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## MEET MONGOOSE

*'He has an animal under his shirt and he says he won't stay in hospital unless that animal stays too,' laughed Daudi.*

*'What sort of animal?' asked the twins, Tali and Kali, in one breath.*

*'It's one of those who delight to fight and kill snakes.'*

*The girls, Lutu, Liso and Elizabeti, smiled. 'It's a mongoose.'*

*'And,' said Lutu, 'mongooses are interesting animals, full to the eyes with curiosity.'*

*'Bwana Daudi.' Gulu, whose leg was still in plaster, looked up from the wheelbarrow in which he was sitting. 'It's time you told us some more stories about Jojo, the mongoose.'*

*His friend, Gogo, nodded. 'This sick boy whose name is Pompo has a face like thunder and a leg ulcer*

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*that gives him no joy. If we're kind to his mongoose perhaps he will listen and understand.'*

*'Good idea,' said Daudi. 'By the way its name is Hwikwi (pronounced Hweequee) which means hiccoughs.'*



*That evening Daudi sat under the pepper tree to tell his story. Now, the pepper tree was outside the window of the ward where Pompo lay and it was as easy to hear the story inside as it was where the children sat.*



*As they looked up they could see a mongoose peering down at them from the windowsill while the sick boy turned his head and looked the other way.*

Boohoo, the hippo, was thinking about watermelons as he strolled along the jungle path. His thoughts



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moved slowly through his small mind and came out of his large mouth.

‘Delicious, they are – *um* – especially in – *eh* – hot weather. Cooling to the – *um* – throat, they – *er* – are. *Oooh!/?* Boohoo’s eyes opened wide. At his feet hissed an exceedingly angry snake.

Hippo blinked. ‘*Eh*, I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to tread on you – *eh* – as a matter of – *um* – fact ...’

A small voice came urgently, ‘I’m Mongoose. Don’t talk – JUMP. It’s poisonous. It’s going to bite you.’

Boohoo stumbled backwards. Past his nose flashed a furry, red-eyed fighter. Snake saw him coming and slithered away from Hippo to attack his enemy.

Jojo, the mongoose, jumped to one side. Snake swayed towards him, tongue flicking in and out and fangs bared. Jojo jumped backwards only just out of range. Again and again it struck, again and again the flying ball of fur with his fiery eyes was dangerously close to those deadly teeth.

Then it seemed Mongoose was tiring. Snake hurled itself forward but Jojo jumped high above its plunging head and landed astride his enemy.

**CRUNCH!**

Strong teeth met in Snake’s neck and the fight was over.

Jojo sat up on his haunches, twitched his whiskers and dragged the dead reptile to an ants’ nest. Then

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he walked back to Hippo and started shaking the dust out of his fur.

Boohoo blinked at him. ‘*Eh*, thank you. Do you know, I think that – *um* – snake would have – *um* – bitten me if I hadn’t moved rather – *um* – briskly.’

Jojo tried not to smile. ‘Hippos should be careful of snakes.’

Twiga, the giraffe, and Toto, the monkey, had watched the whole adventure. Twiga said quietly, ‘Make no mistake about snakes. It’s the poison in their fangs that does the damage.’

Jojo nodded. ‘Small snakes can be just as deadly as large snakes.’

‘And,’ said Toto, ‘as every monkey should know, there are the large python sorts of snakes. There is no poison in their mouths but they have great strength to squeeze and crush and swallow.’

Mongoose was busy sniffing here and there because often when you find one snake you will find another.

‘*Um*, useful animal, Mongoose,’ came Hippo’s slow voice. ‘I remember ...’

But no one was listening. Mongoose had moved like a flash into the tall grass.



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*A voice came through the window, 'My mongoose, Hwikwi, is hungry.'*

*'What does he eat?' asked Daudi.*

*'Eggs.'*

*'Right, we will get one. While Gogo is finding it let me tell you about snakes and poisons. The worst and cunningest snake of all is Shaitan, the devil.*

*'In God's book it talks about Shaitan as a snake. He's cunning, he deceives, there is poison in the thoughts he puts into your mind. There ...'*

*From above them came a scared voice. 'I have fear of Shaitan and those who work with him.'*

*'You're right,' said Daudi, 'very right to fear the devil and all his tricks and traps but there is no need to stay that way for Jesus is stronger. Who fears Hyena when Elephant is his friend?'*

*'Who is Jesus?' said Pompo. At that moment Gogo ran up panting with an egg.*

*'Watch,' shouted the sick boy his face glowing. 'Give him the egg.'*



*Hwikwi jumped through the window, stood on his haunches, took the egg with his front paws, balanced*



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*it and then tossed it between his legs. The egg cracked and Mongoose had his dinner very happily.*

*'More stories tomorrow,' said Daudi. He looked up but now the excitement was over. Pompo was lying in bed with the sheet over his head. Hwikwi ran in, jumped up onto the pillow and busily licked his whiskers.*

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### What's Inside the Fable?

**Special Message:** Watch out for the enemy.

Read of the battle between Jesus, God's Son and Shaitan, the Devil.

Read *Luke chapter 4 verses 1 to 13.*