

THE MOUNTAIN OF MONKEYS



**Written by
Rabah Kheddouci**

**Drawings by
Omar Zerman**

THE MOUNTAIN OF MONKEYS

How did it end? A child captured a monkey of the mountain. Do you believe in it? The Mountain of Monkeys is an exciting educative story about man and the world of monkeys. Through beautiful and meaningful drawings, it aims at developing the imagination of the child and linking him to his ecological environment, as he will discover the different animals and the nature of self-sacrifice among these creatures. Also, this story builds the awareness and the complete personality of the child.

The morning beamed at the day, as the world woke up shortly before the sun rose. And with the first golden streaks of its rays, every hamlet sung its hymn of life.

My father came in my room, called us:

- Omar... Sofiane... Hurry up, the prize is waiting for you!

We got up at the same time, wondering:

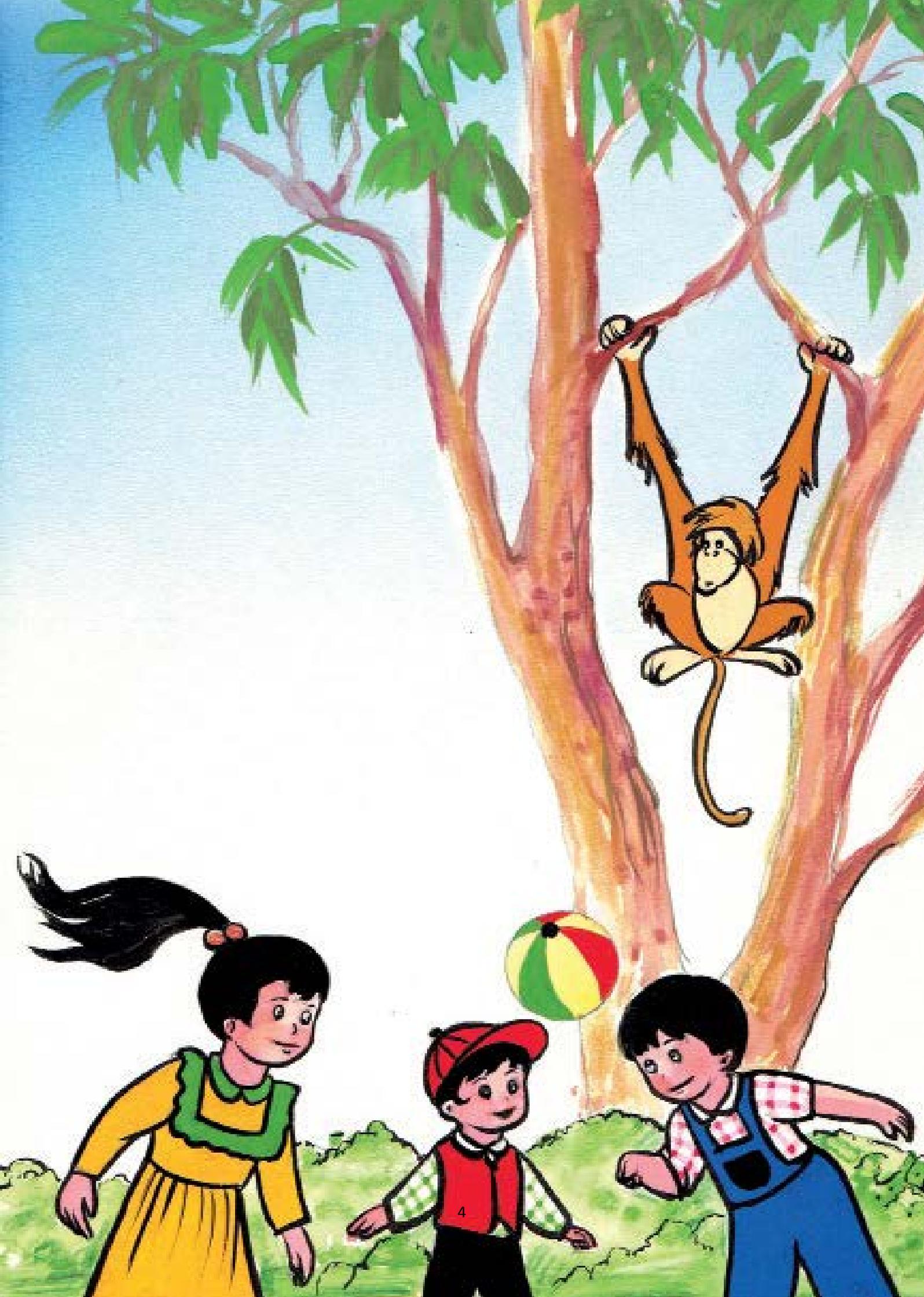
-What would that be?

