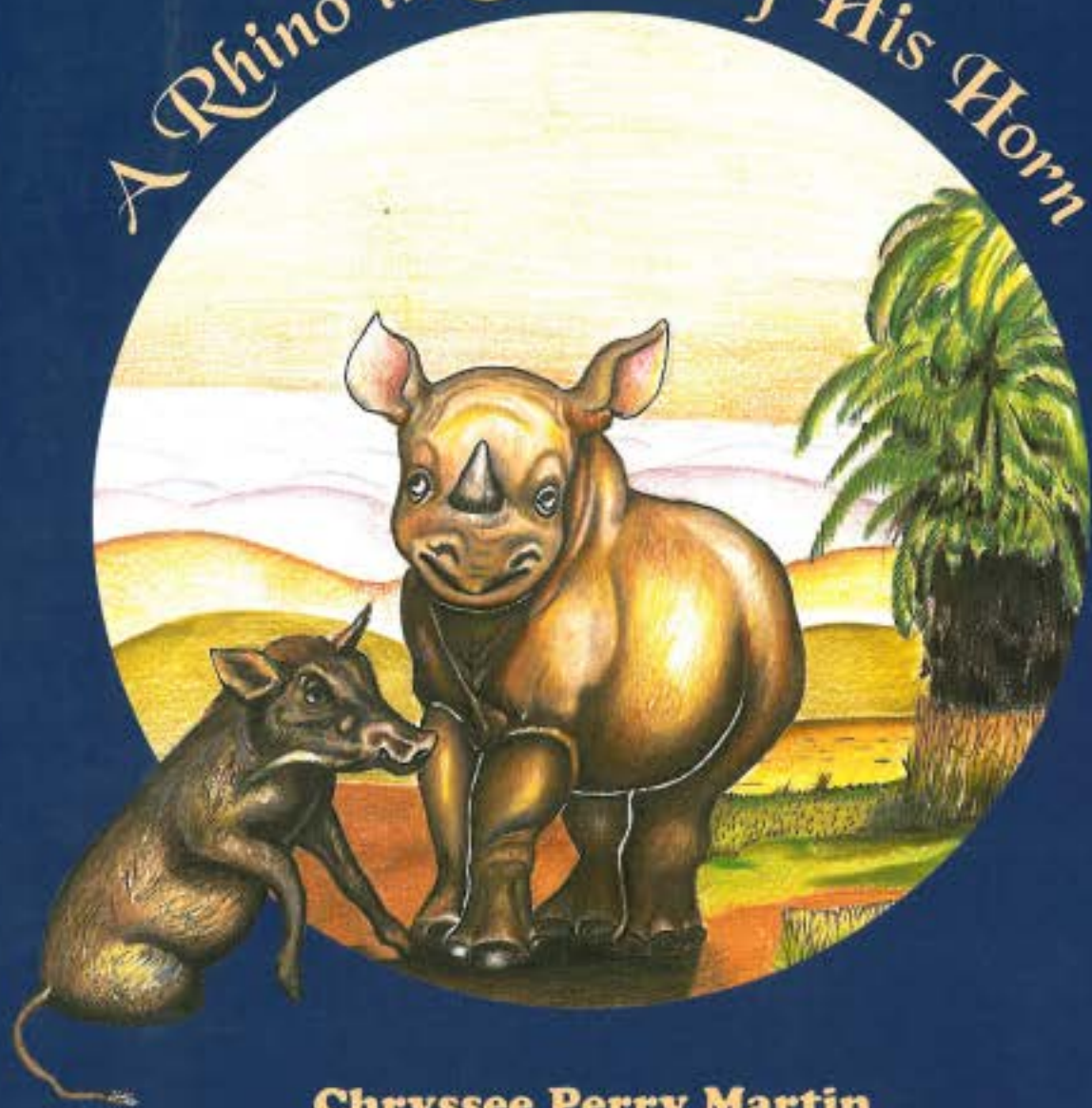


RUSSELAS

A Rhino in Search of His Horn



Chryssee Perry Martin

Illustrated by Samwel Okinyi Ngoje

RUSSELAS

A Rhino in Search of His Horn

To Anna, I hope the adventures of my extraordinary rhinoceros will amuse you! Esmond and I send you our love, Chryssee '76



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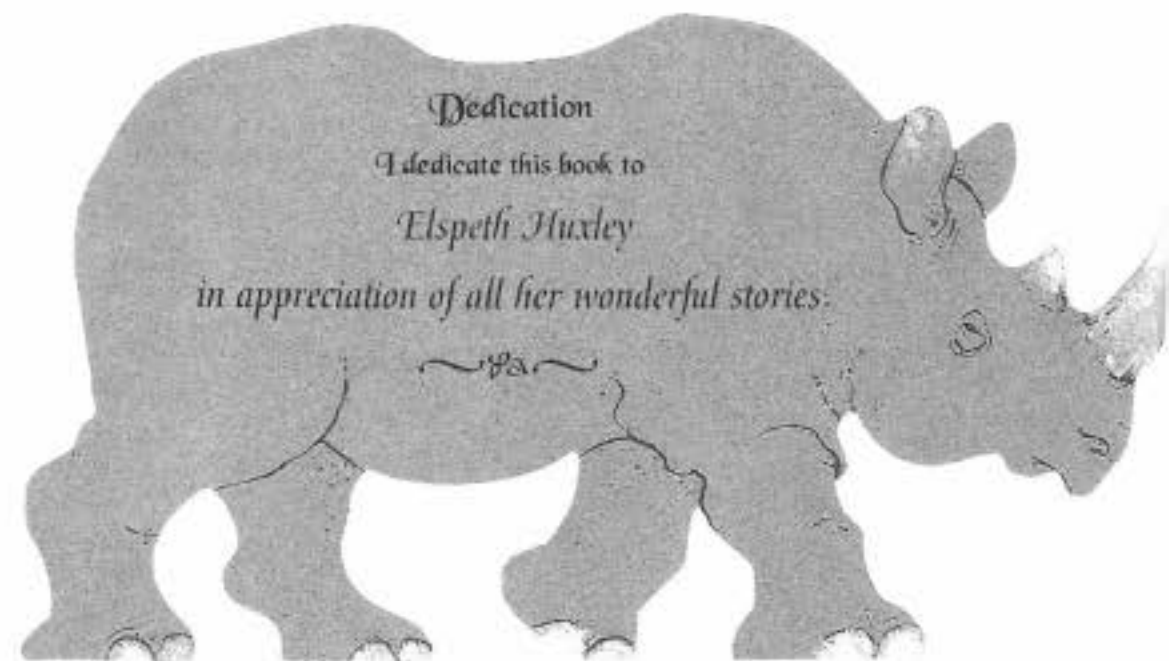
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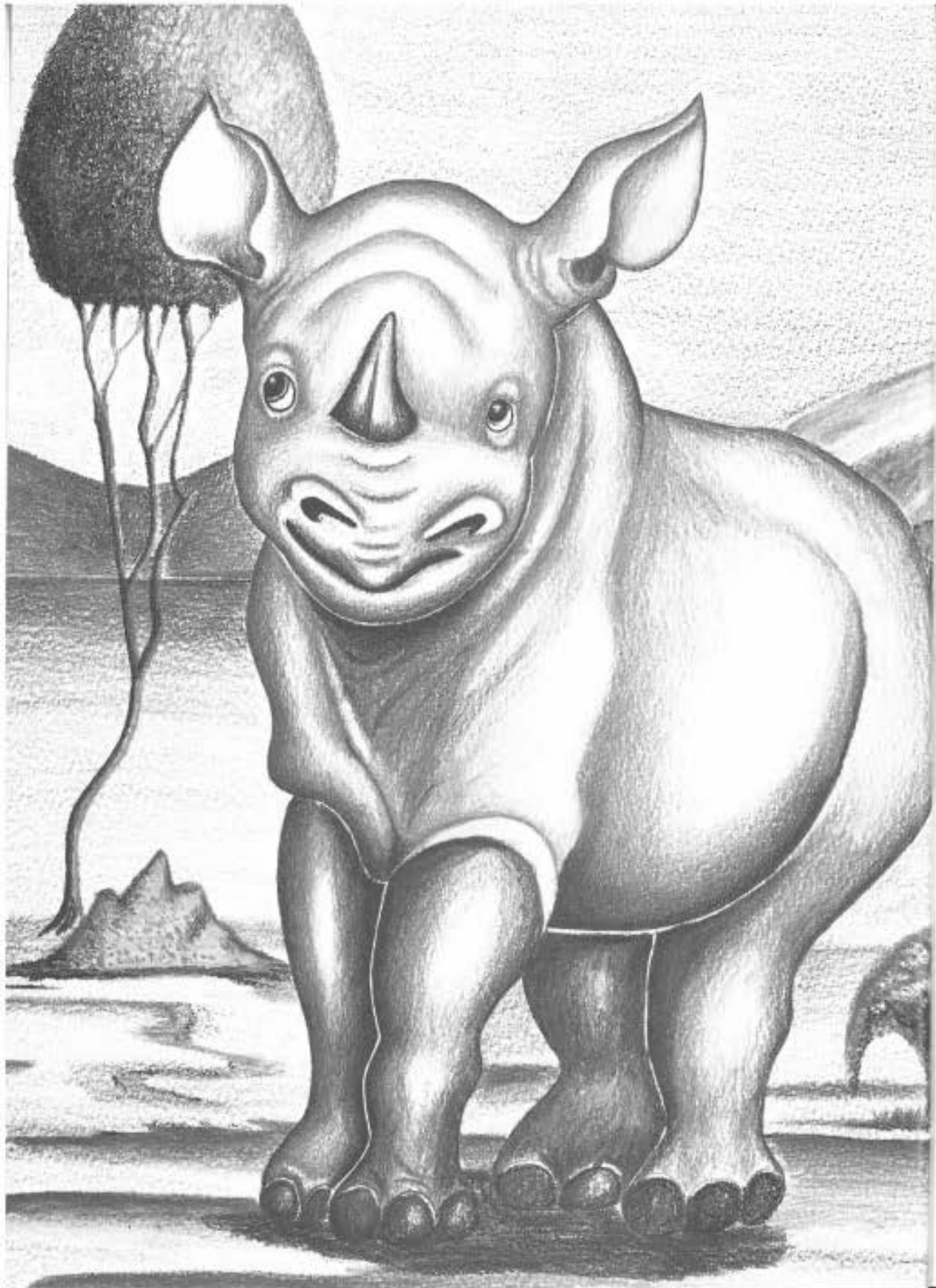
Chryssee Perry Martin
Illustrated by Samwel Okinyi Ngoje



To my wife
 Alice Wangui, whose love is the fuel of my imagination.
 S. N.

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Foreword

I well recall meeting Russelas for tea at Harrods. As you can imagine, he created quite a stir, for a young rhino, indeed any rhino young or old, is not a usual sight in London's streets. Frankly, I thought him rather greedy; he'd already eaten at least a dozen scones, sent for a second jar of strawberry jam and was filling in the chinks with rich layer cakes. But then rhinos do have appetites to match their size—a size, incidentally which created problems for Harrod's chairs. But the staff dealt with the matter with their usual courtesy and aplomb, trained as they are to serve customers from all parts of the world and to satisfy their needs with anything from a shrimp to an elephant.

Russelas' travels took him from his home in the Nairobi National Park in Kenya first to Bombay by dhow, then to the ebullient city of Hong Kong, on to Singapore and finally via London to Sanaa, the capital of North Yemen, where his quest ended: his missing horn had been turned into the handle of a beautiful dagger!

In the course of his travels, Russelas learned a great deal about the wicked trade in the horns of his fellow rhinos, many thousands of whom have been killed by poachers. Why should they be slaughtered to the verge of extinction to make dagger handles for proud young warriors and potions for people in distant lands who suffer from fevers and headaches? I don't think Russelas found an answer to that question, but he did find an affectionate welcome on returning home to Langata, the Kenyan home of Chryssee and her husband Esmond who devote all their energies to trying to make the world a safer place for rhinos. Cream teas at Harrods are fine, but he was glad to get back to a good old mud wallow. And when he looked in a mirror, he got a very exciting surprise.

So this story has a happy ending, and we must all hope that the efforts of those dedicated people who are trying to save the rhinos from extinction will have a happy ending too—and we must do what we can ourselves to help to bring it about.

Elsbeth Huxley

Elsbeth Huxley



Chapter 1

Russelas at Home

Once upon a time, there was a rhinoceros named Russelas. How he came to be called Russelas is a very long story—or a very tall story if you happen to be lying down. At four years old he was still small and weighed only half a tonne. His mother was beautiful with two very long horns, but she was very short-sighted. Russelas dreamed that one day his own horns would grow to be the biggest in the world, but hoped he would not be as myopic as his mother. Because she couldn't see very far, she worried about everything and insisted that Russelas follow right behind her. And that was Russelas' problem. He never wanted to stay put. Every day his mother led him around the same old places: the water-hole, the acacia thorn trees, the Langata Forest; the water-hole, the acacia thorn trees, the Langata Forest...

Russelas should have been very happy. His home was the Nairobi National Park where there are lots of other animals and plenty of food and water. There was even entertainment, provided by hoards of tourists who tried to disguise themselves by coming in minibuses painted in zebra stripes. But Russelas was tired of living in the little park: he wanted adventures. He could see the skyscrapers of the big city to the north and wondered what went on inside them. He listened to the foreigners tell thrilling tales of London, Paris, Rome and New York. It all sounded so much more exciting than the life he knew and he wanted to go and see these places for himself. He discussed his problem with Sam Ngethe, the nice man who had a house in the park and who sometimes gave him pieces of sugarcane, but Sam said it was very risky for Russelas to go off on his own.

"Remember what happened last year when you ran away from your mother at night, and the hyenas chased you and bit you on the back leg?"

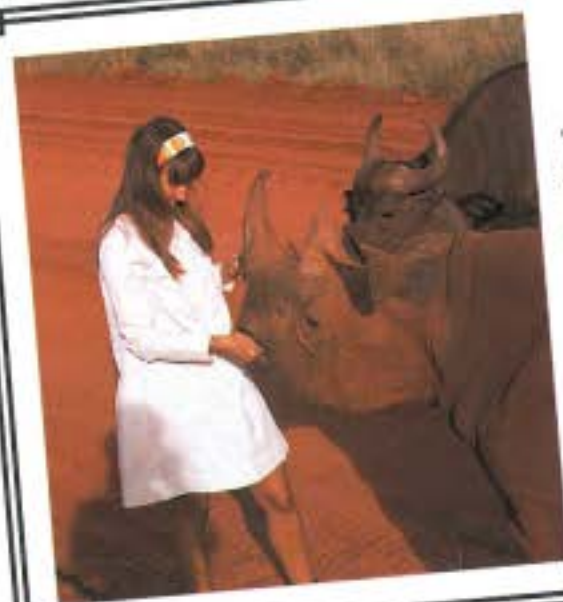
"Yes," admitted Russelas. "But I was very little then!"



