

One Kid's Treasure

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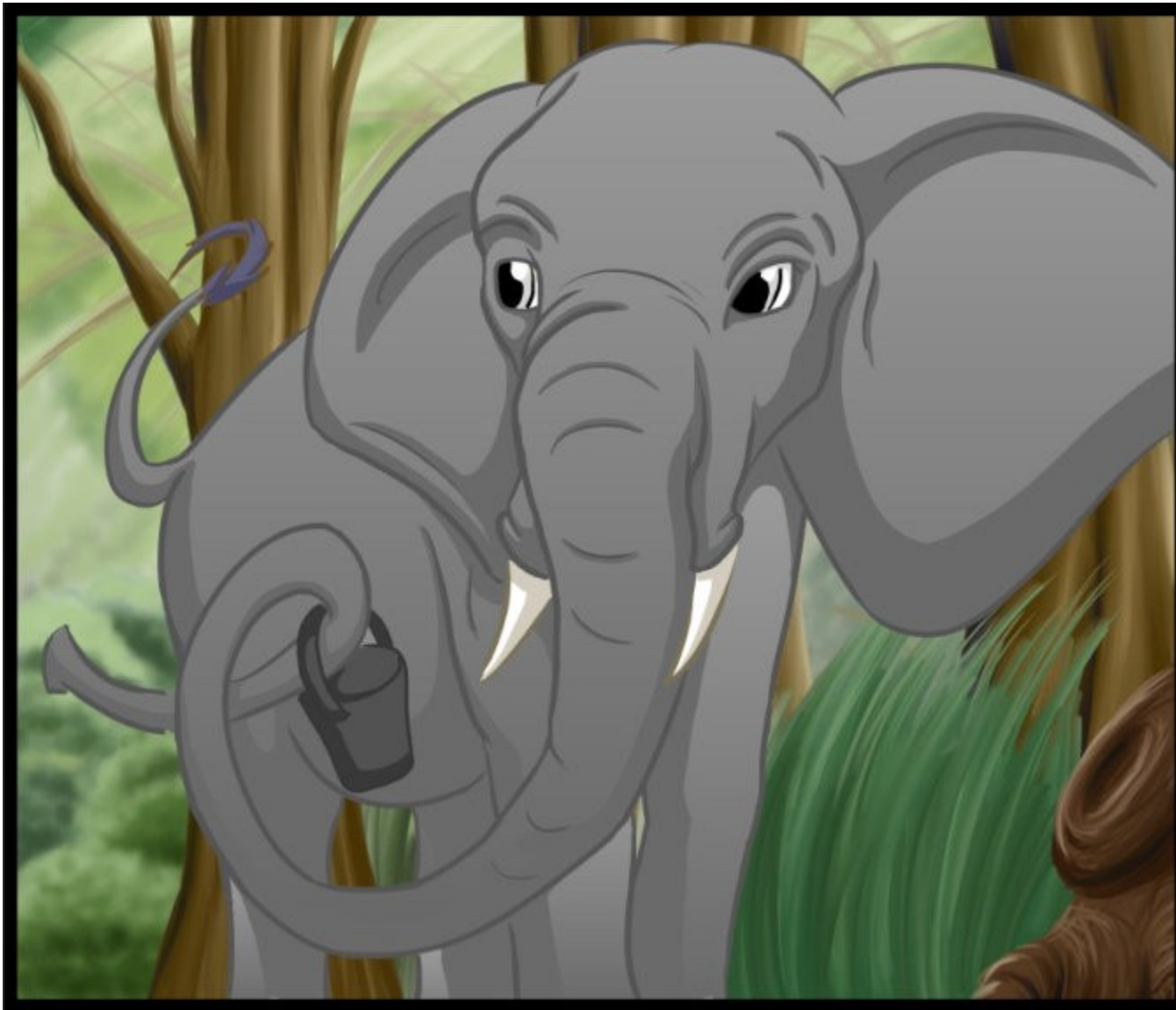




Not so long ago, there was a jungle filled with many, many animals. There were big ones, little ones, even itty-bitty ones. Most were friendly, but a few were a little mean. All the animals played together, except the mean ones. They didn't have too many friends so they just stayed alone most of the time. One day, a big hippopotamus and a large brown bear were resting after eating a big snack.

"Hey bear," the hippopotamus said. "This is how I like to live. Eat a big snack, and then take a long nap. How about you?"

The bear replied, "Me too! But sometimes I like to walk around the jungle looking for a campsite...you know, to scare the people. It's fun! They scream and then run away. Then I go get the food they left behind. You get good snacks that way."



Just then, a not so big elephant walked up to them. The bear noticed something different about the elephant. “Hey, what’s that you have with you?” The bear asked.

