



Jumbo Foundation Elephant Orphanage Moyo Drive, Chitipi, Lilongwe

A letter from Jumbo Foundations baby, Moses.

Hello my name is Moses and I am a baby elephant. I have no mum and I need your help, this is my story.

Three months ago my mum was murdered for her two teeth. I watched mum being killed and in sheer terror I landed up in the South Rukuru river at Vwaza. I screamed and cried, yes elephant cry real tears when we grieve, I spent two days in the river, and sometimes my feet did not touch the ground. I was freezing, exhausted, distraught, starving and thought I too would die.

Then some very nice rangers rescued me, and spent the day trying to find my family. When they could not, two very kind tourists Luca and Cecile offered to take me to Mzuzu in their Landrover.

I thought I was now saved but this was only the beginning, no one would take me in too look after me. They all said I was too expensive and too difficult to look after. Some people even said I should be taken back to the bush. I was only a week old and I take the same time to become an adult as you humans, so I was a week old baby who could walk.

Luckily two very lovely ladies Summer and Lisa would not let me die, they kept phoning everyone and finally found my new mum, Jenny. There was no fuel in Lilongwe and a very long drive to come and get me, but against all odds she found fuel and some ingredients to make my milk for me. In the middle of the night I finally arrived home to my new family.

I need 24 hour care, just like a tiny baby. I am never ever left by myself. I need special milk because I am an elephant and can't drink people or cow's milk alone, lots of other stuff has to go into it, some things my mum can't even find in Malawi and has to be imported. At the moment I drink every 2 hours and have 15 litres a day but soon will need 24. I will only start solid food when I am 7 months old but will drink milk until I am 4.

In the bush, I live underneath my mum until I get a lot bigger, so she can be my umbrella, she baths me with water, mud and other bush stuff, but my new mum is not a elephant so she has to find human stuff to do the job, even though I am a very tiny baby my body is still big so I use lots of this stuff.

I don't have any of my own immunity because this would come from my mum's milk, so I can get sick every easily. This is why my human mum has to buy lots and lots of cleaning products and disinfectants so everything is very clean. I am not house trained and too big for a nappy so I make big messes.

Also people can make me sick, I would die if I got your cold or flu so mum won't let lot of people visit or touch me. I am also scared of lots of people especially little ones, so mum only lets two big people at a time visit me for a short while.

Its winter, Lilongwe is colder than my home used to be and I am not surrounded by my Ellie family giving me there body warmth, so I have to wear blankets to keep me warm. Sometimes I also get too hot, so I have a paddling pool to play in.

I get scared at night, because in the wild scary things like lions might eat me, so I can't sleep by myself. As I am now a city elephant, I don't like sleeping on grass, I sleep with my mum on her bed, with my own pillow and blankets, so one day when I am big and mum returns me to the bush, I hope she lets me take my pillow to carry around with me.

I am getting stronger, at first I had a 10% chance of living but now I probably will survive and I can push chairs around, sometimes my trunk explores surfaces and knocks over things and then they make a cool sound when they smash. So mum says I can't live in the house forever and we need to build me my own house. Also mum says we need it to be a barn so if more brothers and sisters have no mum's they can move in too.

I am a very clever animal and need to go to school like all little people and have to have toys to teach my brain. I play with balls, sticks and my favourite thing at the moment a newspaper; I scrunch it up and push it around.

One day when I am big, I will go back to the bush, so I can start my own family, but I will always have my human family following me in case anyone tries to hurt me. I can live until I am in my 70's.

I often wonder if my human mum knew how much time, care and commitment I would take when she saved me, but I do know she will look after me for the rest of her life, and she is going to have to ask her grandkids to keep looking after me as I think I will outlive the current family members.

Lots of Love

Moses