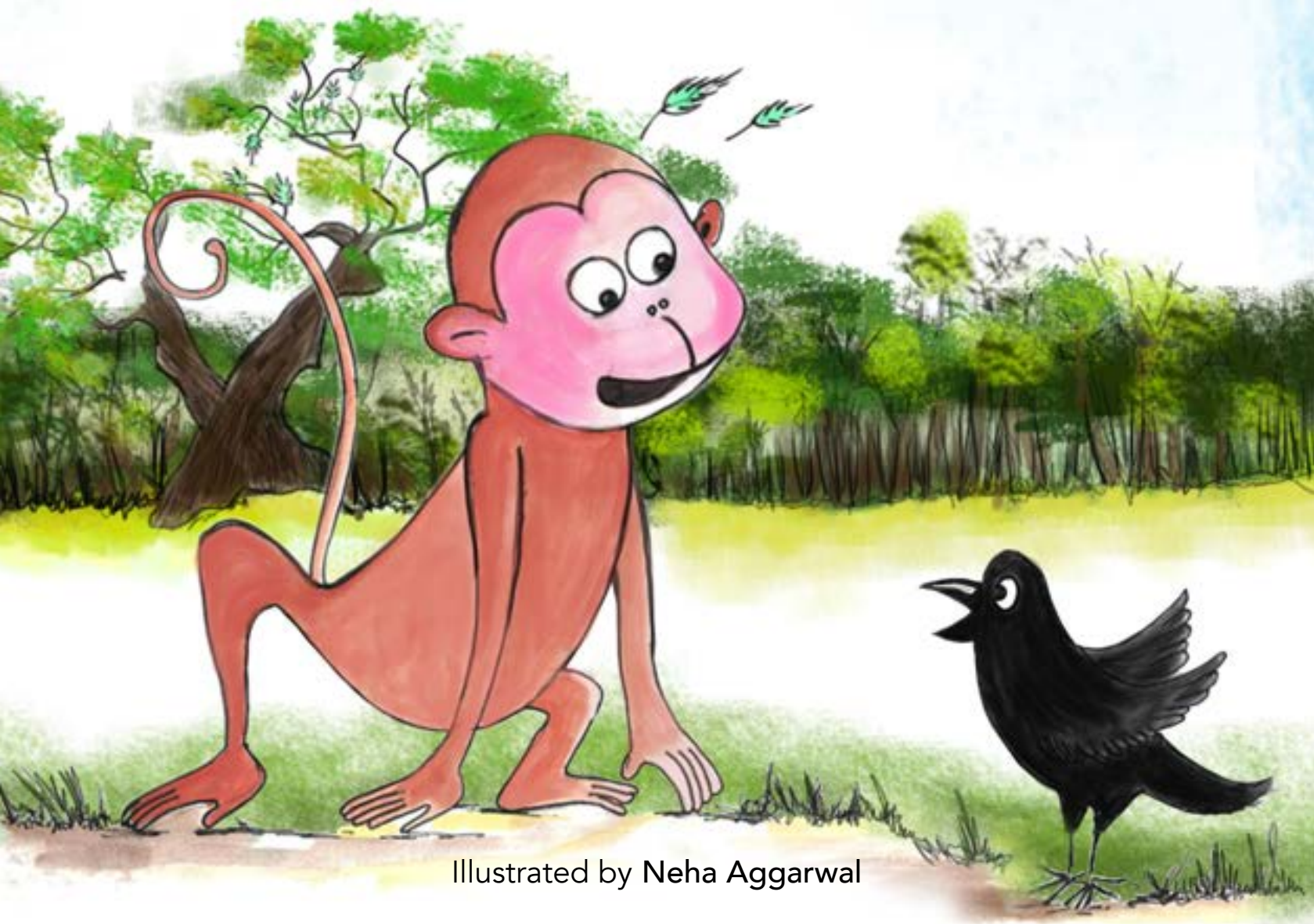
# The Monkey and the Crow

JON COLLINS

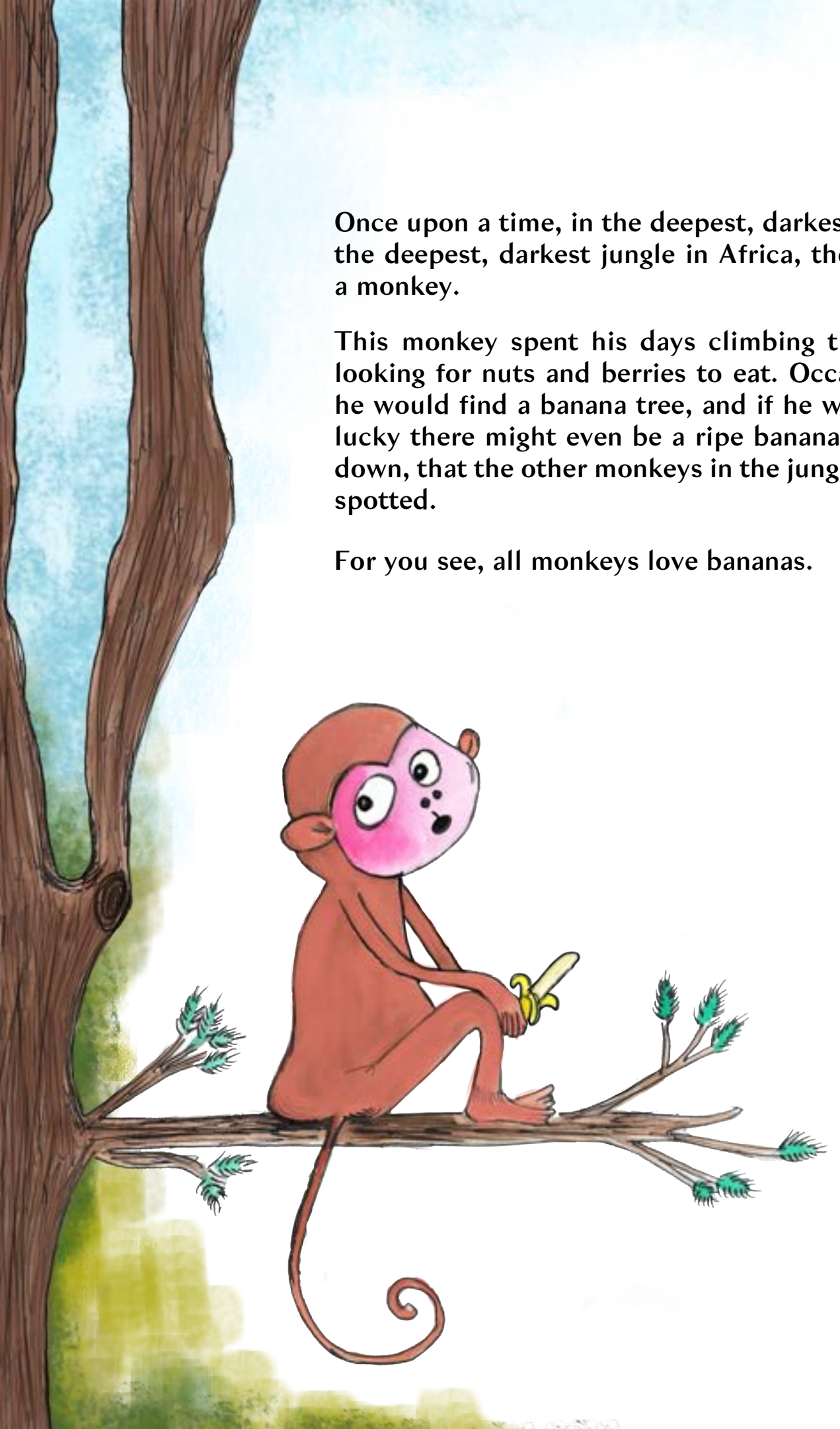


Illustrated by **Neha Aggarwal**

Once upon a time, in the deepest, darkest part of the deepest, darkest jungle in Africa, there lived a monkey.

