

ELMER'S SPECIAL DAY

David McKee



Elmer, the patchwork elephant, looked at the other elephants, and smiled. It was almost Elmer's Day – the day when once a year all elephants decorate themselves and parade. The elephants had only just begun to prepare for it, but they were already excited and noisy.



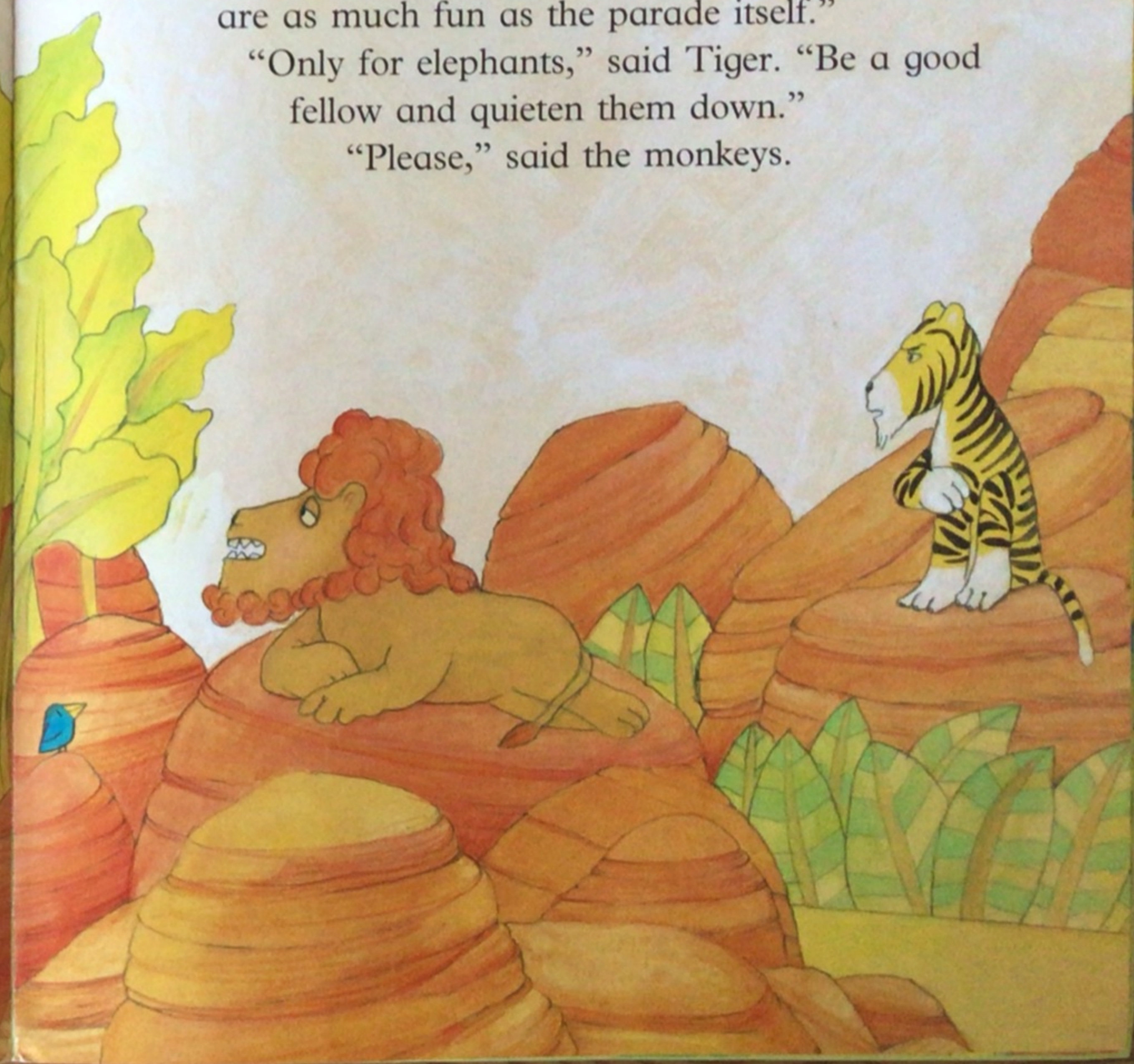


"I say, Elmer," remarked Lion. "That's a bit of a racket your chaps are making!"

"I'm sorry," said Elmer, "but the preparations are as much fun as the parade itself."

