



The Hunter and The Trap: From The Elephant Pit Readers Theater Play Script and Performance Notes

AUTHORS: Leslie Spurrier, COUNTRY: France, GENRE: Fairytales



CHARACTERS

NARRATOR or NARRATORS

MAN

LION

MOUSE

SNAKE

FALCON

HUNTER

HUNTER'S WIFE (non-speaking role)

SOLDIERS (non-speaking roles)

KING

QUEEN (non-speaking role)

PEOPLE

**Performance notes can be found on the pages following the script*

Scene 1 – Forest

NARRATOR:

Many years ago in the Land of Tibet there was a great hunter of elephants. He was at his best at what he did, as he trapped the wild elephants by having them fall into pits. One day though while checking in on his pits he didn't find any elephants, but a lion, a snake, a falcon, a mouse and a man had fallen in. This is the story of how this group ended up in the hunter's elephant trap and how the hunter made a terrible mistake by rescuing one of them.

[The curtain rises showing a forest on the stage. There is a large "pit" to the left side of the stage along with many trees and plants spread along the stage. On stage a LION is chasing a MAN all over the place. The LION is upset at the MAN for trying to kidnap one of its cubs.]

MAN:

(pleading with the LION while running) Oh, please don't hurt me, I didn't mean any harm to your children.

LION:

(with a bitter anger) You have tried to hurt my cubs and now you will pay!

MAN:

(practically begging now) King of the Jungle, please let me be. I have done nothing to them, I swear it.

[While the two of them are running they fail to notice the giant pit. The two of them start to get into a scuffle. They start rolling around and fall into the "deep pit." At the same time, a MOUSE, SNAKE and FALCON enter the stage, all chasing each other.]

MOUSE:

(alarmed at how close the SNAKE was getting to him, in a high-pitched and squeaky voice) Oh, please don't eat me. I have done nothing to you.

SNAKE:

(grinning gleefully knowing his dinner is near, in a hissing but audible voice) I have not eaten for days and you will be my next meal.

FALCON:

(eyeing the SNAKE) And after you eat that mouse I will feast on you.

NARRATOR:

These three also did not note that there was a massive cavity up ahead that the lion and man had already fallen into. They all fell as well into the pit after the mouse led them to it. The five of them in the pit feared for their lives as they believed any other animal could harm them at any move they made. Finally the lion spoke up.

LION:

(nervously) Oh honored ones, we are all comrades in misfortune. Let us promise not to hurt each other. Let each abide where he now is while we plan a way to get out of this pit.

OTHERS:

(with promptness) Agreed!

NARRATOR:

The animals and the man start conversing about how they will be able to get out of the pit. While they are doing this, the hunter comes along to see if he has caught any animals when he discovers who is in the hole.

[HUNTER enters.]

HUNTER:

(bellowing out while looking down at the hole) Why, what is all this? How did all of you get here?

ANIMALS:

Oh, hunter, good hunter, kind hunter, the best of the best, please help us out. *(begging for their lives)* You see that we are not elephants, we are in great need to get out of here.

MOUSE:

(squealing with a grin) No, no, good hunter, I am not an elephant, I am not an elephant.

HUNTER:

(chuckling at the remark) No, you don't look like an elephant my little friend. I think I must help you all to escape.

[The HUNTER then begins to hoist down a ladder to retrieve the ANIMALS. The LION comes up first.]

LION:

(with great respect and thanks) Oh hunter, I and the other animals will prove grateful to you and will help you for your kindness to us, so rescue them. But leave the man in the pit, for I warn you he will forget your kindness and do you harm.

HUNTER:

(shocked at the remark) That's nonsense. I must rescue everyone in this pit so they will not die.

[The HUNTER proceeds to rescue the rest of the ANIMALS and the MAN out of the pit with all of them thanking him while he does so.]

SCENE 2 – Hunter’s House

[The curtain rises showing the HUNTER lying in his bed inside of his house with his WIFE, both sick, weak, sneezing, and coughing.]

NARRATOR:

He has grown ill with terrible fever in the past months and is not able to hunt for elephants or any other game no longer. He would have died along with his wife if it weren’t for the lion bringing meat everyday to the hunter’s home.

[The LION is shown dropping off the meat at the house.]

HUNTER:

I owe you so much now, since you have fed my wife and I during these hard times and have allowed us to live.

LION:

I am just repaying you for the kindness that you treated me with when I fell into the pit.

[LION exits.]

NARRATOR:

The next day the falcon arrives at the hunter’s house carrying a large bag of gems he had found in the middle of the forest. They were bright and glistening. He brought them to the hunter for repaying him for saving his life.

[FALCON enters.]

