

The Elephant's Child

SONG: "In Africa" (Narrator #1 speaks during song)

Scene 1

Narrator #1: In the high and far off times the elephant, O Best Beloved, had no trunk. He had only a blackish, bulgy nose, as big as a boot, that he could wriggle about from side to side; but he couldn't pick up things with it.

But there was one elephant... a new elephant,,, an Elephant's Child.
Who was full of insatiable curiosity.
And he lived in Africa!

Narrator #2: One fine morning this insatiable Elephant's Child asked a new fine question that he had never asked before.

Elephant's Child: What does the Crocodile have for dinner?

All: Hush!

Narrator#2: And they spanked him immediately. By and by, when that was finished, he came upon Kolokolo Bird sitting in the middle of a wait-a-bit thornbush, and he said,

Elephant's Child: My father has spanked me, and my mother has spanked me; all my aunts and uncles have spanked me for my insatiable curiosity: and still I want to know what the Crocodile has for dinner!

Kolokolo Bird: Go to the banks of the great grey-green, greasy Limpopo River, all set about with fever trees, and find out.

Narrator#2: That very next morning, this insatiable Elephant's Child took a hundred pounds of bananas, and a hundred pounds of sugar cane, and seventeen melons, and said to all his dear families...
"Goodbye dear families. I am going to the great grey-green greasy Limpopo River, all set about with fever trees to find out what the Crocodile has for dinner." And they all spanked him once more for luck, though he asked them most politely to stop.

SONG: "The Great Grey-Green Greasy Limpopo River"

Scene 2

Narrator#3: Now you must know and understand, O Best Beloved, that till that very week, and day, and hour, and minute, this insatiable Elephant's Child had never seen a Crocodile, and did not know what one was like. It was all his insatiable curiosity. The first thing that he found was a Bi-Colored-Python-Rock-Snake curled around a rock.

Elephant's Child: 'Scuse me, but have you seen such a thing as a Crocodile in these wild parts?

Python: Have I seen a Crocodile? What will you ask me next?

Elephant's Child: 'Scuse me, but could you kindly tell me what he has for dinner?

Narrator#3: Then the Bi-Colored-Python-Rock-Snake uncoiled himself very quickly from the rock, and spanked the Elephant's Child with his scalesome, flailsome tail.

Elephant's Child: That is odd, because my father and my mother, and my uncle and my aunt, not to mention my other aunt, the Hippopotamus, and my other uncle, the Baboon, have all spanked me for my insatiable curiosity, and I suppose this is the same thing.

Narrator#3: And so, he said goodbye very politely to the Bi-Colored-Python-Rock-Snake, and helped to coil him up on the rock again, and he went on, eating melons, and throwing the rind about, because he could not pick it up, till he trod on what he thought was a log of wood at the very edge of the great grey-green, greasy Limpopo River, all set about with fever trees. But it was really the Crocodile, O Best Beloved, and the Crocodile winked one eye – like this!

SONG: "A Crocodile Wink"

Scene 3

Elephant's Child: 'Scuse me, but do you happen to have seen a Crocodile in these wild parts?

Narrator#4: Then the Crocodile winked the other eye, and lifted half his tail out of the mud; and the Elephant's Child stepped back most politely, because he did not wish to be spanked again.

Crocodile: Come hither, Little One. Why do you ask such things?

Elephant's Child: 'Scuse me, but my father has spanked me, my mother has spanked me, not to mention my tall aunt, the Ostrich, and my tall uncle, the Giraffe, who can kick ever so hard, as well as my broad aunt, the Hippopotamus, and my hairy uncle, the Baboon, and including the Bi-Colored-Python-Rock-Snake, with the scalesome, flailsome tail, just up the bank; and so, if it's quite the same to you, I don't want to be spanked any more.

Crocodile: Come hither, Little One, for I am the Crocodile...

Narrator#4: And he wept crocodile tears to show it was quite true. Then the Elephant's Child grew all breathless, and panted, and kneeled down on the bank...

Elephant's Child: You are the very person I have been looking for all these long days. Will you please tell me what you have for dinner?

Crocodile: Come hither , Little One, and I'll whisper.

Narrator#4: Then the Elephant's Child put his head down close to the Crocodile's musky, tusky mouth, and the Crocodile caught him by his little nose, which up to that very week, day, hour, and minute, had been no bigger than a boot, though much more useful.

