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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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Dr. Dolittle Escapes from the Pirates (13/21)

On their way home, Doctor Dolittle's ship had to pass the coast of Barbary. This coast was the coast of the Great Desert. It is a wild and lonely place with lots of sand and stones. The Barbary pirates lived in this place. These pirates chased sailors with their fast sailing ships with the aim of causing them to shipwreck. When they seized a boat, they captured the people, took everything that was on the ship, and then let the ship sink. On their way back to Barbary, they sang songs and were proud of the harm they had caused. They made the captured people write letters to their friends asking for money. If they did not send the money, they threw the prisoners into the sea.

On a sunny day, Doctor Dolittle and Dab-Dab were walking on the deck. A nice fresh wind blew the boat forward, and everyone was happy. Soon, Dab-Dab saw the sail of another ship far behind them at the edge of the sea. It was a red sail.

"I don't like that sail," said Dab-Dab. "I have a feeling it's not a friendly ship. I'm afraid we'll be in trouble." Jip, who was napping in the sun nearby, began to growl and talk in his sleep. "I smell roast beef," he muttered, "but the roast beef isn't done yet, it needs brown gravy."

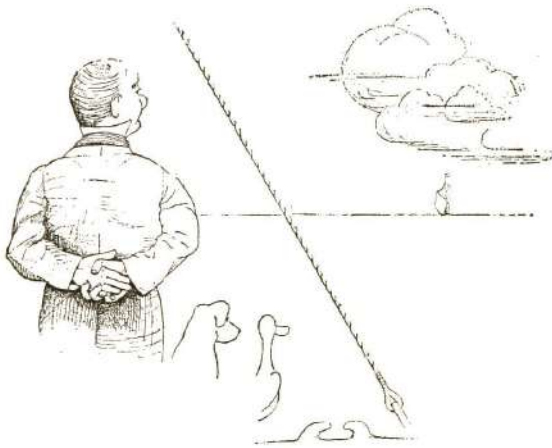
"My goodness!" exclaimed the doctor. "What's wrong with that dog? Does he smell in his sleep and talk too?"

"I suppose so," said Dab-Dab. "All dogs can smell in their sleep."

"But what does he smell?" asked the doctor. "There's no roast beef being cooked on our ship."

"No," said Dab-Dab. "The roast beef must be on that other ship over there."

"But that's ten miles away," said the doctor. "He couldn't possibly smell that far!"



"Oh, yes, he could," said Dab-Dab. "Just ask him."

Then Jip, still deeply asleep, began to growl again, and his lip curled angrily, showing his white teeth. "I smell bad

men," he growled. "The worst men I've ever smelled. I smell trouble. I smell a fight--six bad ruffians fighting one brave man, I want to help him. WOOF WOOF." Then he barked loudly and woke up with a surprised look on his face.

"Look, the boat is getting closer," cried Dab-Dab.

"They're bad sailors," said Jip, "and their ship is very fast. They must be the pirates of Barbary."

"Well, we need to put up more sails on our boat," said the doctor, "so we can go faster and sail away from them. Run downstairs, Jip, and bring up all the sails you can find."

The dog hurried downstairs and dragged up all the sails he could find. But even when they had set all the sails, the boat did not go nearly as fast as the pirates, who were getting closer and closer. "This is a miserable ship the prince gave us," said Gub-Gub the pig, "this old tub is the slowest ship he could find, I think. Look how close they are now! You can see the men's mustaches, there are six of them. What should we do now?"

Then the doctor asked Dab-Dab to fly up and tell the swallows that pirates were chasing them in a fast ship, and ask them what they should do. When the swallows heard this, they all flew down and landed on the doctor's ship. They told him to unravel a few long pieces of rope and make as many thin strings as he could, as quickly as possible. Then the ends of these strings were tied to the front of the ship. The swallows grabbed the strings with their feet and flew away, pulling the boat along.

A few swallows together aren't strong, but it's a different story when there are a lot of them. And there, tied to the doctor's ship, were thousands of strings, with two thousand swallows pulling on each one, all incredibly fast fliers. Suddenly, the doctor noticed that the ship was moving so fast that he had to hold onto his hat with both hands. It was as if the ship was flying through the sea.

And all the animals on the ship began to laugh and dance, because when they looked back at the pirate ship, they could see that it was getting smaller and smaller instead of bigger and bigger. They left the red sails behind!