This monkey spent his days climbing trees and looking for nuts and berries to eat. Occasionally he would find a banana tree, and if he was really lucky there might even be a ripe banana hanging down, that the other monkeys in the jungle hadn't spotted.

For you see, all monkeys love bananas.



One day, as the monkey was foraging through the jungle, he heard a weak, sad, croaking noise. It went:

“Craaaaarrk... craaaaaark...”

“What can that noise be?” thought the monkey to himself. And he went to have a look. This monkey, just like all monkeys, was very inquisitive.

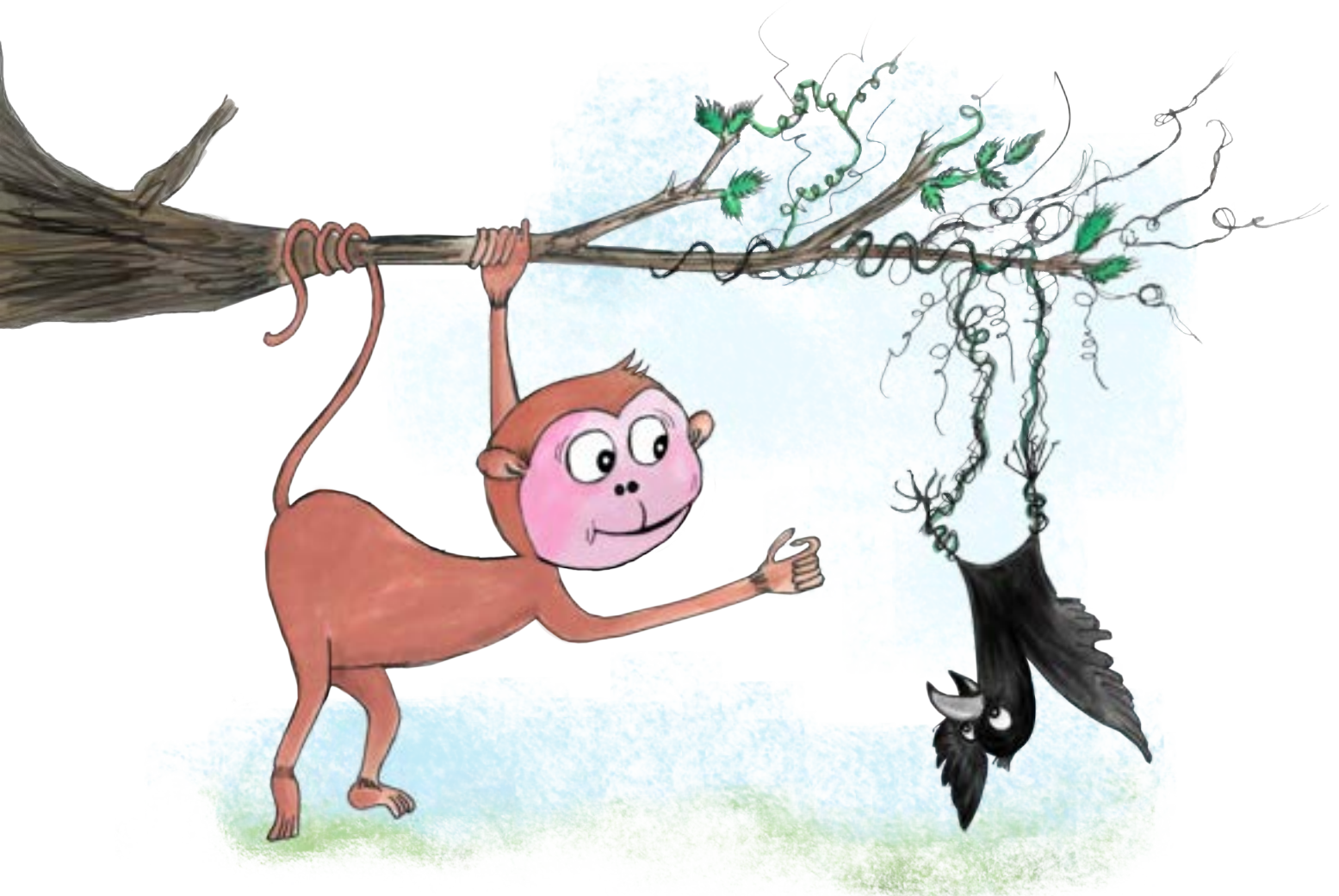
He was just approaching a huge old tree when he heard the croaking noise again. This time it was even weaker, sadder and croakier:

