

The African Elephant bears All

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An upbuilding tall tale for the little ones, but which is also suitable as a reader for grade 2 or 3 because of the repetitive lines. I wrote it after writing a similar one in which the animals were European —where I grew up, in part. But I also grew up in Namibia and South Africa until almost nine, and have many vivid memories of being on the Etosha Pan and seeing the game there. So I thought I'd write an African version as well.

One day a bull elephant was walking across the veldt. He met a long-necked giraffe.
“Good day, big elephant,” said the giraffe, “how broad your back!”

“Jump up,” said the elephant, and the giraffe jumped up on the elephant’s broad back.

By and by they met a zebra.

“Good day, big elephant,” said the zebra, “how broad your back!”

“Jump up,” said the elephant, and the zebra jumped up on the giraffe’s back.

By and by they met an ostrich.

“Good day, big elephant,” said the ostrich, “how broad your back!”

“Jump up,” said the elephant, and the ostrich jumped up on the zebra’s back.

By and by they met a cheetah.

“Good day, big elephant,” said the cheetah, “how broad your back!”

“Jump up,” said the elephant, and the cheetah jumped up on the ostrich’s back.

By and by they met a springbok.

“Good day, big elephant,” said the springbok, “how broad your back!”

“Jump up,” said the elephant, and the springbok jumped up on the cheetah’s back.

By and by they met a hyena.

“Good day, big elephant,” said the hyena, “how broad your back!”

“Jump up,” said the elephant, and the hyena jumped up on the springbok’s back.

By and by they met a dik-dik.

“Good day, big elephant,” said the dik-dik, “how broad your back!”

“Jump up,” said the elephant, and the dik-dik jumped up on the hyena’s back.

By and by they met a gecko.

“Good day, big elephant,” said the gecko, “how broad your back!”

“Jump up,” said the elephant, and the gecko scurried onto the dik-dik’s back.

By and by they met a dung beetle.

“Good day, big elephant,” said the beetle, “how broad your back!”

“Jump up,” said the elephant, and the beetle crawled backwards onto the gecko’s back.

By and by they met an antlion.

“Good day, big elephant,” said the antlion, “how broad your back!”

“Jump up,” said the elephant, and the antlion jumped onto the elephant’s broad back, the giraffe’s back, the zebra’s back, the ostrich’s back, the cheetah’s back, the springbok’s back, the hyena’s back, the dik-dik’s back, the gecko’s back, and last of all on the dung beetle’s back.

The antlion was high above the ground. (The antlion was high—so high!) He looked all around. He thought himself big and tall.

“Roar!” roared the antlion as loud as an antlion can roar (which isn’t loud at all), and he bit the beetle to show who’s King of the Sand Trap.

“Push!” said the beetle and rolled the gecko.

“Squeak!” said the gecko and threw his tail at the dik-dik.

“Dik-dik!” said the dik-dik and butted the hyena with his teeny tiny horns.

“Ha-ha-ha!” laughed the hyena and frightened the springbok.

“Boing-boing!” sprang the springbok and bounced on the cheetah.

“Snarl!” said the cheetah and clawed the ostrich.

“Run!” honked the ostrich and pecked the zebra.

“Neigh!” said the zebra and dazzled the giraffe.

“Snort!” said the giraffe and thumped the elephant with one of his long legs.

“Well,” said the elephant, flapping his ears, “if that’s how you thank me, then off you go!” and he reached up with his trunk and threw them off one by one, and never did he let them ride on his back again.