

The Monkey King

A SERIALIZED
STORY FOR
NEWSPAPERS

written by

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illustrated by

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Introduction



The Monkey King provides a special opportunity for students to enter the cultural world of the Chinese people. This previously unpublished version of the story was written by Ji-li Jiang. Jiang's earlier story, *Red Scarf Girl*, won an American Library Association (ALA) 1998 Best Book for Young Adults award, an ALA Notable Book award, a Publishers Weekly 1997 citation as one of the Best Nonfiction Books for Children, and a Parenting Magazine Magic Award as one of 1997's Most Wonderful Children's Books. The illustrations for this version of *The Monkey King* were created by Hui Hui Su-Kennedy, a longtime fan of the Monkey King story.

The serialized version of *The Monkey King* is a partial retelling of the classical Chinese story, *Journey to the West*. The true story tells how Xuan Zang (602-664), a famous Chinese monk, traveled to India to find the Sutra, the sacred texts of Buddha. Xuan Zang returned with the Sutra, translated them into Chinese, and wrote a story about his travels. After years of retelling, Xuan Zang's story became a legend filled with fantasy. In this allegorical story, Buddha provides Xuan Zang with three companions: the Monkey King (whose name is Sun Wu K'ung), a pig, and a sea monster. The version of the story most familiar to readers today is credited to We Ch'eng-en, who wrote the story down in the 1570s. The final story encompasses 70 episodes in three volumes.

Over the years, the Monkey King emerged as the dominant character in the story. Today, the Monkey King is as well-known in Asian cultures as "The Wizard of Oz" is to Americans. There have been comic books, animated features, movies, and children's books based on the Monkey King.

Lesson Plans

The chapter lessons are divided into five parts:

Just the Facts are literal-level questions. Students will find the answer stated in one sentence in the chapter being examined.

Between the Lines questions require students to make connections between information that appears in two or more sentences.

Let's Discuss questions encourage students to think about what is happening in the story. One question invites students to make a prediction about what is going to happen in the next chapter.

In the Real World allows students to make connections between the events and topics in the chapter and the real world through newspaper activities.

Vocabulary words are identified in each chapter. Teachers may use instructional vocabulary activities as they choose, such as for identifying phonic elements, using root words and affixes, or determining meaning from context.

Games

This guide includes questions and puzzles related to character names and numbers in the story, a crossword puzzle, and a word search.

Resources

Internet sites and books related to the story are provided.

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Story Structure of The Monkey King

The Monkey King is based on *The Journey to the West*, written by We Ch'eng-en during the Ming Dynasty. The book tells the true story of a monk who travels to India to seek sacred texts about Buddha. This version of *The Monkey King* includes several episodes in Monkey's life. The events can be broken down into five areas. This chart provides an overview of the 17 chapters of the story.

Story Section	Chapter	Storyline
The origins of the Monkey King	1	A stone monkey comes to life.
	2	Monkey meets the monkey clan and accepts a challenge that can make him their king.
	3	Monkey finds a hidden paradise behind the Water Curtain and becomes the king of the monkey clan.
Monkey studies with a master	4	Monkey sets off to find a sage.
	5	Monkey meets Master Subhodi and becomes a student.
	6	Monkey learns transformations and spells, although he misbehaves. He promises the Master he will change his behavior.
	7	Monkey breaks his promise and is sent away.
Monkey protects his clan	8	Monkey returns to his clan and learns the Demon of Havoc has kidnapped some of the monkey clan. He fights the Demon and brings back the monkeys.
	9	Monkey goes to the Dragon King of the Eastern Sea to seek a powerful weapon. He steals a magic iron pillar.
Monkey goes to the Jade Emperor's Palace	10	Dragon King complains to the Jade Emperor about Monkey. The Emperor invites Monkey to his palace and makes him supervisor of the Celestial Peach Garden.
	11	Monkey eats all the peaches, including those that give immortal life. Fairies come to gather the peaches for a banquet.
	12	Monkey transforms himself into Lotus-Feet Immortal, a banquet guest.
	13	Monkey attends the banquet but loses control of his transformation. He is discovered and flees.

Monkey defends himself from the forces of the Jade Emperor.

