

The Bruins - 3 A Visit to Africa

ALL was hustle and bustle at the quay from which ships sailed for India, England, Africa and other countries, and there was Mother Bruin with two parrots she was taking with her.



" Oh Mother, " laughed Belinda. " You ARE funny Why, taking parrots to Africa is like taking sweets into a sweatshop. They've got thousands there. Leave them here and please hurry or we'll miss the steamer. "

They didn't miss the ship of course, but the birds were left in their native land and at last the siren sounded and the ship sailed away bound for the land of monkeys,

parrots, lions and coconuts.

" Hurrah ! " cheered the children.

" We DO like travelling. " And Mother and Father Bruin beamed upon the two happy youngsters as the land of China faded from sight.

Africa was indeed an exciting place, and Bertie and Belinda lost no time in exploring. They wandered farther and farther into the interior, and were beginning to feel, a trifle worried about getting back, when Belinda held up her hand for silence.

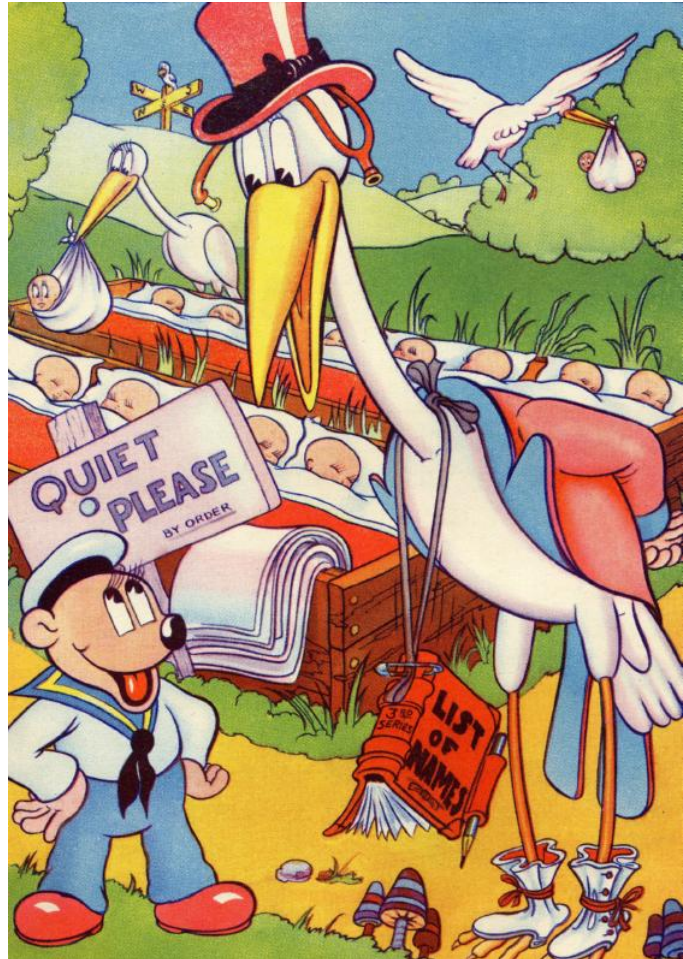
" Listen ! " she whispered. " I can hear a baby crying. " I can hear more than one ! " answered her brother. Come on ! I'll lead the way. " And he led Belinda straight to the place where the Babies Come From.

There in the heart of Africa was old Mr. Stork and his assistants looking after all the babies waiting to be taken to happy homes all over the world.

" Well, I never did, " cried Belinda.

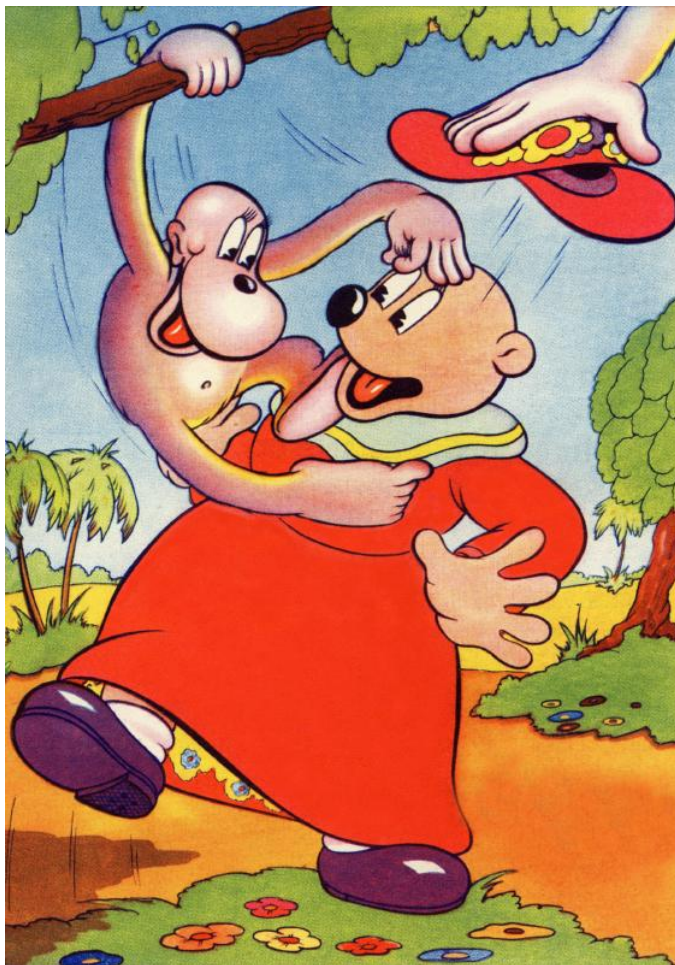
" Nor did I ! " answered Bertie.

