



WHY BABOON STOPPED BEING POLITE BY DOUGLAS EVANS

Everyone in the African bush knows how rude Baboon can be.

Although he used to be the most polite of all animals. But everything changed on the day he met Elephant at the People Safari Camp.

The sun was up. The people had just left the camp in search of animals such as elephants and baboons. Baboon met Elephant as they both arrived at the people's camp.

"Good day, Elephant. How do you do?" said Baboon. "Fine morning isn't it?"

"Splendid indeed, little fellow," Elephant replied. "Notice all the lilies in bloom. Come with me and let's go enjoy their fragrance."

"After you, Elephant. You first," said Baboon. "Be my guest."

Elephant pointed his long trunk toward an orange flower and sniffed.

“Ah, delightful. Marvelous odor,” he said. “You should take a whiff, my friend.”

Baboon sprang over to the lilies. He put his small nose on a flower, but smelled nothing. “Elephant’s big nose has sniffed all the smell from these flowers,” he told himself. But he was too polite to say a thing.

This close to the Equator, the sun rose quickly. As it spread its light across the bush, the ibis bird called out *har, har, harrrr*.

“There’s a sound I enjoy hearing each morning,” said Elephant, flapping his big ears. “Isn’t it cheerful? Listen, my friend.”

Baboon lifted his head and stood still. But he heard nothing. “Elephant’s big ears have collected all the sound and left me with none,” he said. But he was too polite to say a thing.

Soon the sun hung straight overhead. The air grew hot and dusty.

“A cool bath would suit me fine,” Elephant said. “Shall we take a dip in the water hole?”

“Good idea, Elephant,” said Baboon. “You first.”

Baboon followed Elephant over to the small pool. When Elephant stepped into the water he let out a long sigh. “Ah, how refreshing,” he said. He sprayed his broad, wrinkled back with his trunk. “How cool. You should join me, little friend.”

Baboon leaped into the water, then raced right out again. “Cool water? What does he mean?” he muttered to himself. “That pool is

lukewarm. Elephant's yards of skin have taken all the coolness away." But still Baboon said nothing.

After stepping from the water, Elephant pointed his tusks toward an acacia tree. "Lunchtime, little friend," he said. "Shall we share some delicious leaves?"

"Help yourself," said Baboon. "You first."

Elephant raised his trunk and brought down a branch that he curled into his mouth.

"Ah, delicious," he said, shoving the leaves into his mouth. "You should try some, little friend."

Baboon scampered up the tree and grabbed a handful of leaves. He chewed one, then another, but tasted nothing. "Elephant's trunk took the taste right out of these leaves," he told himself.

By this time, the sun was heading downward. The people's minivan, returning from safari, chug-chugged in the distance.

"Time for us to leave," said Elephant. "How fine it was to spend this day with you."

Of course, Baboon had not enjoyed the day at all. Elephant had hogged everything, and he was furious. As the pair left the camp, Baboon lost his manners completely. Without asking, he leaped onto Elephant's head. He knew that at this height, his keen eyesight could see something Elephant would miss with his small eyes.

Knocking his knuckles on Elephant's head, he shouted, "My how beautiful the sunset is tonight, Elephant. Just look at all those colors. What a splendid view from us here."