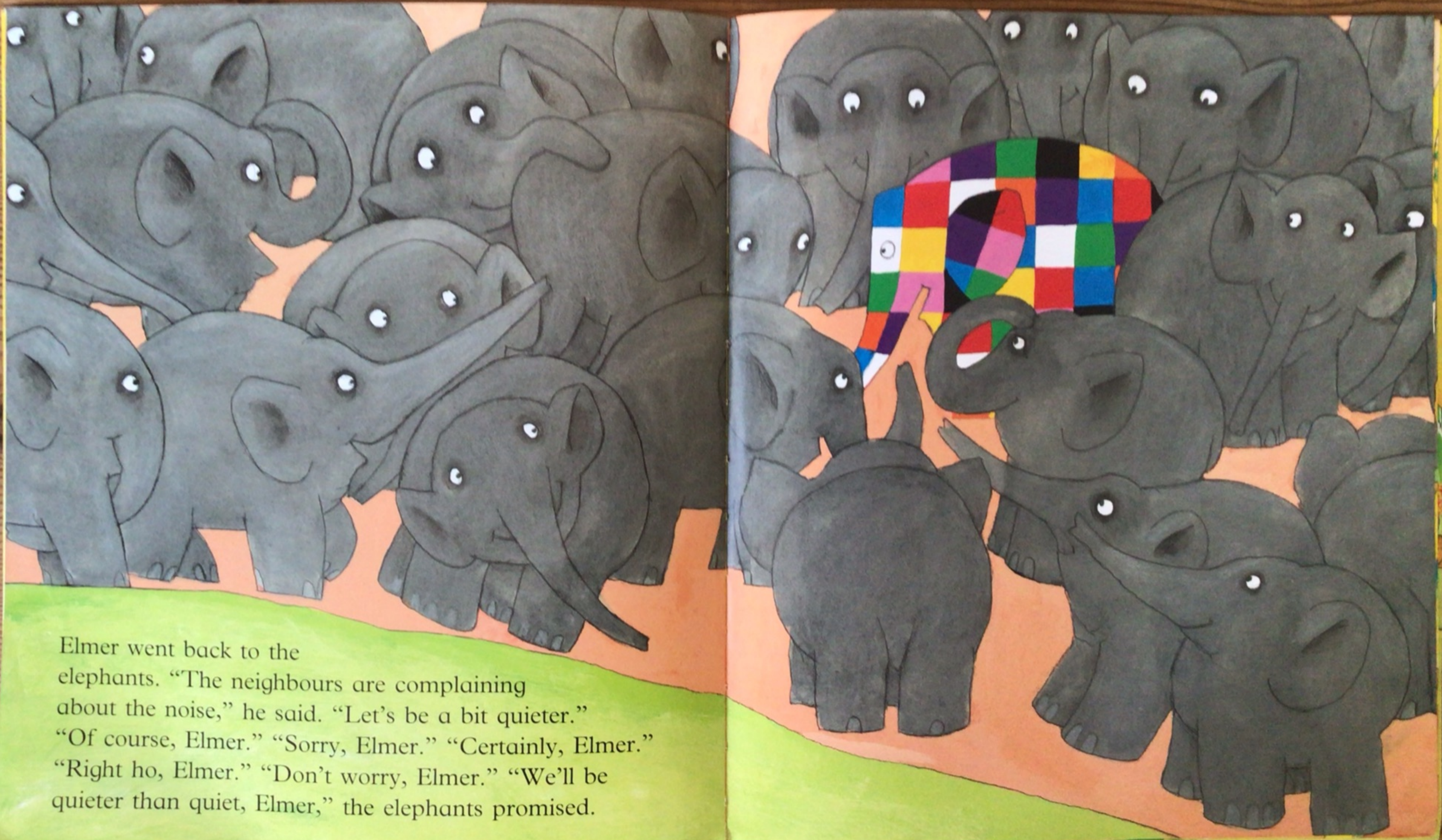
"Only for elephants," said Tiger. "Be a good fellow and quieten them down."

"Please," said the monkeys.





A little later on, the other animals asked, "How about less noise from your friends, Elmer?"
"Please", said the rabbits.



Elmer went back to the elephants. "The neighbours are complaining about the noise," he said. "Let's be a bit quieter." "Of course, Elmer." "Sorry, Elmer." "Certainly, Elmer." "Right ho, Elmer." "Don't worry, Elmer." "We'll be quieter than quiet, Elmer," the elephants promised.

