



★ THE LARGE FAMILY ★

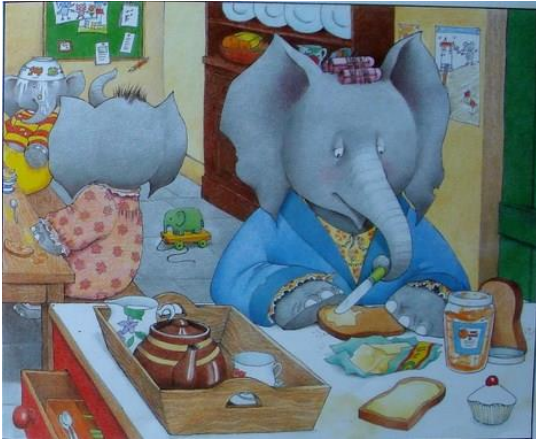
Five Minutes' Peace



JILL MURPHY



The children were having breakfast.
This was not a pleasant sight.



Mrs Large took a tray from the cupboard.

She set it with a teapot, a milk jug, her favourite cup and saucer, a plate of marmalade and toast and a leftover cake from yesterday.

She stuffed the morning paper into her pocket and sneaked off towards the door.



"Where are you going with that tray, Mum?" asked Laura.

"To the bathroom" said Mrs Large.

"Why?" asked the other two children.

"Because I want five minute's peace from you lot", said Mrs. Large. "That's why."



"Can we come?" asked Lester as they trailed up the stairs behind her.

"No" said Mrs. Large, "you can't".

"What shall we do then?", asked Laura.

"You can play" said Mrs. Large.

"Downstairs, by yourselves. And keep an eye on the baby." "I'm *not* a baby," muttered the little one.



Mrs. Large ran a deep, hot bath.

She emptied half a bottle of bath-foam into the water, put on her bath-hat and got in.

She poured herself a cup of tea and lay back with her eyes closed.

It was heaven....



"Can I play my tune?" asked Lester.

Mrs. Large opened one eye.

"Must you?" she asked.

"I've been practising," said Lester. "You told me to. *Can* I? Please, just for *one* minute."

"Go *on* then," sighed Mrs. Large.

So Lester played.

He played 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star' three and a half times.



In came Laura. "Can I read you a page from my reading book?" she asked.

"**No**, Laura," said Mrs. Large. "Go on, **all** of you, off downstairs."

"You let Lester play his tune," said Laura. "I heard. You like him better than me. It's not fair."

"Oh, don't be silly, Laura, " said Mrs. Large. "Go **on** then. Just **one** page." So Laura read.

She read four and a half pages of 'Little Red Riding Hood'.



In came the little one with a trunkful of toys.

"For *you*," he smiled, throwing them all into the bath water.

"Thank you dear," said Mrs. Large weakly.

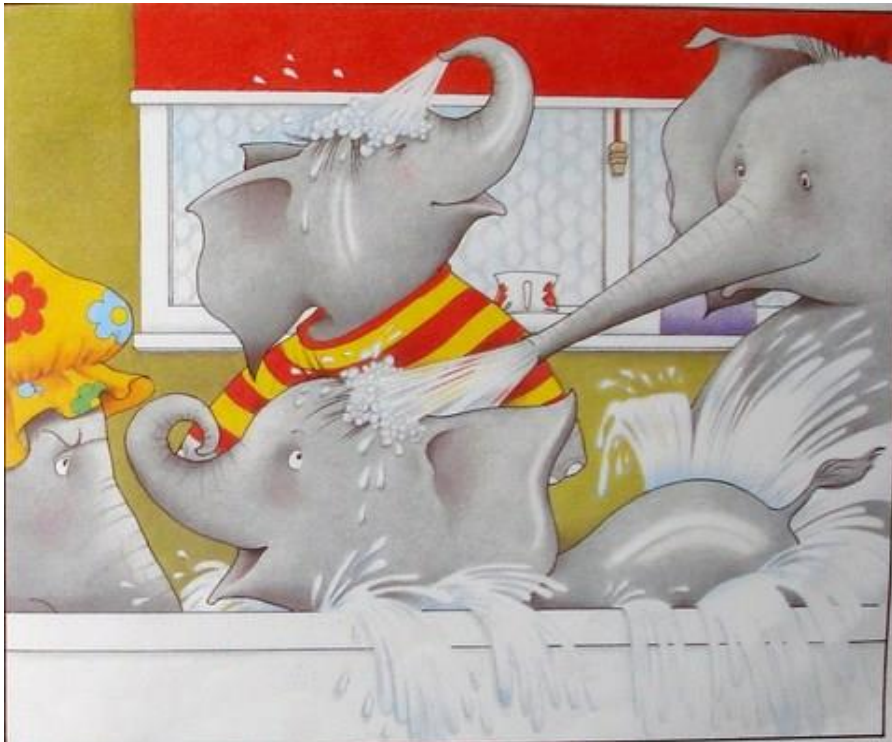


"Can I see the cartoons in the paper?"
asked Laura.

