapted by **Matt Evans**

This story is from **Africa**.



Once upon a time, long ago, there was a terrible drought that hit the land. The rains had not come that year and the crops were doing very badly. Without much food and water, all of the animals were very hot, very thirsty, and very hungry.





It just so happened that there was a field and in the middle of this field was one large pear tree full of the juiciest pears you ever did see. They were big and yellow and just waiting to be picked. Unfortunately, at the base of this tree was a very mean tiger.





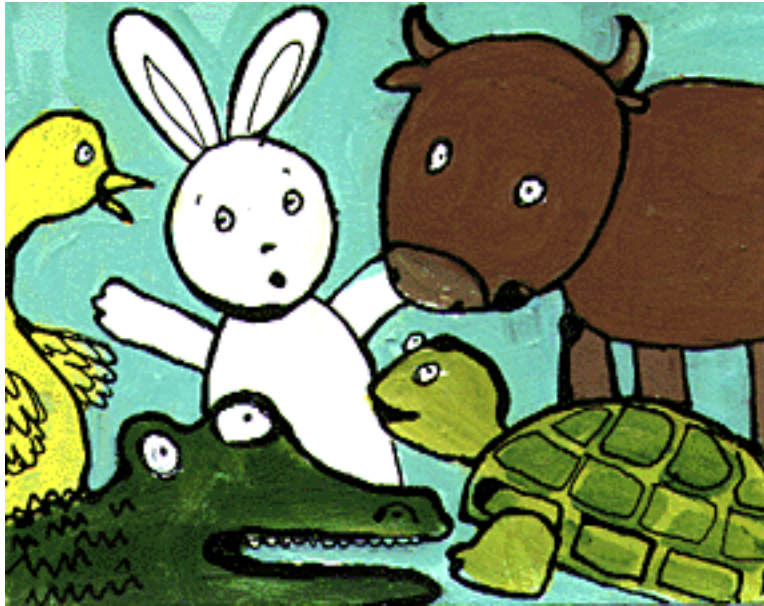
Tiger was greedy and selfish and refused to let anyone near the tree. He would sit all day in the shade of the pear tree and growl at anyone who came too close. He'd say, "Growr, growr, I'll eat you up! Stay away from my tree or I'll eat you up!"





Eventually Rabbit happened by and heard what was going on. "Oh, Rabbit, what are we to do?" wailed the animals. "Tiger is so mean and won't share the juicy pears! Oh, we are so hungry and thirsty!"





Rabbit thought about this and being such a clever animal, he immediately devised a plan. "Come close, come close. Listen to me and I will tell you what to do."





The next morning all of the animals secretly gathered in the forest near the field where Tiger was sleeping. All of the animals who lived on the ground, like Turtle, Elephant, Ox, and Donkey, they all stood near big hollow logs. All of the monkeys and birds who lived in the trees quietly sat in the branches and waited for Rabbit to arrive.

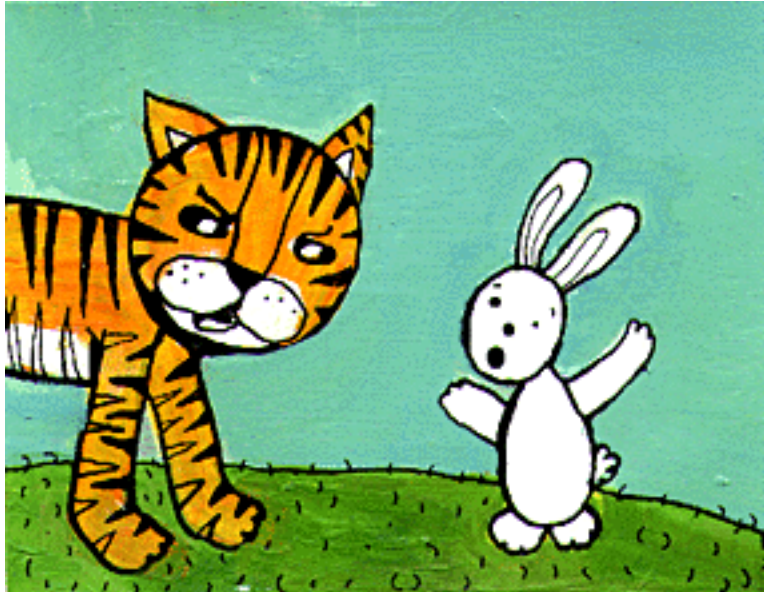




Soon Rabbit did show up, carrying a large, thick rope. He ran across the field and made a lot of noise. "Oh, my! Oh, my!" he shouted.

Tiger sleepily opened an eye and growled, "Why are you making so much noise, Rabbit? Can't you see I am sleeping?"





"Tiger! You must run! A big wind is coming that will blow everyone off the earth!" Just at that moment, the animals hidden in the forest began to make a great racket.