"And I heard you crying," Sam went on relentlessly. "If I hadn't come to your rescue and frightened away the hyenas you might not be around to complain."

"Well, I can take care of myself now," Russelas said. "Look, my front horn is lots longer and any hyena coming near me will feel the sharp end!"

"There are worse things than hyenas for you to worry about now," replied Sam ominously.



How Russelas got his Name

Russelas' name comes from 'Rufus', Kenya's well loved orphan rhino that in 1960 wandered into the kitchen of the Warden of Tsavo East National Park; and from 'Russelas', a moral tale about an innocent abroad, written by Samuel Johnson in January 1759, one month before Voltaire published *Candide*, a much more famous and readable philosophical tale about a young man beset by catastrophes in "the best of all possible worlds".

But Russelas persisted.

He nagged and worried until his mother finally agreed that he could go and see Chryssee who lived just across the road from the park. He went through the forest, walked through a flimsy part of the fence, crossed the road and ambled down a hill. Ending up in another small forest, he strolled through it, tasting some branches from different trees. Then suddenly, he was startled by a creature charging towards him. Russelas spun around and headed into some bushes to hide. He wasn't quick enough. Little scampering feet darted right under him. Russelas twisted around to see what was there.

"Puff, puff," he heard, followed by a plea, "Please stay still or you'll knock me over with your big feet!"

It was a warthog. Russelas had seen plenty of them in Nairobi Park, but never before one like this.

"Who are you?" Russelas asked.



"I'm called Voltaire and I live here!" was the prompt reply. "Right now I'm playing hide-and-seek with two people."

Russelas was impressed. Here was a warthog named after a very famous writer, who seemed to get his own way with people. "Tell me more," he asked.

"I'm an orphan," Voltaire proudly announced. "I was found half-drowned during the long rains. Chryssee rescued me and fed me lots of porridge and let me sit on her lap while she wrote books. I'm too big for that now, so when she's writing she sends me out on walks with Benjamin and Joseph. That's who's looking for me now. I tease them by running away and hiding. I wonder what they will think when they find me under your legs!" Voltaire began to oink and giggle so loudly that Benjamin and Joseph soon found them.

"Jambo," said Benjamin Kavumbu.

"Habari," said Joseph Kieke.

"Hello," replied Russelas to their Swahili greetings.

"Come along, little fellow," they said to Voltaire. "We have to get back to the house and cook lunch."

"May I come too?" asked Russelas.

"Of course," said Benjamin, Joseph and Voltaire in unison.

"Chryssee loves rhinos. She has written more about rhinos than anything else, but I wish she'd write about me," said Voltaire.



Why "Voltaire" for a Warthog?

Often considered as the ugliest creature, the warthog is among the most intelligent of animals and in many ways is quite unlike other pigs. It has no fatty layer nor thick coat to protect it, and cannot tolerate the cold. It sleeps in a burrow at night, and will take grass inside to make a warm bed. Voltaire the warthog is the namesake of France's great and prolific 18th-century author of more than 15 million words, who was no beauty either. He wrote plays, novels, short stories, poetry, history, scientific papers and 20,000 letters to 1,700 people. He knew everyone who was anyone and his friends ranged from peasants to popes. He was a brilliant, witty thinker and a crusader against injustice.



Russelas and his three new friends trudged through the bush towards a big gate that Benjamin unlocked. They came to a pretty garden with lots of flowers, in the middle of which stood a white house with many windows. From inside came a strange buzzing sound. Russelas walked up to a window to have a closer look. There was Chryssee with big glasses on her nose, sitting at an electric typewriter with piles and piles of papers all around her. She wasn't computerized but was very intent on whatever it was she was writing and didn't see the rhinoceros peering in at her.

Benjamin and Joseph called to her. "There's someone here we think you'd like to meet."

The whirr of the typewriter stopped and the door flew open. "How super!" Chryssee cried out as soon as she saw Russelas. "Wherever did you find him?" she asked the two men.

It was Russelas' turn to introduce himself while Benjamin and Joseph took themselves off to the kitchen with Voltaire close on their heels. He would push and shove at them until he got what he thought might be enough to eat until lunch was ready. They had wisely decided to serve lunch on the verandah, correctly assuming that Russelas was not accustomed to meals in a French-style dining room.

"My name is Russelas. I have come from Nairobi Park because I want to learn about the rest of the world and have some adventures," Russelas began boldly.

"Well," answered Chryssee with a smile, "you'd better meet Esmond who is a geographer. He chooses the places we go." She yelled at the top of her lungs, "Esmond!"

Through the open door, Russelas could see a man with bushy white hair coming down the stairs towards them. He walked with long strides like an antelope.

"What is it?" he asked. "I have work to do."

"This is important," countered Chryssee. "We're always talking and writing about rhinos and now we have one on our doorstep, one who wants to know all about the world. You must help him."

"What do you want to know?" asked Esmond.

"I don't know," replied Russelas. "I was hoping you'd tell me."

Esmond said he didn't know where to start, and Russelas was beginning to realize that conversation with Esmond could be very difficult. He seemed to ask one question after another, obviously enjoyed listening to answers, but gave very few himself. Russelas tried another tactic.



"What do you do?"

"I read, I travel, I write."

"Russelas wants to travel and have adventures," interrupted Chryssee to Russelas' relief. "What can he do?"

"Well," said Esmond, "you could walk to Magadi. It isn't that far and you could see the Maasai people and their cattle. You could find out if you really want to travel because you'll have to look after yourself there and learn what it means to be on your own."

Benjamin and Joseph brought out the food for lunch. "We're having cheese soufflé," murmured Voltaire to Russelas as they took their places at the table. "It looks a lot, but it's not much; it's mostly air," he complained. Voltaire was always hungry and could never have enough to eat.

Russelas liked the green salad that came with the strange dish they called a soufflé, but much preferred the strawberries and cream that were served afterwards. Before he left, Chryssee gave him some oranges and French chocolates. He had already learned that Chryssee liked all things French and he asked her if one day she would take him to Paris.

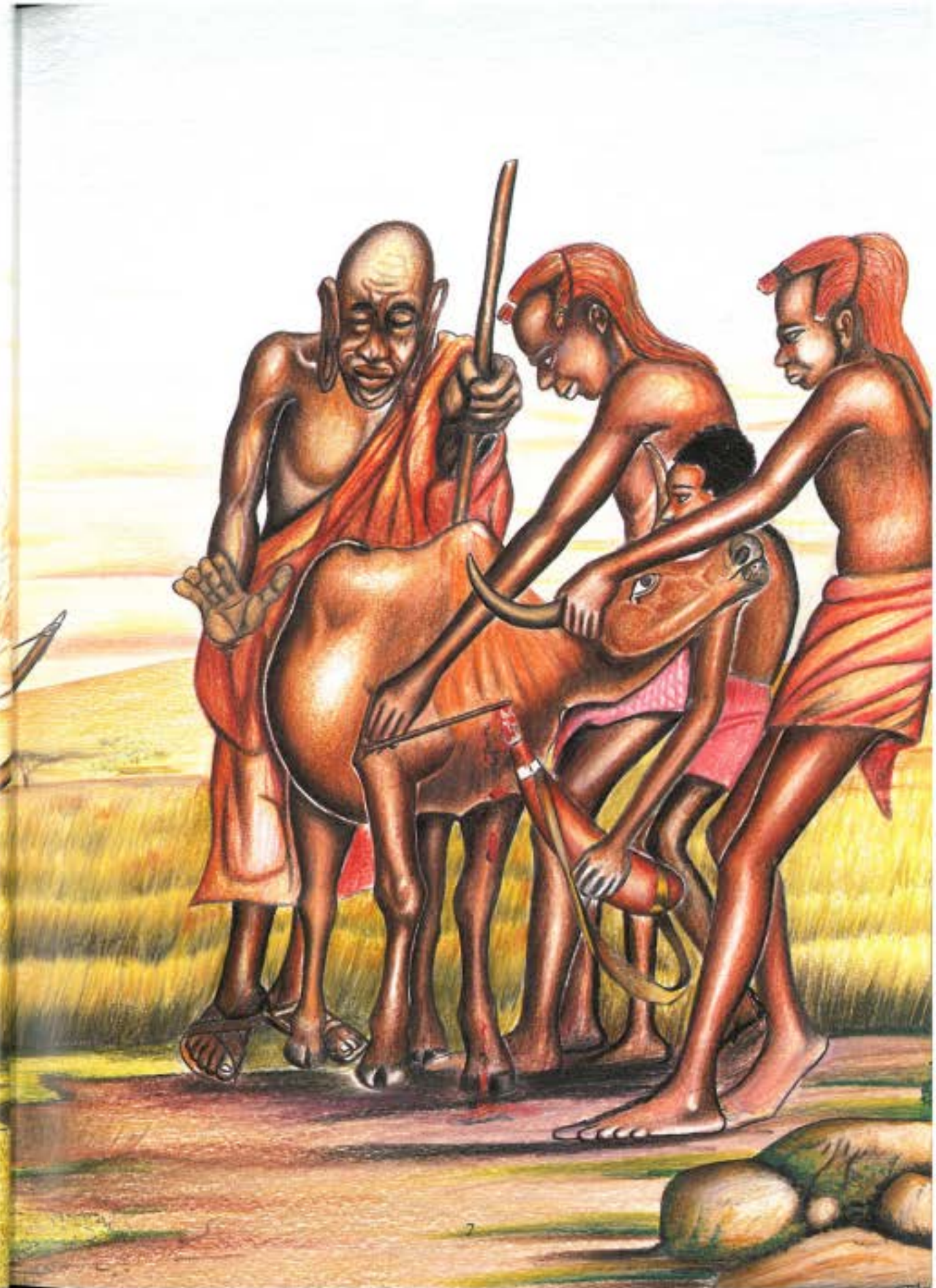
"That would be great fun," she agreed. "A hundred years ago a poet named Gérard de Nerval walked along the Champs-Élysées, leading his pet lobster on a pink ribbon. I'd love to take you." Russelas privately vowed he would not be seen dead in a pink ribbon, but was too polite to say so.

Esmond pointed out the way to Magadi and asked Russelas please to pick up the mail at the post office on his way back the next day.

Russelas walked for a while then turned across a wide open plain. A cheetah and her cubs darted past but didn't stop for a chat. He plodded on and it got very hot. He was tired, so lay down and rolled in the dust. Not quite as good as a mud bath, he thought to himself, but better than nothing. He got up and strolled along farther but didn't see much of interest and was beginning to wonder if there were any Maasai people around, when just then he saw a group of men standing around a cow. One of them had a bow which he used to shoot an arrow into the cow's neck. Russelas was rather shocked, but the cow didn't make a sound and seemed quite used to this treatment. The arrow was pulled out and the blood spurting out of the wound was caught in a long gourd. After a couple of minutes a small plug was put into the wound, stopping the flow of blood. The cow went back to grazing peacefully.

The blood was mixed with some sour milk and the men sat down in a circle and passed the concoction from one to another, each taking a sip. Russelas thought that a soufflé was strange enough food for one day so he decided



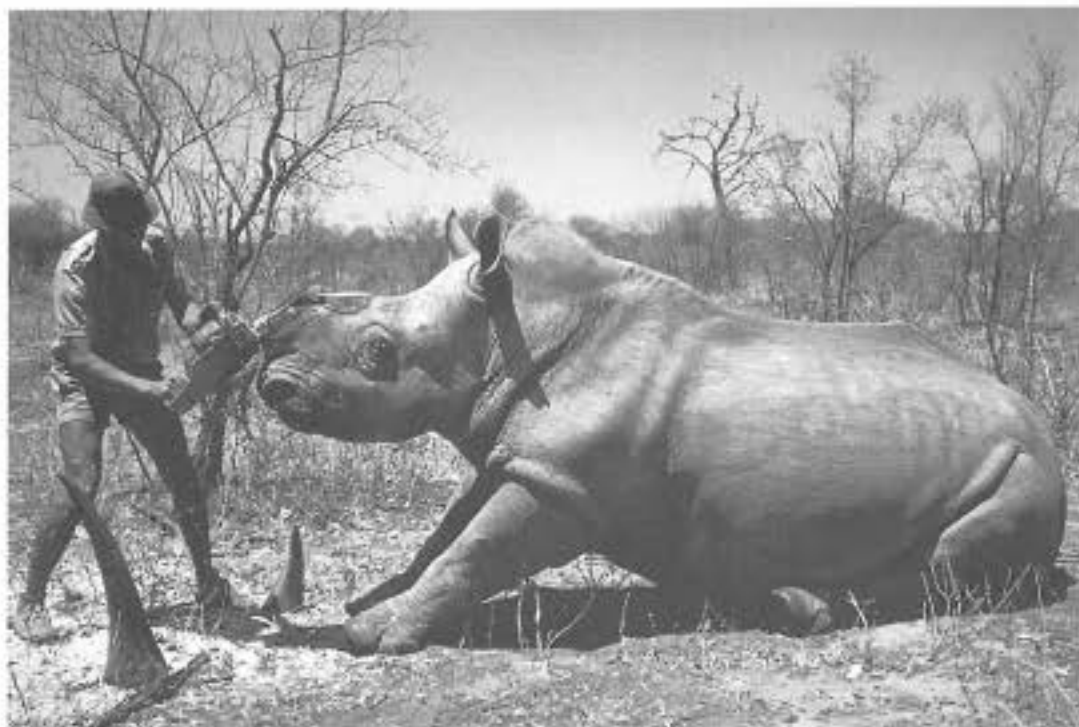


not to join the Maasai and wandered on a while longer.

The sun went down and the night grew darker and darker. Russelas was lonely. He didn't like this part of his adventure, so he found some bushes and made a kind of den for himself and settled down. Perhaps things will be more interesting tomorrow, he thought to himself as he drifted off to sleep.

During the night Russelas had awful nightmares. As soon as the sun rose in the morning, he hurried back to Chryssee and Voltaire, desperately needing somebody to talk to.

"Goodness!" exclaimed Chryssee when she saw him. "What has happened to you? You look awful! Where's your beautiful horn?"



A Rhino being de-horned under heavy sedation in Zimbabwe.



Nairobi National Park

The idea of national parks came about in the 19th century, when the buffalo had almost disappeared from America and the elephant was almost extinct in South Africa. People had begun to realize that wildlife could no longer compete with them for land use, and governments would have to grant protection to the areas where animals could be preserved. The world's first national park, Yellowstone, was established in America in 1872. By the early 1900's colonialists in Africa were also demanding national parks.



