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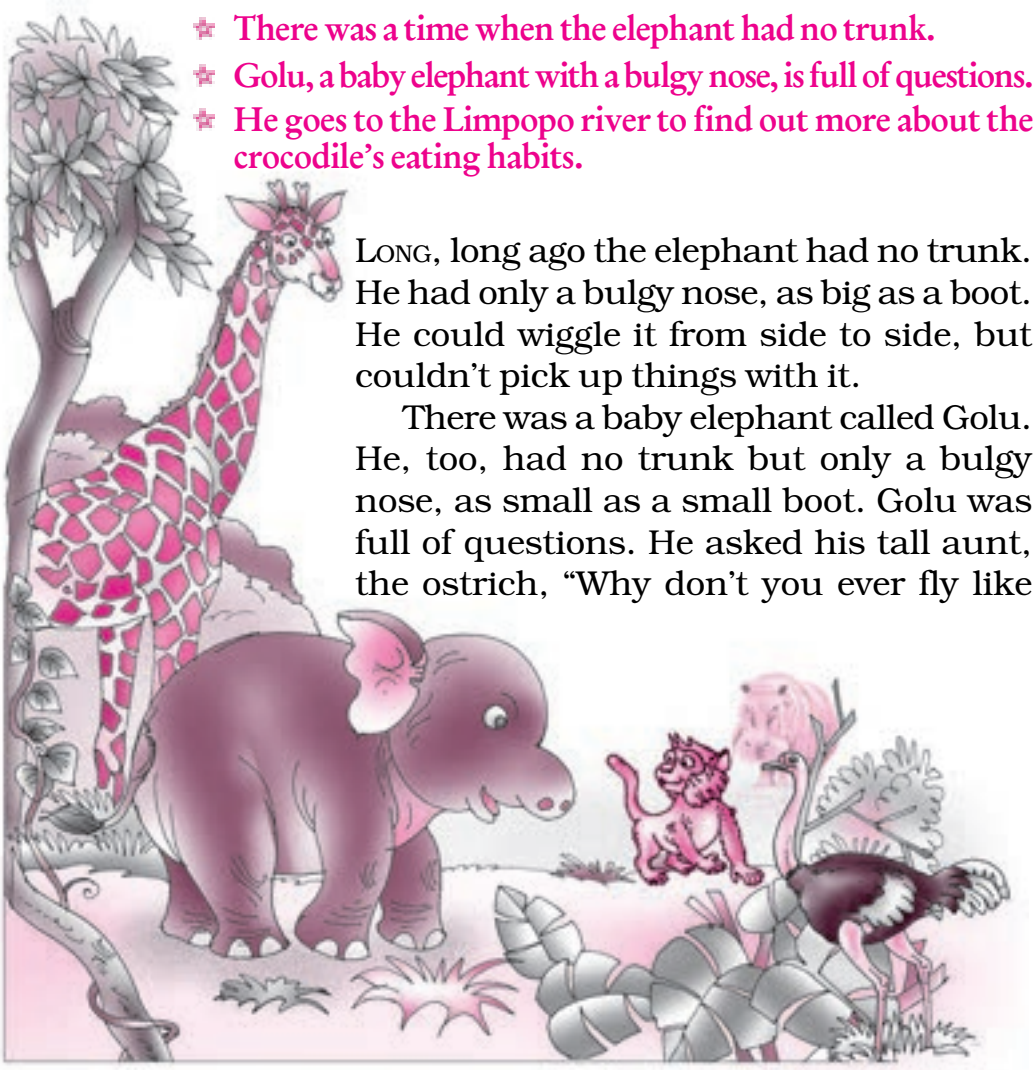
Golu Grows a Nose

- There was a time when the elephant had no trunk.
- Golu, a baby elephant with a bulgy nose, is full of questions.
- He goes to the Limpopo river to find out more about the crocodile's eating habits.



LONG, long ago the elephant had no trunk. He had only a bulgy nose, as big as a boot. He could wiggle it from side to side, but couldn't pick up things with it.

