



My First Pet

My first pet was a female monkey named Mr Jackson. I purchased her for 10 rupees (about \$1.00) from a street vendor who trapped her in the forest of India. She was a three month old, beautiful golden-haired monkey with bright brown eyes, a defiant stance and all the characteristics of a boy monkey – hence the name Mr Jackson.

Mum's jaw dropped as soon as I brought her home, but before she could say anything Mr Jackson decided to bite me on my wrist. I yelled in pain and let go of the lead around her neck. Once free she wrought havoc in the house, breaking, ripping and destroying all that was in her path, until I grabbed hold of her lead, dragged her out the back and tied her to an old lemon tree. Then I put a box and blanket in amongst the branches, which became her home.

As time went by we became inseparable, the best of friends. I taught her to shake hands with everyone, to be gentle and do back flips and somersaults for tourists. She would sit on their shoulders and be photographed for a small fee, usually a few cents. The money would be used to buy lollies and fruits, which we both shared.

Even Mum now started to like her. Mr Jackson was so intelligent – more so than other pets I thought. Her favourite game was hide-and-seek. When it was her turn to hide, I would always know where she was hiding as her long tail would be sticking out. I'd pretend that I couldn't find her, then she would jump out and we would both roll around screeching and laughing. On hot summer days we would swim in a nearby lake. She was an excellent swimmer, but when it came time to go home she would refuse to get out, and trying to catch her in the water was exhausting work.

We spent two wonderful years together. By then Mr Jackson had grown into a sleek, beautiful young female. Then one day as we were walking back home from a long swim, a stray dog pounced from behind and bit her, crushing her skull and she died instantly. I was in shock; I sat on the side of the road crying, holding her bloodied and limp body in my arms till Mum came and took us home.

Mum consoled me and said that this was not the end of our friendship but only the beginning, as Mr Jackson would be reincarnated in another life and we would be together again, and again and again, till the end of time. We buried her under the old lemon tree and performed a small ceremony lighting candles and incense.

Many years have passed since that tragic day. I am now 61 years old and occasionally I still have dreams of us playing hide-and-seek, swimming in the lake, rolling around screeching and laughing, and getting into all sorts of mischief. Sometimes I wake in the morning and it seems as if it was only last night that I was nine years old again, reunited with my beautiful Mr Jackson.

Robin



*On a personal note, **Robin** adds:* I was referred to Read Write Now by TAFE, because I needed to improve my reading and writing skills. I have now been working with my tutor Rick for several months. I have found the lessons really enjoyable and challenging, and now feel confident to write little stories like this one.



Discussion

You might want to discuss some of the more unusual or complex words with your tutor. Can you remember how to spell these?

vendor		defiant	
	stance		havoc
inseparable		somersaults	
	screeching		exhausting
sleek		pounced	
	consoled		reincarnated
incense		occasionally	

Discuss with your tutor:

- What do you think, about this story?
- Do you think that Robin tells the story well?
- How does this story make **you** feel?
- When the now 61 year-old Robin remembers this time, how do you think **he** feels?

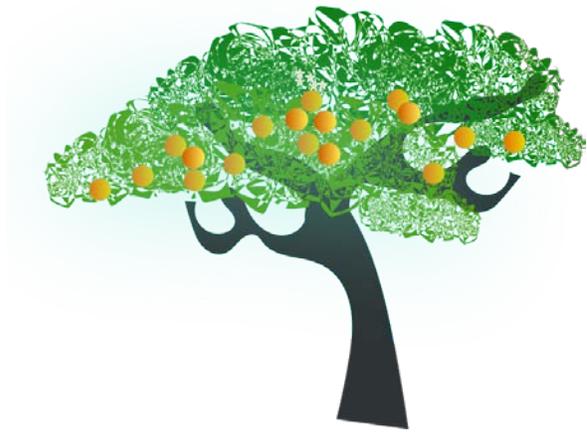
Write down some words, describing the feelings which this story causes:

.....

.....

.....

Activities



Ask yourself these questions about what you just read:

- Was Mr Jackson male or female? Male Female
- How old was Mr. Jackson when first bought?
- What was the monkey's favourite game?
- What does 'inseparable' mean? Tell your tutor.
- How did Robin know where the monkey was hiding?
- He could hear the monkey
 - The monkey didn't enjoy hiding
 - The long tail was sticking out
 - The monkey loved swimming
- How long did Robin have with Mr. Jackson?
- How old was Robin, when in his dreams, playing with Mr. Jackson?

Here are **some words** which could be applied to Robin's story. You might like to compare these with your own choices on the previous page.

heartbreaking poignant touching affecting

Your own response and opinion is just as valid as these words.

Words

After discussing the meaning of any difficult words, and perhaps checking them in a dictionary – either online or in a book...



- Circle the words which are likely to apply to a **defiant** monkey:

naughty loving mischievous angry cooperative

- Which of these words have a *similar* meaning to ‘**stray**’?

homeless secure lost missing comfortable

- Words with a similar meaning to ‘**consoled**’ are:

betrayed comforted reassured sympathised

- In this text, the word ‘**characteristics**’ (of a monkey) means:

features names traits qualities photographs

- Circle the words with similar meaning to ‘**havoc**’:

calm boredom mayhem inertia wildness

- Other words which mean something *similar* to ‘**sleek**’ are:

slim silky stray healthy fit athletic



True or False? ‘**challenging**’ can mean similar to difficult?



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Proofreading Activity

Here is an excerpt from the text,
with some deliberate errors.

Can you find and correct them?

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.....
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an olde lemon tree. Then I put a box and blankit in amongst the branches, which became
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her home. *(The next paragraph has not been used, for this exercise.)*

As time went by we became inseperable, the best of friends. I tauhgt her to shake hands
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with everyone, to be gentel and do back flips and sumersaults for tourists. She would sit on
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there shoulders and be photagraphed for a small fee, usually a few cents. The money woud
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be used to buy lollies and fruits, which we both shared.

Did you notice “bought” in the first line? In the original text, it was “brought”. The difference is: that “bought” is the past tense of buying - while “brought” is the past tense of bringing. So in this case, **brought** was correct.