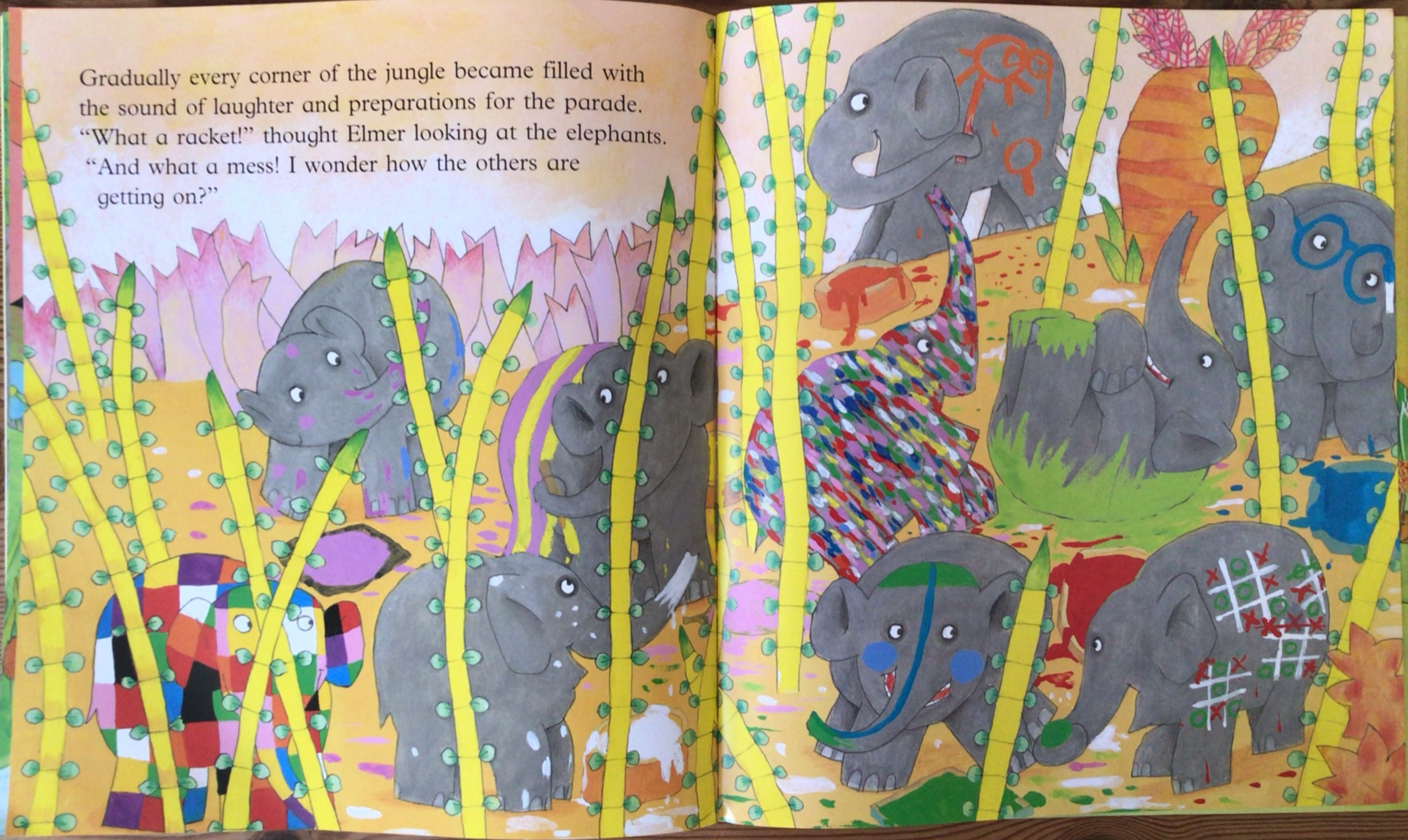
But ten minutes later the elephants were noisier than ever!
“Listen,” said Elmer, “I have an idea.”
“Whatever you like, Elmer,” said the elephants, as they continued their preparations. “It’s your Day!”






Elmer returned to the other animals.
“I’m sorry about the noise,” he said. “But this year is a special year, because you are all invited to join the parade. Of course you will have to decorate yourselves.”
The animals were really excited.

Gradually every corner of the jungle became filled with the sound of laughter and preparations for the parade. "What a racket!" thought Elmer looking at the elephants. "And what a mess! I wonder how the others are getting on?"

