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The Magnificent Mulligans



LIONS, ELEPHANTS, AND LIES

Bill Myers

The Magnificent
Mulligans™

BOOK TWO

**LIONS, ELEPHANTS,
AND LIES**

Bill Myers

Illustrations by Greg Hardin

FOCUS
ON THE FAMILY®

A Focus on the Family Resource
Published by Tyndale House Publishers

The Magnificent Mulligans: Lions, Elephants, and Lies

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A Focus on the Family book published by Tyndale House Publishers, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188

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Cover and interior illustrations by Greg Hardin. Cover design by Michael Harrigan.

For Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data for this title, visit <http://www.loc.gov/help/contact-general.html>.

For manufacturing information regarding this product, please call 1-855-277-9400.

For information about special discounts for bulk purchases, please contact Tyndale House Publishers at csresponse@tyndale.com, or call 1-855-277-9400.

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 978-1-64607-114-2

29	28	27	26	25	24	23
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

*“The LORD detests lying lips,
but he delights in people who are trustworthy.”*

—PROVERBS 12:22, NIV

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1

Just for Starters

“YOU AIN’T NERVOUS, ARE YOU?”

“Me?” Lisa half swallowed, half squeaked. “What’s to be nervous about? Flying six miles above the earth in a metal tube at five hundred miles per hour?”

Nick chuckled. “Yeah, first time flying can be a little crazy. But not if you’re a seasoned pro.”

“Like you, I suppose,” she said.

“Of course.” Nick gave a little yawn to prove his point.

Dad sat in the middle seat and turned to speak to Nick at the window seat. “You’ve done a lot of flying?”

“Sure,” Nick said. “That time I flew from New York to start living with you all.”

“And now you’re a pro?” Lisa said.

“Well, yeah. With my superior intelligence and quick ability to adapt, you bet.”

If Lisa rolled her eyes any harder, they would have stuck in the back of her head.

Nick leaned over Dad and waved to the passing flight attendant. “Ma’am?” he said. She came to a stop. “Can you get my little friend here some milk?”

“Nick,” Lisa whispered. “I’m fine.”

He ignored her and said to the attendant, “First time flyers—they can be such rookies.”

“Nick—”

“Trust me,” he said. “It calms the nerves, helps settle the queasy stomach.”

“My stomach isn’t—”

He turned back to the attendant, “Oh, and could I have another Diet Coke. It’s still free, right?”

The attendant nodded. “One milk, and . . .” with a patient breath, she added, “*another* Diet Coke.”

“And lighter on the ice this time.” Looking toward Lisa, he explained, “Less ice means more soda. Another little tip I’m happy to share.”

Lisa slumped into her seat and sighed. It was going to be a long trip, and not just because they were going to Africa.

Africa? “Why are they going to Africa?” you ask. And you are asking, right? (If not, this next paragraph is going to be real boring.)

Last week Dad got a call from the Botswana Wild Game Reserve. A newborn elephant’s mother had died, and the baby

elephant was so heartbroken that he wouldn't eat, drink, or do anything else to survive. Because we Mulligans have a reputation for helping animals, and because we solved a similar problem with Gus, our own young elephant, the Botswana staff called us. And since Mom and Dad have this policy to always say yes to folks, they agreed. Of course, everyone—including a certain cute chimpanzee (that's me!)—wanted to go along. But because Lisa has this cool way with animals, and because Nick is . . . well, Nick, they were the two who got to fly over there with Dad.

"Here you go," the attendant said, handing Lisa the small carton of milk and leaning over to hand Nick a Diet Coke.

"Great," he said. "And do you have any more pretzels?"

"Nick," Dad warned.

"Hey, I'm a growing boy."

"In both directions," Lisa said.

He looked down at his gut and immediately sucked it in.

Dad continued, "You've been eating junk food ever since we got on the plane."

"I'm fine," Nick said. He turned back to the attendant. "How about a couple more packs of peanuts?"

Before she could answer, the airplane gave a little

LURCH

"What was that?" Lisa asked in alarm.

The attendant smiled. "Just a little turbulence. Nothing to worry—"

She was interrupted by another and much bigger

LURCH

Suddenly, the overhead “Fasten Seat Belt” light came on.
“Dad . . .” Lisa said.

“We’ll be fine,” Dad said calmly. (He might have been more convincing if the flight attendant hadn’t just dashed to her own seat to buckle in.)

And then, just to keep things interesting, the plane started to

BOUNCE . . . BOUNCE

and

BUCK

so much that Nick nearly spilled his soda.

“Whoa, that was close,” he said as he took a big sip so he wouldn’t lose any of the precious liquid.

