

## All That Glitters Isn't Gold

The hot afternoon sun was peeking out from behind the vast mountains as the valley was filled from top to bottom in a rich, warm light. A few fluffy clouds speckled the sky and the grass on the safari was reaching tall towards the heavens, dancing with the slight breeze in the air. Various herds of animals were gathered around the large and well-filled water hole positioned conveniently near the valley's scant acacia trees, where the beasts could shield themselves from the beating sun. Giraffes, zebras, antelopes, and wildebeests crowded around the water as a group of hippos splashed around on the shore. Everything was at peace until suddenly, from beyond the clouds, a torpedo of yellow, blue, and red propelled itself towards the ground. The parrot whizzed through the air and weaved its way in between the groups of animals stationed at the water hole, much to their dismay. A giraffe grunted in response as the hyper bird landed on its back. When other animals saw that Zazu the parrot was in their presence, they rolled their eyes and continued drinking from the hole.

"Good morning to you all, my fine, furry friends!" Not one creature replied. Taking no offense, he continued on. "Why so chipper, everybody?" he asked sarcastically. An antelope took one last gulp of water and looked up at the parrot.

"We can't all be as happy and lively like you on a day such as this. I think my fur may actually start to burn due to the heat of the sun today."

"Seriously." a giraffe added in. "While you get to soar through the clouds and feel the breeze rustle your feathers, we all have to stay down here on the ground in direct contact of the blazing sun. We haven't left this watering hole all day!"

“Even the water itself is beginning to get warm,” cried a hippo restlessly splashing in the water. A wildebeest from across the pool bellowed in agreement.

“None of us have been able to leave this watering hole all day. Do you even know how boring it is, sitting here and lapping up warm water for endless hours?” A unison of cheers from the crowd of animals followed his statement.

“Hmm. That does stink to be stuck here on the ground, not having the beautiful, versatile wings I do.” More eye rolling from the herd. “Tell you what. I’m a nice animal, so I wouldn’t mind helping you beasts pass your miserable time here on the ground. Suppose we have story time!” the parrot cried excitedly.

“You’ve got to be kidding,” sputtered an angry wildebeest.

“Not at all!” the bird began. “Really, if it’s for the better good of society, I can spend a little more time with you guys and help take your mind of the heat. Plus, I have an interesting story that will totally grab your attention and keep you occupied. Believe me, we’ll have a great time.” A chorus of “fine”s and “whatever”s echoed his enthusiastic announcement. Deciding they had nothing better to do, many animals clambered over to a cluster of acacia trees for shade or laid down on the edge of the hole, putting their snouts to the surface of the water. All eyes were positioned on the parrot, still perched on the back of a giraffe, getting ready to tell his story.

Now, Zazu the parrot was an interesting character. For starters, his vibrant colors represented his boastful personality to a tee. His bigheaded charisma stemmed from the fact that he was a parrot, as he had luxuriously soft feathers, handsomely bright colors and was able to fly unlike the majority of the animals on the safari. And if being a parrot didn’t make him egoistic enough, he was the only parrot in this area of the valley, meaning his big talk was limitless. His dazzling colors and piercing cry quickly drew the attention of any animal within seeing or

hearing distance. Besides Zazu's social and lively character, he was an excessive bragger. In his defense, he did have quite a lot to boast about in comparison to the other animals, what with his beautiful coat of feathers, social connections to every creature in the valley and ability to see every part of the safari from a bird's eye point of view. However, he let all of this get to his head and had an ego bigger than Mount Kilimanjaro. He was completely oblivious to his immense amount of self-obsession and ironically scolded any other animals that excessively gloated or showed off, reminding them that "all that glitters isn't gold." These particular traits contributed towards the reason why he constantly annoyed the other animals and was often on their last nerves. Even as the parrot had settled down to tell his story, he rustled his feathers, sat a bit taller and loudly cleared his throat. Once he assured himself that he had every animal's undivided attention, he eased into his tale.

"Today, I will be sharing a story about how a group of men made a huge mistake due to their foolishness, greed, and stupidity. It's a twist on the classic pirate story, including the voyage at sea and the concentrated search for buried treasure. It represents my number one pet peeve; bragging, and the people that do it."

"Hypocrite much?" muttered a bored zebra under his breath. The parrot continued.

"It's true, I hate bragging. So many animals are constantly boasting or gloating about something that they honestly shouldn't be showing off about. Just because something sounds great doesn't mean it is. But enough of this, let me start my story! Listen up, everybody."

"Tighten the sail! Tighten that darn'd sail!" barked the angry captain, who was beginning to get red in the face. "And fix that mast! Good for nothing scallywags." The captain's crew bustled about hurriedly from one end of the ship to the other, fixing the ship's imperfections from its last trip to sea and preparing itself for another potential voyage. Men were nailing down

popped-up floor boards, mending the wheel, and dangling from the logs supporting the massive sails. Captain Jack stood on the top deck of the ship, scowling and grunting in disapproval at the chaos of his crew. Still angered from their recent failure on an expedition to find treasure, the pirate kicked a bucket full of grub with full force, sending the remains flying everywhere. A young, nervous-looking crew member sat polishing the floor where the fish parts had landed.

