

# Aesop's Fables

## 38. THE RAT AND THE ELEPHANT

**By Rob John**

A Rat was walking through the city. He was a very proud Rat who believed that he was the most frightening animal alive.

'Oh, yes!' said the Rat to himself. 'Everyone's scared of me. Scary Rat coming through. Out of my way!'

The Rat turned a corner and saw a crowd of people standing by the side of the road. 'Brilliant,' thought the Rat. 'I do like a crowd.'

He jumped out into the middle of the road right in front of the crowd and waited for the first scream...but there wasn't one.

Everybody was staring up the road. Nobody even noticed the Rat.

'Look everybody,' said the Rat. 'Over here. Rat. See.'

Nothing happened. The people were all too busy looking up the road. 'This is ridiculous,' said the Rat. 'Are you all blind? Can't you see me?'

Then the Rat saw what the people were looking at.

An elephant was coming down the road. Sitting on the elephant's back and stroking a large white cat rode the King.

'Wow,' said a man. 'Just look at the size of that elephant!'

'Never mind the elephant,' said the Rat. 'What about me. Look at me. I'm a scary rat.'

'Yes look at its wonderful long trunk,' said a woman.

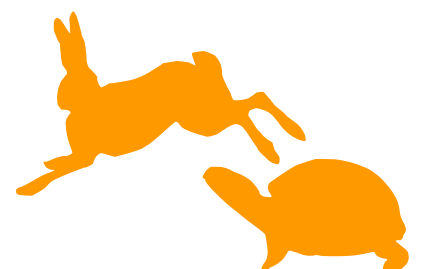
'That's just its nose,' said the Rat. 'I've got a nose.'

'And its huge ears,' said a little girl.

'I've got ears,' said the Rat, jumping up and down.

But nobody was listening. They were too busy admiring the enormous elephant.

'That is the most wonderful creature in the whole world,' they all said.





'No...no!' said the Rat. 'There's nothing wonderful about elephants. How many legs have they got? Four like me. How many eyes have they got? Two like me. What colour are they? Grey like me. See, I'm exactly the same as an elephant except an elephant's really slow and boring and I'm truly the most fierce and terrifying creature in the world.'

But nobody noticed the Rat...apart from the King's Cat.

'Look at me...look at me. I'm exactly like an elephant 'cept better. Elephant's are rubbish. I am the most fierce and...'

The Rat didn't finish what he was saying because...in an instant the white cat had run down the elephant's trunk and was staring the Rat in the face.

'Exactly like an elephant, eh?' said the Cat looking down at the Rat.

'Well maybe not *exactly*,' said the Rat looking nervously at the cat's sharp claws. 'Obviously my nose isn't quite as long... my ears are a bit smaller...and I haven't got a king riding on my back...'

Suddenly the Cat's paw flashed out and pinned the Rat to the ground.

The Rat couldn't move.

'Think I could do this to an elephant?' said the Cat.

'Um...not sure,' said the Rat.

The Cat scooped up the Rat and held him up to her mouth.

'Think I could do this to an elephant?' said the Cat.

'No, maybe not,' said the Rat shaking in fear.

'Think I could eat an elephant in two seconds flat?' asked the Cat.

'Nope,' whispered the Rat.

'Look what I've found,' said the Cat to the people putting the terrified Rat back down on the ground.

The Rat was shaking and looked so small and scared that people weren't at all frightened of him.

'What is it?' said a man.

'Sort of mouse I think,' said his wife. 'Funny little mouse thing probably.'

As he slunk away the Rat heard the Cat say 'A rat and an elephant may be the same colour but that doesn't make them the same size. You remember that...Mr Rat.'

And the Rat did remember that. For ever.