

All Because of a Flower

Once upon a time, there was a young elephant named Joe. Joe loved running through the tall grasses in Africa. He also loved smelling flowers. Whenever he would see a flower, he would sniff it. His entire herd would. He had a good life, and lived in a good land, except that lions that lived there.

One day, a group of lions chased Joe's herd out of the savannah they lived in. His mother was not as fast as the rest of the herd, and the lions were faster than her, so she got caught and killed by the lions. The whole herd was sad. Joe cried all night long. The next day, the herd woke up, ate breakfast, and went out to sniff flowers. Where they had moved to didn't have close to as many flowers as where they used to live, but at least it had some.

Sniffing flowers took everybody's mind off the sad event that had happened the day before. They sniffed for hours when ever something bad had happened recently. After about three hours of sniffing, Joe remembered it was time for lunch, so he made his way back to their new home. When Joe got back, he realized nobody was there. He decided to wait for everyone to come. He waited five minutes. Nobody. Fifteen minutes. Nobody. Thirty minutes. Still nobody. One hour. STILL nobody. Joe decided to go look for them.

He looked and looked, but he couldn't find a single member of his herd. He looked a little bit more, but stopped when he came across a flower. It was not like anything he had ever seen before. It had almost any color you can imagine on it. He just **had** to sniff it. As he was taking one big whiff, his trunk touched the flower. As soon as he touched it, his world grew black. His head was spinning, and he couldn't tell if he was falling or floating. He got his answer when his feet slammed on the ground. He fell down but got up quickly. As he was getting up, he noticed he was in a room with two doors. He walked over to one door and pulled. Nothing. Then he tried again, but pushing. Nothing. Then he realized there was a key hole. So he walked over to the other door.

Hanging from the door knob was a sign that said "Key Inside". He opened the door and walked in. Somehow, he managed to find a light switch. When he turned it on, he saw that that he was in a small, white room. He saw no key. He got so mad because he thought he was never going to see his herd again, that he kicked down the door. It broke into a bunch of small and large pieces. A second after he kicked it, he heard the sound of metal hitting the ground. He looked down to find the key. He thought about it for a moment, then realized the key was inside the door! He picked the key up and walked over to the other door. He put the key in, turned it, and opened the door. As he walked in, he was blinded by a very bright light. It took his eyes a moment to get used to it, and when they did, he saw tall, green and tan grasses, a bright, yellow sun, a blue, sparkling pond, and best of all, his herd.

"Daddy!", Joe yelled, "How did you get here also?" He ran to his dad.

"We were just smelling flowers," his dad said, "but then I saw an unusual flower, so I called the members to come. We stared at it, then I decided to smell it, but since everyone was trying to see it, we all fell down and touched it."

Then Joe asked, "How did you get through the door? It wasn't broken when I got there."

His dad explained how there was a hole in the door, so he used his trunk to feel around. He found the key, opened the other, then put the key back. Then, they walked in, looked around, and started playing.

"In the end, we all decided to stay, since we don't know how to get home," Joe's dad finished.

"So we are all staying?" Joe asked. "But I left my blanky at home!"

His dad asked, "Can't we just make you a new one?"

"NO! Mommy made it for me." He started bawling. "I miss mommy!"

"We all do."

"Well, I'm going to get back home, no matter what it takes, and nobody is going to stop me." He turned around and started walking.

The rest of the herd called "Come back!", and "Don't go!", but Joe kept walking like he never even heard them.

Then his dad yelled, "Stop." Joe stopped and faced him.

"I am coming with you. I don't want you going alone." Then one by one, each member said they were going with them. It turned out that everyone had left something at home, even Joe's dad. So off they went.

After a few minutes of walking, they saw a flower. It looked like the one they touched to get there. Everyone wanted to smell it, but Joe's dad said there's no time to stop and sniff, so they just kept walking along, even though they had no idea where they were going. They walked and walked for about three more hours, then stopped at a small pond. They ate and drank, then started walking again. When it started getting dark, they stopped for the night. Nobody got much sleep because Joe cried all night long, because he didn't have his blanky.