FALCON:

Take these gems as a gift for saving my life. You can use them for buying food for yourself and your wife.

HUNTER:

(with much gratefulness) You have helped save my wife and me. I thank you for your good doings. I wish you good health.

NARRATOR:

With that the falcon nodded and left the hunter. Little did he know is that the gems he found in the forest were actually the queen’s gems. Not realizing it, she had left them in the forest they previous day. When she found they were missing the king suspected theft, and sent out the man who the hunter had saved, along with many other soldiers, to find these gems. While the man was searching he came upon the hunter’s house.

[FALCON exits. MAN enters.]

MAN:

(with kindness) I hope that you are feeling better. I ask you, though, have you seen any gems?

HUNTER:

(with some shock) Yes I have. Here they are.

[HUNTER spreads the gems across the table.]

MAN:

(with much surprise and intrigue) Where did you get these?

HUNTER:

(cautiously) The falcon whom I rescued from the pit brought them to me.

MAN:

(looking at the gems with much greed) These gems belong to the queen. She thinks someone has stolen them. I have been sent to find them. Unless I tell, nobody will ever now where they are. So my friend, *(with thoughts of riches in his mind)* let us divide them. You keep half, and I'll keep half. Then we shall both gain wealth and no one will be the wiser.

HUNTER:

(shocked) What! *(angrily)* Do you take me for a thief? No, No I say! *(calming down)* The gems shall be returned to our good queen.

MAN:

(sneering and disappointed at what just occurred, ungratefully) Then my honest fellow. You shall go to the palace as my prisoner.

[The MAN claps his hands, which causes two SOLDIERS to rush in.]

MAN:

Bind him and carry him to the king! It is he who stole the queen's jewels!

NARRATOR:

With that the hunter, who was still frail from illness and fever, was taken out of his house and brought to the palace. The king believed the false story told by the man, chained the hunter as a thief, and placed him in a dark dungeon.

SCENE 3 – Dungeon/Garden

[This scene opens to a dark and miserable dungeon at the right hand part of the stage. It is blocked off to the large palace at the left of it and next to that is a beautiful garden. The HUNTER is alone on stage, miserable in his dungeon, in terrible shape.]

HUNTER:

(speaking with much sadness to anyone who would listen) Alas! The lion spoke the truth. Because of the man that I rescued from my elephant pit I am now in this loathsome dungeon with none to pity me or to deliver me.

[MOUSE appears out of a corner of the dungeon.]

MOUSE:

Say not so, good friend. I pity you, and it may be I who can deliver you. Keep up your courage. I will go now and find help.

NARRATOR:

The mouse exits at this remark and goes to find help. This leaves the hunter alone to think for awhile. The mouse returns with the snake within a few moments.

[MOUSE exits and re-enters with SNAKE.]

SNAKE:

(with much delight at seeing the HUNTER alive) Now I am glad, to have a chance to show my gratitude.

[SNAKE brings out a box of cream.]

SNAKE:

Take this little box of cream. Hide it in your chest. Then when the king walks in the garden, I will sting him on the heel. The cream in that little box alone can save his life. I urge you, use it!

[KING, QUEEN and PEOPLE enter.]

NARRATOR:

A few moments later, while the king was walking in the garden, the snake bit him. A group of people gathered around him.

PEOPLE:

(screaming in terror) He will die! He will die! None of our doctors know the cure for the bite of the snake.

NARRATOR:

While the queen was grieving next to the king's side the mouse approached her.

MOUSE:

(with much honor) O queen there is one who can cure the king. The hunter who lies in the lowest dungeon. Send for him quickly, lest it be too late.

NARRATOR:

The queen then sent for the hunter who appeared with the hunters that brought him up. He came to the king's side and took the box of cream on his chest and applied it to the king's wound. The swelling soon went down and the king was well again.

KING:

(upon awakening with much pleasure) What reward shall I give you? Ask what you will, my deliverer!

HUNTER:

(with much admiration) O king, I ask only of your one great favor, that you listen to my story.

NARRATOR:

He proceeded to tell the king everything that had occurred.

KING:

So the lion was right. If you had left the ungrateful man in the pit you would have been fine. Ho, soldiers bring him to me and I will see that he is fitly punished.

[The SOLDIERS search throughout the stage area but are unable to find the MAN. They return with the bad news to the king.]

HUNTER:

I am glad he escaped, for I like not to see anyone suffer.

KING:

(with much respect for the MAN) Good, it is noble thus to forgive an enemy. And now, my friend, I have need of a brave man like you in my palace. You shall live here as my great hunter.

[The HUNTER follows the KING into the palace as he greets the QUEEN, and the curtain falls, ending the play.]