Then, my Sofiane guessed:

- Without any doubt, it is a motorcycle.

My sister Amina said:

- I wish it a radio cassette recorder to store the songs of birds.



As to me, I kept thinking about the nature of the prize. I said:

- We all succeeded in school this year. Therefore, the prize should be shared by all of us. Or would you prefer each a special prize?

During breakfast, my sister Amina asked:

- For whom the prize, mom?

My mother answered with a smile:

- To all of you! A trip to the Mount of Monkeys near Chrea Mountains adjacent to the majestic mountains of Beni Misra...

I told all of them:

- I will not come back home without a little monkey!

They all smiled, saying to me:

- This is an impossible dream!

Yet, I bent upon seeing my dream come true at any cost.

The car started its drive from the city of Birtouta (*The Well of Mulberry*), not far from Algiers, toward the heights of Chiffa.

The father drove the car slowly before it picked up speed, racing with the rays of sun toward the valley.

The mountains of Chrea wore a white crown of snow, looking on Mount Beni Salah like a queen in her throne of The Mitidjia Plains, draped with a lush green carpet amidst the festive spring.

Mount Beni Salah sent cold kisses, yet mixed with the warmth of first sunshine, to the opposite Mount Tamezguida. This latter looked over the city of Mouzaya, known for its springs gushing with mineral water. The rear side hung over the jewel in the crown of all the cities, Medea, the twin of Algiers and Miliana in terms of beauty and old history.

The nature was glowing like the face of my mother, the landscapes were magnificent like the words of my father, and the waterfalls were cascading like the hair of my sister. I told myself:

- My country is a real paradise on Earth. What a wonder! It looks like my mother, her face being an Eden and under her feet spreads the Paradise!

I said:

- Look! Look over there! They are so like us!

My mother said:

- My God! How their stares are so strange!

Holding a piece of bread, my brother moved closer to the monkeys, while my scared sister got back to the car.

Some of the monkeys stepped back, hiding behind the boulder.

My father said:

- What a fantastic tale! Fear and cowardice are the signs of any weak living being.

Afterwards, we took a narrow path, and walked on, coping with its tortuousness. We reached a hill that overlooked the big river. The place bathed in various songs: the birds chirped atop the trees, the water gurgled between the rocks, and the frogs waited the evening to croak.

We children played in the woods.



After a while, my mother said once she had seen a little monkey:

- It is a kind animal if it had not a wretched face!

I told myself:

