

An Elephant in the House

by Margaret Mahy

Illustrated by Darcia Labrosse

An elephant came to our house. It sat on the living room floor and watched TV.

"What's that elephant doing in here?" asked Dad.

"Watching the news and weather," Mom replied.

"It's too big. Get it out," said Dad.

Aunty came in. "What's that huge elephant doing?" she asked.

"It's watching TV," said Mom.

"I can't see past it," grumbled Aunty.

"We've tried pushing it," said Dad, "but it won't go away."



"I'll help you push," said Aunty.
So Mom and Dad and Aunty
pushed. They pushed and pushed
and pushed. The elephant didn't
even blink.



Uncle came in to see what all the fuss was about.
"Who let that enormous elephant in?" said Uncle.
"It came in by itself," said Dad.
"Why don't you chase it out?" said Uncle.
"Why don't *you* chase it out?" said Dad.
So Uncle yelled at the elephant, "Shoo, you big fat
thing!"
But the elephant stayed where it was.

"I know what we'll do," said Uncle. "We'll push it out."

"We've already tried that," said Aunty.

"Not with me, you haven't," said Uncle. "I used to be very good at pushing elephants."

So Mom and Dad and Aunty and Uncle pushed the huge elephant. They pushed until they were blue in the face.

The elephant didn't move.



Jim-John came in. "What are you doing?" he asked.

"Trying to get rid of this elephant," said Mom.

"We've pushed and pulled," said Dad.

"We've pulled and pushed," said Aunty.

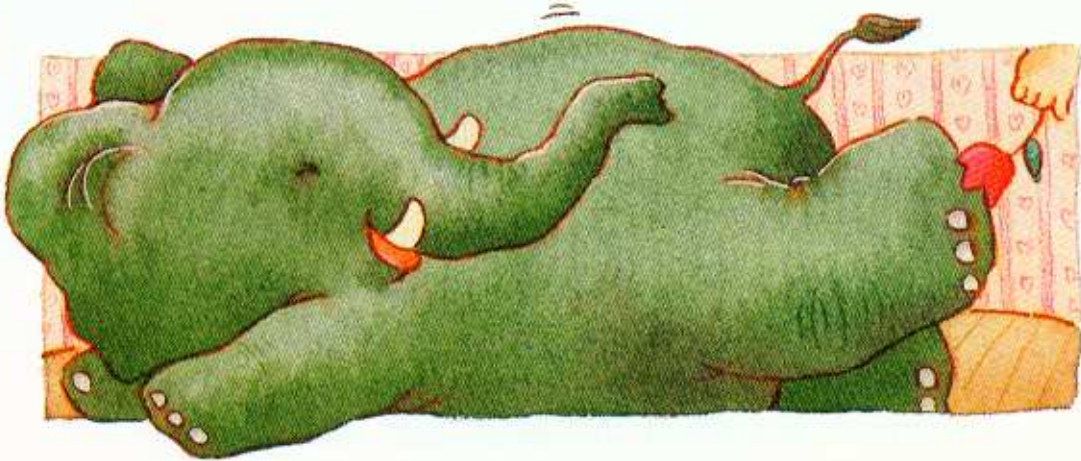
"We've got no more push left," said Uncle.



“That’s not the way to get rid of an elephant,” said Jim-John. He took a flower from the vase. “Watch this,” he said. Then he gently tickled one of the elephant’s feet.



Jim-John tickled the second foot. The elephant shook all over. Its ears flapped like sails in a wind.



Jim-John tickled the third foot. The elephant gasped. Tears came out of its eyes. But still it pretended to watch TV.



Jim-John tickled the fourth foot. That was too much for the elephant. It rolled over on its back. It shook like a jelly. It laughed so loudly, the window cracked.

Jim-John held the flower to the elephant's nose.

"Do you want some more?" he said.

He didn't have to say it a second time. The elephant got to its feet and ran out of the house. They could hear it bellowing down the road.

"That's how you get rid of an elephant," said Jim-John.

"It's just as well we had some flowers," said Uncle.

They closed the doors so no more elephants could come in, then they all sat down to watch the news and weather.