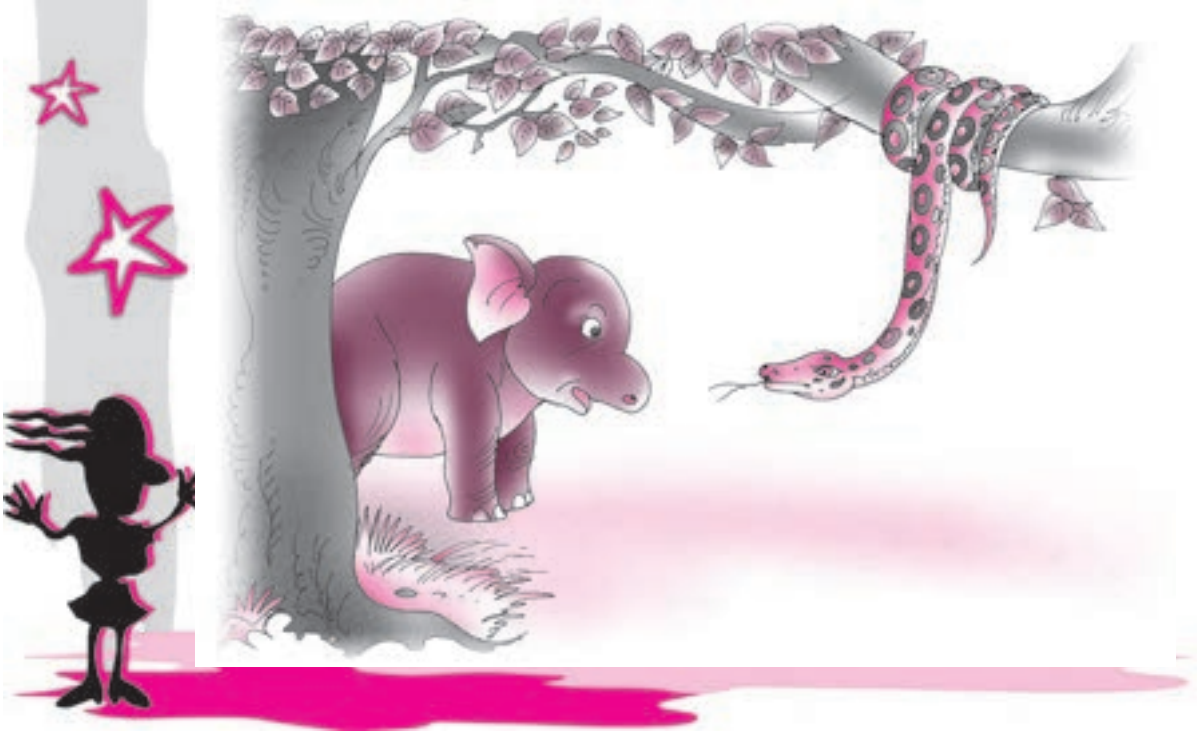
There was a baby elephant called Golu. He, too, had no trunk but only a bulgy nose, as small as a small boot. Golu was full of questions. He asked his tall aunt, the ostrich, "Why don't you ever fly like

other birds?" Then he asked his tall uncle, the giraffe, "What makes your skin so spotty?" He asked his huge uncle, the hippopotamus, "Why are your eyes always so red?" He asked his hairy uncle, the baboon, "Why do melons taste like melons?" The ostrich, the giraffe, the hippopotamus and the baboon had no answers to Golu's questions. "Golu is a naughty baby," they said. "He asks such difficult questions."

One day Golu met the mynah bird sitting in the middle of a bush, and he asked her, "What does the crocodile have for dinner?" The mynah said, "Go to the banks of the great, grassy Limpopo river and find out."

Golu went home. He took a hundred sugar canes, fifty dozen bananas and twenty-five melons. Then he said to his family, "Goodbye. I'm going to the great, grassy Limpopo river. I'll find out what the crocodile has for dinner." He had never seen a crocodile, and didn't know what one looked like.

He met a python and asked him, "Have you ever seen a crocodile? What does he look like? What does he have for dinner?"



The python uncoiled himself from the branch of a tree but said nothing. Golu politely helped him to coil around the branch again and said goodbye to him.

- Golu meets the crocodile face to face.
- He gets the python's help when he needs it most.
- Golu grows a long and useful nose.