Crocodile: I think..I think today I will begin with Elephant's Child!

Narrator#4: At this, O Best Beloved, the Elephant's Child was much annoyed, and he said, speaking through his nose, like this,

Elephant's Child: Led go! You are hurtig be!

Narrator#4: Then the Bi-Colored-Python-Rock-Snake scuffled down from the bank...

Python: My young friend, if you do not now, immediately and instantly, Pull as hard as ever you can, it is my opinion that your acquaintance in the large-pattern leather ulster...

Narrator#4: ...And by this he meant the Crocodile..

Python: ...will jerk you into yonder limpid stream before you can say Jack Robinson.

Narrator#4: This is the way Bi-Colored-Python-Rock-Snakes always talk. Then the Elephant's Child felt his legs slipping and he said through his nose, which was now nearly five feet long,

Elephant's Child: This is too butch for be!

Narrator#4: Then the Bi-Colored-Python-Rock-Snake came down from the bank, and knotted himself round the Elephant's Child's hind-legs.

Python: Rash and inexperienced traveler, we will now seriously devote ourselves to a little high tension, because if we do not, it is my impression that that yonder self-propelling man-of-war with the armour-plated upper deck...

Narrator#4: ...And by this he meant the Crocodile...

Python: ...will permanently vitiate your future career.

Narrator#4: That is the way all Bi-Colored-Python-Rock-Snakes always talk.

Python: Pull!

All: Pull!

Python: Pull!

All: Pull!

Python: Pull!

SONG: "Pull!"

Scene 4

Narrator#5: And the Bi-Colored-Python-Rock-Snake pulled hardest, and at last the Crocodile let go of the Elephant's Child's nose with a plop that you could hear all up and down the Limpopo.

Elephant's Child: Thank you, Bi-Colored-Python-Rock-Snake.

Narrator#5: And the Elephant's Child wrapped up his poor, pulled nose in cool banana leaves and hung it in the great grey-green, greasy Limpopo to cool.

Kolokolo Bird: What are you doing that for?

Elephant's Child: 'Scuse me, but my nose is badly out of shape, and I am waiting for it to shrink.

Kolokolo Bird: Then you will have to wait a long time. Some people do not know what is good for them.

Narrator#5: The Elephant's Child sat there for three days waiting for his nose to shrink, but it never did. For you see, O Best Beloved, the Crocodile had pulled it out into a really truly trunk as all Elephants have today.

Narrator#6: So the Elephant's Child went home across Africa, frisking and whisking his trunk. When he wanted fruit to eat, he pulled it down from a tree, instead of waiting for it to fall. When he wanted grass, he plucked it up from the ground, instead of going on his knees as he used to. He swished the flies away He made a new, cool, slushy-squshy mud-cap when the sun was hot. When he was lonely, he sang through his trunk, and the noise was louder than several brass bands And he picked up the melon rinds he had dropped, for he was a Tidy Pachyderm. One dark evening he came back to all his dear families, and he coiled up his trunk and said,

Elephant's Child: How do you do?

Narrator#6: They were very glad to see him, and immediately said, "Come here and be spanked for your insatiable curiosity."

Elephant's Child: Pooh! I don't think you peoples know anything about spanking; but I do, and I'll show you.

Narrator#6: Then he uncurled his trunk and knocked two of his dear brothers head over heels. "Where did you learn that trick," said they, "and what have they done to your nose?"

Elephant's Child: I got a new one from the Crocodile on the banks of the great-grey-green, greasy Limpopo River. I asked him what he had for dinner, and he gave me this to keep

Narrator#6: "It looks very ugly," said his hairy uncle , the Baboon.

Elephant's Child: It does, but it's very useful.

Narrator#6: And the Elephant's Child spanked all his dear families for a long time and they were greatly astonished. At last things grew so exciting that his dear families went off one by one in a hurry to the banks of the great grey-green, greasy Limpopo River, all set about with fever-trees, to borrow new noses from the Crocodile. When they came back nobody spanked anybody any more; and ever since that day, O Best Beloved, all the Elephants you will ever see, besides all those that you won't, have trunks precisely like the trunk of the insatiable Elephant's Child.

SONG: "Reprise: In Africa"