- 14 The Jade Emperor sends the Kings of the Four Directions and 100,000 soldiers to arrest Monkey.
- 15 Monkey fights off Magician Lang, a master of transformation. However, he is trapped under a vase thrown from Heaven by the Goddess Guan-yin.
- 16 Monkey, being immortal, survives assorted punishments from the Jade Emperor. Buddha interrupts the fighting.
- 17 Monkey fails a challenge given by Buddha and is trapped under a mountain until he learns to use his powers wisely.

Monkey Is Born

Just the Facts

1. What force made the stone egg burn?
2. For how many days and nights did the great stone egg burn?
3. What made the monkey's stone skin turn to fur?
4. How high did Monkey jump when he was fully alive?
5. According to the story, who was the ruler of Heaven and Earth?
6. What did Thousand-League-Ear hear?

Between the Lines

7. What made Monkey's eyes twinkle?
8. What upset the Jade Emperor?
9. What was unusual about Monkey's eyes?
10. What told you that the Jade Emperor was an older man?



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Let's Discuss

11. Why would the Jade Emperor be concerned about a disruption in his universe?
12. Why did the Jade Emperor think he didn't have to worry about Monkey?
13. Make a prediction: What could happen that would prove the Jade Emperor was wrong?

In the Real World

Write a newspaper story about the unusual birth of Stone Monkey.

In the first paragraph, include answers to "who, what, when, and where." Write an attention-getting headline.

VOCABULARY

cowered in terror, v
crouched down

howled, v
made a loud, continuous sad sound

Jade Emperor, adj, n
jade is a valuable green gemstone;
an emperor is an absolute ruler, like a king

Thousand-League-Eye, n
a measure of distance, equal to 2.4 to 4.6 miles (the exact number has varied over the years)

needle peak, adj
a sharp, pointed rock

pearly mist, adj
a white, glowing mist

pelted, v
beat repeatedly

torrents of rain, n
forceful, steady streams of rain

Monkey Accepts a Challenge

Just the Facts

1. What destroyed the trees on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruits?
2. How wide was the waterfall that the monkeys found?

Between the Lines

3. Why did the monkeys think it would be a good idea to follow the stream up the mountain?
4. Why were the monkeys afraid to go to the other side of the waterfall?
5. Who dared to go through the waterfall?
6. What great physical feat could Stone Monkey do?
7. Who had authority in the monkey clan?

Let's Discuss

8. How did the other monkeys respond to Stone Monkey's claim that he would go through the waterfall?
9. Why do you think Stone Monkey wanted to be king of the monkey clan?
10. What did Stone Monkey mean when he said he was born of Heaven and Earth?
11. Make a prediction: What do you think is on the other side of the waterfall?

In the Real World

Find a newspaper story about someone who has taken on a big challenge. Compare the individual with Monkey. What qualities do they have in common? How are they different?



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VOCABULARY

arrogance, n
feeling that you're better than other people

bend in the stream, n
a curve

carefree life, adj
without any worries or problems

casting down , v
throwing down

clan, n
a group united by a common interest or characteristics; sometimes used to refer to extended families

sitting forlornly , adv
in a sad, lonely way

jeered, v
made fun of, mocked

steamy morning, adj
hot and humid

Monkey Behind the Waterfall

Just the Facts

1. What was Monkey's favorite food?
2. What were the tables, chairs, and other furniture in the cave made of?
3. What new name did the monkeys give to Stone Monkey?

Between the Lines

4. What amazed Stone Monkey when he looked behind the waterfall?
5. Why did Stone Monkey think the cave was made for him?
6. Why did the other monkeys think that Stone Monkey must have drowned?

Let's Discuss

7. Who do you think created the cave with its plants, furniture, and other treasures?
8. How did the monkeys feel about Stone Monkey?
9. Make a prediction: What do you think Monkey King will want to do next?



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In the Real World

Look through newspaper ads to find items that you would want to have in your dream home. Paste the items on a piece of paper. Then write a paragraph describing your dream home.

VOCABULARY

bathed in brilliant light, adj
under a bright light

great chamber, n
a large room, especially a large open area in a cave, like a gigantic room

delicate tables, adj
fine, beautifully designed

gurgling streams, adj
making an uneven but soft bubbling sound

jeweled throne, adj
covered with jewels, like diamonds, rubies, or emeralds

green marble, n
a stone that can be highly polished, a kind of limestone

sheer silk, adj
a very fine transparent fabric

utterly overcome, adv
to the highest degree