In the morning, everybody had breakfast, then started walking again. Nothing happened until a little bit after lunch, when they found themselves standing at the edge of a half-mile wide river, that stretched out as far as the eye can see. The water was moving fast and hard. They thought they would never make it

Then somebody call out, "Hey! Look over there!" Everyone looked where he was pointing. A few football fields away, they saw the most fascinating sight. As they approached it, they were amazed. It was the tallest, greenest tree in the world. Then somebody spotted a lion. They all ran away and lay as flat as they could. The lion approached the tree, then looked around to make sure no one was watching. He was wrong. He seemed to dig at the base of the tree, then press a button in the hole. The tree started to slowly come down across the river, and when it came to a stop, the lion walked across on it.

When he got to the other side, he pressed a button at the top of the tree, so it started to rise up slowly. When the lion was out of sight, everyone got up and walked to the base of the tree. When they got there, it seemed that there had never been a hole dug. But that didn't stop them. Joe started digging. He just kept digging and digging, and when he was about to give up, he felt something hard. He dug around it, and when he was done, he saw a red button. Everyone gathered around as he pressed it. The same thing happened. The tree lay down slowly across the river.

Joe went first. He climbed on, then started walking across. The rest did the same thing. It was easy to walk, but hard not to look down. When they were all safely across, Joe pressed the button on the top of the tree. It rose up, then they walked away. For the rest of the day, they just walked. The only problem was there were big rocks with snakes, so they had to go around. At the end of the day, they ate and went to sleep. Joe didn't cry as much.

In the morning, they ate and started walking. After an hour, they saw the strangest sight any of them had ever seen. It was a tree on fire. It was a dark brown, and the leaves bright green. Even though the tree was on fire, it was not burning. As they were admiring the tree, they heard a loud, booming voice. It said, "You have passed the way out!"

Joe asked, "Who are you and where are you?"

"I am the king of this land. I can take form of any living thing."

"Wait, what was the first thing you said?" Joe asked

"You have passed the way to get out, so I thought I would get your attention by taking this form," he answered.

"Well, you sure did. Wait, we passed the exit?"

"Yes, you did. Here is a clue to help you get out:" then he sang, "Red, orange, blue, and more, then touch it to find two doors."

The flower we passed a few days ago! If we touched, we would have gotten out!" Joe exclaimed.

They said bye to the king, then turned around and started walking. They walked and walked. They talked about the long journey they had had, and forgot about the river. They only remembered it when they came to it. They all stopped and stared. They had no way of getting across from the side they were on, unless they got really lucky. And that's just what happened. A lion came to the tree on the other side, dug, then pressed the button. The elephants were ducking down so he wouldn't see them. The lion walked across the tree, but when he got to the other side, he forgot to put the tree up and just walked away. When he was out of sight, they got up, got on the tree, and started walking. At about half across, Joe heard a splash. He turned around to see that his dad fell in the water!

"Help Me!!! Help M... Wait! This water is only two inches deep! Hop in!"

So, they all did. They splashed each other and had the most fun they had had in days. They walked over to the other side of the river, then lied down in the grass to dry off. They talked about stuff like how it would hard to leave the paradise they were in. Then Joe's dad apologized because he didn't let them smell the flower, and if had let them smell it, they would have been home by now. Everyone said it was okay. When they were dry, they decided to stay the night. Joe didn't cry, but he did have trouble sleeping. In the morning, they did their usual routine, then went off. They walked until it started to get a little dark, and the only reason they stopped was because they had made it. They were standing next to the flower.

They all said goodbye to the beautiful land they were in. Then they all got in line to touch the flower, Joe first, his dad last. As Joe was leaning in, his dad yelled, "Wait!" Joe stopped. "Can't we stay, just one more night?" Everyone agreed, so they got out of line and found spots to sleep. They all said goodnight to each other, and the land, then went to sleep.

First thing in the morning, they got into line in the same order as the day before. They said goodbye for the second time, then Joe touched the flower. In less than two seconds, he

was home. Then, all around him, the rest of his herd started popping up. When his dad popped up, everyone started walking home.

**THE
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