

Creatures with Character –10 [Imaginary story]

The Elephant and the Giraffe Part 2

Malga and Oubo, Savannah and her husband, along with their parents, again settled in the calm evening for a meal. They had spent another day of working on their fields and crops, and helping to build the next part of their house.

This night however, the younger children were eager to get to bed, for when they did they would get to hear the rest of the story.

Savannah the Story Teller (or so she was called tonight) began telling the rest of the promised story of, “The Short Giraffe and the Tall Elephant.”

When the elephant calf and the giraffe calf saw one another again at the waterhole, they continued noticing the differences between them.

For example, one had large ears, the other had small ones. One would get long white tusks at the bottom of his face, the other would grow short dark ossicones on the top of his head.

One had long thick legs that could gracefully walk and run, or tip toe through the bush, it seemed; and the other had wide and heavy legs and feet that made the ground rumble when it stomped and ran with the herd.

That night as these two young creatures went to bed, a dream came to them—something that taught them that not all wishes will make us happy if we get them.

It showed them that each of us are made just right. To be happy with the way we are, and with what we have, is to be content.

In his dreams there was one thing that the giraffe couldn't do—well, nearly everything really, because he simply couldn't stand up. His head, in his dream, had the grand addition of a long and heavy trunk an huge ears placed up high on his long neck. His legs were much shorter also. In this condition things just didn't

work for him.

So giraffe, feeling thirsty and tired of trying to stand up, with a headache now also, just moaned and looked over at the beautiful giraffes. They looked perfect and could move about so gracefully and swiftly with light feet. That is just what he wanted to be like. —The real him, all the way.

Elephant was having just the same problem. Though he could stand up for some time, his heavy head and body just couldn't keep up when on those stilt-like, thin and long delicate legs. He felt tired and exhausted real soon.

When he tried to get a drink, he experienced a nose dive for sure, and into the water he plunked. Oh how his legs ached trying to hold up the weight of his very heavy form.

So for most of the day he just lay there on the ground. He saw a herd of elephants running along. He would have liked to join them, but he couldn't even stay upright. —And certainly couldn't run!

When giraffe and elephant woke the next morning they were thrilled to see that they were just the way they were meant to be!

With glad vigour they appreciated every moment of the day, doing the things that they were made to do. No longer did they wish to be just a bit like another creature. What they were like was just right for them.

When the children were sleeping, Savannah crept out of the room to place her baby in her bed and sleep now with her husband. He was tired from his long day of working also.

However, they were glad that tiredness was the only challenge. They could see, and hear, speak and move. They had food to eat and water to drink, and a place to sleep.

There were some things she missed, or some things that others could do, and not her. But in telling this little story to her younger brother and sister, it had helped her to accept some things about

her own life that might be different than others.

Savannah decided that she too wanted to be content with what she had, knowing that others might be looking at her life and all she enjoyed, wishing they could have it too.

She wanted to wake with smiles the next day and be ready to do the best she could with the little they had, and be glad for it all!

The next night the children had some something exciting to talk about. It had been a day when they saw some elephants in the wild when they travelled on foot for many hours, in search of certain fruits and roots.

When it was time for sleep, they asked their sister Savannah for a special story, all about a young elephant.

Malga and Oubo washed their faces, hands and feet, said their prayers, and settled down to listen. They were curious as to what tonight's story would tell.

Sister Savannah the Story Teller began, and dreamily the children visualised it as they drifted into a deep sleep.

"Mama I can almost run as fast as you!" said the little elephant calf who was now a year old.

"You are doing very well, dear. You are growing fast—and going fast," mother elephant said to her little baby.

"Come now, darling, it's time to hold on to me, as I lead you this way," she told her young one to hold to her tail for a while.

"We are going into new and unexplored areas. Our herd is travelling, and I don't want you to get lost. But just remember that Mama and Papa are very strong, and if any troubling beasts come around, we'll protect you. But that is only if you stay very close and do just as we tell you."

"Okay, Mama," replied the elephant calf.

Papa elephant came over to see how they were doing. Using their trunks they greeted one another in a friendly kiss.

Trunks were useful for doing so many things. They could be tough and pick up huge and heavy logs, or they could gently place a kiss on a elephant loved one.

The herd had spend some time at the waterhole, eating and bathing, showering, and splashing, and resting. Now it was time to go.

“Everyone ready?” the leader blew his trumpet trunk, and off they went. Sometimes they walked in a line, holding on to each other’s tails, other times they ran faster, as a herd, to cover more ground, or if they thought there was trouble.

That night they settled in a bushy area. “Mama, thank you for taking care of me today,” the little calf said before drifting off to sleep.

“You’re welcome, darling, she responded.”

Just then, one strange sound seemed to follow after another—or so it seemed to little elephant. This was a new place, with new smells, new sights, and new sounds. Little elephant was woken up time and again, somewhat worried.

“It’s okay, darling, we’re safe. Why don’t you try to sing a song? Have you tried out some new sounds with your trumpet yet?”

Little elephant didn’t think he came equipped with a mobile, ready to use, musical instrument that he just needed to learn to play. But there it was, ready for use.

“Sometimes a bit of music might help you when you are having trouble sleeping—the right kind that is,” mother said.

“Just like to make a good sound with your trunk you have to hold it up and not drag it in to the ground, so is it true that the right kind of music helps pick up you mood and gets you looking up at the neat things to look forward to.

“The wrong kind of music will get you feeling low and sad, or afraid too.”

So the little elephant stood up for a moment and lifted up his trunk up to the sky and blew out a musical sound, with all of his might.

It might not have sounded like his daddy, but it was a very good try.

“That’s nice Darling,” mama said. “And every day you can practice using your musical instrument, and lift it high up to make the right kinds of sounds.”

It felt good to be able to learn something new, and being able to make a musical sound like that seemed to remove some of his worries.

Perhaps if one day he really needed help, he could just blow out the sound, and someone would hear. Or perhaps if it was a special day, and he was feeling particularly happy, he could express it with a joyful sound.

Or maybe one day when he had a family of his own, he could use it to lead his family in the right direction. He would teach them all the importance of reaching up high first, then the right and good sounds could be made.

Somehow, making a bit of music when he was feeling uneasy, got his focus on something else. Soon he and the others were sleeping well, and would be ready for travel the next day.

Their story ended, and Savannah quietly left the room to tuck into her own bed, with her baby and husband.

As she lay down to sleep, a new idea began coming to her.

“Maybe I should teach the children some songs. Maybe I could make up some story songs—stories that tell of important things for the children to learn and remember.

“We can sing and review them often, and maybe one day they can then teach these to their children.”

This thought came to Savannah, as she thought about the story she had just told—where music of the right kind could make you feel better, remove worries, and make you and others happier.

She didn’t really plan the stories long in advance, but casually told them as thoughts came to her mind. So this part in the story about music was a new idea to her too.

“Yes,” she determined, “Musical stories would be a wonderful addition to our nightly bed-time story. I think the children would learn well this way.

She was starting to get many ideas of all the things she could teach her young brothers and sisters, and would start the following night.

Life wasn’t just about eating and working, but about being together as well, and helping younger ones to discover secrets to living joyfully.