

GRANDMA'S MAGICAL ELEPHANT

"HI THERE, I'm Wendy," said a friendly nurse. "The doctor told me about your operation today. He asked me to stop by and cheer you up." The smiling nurse reached for Emily's hand. "I have a story I think you will like. I'm sure it will help put a smile on your face."

The five-year-old's face looked to be the color of white paper. She looked tired and struggling to keep her eyes open.

"There once was a little girl about your age. On her fifth birthday trouble came and she needed to go to the hospital for a few weeks. Each day she felt more tired. Her mum felt sad, but always visited wearing a smile."

"What was wrong with the little girl?" whispered Emily.

"The doctor said she wasn't eating all her dinner. Her mum said it had to be something else. She would sit and stroke her daughter's arm then read story after story to help pass the time. At the end of each day she'd pray for a miracle. Her dad always walked the floor wearing a frown."

"It must've been his way of showing he was worried," whispered Emily.

Wendy nodded and sent her a caring smile.

"One day the young girl's dad was running to the hospital when he saw an old lady waving at him from across the street. He said she looked like an old Grandma with her bent shoulders and baggy old clothes. Wrapped around her neck she wore a pink and purple woolen scarf."

"Who was she?" asked Emily, sitting up in bed.

"Let's see if I can remember the whole story," said Wendy. She put her finger to her cheek and continued.

"Sorry, I can't stop for a chat. I'm running late to see my daughter. She's in the hospital," said the little girl's dad.

The old lady kept on waving and smiling at him. He thought better of his answer and marched across the road.

"Why do you need to talk to me?" he asked.

"Your little girl, would she like a special gift?" The old lady started to say.

"Yes of course. Do you have any teddy bears?" he asked. "My daughter loves teddy bears."

"No, I don't. A Grandma's magical elephant might be just what she needs. If you say yes, you can have an elephant for free."

The little girl's dad felt amazed. "Something for free?" he asked.

The old lady slowly nodded.

"Thank you, I'll take her one today."

"Before you go, I must tell you a little secret about Grandma's magical elephant. Don't be alarmed if you hear stories about this elephant tickling little children's nose, ears and toes at night. It only wants to put a smile on children's faces. When your daughter is well again and ready to go home she won't find it. My elephant would've returned here to my little old table once again."

"How?" asked Emily.

"I'm not sure, maybe it's just a story," said Wendy.

For the first time in a week Emily sat straight-backed. Her cheeks appeared to be a healthy red color. She even managed to smile. "Please, keep going."

"I will if you think you're up to hearing more of the story?" said Wendy.

Emily's eyes started to sparkle. Looking excited, she quickly nodded.

"This special little girl said her dad didn't understand what the old lady meant, but he gave her a friendly smile before running off towards the hospital with the stuffed elephant under his arm."

"He's an odd-looking fellow," his daughter giggled. "His blue and red body certainly doesn't match his dark green trunk. His pink tail makes him look funny. He's under-stuffed body makes his ears look too big. Not at all like a real elephant." She took him in her weak arms, giving him a huge cuddle as big as she could manage."

"Did the elephant come alive?" asked Emily, jumping about in the bed.

"When everyone was asleep, Grandma's magical elephant did come to life. Night after night he would tickle the little girl's nose and tickle her toes and behind her ears too. He stayed by her side waiting for the time she was well enough to go home. Then the strangest thing happened. Her funny looking elephant disappeared."

“Wendy, where did it go?”

“The little girl ran around asking everyone again and again if they had seen her elephant. I’ve looked for it everywhere,” she cried. “It’s not under my pillow or my bed. It’s not in the cupboard or under my blanket. It’s not even down the hall. Where could my elephant be?”

“Never seen a thing like it,” chuckled all the grown-ups.

“You must have seen it sitting on my bed during the day. Tell me you did,” pleaded the little girl.

“The grown-ups just smiled and they’d give her a hug.”

“What happened to the elephant?” asked Emily. She looked like she was about to cry.

“The most amazing thing happened,” said Nurse Wendy. “I’m that little girl. I’ve grown-up and work in the very same hospital. When all is quiet in the middle of the night, I sometimes hear children giggling. I walk into their room to see what has happened. They say there’s a real elephant close by. It keeps tickling their ears, nose and toes. I smile and say I know all about Grandma’s magical elephant. It’s hard at work, tickling the ears, nose and toes of all the seriously ill children.”

“Do you think a magical elephant will visit me?” asked Emily.

“Maybe one night soon Grandma’s magical elephant will come to visit to tickle your ears and toes and play with your nose.”

Emily started to giggle. “What happened to the sweet little old lady?”

“I think she was an angel sent to help the children of the world to feel well. That’s what I believe. Don’t you?”

Dear reader,

thank you for reading my short story Grandma’s magical elephant, I do hope you enjoyed it. Any feedback is gratefully accepted. The information you, the reader give, helps me to become a more professional author.

My stories are based on the Australian culture. Some of the spelling is Australian. Thanks for your understanding.

Again, thank you for your support, for without you, the reader, I wouldn’t have anyone to read my work.

Mark Stewart

Email: mark_stewart777@hotmail.com