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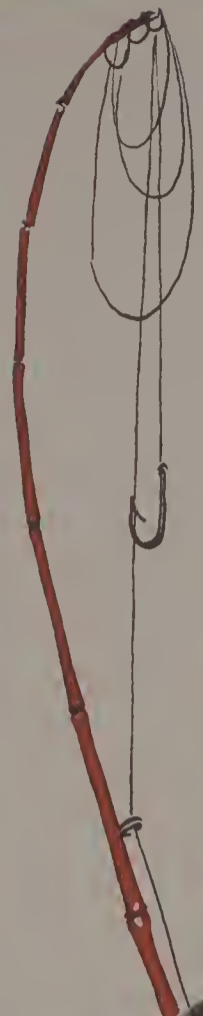
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# THE ELEPHANT'S PICNIC



HELUIZ WASHBURNE      JEAN McCONNELL





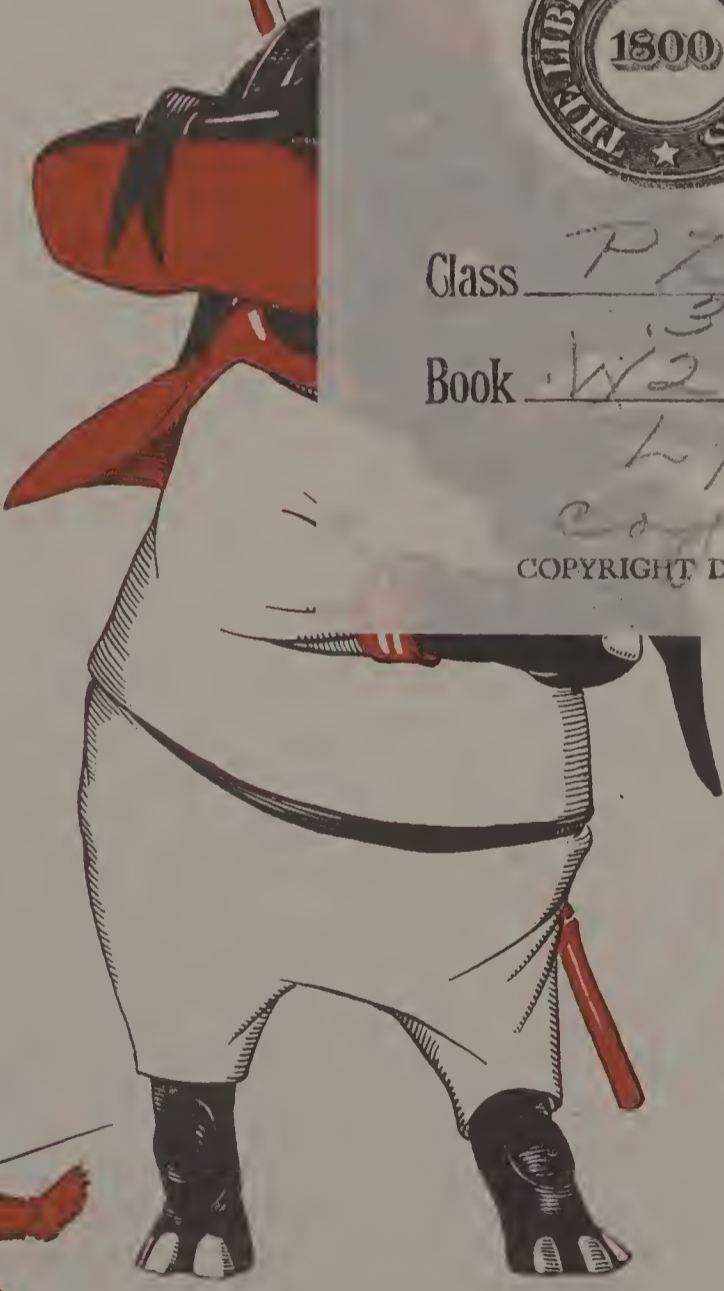
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# LITTLE ELEPHANT'S PICNIC





*"It's only an April shower," she said comfortingly*



# LITTLE ELEPHANT'S PICNIC



**STORY BY HELUIZ WASHBURNE**  
**PICTURES BY JEAN McCONNELL**

Author and artist of Little Elephant Catches Cold  
and Little Elephant's Christmas

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**W**HEE!" cried Little Elephant as he threw back the covers and jumped out of bed. Usually Mother Elephant had to call him five times and then come in and shake him to wake him up. But today was Sunday and there was no school. Besides, Mother Elephant had promised to take him on a picnic today.

