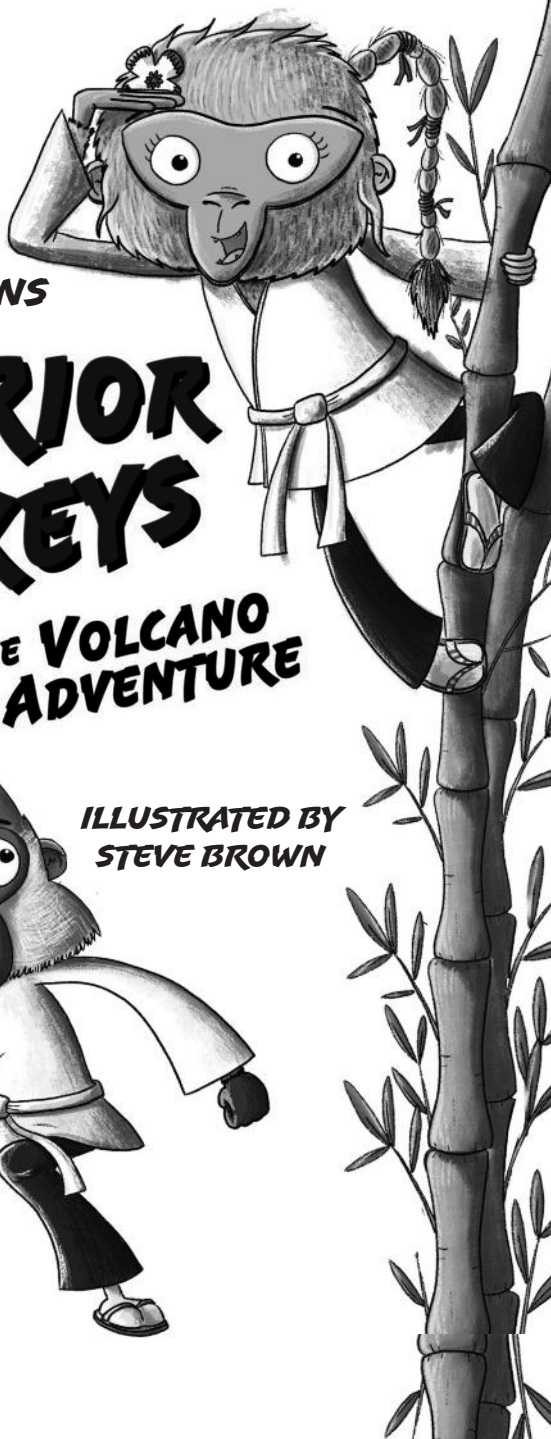


*M.C. STEVENS*

# WARRIOR MONKEYS

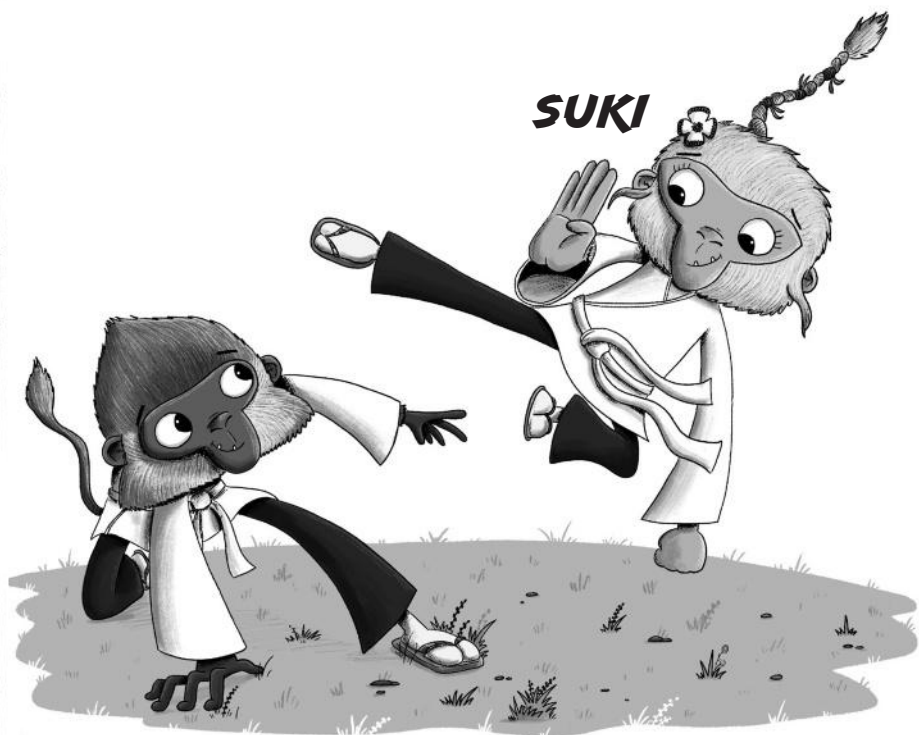
AND THE VOLCANO  
ADVENTURE

ILLUSTRATED BY  
STEVE BROWN



# MEET THE CHARACTERS

**SUKI**



**BEKKO**



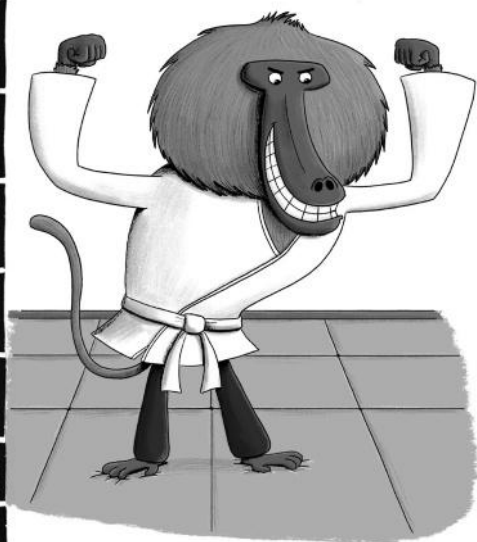
**FARA**



**CHAN**

**SENSEI  
RIKA**