Eagle and Stork and Owl and all the rest of the birds flapped their wings, causing the leaves to shake and twist. Elephant and Ox and Otter and Crocodile and all of the animals on the ground beat on the hollow logs and smacked the trees. They scurried around in the brush and altogether set the entire forest to swinging and swaying like it was the end of the world!





Tiger was terrified! "What do I do?! What do I do?!" he screamed.

"You must run," Rabbit said. "I cannot help you now. I have to go tie the other animals down with this rope so that they do not fly off of the earth!"





"You must tie me down!" Tiger demanded. Rabbit shook his head, "But I must go help the other animals or they will all blow away! You are big and strong, you have a very good chance of escaping alive!"

"No!" Tiger roared. "You must tie me up now!"





"Very well," Rabbit sighed. "I will tie you up now."

And so he tied Tiger to a tree on the edge of the field. He tied the rope tight, but Tiger kept shouting, "Tighter, tighter! I don't want to be blown off of the earth!"





When he was done, Rabbit stepped back and called for the other animals to come out of the forest.

"Look here," he said out loud. "Look here at the one who tried to keep all of the juicy pears to himself instead of sharing them. Well, food was put on the earth for all to enjoy. Nobody has the right to be selfish with what is meant for everyone."

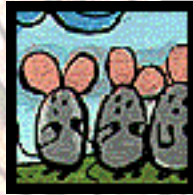




And then all of the animals sat in the shade of the big pear tree and happily feasted on the delicious fruit... together.



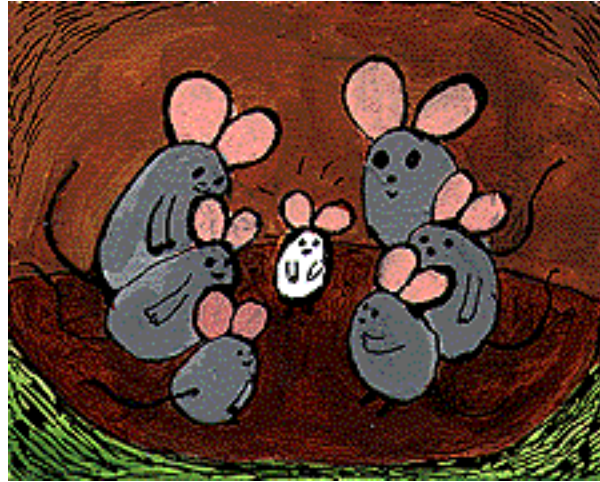
The Marriage of Mouse



Illustrations by **Gina Triplett**

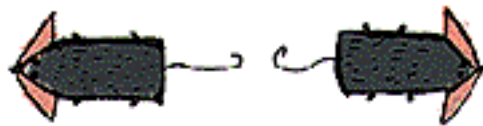
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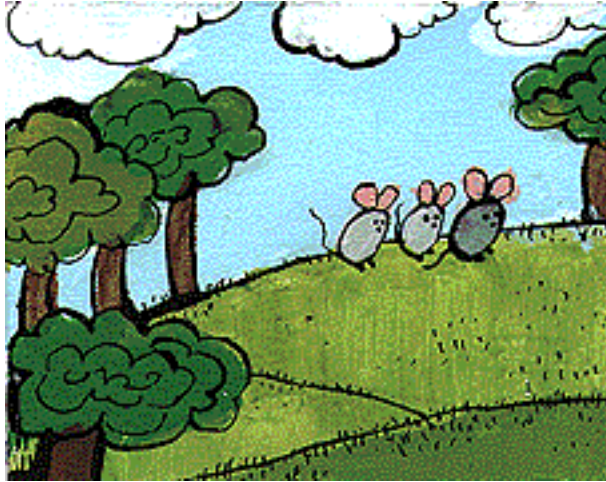
In this story from **Ethiopia**, the family of a special mouse searches for a special wife.



Once a beautiful mouse was born. This mouse did not look at all like his brothers and sisters. This mouse was bright white like the soft clouds in the sky.

His family was most excited by the unusual color. His parents often said, "See how different he is from all other mice. Look at how handsome he is. See how regal he is in his posture. Truly, he is special!"



