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Elephant Man

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Joseph Merrick had not always been known as the Elephant Man. When he was about two years old, his skin changed and lumps began to form. He could no longer use facial expressions and his limbs became swollen. It was difficult to work as an adult since others were afraid of him. He joined a traveling show to make money, but was soon abandoned far from home. After finding his way back to England, he contacted a friendly doctor who provided a home for him in the London Hospital. Here he lived out his life among friends.

This poignant true story is a lesson in the power of kindness. Merrick was rejected by family and strangers alike. Dr. Frederick Treves was the first, besides his mother, to treat him as a human being. It made a big impact on Merrick’s life to be regarded as a friend. Illustrations include photographs of Merrick and other people and artifacts, collages, and drawings. The book contains an afterword, Merrick’s writing samples, and further sources including books, film, and websites. In the end, Merrick finds joy, confidence, and self-worth in knowing that others saw him as an intelligent human with feelings.