



by Lara Mostert

TOO CLEVER

My name is Houdini. I am a capuchin monkey. Did you know that capuchins have a reputation for being the most intelligent monkeys, since they are very easily taught tricks. This is why they have been trained as movie stars, pickpockets, organ grinders and even to nurse quadriplegic humans. However, such hand-reared capuchin monkeys usually become difficult to manage after sexual maturity and end up in sanctuaries as confused “problem” monkeys due to biting someone.

I am one of those ex ‘nursing’ monkeys. I have absolutely no idea why humans would prefer a ‘monkey’ as a nurse to a human one. My guess is that it must be the novelty of owning something different, and of being able to say I have a ‘monkey’ helper? So, here goes: My option of all this is NO NO NO!!!! I don’t want to be your nurse or assistant! Who on earth gave *you* the permission to make me one?



I am happy to be here at Monkeyland, and I don’t ever wish to escape. I am never forced to do a thing, I don’t have to wear human clothes and diapers, I have a few girlfriends at present and a baby on the way. I am happy that nobody can, or ever will, take me away from my new home. I have trees to climb in, food galore, friends I adore and lovers I can’t get enough of. Spending time here at Monkeyland, lazing about, eating, playing and just having fun is what I want my life to be like. BEST of all there are all these humans who come to visit. They walk in the forest and photograph us.



As a youngster I was trained, (by the deprivation of food and water – but there are other harsher and not so harsh techniques), to open doors, fetch mail, pills, switch on lights, answer the phone by pressing the except button and the speaker one thereafter, fetching water from the fridge and so forth. I was also taught to ‘listen’ to my owner’s every command.

I had to wear diapers, and sometimes-even clothes. You try doing that as a tween or teenager! Imagine being a 12 year old in a diaper! Give me a break!

I was named Houdini by the people who found me in Israel. I can’t remember what the place was called, but if you want to know you can ask Monkeyland. That’s where I live now. I was only in at the safe house in Israel for a very short while, before that I wandered the streets scavenging for food and hiding from humans. When I became too weak I must have collapsed, and that’s when the safe house saved me. I was quarantined and sent off to South Africa.



I know my name is Houdini, but, perhaps I should change it to something else. All this fascination and hands-off attention we receive at Monkeyland is making me feel like a real Hollywood movie star. I think that I want a name change – my new name is



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Scared of heights!

By Leila Elbourne

C4, a little tabby kitten was found in a storm drain during a thunderstorm. Half drowned, half starved and absolutely terrified C4 came to live with my parents and I. Her first memorable incident was quite a traumatic one.

Drunk with euphoria at being in a garden, the sights and smells of the great wide open went to her head. She spotted the largest tree in the garden and up she went! The tree in question was an enormous fir tree, towering over the house. Once at the very top of the tree she discovered that she was scared of heights.

Much effort was expended to try and persuade her that she could climb down but she remained unconvinced. We attempted to reach her but it was impossible. The tree was not climbable for humans. A neighbour kindly suggested that we shoot her down and get another cat – he was a devout Christian but hated birds because they ate his fruit, hated cats because they ate birds etc.etc. A real ray of sunshine! We elected not to use his helpful suggestion. We attempted to hose her out of the tree and managed only to drench her and cause her more misery. She ended up having to spend the night in the tree, cold, hungry and miserable.

The following day my father mounted a rescue operation. A truck with an onboard extendable ladder was commandeered. The ladder was not quite long enough though and the pool cleaning pole was brought into service with a large hook mounted on the end – my father bravely went up the ladder as far as it would reach, precariously reached over as far as he could – and more by luck than design, managed to get the hook through C4's collar and slid her down out of the tree

A very bedraggled little creature, smelling of pine cones was whisked into the house and a bowl of milk and her favourite snack of chicken helped to calm her nerves. She never went near that tree again!



Send us a photo of your pet for our pet column at editor@itsanytime.co.za and tell us your favourite pet story.