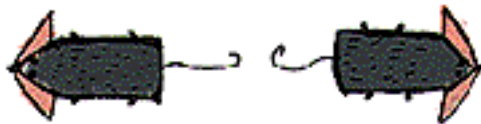


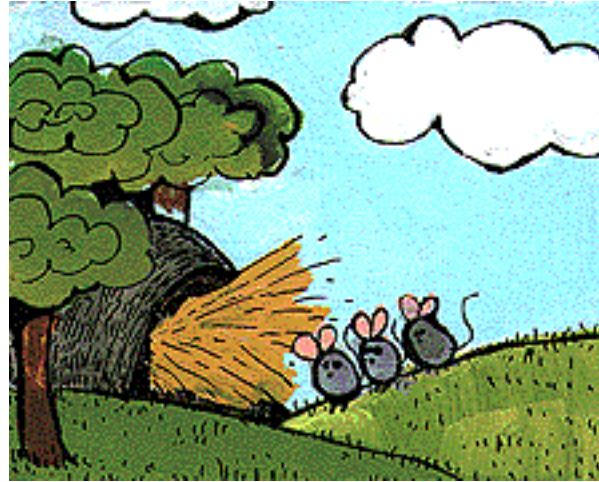
When it came time for the white mouse to marry, his family did not know what to do.

"He is so special," they said. "How will we ever find a wife that is as dignified as he?"

They thought and thought and finally they decided that only the family of God would be able to supply a wife that was special enough for such a noble mouse.

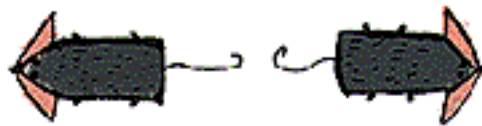
As was custom, three elder members of the mouse family set out to ask the family of God if it had a wife for their young man.

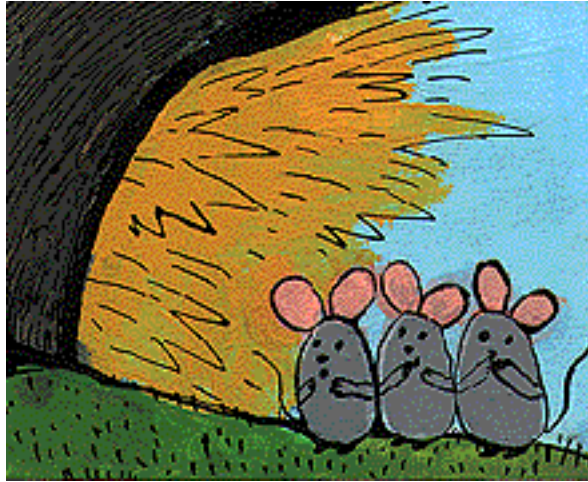




God invited the three mice in and asked, "What can I do for you today?"

"We are looking for a wife for the mouse who is white as the clouds," said the elders. "Your family is the strongest and noblest, therefore it is the best place to look."

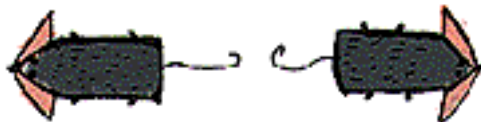


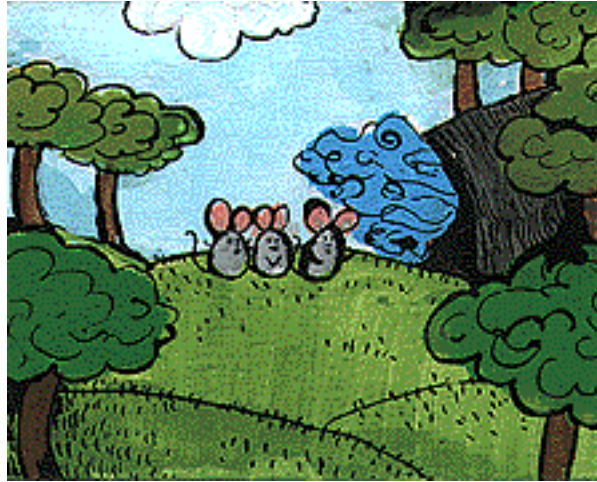


God thought for a moment and smiled. "It is true that I am powerful, but the family of the Wind is where you want to look."

The mice were startled to hear this. "But surely you are more powerful than the Wind," they said.

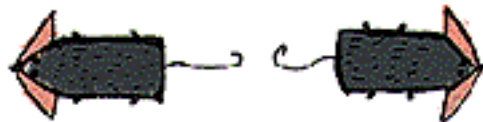
"I may have created all the lands of the world," said God, "but the Wind covers them with dust and blows dirt even in my own eyes. Go there to find your wife."

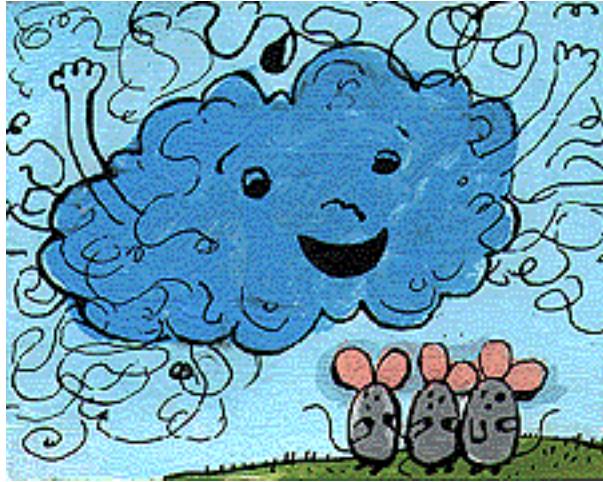




When they arrived at the house of the Wind they were invited in. They told Wind of the purpose of their journey and of their meeting with God. "We are in search of a special wife and have decided to come to your family, since you are stronger even than God."

