



Kobe



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A ripple of “oohs,” sound out amongst the caregivers at Pondok Dua as they let Kobe out of her sleeping enclosure. Kobe is a very wilful orangutan and recently she has been known to stay out in the forest overnight, especially if it is raining. Luckily, for the caregivers, today is a bright day full of sunshine, perfect for Kobe to play out in the forest. As her fellow orangutans easily cling to their caregiver’s backs, Kobe strides purposefully out of her enclosure before finally being convinced to climb onto her caregiver’s back. As Kobe wraps her arms around her caregiver’s neck you can smell the familiar fragrant orangutan musk surrounding you and Kobe.

Once off her caregiver’s back, Kobe bypasses the playground and goes straight into the Learning Forest. She climbs up a lone tree at the side of the forest. Other orangutans like Judy are already up there. Kobe uses Judy as a stepping stone to go even higher. It’s as if Kobe views it as a competition to see who can climb the highest and she is determined to win. She even has her own way of “celebrating” as she urinates from the top of the tree. It’s not just falling leaves and fruit you must look out for when Kobe is around.

Kobe can be described as a bit of a tomboy. She swings with force around the tree tops and conducts controlled falls into the vines. She is not quite as big as some of her peers, but she is no less energetic. As her caregivers watch from the ground, they observe Kobe’s silhouette in the light of the sun as she plays with branches and leaves. One tree can provide hours of fun but Kobe refuses to confine herself to just one tree.

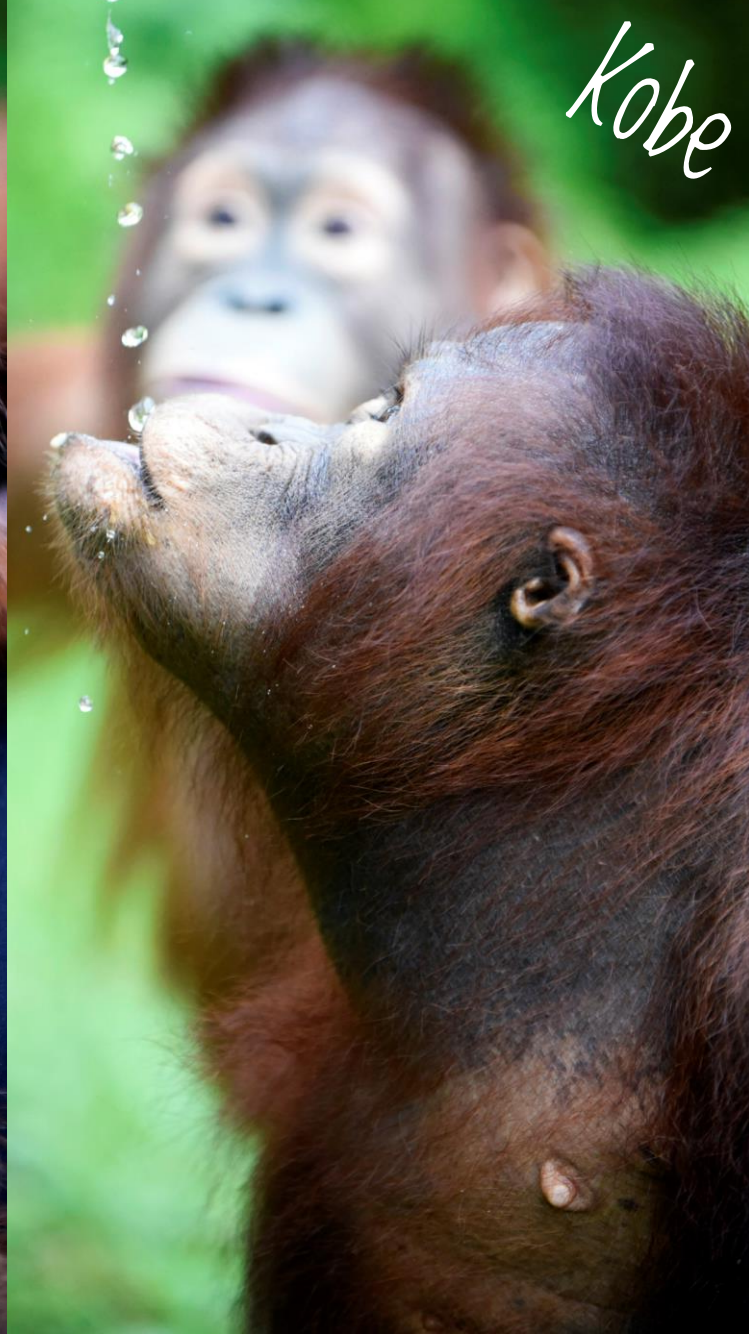
Kobe swings back and forth to propel herself onto the next tree. It may take several attempts, but she makes it. She may also utilise what is around her to get across. Again, she may use Judy like a bridge to get over to the other trees, but Judy doesn’t seem to mind. She’s used to this. Kobe’s caregivers watch. No doubt, the thought may cross their minds: Is Kobe ever going to come down? Kobe remains vivacious and full of life. Kobe is the last orangutan orphan to come down from the canopy and make her way to the sleeping enclosure. Her caregivers will attest that she keeps them on their toes, but it is worth it to see Kobe out and about, enjoying herself and tasting some of the freedom that will eventually be hers when she returns to the wild.

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