“Clean that up,” ordered the captain, turning abruptly to exit the ship. He couldn’t stand the sight of his disorderly crew anymore. Just had he had crossed the plank connecting the dock to the side of his ship, an old, ugly crew member came running towards him from the direction of the town. Irritated that the old man had been spending time in the village while the rest of the crew was hard at work on the ship, the captain demanded to know what he was doing.

“Captain,” the old man replied. “I have stumbled upon the most amazing discovery!” The captain looked at him inquisitively, urging him to go on.

“Look here, my good captain.” He held up an old, battered up treasure map that was yellowing and tearing at the edges. “I’ve found the next loot of treasure for us to search for!” The captain’s expression did not change.

“And what makes you think that this treasure map, out of the hundreds that we have unsuccessfully followed, will actually lead us to this fortune?”

“No, this one is extra special,” the man insisted, trailing at the captain’s feet as he made his way back to the ship. “A vendor sold it to me, said it was taken from the very grave of Davey Jones!” The captain stopped in his tracks.

“You mean, THE Davie Jones?” he asked, swiveling his head around. The old man nodded. Davie Jones was one of the most famous and successful treasure-hunting pirates of all time, and his grave was here in London. And if this map had come from his very own pocket,

that meant it must have been his next goal before his death and therefore had to be real. The captain snatched the withering document from the old man's hand and briskly walked back onto the ship.

“Listen up, you losers. We have a new journey to embark on.” He proudly held up his handed, flashing the map to the crew. “Here in my hand I hold a treasure map from the one and only Davie Jones himself.” Excited murmuring among the crowd. The captain continued on with his announcement.

“Not only does this mean there will actually be a treasure to obtain, but it also means that Davie Jones never actually succeeded in finding it, means I—I mean, *we*, will receive credit for making this amazing discovery.” A man from the crew interrupted.

“Uhh, Captain? How are we not sure that it's just a dud?” The captain glared at him.

“This is *Davie Jones* we are talking about here,” he replied rudely. “Of course this map is real.” The crew shrugged, knowing better than to argue with their captain. Instead, they followed his orders and began to get the ship ready to sail off again. Captain Jack walked proudly over to the wheel, displaying the map to the driver. After discussing the coordinates for a little while, the captain left the driver to study the map and went to check out the crew's progress on the rest of the ship. The sails were in tip-top shape and ready to face the rough winds of the Atlantic Ocean.

“Is she ready?” the captain shouted to the men. The crew grunted in agreement as they struggled to finish fixing the sails. “Alright then. Men, we are off to find the forgotten treasure of Davie Jones. Sail away!” The boat creaked as the crew cut the ropes connecting her to the port and pushed her out into the water. Once out far enough, the sails were extended as they caught the wind and whisked the vessel into the open sea. The driver used the force of his body

weight to turn the ship against the strong gusts of wind and in the right direction, towards the location of the treasure. Pleased with the smooth start to the journey, the captain let a wide grin stretch across his face as he made his way to the Captain's Cabin. Here, he resided for the majority of the voyage as he let his crew take responsibility for the hard tasks. He fell into a deep slumber as he was reminded of the wonderful bounty waiting for him at the other end of his trip.

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The voyage was not an easy one. Rough storms welcomed the crew into the depths of the ocean; the strong winds ripping the sails as the fatal waves rocked the ships violently back and forth. Despite narrowly surviving a whirlpool and almost having the ship turned over on them, the captain still pressed on, his heart set on reaching the treasure. The crew grew more worried and angrier with every burst of air or pelting of hail as the captain, only concerned about himself, forced them to go on. Conversations about mutiny and finishing the voyage themselves swarmed the ship, but no action against the captain was actually taken as the crew realized they still needed a charismatic leader. The captain carried on without a worry in the world, killing most of his time in the cabin dreaming about the moment he could finally lay his hands upon his much-anticipated treasure.

After around six long and treacherous months at sea, the weather had finally began to act in the crew's favor. Sunny days and a cool, salty breeze characterized one day in particular. Early that morning, the crew member sitting in the crow's nest made a startling discovery.

"Land ho! Land ho!" he screamed, scrambling down from the mast. The crew looked out to see the island that was sketched on the map, resulting in cheers and hoorahs from the crowd.

Once on shore, the men quickly docked only to be pushed aside by the captain, who was rushing to get on shore. They all hurried, together, to the cave at the upper east corner of the island. But what they found there had shocked them.

Absolutely nothing. No treasure, no gold, not even an ounce of jewelry. The captain collapsed in despair as he finally realized the treacherous journey was not worth it. The crew, angry with their captain for forcing them on this voyage, rose up in revolt. They savagely killed the captain and left his body to rot in the cave, carefully laying the map by his side. They traced their steps to the shore, mounted the ship, and left the island, bound for home with not a penny for show. Disappointment flooded the crew.

You know what they say, all that glitters, isn't gold.