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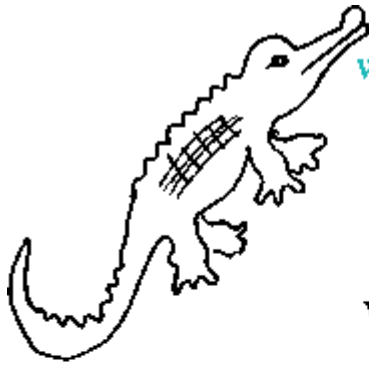
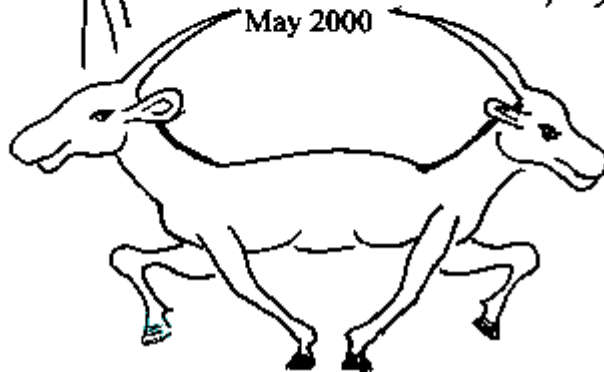
with Federico Vacca

**DOCTOR DOLITTLE
AND
DOCTOR TALKALOT**

Stories for children from 3 to 10



May 2000



Chapter 1

The Trouble with the Big Snake

Freddie Talkalot was four years old. His papa - Peter Talkalot - was a doctor. One day, on a Sunday, Freddie's papa took Freddie to the zoo. Freddie liked to look at the animals. Best of all he liked the bears, because they looked like his Teddy bear. But - that day - he wanted to look at the snakes. So Doctor Talkalot and Freddie went to the snake house. As they were going in, a guard of the zoo started shouting:

"The big boa snake is ill. It is feeling very bad! What can we do? Is there a doctor here?"

Peter Talkalot said quickly:

"I am a doctor."

So the guard took Freddie's papa to see the big boa. The big snake had a sad face. Freddie's papa looked at the snake and said:

"I don't know what to do for this animal. After all I am a doctor for people, not for animals. You must understand that inside animals and people are made quite differently. I can understand what is wrong with a human being, but not very well what can be wrong with a large snake like a boa. I just happen to know that its scientific name is "boa constrictor", because it will kill other animals by winding around them and choking them. I know that he eats rats and, sometimes, rabbits, but all that does not really help me to cure it."

The guard was a bit tired of listening to that long talk. He said:

"I know. I know. We will have to call Doctor Dolittle. I am going to call him on the telephone."

And he called doctor Dolittle on the telephone. But Freddie said to the guard:

"It is no use calling this doctor Dolittle. If my papa cannot cure the snake, nobody can. My papa is the best doctor there is."

"Ha, ha." - said the guard - "But doctor Dolittle can speak the language of all the animals. You will see."

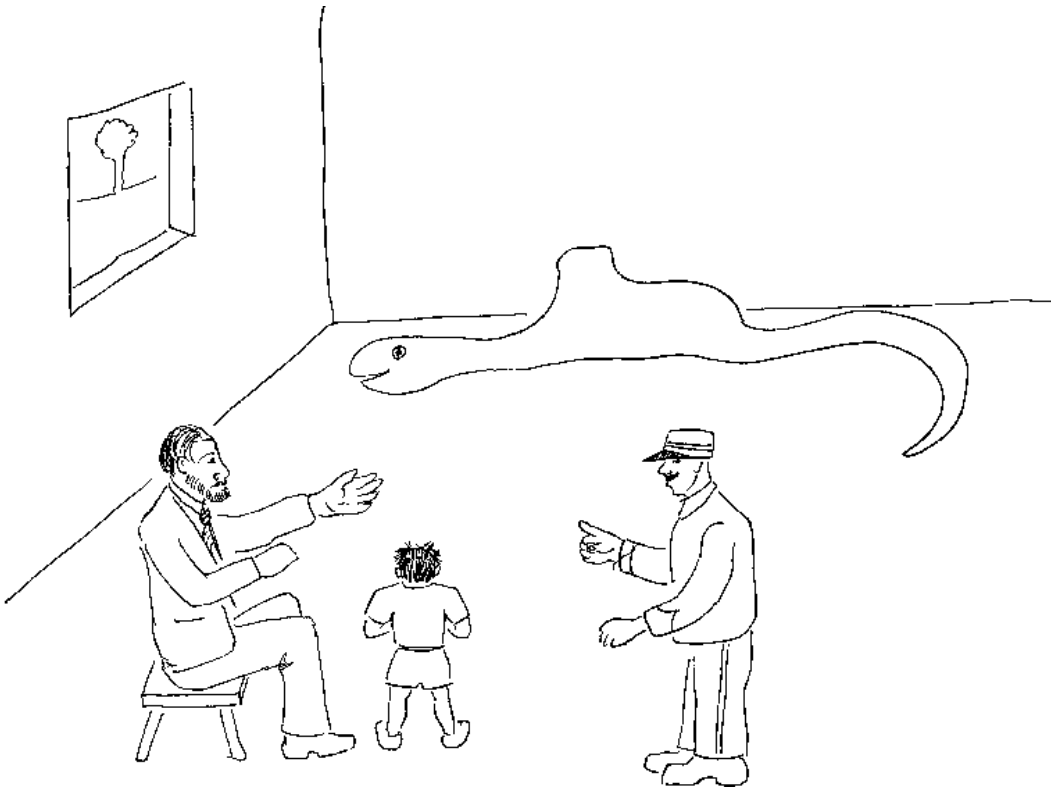
After some time, doctor Dolittle arrived on his bicycle carrying his little bag. He went at once to see the big snake and he started to hiss. [Snakes do not speak, they just hiss].

