Sarita and the Elephant Bird

Written by Linda Rae Liss
Illustrations by George Carrara

Characters

Anvi
Elephant Bird

Sarita
Sarita made a secret friend in the forest. Her friend is Anvi, a giant bird. She is so huge that she cannot fly. People are afraid of Anvi because she is different from other birds. They call her the Elephant Bird, because she is so huge. Sarita’s mom tells Sarita to stay away from the Elephant Bird.
One day, an apple farmer finishes selling apples in the town. As he leaves the town, apples fall from his cart onto the road.

Banjarra, the horse, runs to eat the apples. He eats the apples and spits out the cores. He follows the cart down the road out of town.
When Sarita comes back to town, people are meeting about the missing horse. “A monster ate our horse!” screams one man.

“A monster? It was that Elephant Bird!” yells Sarita’s mom.

Sarita stands in front of the crowd. She tells them, “It wasn’t the Elephant Bird! She only eats plants.”

But an old man tells her, “Shh! Children should be quiet.”
Sarita is so upset because she thinks people will hurt Anvi. So, she makes a plan to find out what happened. First, she goes to Banjarra's fence. Next, she sees the horse's footprints go down the road. But the bird footprints go into the forest. The horse and bird did not walk the same way.
Finally, Sarita comes to Anvi’s nest. “Come with me!” she pleads with Anvi. She climbs up on Anvi’s back.

They hear the other people coming, so they run to hide deeper in the forest.
The road leads to an apple orchard. They shine a light on Banjarra! The horse is still eating apples.

After some time, they run to the road. Sarita uses her lantern to light their way. They follow the horse's footprints away from the forest.
The people arrive and they are surprised! “How did you know Banjarra was here?” asks an old man.

Sarita says, “I saw his footprints on the road. The Elephant Bird and I followed them here.”

“That is so smart,” says the old man. “We should all think before we act. And we should not be scared of things that are different.”
Elephant Bird Facts

- Lived in Madagascar off the coast of East Africa
- Became extinct in the 1600’s
- Closest living relative is the Kiwi bird of New Zealand
- Weighed 500 KG (1,100 lbs)
- 3 Meters Tall (9.8 Feet)
- Their eggs were bigger than a human head

After that, everyone includes Anvi and Sarita when they play. They do not care if they are different. The other kids want to play with them. Sarita is clever, and she helps the other kids win games. Anvi and Sarita are so thrilled to be part of the group.
Map of Madagascar

3 Meters

2 Meters

1 Meter

0
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DEDICATED TO

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