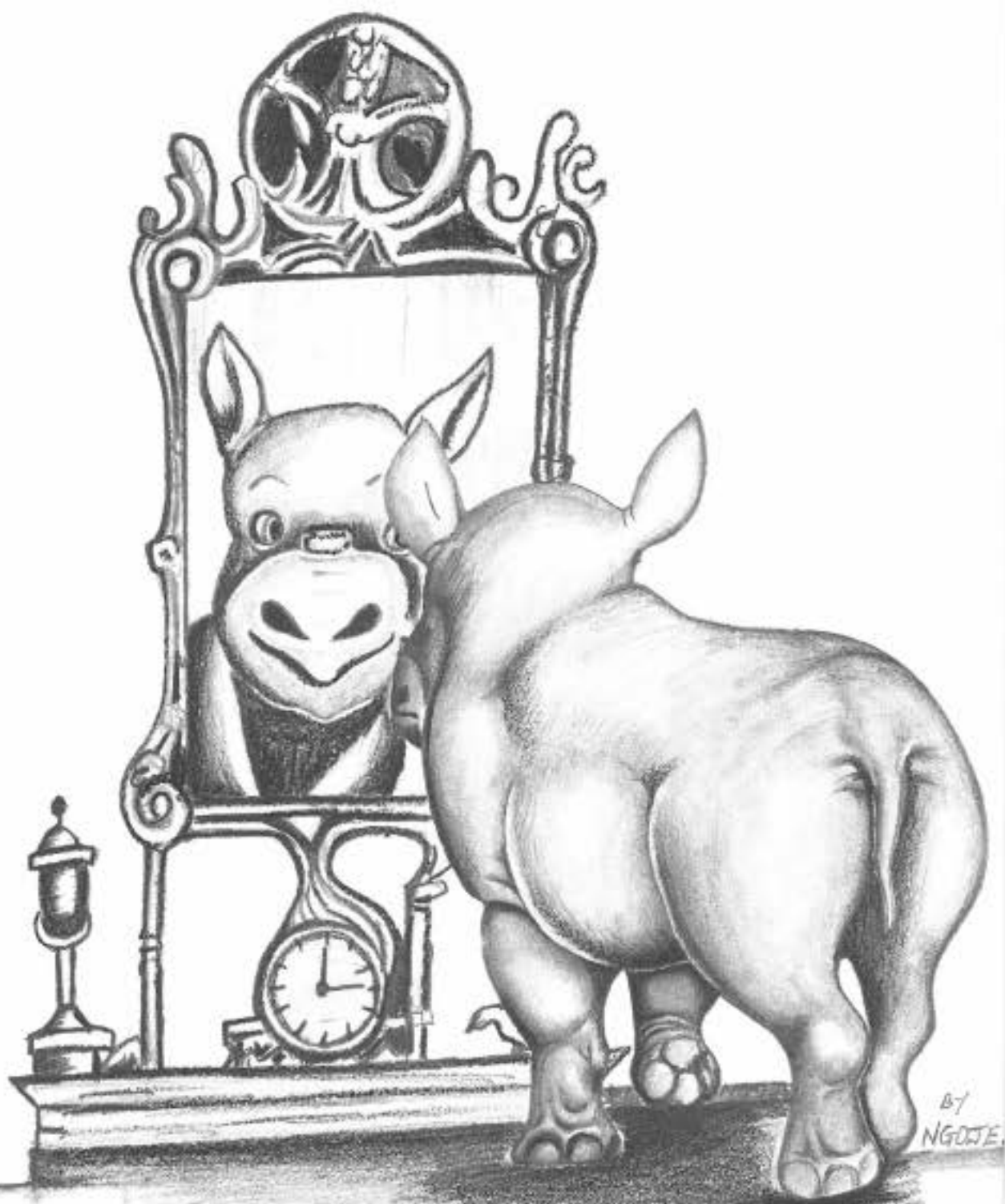
In Kenya, the two World Wars caused great destruction to game animals when the government used them to provide meat for the troops, prisoners of war and camp followers; and to make money from the sale of their horns, hides and tusks. Concern grew into a hue and cry to 'save our wildlife'.

On Christmas Eve 1946, the Official Gazette of the Government of Kenya proclaimed Nairobi National Park as Kenya's first. For many years the director, Mervyn Cowie, had led the campaign to establish Kenya National Parks. There was very little money but lots of enthusiasm and determination. Soon Nairobi Park had 150 km of roads, several dams and salt licks... and regulations that met with opposition from quite a few members of the public who moaned: "You can't even blow your nose, let alone your horn in the park!" When one woman who liked riding her horse there learned that she would no longer be allowed to do so (only visitors in motor cars were permitted), she was irate and went to the Governor of Kenya to demand "my right to ride where I please". She pounded her fists on his desk until the inkwell toppled and ink spilled all over his papers whereupon she was unceremoniously removed from the Governor's office.

Nairobi was already a bustling city in the 1940's, and preserving wildlife right on its doorstep was then, and still is, unique. One of the first undertakings was to build a fence along part of the park's border. The few strands of wire cut deeply into the budget but did not always keep the animals within their prescribed bounds, despite adding thorny hedges, bamboo lacing, ditching and banking. Many of the resident lions went 'visiting', and while some of the park's neighbours enjoyed having the odd lioness sleeping on their verandah from time to time, there were problems.

Today, an electric fence surrounds almost the whole of the park which is 117 square kilometres. Only a small corridor is left open for migratory animals to move in and out. There are more than a hundred different species of mammals in Nairobi Park and as many as 25,000 animals in the dry season.





Chapter 2

A Point Lost

How could he be a rhino without a horn? What had happened to it when he'd been all alone in the bush last night? Russelas was heartbroken. Chryssee took him upstairs to the big mirror in the blue room so that Russelas could see for himself what he looked like. His sorrowful image stared back at him and he began to cry. He didn't yell or scream, he just squeaked and squealed sadly. The one thing that meant most of all to him was gone. He had been so sure that his front horn would grow to be the biggest in the world, but now all that was left was just a little stub on his forehead. It looked dreadful!

Esmond came to examine him. "Tell me, Russelas, do you hurt anywhere?"

"All over, everywhere!" he sobbed bitterly, "and I feel all wobbly!"

"Be specific, Russelas," insisted Esmond. "Is there any place on your hide which feels bruised?"

"Oh yes, right here on my right thigh," answered Russelas, sticking out his leg for examination. He was beginning to feel a bit better now that someone was taking a real interest in the situation.

Esmond peered closely, prodded around with his fingers and noticed that there was quite a swelling—and a big puncture mark. "Mmmmmm," said Esmond looking closely at Russelas' forehead. "Your horn was cut off with a sharp knife."

"But why would anyone do that to me?" wailed Russelas.

"Because they thought you'd be better without it, I expect. It's the conservationists who've done that to you," explained Chryssee in a fury.

"What are conservationists?" asked Russelas, but got no immediate reply. Chryssee was making too much noise, shouting madly and stomping around the room in her anger, while Esmond was busy trying to focus his camera on the place where the horn had been cut off.



Finally, Esmond tried to explain. "All conservationists want to save rhinos. Some of them think that the best way to do that is to go around cutting off their valuable horns whenever they find them."

"But why?" Russelas couldn't make head or tail of this conversation, it all sounded so contradictory.

"Listen, Russelas," Esmond went on patiently, "rhino horns are very valuable things."

"I know that," said Russelas. "It was certainly the most valuable thing I had!"

"What I mean is," continued Esmond, "that they are worth a lot of money to some people."

"But they're not as valuable to anyone else as they are to me," argued Russelas. "People don't need them to scare off hyenas and they don't wave them in the air to say 'Hello'. They use salt cellars instead of digging for minerals to eat, so they don't need them for that, or to pull down branches. I just don't see why they should need my horn more than me. How can a rhino be a rhino without a horn? What are the conservationists going to do with my horn that they stole, and besides all that, how did they manage to get it off me in the first place?" he cried piteously.

"Huh!" snorted Chryssee in a rage. "The conservationists won't do anything with your horn—they'll just throw it away!" She flounced out angrily to make some hot chocolate for Russelas, thinking it might be the best thing for shock.

Russelas was horrified and stood frozen to the spot. Esmond took the opportunity to get his picture and then sat down on the big canopied bed, and Russelas curled up beside him. Calmly, Esmond began to explain the details.

"Let me tell you what must have happened last night. Someone shot a dart into your thigh and that dart was full of anaesthetic that knocked you out cold and gave you those nightmares. It's also what makes you feel so wobbly today and why you hurt. When the person realized you were unconscious, he took a knife and hacked off your horn. It's not bone, just a special kind of hair. It wouldn't have taken long to do. Chryssee is probably right when she says that your horn was thrown away. However, it is also very likely that someone else will have found your horn by now and sold it."

Russelas rolled over and put his head on Esmond's knee. Esmond scratched Russelas' ears, which gave him a bit of comfort, then went on: "It could have been much worse for you. A poacher might have found you instead of a conservationist and he would have killed you for your horn. A conservationist did this to try and stop the poachers from shooting you."



a conservationist and he would have killed you for your horn. A conservationist did this to try and stop the poachers from shooting you."

"What are poachers?" asked Russelas.

"Poachers are people who kill game or catch fish illegally. Sometimes they are poor people who need food or money. They kill rhinos to raise money by selling the horns. Sometimes poachers go around in gangs organized by evil and greedy men who are only interested in making money. They are the ones who profit most, and who smuggle the horns out of the country to far away places where other people make medicines out of them, or..." Esmond stopped short, not wanting to tell Russelas what happened to many other rhino horns. Fortunately, Chryssee came back just in time with a cup of steaming hot chocolate. It was scrumptious, with marshmallows floating on top. Russelas gulped it down gratefully and then lay back on the bed. He was tired and oh, so sad.

"Try to sleep now, Russelas," said Esmond, and he and Chryssee crept out of the room.

Voltaire was waiting for them. "Why can't I have hot chocolate with marshmallows?" he pouted.

"Because you're getting fat," answered Esmond. "Go away and play and let me get on with my work."

Voltaire was annoyed. It wasn't fair that Russelas was getting all the attention. He went out into the garden and dug up a flower bed, pretending to look for roots to eat, but really just to mess it up, which he knew always made Esmond angry. "Serves him right," Voltaire muttered. "He's even letting Russelas sleep in the big bed and I'm never allowed to do that!" Voltaire knew very well why Esmond wouldn't let him there—because he snored and always hogged the pillows.

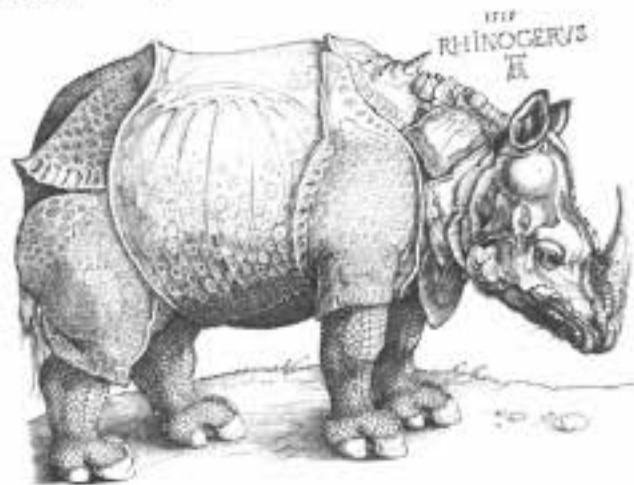
In the afternoon Russelas went for a long walk with Voltaire in the forest. He didn't want to go back to his mother in Nairobi Park. He was too embarrassed to be seen without his horn. Even Voltaire now felt sorry for him, but nothing he could do would cheer up the sad little rhino.

Dinner that night was served by candlelight in the green dining room. Benjamin and Joseph had spent hours cooking a magnificent French feast, but conversation around the table was dull. No one knew what to say to Russelas who was very, very quiet. To Voltaire's surprise, neither Chryssee nor Esmond stopped the warhog from taking a third helping of potatoes, something he was never, ever allowed to do. At the end of the meal, Russelas stood up, thanked Benjamin and Joseph for the lovely food and said he was going back to bed.



Rhino History

The oldest known member of the rhinocerotoid family is *Hyrachyus*, a creature without horns. It was the size of an Alsatian dog, with longer legs and hooves on its feet. *Hyrachyus* could run very fast indeed. When it appeared 50 million years ago, most of the world was like a greenhouse, with tropical vegetation right up



to the Arctic Circle. *Hyrachyus* lived off leafy vegetation in North America, Europe and probably in Asia.

Some 33 million years ago, when there was a drying and cooling of the earth, the continents drifted apart. Rhinos in different places developed very differently from one another. Some began to look like hippopotamuses, some like horses, some like pigs. Some were sabre-toothed and had long, wriggly noses. The first to get horns was one in America, called *Diceratherium*. The biggest of all was in Asia and is today properly called *Paraceratherium*, though

some people still refer to it as *Baluchitherium* or *Indricotherium*. It was the largest land mammal ever. Nine metres long, it stood six metres high at the shoulder and weighed over 20,000 kg, more than four African bull elephants together! *Paraceratherium* browsed on treetops, like modern giraffes, and survived in Pakistan up until about 15 million years ago.

Preserved in European peat bogs, you can find *Coelodonta*, the woolly rhino that is closely related to the living Sumatran rhinoceros. Earliest specimens are 20 million years old, but freeze-dried mummies from 10,000 years ago are being dug up in Siberia. The woolly rhino was

widespread in Europe and Asia. It never got across the Bering Strait to America, even though woolly mammoths did. *Coelodonta* had two horns, the front one rather flat and shovel-like which it used to sweep away snow to feed on the grasses beneath.

Today, rhinos come in five species, two in Africa and three in Asia. They all have horns, and that is their undoing. In 1970 they numbered 70,000 altogether, of which 65,000 were black rhinos, like Russelas. By 1994 less than 12,000 rhinos remained, and of those just 2,400 were black.



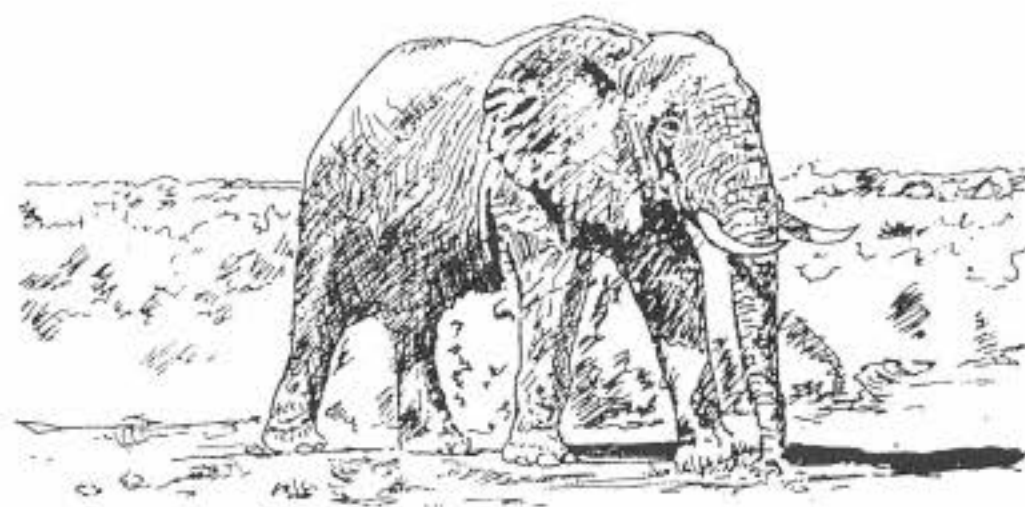
"I'll be leaving you tomorrow," Russelas announced. "I'm going to Mombasa to find out if someone there has my horn. You've told me that rhino horn is sometimes smuggled out of the country on old wooden sailing boats called dhows. I'm going to find my horn before anyone has a chance to ship it out of Kenya. I'll buy it back if I have to, but I'm determined to find it."