He raised his trunk and waved it from side to side, sniffing the air. Mmmmmmm! What was that good smell, so warm and spicy? GINGERBREAD!

Then Little Elephant wondered what he should wear. He galumphed out into the hall and called down "M-o-o-o-ther!"

"What is it?" said Mother Elephant, who was very busy in the kitchen.

“What shall I wear?”

“Your blue overalls, of course,” Mother Elephant trumpeted back.

“They’re too dirty!” said Little Elephant, very loud.

But Mother Elephant didn’t answer, so Little Elephant trotted back into his room. “Humph!” he snorted. “Who wants to wear blue overalls on a nice spring Sunday like this?” So he took out his best white sailor suit.

“Goodness sakes!” cried Mother Elephant when Little Elephant came into the kitchen all dressed up.

“We’re going on a picnic, aren’t we?” said Little Elephant, strutting around proudly, and holding his trunk very high.

“Yes, but oh dear, oh dear, you’ll get it all dirty,” she said.

“No, I won’t,” cried Little Elephant, “I promise.”

Little Elephant did look awfully nice in that new sailor suit. “Well, if you promise,” she said, and turned to take her gingerbread from the oven.

“Can I take my sailboat?” asked Little Elephant, hopping around the table. “Can I take my fish pole?”

“Yes, yes, of course you can,” answered Mother Elephant, “but for pity’s sake sit down and eat your breakfast, and don’t get under my feet.” Then she





*So he took out his best white sailor suit*

took up the pancakes she had been turning and put them on a plate. She placed a big lump of butter on top, and poured syrup all over them.

Little Elephant didn't talk any more then. He just ate his way down through that stack of pancakes, one after the other, as fast as he could. Then Mother Elephant gave him another stack, and he ate that.

When he couldn't eat any more, he watched Mother Elephant making the sandwiches for the picnic. The piles grew higher and higher, one pile of cheese, one of meat, one of peanut butter, and an extra big pile of jam sandwiches. For she knew Little Elephant loved jam sandwiches.

Then he spied the stuffed eggs — a whole tray of them! "Oooh," sighed Little Elephant, because he wanted one of those eggs and he was sure Mother Elephant wouldn't let him eat one before the picnic. Reaching over he picked up one in his trunk.

"Little Elephant, put down that egg," said Mother Elephant without turning around.

"Oh, I just wanted to smell it," he said, as he laid it back.

Into the great lunch basket went the sandwiches, a fried chicken, a vegetable salad, the gingerbread, the stuffed eggs, the potato chips, and all the other good things.





J. McC.

*Reaching over he picked up one in his trunk*

At last the family started off. Father Elephant was wearing a new black and white checked cap set over one ear. And his tusks were all painted with red and black stripes. He had used the tusk-paint Little Elephant had given him for Christmas. Father Elephant was very proud of his looks. He walked ahead with big, slow steps, for he carried the heavy lunch basket. Every few seconds he turned around to say, "Do hurry up! We'll miss the street car."

Mother Elephant, dressed in her red cape, and carrying her big umbrella, followed after, swinging a big jug of lemonade from her trunk.

Little Elephant had all he could carry with his boat and his fish pole.

Grandpa Elephant came shuffling along behind with a tree-MEND-ous custard pie, all packed up in Mother Elephant's hatbox! Of course, a custard pie was a queer thing to take on a picnic, but Mother Elephant made the most wonderful of custard pies. It was one of her specialties.

