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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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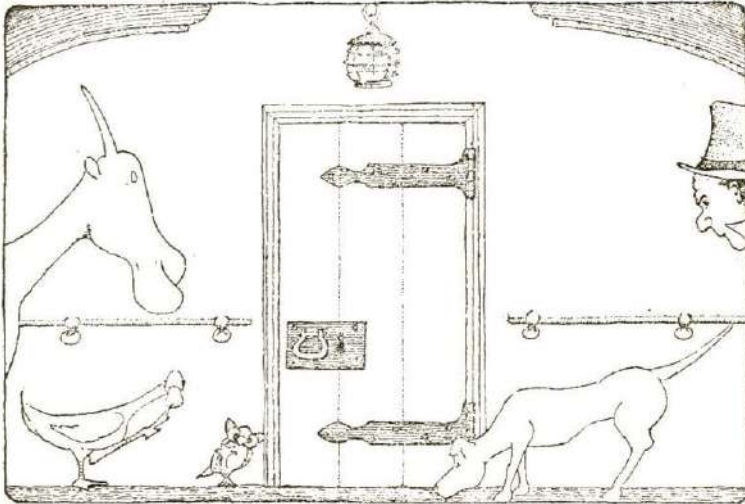
Dr. Dolittle and Too-Too the Owl hear something (16/21)

After thanking the sharks again for their kindness, the doctor and his pets continued their journey back home on the fast ship with the three red sails. When they were out at sea, all the animals went down below to see what their new boat looked like inside. The doctor stood on the back of the ship's railing with a pipe in his mouth and watched the Canary Islands fade into the blue twilight of the evening. He was just wondering how the monkeys were doing and what his garden would look like when he returned to Puddleby when Dab-Dab came waddling up the stairs.

"Doctor!" she called. "This pirate ship is amazing. There are silk beds with hundreds of pillows, soft carpets on the floor, and the dishes are made of silver. The food and drink are delicious. You've never seen anything like it! Come and take a look! We also saw a door with a padlock. We really want to know what's inside. Jip says the pirates keep their treasure in there. Come with us, maybe you can open the door."

The doctor went with them and saw that the ship was beautiful. All the animals were standing at the door, talking all at once. The doctor turned the handle, but the door wouldn't open. Then everyone looked for the key. They searched everywhere: under the mat, under

the carpet, in all the cabinets and storage chests. They discovered more beautiful things that the pirates must have stolen from other ships. Embroidered scarves, tobacco jars, ivory, tea, and an old violin with a broken string. There was also coral, a walking stick with a sword in it, and wine glasses. But they couldn't find the key to the padlock.



So they all came back to the door, and Jip peered through the keyhole. But there was something blocking the door on the inside, and he couldn't see

anything. Nobody knew what to do. Suddenly, the owl Too-Too said, "Shh! Listen! I really think there's someone in that room."

They all stayed quiet for a moment. Then the doctor said, "You must be mistaken, Too-Too. I don't hear anything."

"I'm sure of it," said the owl. "Shh! There it is again. Don't you hear it?"

"I don't hear anything. What kind of sound is it?" asked the doctor.

"I hear the sound of someone putting their hand in their pocket," said the owl.

"But that makes hardly any noise," said the doctor. "You wouldn't hear that from here."

"Excuse me, but I can hear it," said Too-Too. "I'm sure there's someone on the other side of the door putting their hand in their pocket. My ears are so sharp, they can pick up any sound. We owls can hear a kitten blink its eyes in the dark with just one ear."

"Well, well," said the doctor. "That surprises me. That's very interesting. Listen again and tell me what he's doing now."

"I'm not sure if it's a man or a woman. Pick me up and hold me to the keyhole, and I'll tell you," said the owl. So the doctor lifted the owl and held him close to the lock on the door. A moment later, Too-Too said, "Now he's rubbing his left hand over his face. It's a small hand and a small face. It could be a woman. But now he's pushing his hair back from his forehead, so it must be a man."

"Women do that sometimes, too," said the doctor.

"That's true," said the owl. "But when they do it, their long hair makes a very different sound... Shh! Make that restless pig be quiet. Everyone, hold your breath for a moment so I can listen well. This is very difficult, what I'm doing, that annoying door is so thick! Shh! Everyone be quiet, close your eyes, and don't breathe."

Too-Too leaned forward and listened again. Finally, he looked up and said, "The man inside is unhappy. He's crying. He's made sure not to sniff, otherwise we would hear that he's crying. But I heard, very clearly, the sound of a tear falling on his sleeve."

"How do you know it wasn't a drop of water that fell on him from the ceiling?" asked Gub-Gub.

"Pfff, don't be silly," snorted Too-Too. "A drop of water that falls from the ceiling would have made ten times as much noise!"

"Well," said the doctor, "if that poor man is unhappy, we should go inside to see what's the matter with him. Find me an ax, and I'll chop a hole in the door."