"You'll have to watch out!" warned Esmond. "Sometimes poachers sneak up behind a rhino and pull the triggers of their guns without even checking to see if the rhino has a horn. To get to Mombasa you'll have to cross Tsavo National Park and there are many poachers around that park—not to mention elephants!"

"What are elephants?" asked Russelas. Poor creature, he'd spent his whole life in Nairobi Park where there are no elephants at all. There was so much he had to learn!

"They're bigger than you and they don't like rhinos," said Chryssee. "They have ivory tusks that sportsmen and poachers want so they're bad tempered because they're always being hunted."

"I'll watch out for them," Russelas replied. It seemed there were many problems in the world, but he would just have to cope. He was determined—no matter what—to find his horn!



The Black Rhinoceros

The black rhinoceros first appeared 10 million years ago, and lived in Spain, Italy and Greece as well as in Africa. It can still be found in



Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia; but it has probably now completely disappeared from the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda. It is on the way out in Angola, Botswana, Cameroon, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda and Zambia.

Despite its ungainly looks and ponderous tone and a half bulk, the black rhino can gallop at up to 45 km an hour and make abrupt turns at full speed. It really is a power-house of muscle and can climb cliffs better than an elephant.

The black rhino likes to live in thick bush and seems to enjoy crashing through the vegetation, making lots of noise. It prefers variety in its diet, and in Tsavo Park eats at least 82 different kinds of plants. Using its horn to pull down branches that it can't otherwise reach, it grasps them with its pointed lip and tucks them bit by bit into a rather large mouth with no front teeth but very strong molars that grind down the food. Although mainly a browser, the black rhino also eats clover and grass that is long enough to be gathered into a bundle. It loves sweet fruits.

A newborn calf weighs up to 40 kg and within ten minutes can stand up and walk. It stays very close to its mother who is fiercely protective. Some people think there is no animal so dangerous as a black rhino cow whose calf is threatened. The calf follows the mother wherever she goes, but for the first few weeks she doesn't move far and often

stops to let her baby rest. The calf grows fairly quickly and at a month old starts eating twigs.

Its front horn begins to show when the calf is about four months old; the back one develops later and never is as large. The front horn adds about half a centimetre a month to its length, while the back one grows at about three centimetres a year. Because the black rhino uses its horns, the tips wear down and sometimes break off. If broken or cut off, the horns will grow back.

By the time the calf is two years old, it is too tall to stand up to suckle and has to lie down. If the mother won't stand still, it can't drink her milk, so when a mother wants to wean her baby she just moves out of range when it lies down. The youngster doesn't want to leave its mother, but she usually chases it away by the time it is four or five years old and she is ready to have another baby.

The black rhino has an acute sense of smell, which is most important for its protection; but that doesn't work when the rhino is downwind from a poacher. Its hearing is also good, and its ears twitch at every sound, but its eyesight is really extremely poor. It usually relies on a tick bird to alert it to danger. Then the rhino has to make up its mind whether to flee or charge. That can be a problem, and the rhino may end up charging anything from a butterfly to a moving train!



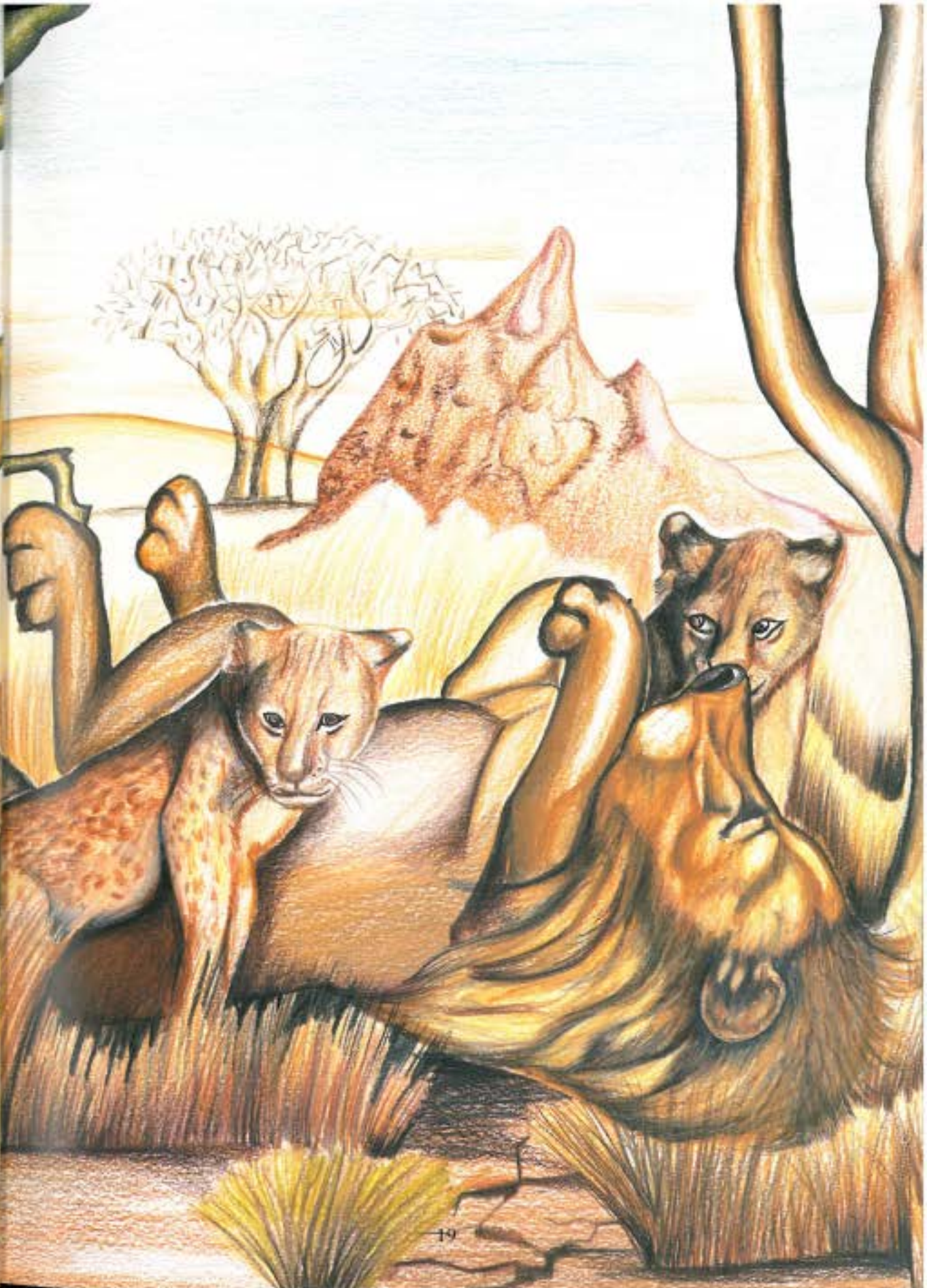
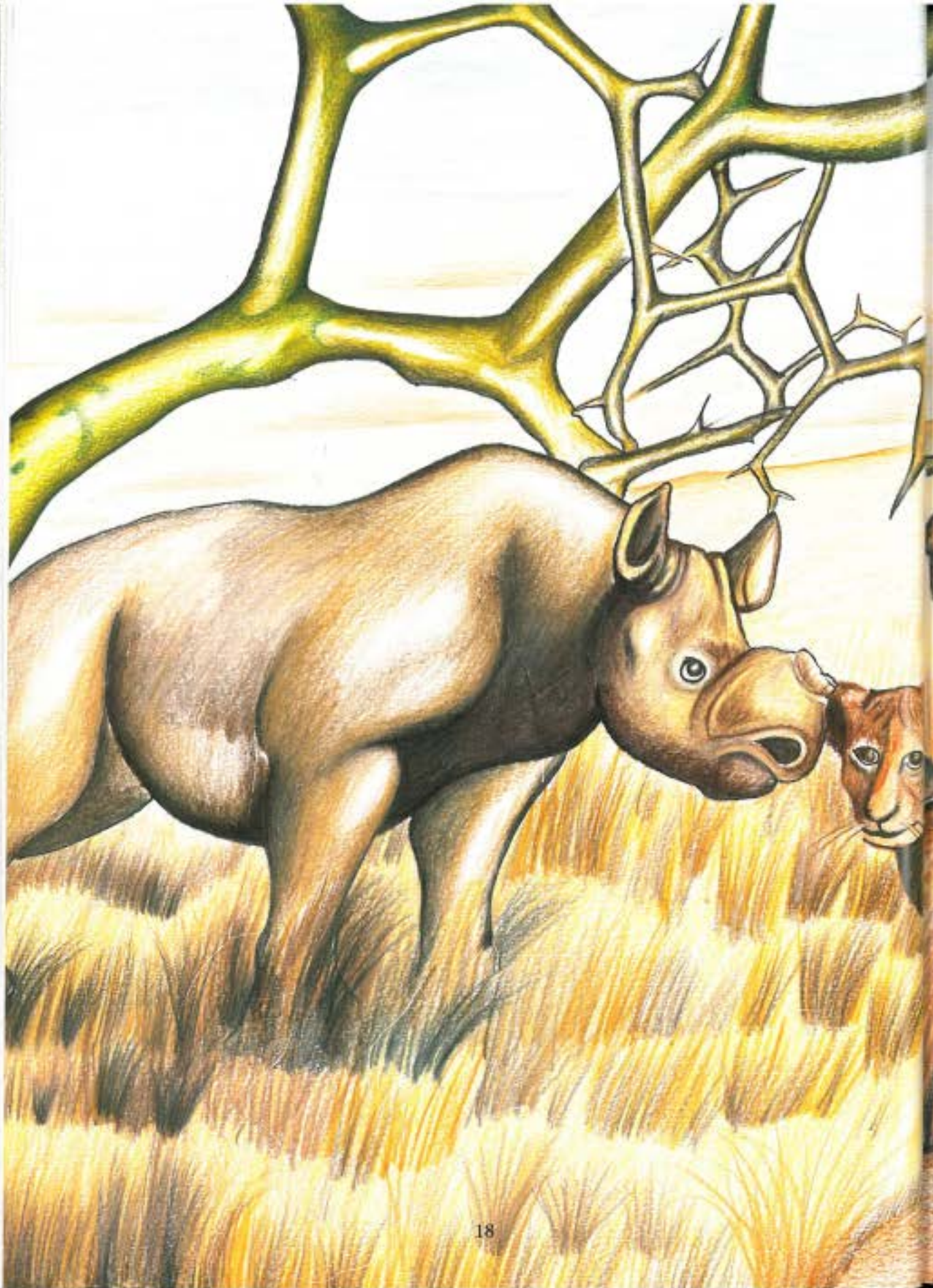
Chapter 3 The Terrors of Tsavo

Tsavo National Park is immense, just about the size of Wales or the whole country of Lesotho. In order not to get lost, Russelas plodded along beside the railway line that runs through the middle of the park. He had heard stories about the man-eating lions of Tsavo and shuddered at the thought of the beasts.

The day before Russelas had come across a pride of about a dozen lions. He hadn't seen them until he was almost on top of them, because they were in the shade of a clump of bushes. One big lion was asleep, lying on his back with four legs up in the air, while the three lionesses beside him gave Russelas a bored glance as they lazily flicked their tails at the buzzing flies. It was the cubs that had been the worst. As soon as they saw him, they ran playfully towards him. Russelas was scared stiff that the lionesses might think him unsuitable as a playmate for their offspring, but acceptable as an afternoon snack! He started to trot, but the cubs kept following and he did not dare turn on them and make a fuss in case their mothers were disturbed.

Thankfully, the cubs lost interest after a while, but Russelas kept on trotting at a steady pace for several kilometres. He was utterly exhausted by the time he stopped and when he looked round, he saw absolutely nothing! Not a single thing worth nibbling. He went to sleep on a very empty stomach that night.

Next morning he continued on towards Mombasa. Had he known he was less than half-way through Tsavo, he might have turned back. He didn't like being here. It was so terribly dry and so terribly hot! He was discouraged and beginning to feel sorry for himself. The few remaining trees in the area looked ghastly. They had had their bark stripped from them by elephants during the years of drought; some looked like they would soon topple over. Russelas could only find some scrub brush to nibble on for his lunch. His tummy rumbled. He wondered what Benjamin and Joseph were making for Esmond and Chryssee's midday meal. If only he could have some strawberries and cream!



The day grew hotter and hotter. Russelas discovered a nice sandy spot where he lay down to rest and roll. He was completely oblivious to anything other than the baking sun when, without any warning, he heard the trumpeting of elephants. They were coming towards him, fast!

Looking up, he saw a cloud of dust and thundering feet. He tried to stand up, but his legs wobbled and he fell back down. In a moment the elephants surrounded him. They were bulls, bigger than any animal he had ever seen before in his life and they had a glint in their eyes that made Russelas feel most uneasy. Russelas had no idea what was going to happen next. He hoped and prayed he would survive the encounter.

The biggest bull scooped up some of the dusty sand in his trunk and sprayed it all over Russelas. The others began to do the same. They were having fun! Poor Russelas got sand in his eyes and couldn't see a thing. He tried to make himself look small and cried out pathetically, but the elephants seemed intent on burying him up to his neck. Then, for no apparent reason, they moved off as rapidly as they had arrived. Russelas rolled over and over, trying to get the sand out of his eyes. He started to cry. Not real tears, but rhinos' eyes can water. After a while, when he could see properly again, he got up and went on his way.

He decided that a nice long drink of water would improve his spirits, so he wandered away from the railway line and went down to the Athi River. Russelas felt a lot better after drinking his fill and wallowing on the mud banks. With sprightly steps he trotted on.

The little camp with its simple shelters and a smouldering campfire came as a surprise. He went up to it, thinking that afternoon tea with cucumber sandwiches would be rather nice, but no one seemed to be around. Suddenly he remembered what Esmond had said about poachers.

Too late!

He had already been seen by the Somali bandits returning to their camp. They spread out and pointed at him. One of them lifted a big gun and aimed it right at Russelas' rump. Rat-a-tat-tat went the gun and Russelas didn't stop to see which of the poachers was after him, but galloped away faster than he had ever run in his life. The Somalis understood rhino habits well and knew that they seldom run in a straight line. Dividing up, some ran behind him while others went to the sides.

Thinking he had escaped, Russelas was just beginning to slow down when out of the blue the gunfire came again. Another Somali was right behind the tree he was running towards and as Russelas swerved away, yet another poacher had him in his sights. Russelas felt a sharp sting as a bullet tore through the flesh of his shoulder, but he was so furious that he kept galloping and galloping and finally got away.