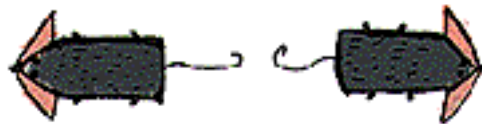
Wind thought for a moment and smiled. "It is true that I am powerful, but the family of Tree is where you want to look."





The mice were startled to hear this. "But surely you are more powerful than Tree," they said.

Wind replied, "I may blow dust upon the world and in the eyes of God, but Tree gives shelter from my strength and defies my attempts to blow him over. Go there to find your wife."

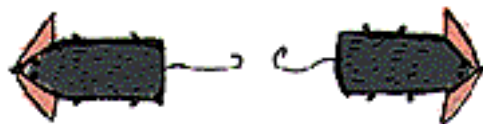


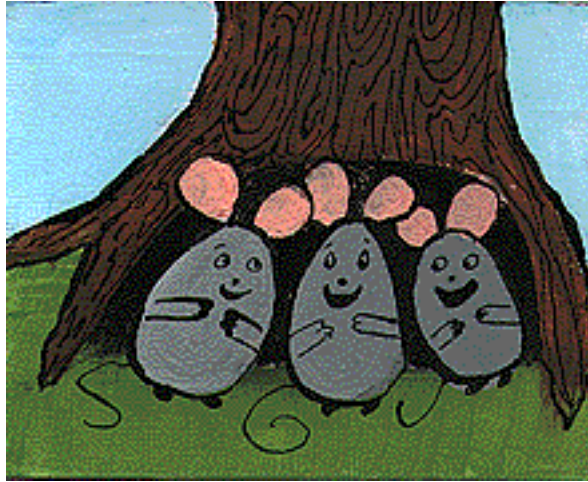


So they set off for the house of Tree. Tree invited them in and listened carefully to their story.

"So you see," explained the three mice, "a wife from your family will be the best choice, since you are stronger than Wind and therefore stonger than God."

Tree thought for a moment and smiled. "It is true that I am powerful, but there is a family that is even stronger than I. That is where you want to look."

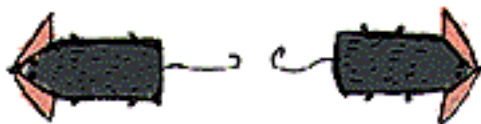




The mice were startled to hear this. "But surely you are the most powerful," they said.

Tree replied, "I may shelter travelers and stand up to Wind's might, but between my roots lives a family that is far stronger. They can chew through my wood and cause me to fall to the ground. That is where you will find your wife."

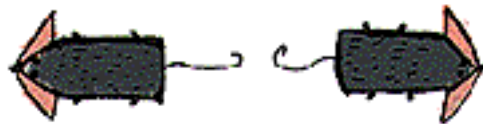
The mice were suddenly excited. "Yes, yes! Such a creature is powerful indeed!"

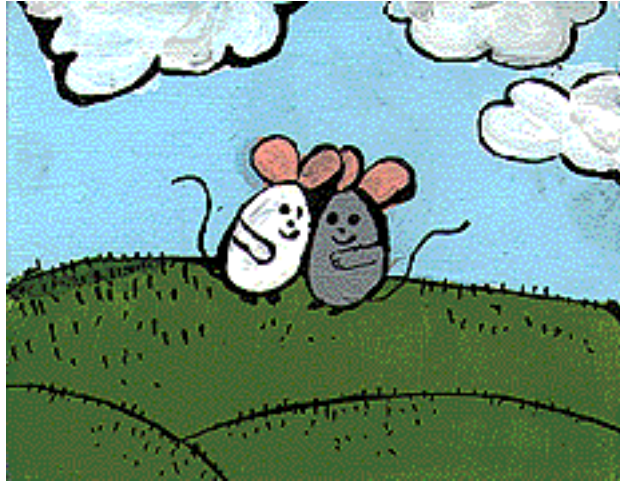




So they went down to the roots of Tree and knocked on the little door that was there. After a moment it opened and a little mouse invited them in.

They explained their story to the mouse. "Oh, yes," he said. "You have come to the right place indeed! Such a joyful day this is now that our two exceptional families will be joined!"





And that is how the noble little cloud-white mouse found a wife that was as special as he.

