

The Elephant's Child, by R Kipling

Review by Patricia Prada Jimenez

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Kipling's Just So Stories have been for long literary classics. The use of language, humour and illustrations are simply brilliant. Anyone filled with 'insatiable curiosity' would somehow identify with this sweet animal. Even though he is much discouraged to enquire after his life experiences and pushed to abandon his endless questions about everything he saw, heard, eat and touched the Elephant's Child never gives up.

As a small child would, he asks continuous questions and always gets the same reaction; many 'spankings'! Regardless of his punishment for constantly annoying his family and friends he continues until one day his question becomes the cause of what may be the most important decision of his life. The Elephant's Child asks; 'What does the Crocodile have for dinner?'

Not in the least frightened by everyone's response he decides to leave and find the answer himself. His adventurous journey through Africa, most delightful to the child mind, ends in an unexpected surprise.

By the time he arrives at the Limpopo River he only had a bulgy but short inadequate nose. However, after his encounter with the Crocodile, and with the help of a Bi-Coloured-Python-Rock-Snake, the elephant gets his trunk. Not without pain and much grumbling; 'Led go! You are hurtig be...This is too butch for be!' the elephant is free from the Crocodile's teeth. In shock and frustrated the elephant waited for his nose to shrink. 'You would have to wait a long time', the Snake said, 'Some people do not know what is good for them'.

The Elephant's Child and Other Stories
(Unabridged. In easy-to read type)
Rudyard Kipling
Dover Children's Thrift Classics
Editor Philip Smith
1993 USA

From The Elephant's Child

I keep six honest serving-men:

(They taught me all I knew)

Their names are What and Where and When

And How and Why and Who.

I send them over land and sea,

I send them east and west;

But after they have worked for me,

I give them all a rest.

I let them rest from nine till five.

For I am busy then,

As well as Breakfast, lunch, and tea,

For they are hungry men

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