Rhino Horn

The most valuable horn in the world is a rhino's but it isn't a real horn as it has no bony base attached to the skull. Instead it grows out of the skin on a rhino's nose and is thickly matted hair made up of keratin tissue, like finger nails. It is solid and hard and can be carved. The most beautiful rhino horn sculptures are those that the Chinese made for their emperors.

During the Middle Ages in Europe, the rhino got mixed up with the mythical unicorn, an animal imagined to be shaped like a horse with a long horn in the middle of its forehead. Arabs sold rhino horn to Europeans who for several centuries believed it could detect poison. The rich and powerful carved goblets out of it thinking that poisoned drinks would bubble when in contact with rhino horn. Queen Elizabeth I kept one in her bedroom at Windsor Castle and the royal food for French kings was also tested with rhino horn. In 1591 Pope Gregory XIV was fed rhino horn on his deathbed; it didn't save him, but the remaining part of the horn is in New York City's Museum of Natural History.



Chinese 18th-century Libation cup from carved rhino horn.



This Indian Rhino horn weighed 0.875 kilos.

Some people today use rhino horn as a medicine to lower fever and to cure diseases. In the 1980's when rhino horn became scarce, medicine factories in China smashed and ground up rhino horn carvings to put into fever-reducing pills for export throughout Southeast Asia.





Finally, he just had to stop. His shoulder hurt so badly and he needed to rest. He began to wonder if he'd ever make it to Mombasa with such a painful wound. As he stood all alone, the quiet was almost eerie. No other animal was near, and the afternoon was very still without even the whisper of a breeze.

An hour or so before sunset he heard a familiar sound, like the call his mother used to make when he strayed away from her. His ears pricked, he lifted his head and tried to decide from which direction the sound was coming. It was close, he was sure of that. He got all excited. Perhaps there was another rhino around! How wonderful it would be to meet him, or even nicer, her! He forgot all about the pain in his shoulder and trotted off in what he hoped was the right direction. He slowed down and found himself under a tree. The call was repeated and he was baffled. It was as if it were coming from high up in the tree! But rhinos can't climb trees! Russelas walked round and round the tree and then, craning his neck upwards, he saw a man in a tattered T-shirt, perched in the branches and holding a big bow and arrow!

"Jambo," said the man in a friendly tone.

"Habari," replied Russelas politely.

"I'm a Liangulu and have been hunting elephant and rhino for forty years," said the man, "like my father and grandfather before me. In all that time, you are the strangest rhino I've ever seen! You're definitely not worth the poison on an arrow. What has happened to your horn?"

Russelas, although somewhat faint at his near escape, explained.

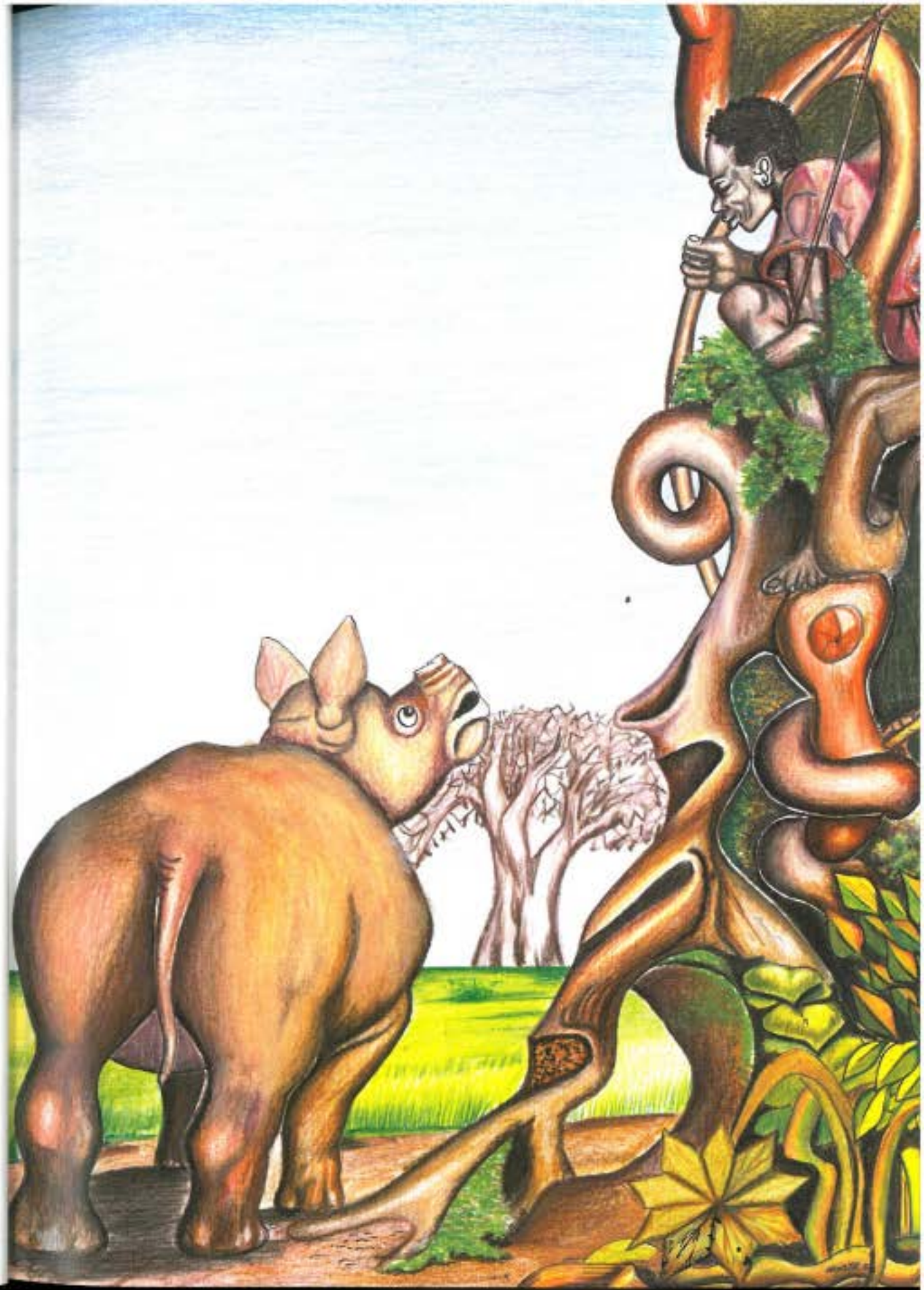
"Conservationists!" exclaimed the man with a sneer. "They're not conserving my job! At one time I made a nice little living selling ivory and rhino horn to other tribesmen for goats and bags of grain. I didn't have to work more than one week in four. Now it's a different story. It's either Kalashnikov AK-47 rifles scaring off everything or game wardens leaping out from behind a bush and sending you off to Kingi Georgi Hoteli!"

"Kingi Georgi Hoteli?" enquired Russelas. "What's that?"

"Prison!" said the man, surprised that anyone could be so ignorant.

A criminal, thought Russelas, and a hardened one at that. King George had been dead for decades! With a quick "*Kwaheri*," which means good-bye in Swahili, he hobbled away.

Russelas limped along the railway line all night, not wanting to stop. Although his shoulder hurt a lot, he thought if he tried to sleep he would only have nightmares again. The terrible day was over, but the memories would stay with him. Russelas now knew that life is cruel in the wilds of Africa, and that man can be the worst enemy of all.



The Iron Snake, Man-Eaters and Colonialists

In the 1890's British politicians dreamed up the Uganda Railway, so named because its destination was Lake Victoria, Africa's largest lake, on the borders of Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya. The politicians were afraid that if they didn't control the lake, the Germans would take it. The politicians were also worried about the costs of running the colonial empire. With a railway, it



The first passenger train to leave Mombasa.

would be easier to transport ivory to the port of Mombasa. Also, the railway would open up 'Darkest Africa' to British settlers who, they thought, would wipe away the debts of the British Treasury.

In 1896 track laying began. The Africans were generally uninterested in helping to build the railway, so 31,983 workers from India were brought in. Some 6,000 of those that survived stayed on and opened shops. By the time the railway line reached the shores of Lake Victoria in 1901, 2,000 Indians had died of thirst or disease and 28 had been eaten by two wily lions, immortalized in a book written by Colonel Patterson called 'The Man-Eaters of Tsavo'. The brave Colonel eventually shot the lions after work on the railway had come to a complete halt

for three weeks in 1898 because everyone was terrified of becoming the lions' next meal.

In the first years of this century, thousands of Britons took steamships to Mombasa and then rode on the train to Nairobi. Kenya was being advertised as 'A Sportsman's Paradise and A Winter Home for Aristocrats'. Many decided to make it their permanent home. Shooting from train windows was banned in 1902, but there was a great deal of excitement when rhinos charged or elephants trumpeted. Ordinarily, the train stopped at what were called 'dak bungalows', where the passengers got off the train and ate their meals. When VIPs travelled on the train in the 1920's and '30's, special state coaches were laid on and stewards dressed in white and wearing white gloves served nine-course meals in the restaurant cars. Carriage No. 507

had wood-panelled walls, two large beds, several cabinets, a dressing table and a private bathroom with a big bathtub.

The early settlers turned Kenya into 'The Brightest Gem in Britain's Cluster of Colonies', but they didn't earn the empire much money. They were the first of a great tradition of 'Kenya cowboys', one being a lord who shot up the bar in Nairobi's Norfolk Hotel when things got dull. He was Lord Delamere who also spoke the Maasai language, opposed the idea of Europeans having their own farms separated from Africans and did more to help Kikuyu agriculturalists than anyone. He grew crops on land that had never been cultivated and he raised excellent livestock. Like most of the early settlers, he worked as hard as he played.



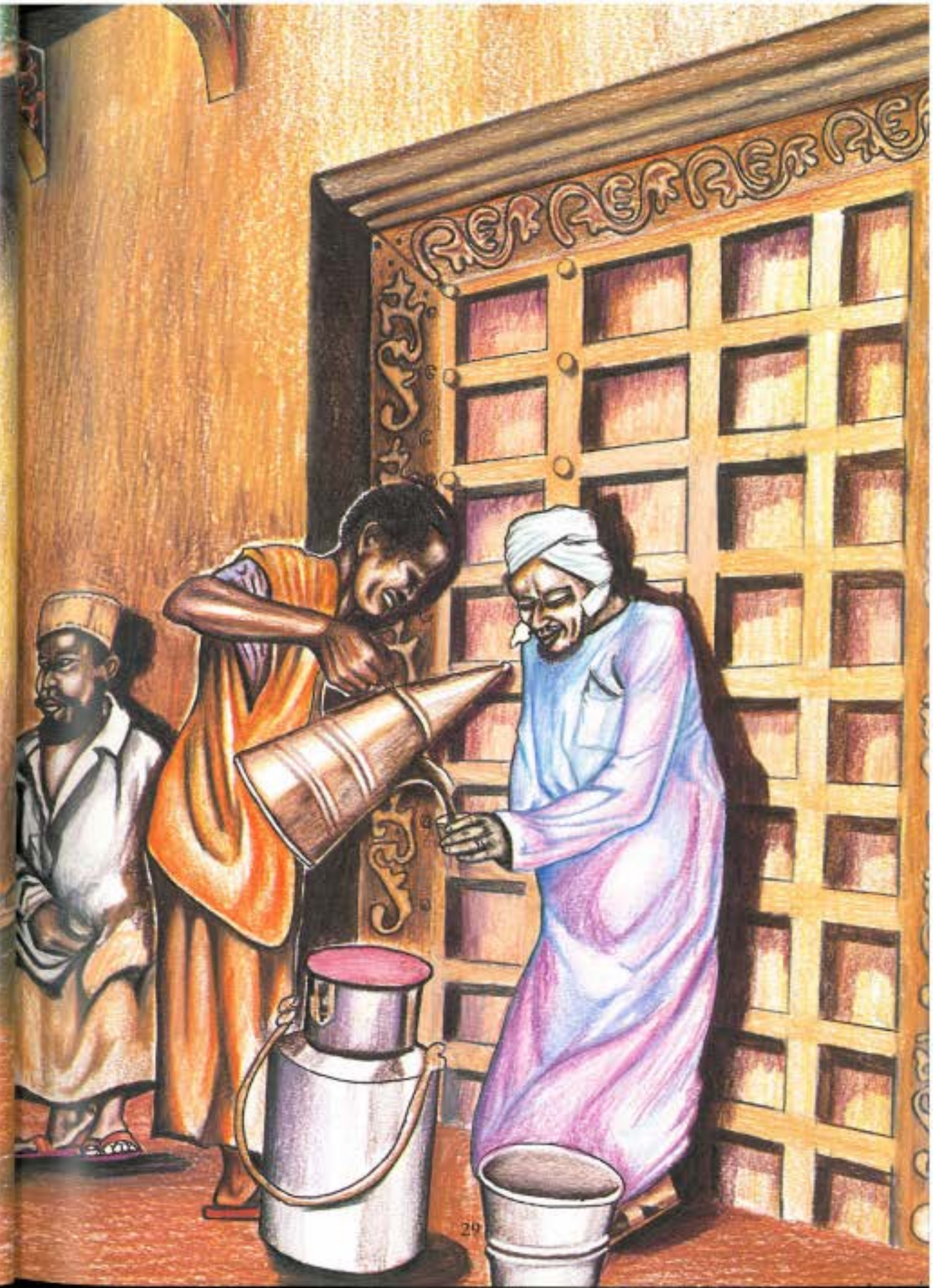
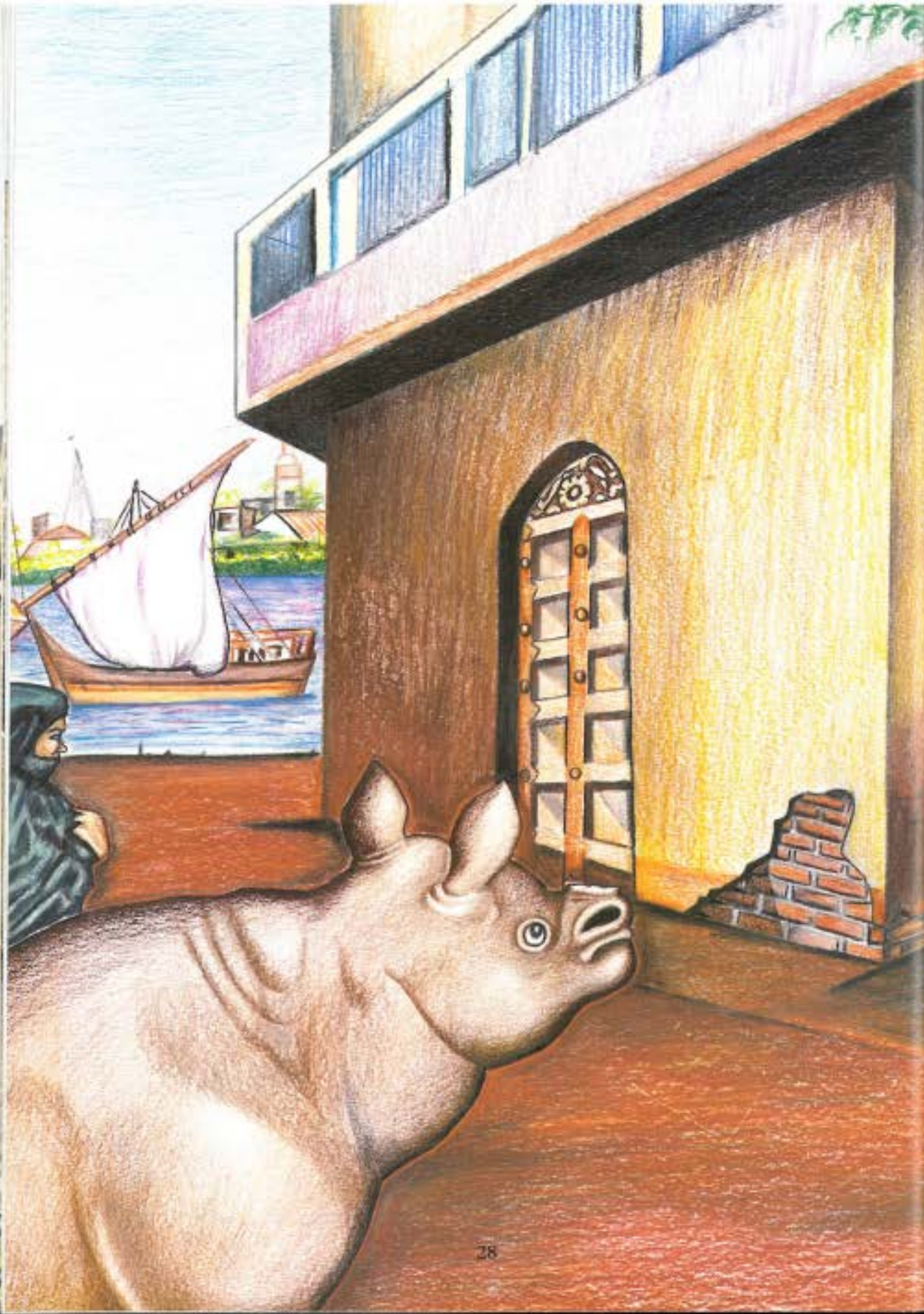
Chapter 4