“Craaaaaaarrk... craaaaaaaaaark...”

The monkey looked up and there, high up in the tree, he could see a crow. So he climbed up and sat on a branch, next to the poor bird.

"What are you doing there?" asked the monkey.

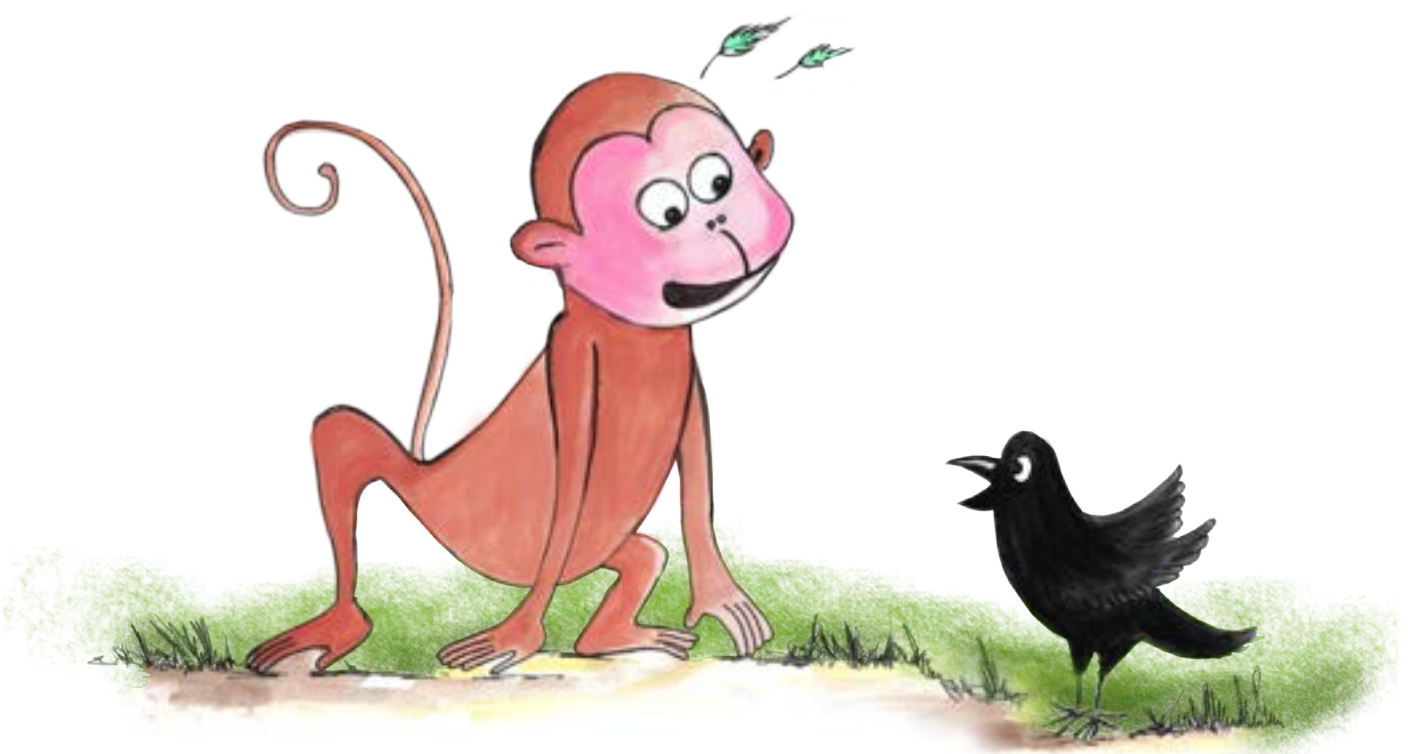
"Oh dear, oh dear," wailed the crow. "My legs are all tangled up in these creepers. I've been stuck here for days, and I'm cold and hungry. Oh dear, oh dear, I thought I would die!"



