

## Horton Hatches The Egg

By: 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?”

The elephant laughed.

“Why, of all silly things!

I haven’t feathers and I haven’t wings.

Me on your egg? Why, that doesn’t make sense...

Your egg is so small, ma’am, and I’m so immense!”

“Tut, tut,” answered Mayzie. “I know you’re not small

But I’m sure you can do it. No trouble at all.

Just sit on it softly. You’re gentle and kind.

Come, be a good fellow. I know you won’t mind.”

“I can’t,” said the elephant

“PL-E-E-ASE!” 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 weigh a ton.”

Then carefully,

Tenderly,

Gently he crept

Up the trunk to the nest where the little egg slept.

Then Horton the elephant smiled. "Now that's that..."

And he sat

And he sat

And he sat

And he sat....

And he sat all that day

And he kept the egg warm...

And he sat all that night

Through a terrible storm.

It poured and it lightnined!

It thundered! It rumbled!

"This isn't much fun,"

The poor elephant grumbled.

"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 the 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.

I meant what I said  
And I said what I meant...  
An elephant's faithful  
One hundred per cent!"

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 the they Laughed, Then they al ran away.

And Horton was lonely. He wanted to play

but he sat on the egg and continued to say

"I meant what I said

And I said what I meant...

An elephant's faithful

One hundred per cent!

"No matter What happens,

This egg must be tended!"

But 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!*

He heard the men's footsteps!

He turned with a start!  
*Three rifles were aiming*  
*Right strait at his heart!*

Did he run?

He did not!

HORTON STAYED ON THAT NEST!

He held his head high  
And he threw out his chest  
And he looked at the hunters

As much as to say:

“Shoot if you must

But I *won't* run away!

I meant what I said

And I said what I meant...

An elephant's faithful

One hundred per cent!”

But the men *didn't* shoot!

Much to Horton's surprise

They dropped their three guns

And they stared with wide eyes!

“look!” they all shouted,

“Can such a thing be?

An elephant sitting on top of a tree...”

“It’s strange! It’s amazing! It’s wonderful! New!

Don’t shoot him. We’ll catch him. That’s just what we’ll do!

Let’s take him alive. Why, he’s terribly funny!

We’ll sell him back 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.

Up out of the jungle! Up into the sky!

Up over the mountains ten thousand feet high!

Then down, down the mountains

And down to the sea

Went the cart with the elephant,

Egg, nest and tree...

Then out of the wagon

And onto a ship!

Out over the ocean...

And ooh, what a trip!

Rolling and tossing and splashed with the spray!

And Horton said, day after day after day,

“I meant what I said

And I said what I meant...

But oh, am I seasick!

One hundred per cent!”

After bobbing around for two weeks like a cork,

They landed at last in the town of New York.

“All ashore!” the men shouted,

And down with a lurch

Went Horton the Elephant

Still on his perch,

Tied onto a board that could just scarcely hold him...

Bump!

Horton landed!

And then the men sold him!

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;  
To Dayton, Ohio; St. Paul, Minnesota;  
To Wichita, Kansas; to Drake, North Dakota.  
And everywhere thousands of folks flocked to see  
And laugh at the elephant up in a tree.  
Poor Horton grew sadder the farther he went,  
But he said as he sat in the hot noisy tent:  
“I meant what I said, and I said what I meant...  
An elephant’s faithful—one hundred per cent!”

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, spying the flags and the tents just below,  
She sang out, “What fun! Why, I’ll go to the show!”

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.)

“It’s my egg!” she sputtered. “You stole it from me!

Get off of my nest and get out of my tree!”

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!

Then they cheered and they cheered and they cheered more and more.

They’d never seen anything like it before!

“My goodness! My gracious!” they shouted. “My Word!

It’s something brand new!

It’s an elephant-bird!!

And it should be, it should be, it should be like that!

Because Horton was faithful! He sat and he sat!

He meant what he said

And he said what he meant...”

...And they sent him home

Happy,

One hundred per cent!

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