**KANG**



**NITA**

**YASH**



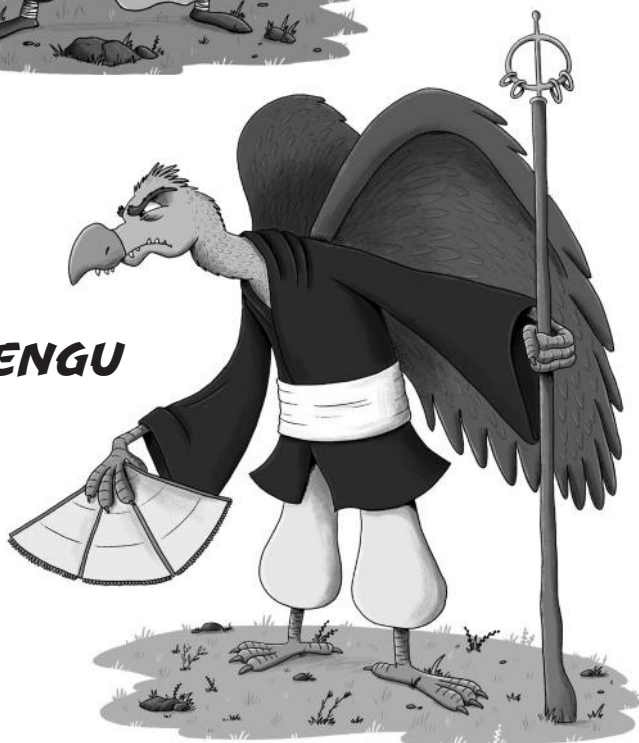
**KUMA**





**JIRUGI**

**TENGU**







## ***PROLOGUE***

Tied up and under guard, Jirugi still looked dangerous. He was large even for a mandrill: the strongest of the monkeys. His face was dirty after the long fight but his eyes glowed with rage as Master Chan rose to give the Kuro council's decision.

