

“HORTON HATCHES THE EGG”

Dr. Seuss

Sighed Mayzie, a lazy bird hatching an egg:
“I’m tired and I’m bored
And I’ve kinks in my leg
From sitting, just sitting here day after day.
It’s work! How I hate it!
I’d much rather play!
I’d take a vacation, fly off for a rest
If I could find someone to stay on my nest!!

“If I could find someone, I’d fly away – free – “
Then Horton, the Elephant, passed by her tree.
“Hello!” called the lazy bird, smiling her best.
“You’ve nothing to do and I do need a rest.
Would YOU like to sit on the egg in my nest?”

“ME on your egg? Why, that doesn’t make sense ...
Your egg is so small, ma’am, and I’m so immense!”

“I can’t,” said the elephant.
“P-L-E-A-S-E!” begged the bird.
“I won’t be gone long, sir. I give you my word.
I’ll hurry right back. Why, I’ll never be missed”
“Very well,” said the elephant, “since you insist
You want a vacation. Go fly off and take it.
I’ll sit on your egg and I’ll try not to break it.
I’ll stay and be faithful. I mean what I say.”
“Toodle-oo!” sang out Mayzie and fluttered away.

“H-m-m-m .. the first thing to do,” murmured Horton,
“Let’s see
The first thing to do is to prop up this tree
And make it much stronger. That has to be done
Before I get on it. I must weight a ton.”
Then carefully, tenderly, gently he crept
Up the trunk to the nest where the little egg slept.
And he sat all that day, and he kept the egg warm
And he sat all that night through a terrible storm.
“I wish she’d come back ‘cause I’m cold and I’m wet.
I hope that that Mayzie bird doesn’t forget.”

But Mayzie, by this time, was far beyond reach,
Enjoying the sunshine way off in Palm Beach,
And having such fun, such a wonderful rest,
Decided she'd NEVER go back to her nest!

So Horton kept sitting there, day after day.
And soon it was Autumn. The leaves blew away.
And then came the Winter ... the snow and the sleet!
And icicles hung
From his trunk and his feet.
But Horton kept sitting, and said with a sneeze,
"I'll stay on this egg and I won't let it freeze."

So poor Horton sat there the whole winter through ...
And then came the springtime with troubles anew!
His friends gathered round and they shouted with glee.
"Look! Horton the Elephant's up in a tree!"
They taunted. They teased him. They yelled, "How absurd!"
"Old Horton the Elephant thinks he's a bird!"

They laughed and they laughed. Then they all ran away.
And Horton was lonely. He wanted to play.
But he sat on the egg and boldly would say,
"No matter WHAT happens, this egg must be tended!"
Yet poor Horton's troubles were far, far from ended.
For, while Horton sat there so faithful, so kind,
Three hunters came sneaking up softly behind!
"Look!" they all shouted, "Can such a thing be?
An elephant sitting on top of a tree...."
Let's take him alive. Why, he's terribly funny!
We'll sell him to America, to a circus for money!"

And the first thing he knew, they had built a big wagon
With ropes on the front for the pullers to drag on.
They dug up his tree and they put it inside,
With Horton so sad that he practically cried.
"We're off!" the men shouted. And off they all went
With Horton unhappy, one hundred per cent.

After bobbing around for two weeks like a cork,
They landed at last in the town of New York.

Sold to a circus! Then week after week
They showed him to people at ten cents a peek.
They took him to Boston, to Kalamazoo,
Chicago, Weehawken and Washington, too;
And everywhere thousands of folks flocked to see
And laugh at the elephant up in a tree.

Then ... ONE DAY the circus show happened to reach
A town way down south, not so far from Palm Beach.
And dawdling along way up high in the sky,
Who (of all people!) should chance to fly by
But that old good-for-nothing bird, runaway Mayzie!
Still on vacation and still just as lazy.

And she swooped from the clouds through an open tent door ...
“Good gracious!” gasped Mayzie, “I’ve seen YOU before!”
Poor Horton looked up with his face white as chalk!
He started to speak, but before he could talk ...
There rang out the noisiest ear-splitting squeaks
From the egg that he’d sat on for fifty-one weeks!
A thumping! A bumping! A wild alive scratching!
“My egg!” shouted Horton. “MY EGG! WHY, IT’S HATCHING!”

“But it’s MINE!” screamed the bird, when she heard the egg crack.
(The work was all done. Now she wanted it back.)

Poor Horton backed down
With a sad, heavy heart

But at that very instant, the egg burst apart!
And out of the pieces of red and white shell,
From the egg that he’d sat on so long and so well,
Horton the Elephant saw something whizz!
IT HAD EARS AND A TAIL AND A TRUNK JUST LIKE HIS!

And the people came shouting, “What’s all this about ...?”
They looked! And they stared with their eyes popping out!
“My goodness! My gracious!” they shouted. “MY WORD!
It’s something brand new!
IT’S AN ELEPHANT-BIRD!!