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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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How the Elephant got his trunk

One night in the Zoo when the keepers were asleep the other animals were awakened by the chattering in the monkey cage.

"I have heard that Mr. Lion can be made very tame," said Jocko, "and while I doubt very much if he really can bite, his growl is most unpleasant to hear."

"Oh, well, it may be worse than his bite," said Tito.

"Those who make the most noise are not always to be feared, I have been told."

"There is Hippo; he is much bigger than Mr. Lion, and he doesn't make as much noise all the time as Mr. Lion."

"Oh, dear me, but what a big mouth Hippo has!" laughed Tito. "I wonder how he happened to get such a big one. He must have been the first one there when they gave out mouths."

"I have heard something about almost every animal here," said Jocko. "Want to hear it?"

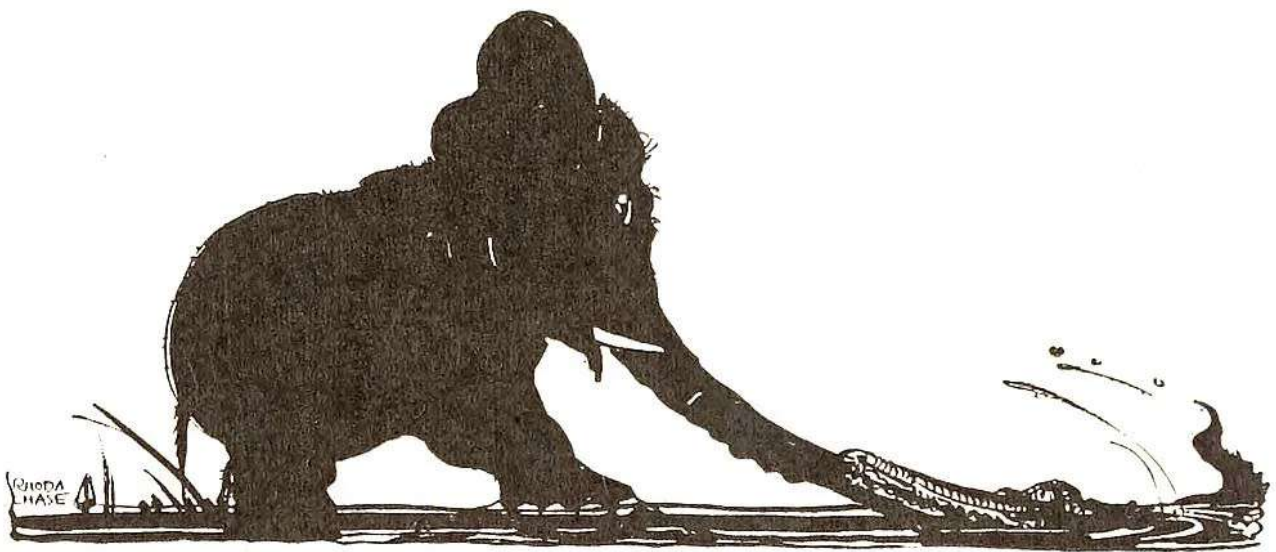
"Yes, tell me," said Tito, moving close to Jocko. "Where did Mr. Lion get his long hair?"

"Oh dear! don't you know?" laughed Jocko, "Mrs. Lion pulled it so much it made it long. She hasn't any, you see. Oh dear, yes, Mr. Lion is a henpecked husband if ever there was one."

"You don't tell me so," said Tito. "What about Hippo? How did it happen he is so big and clumsy?"

"Oh, don't you know?" said Jocko. "When the animals were being made there was a lot of each animal left and it was all stirred together, and that made Hippo. They made his body first and then they did not have enough to give him a long tail or fill in his mouth. That is the reason it is so large."

"Ho, ho, ho!" laughed Tito, and Jocko laughed, too, until they nearly fell off the place where they were sitting. "Where did old Reynard get his bushy tail, Jocko?"



"Oh, don't you know that either?" replied Jocko. "He was caught trying to steal chickens by the farmer's wife, and she threw the brush she was using at him with such force that it struck him handle first, and there it stuck right on his back, and he never could be rid of it."

"Ho, ho, ho!" laughed Tito. "And where did the giraffe get his long neck?"

"Oh, that is easy," said Jocko. "He was so big-feeling and so haughty he would not look at the other animals, and it stretched his neck until now he can't see the ground, so I have been told. I don't know, of course."

"He has a very little head, anyway," said Tito.

"There is very little in it, my dear Tito," said Jocko. And then they both laughed again.

One by one the animals had awakened, but, hearing what was being said, they each hoped to hear something about the other that would offset the fun Jocko was making of them, so they kept still.

"Where did the elephant get his trunk? That is what I should most like to hear about," said Tito.

"Well, that is a long story," said Jocko. "It seems that it really was only a nose to begin with, and not much of a nose at that, so I have heard it said, but because he was so big he thought he was the boss of the jungle, where he lived, and he went about poking his nose into every place he could find to see what was going on. They used to call him Old Nosey, I have been told, and he had such big ears that what he did not see he heard, so every one disliked him, but it took Old Man Crocodile to cure him of his bad habit."

"What did he do to Mr. Elephant?" asked Tito, excitedly.

"I'll tell you," said Jocko. "One day Mr. Elephant was walking by the water when he saw something queer-looking sticking out of the water.

"Mr. Elephant had to know what it was, so he poked it with his nose, and, zip! it had him right by the nose, and held him, too.

"My, how he did yell, I was told, but Old Man Crocodile would not let go. He held right on tight.

"Mr. Elephant pulled and cried, 'Let go!' and the harder he pulled the harder Old Man Crocodile pulled, until Mr. Elephant had that nose you see on him now called a trunk.

“By and by Old Man Crocodile had to catch his breath, and he let go, and down sat Mr. Elephant on the ground with a bang.

“Old Man Crocodile began to cry and say how sorry he was that he had grabbed Mr. Elephant—that he had no idea he was hurting a friend. He thought it was a hunter, and would Mr. Elephant please forgive him this once!—he would never do it again.”

“Is there where Old Man Crocodile got his tears?” asked Tito.

“That is how he began to cry,” said Jocko.

“Ho, ho, ho!” they both laughed, and then a terrible roar and trumpeting and all sorts of cries went up from the animals, for Mr. Elephant could not keep quiet when he heard what Jocko said about his trunk.

When Mr. Elephant began to trumpet Mr. Lion began to roar, and Jocko and Tito fled to the back of their cage and huddled together, trembling with fright.

“They can’t get us,” said Jocko. “Let them talk and scream. I guess we woke them up talking and laughing.” The other animals made such a noise that the keepers came running to see what had happened, but, of course, they did not understand a thing they told them about the awful stories Jocko had told about them, and so all they could do was to give them a drink of water or a biscuit, hoping they would be quiet.

Far into the morning the animals scolded and told Jocko what they thought of him, but Tito and Jocko fell asleep in spite of the noise and Tito laughed in his dreams about the funny things Jocko had told him.