

The Story of Ebo, the Little Mona Monkey in the Rainforest

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Once upon a time in a land far away there lived a little monkey named Ebo. Ebo lived in a beautiful rainforest with lots of lush, tropical flora of all colors, sizes and shapes. Ebo liked bananas and mangoes. Ebo had a very long tail and spent most of his time in trees, moving very quickly from tree to tree. Ebo was a mona monkey.

Ebo's mother warned him, from the time he could venture out, to never leave the rain forest because their enemies, humans, lived just beyond the rainforest. The humans sometimes captured mona monkeys and took them far away, never to be seen again. Having never seen a human, Ebo was curious and wanted to glimpse one from the safety of his trees in the rainforest.

Right outside the rainforest, the Chief's son, Osei, begged his father for a pet monkey. "Father, I am growing big, and I would like to have a pet that is not a dog or a bird. Monkeys are smart and they are fast. Just like me!" he said.

The Chief spoke to his only son. "No one has been able to capture a monkey, my son. They are so fast, and they seldom come down out of the trees and they never leave the forest unless there is a drought. It is then that they raid our crops. But in my lifetime, I have never seen a monkey outside of the rainforest and I have lived 55 years on this earth," said the Chief.

But Osei had dreamed about monkeys since he first saw them darting from limb to limb, tree to tree. They seemed so happy, and he wanted to have a monkey that sat on his shoulder and wrapped its long tail around his neck, eating fruit from his hand.

One night, Osei dreamed about monkey. He dreamed about the village griot. A griot is the village storyteller. Their stories stretch back to the beginning of time. Having arranged an audience with the village griot, Osei bowed (to show his respect for the elderly griot) and quickly explained why he needed the griot's assistance.

The griot listened and said, "If you promise not to tell anyone else, I will tell you how to capture a monkey in the rain forest." Osei promised and so the griot leaned over and beckoned Osei to come closer. The griot whispered some words in his ears that I cannot even impart to you. Osei bowed, thanked the village griot for his help and set about carrying out the instructions of the griot.

One day went by, nothing.

Two days went by, nothing.

Three days went by, nothing.

And this went on for one month, and then another month. But Osei was patient. The griot had warned him that only through patience would he be successful.

After two months and no monkey, Osei decided to try the watering hole where the women had reported seeing monkeys where they drew the village water.

One morning, after setting and watching the trap at the river's edge for over yet another month, Osei saw a terrifying sight. There was a monkey lying perfectly still at the entrance to the trap. Osei's heart leapt out of his chest. He had killed the monkey, the beloved pet he had worked so hard to entice.

Then he remembered what the griot had told him. When a mona monkey is in danger it freezes and plays dead until the danger is over.

Ebo was as still as a mouse. He even looked dead. But he was thinking. He was thinking about his poor mother and all his friends that he might never see again because he had disobeyed his mother's words. He could hear them ringing in his ears as he lay very still by the strange cage.

"Ebo, do not venture outside of the rainforest. There is danger beyond the rainforest," said his mother many, many times as he went out to play. Ebo was very sad thinking about how much his mother and father would miss him.

Osei, on the other hand, was jumping with joy. He was thinking about all the tricks he would teach his monkey and the things they would do together. Suddenly Osei stopped! He realized how frightened the little monkey must be. He walked very quietly up to the little monkey so he would not be frightened at his appearance.

Osei peered at the little monkey who was lying very still. He had the large mango in his hand that Osei had placed in the cage. The hole was only big enough for Ebo to reach into the cage. Because he refused to release the mango (his favorite fruit), Ebo was trapped, or so he thought.

And this is where the story of Ebo and Osei ends. What do you think happened? Do you think Ebo decided to let go of the mango, which would then allow him to withdraw his hand and quickly run away from Osei? Because, of course, he was a mona monkey and he could run faster than Osei. Or did he continue to hold onto the delicious and savory looking mango as Osei crept closer and closer, rope in hand, prepared to capture Ebo.

It is said that if you listen very carefully when the rainforest is very still, you can hear Ebo's mother calling, "Ebo, Ebo, Ebo, come home, my darling child!"

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