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Ririro

IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

Dr. Dolittle and the Prince (11/21)

At the edge of the river, they stopped and said goodbye. It took a while, because all the thousands of monkeys wanted to shake John Dolittle's hand. Then, as the doctor and his pets continued on their way, Polynesia said, "We must walk carefully and speak softly as we go through the land of the Jolliginki. If the king hears us, he will send his soldiers to capture us again. He is surely still very angry about the trick I played on him."

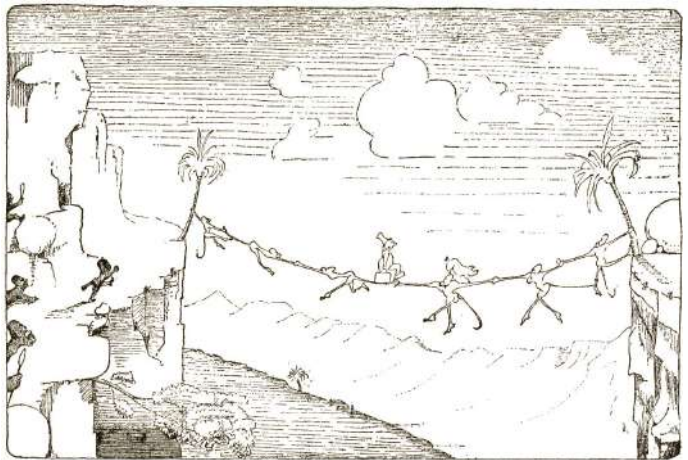
"What I wonder," said the doctor, "is where we can find another boat to go home with. But oh well, maybe we'll find one on the beach that no one is using."

One day, while they were walking through a dense forest, Chee-Chee went ahead to search for coconuts. But while he was away, the doctor and the rest of the animals got lost. They didn't know the jungle paths in the deep woods very well... They wandered around and around, but couldn't find the way to the coast. Chee-Chee was terribly upset when he couldn't see the others anymore. He climbed high trees and looked from the top branches to see if he could spot the doctor's tall hat. He waved and shouted, calling all the animals by name. But it was no use. They seemed to have completely disappeared.

And indeed they were completely lost. They had strayed quite far from the path and the jungle was so overgrown with bushes and vines that they could barely move at times. The doctor had to take out his pocketknife to make his way. They stumbled through wet, marshy spots and got tangled up in the plants. They tore their skin on thorns and twice they nearly lost the medicine bag in the undergrowth. There seemed to be no end to their problems and there was no path to be found.

Then, after wandering for many days, they accidentally walked into the backyard of the king's palace, their clothes torn and their faces covered in mud. The king's men immediately ran over and grabbed them.

But Polynesia flew quickly into a tree in the palace garden without anyone noticing and hid among the leaves. The doctor and the other animals were brought to the king.



"Ha, ha!" cried the king.

"So, you're caught again, doctor! This time you won't escape. Take them all back to the prison and put double locks on the door. This man can do chores for me for the rest of his life!"

So the doctor and his animals were locked up in prison again. And the doctor was told that he had to start

scrubbing the kitchen floor every morning. They were all very unhappy.

"This is a really annoying delay," said the doctor. "I really need to get back to Puddleby. That poor sailor will think I stole his ship if I don't come back soon. Maybe we're lucky and the prison door isn't locked?" But the thick door was firmly locked. There was no chance of getting out. Then Gub-Gub started crying again.

Meanwhile, Polynesia was still in the tree in the palace garden. She said nothing and blinked her eyes. This was always a very bad sign. Whenever the parrot didn't say anything and blinked her eyes, it meant there were problems and she had found a way to solve them. People who caused problems for Polynesia or her friends always regretted it later. Soon she saw Chee-Chee swinging through the trees, still looking for the doctor. When Chee-Chee saw her, he came into her tree and asked what had happened.

"The doctor and all the animals have been captured by the king's men and locked up again," whispered Polynesia. "We got lost in the jungle and accidentally walked into the palace garden."

"But couldn't you have shown them the way?" asked Chee-Chee, and he began to scold the parrot for getting them lost while he himself was looking for coconuts.

"It was all that stupid pig's fault," said Polynesia. "He kept running off the path, chasing after ginger roots. I was so busy catching him and bringing him back that when we reached the swamp, I went left instead of

right. Oh, but watch out, here comes Prince Bumpo into the garden! He mustn't see us. Don't move, stay where you are."

Prince Bumpo opened the garden gate. Under his arm he carried a fairy tale book. He sauntered along the gravel path, humming a sad song, until he came to a stone bench right under the tree where the parrot and the ape were hiding. Then he lay down on the bench and began reading fairy tales to himself.

Chee-Chee and Polynesia sat very still and watched him. After a while, the prince put down the book and sighed. "If only I were a golden Prince!" he said, with a dreamy, faraway look in his eyes. Then the parrot, speaking in a high-pitched voice like a little girl, said aloud, "Bumpo, maybe someone can turn you into a golden Prince."

The prince jumped up and looked around. "What do I hear?" he exclaimed. "I thought I heard the sweet sound of a silver fairy voice coming from the arbor! Strange!"

"Dear Prince," said Polynesia, keeping very still so she wouldn't be visible to Bumpo, "you speak words of honorable truth. For I, Tripsitinka, the Queen of the Fairies, sit in a rosebud and speak to you."

"Oh tell me, Fairy Queen," cried Bumpo, his hands clasped in joy, "who can turn me to gold?"

"In your father's prison," said the parrot, "there is a famous wizard named John Dolittle. He knows everything about medicine and magic, and he has performed many mighty and wonderful deeds. Yet your royal father has left him alone in the prison for hours.

Go to him secretly, brave Bumpo, when the sun has set. You will see that then you will become the most beautiful golden prince any woman has ever had. I have said enough. I must now return to Fairyland. Farewell!" "Farewell!" cried the prince. "A thousand thanks, good Tripsitinka!"

And he sat down again, with a big smile on his face, waiting for the sun to go down.