

Six Blind Men and the Elephant

Once upon a time there were six blind men. They lived in a town in India. They thought they were very clever. One day an elephant came into the town. The blind men did not know what an elephant looked like but they could smell it and they could hear it. 'What is this animal like?' they said. Each man touched a different part of the elephant.

The first man touched the elephant's body. It felt hard, big and wide. 'An elephant is like a wall,' he said.

The second man touched one of the elephant's tusks. It felt smooth and hard and sharp. 'An elephant is like a spear,' he said.

The third man touched the elephant's trunk. It felt long and thin and wiggly. 'An elephant is like a snake,' he said.

The fourth man touched one of the legs. It felt thick and rough and hard and round. 'An elephant is like a tree,' he said.

The fifth man touched one of the elephant's ears. It felt thin and it moved. 'An elephant is like a fan,' he said.

The sixth man touched the elephant's tail. It felt long and thin and strong. 'An elephant is like a rope,' he said.

The men argued. It's like a wall! No, it isn't! It's like a spear! No it isn't! It's like a snake! They did not agree. The king had been watching and listening to the men. 'You are not very clever. You only touched part of the elephant. You did not feel the whole animal. An elephant is not like a wall or a spear or a snake, or a tree or a fan or a rope.'

The men left the town still arguing. A little girl heard them and said 'Each of you is right but you are all wrong... but I know what you are talking about!'

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