The Little Red Cart

Mary Jane Henry
The Little Red Cart was an entry in the National Competition for Writers of Children’s Books organised by CBT and UNICEF in 1985. The theme was intended to portray boys and girls as equals.

The author, who is a professor of history, writes plays for children.

Illustrated by
Ruma Sharma

© by CBT 1987

ISBN 81-7011-377-6
Ruma and Rumi, two little monkeys lived with their parents on a big, green tree. There were so many things for them to do that they were never bored.
Autumn came and all the leaves fell one by one. The bare branches no longer amused the little monkeys. They could not play any of their usual games. So they sat, bored and unhappy.
One day, their mother came out and said to them, “You have all these old wooden boards, why don’t you play with them?” But the monkeys were not interested. Suddenly Ruma said, “Look, I have
a plan. We will put all these boards together and make a cart.”

“That is a good idea,” said his sister, Rumi.
In no time they were at the job, scampering up and down the tree with nails, hammer and chisels.
By sundown they were very tired. The next day and the next, the work went on. At the end of the week there it was, a beautiful little
cart. “Mama must not see it till it is completely ready,” said Rumi hiding it amongst the bushes.
“Now, for some red paint,” said Ruma. Rumi ran up to their mother and asked her for some.
“What do you want it for?” she asked.
“Please, Mama, give it to us first and later we will tell you why we want it,” she replied.
Puzzled, their mother handed her a small tin. Rumi dashed off to the bushes where Ruma was waiting for her. Together they painted the cart red.
The next day, Mama monkey said, "I am so tired but there is so much shopping to do. There is nothing for breakfast, nothing for lunch and nothing for dinner." Ruma and Rumi looked at
each other and winked. With the least hint of excitement they said, “Come down, Mama, we will help you with the shopping.”
Mama monkey locked up her house and came down. And then she saw it, the brightly painted red cart, gleaming in the sun! She stared at it disbelievingly. “How ever did you make this!” she exclaimed. “Oh! really, it is very, very beautiful!”
The children were so glad their mother had liked it. “Come on, Mama,” they shouted, clapping their hands in joy. “Now sit in it.”
Mama monkey climbed into the cart. Ruma gave it a push from the back. The cart began to move, gently at first, gathering speed as it rolled on.
In no time they were at the market. Mama monkey bought all she wanted to buy. The little monkeys stacked everything in their new cart. Then they all trooped home happily. Mama monkey said cheerfully, “Thank you, children, now I can do my shopping every day.”