Golu moved on, eating sugar canes, bananas and melons. After a few days he reached the very edge of the great, grassy Limpopo river. On the bank of the river he saw a log of wood.

It was really the crocodile who winked at him. "Excuse me," said Golu. "Have you ever seen a crocodile?"

The crocodile winked again and lifted half his tail out of the mud. "Come here, little one," said the crocodile. "Why do you ask such questions?"

"I want to know…"

"Come close, little one, for I am the crocodile," and he shed crocodile tears to show it was quite true.

Golu was afraid, but he sat down on the bank and said, "You are the very person I was looking for. Please tell me what you have for dinner."

"Come here, little one, and I'll whisper the answer to you," said the crocodile.

Golu put his head down close to the crocodile's snout and the crocodile caught him by the nose.

"I think," said the crocodile, "today a baby elephant will be my dinner."

"Let me go. You are hurting me, Mr Crocodile," screamed Golu.

The python, who had been quietly following Golu, came to the bank and said, "If you do not pull as hard as you can, the crocodile will drag you into the stream."

Golu sat back on his little haunches and pulled and pulled. The crocodile slipped into the water making it all creamy with great sweeps of his tail, and he also pulled and pulled.

Then the python coiled himself round Golu's stomach and said, "Let's pull harder." Golu dug in all his four legs in the mud and pulled. The nose kept on stretching. At each pull the nose grew longer and longer and it hurt Golu. The nose was now five feet long, but it was free at last.

Golu sat down, with his nose wrapped up in a big banana leaf and hung it in the great, grassy Limpopo river to cool.

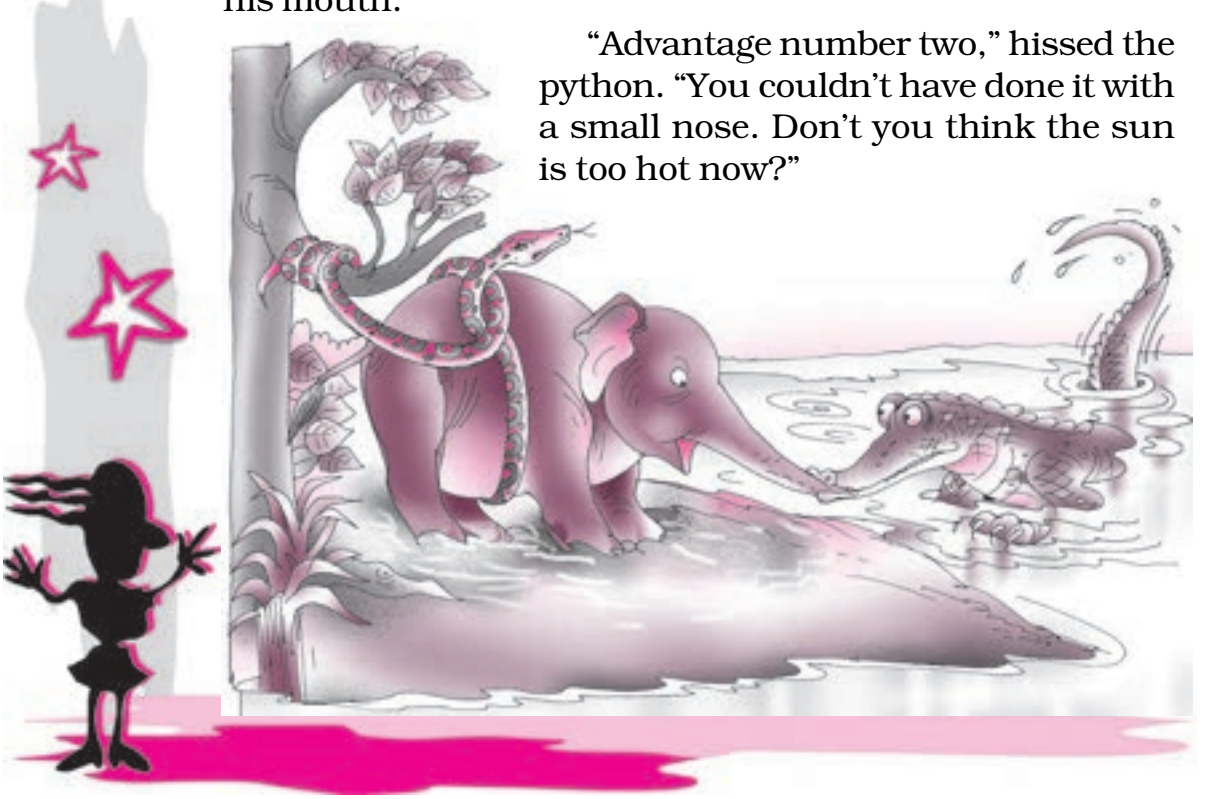
Golu sat there for two days waiting for his nose to cool and to shrink. It grew cool but it didn't shrink.