‘Jirugi, the Warrior Monkeys have no choice. You have betrayed the values of kindness and justice that make our law. You have continued to use your strength







to abuse others and shown no remorse for your actions. We banish you from the Shanti Islands with immediate effect. Do you have anything to say?’

Jirugi spat on the floor, an act of disrespect that caused several of the Kuro to wince. There was an almost imperceptible rattle of wooden armour as the guard bears quivered with anger. Their simple loyalty to the warrior code was absolute: an insult to the Kuro was an insult to all the Warrior Monkeys and to all creatures who shared the Shanti Islands. Their prisoner had plenty more to add.

‘I don’t care about your laws of weakness and wishy-washy nonsense,

Chan! If you think the islands can be kept safe with good deeds and bravery then you're even more stupid than I thought. Power is for the strong, and it needs to be used by the strongest; for the good of everyone!'

Master Chan sighed, sorrowfully shaking his head at his former student. 'I don't regret giving you so many chances to find a better path, Jirugi. But I do regret the pain you have caused us all, and it now has to stop. We will take you over the sea to Gimandesh and you can make a new start. You can never return here. Is that clear?'

'Am I supposed to be grateful for this new start? Ridiculous! If you really

wanted to protect your precious islands you would kill me, but you don't have the guts. Let's get this over with. I've had enough of your pathetic teaching. I've learned nothing from you.'

Chan swept back his magnificent hair and his calm, strong face seemed etched with wisdom, sadness, and resolution.

'Learned nothing . . . well, that much seems to be true. Guards, take him away.'





*SIX YEARS LATER*

## ***CHAPTER ONE***

The sound of the castle's bell carried south on the wind as it clanged the summons to morning training. Young Warrior Monkeys ran to prepare themselves: the hall must be swept; uniforms must be tidied; hair tied back; and all should be kneeling in neat rows to await the beginning of the lesson. Neat and tidy, organized and disciplined. This was the way of the warrior.

Two monkeys had not responded to the bell. One of these was Suki, ignoring the distant noise as she balanced lightly on a maple branch. She was looking at the stony ledge high above and wondering if she could jump that far. The other was her friend, Bekko, who was pleading with her to come down.

‘Suki!’ he begged. ‘Please hurry! We’re going to be late for class again. Sensei will be furious!’

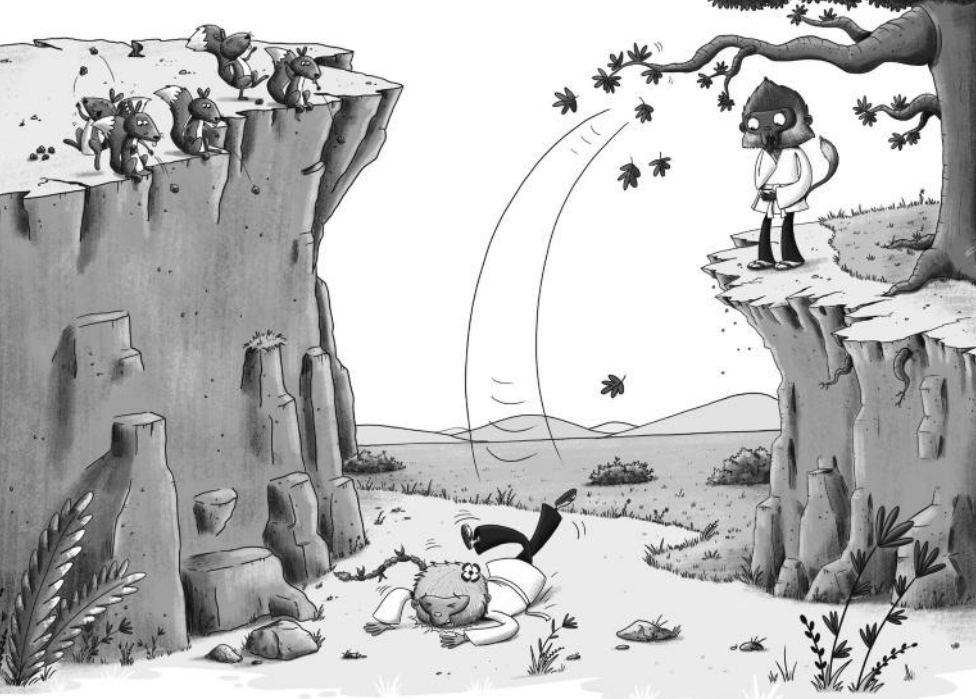
‘Just a few more seconds. I’m soooo close.’