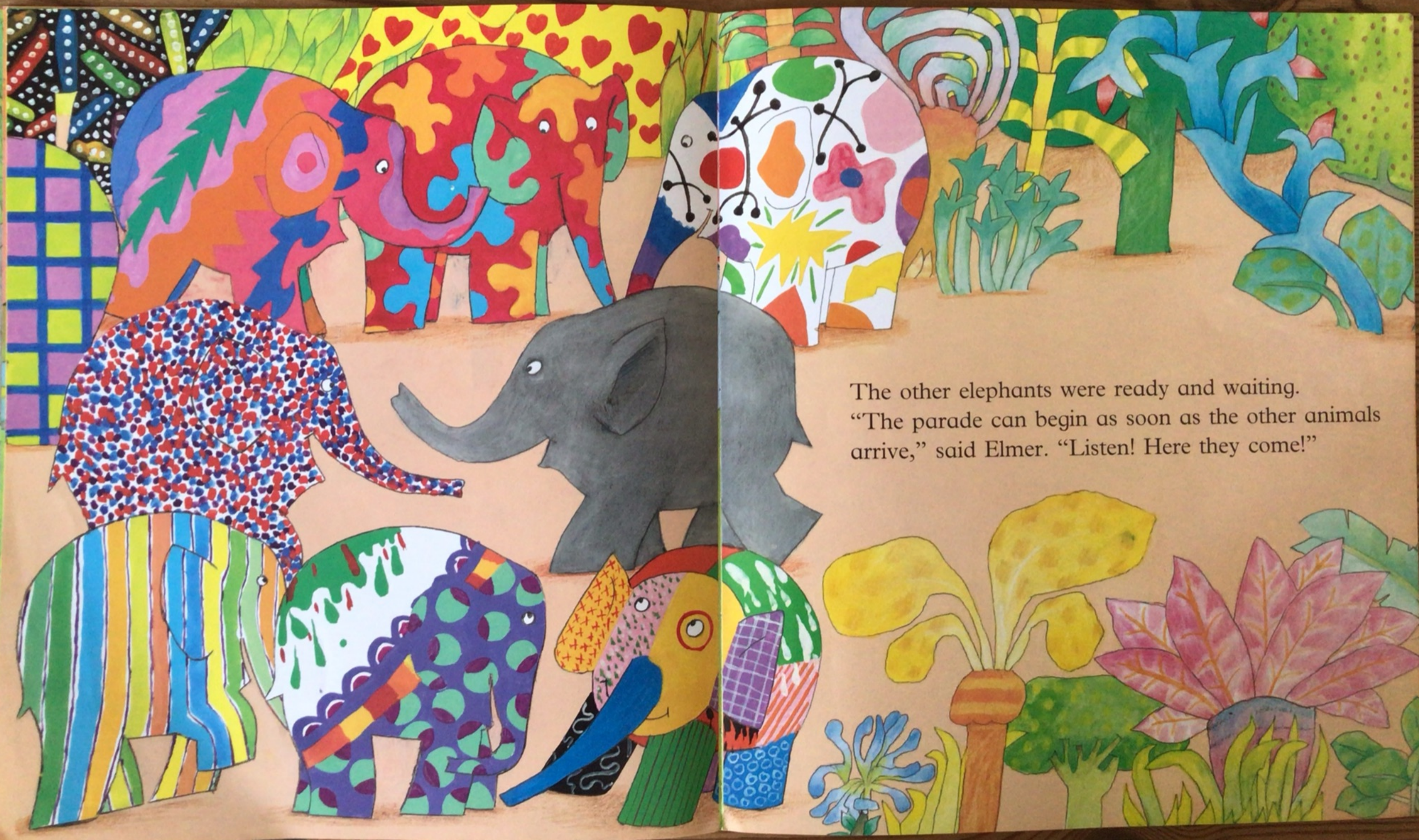




The other animals were just as messy and noisy as the elephants. Elmer chuckled. "Well at least no one is complaining now," he thought. "Do you mind, Elmer," said Bird. "We'd rather you didn't spy on our preparations!"



At last the big day came. The tradition was that on Elmer's Day only Elmer could be elephant-coloured, so, as usual, Elmer went to the bush with the elephant-coloured berries and covered himself with berry juice until he looked just like an ordinary elephant. Then he returned to the herd.



The other elephants were ready and waiting. "The parade can begin as soon as the other animals arrive," said Elmer. "Listen! Here they come!"

