



The elephant  
in the garden



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The music in the audio recordings was composed by Rachel Jamieson – find out more at [www.racheljamieson.com](http://www.racheljamieson.com).



The narrator was Christopher Jamieson – [www.christopherjamieson.co.uk](http://www.christopherjamieson.co.uk).



Some of the pictures were drawn by Samantha Purkis. Find her etsy shop at [www.etsy.com/uk/shop/LittlePaperTrails](http://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/LittlePaperTrails).



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## Before you start

These booklets contain ...

The text of the story, in case you'd like to read it to your child yourself.

Some simple sentences inspired by the story, for new readers.

Some quiz questions and activities.

A colouring-in sheet.

You may want to print the colouring-in sheet. In some cases, you may want to print the activity sheet too. These are always in black and white, so they should print on any printer, and won't use much ink.

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## The elephant in the garden

**O**nce upon a time there was a little girl called Claire, who lived with her mummy and daddy in a very nice house near London. Claire's mummy and daddy were very kind to her. They took her to the park to play on the swings, and they bought her ice creams and they went on trips to London to see the soldiers in their lovely red uniforms, and they invited her friends round to play, and they even gave her her very own puppy.

So you'd *think* she would have been very happy. And she was. She was *very* happy. Except for one thing. The elephant in the garden at her playschool.

Claire had been going to playschool for nearly a year before she saw the elephant. Thursdays were playschool days, because that was the day when mummy had to go shopping. So every Thursday, mummy would take Claire to the sweet shop to buy lemon sherbets which were her favourites. After that they'd stand at the bus stop outside the shop, and when the big red bus came, they'd go upstairs and sit right at the front and eat sweets together and look down into the gardens of the houses as they went by. Then, when the bus reached the playschool, Claire would press the button to sound the bell so the bus would stop, and mummy would help her take off her coat and hang it on her special peg with the jack-in-the-box picture on it, and would give Claire's lunchbox to Miss Kent, who was very kind, and Claire would run off to play. Sometimes she would make castles in the sand tray, and sometimes she painted pictures of her puppy or of her mummy and daddy, or of the big red buses, and sometimes Miss Kent would read stories to them; and whatever they did, it was really good fun, and Claire loved every minute of it. And then at four o'clock, mummy would come back, and they'd get on another bus and go home again.

And it was just after they had got into the bus to go home one windy afternoon in March that Claire saw it. From the top floor of the bus, she could see down into the garden at the back of the playschool, and there it was – the elephant. It had a big nose and big ears and big feet, and it was very big, and very grey, and *very* scary.

The next week, Claire really didn't want to go to playschool, but she didn't know what to do,

because she knew mummy had to do the shopping on Thursday or they wouldn't have important things like baked beans and shampoo. So she decided she'd just have to be brave, and go anyway, and not say anything. But she felt too ill for sweets, so she asked if they could not bother going to the shop. This worried her mummy, because she had never ever known Claire not to want sweets; but she knew that some of Claire's friends had had colds and things, so she thought perhaps that was all it was.

At playschool, Miss Kent noticed that Claire didn't seem to want to join in, and when it was time to go out and play in the garden, Claire simply burst into tears and wouldn't go. Miss Kent asked whatever was the matter, but Claire didn't say anything, because she liked playschool and being with her friends, and she was afraid that if she told Miss Kent there was an elephant in the garden, Miss Kent would tell mummy, and then mummy would decide that it wasn't safe to be sending her to a playschool which kept dangerous things like elephants in the garden.

The next week, though, was even worse. Not only did she not want sweets, but she didn't even want to go upstairs on the bus any more – and mummy got *really* worried. In fact, she was so worried that she decided she needed to talk to daddy.

'I'm scared about Claire,' she said. 'She's been behaving very strangely lately. She doesn't want to go upstairs on the bus any more, and she doesn't want to buy sweets any more.'

'Hmm – that's very worrying,' said Claire's daddy. 'Doesn't want sweets? Hmm, I think perhaps you'd better take her to the doctor.'