Even for a warrior monkey, Suki had super agility. Her jumping and climbing skills were known for getting her out of tricky situations. Right now, though,

Bekko knew his friend was leaping into trouble. She had never succeeded in raiding the squirrels' nut store high up on the slippery rock face. He knew it wasn't even that she wanted the nuts for herself. It was all about the challenge!

The bell rang again and Bekko looked desperately up the mountain, watching the Warrior Monkey students running through the big castle gates. Above him, Suki crouched low then exploded suddenly into her jump. She was a flying crescent in the air, stretching wildly for the ledge . . . and missing again. Bump, scrape, bash, splat. Down she came and the squirrels all raced out on the ledge to laugh at her, taunting her with the





nuts she tried so hard to steal. She took a deep breath and rubbed her bruised legs. Nothing broken. But . . . the bell had stopped. Looking up the mountain towards the castle they could see the gates had closed. This time they would be in deep trouble, and Bekko struggled not to cry. He hated being late, and dreaded the punishment they would get. He sank

to the ground despairingly, head in his hands.

‘Suki! Now look what’s happened! Why didn’t you just come when I asked you?’

Suki was immediately very sorry. She didn’t mind too much about being punished, but she did mind about upsetting her friend.

‘Bekko, I’m so sorry. This is all my fault.’

‘Well maybe next time you will listen to me!’ he said, sadly. He knew his adventurous friend had a lot to learn about being a true warrior.

‘Come on then,’ she said, pulling him up by the elbow. ‘We might get back

before they finish warming up if we hurry.’ She set off towards the castle at a brisk jog, not noticing that Bekko had stayed rooted to the spot.

‘Hey! Suki! Come back!’ he shouted, waving his arms. She stopped, surprised, and scampered back quickly, wondering what could distract Bekko from getting back immediately.

‘Look at the volcano!’ he exclaimed, pointing through the rocky forest to where the twin peaks of Mount Niru and Mount Leng marked the horizon. Mount Leng was a jagged mountain; its trees and cliffs were exciting to explore. Streams sliced their way down towards the ocean and offered great opportunities



for leaping and swimming. Mount Niru was different, however. It was a dormant volcano and the stink of sulphur gas escaping from it was already enough to put off anyone keen to visit. It was covered in low, prickly bushes that were no fun for the monkeys, who enjoyed high trees. Usually it only attracted Bekko's interest when he wanted to see the playful meerkats who lived on its slopes. Now, however, he was staring at a low cloud that hung over the crater.

‘Suki! That cloud is all wrong!’

Suki couldn't see anything peculiar about the cloud. Surely it was just a cloud?

‘What do you mean, Bekko?’ she

asked, impatiently. 'There's lots of clouds around today!'

'Not like that!' He was shaking his head and looking very concerned. 'It's the wrong shape. It's the wrong height. It's the wrong colour! I think it's an ash cloud.'

Suki couldn't believe that Bekko was more interested in the clouds than in getting back to the castle.

