The Narrow Minded Monkey

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The Narrow Minded Monkey

Abstract
In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"A monkey, who wanted to stop or derail a large freight train near his habitat in the forest, was very determined. He was motivated by many factors; among them were his popularity, prestige, and recognition with the other monkeys in the forest. This monkey thought he had all the advantages on his side. It wasn't far to the tracks from his home and there was a clear view from the mountain top where he could see the on-coming train. The daring monkey was going to stop the train at whatever cost or pain was involved. The monkey knew the train was very heavy and over-packed, but that did not deter him."

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Monkeys are usually good-sized animals, depending on their breed and kind. They are long-tailed primate creatures with lots of strength in their tails. I know this from personal experience. Many years ago I was at the Seneca Park Zoo, feeding Jimmy, a long-time resident of the zoo. All of a sudden he grabbed my hand with his tail and began to pull with all of his strength. The strength of Jimmy’s tail surprised me and caught me off guard. Monkeys are known to use their tails to achieve just about every task imaginable, or at least every task they attempt.

Now this monkey who wanted to stop or derail the train had a great deal of strength in his tail. He knew it would be helpful with his plan that he had carefully formulated. He waited quietly on the mountaintop. After waiting for hours, he finally saw the train coming through the valley, moving full speed ahead. The monkey knew it was time to go and meet the train, so he immediately left the mountaintop and descended towards the tracks. He arrived with plenty of time. The determined monkey took his tail and positioned it across the tracks. The train was still about two minutes away. This gave the monkey a great deal of time to think. To him, the two minutes felt like two years. The train was getting closer and the monkey was getting excited.

The train finally reached the monkey, and to his surprise, the train cut off part of his tail. He got up in a state of shock and dismay. But the monkey remained determined. He was going to let his tail heal and try again to stop or derail the train.

The monkey waited three months before trying again. By then his wounds and pride had healed. The monkey perched himself at the top of the mountain once again and waited to see the train. Soon, he saw the train coming through the valley. He rushed down towards the track. He laid his tail across the track and waited in anticipation. He was sure this time that it would work. He was feeling like King Kong and there was no doubt in his mind that his plan would work this time. Once again, the train ran over his tail and cut off an even bigger part. The monkey was left with very little tail.

By this time the monkey was really disgusted, not to mention disappointed and angry that he could not stop or derail the train. But he refused to give up. He was even more determined now that the train made a fool of him twice. The monkey came up with what he thought to be an even better plan than before. He figured, since his tail was not as powerful as he originally thought, he was going to use something else. He decided to use a part of his body that was much thicker, wider and harder. He decided to use
his head. In his mind he imagined the train stopping or better yet, flipping over. The monkey was more excited than he had ever been.

The determined monkey waited at the mountaintop for the train. He saw the train moving through the valley at full speed. When he got to the tracks, he laid his head across them and excitedly waited for the train. Unfortunately, after all the good feelings that the monkey had about stopping the train, the plan failed. The train took every possession that the monkey had: his life, his head, and every other valuable part of his body.

The determined monkey was laid to rest without a head and almost without a tail. However, the monkey left behind a very valuable and important lesson to be learned by future monkey generations or anybody that gets as disoriented as this monkey was. The lesson goes like this, “Never lose your head over a piece of tail.”

-Euliojio Rivera