

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
KIDS™

CHAPTERS

APE ESCAPES!

And More True Stories of
Animals Behaving Badly

By **Aline Alexander Newman**

 NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC

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Chapter 1

A SCAMP IS BORN

July, 1965. Omaha, Nebraska.
A young orangutan peers
through his cage at the
Henry Doorly Zoo. No humans
are in sight. The coast is clear.

He winds his long fingers
through the chain link. He bends
back one corner of the mesh. He
pulls. *ZZIIIP!* The stiff metal
fencing unravels like a hand knit
scarf.

Hours later, veterinarian Lee Simmons arrives at work. He rounds a bend in the path and *yikes!* Dr. Simmons stops in his tracks. A shaggy, red-haired ape sits perched in a tree. *How did he get loose?*

The ape is six years old, tailless, and weighs 100 pounds. He has a mustache and beard like a famous movie character. For that reason he is called Fu Manchu. Fu's arms are super strong and longer than most fourth-graders are tall. In a wrestling match against a man, the orangutan would surely win.

The ape doesn't move or make a sound. Dr. Simmons stares at him and sees a twinkle in his eyes. The vet can't help but marvel that Fu is giving off

some surprising vibes. *It's like he's been sitting there just waiting for me.*

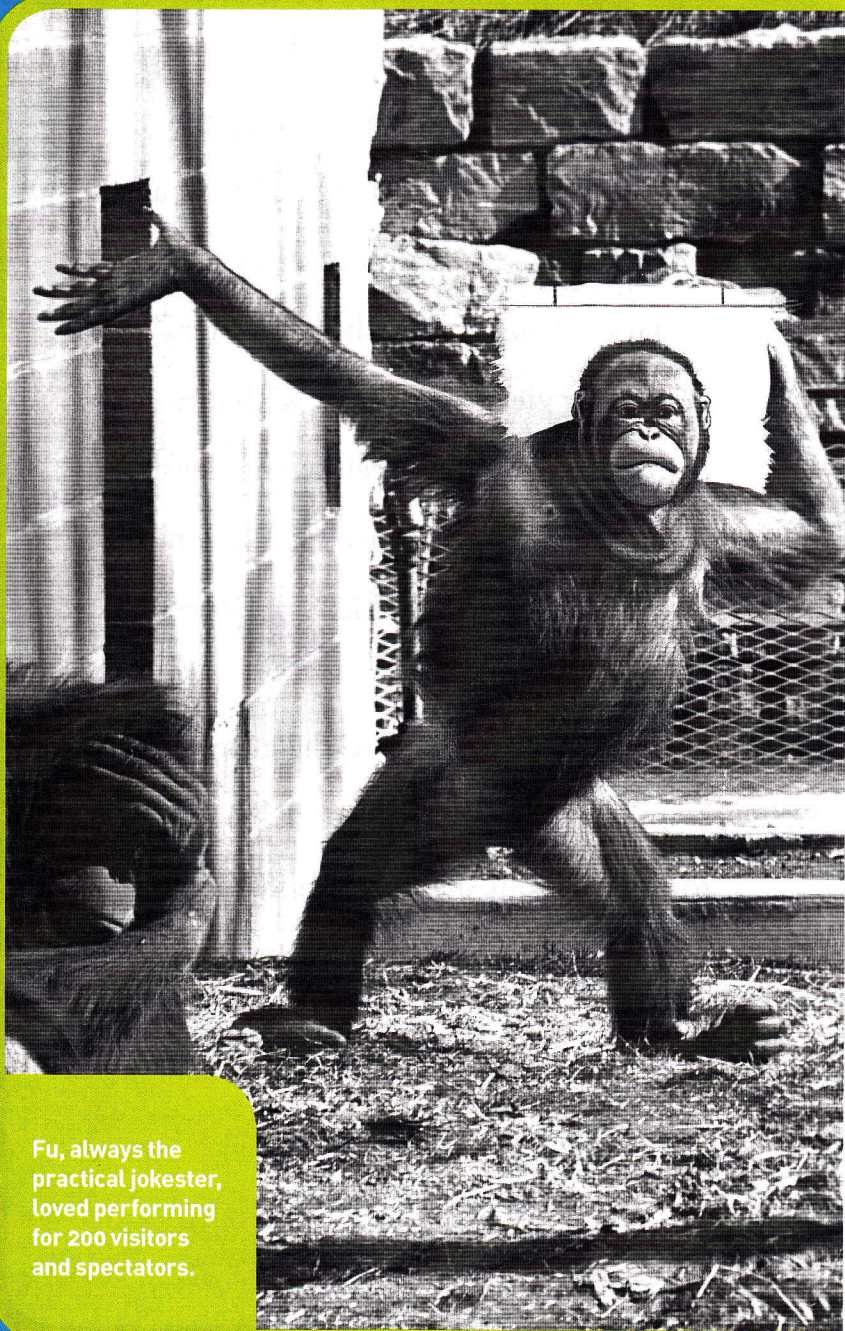
Fu climbs down. The sun sparkles on his red hair as he ambles back to his cage. Dr. Simmons follows shaking his head. *What a crazy ape!* He locks Fu inside. He calls someone to fix the fence and then goes about his normal business. And Fu goes about his—dreaming up hijinks to come.

Fu was born in a rain forest on the Indonesian island of Sumatra. He never knew his father. But his mother doted on her helpless baby. She nursed him. She held him and snuggled him. And every night she built them a nest high in the treetops.

These sleeping nests were made of leafy branches bent and twisted together. They were as big as a bathtub. Usually Fu and his mom stayed dry in their cozy bed in the sky. But sometimes thunder boomed. Rain fell in torrents. Then the orangutans shivered and turned giant leaves into makeshift umbrellas.

During the day, Fu often rode on his mother's back. He clutched her hair as they swung through the trees looking for durian fruits. Durian fruits stink like sweaty gym socks. But Fu *went ape* for the smelly stuff.

The problem is that durian fruits do not all ripen at once. The fruit trees are also scattered and hard to find. Fu's



Fu, always the practical joker, loved performing for 200 visitors and spectators.