The Lure of the East

It was late April and still pouring with rain when Russelas made his way across the causeway that joins the island of Mombasa to the mainland. He was a very bedraggled and unhappy rhino whose shoulder still hurt a great deal. He was also somewhat disappointed that people did not seem particularly surprised to see a strange rhino limp into the city. But unusual sights are normal in Mombasa. After over a thousand years of trading, the port has become used to comings and goings of strange people and goods from far-off lands. Besides which, it was two o'clock in the afternoon and very hot and humid. Everyone with any sense was taking a siesta and wouldn't get back to work again until late afternoon. By nine or ten o'clock at night the exotic mix of peoples from Africa, Arabia and the East would be seen in full flower.

The hot and salt-laden air of Mombasa makes motor cars suffer from rust in no time. Russelas thought that most of the traffic looked just about as old as Fort Jesus, his destination. The one-eyed guard at the wooden gate to Fort Jesus asked Russelas what he wanted. Russelas asked to see the Curator of the museum. Shuffling along, the guard led Russelas through the courtyard, past the main gallery with its row of cannons that had played such an important part in the turbulent history of the city, and up the steps to a house at the back of the Fort. A white-haired gentleman with brightly shining eyes welcomed Russelas and invited him inside for a cup of tea.

Happily settled on a large, soft sofa, Russelas explained why he had come to Mombasa. The old man, whose name was James Kirkman, listened attentively to the story of the lost rhino horn. His wife, Dorothy, dressed Russelas' shoulder wound, gave him some aspirin and then poured tea from a beautiful silver pot into exquisite china cups. He was particularly happy to see that she added three heaped spoons of sugar to his cup.



"It's more than likely that your horn has already left Kenya," James said to Russelas. "Last month the dhow captains from Arabia were scurrying round the streets of Mombasa, buying all kinds of goods for their return journeys. Most of them have left now because the southwest monsoon has begun and the sea will soon be too rough for safe crossing." James drank his tea with great concentration while Russelas sat politely waiting for him to go on.

"However," James continued eventually, "there are a few *kotias* still in the Old Port. They're the Indian dhows and the most colourfully painted. You could try to book a passage to Bombay on one of those. I doubt that much rhino horn is used in India today, but if your horn reached here after the Arab dhows left, it's possible that an Indian sailor would take it to Bombay where he could sell it to someone to send to the Far East. It will take you less than a month to sail to Bombay, and it will be a great experience for you!" James' eyes twinkled in amusement.

After tea, James led Russelas up the stairs to the eastern ramparts of Fort Jesus from where he pointed out the different types of dhows in the Old Port below. It was a fabulous view! There was something almost magical about those black-eyed, bearded and turbaned sailors, sitting cross-legged on oriental carpets spread out on the decks of their dhows, smoking hookahs. The thought that some of them might be notorious smugglers sent shivers of excitement up and down Russelas' spine.

It was dusk now. None of the remaining dhows would set sail until tomorrow, so Russelas went to the Mombasa Club to spend the night. He was given a marvellous big old room upstairs, with a creaking ceiling fan. He opened the shutters of his window to catch the evening breezes and looked down on a large terrace facing the Indian Ocean. There were lanterns in the palm trees; the waiters, dressed in uniforms designed in the 1930s, were carrying heavily laden trays of deliciously aromatic foods. All of a sudden, Russelas felt very hungry but there was a sign saying that male diners had to wear ties. He didn't have one. Boldly picking up the telephone on the desk in his room, he asked the operator to ring James at the Fort.

"Would you and Dorothy like to join me at the Club for dinner?" he asked tentatively.

"That would be a pleasure," James replied.

"I need to ask you a favour," Russelas continued, "could I please borrow a tie?"

A little later Dorothy and James arrived at the Club, bringing Russelas a black bow tie and a cummerbund that was a little bit small, but Dorothy sellotaped it to Russelas' middle and he thought he looked quite dashing.

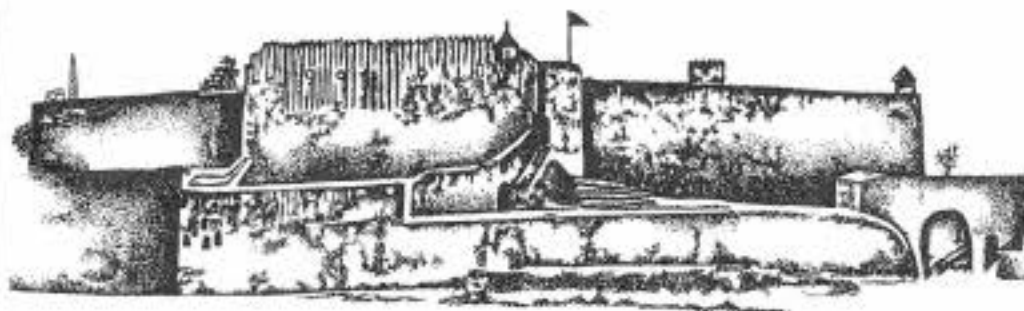
Mombasa's Fort Jesus

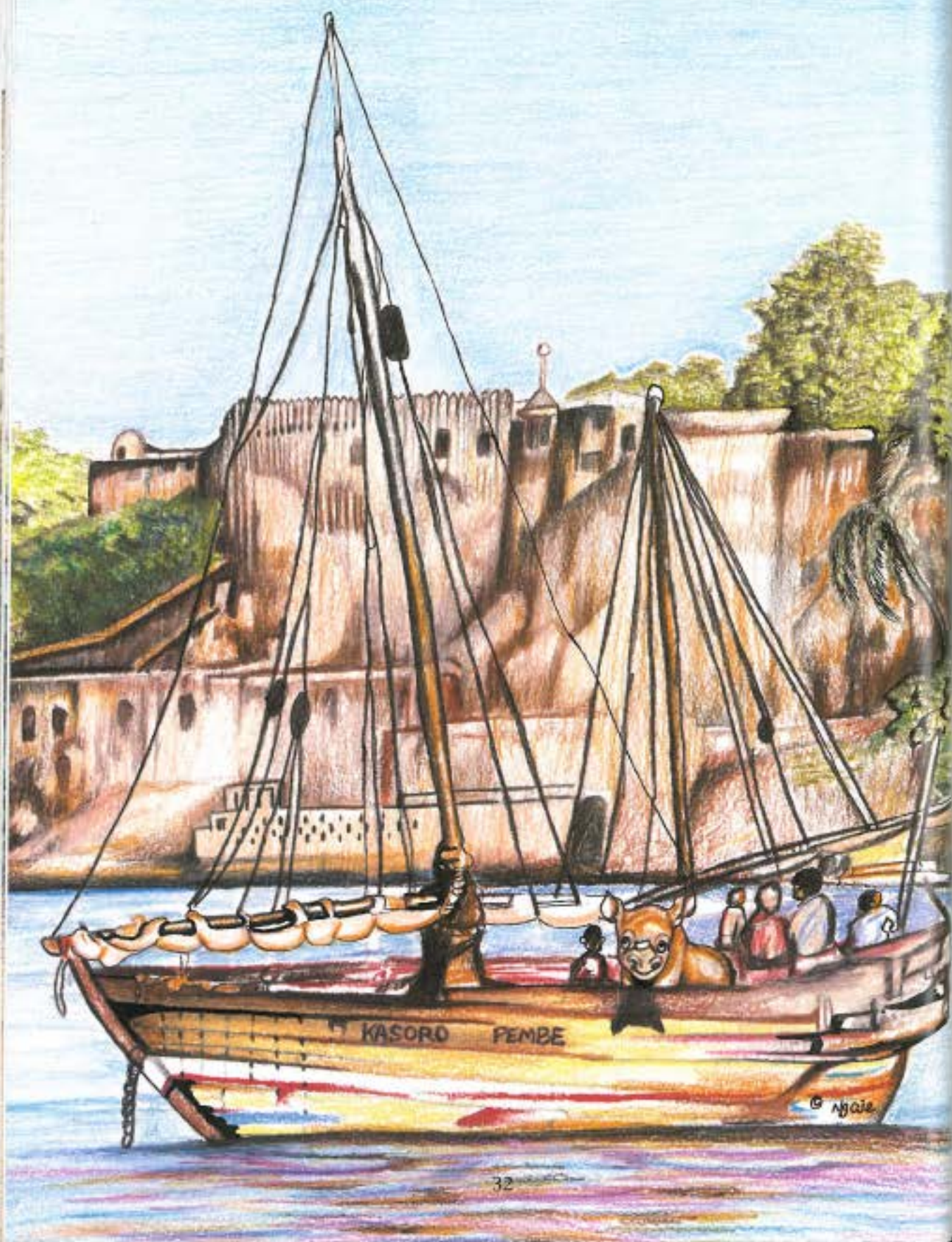
Treachery, murder, starvation, disease and bombardment are the hallmarks of Fort Jesus. Indeed, it has the most colourful history of any monument in Kenya. It was built between 1593 and 1596 by the Portuguese who then ruled the Indian Ocean and feared a Turkish invasion. Mombasa was the site chosen for the Portuguese headquarters because it had a good harbour and, being an island, was easier than the mainland to defend. However, the Portuguese captains in charge of Fort Jesus didn't get along well with the Mombasa sultans. They fought over money. One captain arranged the murder of a sultan in 1614; 16 years later that sultan's son wheedled his way into the fort and murdered the new captain.

The great siege of Fort Jesus began in 1696 when 3,000 Omani Arabs came to bombard it. Inside were 50 Portuguese and 1,700 loyal Swahili allies. When Portuguese reinforcements came, they brought bubonic plague with them, and by June 1697 all the Portuguese inside Fort Jesus were dead. A sheikh from Faza with 17 members of his family, 8 African men and 50 African women held the fort and were not reinforced until September when a Portuguese ship stopped over on its way from Mozambique to India. When Fort Jesus finally fell to the Omanis the following December, there were just ten Portuguese, three Indians and two African women alive inside.

Except for a brief period, Fort Jesus then remained in the hands of Arabs who continued the tradition of bombarding, starving and tricking one another to gain possession until the British turned it into a prison and lunatic asylum in 1895. In 1960 the coastal archaeologist, James Kirkman, turned it into a museum.

Back in the early Portuguese days of Fort Jesus, the Turk who came was a swashbuckling privateer called Amir Ali Bey. He claimed he was sent by the Turkish sultan to free the people of the East African coast from the Christian Portuguese. But, around that same time, a horde of 15,000 rapacious Zimba cannibals from Malawi were munching their way up the coast. They consumed 3,000 of the inhabitants of Kilwa, hence solving the population problem in the area for a generation or two. The Portuguese thought the Zimba would appreciate a little Turkish Delight and managed, during the course of a pitched sea battle, to encourage Amir Ali Bey and some of his luckless followers to flee from their galleys into the bush where the Zimba were waiting. It is not recorded that the Zimba thanked the Portuguese for their timely feast, but they were rather an uncouth lot. Amir Ali Bey was lucky. He was not consumed and escaped to ride back on his horse, begging the Portuguese to save him.





Dhows and the Dhow Trade of the Western Indian Ocean

The dhow is a wooden ship with a triangular sail, which plies the Arabian Seas and the Western Indian Ocean. It is the largest and oldest kind of ocean-going ship that is still being built and used to go long distances.

No one knows the origin of the dhow but for at least two thousand years dhows have carried cargoes of the East to the shores of Africa; and, as noted in a manuscript dating from the second century, they have taken ivory, tortoise shell and rhinoceros horn to Arabia and India. In a tenth-century geography book, we are told that Indians made chessmen and backgammon pieces out of ivory imported from Africa.

In the 13th century, Marco Polo made fun of the dhows he saw in the Arabian Gulf because their wooden planks were sewn together with twine made from coconut fibre, instead of using iron fastenings or nails. However, even after the Portuguese came to the Indian Ocean at the end of the 15th century and influenced the shipbuilders' designs for dhows, few cared to use nails. The coconut fibre kept the dhows flexible and better able to withstand the bumping of the surf and sand when they beached or ran onto coral reefs. It was also easy to replace and didn't rust. Up until this century some dhows still had sewn hulls.



Blown by the northeast monsoon during December and January, dhows bring wooden chests, carpets, henna and shark meat from Arabia to the East African coast; earthenware pots, tiles, more chests and carpets from India. Leaving Africa at the beginning of the southwest monsoon in early April, they take back tea, coffee, sorghum, sesame seeds, mangoes, cashew nuts and cloves. Despite the introduction of steamships and aeroplanes, dhows continue to sail the Indian Ocean. There are still thousands of them and, provided the wind is behind them, their captains are willing to transport anything, at any time to any place—for a price, of course!

Throughout the nine-course meal, James told Russelas stories of the Far East. Russelas was excited by all the talk and happier than he had been for some time. He began to think that it wasn't such a bad thing that his horn had already left Kenya and he was looking forward to a real adventure travelling to all these exciting places in search of it!

