

PERUSAL SCRIPT

The Elephant and the Ant

A Traditional Tale from India

Adapted by Genevieve Aichele for *World Tales, Volume 1*

Theatre Tales from Around The World *SERIES*



Newport, Maine

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THE ELEPHANT AND THE ANT

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CAST OF CHARACTERS: 6f, 7m, 2 either

Narrator 1, M or F

Narrator 2, F or M

Tiger, M

Leopard, F

Panther, M

Fox, F

Jackal, M

Cobra, F

Monkey, F

Water Buffalo, F

Stork, M

Peacock, M

Ant, F

Elephant, M

Bullock, M

Shadows, M or F

THE ELEPHANT AND THE ANT A Traditional Tale from India adapted by Genevieve Aichele. 6f, 7m, 2 either. 12-15 minutes. Simple Setting (places in the jungle) Fantasy Costumes and/or Traditional dress of India. Wisdom from the smallest of all helps the jungle animals to maintain order when the largest of all acts only in a selfish manner; not deciding for the good of all as their leader should. This tale shows that there is wisdom in the most unexpected of places, and that shared wisdom in a community can mollify or moderate any disagreement. Part of the TALES FROM AROUND THE WORLD SERIES.
ORDER # 3139

Genevieve Aichele is Founding Executive Director of New Hampshire Theatre Project in Portsmouth, and has performed, directed and taught theatre arts both nationally and internationally for over 35 years, including 20 years of directing the NHTP Youth Repertory Company.

Genevieve has written dozens of story theatre scripts for use both onstage and in the classroom. Her adult scripts include *Neighborhoods* (2001 Portsmouth Spotlight Community Arts Award); original adaptations of *Lysistrata* and *Finding the Prince*; and *Dreaming Again*, commissioned in 2011 by the NH Humanities Council.

As a storyteller, Genevieve performs with musician Randy Armstrong in *World Tales*. Their two CD's have won numerous national and international awards. Her first audiobook recording, *Forest Secrets* by Tracy Kane, was released in 2012. *Ocean Secrets*, her first novel for young readers co-written with Tracy Kane, was released in May 2014.

Genevieve received the 2001 New Hampshire Governors Award for Excellence in Arts in Education and the 2008 NH Theatre Award for her work with youth. In 2002, she received an award for Outstanding Achievement in American Theatre from the New England Theatre Conference.

See "PRODUCTION NOTES" at end of script.

THE ELEPHANT AND THE ANT

NARRATOR 1: The Elephant and the Ant.

NARRATOR 2: A Story from India.

(ELEPHANT enters. Other animals enter and place themselves in humble positions around ELEPHANT.)

NARRATOR 1: There once lived in the dense jungle of India an enormous and powerful elephant. He was so strong that even the tiger and the leopard were afraid of him.

NARRATOR 2: The other animals of the jungle treated this elephant as if he were the king of all beasts.

NARRATOR 1: Now being treated as the king of all beasts made this elephant feel arrogant and proud.

ELEPHANT: Look how they all grovel before me! I am the wisest and strongest of all animals!

NARRATOR 2: The Elephant didn't care anything about the happiness of others.

NARRATOR 1: So his decisions were often cruel and unkind.

(TIGER, MONKEY and WATER BUFFALO come forward timidly. TIGER is limping.)

TIGER: Sir Elephant, we would like to ask your advice on a small matter.

ELEPHANT: *(importantly)* I will render judgment if it doesn't take up too much of my valuable time. What is the problem?

BUFFALO: The Monkey keeps stealing my food.

MONKEY: It's not really stealing... just borrowing. My mate was killed and I can't leave my children this season. I'll make it up to you next year.

BUFFALO: But I need that food for my children. This year!

ELEPHANT: I can't believe you're bringing me such petty problems, Tiger. Why don't you figure it out yourself?

TIGER: But the last time I did that, you were so angry...

ELEPHANT: Oh, how is that broken leg of yours healing anyway, oh Master Brave-and-Fearless Tiger?

(ELEPHANT roars and laughs. Actors hold up Laugh Card to Audience.)

MONKEY: *(timidly)* Please, Sir Elephant, what should we do?

ELEPHANT: Since you stupid creatures can't keep from fighting over your food, then neither of you should have it. I'll just go trample on those food stores myself. Good exercise! Anybody else want to come along for some fun?

(ELEPHANT laughs again and exits. Actors hold up Laugh Card to Audience.)

NARRATOR 2: The other animals looked at each other in dismay.

BUFFALO: All my food - destroyed! This is your fault, Monkey!

MONKEY: What about my poor children? What will they do now?

COBRA: We mussst sstop thissss, Massster Tiger. Thingssss were sssso much better when you made decssssionsssss for ussss.

STORK: Why don't you stand up to him, Tiger?

TIGER: *(sadly)* Look what he has done to me. I cannot fight him. He's too strong.

COBRA: Thissss mussst sstop. All of usssss are sssssuffering.

TIGER: What can we do?

STORK: You should call a meeting of all the animals in the jungle.

