



Jumbo: This Being the True Story of the Greatest Elephant in the World

Paul Chambers

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A magical blend of true story and popular science, *Jumbo* is the wonderful, colourful biography of the greatest elephant ever known. Born in Africa in 1863, Jumbo was orphaned by ivory-hunters, “rescued” and taken to France. Mistaken for a runt, he was sold to London Zoo, where he became the favourite of the British populace, from Queen Victoria to the young Winston Churchill – until, talent-spotted by the American circus-owner P.T. Barnum, and despite public outcry and Royal protestations, he was taken across the Atlantic to New York. There, having once more conquered public hearts and now a beast of giant proportions, he “befriended” a smaller elephant, Tom Thumb – but in saving whose life he was to meet a tragic end. This book not only unravels the story, but also looks at Jumbo from a zoologist’s point of view. Why was he thought to be a runt? What helped or hindered him in adapting to unfamiliar surroundings from one hemisphere to the other? How was he likely to have reacted to the overwhelming public attention – and to isolation from his natural habitat? The author draws illuminatingly on modern knowledge of elephant behaviour and biology to shed light on the mysteries surrounding Jumbo’s life.

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