Early next morning, Russelas went to the Old Port. It was bustling with activity. Everyone was clambering about with baskets of dried fish, spices, oils, oranges and limes. There were also tethered goats, sea chests and stacks of clothes waiting to be hauled aboard the dhows. Looking beyond the harbour, Russelas saw one dhow unfurling its patched sail to catch the monsoon wind for India. He became terribly impatient. He too wanted to be on his way!

He looked round for a *nahoda*, which is what they call a dhow captain, to enquire whether he might obtain a passage. A heavy-set, grumbling porter shouted at Russelas to make room for him to pass by. Stumbling backwards, Russelas fell onto a bale of coffee husks that another porter was dragging onto a dhow already overloaded with tea, coconuts, rice, charcoal, aluminium kettles and cooking pots.

Someone took pity on Russelas. "If you're wanting to catch a ride," said a ragged sailor who had been watching Russelas and could see that he was baffled by all the commotion, "your best bet would be to go to the coffee house down the road. You'll find a *nahoda* from one of the *kotias* there. No one here is going to take any notice of you, they're all much too busy."

"Thank you so much," said Russelas gratefully. "It's all so confusing, and I do so want to get a berth to Bombay. I'm going in search of my horn, you know."

The sailor looked a little surprised, but said nothing, and hitching up his loose cotton pants, went on his way. You meet all sorts in this life, he mused, and most of them are quite mad.

Russelas saw the open-air coffee house a little farther down the twisting, narrow street. He had to stop and press himself against the doorway of a little shop and hold his breath to try to make himself thinner while an old Arab with a donkey cart passed by.

"Make way! Make way!" he shouted as he waved a long stick and pushed everyone aside. The donkey never once looked up but plodded along steadfastly, used to the crowded little streets. Every morning, year after year, the donkey faithfully pulled the cart-load of barrels of fresh water to the old Arab's customers in houses without a well.

When Russelas reached the coffee house, he noticed a man sitting on a bench, sipping cardamom-spiced coffee and studying a sheaf of bills. He was thinking that Mombasa was becoming too expensive; he could not buy



as much as he had hoped, and the clay pots he had brought with him from India had sold for very little. Instead of making money on this trip, he was not even going to cover his expenses and he was worried how he was going to pay for the food he would have to buy for his crew on the return journey.

"Excuse me, sir," Russelas said politely. The man's eyes bulged when he looked up at the half-tonne rhino standing before him. "But I would like to go to Bombay."

"Sit down. Perhaps we can talk about it," the *nahoda* said, sensing that a solution to his problems might just have presented itself. He made all kinds of excuses why he could not take Russelas to Bombay: the rhino would take up too much space, would eat too much, would have to be looked after and would be a nuisance on the dhow, etc., etc., etc. But Russelas would not be put off. He had a suspicion that the *nahoda* was trying to negotiate a high price for his passage and was so thrilled at the prospect of travelling that he knew he could drive as hard a bargain as the *nahoda*. It was really rather fun dealing with the canny Indian, and Russelas felt perfectly at ease and quite grown up as he ordered some mango juice to help quench his thirst as he bartered and discussed the deal.

Later that afternoon, Russelas found himself squashed amid building materials, fish, dates and several mysterious bundles of goods belonging to the crew on board a 30-year-old, 60-tonne *kotia* with no engine. The ship was in poor condition. It stank to high heaven with a mixture of dead fish, rotten fruit and an indescribable something else that was definitely rather nasty. The sea was choppy, the waves relentlessly pounding the hull of the small craft, but he was finally bound for Bombay!

Russelas was seasick most of the time. He ate wads of sticky rice and lime juice to sustain him, but invariably ended up in the thunder-box (for that's what sailors call the makeshift toilet) which was built out over the port quarter and scared him silly every time he had to use it. He was sure it would fall off and dump him into the ocean.

But none of that seemed to matter. He was having a real adventure! For the next 21 days he could put up with anything. Whenever he looked across the bow of the dhow, he was filled with wonder and anticipation.



The Port of Bombay

Bombay Port is one of the busiest in the world. Every year thousands of dhows tie up at its myriad docks, bringing in more goods from other parts of India than from abroad. Jungle wood, bamboo, cement, bricks and hundreds and thousands of Mangalore clay tiles are off-loaded by men, women, boys and girls, many of whom are under 12 years of age. If they earn enough to feed themselves they are lucky. They live on the quays in one of the worst slums of India.



Bombay harbour.



Chapter 5

Russelas in India

Inshallah! God willing! We'll be in Bombay this very afternoon," the bo'sun shouted.

Russelas was so cramped and stiff from the weeks of sailing that he had a hard time trying to stand up and only smiled weakly in agreement. "Inshallah." How splendid it would be to put four feet on firm ground again. He could hardly wait. He was also thinking how grand it would be to have a really good wallow! But whatever Russelas was hoping for and expecting upon his arrival, he was quite unprepared for India and its teeming masses of humanity. One-sixth of all the people in the world live in India, and they increase their number by a million every month.

The sights, smells and hustle and bustle of Bombay port were horrific to Russelas and he couldn't get away quickly enough. He contemplated taking a taxi to the Taj Mahal Hotel, but cars in India are very small and reek with fumes from the fuel they burn, so Russelas decided to walk. He was glad he did. There was so much to see! Temples, shops, cinemas; millionaires and beggars; bullock carts and buses; glamorous ladies and old hags; mansions and hovels; uniformed civil servants and screaming street urchins. The fabulous and fantastic contrasts were all utterly fascinating to a young rhino.

What astonished Russelas the most was seeing so many animals in the crowded city. There was a cat in almost every doorway, dogs in gutters, birds in cages, sheep and goats being herded wherever there was an empty space, cobras that sat up in baskets and mongooses being led around on bits of string by their fond owners. And cows galore!

The 200,000,000 cows of India are sacred beasts, according to the Hindus who have even built old-age homes for some of them. While drivers in Bombay rely on their horn to get them through crowds of people, all traffic has to come to a grinding halt when a cow decides to cross the road. The screech of brakes, shouts and banging of impatient arms on the metal sides of trucks to encourage the beasts to move at greater speed have little effect. This vastly amused Russelas who rather sympathized with the cows.

Just before Russelas reached the ornate Taj Mahal Hotel, he stopped to watch a monkey in a bright red coat and funny top hat tied under his chin. Tourists were tossing coins to the monkey's owner to make him keep the monkey dancing. Around the entrance to the Taj fireworks were going off. The noise startled Russelas, and his first instinct was to turn and gallop away but people were laughing and having fun. Once again, curiosity won him over and he wanted to know what was going on so he wandered over to look.

It turned out to be a wedding procession, complete with a turbaned groom astride a magnificent white horse that was snorting and blowing at the horrid fire-crackers. There must have been nearly a hundred people in the procession, and Russelas' eyes widened and blinked at the splendid saris worn by the jasmine-scented women entering the Taj for the reception. He had seen many Indian ladies in Nairobi Park, but none so beautifully dressed as these in their silks of crimson, turquoise and every other brilliant colour, embroidered with golden threads and studded with small shiny jewels.

Once inside the Taj Mahal Hotel, the wedding guests made their way to one of the sumptuous private salons, and Russelas went into the marble lobby. A doorman stood before him with the palms of his hands together in the traditional Indian greeting.

"*Namaste*," he said, which means good morning, good afternoon or good evening.

Russelas booked a very fine room with a gigantic tiled bathtub adorned with golden taps. The room boy ran the water for him and after casting a glance in his direction, emptied three whole bottles of bubble bath into it. Russelas sat in the tub for an hour and scrubbed himself until his hide glistened. He decided that this was almost as luxurious as a mud wallow. Afterwards, he slept soundly in the enormous bed with four pillows for his head.

The next day, Russelas decided that he should visit his distant cousins, the greater one-horned rhinoceroses in Kaziranga National Park. It isn't easy to get there from Bombay, but Russelas persevered, fighting his way through the bureaucratic red tape to obtain a permit and transport to Assam.

When Russelas arrived at Kaziranga at dawn one morning several days later, he was taken to one of the park's 20 tame elephants. A *mahout* was talking to the elephant who fondled him with her trunk. The *mahout* smiled at Russelas, then ordered the elephant to lie down so Russelas could get into the *howdah* on the elephant's back, where he was told to sit and make himself comfortable. The *mahout* pulled himself onto the elephant's neck, urged her with his voice to stand up again, and with a nudge of his foot let the elephant know the direction he wanted her to move.



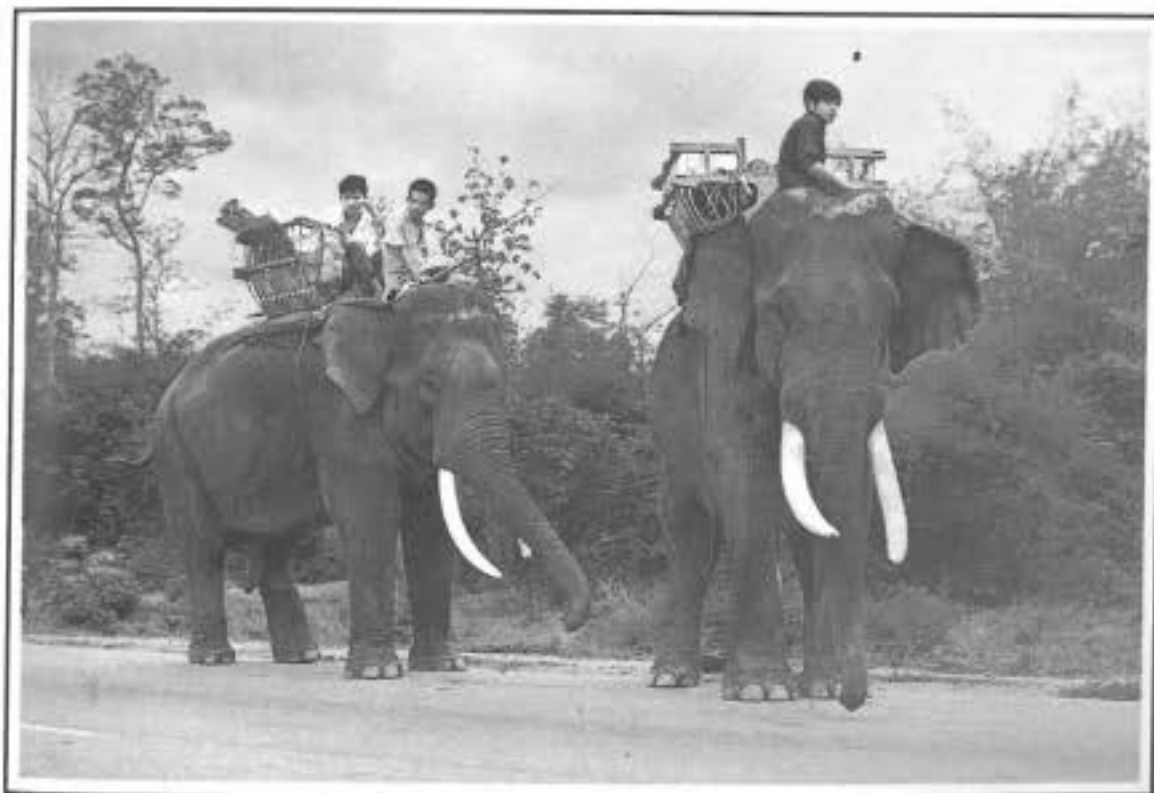
Russelas was amazed by the perfect obedience of the elephant, but remembering his experience with elephants in Tsavo, he wasn't sure he really wanted to ride on one.

"Only way to see park, *Sahib*," said the *mahout* in his broken English.

Russelas was still scared. "Will she be nice to me?" he asked in a very small voice.

"Indian elephant not like African elephant," assured the *mahout*. So far, that was certainly true. The elephant had paid no attention to Russelas whatsoever. But what would she do when they saw Indian rhinos he wondered?

"No worry. She not run away when a rhino come!" The *mahout* knew very well that if she did, the rhino would most likely chase her, and perhaps even bite her on the rump with his long, sharp incisor teeth called 'tushes'. Indian rhinos are a lot bolder than their African cousins. "She my friend," insisted the *mahout* as he gave her an affectionate pat. "She go where I tell her. I live with her my whole life. We both 45 years old. Now get seated. We see park and look for rhino."



The Indian elephant has smaller ears than the African elephant. It can be trained to carry and work for man.



Together the three of them moved through the jungle and swamps where the grass was as high as an elephant's eye. The snow-covered Himalayan mountains gradually came into view as the mist cleared, and lush plant life shone in the early morning sun.

When Russelas saw his first Indian rhino, he was terrified. It was enormous, much, much bigger than Russelas' own father. Not only that, but its skin was incredible! So thick, it hung in folds on the beast's neck, shoulders and rump; and because there were bumps all over it, which looked like studs holding pieces of metal together, the rhino made Russelas think of a medieval warrior in armour!

It had been grazing quietly enough but then turned in alarm and snorted harshly more than 20 times when they got to within a few metres of it. The elephant instantly halted, and neither the *mahout* nor Russelas made a single sound. Glaring intently at them, the rhino stood its ground. With a menacing look, it dared them to come closer. They didn't, and Russelas sighed with great relief when, after about five minutes, the *mahout* ordered his elephant to back off very, very slowly.

When they had moved a good distance away, Russelas asked why the rhino was so unfriendly. It seemed to him that Indian rhinos had the personalities of African elephants and that Indian elephants were more like African rhinos!

"Rhino unpredictable, likes to fight," the *mahout* replied shortly.

As if to prove his statement, a mother rhino and her half-grown calf started honking and bleating. The shrieking calf ran past Russelas while the mother charged out of a mud wallow, hotly pursued by a male rhino. Then she turned to face the male, her head held high, with lips curled back to expose fearsome tusks. The male took no notice and instead lunged into her, delivering a terrible blow to her side. She turned and fled, but he was close on her tail. The chase went on and on, and the noises the two of them made were louder than any animal sounds that Russelas had ever heard. He had noticed that neither tried to charge with its horn, but used their tusks as weapons.

"Tusks more dangerous than horn," commented the *mahout*.

"What will happen if he catches her again?" asked Russelas.

"He more powerful than she. She give in. Probably lie down, gasp like a fish. Then he kick her. Finally he go away."

"Oh," said Russelas feeling slightly sick. He was thankful he wasn't an Indian rhino and that his own mother had never been in a fight like that.



The Indian Rhinoceros

The greater one-horned rhinoceros of India and Nepal looks armour-plated. Not only does its thick skin have folds on the neck and legs, it also has tubercles that resemble iron rivets on its skin. This bellicose appearance does not belie the Indian rhino's behaviour. It is the most aggressive of the rhinos. An Indian rhino was once attacked by two tigers but left them both covered in blood and seriously injured. No wonder the Asian elephant is afraid of it!



Indian rhinos often fight one another, curling their lips, snarling, honking and roaring loudly. One might give in and gallop away, but the other is likely to give chase. When it catches up, the two lunge at each other, aiming their tusks (those long, pointed incisor teeth) at each other's head. Wheeling around to prevent such a blow, the rhinos usually end up biting each other's sides and rump. Sometimes these encounters are deadly.

