

AFRICAN TALES

The Kindly Aardvark
How Elephants
Got Their Tusks



A long, long time ago Warthog possessed enormous ivory tusks and Elephant had only a small pair of tusks. This made Elephant very envious. He believed that the Creator should have bestowed such magnificent ornaments on him, the largest and most powerful animal in the bush.

Warthog's tusks were so huge that they trailed along the ground and weighed him down. Warthog would never admit it, but they could be a nuisance at times. However, he was tremendously proud of them.



Warthog's best friend was Aardvark. They lived close to each other and spent many happy hours together. One day Elephant sent an invitation to Warthog to visit him. As Warthog trotted off, Aardvark became worried as she knew Elephant was jealous of Warthog's tusks.



“You had better keep your wits about you. Don’t trust Elephant, he will trick you in some way. My advice is to be on your guard!” Aardvark warned. “Oh I will, Aardvark, I will! Thank you for your concern and advice,” replied Warthog gratefully. “Will you be here long?”

“I have so many burrows that I do not need to stay long in one place. But I will stay here a few days longer. Should you need my help, I will be here,” answered Aardvark.



Warthog found Elephant and while they were eating they had a long chat. Elephant breakfasted from the branches and Warthog dug up grass roots and tubers.

Warthog was most flattered by Elephant's friendliness and when Elephant started to compliment Warthog on his magnificent tusks, he thought how kind and charming Elephant was. Warthog had forgotten Aardvark's warning.



“Warthog, your tusks are so wonderful! I do believe they are the finest tusks in all Africa,” said Elephant warmly. Warthog was blushing with pleasure at such compliments.

“I wonder if... but no, I could not ask such a favour of you.”

“What is it you want, friend Elephant?” asked Warthog, who was now totally off guard thanks to Elephant’s cunning.



“Could I please try your tusks? Just to see how I would look with such fine ornaments. I promise I will return them promptly. Warthog was only too pleased to help his new friend and so pulled out his great tusks.



Elephant hurriedly removed his small tusks and put the big ones in place. Elephant looked at his reflection in a nearby pool and was very impressed by his splendid appearance.

“Yes, these will do very nicely,” gloated Elephant. Then he wickedly beat poor, trusty Warthog and walked off with his new prize, saying, “You will never get these tusks back. They are mine now – mine, mine, MINE!”



Poor Warthog used Elephant's small tusks to replace his magnificent stolen tusks. He knew that he looked ridiculous. It was a crestfallen Warthog that met Aardvark when he returned home at last.

"I forgot your warning about Elephant. What a fool I am," sobbed Warthog miserably. "Now Elephant has my beautiful tusks and I only have his little ones."



Aardvark became more and more indignant as he listened to Warthog's lament. "Poor Warthog," she said. "It is a shame and Elephant will be punished for his deceit. He shall never have a real home and he shall be hunted all the time for his ivory tusks. But you, Warthog, shall be safe and you shall shelter in a burrow for the rest of your days."



Warthog was incredulous. “But how can I shelter in a burrow? I cannot dig,” he said. “You shall use my burrows. I have so many and I am always digging new ones. There are more than enough for both of us.”

Since that day, generations of warthogs have lived safe from predators and bad weather in burrows of aardvarks.

Extracted from: "When Lion Could Fly and Other Tales From Africa."



FUN FACTS

About Aardvarks

- They are also known as Ant Bears.
- They are nocturnal creatures.
- They can live up to 10 years.
- A mommy aardvark will only have one young.
- It takes them 2 years to reach the age of maturity.
- Their burrows have numerous chambers and several entrances. These burrows are scattered around their territories, which are generally about 5km² in size.





THINK

DIGITAL ACADEMY