COBRA: Yesssss... they will lisssten to you.

NARRATOR 2: And so the Tiger called a meeting of all the animals in the jungle.

(All animals gather onstage.)

NARRATOR 1: The peacock traveled from near Jaipur in Rajasthan.

NARRATOR 2: The leopard made her way from the Ajanta Caves in Maharastra.

NARRATOR 1: The panther journeyed from Benares on the Ganges River.

NARRATOR 2: The fox trotted from Madras in the south of India...

NARRATOR 1: And the jackal sauntered in from Calcutta near the Bay of Bengal.

NARRATOR 2: When they had all gathered, the tiger said:

TIGER: You all know why I have brought you here. The Elephant is stronger than any of us. We have treated him like a king. But he has not proven to be a wise leader.

FOX: My dear master Tiger, what exactly would you like us to do?

TIGER: We must rise up in revolt! We must throw off the rule of the elephant!

NARRATOR 1: There was a moment of silence. All the animals looked at each other. The jackal yawned and fell asleep.

JACKAL: *(yawning)* Oh my, I'm afraid this is going to be a very long meeting...

(JACKAL falls asleep. Actors hold up Snore Card to Audience.)

NARRATOR 1: The Tiger said:

TIGER: Madame Leopard? Surely you are with me in this?

LEOPARD: But Master Tiger, look what he did to your leg. You are far stronger than I am. Master Panther, what do you think?

PANTHER: I think I would not be able to hunt with a broken leg. How about Foxy Lady here?

FOX: Oh my my no, this is definitely not my field of expertise. Peacock, what about you?

PEACOCK: Risk my beautiful feathers against the Elephant. No way!

TIGER: Cobra? Perhaps you could poison him?

COBRA: He would sssstomp me before I could get closssse. SSSstork?

STORK: He's way too strong for me! Water Buffalo, you're big.

BUFFALO: I have to take care of my children.

(glaring at Monkey)

Especially now that they have no food.

NARRATOR 2: Everyone looked at the Monkey.

(They do.)

MONKEY: Why are you all looking at me? What about Jackal?

(Everyone looks at JACKAL, who snores away peacefully. Actors hold up Snore Card.)

TIGER: Somehow, I don't think he'll be of much help.

NARRATOR 1: Not one animal dared to utter a single word against their king. The tiger begged:

TIGER: Is there no one who will come forward to challenge the elephant?

NARRATOR 2: Everyone looked at everyone else.

(They do.)

No one dared to come forward.

NARRATOR 1: But then, a small, weak and tiny little ant came to the front of the crowd and spoke in a humble voice.

ANT: My friends, I desire to take on the challenge that has been put before us.

NARRATOR 2: The leopard growled:

LEOPARD: Impossible!

NARRATOR 1: The cobra hissed:

COBRA: Ridiculoussssss!

NARRATOR 2: The panther snarled:

PANTHER: A little weakling like you!

NARRATOR 1: The fox sniffed:

FOX: You're too small to do much of anything!

PEACOCK: I've never heard anything so foolish in all my life!

NARRATOR 2: Just then, the jackal yawned and sat up.

(He does.)

JACKAL: Well, since none of us want to do it, I think that we should all allow the Ant to take up this challenge.

(A moment of silence while everyone looks at everyone else.)

TIGER: Ladies and gentlemen of the jungle, our new champion!

NARRATOR 1: The news spread through the jungle like wildfire.

(Actors hold up Whisper Card to Audience. Animals whisper the news back and forth to each other. Then all exit except JACKAL. ELEPHANT enters.)

NARRATOR 2: When the elephant heard the news...

JACKAL: Hey, your Majesty, have you heard the news?

ELEPHANT: What news, pipsqueak?

JACKAL: The Ant has decided to challenge you.

ELEPHANT: An Ant? Who needs to bother about that weakling?

JACKAL: Well, amazingly enough, she's expressed a strong interest in challenging you as King of the Jungle.

ELEPHANT: *(sarcastically)* Right. I'm shaking in my trunk. Now get out of here and let me get my beauty sleep.

(ELEPHANT sleeps. JACKAL exits. Actors hold up Snore Card to Audience.)

3 MORE PAGES TO THE END:

NARRATOR 1: The elephant finally became:

ALL: A wise and strong king.

NARRATOR 2: The End.

(Actors hold up Applause Card to audience.)

PRODUCTION NOTES

If masks are used for the animals, be careful that the actor's mouth and nose are not covered. Decorated cardboard or oak tag head pieces are ideal as they leave the actor's face revealed.

Ideas for creating the illusion of the Ant inside the Elephant's head:

- If levels are available, Ant can simply be above the other actors
- The "body" of the Elephant can be cloth stretched behind the actor who is the "head" and another actor who is the "tail." This can be lifted to reveal the Ant.
- Painted cardboard can be used to create the same effect.

Other plays in the **THEATRE TALES FROM AROUND THE WORLD SERIES**

The Adventures of Hiiaka (Hawaii) Order #3142

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