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## **The Hare, the Elephant, and the Beans**

The Hare and the Elephant were once friends, and the Hare said, "Come, man, and let us go and look for food." And they went to a village and said, "We want to hoe for you if you will give us food," and the headman said, "Good." And he let them hoe in his garden and gave them some beans to eat there in the garden. And they went to the garden and cooked those beans. when they had finished hoeing, the beans were done, and the Elephant said, "I am going to the water to bathe; d you look well after the beans, and we will eat them together when I return." Then he went away and took off his skin, and ran, and came to the place where the Hare was.

When the Hare saw him, he was afraid, thinking that he was a wild beast, and he ran away, and the Elephant ate up those beans, and went back to the water, and put on his skin again, and returned, and said, "Have you taken off the pot with the beans?"

And the Hare said, "No, my friend, there came here a terrible wild beast, and I ran away, and it ate those beans."

And the Elephant said, "No, you are cheating me! You ate those beans yourself! It was not a wild beast, no!"

And the next day they went again to hoe, and cooked their beans. When the beans were nearly done, the Elephant said to the Hare, "I shall go and bathe. We will eat the beans when I return." And he did just the same as before.

When he returned and asked if the beans were ready, the Hare answered, "The wild beast came again today and has eaten the beans."

The Elephant said, "My friend, it is very deceitful of you to eat the beans twice over and not let me have any!"

And the Hare said, "Now I am going to make a bow. if it comes again I will shoot it."

Next day, they put on their beans again, and the Elephant took the bow which the Hare had made and said, "You have not made it well. Give it to me; I will make it right for you." And he kept on paring and shaving it, a little here and a little there, till he had made it too thick in one place, and said, "Now it is good. If the wild beast comes, you can shoot it."

Then he went down to the water and took off his skin and ran and came where the Hare was.

When the Hare saw that wild beast coming, he took his bow to shoot it, and the bow broke.

So he ran away again, and the Elephant ate the beans, and came back as before and asked, "Did you shoot the wild beast?"

And the Hare answered, "No, my bow broke, and I ran away."

Next day they put on the beans once more, and the Hare went aside and made his bow and hid it.

When the Elephant went away to bathe, the Hare took his bow and held it in his hand and took a barbed arrow, and when the wild beast came once more, he shot him through the heart, and the Elephant said, "Mother! Mother! Mother! Mother! (mai mai mai mai) Oh! My friend, to shoot me like this, because of those miserable beans! I meant to have left some for you today that you might eat!"

And the Hare said, "Ha! My friend! Then it was you who finished up those beans by yourself, and I thought it was a wild beast!"

The Elephant said, "Ha! To shoot me with a barbed arrow! You have hurt me, my friend! And how shall I get this out?"

And the Elephant tried to pull out the arrow, and died.

And the Hare ate the beans by himself, and went home.



[African elephant \(photo by Arno Meintjes\)](#)