"Now do be careful with that custard pie!" warned Mother Elephant. She didn't really think the pie was very safe with Grandpa Elephant and she wanted to carry it herself.

"Oh, don't you worry," squeaked Grandpa Elephant, "I'll watch the pie."





J.McC.

*Father Elephant was wearing a new black and white checked cap*

But Mother Elephant did worry about the pie, and as they walked along she kept turning around to look at Grandpa and the pie.

“There’s our street car,” called Father Elephant, starting to run. “Hurry up, it’s about to leave.”

Mother Elephant gathered up her cape and ran too.

Little Elephant trotted as fast as his legs would go. But then the string on his fish pole came loose. It tangled all around his legs and he had to stop and unwind it. And the hook got caught in the trousers of his new white suit. He got it out and ran on.

Grandpa Elephant came along, puffing like a steam engine. But the hatbox was swinging safely from his trunk.

Father Elephant got Mother Elephant and Little Elephant safely on board the street car. Then he reached out to pull up Grandpa. But the conductor was in a hurry to go, so he called out, “All aboard!” and pulled the bell.

“Hey! Wait for Grandpa,” called Father Elephant.

But the car was already moving. Grandpa Elephant ran alongside, panting.

Then he saw he couldn’t get aboard with that hatbox in his trunk. “Here, catch this, Little Elephant,” he piped. And the box with the pie came sailing through the air.





*The hook got caught in the trousers of his new white suit*

“The pie! The pie!” cried Little Elephant. He just knew what would happen to that beautiful pie. He was so scared he closed his eyes and reached out his trunk. Then, PLUMP! he had caught it, and right side up!

Now Father Elephant had Grandpa by the ear and was pulling him up onto the platform, and poor old Grandpa was all out of breath. The street car was crowded because it was a beautiful Sunday and every elephant family wanted to go to the country. So there were no seats and Father and Mother and Grandpa and Little Elephant all had to stand up in the aisle.

That was all right for Father and Mother and Grandpa, because they were tall and could reach the straps with their trunks. But Little Elephant swayed around with nothing to hold on to and he couldn't see out of the window. He stepped on other passengers' toes and they looked at him crossly; and Little Elephant was very unhappy indeed.

Suddenly the car stopped with a terrible jerk and all the elephants bumped and joggled against each other as they slid toward the front. Father and Mother Elephant lost their balance and Grandpa disappeared from sight. Little Elephant was squashed in the crowd.

Then suddenly he heard the gentle wheezing voice





*Poor old Grandpa was all out of breath*



of Grandpa Elephant. Grandpa always lost his voice like that when he was excited. “Be careful of my custard pie!” he begged. “Please be careful of my pie!”

Little Elephant pulled himself out of the crush and looked around. There was Grandpa Elephant struggling to get through the crowd and holding the hatbox high up over his head. When things got straightened out again, Grandpa Elephant lowered the box and looked inside. Was the pie squashed? No, there it was all safe, with the golden meringue sticking up in points all over the top. Mother Elephant’s wonderful custard pie!

The car came to the end of the line and all the passengers got off. Mother and Father Elephant and Grandpa and Little Elephant started to walk through the park. They walked and walked.





*There was Grandpa Elephant holding the hatbox high up  
over his head*

“This is a good place for a picnic,” said Father Elephant.

“No, there isn’t any place for Little Elephant to sail his boat,” said Mother Elephant. So they walked on again.

“Now here is a nice spot,” suggested Grandpa Elephant, for he was getting tired.

“No, I think I see poison ivy there,” Mother Elephant declared. So they walked on some more.

“There is a fine place for a picnic,” coaxed Little Elephant, who was getting hungry.

“No, it is too sunshiny there. We must find a nice big shady tree so Grandpa can take a nap,” said Mother Elephant. And they walked on farther.

Pretty soon Grandpa Elephant said he would sit down on a bench and rest his feet. Little Elephant said he would sit with him. So they rested while the others walked ahead.

Soon Mother Elephant called them and said she’d found a perfect place for the picnic. There was a nice big shade tree for Grandpa, and a branch of the river ran near-by, so Little Elephant could fish and sail his boat.

