

## Uncle Eugene and Nora

Nora the elephant was playing with her friends Anthony and Tomtom. They played spray-the-mud. Each elephant would suck muddy water up its trunk and try to spray it out as far as it could. This was fun for the elephants. In the middle of playing, Nora noticed an old, lonely elephant at the edge of the jungle. "Why is Uncle Eugene always alone?" Nora asked. "He wants to be alone," said Anthony. "He's a cranky, old elephant," Tomtom added. "But what if he doesn't want to be alone?" Nora asked. "Yes he does," Anthony said. "Every time you go close to him he says: Go away! I want to be alone!" Tomtom added. "But what if he REALLY doesn't want to be alone?" Nora pondered: "Maybe he only says that because he has been left alone in the first place?" "That makes no sense," the other two elephants said. Nora was stubborn and went over to Uncle Eugene. "Go away! I want to be alone!" the old elephant said angrily and turned away from Nora. Nora turned to face Eugene. "Go away!" Eugene said sourly. "You are so old and wise," Nora said, "you probably have many exciting stories to tell." The old elephant sat down heavily and stared into the distance. Still, his ears had lifted up with interest. "It would be nice to hear an old story," Nora continued, not giving up. The old elephant looked at Nora and thoughtfully scratched his ear with his own trunk. Nora continued to cajole: "You probably have amazing stories to tell." "Well..." the old elephant finally said, "I guess I've seen many things during my life... Have you heard about the lake that vanished?" "The lake that vanished? No, I haven't heard about that. What happened? Did it really vanish?" Nora asked with excitement. "Come back to play!" Anthony yelled from the edge of the muddy pond. "No, I won't! Uncle Eugene is telling me about a lake that vanished! I

want to hear the story!" Nora shouted back. The other elephants stomped over to Nora and Eugene. "A lake that vanished? The entire lake? Where did it go? Was it ever found?" the boys asked and sat next to Nora to listen. Eugene was baffled as the three small elephants sat waiting eagerly. "Tell us! Tell us!" Nora insisted. The old elephant thought for a moment and started: "It happened long ago, when I was still a small, young elephant. There was a valley with a beautiful lake. All the animals used to come and drink from it. But one day, something strange happened..." The three young elephants listened breathlessly as the old elephant told the story about the lake that vanished. The next day they asked their friends to join in and they all went over to Eugene. "Tell us more stories!" they requested. After that, Uncle Eugene was never alone again. In the end, he wasn't all that moody after all. Not anymore.

Kirjoittanut Päivi Honkakoski

### **Kysymyksiä**

Why wasn't Uncle Eugene so moody and cranky in the end?

How would you feel if you were left alone all the time?

What can you do if you see someone alone?

### **Tehtävä**

Make up the story that Uncle Eugene told the little elephants. Where did the lake go? Did it ever come back? What happened to the animals who couldn't get water from it anymore?