

But now people were afraid to send their pets to see the Doctor because of the crocodile. So the Doctor told him he must go back to his circus. But the crocodile wept such big tears<sup>1</sup>, and begged so hard to be allowed to stay, that the Doctor hadn't the heart to turn him out.

So then the Doctor's sister came to him and said, 'John, you must send that creature away or we shall be ruined entirely. Either you do, or I will leave!'

'All right,' said the Doctor, 'go if you must. It can't be helped.' And he took down his hat and went out into the garden. So Sarah Dolittle packed up her things and went off, and the Doctor was left all alone with his animal family.

And very soon he was poorer than he had ever been before. With all these mouths to fill, and the house to look after, and no one to do the mending, and no money coming in to pay the bills, things began to look very difficult. But the Doctor didn't worry at all.

'Money is a nuisance<sup>2</sup>,' he used to say. 'We'd all be much better off if it had never been invented. What does money matter, so long as we are happy?'

But soon the animals themselves began to get worried, and they talked it over among themselves. And they decided to help the Doctor by doing the housework themselves, and the cooking and mending,

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<sup>1</sup> *crocodile ... tears*—'crocodile tears' usually mean fake tears.

<sup>2</sup> *a nuisance*—an annoying or troublesome thing. Sounds like 'new-sense'.

and the accounts<sup>1</sup> and the gardening. At first they all found their new jobs very hard to do. But they soon got used to it, and they had great fun watching Jip, the dog, sweeping his tail over the floor with a rag tied onto it for a broom. After a little they got to do the work so well that the Doctor said he had never had his house kept so tidy or so clean before.

But still they found things very hard, for they had no money, and they were all really hungry.

### Chapter 3

#### *A Message from Africa*

One cold night in wintertime, when they were all sitting around the warm fire in the kitchen, Too-Too the owl suddenly said, 'Sh! What's that noise outside?'

They all listened, and presently they heard the sound of someone running. Then the door flew open and the monkey, Chee-Chee, ran in, badly out of breath.

'Doctor!' he cried, 'I've just had a message from a cousin of mine in Africa. There is a terrible sickness among the monkeys out there. They are all catching it—and they are dying in hundreds. They have heard of you, and beg you to come to Africa to stop the sickness.'

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<sup>1</sup> *accounts*—records of how the money is being used.