'Seriously, Bekko! I don't care what kind of cloud it is! Can we go? You were the one upset about being late and now you're fussing about the shape of a cloud! Hurry up!'

Bekko really wanted to explain to Suki why the cloud was important, but he

could see that she wasn't listening. In fact, she had already set off again up the path towards the castle. He shrugged and ran after her. As they knocked on the castle gates, he looked back again. Maybe if he could explain to Sensei Rika she would understand. But the cloud had gone. As the big wooden gate creaked open, he tried to put the worry out of





his head. This wasn't too difficult with Kuma, the giant guard bear, glaring at them and shaking his shaggy head crossly.

‘What were you thinking? You know lateness is unacceptable at Senshi Castle. We expect better of you! Get to class straight away. You'd better hope that Sensei Rika is in a forgiving mood!’

‘Yes, Kuma! Sorry, Kuma! Thank you, Kuma!’ They scurried past him apologetically and raced to class as if their tails were on fire.



Sensei Rika raised an eyebrow in their direction as they slipped through the door of the training hall. They knelt

down and waited. Silently. Respectfully. Patiently.

‘Perhaps you would like to join us?’  
When Sensei finally invited them into the line, they performed their two ceremonial bows quickly and carefully and took their places. They had missed most of the warm up and the class was already on basic punching. Bekko launched into his front punches with total focus. Each student took it in turn to count aloud for ten punches while Sensei walked up and down the lines checking technique and effort. When it was Bekko’s turn to count, he shouted as loudly as he could. He tried so hard that his voice cracked on number nine; he blushed deeply and

stuttered on ten. Could this day get any worse? He could hear a stifled giggle behind him and a whisper:

‘N-n-nice counting, B-B-Bekko!’

He didn’t know who it was, and didn’t dare look. He was sadly used to the older monkeys teasing him. It could have been any of them. Nita, who enjoyed it when others were in trouble. Yash, who had a nasty habit of mimicking Bekko to make the others laugh. Or Kang. Kang loved to try to wind Bekko up until he lost control and exploded with his voice or his fists.

Suki saw Bekko grit his teeth and look down at the floor. She had not heard what had happened but she knew the signs.

‘Ignore them!’ she growled, under cover of the counting. Sensei was at the back of the class. The last thing they both needed was more trouble today, but she hated seeing Bekko upset.

The class moved on to blocking work. The rows of students turned to face each other; Suki found herself opposite Kang as Sensei Rika called out combinations.

‘Face punch, rising block!’

‘Body punch, outer block!’

Kang’s punches were rapid and strong; it took all Suki’s concentration to apply the correct blocks to stop herself being hit. Around her the noises of breathing intensified as the class picked up an energetic, absorbing rhythm. The