"Ssssssssss - sssssss - ssssssssssssssssss." - said doctor Dolittle. Then he explained:

"I asked the snake what is his trouble."

The snake hissed back:

"Ssssss - sssss- sss - ssssssss."



"Aha !" - said doctor Dolittle - "You ate a whole sheep, did you? You should have thought it was too big for you."

And he pulled gently the big snake out of his house. Then everybody could see that the snake' s belly was very big - and it had the shape of a sheep. Then doctor Dolittle asked the guard and doctor Talkalot to hold very tight the head and the tail of the boa snake. He took from his bag a knife, a very sharp knife [which doctors call a lancet] and cut open the snake's belly. So the sheep came out of the snake' s belly and said:

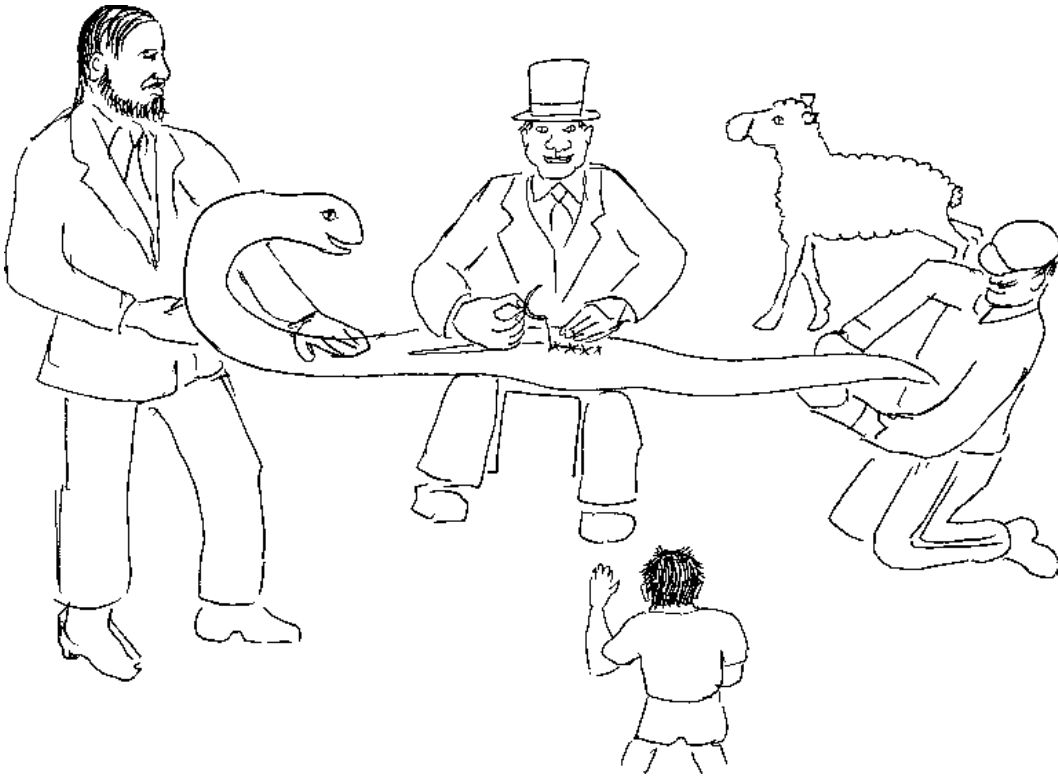
"Baa, baa, baaa."

Doctor Dolittle laughed and said:

"So you are happy to be out of the boa' s belly, eh?"

Then he took a needle and some thread from his bag and sowed the big slit he had made on the boa' s belly. The boa said:

"Sssssssssssssss."



Doctor Dolittle replied:

"You are quite right to thank me. That sheep was too big. You would never have been able to digest it."

Then Doctor Talkalot (Freddie' s papa) said to Doctor Dolittle:

"That was a very good operation. You are a very good doctor. But I would like - best of all - to learn to speak all the animals languages. Will you teach me? You see: if I could speak to animals, I would understand what their problems are - just as you do. Then I would be better able to cure them."

"Yes." - said Dolittle - "Come to my house with your son."

"Wait a minute!" - said the zoo guard - "Don't go away. I have to pay you for the operation you made. How much money do you want?"

Doctor Dolittle answered:

"I don't want any money. Just bring to my house some good grass. It must be special grass from Africa. I need it for my pushme-pullyou. It is a funny animal. It has two heads: one at each end of his body -- and he has no bottom. Some friendly monkeys gave it to me in Africa."

And the guard took out a big truck and filled it with good grass from Africa. Then he drove the truck to doctor Dolittle's house. There he found doctor Dolittle, Peter Talkalot and Freddie Talkalot who were drinking tea and milk and eating bread with butter and marmalade.

Doctor Talkalot had already learnt to speak the language of Dab-Dab who was doctor Dolittle's duck. They were all very happy and doctor Dolittle gave a cup of coffee to the zoo's guard. The two doctors became very good friends and Freddie too became a good friend of doctor Dolittle and of Dab-Dab.