



Chapter 3

Rainforest Antics

“You’re a monkey!” screamed Diego with delight. He reached out a long black furry arm to examine it, then patted his shaggy potbelly. “Am I a monkey too?”

“Yes, we’re both monkeys! Now we are going to be the best ninja warriors ever!” exclaimed Rico exuberantly. “I dare you to climb to the very top of the tree!” he challenged Diego.

Diego looked at Rico sternly. “I thought Papi said not to do that anymore,” he reminded him.

“We can’t get hurt here. It’s not even real!” said Rico. “Do it!” He gestured to the top of the largest tree they could see near them.





¡Hola! squawked a red macaw as it flew up to them and settled on the branch. “Looking good, my little spider monkeys!” It was Don Toño, in the form of a brilliantly-colored red parrot with bright blue, green, and yellow wings. “He’s right, you know. You won’t get hurt, but it might give you a bit of a scare if you fall, and then I’d have to restart the program. I wouldn’t recommend throwing yourself to the ground to see what happens, but feel free to move around without fear.”

The wise old bird looked past the curved point of his beak and rotated his head to see each of the boys out of the side of his head. “I figured you boys might want to experience life as spider monkeys. After watching your acrobatics in the yard, I could tell you like to climb. Now, go and explore the Mexican rainforest.”

Diego batted away a large, colorful bug that buzzed past him. *Gracias, Don Toño,* he said, and Rico echoed his thanks. Don Toño the macaw made a sound like a fire siren and flapped into the air, whistling shrilly. “He’s going to scare the other



parrots," laughed Diego as they watched their friend fly away.

The two spider monkeys excitedly grabbed hold of the tree branch with their hook-like four-fingered hands, attempting to swing from one tree to the next. "This is kind of tricky," commented Rico as both boys practiced moving from branch to branch, using their arms as if they were playing on playground monkey bars.

Suddenly a black spider monkey about their size dropped down next to them, hanging from the branch above by his long tail and looking almost like a spider hanging from a thread. "That's because you're doing it wrong!" He landed lightly on the branch next to them. "I'm Yoyo!" he said with a mischievous smile on his friendly face. His beady black eyes peered at Diego and Rico. "You look like spider monkeys. But you don't move like spider monkeys. Did you forget how?"

The two glanced at each other. "Kind of," they admitted together. "Can you show us?" asked Diego.

