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Six Blind Mice and an Elephant

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Editor's Choice:

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Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

Jude Daly lives in South Africa, and has produced a charmingly warm and inspiring re-working of this classic Indian fable. On a hot, hot day, a sleepy elephant wanders into a farmer's barn and settles to a comfortable sleep. When six blind mice are woken by a new and most unusual scent, they hear the farmer's neighbours' voices whispering that an elephant is sleeping in their barn. The mice set off to explore. The first mouse bumps into a wall and declares his disbelief. 'Could an elephant be like a wall?' Oh no, says second mouse, finding its smooth sharp tusk. A spear! A fan! says the third, but a tickle in its ear woke the elephant. 'Is it a snake?' squeaks the fourth mouse, clinging to its swaying trunk, as the elephant rises to its feet. A knotty knee is felt by mouse five, who claims an elephant is like a tree! Mouse six is the youngest of the blind mice, and, hanging from the elephant's tail, announces that it is like a rope. At this point, many of the fables of long ago leave each exploring character believing that their part understanding was the whole. But Daly says at the end of the book that she wanted her blind mice to realise the full wonder of an elephant. So, as the elephant enters the conversation, he agrees the mice are all right in that his parts are a part of his whole, but it is his whole that makes up his entire being. Beautifully told and imaginatively illustrated, this book should be in all primary schools, especially where philosophy is taught, showing that the whole is always more than the sum of its parts.

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