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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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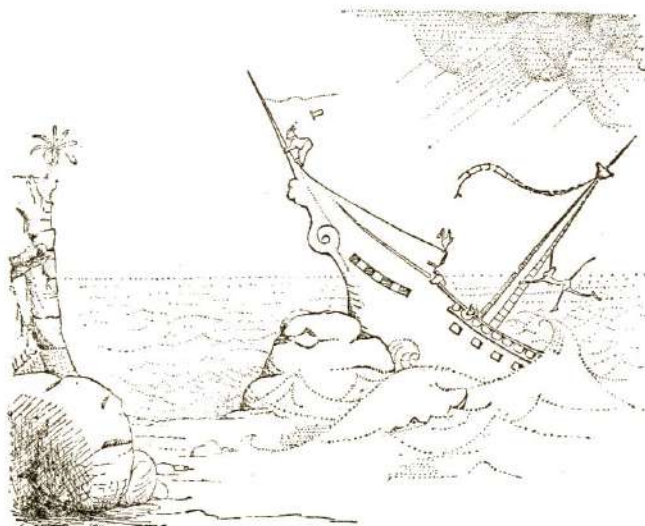
## Dr. Dolittle on a journey (5/21)

For six weeks they sailed on and on, over the rolling sea, following the Swallow, who flew ahead of the ship to guide them. At night, the Swallow carried a small lantern so they wouldn't lose her in the dark. The people on the other passing ships said that the light must be a falling star. As they sailed further and further south, it got warmer and warmer. Polynesia, Chee-Chee, and the Crocodile endlessly enjoyed the hot sun. They ran around laughing and looked over the side of the ship to see if they could already see Africa. But the Pig, the Dog, and the Owl, Too-Too, couldn't do anything in such weather. They sat at the end of the ship in the shade of a large barrel. Their tongues were hanging out of their mouths, and they drank a lot of lemonade.

Dab-Dab the duck kept herself cool by jumping into the sea and swimming behind the ship. And occasionally, when her head became too hot, she dove under the ship and came up on the other side. In this way, she also caught herring on Tuesdays and Fridays. Then everyone on the boat ate fish to make the meat last longer. When they got near the equator, they saw some flying fish heading towards them. And the fish asked the Parrot if this was the ship of Doctor Dolittle. When she told them that it was, they said they were happy because the monkeys in Africa were worried he would

never come. Polynesia asked them how many miles they still had to go. The flying fish said that it was only fifty-five miles to the coast of Africa.

Another time, a school of porpoises came dancing through the waves. They also asked Polynesia if this was the ship of the famous doctor. And when they heard that it was, they asked the Parrot if the doctor needed anything else for his journey.



And Polynesia said, "Yes. We are short on onions."

"There is an island not far from here," said the porpoises, "where big, strong wild onions grow. Just go straight ahead - we'll get some and catch up with you." So the porpoises rushed away through the sea. But soon the Parrot saw them again, they came after the boat and dragged the onions through the waves in large nets of seaweed. The next evening, when the sun was setting, the doctor said: "Pass me the telescope, Chee-Chee. Our journey is almost over. Very soon we will be able to see the coast of Africa."

And about half an hour later, they did indeed think they saw something ahead that could be land. But it started getting darker and darker, and they weren't sure. Then a great storm arose, with thunder and lightning. The wind howled, the rain poured down in

torrents, and the waves became so high that they splashed straight over the boat. At that moment, there was a loud bang, and the ship stopped and rolled over on its side.

"What happened?" asked the doctor, coming from below.

"I'm not sure," said the Parrot, "but I think we've shipwrecked. Tell the Duck to go out and look." So Dab-Dab dived straight down into the waves. And when she came up, she said they had hit a rock. There was a large hole in the bottom of the ship. Water was pouring in, and they were sinking fast.

"We have met Africa, that's for sure," said the doctor. "But dear me, dear me! Well, we'll all have to swim to shore."

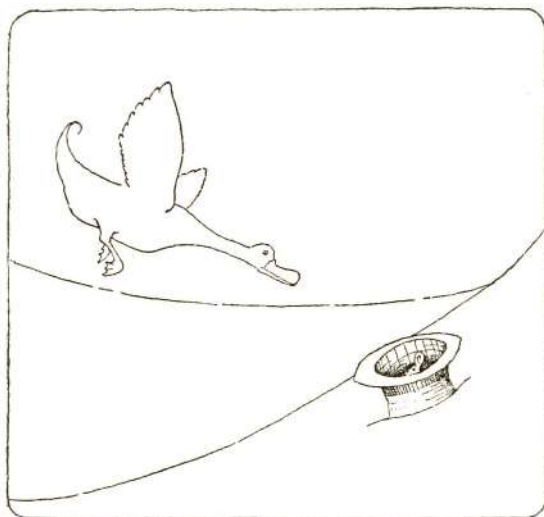
But Chee-Chee and Gub-Gub didn't know how to swim.

"Grab the rope!" said Polynesia. "I told you it would come in handy. Where's that Duck? Come here, Dab-Dab. Take this end of the rope, fly to the shore and tie it to a palm tree. We'll hold the other end of the rope on the ship here. Then those who can't swim can climb along the rope until they reach land. That's called a 'lifeline'." So they all arrived safely on the shore, some by swimming, others by flying. Those who climbed along the rope brought the doctor's trunk and bag with them. But the ship was beyond repair. There was a large hole in the bottom, and soon the rough sea dashed it to pieces on the rocks, and the wood drifted away.

The doctor and the animals sought shelter in a nice dry cave they found high up in the cliffs until the storm

passed. When the sun came through the next morning, they went to the sandy beach to dry themselves off. "Dear old Africa!" sighed Polynesia. "It's so good to be back. Imagine, it will be one hundred and sixty-nine years tomorrow since I was last here! And it hasn't changed! The same old palm trees, the same old red earth, and the same old black ants! There's no place like home!" And the others noticed tears in her eyes. She was so happy to see her homeland again.

Then the doctor missed his high hat, which had been blown into the sea during the storm. So Dab-Dab went to look for it. Soon she saw the hat, floating very far away like a toy boat on the water. When she flew down to get the hat, she found one of the white mice in it. The mouse was very afraid.



"What are you doing here?" asked the Duck. "Didn't you hear that you had to stay in Puddleby?"

"I didn't want to be left behind," said the mouse. "I wanted so much to see what Africa was like - I have relatives here. So I hid in the

luggage and was brought on board the ship. When the ship sank, I was terribly frightened because I can't swim far. I swam as long as I could, but I soon became exhausted and thought I would drown. And then, just at that moment, the doctor's hat floated by, and I got into it because I didn't want to drown."

So the Duck took the hat with the mouse inside and brought it to the doctor on the shore. All the animals gathered around to have a look.

"This is called a 'stowaway'," said the Parrot.

Just as they were looking for a place in the trunk so the white mouse could travel comfortably, the monkey Chee-Chee suddenly said:

"Sssh, be quiet! I hear footsteps in the jungle!"

They all stopped talking and listened. And soon a man came out of the forest and asked what they were doing.

"My name is John Dolittle - M.D.," said the doctor. "I was asked to come to Africa to cure the sick monkeys."

"You're all expected to come to the king," said the man.

"Which king?" asked the doctor, who didn't want to waste any time.

"The king of the Jolliginki," replied the man. "All this land is his, and all foreigners must be brought to him first. Follow me." So they gathered their luggage and followed the man through the jungle.