

Finding Forget-Me-Nots: The Story of a Mindful Elephant

Wickie Rowland

Wickie Rowland, Illustrator

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In the engaging picture book Finding Forget-Me-Nots, elephants learn the benefits of curiosity and mindfulness.

In Wickie Rowland's picture book *Finding Forget-Me-Nots*, a small elephant learns the value of curiosity and mindfulness as he solves a big problem.

Theo watches a line of leaf-cutting ants at work. He is so engaged that he forgets all about taking his mud bath. It is revealed that his curiosity and tendency to get absorbed in all that draws his interest causes him to forget other, less interesting duties, too, like picking leaves for his lunch. This worries the other elephants, who remind him that "elephants never forget."

One day, the elephants are hungry. They notice some delicious-looking trees on the other side of a raging river. Although they can remember much, none of what they recall is any help in crossing the water. Curious, mindful Theo saves the day, leading the whole group to a safe crossing and a satisfying dinner.

Beginning with a definition of mindfulness, this outwardly uncomplicated story touches on some complex topics, including how being different from others can lead to feeling "less than," but can also be a gift; how looking to the past for solutions may not resolve today's problems; and how being mindful of other creatures, their activities, and the beauty of nature can enhance the experience of being alive. It makes the subtle point that adults can learn from children when Theo's sister reveals an important truth: "We forgot to look around us because we were too busy remembering!"

The book's expressive, colorful illustrations are memorable and complement its messages. Theo's curiosity and desire to explore with all of his senses are apparent, and his pink color makes him both different from the rest of the elephants and easy to recognize. Background details, the elephants' facial expressions and body language, and attention to the characters' sizes and apparel are conveyed; the luminous, subtle coloration demands attention, too. A concluding treasure hunt element invites searching through the detailed illustrations.

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KRISTINE MORRIS (September 16, 2021)

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