

The Monkey as Judge

übersetzt von Jan Bruder



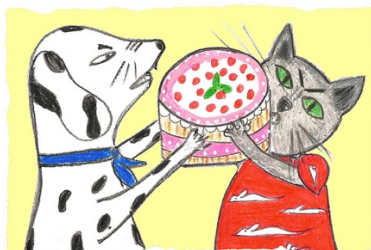
A long time ago, when almost all animals roamed free and only a few of them lived with humans, a dog and a cat lived in a scholar's house.

One day, the scholar was given a freshly baked cake as a gift. Since he had to leave the house for a few hours, he placed the cake for safekeeping on a shelf that hung on the wall.



The cat had watched the scholar attentively, and as soon as he went out the door, she leapt onto the wicker chair by the window, then onto the table, and from there, she dared the long jump to the shelf. The nail, which only loosely connected the bamboo braided shelf, couldn't withstand the impact. With a clatter, the shelf, the cake, and the cat crashed to the floor.

The dog had stretched out sleepily in the sun, waiting for his master's return.



At the sudden commotion, he jumped up in fright and dashed into the room.

When he saw the delicious-smelling cake in the cat's clutches, he leapt at her, trying to snatch it away.

The cat fought back, hissing, and delivered a strong blow to her housemate's nose.

The dog yelped in pain.



A monkey was just climbing over the garden wall and curiously peeked through the window.

"Why are you two fighting on such a beautiful day?" he asked amusedly.

The dog barked angrily, "This good-for-nothing, thieving cat stole our master's cake!"

"What business is it of yours?" the cat meowed angrily. "While you were lazily dozing in the sun, I toiled very hard. I earned the cake with great effort!"

"Impudent, selfish beast," growled the dog, "do you think you can eat the cake all by yourself? It belongs to our master, so I have a right to it too."



"Stop fighting!" said the monkey. "Isn't the cake big enough for both of you?"

I see a pair of scales over there on the table.

I will divide the cake into two equal pieces for you."

The cat and the dog agreed to this.



Excitedly, they watched as the monkey broke the cake and placed one half on one side of the scales and the other half on the other side.

One side of the scales dropped down.

"That piece is a bit too heavy," said the monkey with a serious expression. He crumbled off a few crumbs and joyfully put them into his mouth.

The dog and cat watched expectantly as the scales slowly began to rise again.

"Now it's fine!" exclaimed the dog.


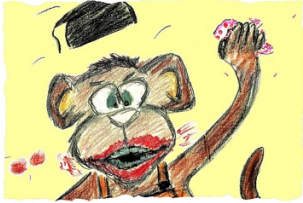




"No!" said the monkey sternly.

"This piece of cake is still a bit too heavy.

No one should say that I am an unfair judge."

With these words, he broke off another small piece of the cake and let it wander into his mouth.

	<p>But he had taken too much, and now the other side of the scales sank down. The monkey mumbled a few unintelligible words and began breaking off crumbs from the second piece, leisurely popping them into his mouth until the two sides of the scales gradually balanced again.</p>
	<p>At the last moment, he took too much from the larger piece again, making it smaller than the other, and the scales tipped the other way. He had to start his work all over again. This process repeated itself until one side of the scales was completely empty, and only a small piece remained on the other side.</p>
	<p>Then he became angry and scolded the dog and the cat: "You argue with each other and bother me as a judge over such a ridiculous little thing? You should be ashamed of yourselves! To ensure peace, I will eat the remaining piece." He popped the last morsel into his mouth and swung out of the window. The dog and the cat stared after him, puzzled.</p>
	<p>"Now see where it's got you!" hissed the cat. "Why did you have to be so stingy?" growled the dog, trotting back to his sunny spot. "You can't rely on anyone anymore," he grumbled and fell back to sleep.</p>
	<p>The End</p>