Not knowing quite what to say, the monkey quickly untangled the crow, who quickly started to feel better.

"Thank you for rescuing me!" said the crow. "It was a good job that you heard me. I was trying to call any other crows for help, but I was too weak to call loudly enough."

The crow continued. "As a reward for helping me, I will tell you the crow's distress call. It goes like this: 'Crark! Crark!' A crow that hears this sound will come to the rescue of whoever calls." And with that, he flew away.



The monkey watched the crow as he left, then went on to continue his search for food. Quite soon he had almost totally forgotten all about what had happened.

Some days later, the monkey was once again hunting through the jungle for nuts and berries, when he came to a grassy clearing in the trees.

In the middle of the clearing was the biggest bunch of bananas that the monkey had ever seen! Immediately, the monkey ran up and grabbed the bunch of bananas, before any other monkeys saw it.

No sooner had he done so than he heard a loud, swishing sound. It was a monkey trap! With a little surprise he found a rope tightening around his feet. With a big shock he found himself being dragged upside down into the air. He was stuck!

“What am I going to do now?” thought the monkey to himself. He tried to undo the ropes but it was knotted tightly around his ankles. He tried to bite through it but he realised that he was high above the ground and he would fall quite a distance if he succeeded.

In the end he just hung there, swinging slowly back and forth in the breeze. As he swung he remembered the crow, with its feet caught in the creepers.

Suddenly he had a thought. “What did the crow tell me about a distress call?” he asked himself. Then he remembered. Raising his hands to his mouth and at the top of his voice, he called, “Crark! Crark!”

craaark...
craaark...

Nothing happened, or so it seemed. So the monkey tried again. “Crark! Crark!”

Still nothing happened, so he hung back down again. He was feeling a little hungry, a little cold and more than a little sad.

As he looked out between the trees, the monkey could see a large, grey cloud in the distance. He could hear a rumbling sound as well. The monkey thought it was going to rain and felt even sadder.

The cloud got nearer, and the rumbling got louder. As it approached, the monkey saw that it was not a rain cloud at all, but a swirling mass of crows. Thousands upon thousands of them.

The crows arrived with a tremendous noise, settling on the trees and around the clearing until there wasn't a branch, twig, stem or blade of grass that didn't have a crow sitting on it.

Once the crows had all arrived, they quietened and turned their beaks upwards. Circling above them, gliding down majestically, was the most enormous crow that the monkey had ever seen.

On her head there was a tiny golden crown, for it was none other than the queen of the crows, who settled on the ground directly beneath the monkey.

“WHO DARED TO MAKE THE CROWS’ DISTRESS SIGNAL?” boomed the queen.

“Why, it was me,” said the monkey, from above.

The queen was horrified. “WHAT GAVE YOU THE RIGHT TO USE OUR SIGNAL,” she questioned. For you see, the crows’ distress signal is normally reserved for crows.

