

MONKEY OF MONKEY HALL

“Parp parp!”

Geese and chickens fled as the monster charged through the yard, its yellow eyes blazing.

“Goodness me!” yelled Pigsy. “What is that?”

“Stand back!” Sandy ordered. “It is clearly a new demon, sent from Hell to vex us!”

The monster roared, coughed, spluttered, and fell silent. Its yellow eyes went dark.

A door in the monster’s side opened, and out stepped a figure known to all.

“Monkey!” cried Pigsy. “Had you been eaten by the monster?”

“You wish that I had,” replied Monkey. “Don’t you know there is no monster that dare consume me?” And he took from behind his ear the cudgel he had used to subdue many an enemy, and beat Pigsy with it soundly.

Dear Monkey!

“What is it?” asked Sandy, as Pigsy lay groaning on the ground.

“It is an invention of the humans,” Monkey replied. “It is called a motor-car.”

“Is it an engine of terror?” Pigsy asked, getting up slowly. “For it is louder than a thousand fireworks and more fearsome than any son of the Dragon King.”

“It is a method of transport, that is all,” Monkey said. “A device for travelling at speed.”

“Speed?” said Sandy. “But master, you can fly through the sky faster than any arrow. You can command the seas to carry you more swiftly than a tidal wave. You can run more quickly than – “

“Stupid creature!” shouted Monkey. “Don’t I know this?” And taking from his brow a small hair, he stroked it until it became a fearsome whip, and began to whip Sandy until he begged for mercy.

As Sandy lay in the dust whimpering, Monkey frowned.

“What you say is true,” he conceded. “But sometimes I think it would be nice not to have to use my monkey magic all the time. How I would like to sit back, save my magical energy and just...”

He placed a paw on the bonnet of the car.

“Drive...” he concluded, wistfully.

“How fast did you say this could go?” asked Pigsy.

“It has the power of five horses,” Monkey replied.

Pigsy looked doubtful. “They cannot be very strong horses,” he said.

For indeed the car was not very fast at all. Even Sandy, who was a river monster and not as fast on land as he was in the water, had no difficulty keeping up as he ran alongside.

“What powers it?” he asked as he jumped up onto the running-board..

“Aha!” said Monkey. “I do not know,” he admitted, mournfully. “My groom takes care of all that. But I know it must be fed regularly.”

“Does it eat a lot?” Pigsy asked.

“Don’t ask so many questions!” shouted Monkey, and that fool crept away to cower in the back seat.

The car bumped and scraped and thumped along the narrow dirt road. Several times Monkey had to parp the horn to make a peasant pulling a cart full of vegetables or a farmer taking his bullocks to market get out of the way. The horn was loud, but not that loud, so very often the peasant or the farmer did not hear them, and Monkey had to get out of the car, transform himself into the likeness of a bear or a wolf to frighten the mortal, and then start the car again. It was all very time-consuming, and the bullocks would stampede, or the cart topple over, and then the journey would be just as slow as before.

"This is boring," said Pigsy. He braced himself for a hail of divine blows, but none came.

"You are right," Monkey said. He got out and, waiting graciously until his companions had done the same, lifted up the car. Dear Monkey! Although the car was very hot and very heavy, it was as nothing to him to raise it above his head and throw it like a child's ball into the air. The monsters watched as the car flew through the sky and landed with a thud in the middle of a nearby village.

Monkey summoned his cloud trapeze and beckoned to Pigsy and Sandy to climb on board. As they flew through the sky, screams could be heard from the village.

"The motor car is a foolish invention," said Monkey.

"But how will you occupy yourself now?" asked Sandy.

"With meditation and good works, of course," said Monkey. "Impertinent fool!" And he batted Sandy into the air.

As Sandy fell shrieking into the waters below, Pigsy looked at his master.

"Master," he asked. "You are the Great Sage Equal to Heaven. I urge you to find a new interest to occupy your heavenly brain."

"Do not worry," said Monkey, landing his cloud trapeze in the grounds of his estate. "I already have something in mind."

"What is it?" said Pigsy as they walked towards the front door of Monkey's home. Outside some peasants were unpacking a large crate.

"It is another machine. Do not worry," said Monkey, laughing at his companion's concerned face. "This one is tried and tested."

The peasants were sweating now as they removed a heavy object from the crate. It smelled of oil and metal.

"What is it?" asked Pigsy.

Monkey smiled as the peasants inserted a long belt into the metal thing.

"It is called a Maxim machine gun," he said, "And we are going to have a lot of fun with it."

Dear Monkey!