

(035) Mice and Elephants

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Are elephants really scared of mice? The legend says they are. The story might begin with Maurice the Mouse. Maurice lived in East Africa. He loved playing tricks.

He was by a water hole one evening. Also drinking there was an elephant. Maurice said how big the elephant was. The elephant announced that he was the biggest animal on the land.

“I agree,” replied Maurice. “But are you the strongest? For example, I wonder if you are stronger than I am.” The elephant trumpeted loudly through his trunk. “Of course! I could crush you without noticing.”

Maurice suggested a test of strength. “Let us each tie ourselves to the end of a rope. We will have a tug-of-war. I will pull you into the river.” The elephant said this was so funny that he would do it.

He tied a rope around his great bulk. Maurice ran with the other end round a bush. There lay a hippopotamus. He is the biggest animal in the river. The mouse started the same argument with him. He challenged him to a tug-of-war. “I will pull you onto the land.” he declared.

“Give me that rope!” snorted the ‘hippo. “I will pull you to pieces.” He tied the other end of the rope round his bulbous body. Then Maurice hid in the bush and shouted, “Pull!” to the elephant and the hippo.

Both animals could not see each other. They were staggered by the power of the mouse. They pulled and strained. They could only just hold their positions. Finally, the rope snapped. The elephant ran away. Now when he sees Maurice, he is nervous. He rushes off in the other direction.