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Toto's Story

With half a century of elephant conservation to our name, it can sometimes feel like we have seen it all. But even among the hundreds of orphan rescues that have unfolded over the years, Toto's story stands out as extraordinary.

His story began in the northern sector of Tsavo East. Ravaged by poaching in the 1980s and 90s, elephants gave this part of the national park a wide berth during those decades. Once we established our Ithumba Reintegration Unit in 2004 and, together with KWS, put in place stringent security measures, word got out that the area was safe once more. Over time, the elephants have returned and now visit the area in their droves.

Over the years, our Ithumba stockades have born witness to some incredible stories. Wounded wild elephants have sought us out for help, ex-orphans have returned with injured wild friends, introduced us to their young, and in 2019, an orphaned elephant named Vaarti was even delivered into our care by a young wild female. It is a place of miracles — but even still, nothing could have prepared us for this day.

On the afternoon of 1st April 2022, ex-orphan Kitrua and Olare arrived at the Ithumba stockade with their baby in tow. The calf was a few days old, in poor condition and how he was found by the staff from Loijuk, who were lactating, and c

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