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The Elephant's Toothache

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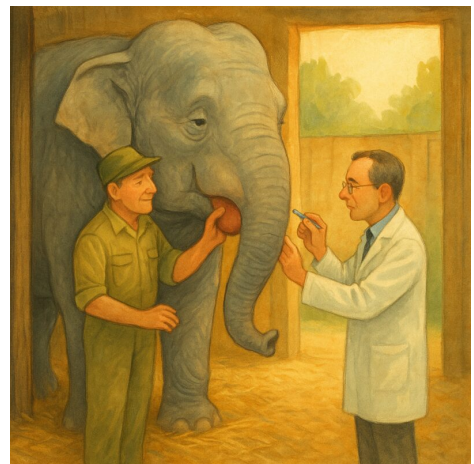
The elephant had been in pain for two weeks.

No one had known. He was not the sort of elephant to make a fuss, and he had simply carried on with his days — a little quieter than usual, not eating quite as much — until his jaw swelled enough that the keeper noticed.

The zoo dentist came straightaway.

"A bad tooth," he said. "But we'll have it sorted."

They gave the elephant something to numb the area, and after a few minutes the throbbing that had been his constant companion for a fortnight simply stopped. When the dentist produced the instrument he needed, the elephant watched it nervously — he had no idea what it was for. But it was over quickly, and when it was done, the tooth was gone.



Within a few days he was himself again — appetite back, spirits back, ready to enjoy his food.

The keeper brought him the finest things he could find.

"You are the bravest creature I've ever known," he told the elephant. "You suffered for weeks without a sound. I only wish we'd known sooner."

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