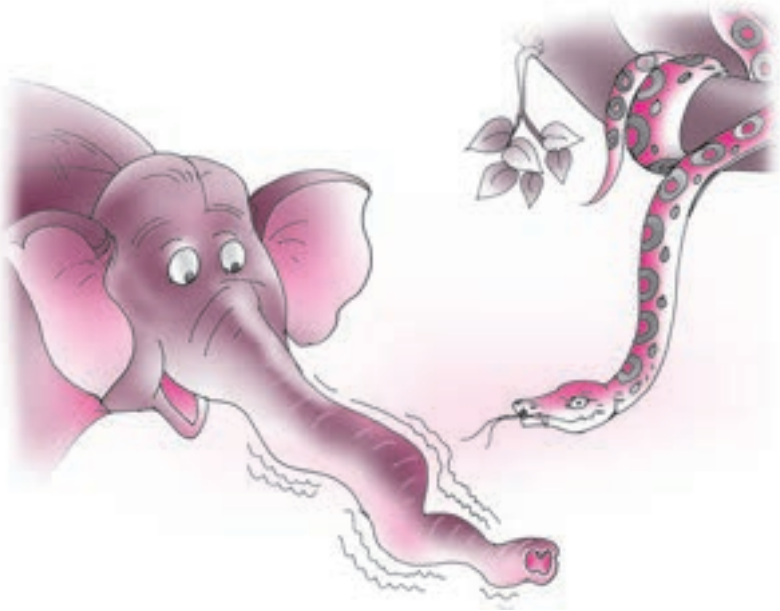
At the end of the second day, a fly came and stung Golu on the shoulder. Golu lifted his long nose (trunk) and with it hit the fly dead.

"Advantage number one," hissed the python. "You couldn't have done it with a small nose. Try and eat a little now."

Golu put out his trunk and plucked a large bundle of grass. He dusted it against his forelegs and stuffed it into his mouth.

"Advantage number two," hissed the python. "You couldn't have done it with a small nose. Don't you think the sun is too hot now?"





Golu scooped up some mud from the bank and slapped it on his head.

"Advantage number three," hissed the python. "You couldn't have done it with a small nose."

"Thank you, Mr Python," said Golu gratefully. "I'll remember all this and now I'll go back to my family."

RUDYARD KIPLING
(simplified and abridged)

Exercises

Answer the following questions.

1. Whom does Golu ask, "Why don't you ever fly like other birds?"
2. Which uncle of Golu had red eyes?
3. Golu's relatives did not answer his questions because
   (i) they were shy.
   (ii) the questions were too difficult.
   (iii) Golu was a naughty baby.

4. Who advised Golu to go to the Limpopo river?
5. Why did Golu go to the river?
6. The crocodile lay on the bank of the Limpopo river. Golu thought it was
   (i) a living crocodile.
   (ii) a dead crocodile.
   (iii) a log of wood.
7. What did the crocodile do to show that it was a real crocodile?
8. "Come here, little one, and I'll whisper the answer to you." The crocodile said this because
   (i) he couldn't stand up.
   (ii) he wanted to eat Golu.
   (iii) Golu was deaf.
9. Who helped Golu on the bank of the river?
10. Name two things the elephant can do with his trunk, and two he cannot.

Laughter at Sea

A passenger boat was moving slowly in a thick fog. On deck an old man, rather frightened, asked a sailor, "How far are we from land?"

"Half a mile," he answered.

"Where?" said the old man.

"Straight down," was the reply.