



Monkey 2265

by Hilko Wiersema (edited by R. Weiss)

I'm a soul in a monkey body, and born in a place where they do terrible things to us. Of course there were friendly humans among them, but most did not care. We wondered sometimes if they had children, and if they would scream and yell at them, or make them all wet and cold.

The first one and a half years of my life in this place were not without sadness, but I was with my mom, and we could sleep together. I was taken away from my mother some time ago, and put in a place with many more, who were taken away from their mothers that same day. It was a day with lots of screaming and crying and cursing from our mothers, directed at the humans who were yelling and cursing also.

It started early in the morning, for hours our mothers were restless and talking worriedly to the neighbours in other cages across from them. I remember my mother holding me tightly, different from other days; now I realize she knew what was coming.

When it was over I woke up in a group of about 20 others. We were scared and hungry and all filthy, we were a pack of panicky children without our mothers in sight. On top of that, the humans had shaved our thoraxes and written numbers in our skin while we were drugged.

It hurt a lot, and some of us were bleeding from it.

In the following days when the humans came into the room we would all break into a panic and flee to the farthest corner of the cage, one on top of the other, and all were peeing and shitting, so you can imagine what we looked and smelled like.

Some of the humans found pleasure in screaming at us, so we would panic even more. The food was thrown inside the cage close to the door, so we had to come to the front and get it. At first the more bold ones would go; the scared and weak would go later or go without food sometimes, or had to beg/steal some from the stronger ones.

When the humans would come to clean our cage was again time for panic, as we would be chased from our cage into a "clean" one. This again was done with much screaming and the use of warm or cold water aimed directly at us. This would not help our self esteem, for we stank even more, and it would take hours to dry. We were a sad bunch, cold, wet and stinking, but we were in a group - things would get a lot worse when we were separated and put in a cage by ourselves. Then we were even more at the mercy of the humans, and would have to sleep all alone, on a wire floor, with wire walls and roof, always cold and drafty.

And as long as one is young and healthy one could cope, but some of our neighbours were old and sick. I would hear them cry at night, not knowing how to lie down or to get warm. Sometimes the humans would throw our fruit on top of the cage -

for the young ones no problem, but the old could not get at it, and it would rot and then fall through, by then not to be eaten anymore.

Some of the humans, especially on the weekend, would come in the room in the afternoon and in a hurry to go "home?" throw fruit on top of all the cages, even the empty ones, and in the evening when all was quiet we would ask each other, if they were blind not to see there was not one of us inside.

Another thing we hated was at cleaning time they would fill our food dish with water, and then forget to clean it so the remaining food would get mouldy and stinky; new food was thrown on top. The food dish could sometimes stay like this for a week, before a human with more compassion cleaned it properly. One learns to eat everything, good and bad.

Next time I will tell of the day when I was singled out for a very painful "experiment?" I think they call it.

It's late and I will try to sleep before an other day full of abuse is starting.

* * *

I promised to tell you about the day I was selected for a what turned out to be a very painful experience.

The day started badly, because the humans did not feed me and five other friends. We worried about it, because from experience we know when this happens something is up. Too many of us never came back to the room after this happened.

And sure enough the humans came and squeezed me to the front of the cage, and stuck something sharp in my leg.

After they released me, they went on to the next; in the meantime I felt drowsy and I could not see clearly. I remember my friend from across the isle said something like "do not worry," but that's all I remember, until a long time later when I woke up in a strange room, alone at first. My head hurt terribly and I was all bandaged up, and the pain I felt between my shoulder blades was terrific. I hardly could breathe because of the tightness of the bandage. My belly seemed swollen, and there was a lump on my lower back; I was sore all over and feeling miserable.

There was some rice in my food bowl and some old fruit, but the banana was covered with black flies. I tried to eat something, but it would not stay down, so now I stank even worse.

Later the humans brought one of my friends and put her in the cage next to me. It was good to have a fellow soul in the room, even if we could not see each other, we could talk about our pain and misery.

She told me what happened, as she was awake and in an eerie, strange room, where the humans were dressed in green coats, she noticed I was put on a table and all my hair was shaved off. She said I looked kind of naked, but what came next was

frightening: one of the humans came and cut four holes in my back, and then put some other things in the holes, and stitched it all together. Then they put a bandage all around me and put on some sticky stuff to make sure I could not get at the wounds. Then her story stops as she was prepared for the same treatment.

Knowing what caused the pain did not make it go away.

As the night was coming and the humans were gone, she and I tried to talk a bit, but we were too miserable to enjoy this, so we tried to sleep, and that was no small feat when all of your body is in pain. Laying on a cold wire floor did not help.

In the morning we would get some food, mainly rice and some fruit. Not enough to get you a good feeling, but it was food and this time it was better looking. The humans treated us a little better it seemed, but we got wet from the cleaning anyway. This would add to the feeling one could not breathe - moving around was painful anyhow, and every movement felt like the wounds on my back would rip open.

My roommate was crying from pain - she was taken away from her mother only recently. It was heart-breaking to hear her call for her mother, when I could do nothing to comfort. It made me angry, despite my own troubles.

So the days passed, and then the humans came to make us sleepy again. When we were back in our room. It hurt even worse as they cut the bandage loose, only to put it together again with some metal things, and again there was the big lump on our lower backs. It was hell all over again.

After many days they came and took the bandage away. Now we felt a different discomfort - all our hair was gone. This was cold, and where the bandage was glued to our skin, it was red and very painful. In addition the wounds were now itching and painful at the same time.

My roommate was very quiet and sad; in the night I heard her cry, not like the first night, but so lonely and despairing.

After this test was over (for the humans, that is), we were moved back to the old room, and we were welcomed by the others. We drew some giggles when they saw we were almost hairless and still red from the tape and glue.

Now the humans are back to the old routine, and yell and scream, spraying us all wet, and the food, well, let's not talk about it.

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