

# The Sad Little Cloud

by RV Staff Writer J.C.

It was a beautiful day. The sun was shining, and the birds were singing. Children were playing at the park. They were swinging, jumping and having fun. The little cloud could hear their laughter and wanted to get closer to see them. As he did, he covered up the sun, and all the mothers and nannies at the park started packing up.

“Come on, children. It’s turned cloudy. Time to go home.” They hurried groaning kids away from the playground and headed indoors.

“Dumb cloud,” complained the children. “Spoiling our fun.”

The little cloud’s feelings were hurt. He hadn’t meant to send the children home.

He floated along and came to a sandy beach on a pretty lake. It was crowded with people of all shapes and sizes. They were building sandcastles, splashing in the water, reading books under floppy hats, and soaking up the warm rays of sunshine. As the little cloud got closer, he noticed people coming out of the water and wrapping themselves in towels. “Brr, it’s cold when the clouds come out,” they said.

The man who sold ice cream shook his fist at the little cloud. “Go away; clouds are bad for business! Nobody wants ice cream when it isn’t hot and sunny.” The little cloud sighed. It seems wherever he went, he wasn’t wanted. He felt heavy and turned gray with sadness.

The cloud wandered for a long time, feeling sorry for himself. In fact, he felt so bad that he thought he might cry. He looked for a place where he could be alone and not bother anybody. Over the dusty African plains, he stopped and let his tears flow freely. He cried so much that he filled up the empty river bed. He kept crying and filled up the animals’ watering hole. He was so sad he didn’t notice the animals emerging from their resting spots to see what was happening.

The gazelles and zebras were first to bend their bony legs down to drink the fresh water from the river. They were soon joined by the wildebeests and rhinoceroses who wasted no time in plunging into the cool water to wash the African dirt off their dusty bodies. The baby elephants trumpeted their pleasure at seeing the watering hole full of clean water again. They sprayed water into the air like little fountains, splashing each other. The happy sounds caught the little cloud’s attention.

“Thank you!” shouted the zebras and gazelles. “We were so thirsty!”

“Thank you!” bellowed the wildebeests and rhinos. “We were so hot and dirty!”

“Thank you!” called the elephants, both young and old. “It’s wonderful to have our watering hole back!”

The little cloud was surprised. He had been helpful to these animals! How wonderful he felt! He had cried himself out; he was no longer heavy and gray, but white and fluffy again. "You're welcome," he answered them. "You have helped me, too! Can I stay here for a while?"

"Yes, please," answered the animals. "Your shade is nice and cool on us. The African sun is so hot!"

So, the cloud stayed with his new friends until the moon came out, and it was time to go home. But the little cloud promised to come and visit the next time he was feeling sad!

**Questions**

1. Why was the cloud feeling sad?
2. What does it mean when the cloud “felt heavy” and “turned gray with sadness”?
3. What happened when the cloud started crying? How did the African animals feel about it?
4. Can you think of another place or other people who might like to see the cloud? Why?