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Little Image Man

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Once in a far-off country, in a temple, lived a funny-looking little image. His face was very solemn, and he held his head up and his mouth a little way open, as if he would scream at the slightest touch.

Not far from him was an Elephant—an image, of course—and on his back, he carried a tall, towerlike affair.

The little Image Man often looked at the Image Elephant, even though he did not seem to be looking at anything, and sometimes he saw little curls of smoke coming out of the little windows of the tower the Elephant carried.

But the thing that most concerned the little Image Man were the gorgeous trappings which the Elephant wore.

Over his back, under the tower, was a beautiful, colored covering of silk, and over his head, hanging down between his eyes, was the same beautiful silk, and from his neck hung a beautiful gold tassel.

Little Image Man thought there could be nothing in the world that could bring greater happiness than to ride on the back of such a gorgeous creature as the Elephant. Sometimes at night when all was still, he would lower his head and by the dim light which was always burning in the temple, he would look at Elephant, and once he thought of speaking to him and asking if he would mind tumbling off that tall tower and taking him for a ride. He was sure the tower must be much heavier than he was.

But he never quite had the courage, and then one day something happened. A terrible noise was heard outside the temple, and then the doors were thrown open, and many creatures came rushing in.

They were soldiers, foreigners, the little Image Man learned afterward, and when it was all over, the Elephant, among other things, was gone from the temple.

It was very lonely then for the little Image Man, and he sighed as he thought of all the images that were gone, but most of all, he missed the handsome-looking Elephant and wished he had asked him for just one ride, but now it was too late.

One day the little Image Man was carried away from the temple, and for a long time, it was all very dark for him. He was being carried far away from the temple

across the ocean in a box, but of course, he did not know.

One day he found himself in a place much lighter than the temple had been, and when it came night and the place was very still, he lowered his head and looked around.

There were many strange things all about him, but at one end of the table on which he sat was another image man, and to him, he spoke.

"Tell me, Brother Image," he said, "what is this strange place and why are we here?"

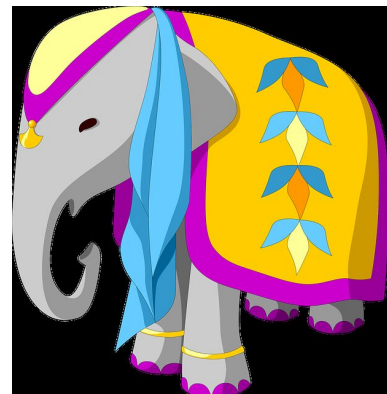
"This is a store, and we are to be sold," replied the image, "how we came here I know not, but I have heard that we were taken from a temple far off across the water where there was a war."

The next day, someone came to the shop and bought the little Image Man and carried him away.

He was put in a beautiful room on a long shelf-like place in front of a window, and that night when all was still in the house, the little Image Man felt something gently touch his arm.

The light from the street came in through the window, and when the little Image Man turned around, his astonished eyes saw the temple Elephant, who had touched him with his trunk.

It did not take them long to tell each other about the strange trip they had taken, and the little Image Man told the Elephant what he had heard in the shop.



"It is much nicer living here," the Elephant said. "In the temple, you could not see what was going on outside, but here all day I look out of the window and see strange and interesting sights."

And then one night, the little Image Man grew bold and asked for the ride he had so long coveted.

"Of course, I will give you a ride," replied the Elephant, and down on his knees, he went, and with the help of another image made of brass, the little Image Man soon had the tower off Elephant's back, and he was in its place.

And so very often, the maid coming to dust the ornaments in the morning finds the tower on the back of the Elephant crooked, and she wonders what could have put it out of place. "It must be the jar of the heavy teams in the street," she always says. But the little Image Man smiles to himself and thinks: "We must be

more careful about putting the tower back on Elephant's back, or we will be caught some night."

And there they live—the little Image Man and the gorgeously decked Elephant, and when sometimes there is incense put in the tower and little streams and curls of smoke come out of the windows, the little Image Man wonders if the fire will burn out in time for him to ride that night, but it always does, and they live very happily even though they are far away from their native land.

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