So the next day, mummy dressed Claire up in her warmest coat, in case she had a chill, and explained that they had to go to the doctor. The

doctor measured how tall Claire was, and weighed her, and took his stethoscope and listened to her chest, and pressed her tongue down with a special stick and asked her to say 'Aah' at the same time, and then he scratched his head. 'I really can't see anything wrong with Claire,' he said. 'Indeed if it weren't for the fact that she doesn't want sweets, I'd say there was nothing to worry about. In any case, I don't think she needs medicine – try giving her lots of chocolate and if that doesn't help, come back and see me in four weeks' time.'

He was just about to show them out when he had another thought. 'Hmm, I don't suppose there's any pattern at all to this?'

Claire's mummy thought. 'Well,' she said, 'it does seem mainly to be a problem on Thursdays, now I come to think of it.'

'Hmm,' said the doctor, 'and does anything special happen on Thursdays?'

'Well, only playschool,' said Claire's mummy, 'and she loves that.'

'All the same,' said the doctor, 'I can't help thinking that might have something to do with it. Perhaps it's something you should think about.'

On the way home, Claire's mummy held her hand on the bus. 'Claire,' she said, 'is there something at playschool which is worrying you?'

Claire suddenly looked very scared. 'Yes,' she said. 'There's an elephant in the garden, and it's very scary. But I didn't want to tell you, because I like being with my friends there, and if I'd told you, you wouldn't have wanted to me to stay in a dangerous place like that.'

'That's odd,' said Claire's mummy, 'I've never seen an elephant there. Perhaps you've made a mistake. But just in case, we'll see what we can do.'

\*

After Claire had gone to bed, Claire's mummy told her daddy she needed a word with him.

'I've discovered why Claire's ill on Thursdays,' she said. 'It's because they keep an elephant in the back garden at playschool, and she's scared of it. But she didn't want to tell us because she likes

playschool, and she was afraid we wouldn't let her go if we knew there was an elephant.'

'That seems very strange,' said Claire's daddy. 'These days you'd have thought there would be a law against keeping elephants in playschools. But we can't take Claire out of playschool if it would make her sad. You leave it to me, and I'll see what I can do.'

'And *that*,' said daddy to himself, 'is a problem, because I have no idea at all what we *can* do.' So he sat himself down in his favourite armchair by the fire on his own with a mug of tea and a large packet of chocolate biscuits, which he always found helpful when he had difficult thinking to do, and he closed his eyes, and he thought, and he thought, and he thought. And at last he jumped up. 'That's it!' he said. And then he got the telephone and dialled a friend of his. 'Hello,' he said, 'I wonder if you could do me a big favour ...'

\*

Next morning, Claire woke up early, because there was an odd noise outside the house. 'That's strange,' she thought, 'it sounds as though there's a lorry out there.'

Then there was a *bang*, as though someone had opened the back of a lorry. And the bang was followed by a thump-thump-thump. And the thump-thump-thump was followed by a strange kind of squeaky bellowy noise.

'What *is* going on?' Claire asked herself. And she had just climbed out of bed and put on her dressing gown, and was walking across to pull the curtains back when mummy came into her room. 'Get dressed quickly,' said mummy. 'There's someone you need to meet.'

Out in the garden, there was a tap on Claire's shoulder. A slightly hard tap. And a slightly dribbly one. She turned round ... and there was an elephant reaching out to her with his trunk! Mummy held Claire's hand very firmly. 'This,' she said, 'is Edgar. Daddy has borrowed him from a friend at London Zoo for the day. He's very friendly. And he's *very* fond of buns.'

The elephant smiled at Claire, and held out his nose to shake hands, and flapped his ears and flicked his tail to and fro – and he wasn't at all

scary. So Claire shook his nose and held out a bun for him, and he picked it up with his trunk and popped it in his mouth and then rubbed himself up against her and let her tickle his tummy.

So Claire spent the rest of the day playing games with Edgar and letting him take her for rides on his back. That was the best bit – he'd bend his leg so she could climb up on his knee, and then he'd wrap his trunk round her and lift her right up on to his back, so she could see into the next door garden.

The little girl next door was out playing in her garden the first time this happened, and she was amazed to see Claire's head pop up above the fence. 'How ever are you doing that?' she asked. 'Are you standing on a ladder?'

'Oh no,' said Claire. 'I'm just sitting on my elephant. Would you like a ride too?'