“Are we going to be okay?” Lisa asked. There was no hiding the quaver in her voice as she reached for her seat belt.

“Sure we will,” Nick said. “Nothing to worry about.” But somehow he didn’t sound quite as convincing as before. He turned to Dad who was fumbling for his own seat belt. “Right, Dad?”

Even though Dad is really Nick’s uncle (long story that I’ll bore you with some other time), he now calls him Dad like the rest of us.

BOUNCE . . . LURCH . . . BOUNCE

“Dad?”

BUCK . . . BUCK . . . BOUNCE

“Daaaaad? Is everything okay?”

LURCH . . . BOUNCE . . . LURCH



Things were a lot quieter in Mom’s car as we all headed for school.

Not that I go to school.

(Not that I haven’t tried.)

But the school officials are really prejudiced against so-called “nonhumans.” And don’t get me started on their dress code. They kept demanding I take off my fur coat, which as you might have guessed, I’m quite attached to.

Anyway, with Dad gone, Mom was pulling double duty, and we were all packed into her SUV tighter than pickles in a pickle jar.

In the far back, the twins, Jessica and Janelle, were carrying on a secret conversation that I’ll tell you about later. In the next seat up sat Hector, the ten-year-old tough guy from Colombia. Tough except when it came to little Julie and Alan, the baby who sat in the car seat beside him. Around those two, Mr. Tough-as-Nails always became Mr. Jell-O-Pudding.

And up front sat me and my best pal, Stephanie. Me because

Mom needed someone mature and intelligent to keep her company and Stephe because my friend was having a hard time not going to Africa with Dad.

“I never get to do anything,” she grumbled.

Mom smiled. “I can give you a few more chores if that helps.”

“Very funny. I mean important stuff, like helping with the animals.”

“You’ve got Winona.”

I leaned against Stephe, batting my eyes and throwing in a little

OO-oo Ah-ah EE-ee

Unfortunately, that only earned me a little scratch behind the ears—not the banana I was hoping for, which I’d seen packed in her lunch bag. But that’s okay. School was still nine minutes away. I had plenty of time to work my animal charm on her.

“It’s my autism, isn’t it?” Stephe complained. “You’re afraid to give me responsibility because you don’t think I can handle it.”

“Sweetheart . . .”

Stephe bit her lip and looked out the window. Big tears welled up in her eyes.

Of course, then Mom went into Mom Mode—you know, saying how she and Dad loved Stephe just as she was, along with all the other stuff they teach you to say in Mom

School. And then she added, “You know, with Lisa gone, I bet Janelle could use some help reintroducing the lion cub back to Golda, his mother.”

Stephie lit up. “Could I?”

Mom grinned. “Fine with me if it’s fine with Janelle.” Glancing into the mirror she called, “That okay with you, Janelle?”

“Yeah, sure, whatever,” Janelle said as she continued listening to Jessica’s plan. (I’ll tell you about this soon, I promise.)

And me? I reached up and gave Stephie’s cheek a big victory

SMOOCH!

(I told you I had charm)

and gave another

OO-oo Ah-ah EE-ee

for good measure—all the time keeping my eye on her lunch sack. One minute had already passed. But I still had eight to go.



It took half an hour for the plane to end its imitation of a roller coaster.

Dad glanced down to Lisa. “How you doing, kiddo?”

She nodded, her voice still a little shaky. “I’m good,” she said.

Turning to Nick, he asked, “And you?”

But Nick wasn’t talking. I guess it’s hard to talk when



pretzels, peanuts, and Diet Cokes are trying to make a repeat appearance in your mouth.

“You don’t look so good,” Dad said.

“I . . . (*swallow*) um . . .” (*swallow, swallow*)

“You’re white as a sheet.”

“Um . . .” (*swallow, swallow*)

“Here.” Dad dug into the seat pocket and pulled out an air sickness bag.

Nick shook his head.

“You sure?”

“Those things are for wimps. I’m (*swallow*) fine.”

“If you say so.”

“Yeah, I—” A strange look came over Nick’s face. Without a word, he unbuckled his seat belt and stood up.

“Nick!” Lisa complained. “What are you—”

“Restroom!” he blurted as he crawled over Dad and then Lisa.

“Doesn’t exactly look ‘fine’ to me,” Dad said.

Once he was standing in the aisle, Nick patted his hair into place and calmly replied, “As I said, I’m perfectly—”

Suddenly, his eyes widened. Throwing both hands over his mouth, he made a mad dash for the restroom.

I’d like to say that he made it in time. I’d like to say that, but I can’t. Instead, all I can say is

GROSS!