“If I may answer that, Your Majesty” said the crow, “This brave monkey rescued me when I was stuck in the creepers at the top of a tree. If it wasn’t for him, I would have surely died. It was I that told him the distress signal”.

“GOOD.” boomed the queen. And with that she stopped booming and turned to the other crows. “Well, what are you waiting for! Get the monkey down from there!” she declared.

Thousands of crows took off at once, swirling and whirling around the monkey. Some pecked through the rope, whilst the others held it in their claws. Eventually the rope snapped and the crows gently lowered the monkey to the ground.

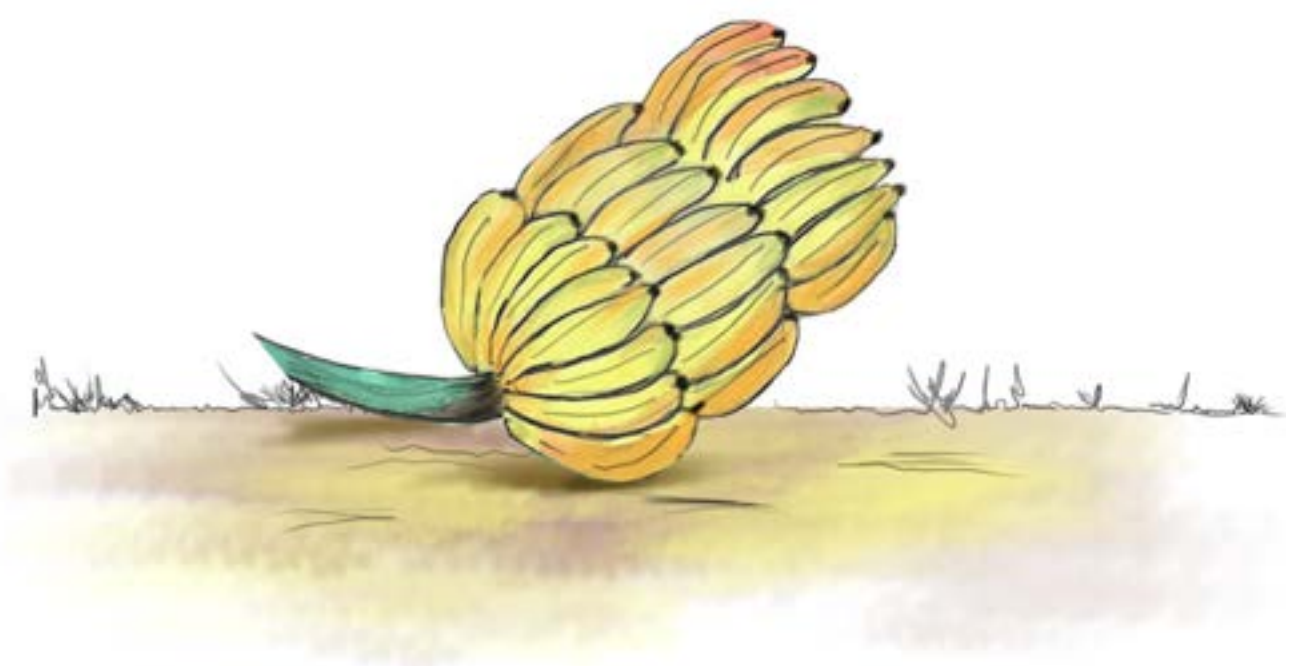
No sooner had the monkey's feet touched the soil than up into the sky went the crows, flapping and fluttering into the distance until they became no more than a huge, black, rumbling cloud.

Then a small, black cloud in the distance.

Then they were gone altogether.

The monkey sat on the ground and undid the last knot from around his ankle. All was quiet again, and the clearing looked just as it had when he first came into it. There were the trees, there was the grass and there was the huge bunch of bananas.

He jumped up and ran to the bananas before another monkey could get to them. Then he picked up the bunch, threw it on his shoulder and went home.

And you'll never guess what he had for supper that night!

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