So Edgar reached over and lifted up the little girl from next door, and took them both for a ride around Claire's garden, and then they got off and Edgar played ball games with them, and also hide and seek – except he wasn't very good at that and always lost: can you think why?

And then they lay down on the grass together, and Edgar cuddled them with his nose, and they gave him lots of buns to eat, and they had a lovely time until the lorry came back to fetch Edgar

because it was time to go back to the zoo for tea. But Claire's mummy said not to worry, because they could go and visit Edgar in the zoo, and he could still come back to play every Tuesday afternoon so long as it wasn't raining, and she'd make more buns each Monday evening so they were ready for him. So Edgar climbed into the lorry and waved goodbye to them, and the lorry drove back to the zoo.

'So,' said Claire's mummy, 'did you have a nice time?'

'Yes, it was *lovely*,' said Claire. And she went up to bed and dreamt about elephants.

\*

When next Thursday came, Claire was very happy to go to the sweet shop again, *and* to go upstairs on the bus, and she couldn't wait to get to playschool because she knew she would never be afraid of elephants again.

When they got there, mummy reached into her shopping bag and gave her a large packet.

'Some buns,' she said. 'In case you see the elephant.'

But the strange thing was that after that, she never *did* see an elephant at playschool. But she *did* see Edgar. She saw him quite often. But that's a whole different story.

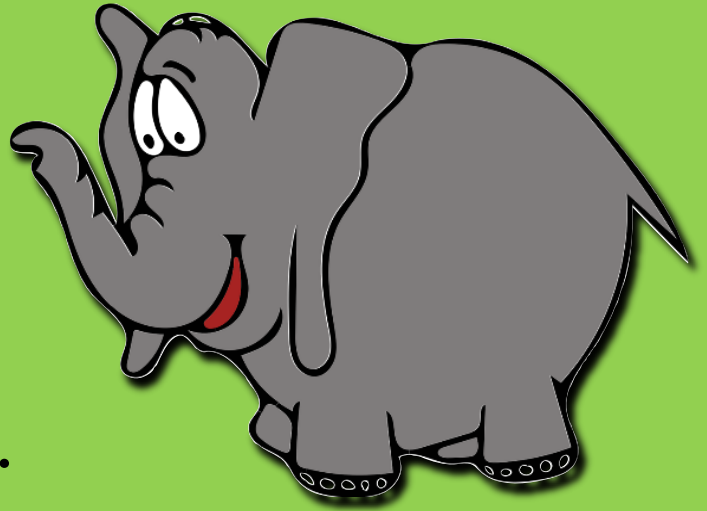


# For new readers

This is Edgar.

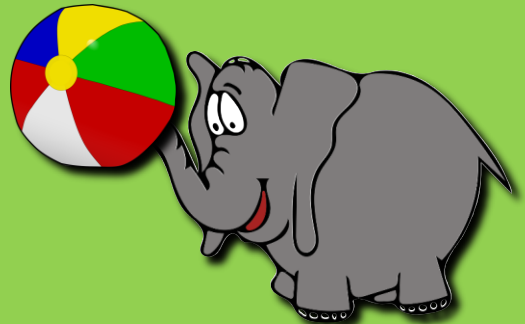
Edgar is grey.

Edgar is very big.



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Edgar has a big ball.



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Edgar eats buns.



**Here are some quiz questions. You get ten points for each answer you get right.**

## **Some questions about the story**

What were Claire's favourite sweets?

Claire had a special peg for her coat at playschool.  
What picture did it have on it?

Why was Claire scared of going to playschool?

What did daddy do to help stop Claire being scared?

Where did Edgar live?

## **Some other questions**

See if you can find out which countries elephants live in.

Elephants have very big noses. What special word is used for an elephant's nose?

What's the special name for a baby elephant? What other animals have babies with the same name.



# That's the end of the quiz

How many points did you get?

\*

Make up your own story about an elephant and draw a picture to go with it.

\*

Edgar and some friends have gone out for a walk. But it's tea time now, and they want to get back to the zoo so they can have some buns.

The way back to the zoo is printed on the next page. See if you can beat your friends and get your elephant back to the zoo fastest.

You will need :-

A print out of the next page. Colour it all in so it looks nice.

An elephant each. Colour the ones below, and then cut out one for you and one for each of your friends.

A dice.

Good luck!