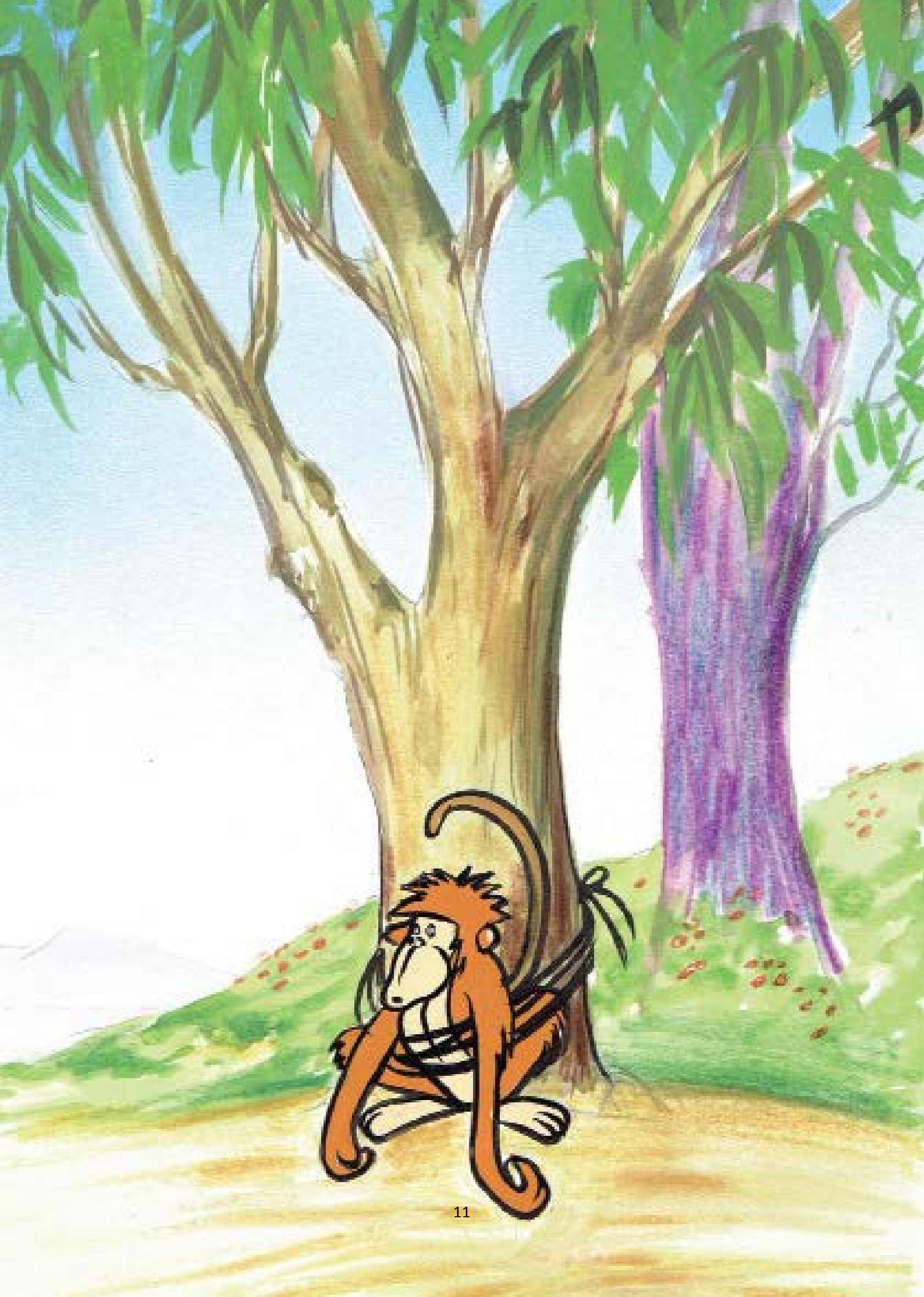
- It is the right time to capture this monkey!

Then, I made my desire known to my family, and everybody was ready to help me, except my mother...

We surrounded the monkey from each side. As we moved closer, he felt frightened. He tried to run away but my father seized him by the neck. The monkey began to twitch and cry, scaring my weeping sister.

I advanced toward the captured monkey with caution. The monkey failed to escape from the hands of my father.





I put a rope around his neck, and my father attached it tightly to the trunk of a tree. My brother brought a piece of bread. The monkey refused to eat the bread, as he continued to cry, pulling desperately the fastened rope.

I was very happy of this precious catch. This new friend will live with me. I will lodge him in the balcony. I will show off my monkey in front of the kids do not stop bragging their bikes and dogs.

When the other monkeys heard his alarming cry, they screamed too, jumping to the trees, announcing a state of extreme emergency in their rows.

A big female monkey tried to break into our camp, as if she wanted to kidnap one of us.

My mother said:

- I think she is the mother of this little monkey... She is weeping without tears!

My father said, joking:

- She wants to kidnap Omar to avenge her baby monkey!

My younger sister was scared and she hid behind my mother, all quivering. My brother Sofiane hurried toward the little monkey to free him, but I stopped him.

More monkeys gathered not far from us. They declared war to liberate the hostage.

I denied the request of my brother for the second time, as I said to him:

- I am going to take with me this little monkey at any price!

Before my father settled the issue, we saw the little monkey sprinting away in the direction of his tribe, the rope still around his neck. My father laughed, saying:

- What a clever monkey! He cut the grass weed-made rope with his teeth and saved his skin!

Fed by anger, I ran after the little monkey to catch him again.

The little monkey was turning back as he ran away, and then stared at me baffled, as though he asked me:

- What do you want from me, human? Eating my flesh? Taking my freedom to see birds playing with me in the cages?



I continued to follow him between the trees, but he jumped on the back of the big female monkey. In fact, she was his mother who was certainly waiting for him to come back.

She walked away, her son on her back. An amazing sight. The eyes of the little monkey shone with joy of escape. He was even waving at me with his leg: *Bye-bye...* And then he let his tongue out as if warning me:

- Go back to your mother, too!

Indeed, I walked back to my mother, who was receiving roses and congratulations from my father and siblings.

Shortly after, I learned that the day coincided with the Mother's Day. Finally, that remarkable trip was a gift from my father to us and my mother in her *birthday*.

Publications of EL-hadhara
BP 04 (A) Birtouta Alger
Tél: 0663.18.12.10
Email: kheddoucir@gamil.com

ISBN:978-9931-357-76-6