The elephants stared in amazement as the animals arrived. Then they cheered. "Wonderful! Fantastic!" they shouted. Not only were the animals decorated, but they all wore elephant masks. "You see, it's still an elephant parade!" Lion laughed.

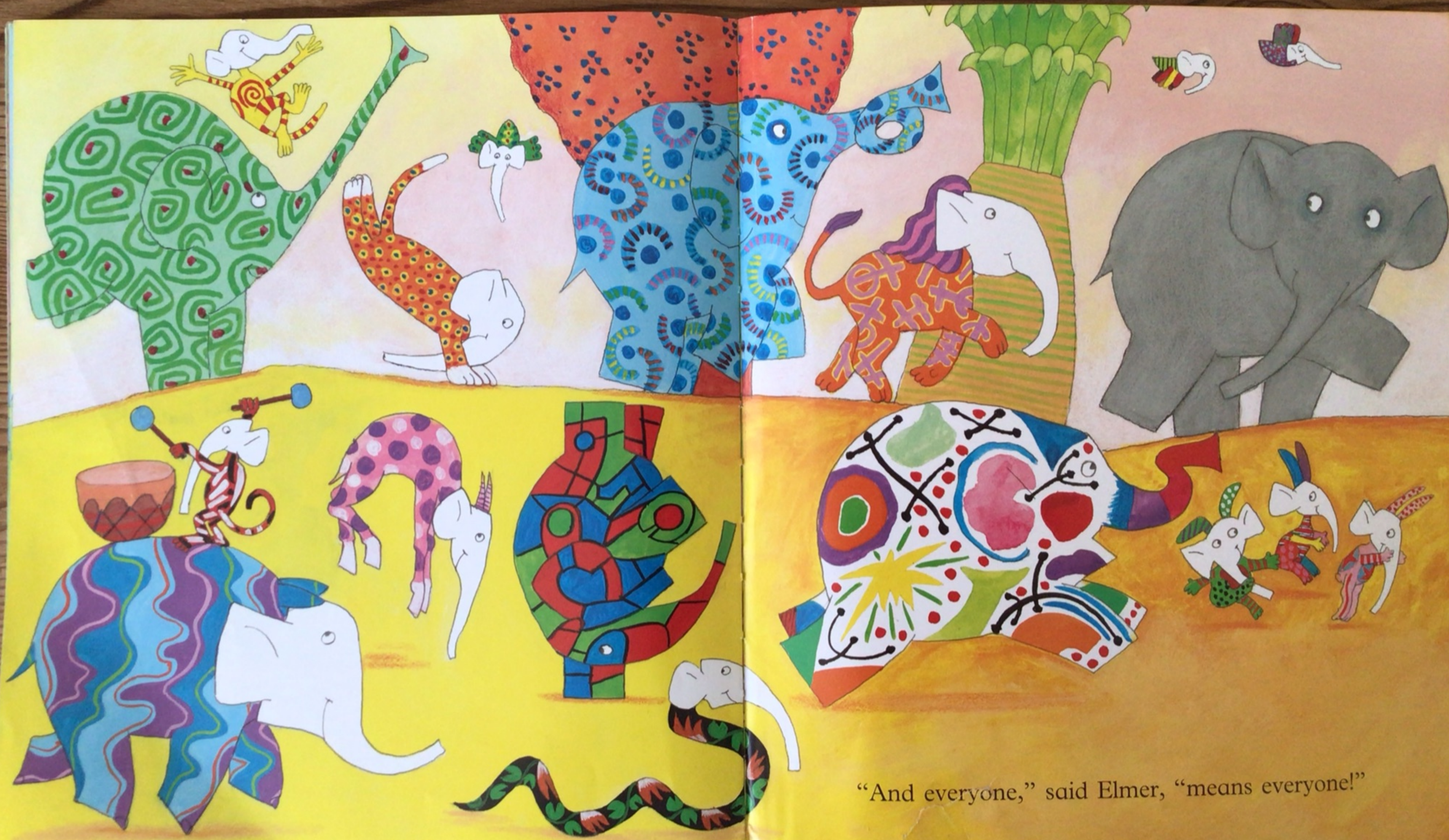


“Let’s begin,” called Elmer from the front of the parade. “From now on everyone can join in the Elmer’s Day Parade...”





... as long as they wear an elephant mask!
This will be the best elephant parade ever!"



“And everyone,” said Elmer, “means everyone!”



UK £6.99 CAN \$14.99

ISBN 978-1-84270-985-6



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