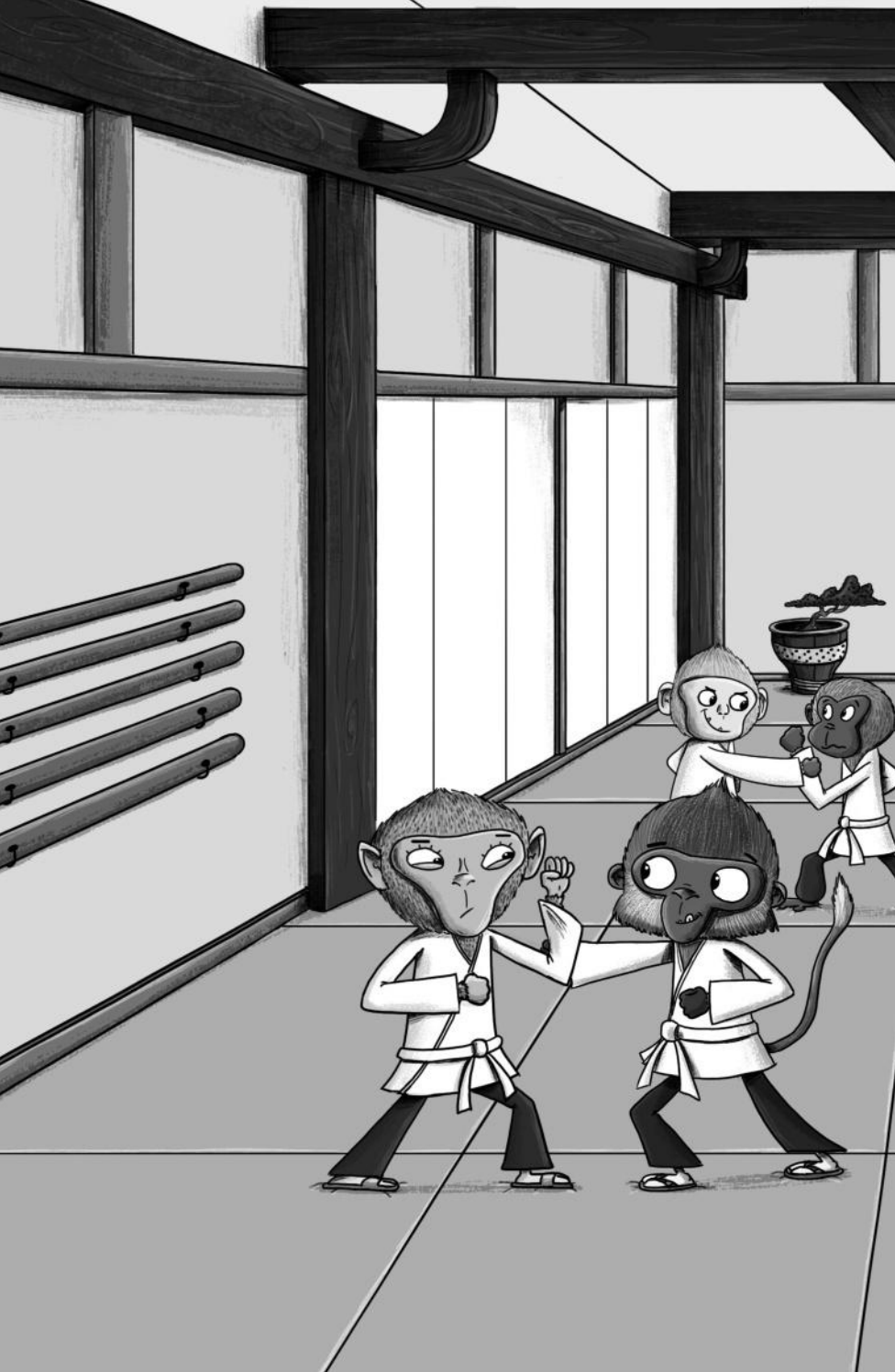
exercises allowed her to put aside her worries about Bekko and the punishment they might receive until finally the drills came to an end. They sat to stretch and listen while Sensei spoke. She used the end of each session to teach her pupils the ideas and rules of their training. It was not enough to fight well. They needed to develop the heart and mind of a warrior to show they could truly earn the right to be called Warrior Monkeys.

Bekko squirmed on his mat, already knowing what today's lesson would be.

‘What is the first rule of the warrior?’ asked Sensei Rika.

‘Courtesy!’ they all chanted back.

‘And courtesy means?’







‘Always treat others as you would like to be treated!’

‘So, this includes always being on time. Does it not, Suki?’

‘Yes, Sensei.’ Suki nodded then looked down at her toes. She was surprised to see quite how battered they were from falling onto the rocks earlier.

‘Bekko. What is the rule about punctuality?’ Sensei glared at him. He coughed, and drew his shoulders back. Then he spoke clearly and firmly.

‘That to be early is to be on time. To be on time is to be late. To be late . . . is unforgiveable, Sensei.’

‘Indeed.’