The children watched the storks and the babies for some time, but at last Belinda said they ought to be going. " I feel that Mother is in trouble, " she murmured anxiously. " I often get such funny feelings. "



This time, as it happened, her feelings were not so funny, because Mother Bruin WAS in trouble, heaps and heaps of trouble.

You see the naughty little monkeys had taken a fancy to her, and while one swung from a tree to embrace her, another seized her lovely flowered hat and scampered away with it.



" Stop that ! " cried Bertie angrily.

" Go away, you mischievous things. "

" Chatter- chatter- chatter- chatter- chatter ! " cried the monkeys, but they DID go away, and the children soothed their mother and laughed at the same time.

Really it HAD been very funny to see those monkeys at play.

That wasn't the end of the Bruins trouble however, because the monkeys hurried away to tell the Congo Customs Officials that there were a lot of strangers about who hadn't paid duty on the things they had brought into Africa.

Duty ? cried Father Bruin. " But nobody asked me, to pay anything. "

Hold him ! " cried a customs man, and poor Mr. Bruin was seized, held searched and then fined. The same thing happened to Bertie and you can be sure the whole family were mighty glad to get away from that particular part of Africa.

" I'm off to do some fishing ! " announced Belinda's brother. " I'll see you all later. Bye-bye ! "

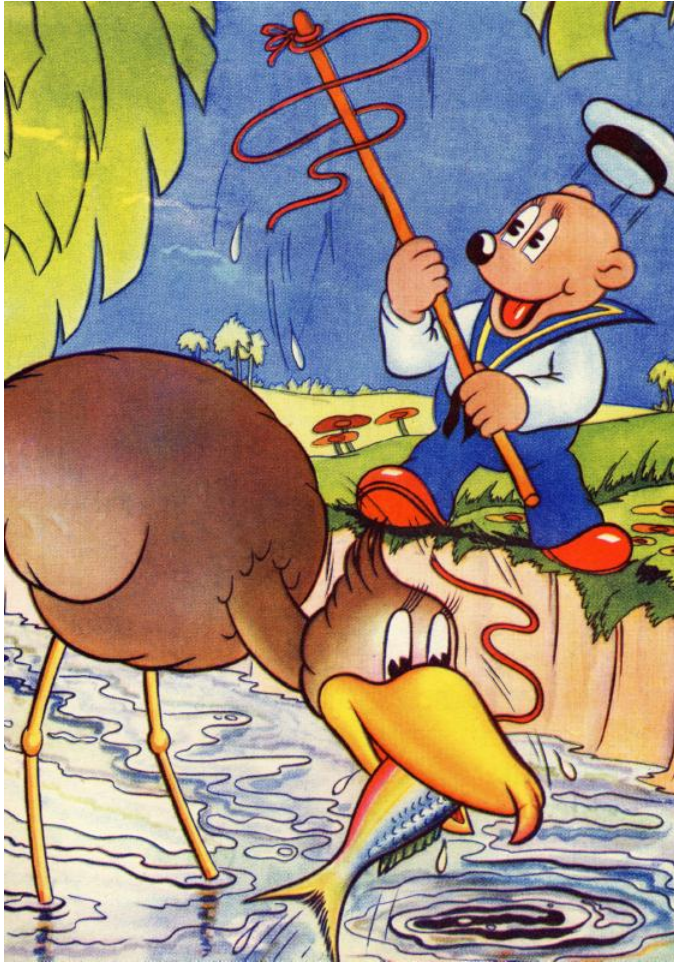


Bertie whistled happily as he baited his line on the bank of the river he had chosen for fishing, and in a very little while he felt a tug and knew he had caught the first fish.

Up he comes ! " cried Bertie Bruin gaily.

" Down he goes ! " cried a large heron, as he swooped down to the surface of the water, grabbed the fish and swallowed it whole.

" Hi ! " shouted Bertie the fisherman. " That was MY fish. You're a thief. "



" I'm nothing of the sort " came the reply, " this stream belongs to us herons and I hereby arrest you for trespassing. Cummer-longame ! " And he seized poor Bertie with his beak and dragged him off to interview the Mayor.

"Oh dear ! wailed the fisherman. "What WILL happen now. Mayor Leo is a terror, they tell me ! Oh dear ! Woe is me ! "

All the ` way to the town of Bongo Wongo Bertie tried to escape from the heron, but without any success at all. At last the town was reached and the prisoner heard the voice of Mayor Leo growling louder and louder.

" Help ! " he screamed. " Help ! "

" What's all this ? " The Mayor turned towards Bertie and then looked inquiringly at Mrs. Bruin, with whom he had been dancing and singing. " Excuse me, madam, but is this your son ?

Mother Bruin turned pale and nodded. " Yes, indeed, " she answered, " but please forgive him for anything he might have

done. He is a good boy and I love him very much. "

For a moment Mayor Leo looked as stern as a coming storm, but finally he smiled, told the heron to release his prisoner and promptly forgave and for got the whole business. " Come along " he cried. " We'll have a banquet before yu sail for India. This way, please; everybody, this way ! "

Thus the visit to Africa ended merrily and happily, just as all visits to foreign countries should end.

