

Bubbles and Bella

People say that a dog is a man's best friend. But could a dog also be an elephant's best friend? If you're talking about Bubbles and Bella, the answer is yes.

Bubbles is an African elephant. She was rescued in Zimbabwe after her parents were killed by poachers for their ivory tusks. She was adopted as a baby and came to Myrtle Beach Safari in South Carolina weighing 340 pounds.

Bubbles now weighs four tons. As she grew, she developed a love of swimming. She loved it so much that the safari park hired a contractor to build her a pool. But when the contractor finished the job, he left someone behind.

That someone was Bella, a black Labrador retriever. Bella was left as a puppy and grew up in the safari park with Bubbles. Being a retriever, she loved to swim as much as the elephant did. Now they are inseparable, playing together in the water every day.

Bella and Bubbles have a favorite game - fetch. First Bubbles throws the ball with her trunk. Then Bella jumps off the elephant's head or back to retrieve it. Bubbles likes to tease Bella with the ball. They seem to be laughing with each other, just like human friends.

Perhaps it shouldn't be surprising that Bubbles made such a good friend. Elephants are very social creatures. They form tight communities with other elephants. If there are no other elephants around, they will find different animals to befriend. Sadly Bubbles is the only elephant at Myrtle Beach Safari. But she has adopted Bella as her community now.

There are stories of other elephants that have found friendship with different species. One lone elephant in an African game preserve adopted a local herd of water buffalo. Because buffalo choose their leader based on size, the elephant is now their queen.

Elephants recognize distress and comfort each other. They comfort their non-elephant friends too. Bubbles wraps her trunk around Bella in a sort of a squeeze to show her care. Their gentle and playful friendship is heartwarming to behold.



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NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. Bella and Bubbles are
 - a. A dog and an elephant
 - b. An elephant and a dog
 - c. A buffalo and an elephant
 - d. A dog and a buffalo

2. What game do Bella and Bubbles play in the pool?
 - a. Catch
 - b. Keep away
 - c. Fetch
 - d. Race

3. Which of the following is NOT mentioned as evidence that elephants are social creatures?
 - a. They form tight communities
 - b. They seek out other animals if there are no elephants around
 - c. They recognize distress and comfort each other
 - d. They choose their leader based on size

4. Why is it sad that Bubbles is the only elephant at Myrtle Bay Safari?
 - a. Because elephants are social
 - b. Because her parents were killed by poachers
 - c. Because she befriended Bella
 - d. Because she likes to swim

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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