Father Elephant settled himself comfortably against the tree and opened the Sunday paper. Grandpa Elephant was all tired out from walking so





*Father Elephant settled himself comfortably against the tree*

far and he lay down to take a little snooze. Mother Elephant spread a big white cloth on the green grass and began to unpack the lunch box.

Suddenly she bellowed, "Where's the custard pie?"

"What did you say?" asked Father Elephant. He was reading the funnies and didn't want to be bothered.

The only answer from Grandpa was a snore.

"I said, what did you do with the custard pie?" and this time Mother Elephant bustled over to Grandpa and shook his shoulder.

"Eh!" said Grandpa, who could be very deaf sometimes, "the custard pie?"

"Yes, it's lost!" cried Mother Elephant, looking very worried.

Then Grandpa Elephant scratched his head. "Lost? How could that be?"

"Well, it's not here," she declared.

"Now, how could I have lost the pie?" and Grandpa Elephant looked worried, too.

"Well, you'd better go and find it or I'll never make another."

Never to taste another one of Mother Elephant's custard pies! This was so terrible that Grandpa and Father Elephant and Little Elephant all started off at once to find the lost pie. They followed the paths





*"Well, you'd better go and find it"*

back to the bench where Grandpa had rested. "I'm sure this is where I sat," he said. But no pie was there.

"I'll go on to the next bench," said Little Elephant, and trotted ahead. He came around a bend in the path, and there on a bench he saw the hatbox. But a big tramp elephant was just lumbering up toward the seat.

"Oh, dear!" thought Little Elephant. "Suppose he should find out there's a pie in that box." So he ran as fast as he could to get there first. Just as the tramp elephant sat down on the bench Little Elephant skidded to a stop in front of him.

"Please, sir," he said, for Little Elephant could be very polite, "this is my mother's hatbox." And with that he picked it up in his trunk and ran off. His heart was beating very fast, but he had saved the custard pie.

When he got back Mother Elephant looked very sternly at Grandpa and Father Elephant, but she said Little Elephant was a good boy. "You can run and play now," she told him. "I'll call you when lunch is ready." So Little Elephant went off with his fish pole and sailboat.

"Be careful of your new sailor suit!" Mother Elephant called after him, "and don't go in the water."

Little Elephant soon found a bridge and for a long







*"Please, sir, this is my mother's hatbox"*

time he stood there fishing. But after a while he got tired of not catching anything. Then he had a bright idea. He rested the pole against the railing of the bridge and held it down with a stone. Now he could go and play with his boat. If a fish nibbled he could see the line bob and run back.

He had great fun with his sailboat, letting it float down the river while holding onto the string. Sometimes he loaded it up with sticks, or he pretended there was a storm at sea. Then he took a big trunk full of water and blew it all over the little boat, until it almost sank.

As he played he walked farther and farther along the bank. He had quite forgotten about his fish pole when suddenly he saw it sail past him down the river. A big fish was swimming away with it!

“Oh, my new fish pole!” he cried.

Just then he heard Mother Elephant trumpeting, “Li-i-ttle E-e-e-le-phant! Li-i-ttle E-e-e-lephant!”

He couldn't go back without his fish pole and it was floating away fast. So he rolled up his nice white trousers and waded after it. The river was deeper than he thought and he was up to his waist before he caught hold of the fish pole. He tugged and tugged, but the fish tugged too. Little Elephant pulled in the line as fast as he could. Then he grabbed the fish with his





*He tugged and tugged, but the fish tugged too*

trunk. It was slippery, and it flapped and wiggled. But Little Elephant held on tight, and finally stuck it in his blouse. He'd never caught such a big fish!

When he climbed out on the bank his nice new sailor suit was all dripping wet and water was running down his trunk and off his ears. What would Mother Elephant say to him now? She'd told him to be careful of his new sailor suit.

The sun had gone under a cloud and he began to shiver. Then he sneezed, "Ker-choo! Ker-choo! KER-CHOO!" He galloped back as fast as he could to where Mother Elephant sat knitting.