"Can I have the cake?" asked Lester.

"Can I get in with you?" asked the little
one.

Mrs. Large groaned.



In the end they *all* got in. The little one was in such a hurry that he forgot to take off his pyjamas.

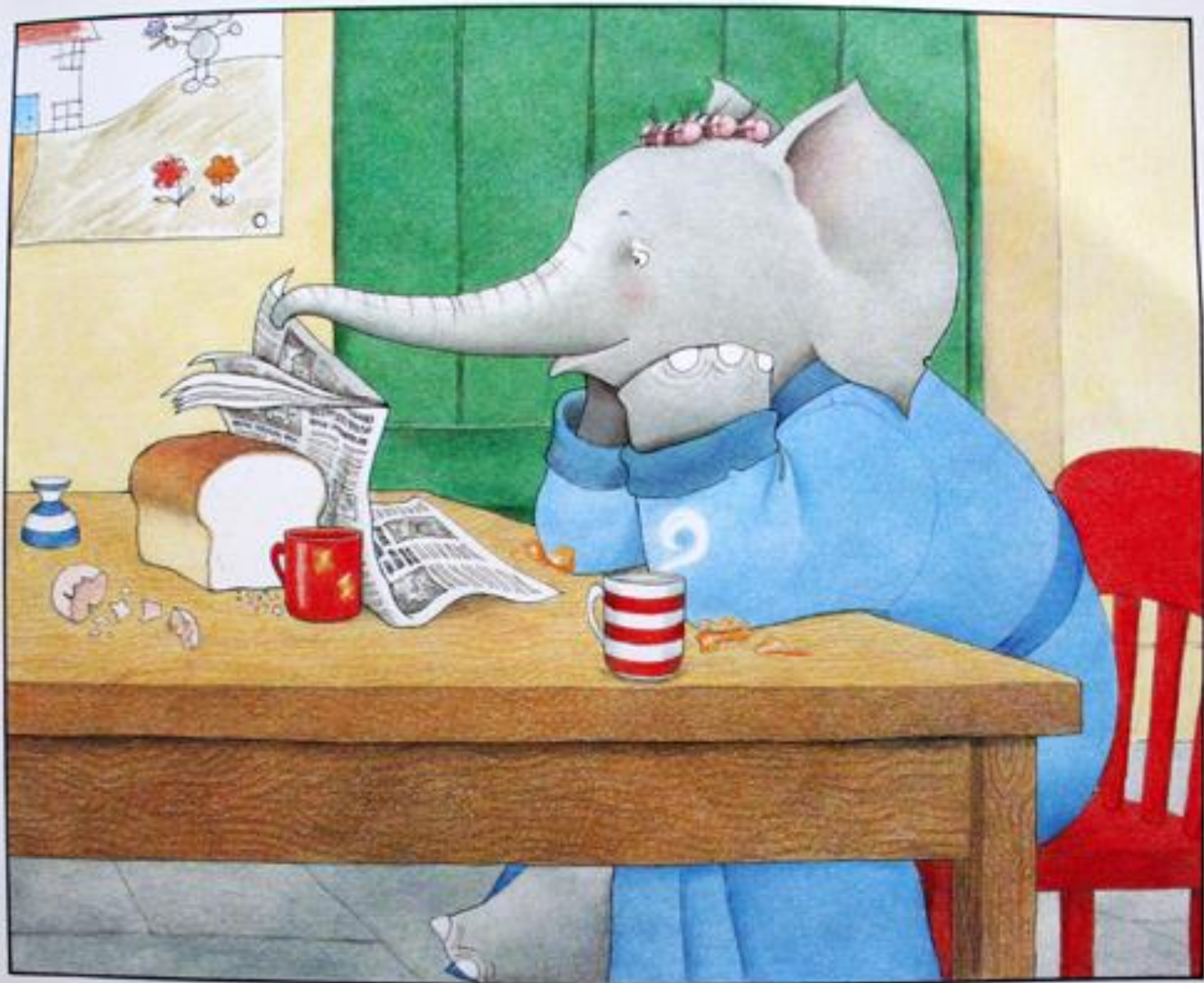
Mrs. Large got out.

"Where are you going now, Mum?" asked Laura.

"To the kitchen," said Mrs. Large.

"Why?" asked Lester.

"Because I want five minutes peace from you lot", said Mrs. Large. "That's why."



And off she went downstairs, where she had three minutes and forty-five seconds of peace before they all came to join her.

