

ELLIE

On a bright winter day, when Ellie was just finishing her lunch, the zookeeper came by with an announcement.

“Gather ‘round!” Walt called. “I have some news.”

“It is a sad day,” he said. “The zoo is closing.”

The animals were heartbroken.

“There must be something we can do,” Ellie whispered to her friends. “The zoo is our home.”

“Perhaps we can spruce it up a bit,” Gerard suggested. Gerard always had good ideas.

“I’ll prune the trees,” Lucy said, nibbling a leaf. “If only my trunk were longer!” said Ellie.

“I’ll move this rock,” Gerard huffed, clearing it off the path. “If only my muscles were bigger,” said Ellie.

“We’ve already cleaned here,” said the monkeys.

“What can I do to help?” Ellie wondered.

It seemed like everyone had a talent.

Everyone but Ellie.

Ellie thought she’d ask Walt to give her a job, but he was busy too.

When the monkeys called him away, Ellie picked up the strange object he’d been holding. It had smooth wood on one side and prickly hairs on the other.

Ellie gave it a try.

When Walt returned and saw her creation, he sprinted back down the path without a word.

Had she ruined the wall?

Soon, she heard a wagon with a squeaky wheel turn the corner. Maybe Walt *did* like her painting!

Ellie added color here... and a rainbow there.

There were so many walls to color, and so many colors to try! Ellie painted all of her friends. She painted the tallest ones...

the smartest... and the quietest ones.

Word spread of Ellie’s talents. Squeak! ROAR! chirp

Ellie the artist!

People came from all over the city to have their portraits painted. Some came with balloons.

Others came with awards. Ellie even painted Mr. Mayor with a smile.

Soon, people from around the world came to see Ellie, the remarkable painting elephant.

Lucy hosted the crowds as they arrived at the zoo.

Gerard led tours through Ellie's art gallery.

And on a bright spring day, the crowds cheering him on, Walt declared, "We are open for good!" Thanks to Ellie.