

Book review

The Monkey's Cave
The Seven Stones of Wisdom
Jenny Moix
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When I was just seven years old, I began to read Aesop's fables. Every night, together with my grandfather, with curiosity and attention, I would pore over three or four pages of an enigmatic book with a thick cover and an ancient aroma that contained beautiful illustrations of animals. They were short, metaphorical stories, like the one about the grasshopper and the ant, whose morals helped sculpt and shape my character. These are stories that touched my heart. With my first reading of *La Cueva del Mono* and its beautiful allegory of the mind, I connected with the feelings of that boy who read the fables with his grandfather. I connected with the exquisite, anticipated emotion that is felt in the moments before opening a gift for which one has been waiting a long time. Without meaning to, I relived the beautiful pleasure of visualizing, in simple and direct words, truths that are extremely complex to describe. With bold and elegant simplicity, and with indisputable intelligence, the author describes the unhealthy relationship that most of us mortals have with our reactive mind and with our difficult emotions. It is a short and concise book that invites us to leave the mind to enter life, and one that— sensitively and without intellectualism—reveals to us the meaning of acceptance, detachment from the mind, and self-compassion.

Significantly, in the first lines of the book, we find a reference to one of the most beautiful allegories in the history of Western philosophy: the myth of Plato's cave. Jenny Moix defies platonic idealism and rightly advocates for trusting the senses and experience again. To do this, she encourages us to stop hiding, fighting, or fleeing from what causes us pain. She invites us to enter the monkey's cave to see those shadows first-hand. She teaches us to cultivate curiosity and to observe the mind, and to learn not to let ourselves be bewitched by it.

Through its pages, the author leads us through a carefully woven plot that tells the story of Rahul, a young man whose life plan has been cut short by misfortune. Immersed in despair, Rahul meets a mysterious old woman who asks him

to enter the monkey's cave. Upon entering, Rahul is immersed in an exciting adventure in which he must overcome a series of challenges that reveal, in the style of old fables, overwhelming truths that end up transforming his relationship with his own mind and difficult emotions.

Over the years, in my clinical practice, I have seen the valuable benefits of contact with the present moment, acceptance, and connection with values. However, I have also noticed that many of my clients, at least initially, show some reluctance or resistance when they hear words like *mindfulness or meditation*. Some of them claim that they do not like to meditate. Others, prompted by social networks or environmental pressure, have tiptoed into mindfulness and have done the occasional long and tedious meditation on their own with the intention of calming their emotional pain. Most of the time, it doesn't work. These people do not find ultimate meaning in the practice of mindfulness, and so they abandon it. Their monkey catches them and judges meditation as useless and without a direct connection to their real problems. Therapists, far from rationalizing or trying to convince our clients about the benefits of mindfulness, have the difficult task of making them practice and discover through their own experience the incalculable benefits that come from being in contact with the present and accepting the experience. In my opinion, *La Cueva del Mono* manages to overcome this common difficulty that we psychotherapists encounter. It is a great introductory note that will surely motivate my clients to enter the present with intent, curiosity, and openness. I know this because, as in Aesop's fables, the author hits the right notes. She touches the heart.