The elephant turned to the bear, “Oh nothing. It’s just a bucket. I keep it filled with water from the river. That way, wherever I go, I’ll always have a supply of nice refreshing water to drink.”

“Hmmm, that’s smart,” said the hippopotamus. Actually, both the hippopotamus and the bear thought it was a little odd. The river was not far from anywhere in the jungle.

Yes, this elephant was strange indeed.

As he walked away from the hippopotamus and the bear, he spotted a paintbrush.

“This will help me scrub myself when I take my bath in the river,” he thought.

So he picked it up also, and off he went, carrying a bucket filled with water, and a paintbrush





As he made his way to the river to take a bath and try out his new paintbrush, he saw a large colorful blanket draped over a tree limb. “This will be great to keep me warm, when the jungle gets cold,” he thought to himself. Although he knew the jungle never got cold, at least not since he was born. Still, he wanted to be prepared just in case it did and so he swung the blanket onto his back, and off he went carrying a bucket filled with water, a paintbrush, and a colorful blanket.

As he got closer to the river, he spotted four fluffy pillows leaning against a tree.

“These pillows will come in very handy when I can’t find a soft place to take my nap,” he said. So he stuffed the pillows under his blanket, and as he did, he looked kind of fat.

And so off he walked, with a little more difficulty now, carrying a bucket filled with water, a paintbrush, a colorful blanket, and four fluffy pillows.





Then, he spotted a small wooden chair. "I can let my friends sit on this chair whenever they come to visit me," he thought. So he put the chair on the top of the blanket, and off he went carrying a bucket filled with water, a paintbrush, four fluffy pillows, a colorful blanket, and a small wooden chair. Finally, the elephant reached the river, where a tall giraffe was swimming near the riverbank. "Why are you carrying all that stuff?" asked the giraffe.

The elephant explained all about the bucket filled with water, the paintbrush, the four fluffy pillows, the colorful blanket, and the small wooden chair he was carrying. The giraffe could only laugh. "You're an elephant! You don't need those things. Besides, they make you look like a big fat circus elephant. You can hardly run or play with all that stuff."

"You can laugh all you want," elephant said proudly, "but we'll see who is laughing when you get thirsty, or when night falls and it's time for you to go to bed."

And so it went for the fat elephant. The animals would all laugh at him as he walked through the jungle.

Soon, he did his best to stay away from them altogether. Once, when he wasn't paying attention, he wondered too close to a campsite. A small boy asked him if he could borrow the bucket. But the elephant said no and turned his eyes away.

Then a little girl asked if she could borrow his blanket. He looked at her, and she looked cold, but he said no again and walked on.

Then an old man who looked tired from walking asked if he could sit on his chair to rest, but he said, "no, No, NO!"

The elephant grew annoyed at everyone wanting to borrow his things, so he decided to paint a sign with his brush on the side of his body that said, "GO AWAY."

From then on, the animals, and the people pretty much left him alone.



One day, the Wacky World Circus sent animal catchers to the jungle.

The circus needed some new animals for their show. And wouldn't you know it, within a few minutes they spotted the fat elephant.

One of the catchers said, "This one would be great for the circus. Look, he already has a colorful blanket wrapped around him, and look at all those things he can carry."

The elephant saw the catchers, and tried to run. But he was very, very slow. He would not let go of all his stuff, so they caught him, and threw him into a cage.

"Let me out!" he shouted. "I'm not really fat, it's just all this stuff I'm carrying." The elephant was sad and thought, "I could have ran away if I wasn't so heavy with all my great treasures. What should I do now? I don't want to be in a cage."





Just then the little boy and little girl from before walked by and saw him. The little boy laughed loudly, and the little girl shouted, "BOO!" Suddenly, the elephant jumped, and all his possessions fell to the ground. And he cried.

The children looked at each other and said. "You are a sad and silly elephant. You could have escaped all along. See, without all those things you're not so big. In fact, you could probably slip right through these two bent cage bars. Go ahead, try it."

The elephant wasn't so sure but tried it anyway. The children shouted, "Go! Go! Go!"

Without the bucket filled with water, the paintbrush, the four pillows, the colorful blanket, the wooden chair, and all the other stuff he collected, he really was not very big, and he escaped easily. He was even able to run pretty fast.

He waved his tail thanking the little children but didn't dare look back. He ran back into the jungle, to his friends. Once again, he felt safe, and most of all, free.

Remember, having things is not bad, but being selfish with them is not good. God blesses us with many things, but He also expects us to share them with others. Things can't talk, play or give you a hug. When we don't share, people won't want to be around us. Without the love of others, we may feel like being trapped in a cage all alone