"Oh dear! Oh dear!" she cried when she saw Little Elephant coming with his suit all wet. "I told you not to wear your new sailor suit. Come here to me!" When she started to undress him the big wet fish fell out of his blouse.

"Why, Little Elephant!" she cried, "did you catch that fish?"

"Oh, I can catch bigger ones than that," he said, trying not to look proud.

Then Mother Elephant called Father Elephant to come and see Little Elephant's fish. Father Elephant said it was a wonderful fish and he made a fire to cook it. Little Elephant sat in front of the fire all wrapped up in Mother Elephant's cape, so he wouldn't





*The big wet fish fell out of his blouse*

catch cold. And Mother Elephant propped his clothes up on sticks around the fire to get dry.

While the fish was cooking they all sat down to the picnic. Father Elephant passed the fried chicken, and Mother Elephant dished up the salad. Little Elephant ate a great deal of everything, especially the stuffed eggs. But after he'd eaten ten Mother Elephant said he'd better stop. So then he started on the bowl of potato chips. Little Elephant loved potato chips. He picked them up in his trunk, very daintily, one by one.

Now Father Elephant said the fish was cooked, and gave everybody a piece. Grandpa mumbled "Mmm-mm! Dee--licious!" And Father Elephant said he'd never tasted a better fish.

Mother Elephant was watching Little Elephant, who was gobbling. "Now do be careful of the bones," she warned. Just then Little Elephant snorted and his eyes went crisscross, for a large bone had stuck right in his throat.

"Quick!" cried Mother Elephant. "Little Elephant's choking!"

Father Elephant gave Little Elephant a thump on the back that sent the bone flying. Little Elephant gasped and then he was all right again.

After that everything went along nicely till suddenly the ants appeared and began to crawl over the





*Father Elephant gave Little Elephant a thump on the back*

tablecloth. At first there were just a few of them and Mother Elephant brushed them away with her napkin. But more and more came, and soon there was an army. Little Elephant tried blowing them away while Mother Elephant rescued the custard pie. Then Little Elephant felt something crawling up his nose. An ant! It tickled. He blew! He blew again! But it didn't come out. He blew harder and shook his trunk. The ant was crawling up farther.

“Humpha! Humpha!” he bellowed. He ran around in circles. He stood on his head. But the ant kept on crawling. Then suddenly the ant gave him a nip right on the tender inside of his nose. Little Elephant left the ground with a roar, his eyes blazing and his trunk standing out straight.

When he landed again he shut his eyes and gave a mighty “WH-OO-OOF!” There, the ant was gone.

But so were the potato chips! When Little Elephant opened his eyes, they were sailing through the air like leaves in the wind.

Little Elephant's clothes were dry now, so he put them on again. Mother Elephant gathered up the food and moved to a new spot. From time to time she looked up at the sky, for big dark clouds were floating past. They must all hurry and eat the custard pie. She cut the rich creamy pie into four large pieces. A





*Little Elephant left the ground with a roar*

drop of rain fell, then another, and then several more.

“Hurry up! It’s going to rain,” said Mother Elephant. Just as Little Elephant swallowed his last bite of pie, there came a flash of lightning, then a clap of thunder. And the rain poured down.

Mother Elephant opened her great umbrella and they all stood underneath. “It’s only an April shower,” she said comfortingly.

And sure enough, in a few minutes the rain stopped and the sun came out. Then Mother Elephant packed the dishes into the empty lunch basket and Father Elephant picked it up with his trunk. Grandpa Elephant took charge of the empty hatbox and Mother Elephant took the empty jug and her big umbrella. Little Elephant gathered up his fish pole and sailboat. Slowly they all walked back to the street car. And each one said, “We’ve never, never, NEVER had such a good picnic!”





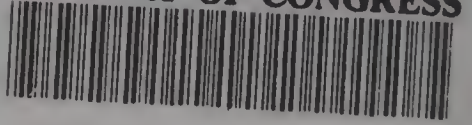








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