

Tales

SAMPLE

From The

Brink



**Kabir The Hero:
An Indian Elephant Story**

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Kabir The Hero: An Indian Elephant Story

By Neil Harwood

I could feel Sai watching me as I walked over to Kyra. Sai had been my best friend for many years, and sometimes we still played together. Recently, however, Sai had been acting differently. He had started showing off and making fun of me, trying to make me look small in front of the herd of female elephants. Especially in front of Kyra.

I didn't understand it. He didn't like Kyra anyway. He liked Prisha. He was always bragging about how he was friends with the beautiful Prisha. I suppose that he just wanted everyone to think how grown-up he was. He didn't realise that his boasting only made him look childish.

'Oh look!' I heard him say behind me. 'Kabir's finally plucked up enough courage to speak to Kyra! Let's see if she ignores him!'

Several of the elephants in the herd looked up from their grazing. Some of them were grinning, watching to see what I would do.

Although he had embarrassed me, Sai had actually done me a favour. I had no choice now but to talk to Kyra. If he hadn't said anything I might have walked past her without stopping to talk.

Kyra was smiling as I approached. I thought that was a good sign. Unless it meant she was laughing at me.

'Hello, Kabir,' she said. 'Have you come to speak to me, or are you going to walk past again?'

I felt even more embarrassed, if that were possible. Kyra must have noticed that I had already walked over to her several times, without daring to speak to her!

'Hello, Kyra,' I said. 'Of course I'm going to talk to you. We're old friends!'

It was true, we had been very good friends and we used to spend many hours playing together. Of course, that was when we were younger.

‘That’s good!’ she said. ‘I was afraid that you didn’t like me anymore!’

‘Of course I like you!’ I replied. ‘It’s just that I, ... er ...’

She laughed. ‘I’m only teasing, Kabir! I’m glad you’ve come over. Why is Sai being such an idiot recently?’

I told her I didn’t know. We looked over at the other elephant. He was talking to Prisha. Prisha seemed to enjoy his company; I don’t know why. Kyra and I talked for a while, sharing memories of our childhood and how we used to play in the river together.

Aanya, the leader of the herd, came over, and started listening to our conversation. It was clear that she wasn’t very happy about me speaking to Kyra. I began to feel self-conscious. I told Kyra that I was feeling thirsty and that I needed to go down to the river for a drink.

As I left, Kyra called, ‘Kabir, You can talk to me any time you want!’

‘Okay!’ I said, smiling. I walked off feeling excited and happy.

I noticed that Aanya was frowning as I left. I feel guilty for saying it, but this made me even happier!

I lived with the herd until last year. Male elephants leave when they reach a certain age. Even now I’ve left I still stay in the valley to be close to them. Nowadays I spend much of my time alone, or with small groups of other males. There aren’t many Indian elephants left here any more, and we tend not to wander far from each other.

There are many more female Indian elephants than males. Sometimes bad men come into the valley and take male elephants away. Sometimes they do even worse things. I have been told that the men collect elephant tusks. Female Indian elephants don’t have tusks, so the men aren’t as interested in them. Well, the men won’t get their hands on my tusks! Let them try; I’ll show them what tusks can do to a puny creature like a man!

End of sample.

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