The Indian rhino loves water and is a superb swimmer in rivers that become torrential during monsoon rains. In the dry season, it wallows in muddy pools for up to seven hours at a stretch, often rubbing its rump in the mud, sitting like a dog. A truce seems to reign at water holes. If a rhino goes to a water hole and sees another already there wallowing, it snorts and grunts a greeting. As soon as the other snorts and grunts back, the newcomer knows that it can join in without being challenged.

Although the greater one-horned rhinoceros only has one horn, this is usually smaller than a black rhino's and never as long. The horn is not used as a weapon nor for feeding, since this rhino eats grass. However, the Chinese believe that Indian rhino horn, like that of the other two Asian species, is a more powerful drug than that of African rhino horn. In 1992 Taiwanese medicine shops were selling it at \$50 per gramme.





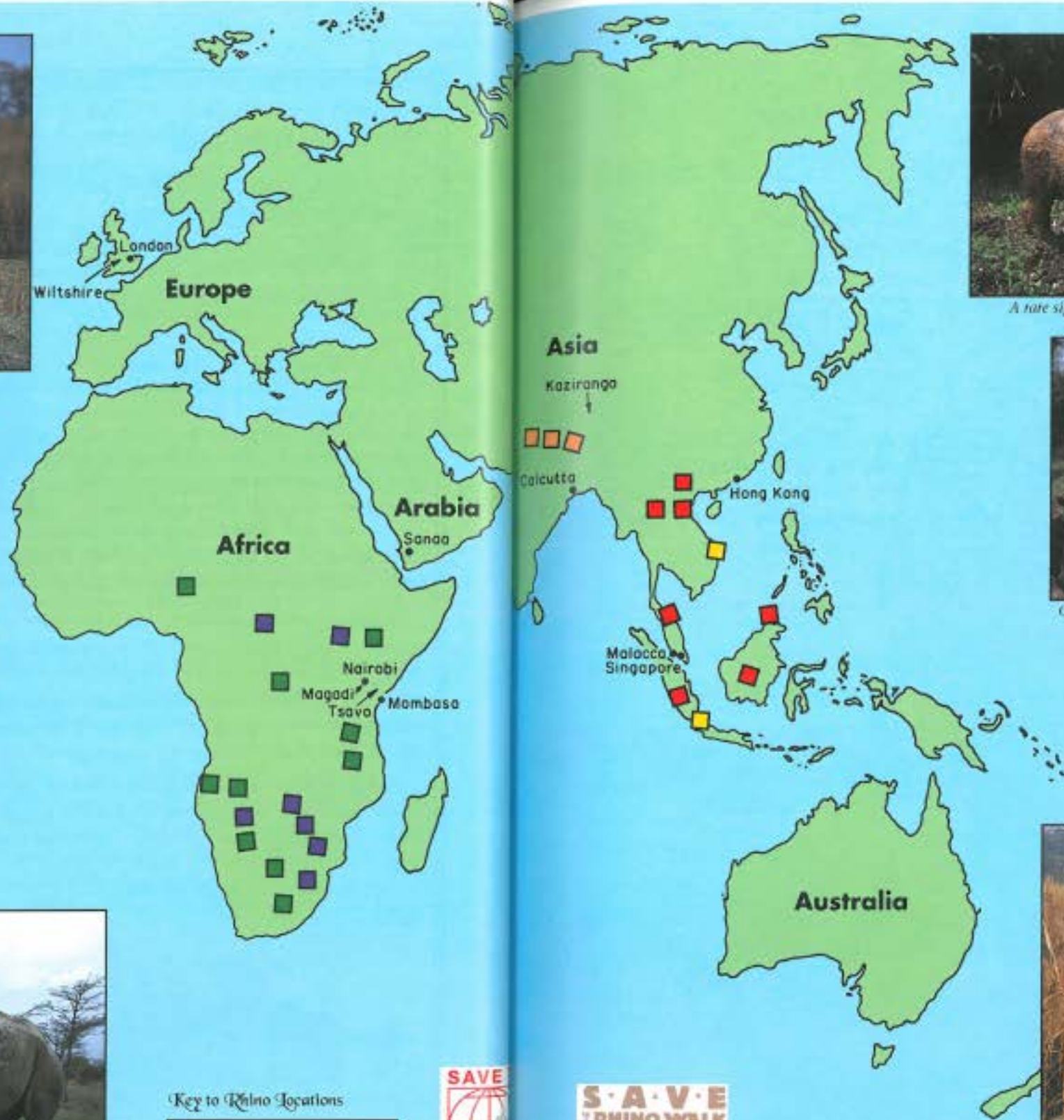
A white rhino with a 2-year-old calf grazing in Zimbabwe.



A pair of white rhino horns on display in Bombay.



A black rhino in Kenya.



Key to Rhino Locations

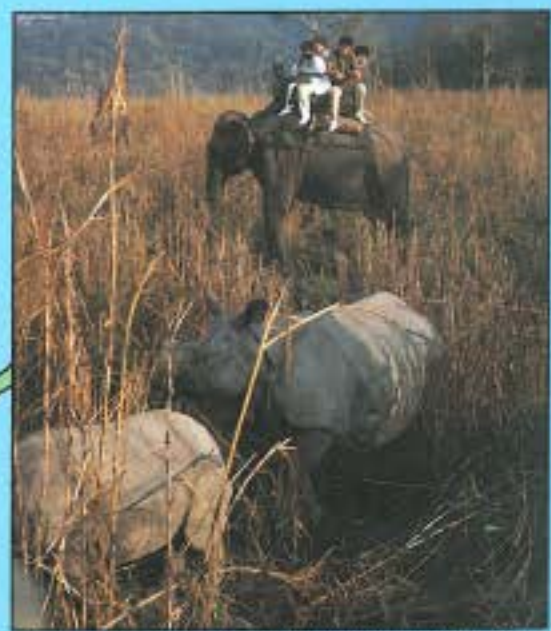
- White Rhino
- Black Rhino
- Javan Rhino
- Indian Rhino
- Sumatran Rhino



A rare sighting of a Sumatran rhino in its natural forest habitat.



Camels provide transport for Kenya's anti-poaching unit.



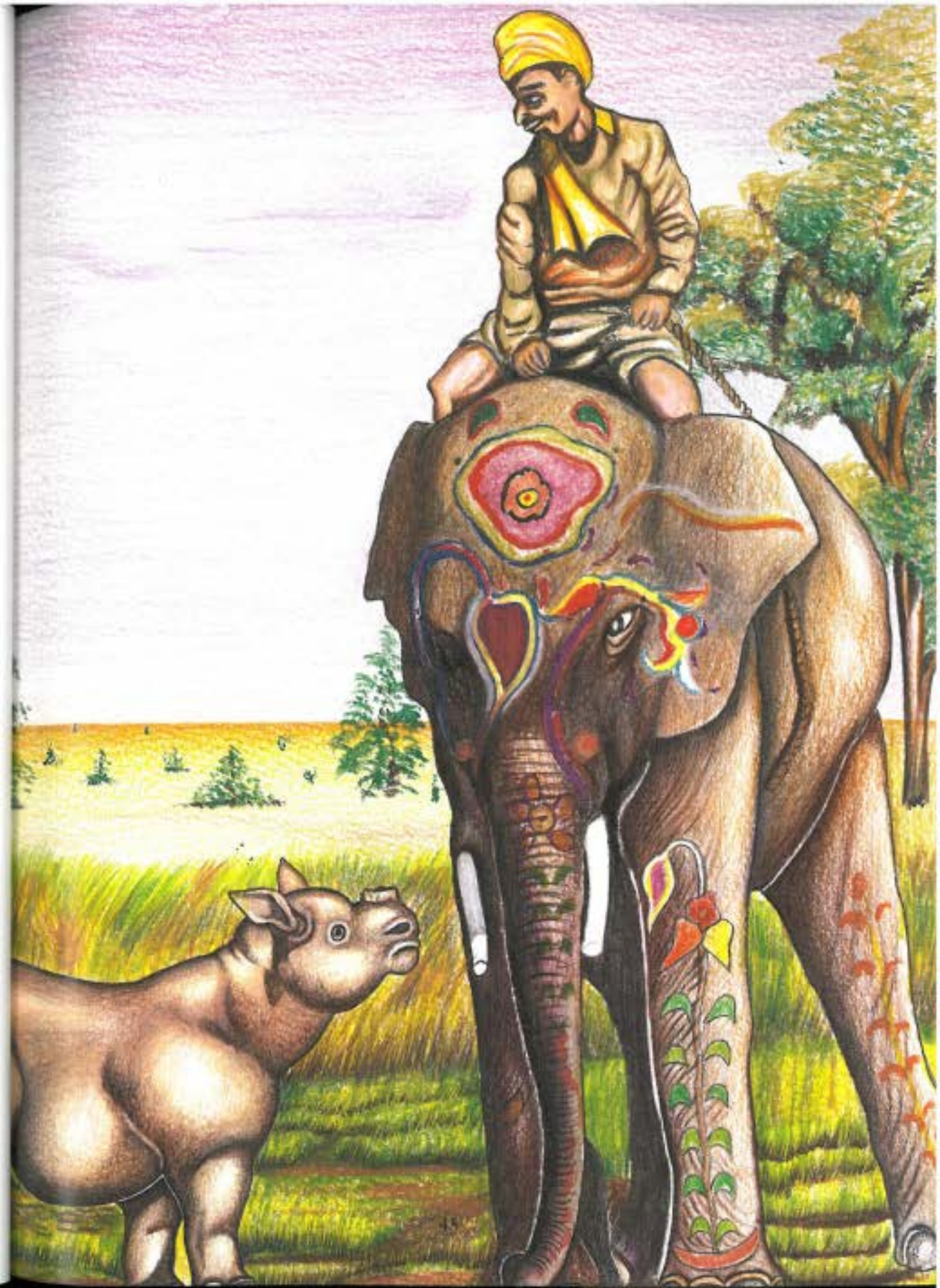
Riding an elephant is an exciting way to see Indian rhinos.

Later that evening in the dining room of the tourist lodge, when Russelas was pretending to like the hot vegetable curry but secretly longing for strawberries and cream, a sinister-looking Indian with straggly black, oily hair slithered up to him. He smiled such a sly smile that it made Russelas cringe.

"I hear you are looking for your horn," the man said as he pulled up a chair and sat down very close to Russelas. If this man had news of his horn, Russelas knew it would be best to be polite and try to talk to him, but that was difficult. The man had a most unpleasant manner and when he started smoking an ugly yellowish cigarette, he seemed all the more hideous. "Go to Calcutta," he went on. "See my friend. Here is where you'll find him," and he slipped a grimy piece of paper next to Russelas' plate. On it was written an address.

Calcutta is a grim place, so the less said about it the better. Upstairs, in a crumbling building, Russelas met a very suave smuggler wearing a flamboyantly tailored suit, several gold rings and a heavy gold chain. He claimed he was "no longer in the business," but told Russelas that he used to sell lots of rhino horn, both African and Indian, to an ivory dealer in Hong Kong, who passed the horn on to medicine shops.

The very next day, Russelas went on his first aeroplane ride—to Hong Kong.



Kaziranga National Park, Assam

In the middle of the 19th century, Indian aristocrats and British military officers spent much of their leisure time on the backs of elephants in Assam, shooting rhinos for fun. Not to be outdone by Colonel Fitzwilliam Thomas Pollock who killed 47 of the brutes, the Maharajah of



Cooch Behar shot 207. In his book, he rapturously described a "a magnificent day's sport" when he "bagged five rhinos before Luncheon."

However, it wasn't hunting but the British addiction to tea which almost doomed the Indian rhino. Britons acquired their taste for tea in the 18th century, and just couldn't get enough of it. Tea imports went up year by year: 3,000,000 kg in 1783 to 7,000,000 kg in 1785 and almost 14,000,000 kg in 1800.

When wild tea was discovered growing in Assam, traders tried to oust it and plant the Chinese variety instead. However, the Indian tea flourished so traders began sending it to England. At first, there was some doubt as to whether or not it was 'real' tea, but eventually it proved even more popular than the Chinese.

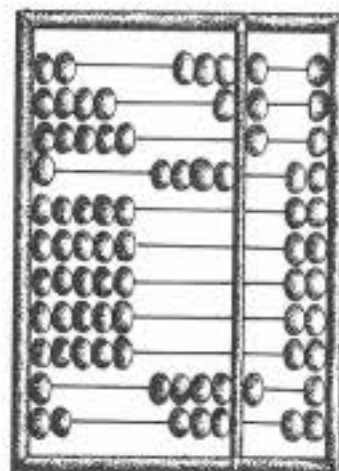
By 1900 Britain was importing 62,000,000 kg of it a year, as against 11,000,000 kg of Chinese tea.

Unlike the British, rhinos cannot live on tea. As tea production increased in Assam, the rhinos became fewer and fewer.

There were only about a dozen left when, in 1908, the authorities decided to save them by declaring Kaziranga in central Assam a forest reserve and closed it to visitors until 1938. It isn't known how many rhinos there were then, but they had increased their numbers quite considerably. Unused to seeing elephants carrying visitors, the rhinos often charged and gave chase, sometimes for a kilometre or more. After several such incidents, it was decided to give the elephants working in Kaziranga

the kind of training they had had in the old hunting days, and they were taught to 'freeze' when threatened by a rhino. Almost always, a charging rhino will pull up suddenly, snort, wheel around and trot away when it sees an elephant standing completely still in front of it.

Today, Kaziranga has about 1,200 greater one-horned rhinoceroses that share the park's 430 sq. km with 2,100 hog deer, 140 wild pigs, 1,100 elephants, 430 swamp deer, 1,000 water buffaloes, 24 barking deer, plus tigers, leopards, sloth bears, otters and gaurs. It is a beautiful wildlife habitat, bordered on the eastern side by the mighty Brahmaputra River which floods every year, creating lush swamps and meadows.



Chapter 6 Exploring Hong Kong

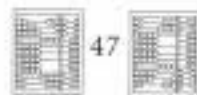
Russelas liked the aeroplane. It was a jumbo jet belonging to Alitalia, with big, comfortable seats. Russelas had four seats to himself in the middle, and the steward used three safety belts to make him safe for take-off. Across the aisle sat a very prosperous-looking Chinese businessman dressed in a smart pinstripe suit, reading London's *Financial Times* printed on pink paper. Next to him was an Englishman who was very hot and bothered, fanning himself with the safety regulations document and grumbling, "When are we going to leave? I cannot abide this place!"

The heat and smells of India remained in the aircraft cabin until it was way up in the clouds. Minutes after take-off, the stewards began scurrying up and down the aisles, offering drinks, pillows, blankets and other comforts to the passengers. Most of the cabin staff thought it was a lark having a rhino on board and were very friendly towards Russelas, bringing him another glass of fresh orange juice every time they passed, and two helpings of the meal which he enjoyed. The Captain came around to talk to various passengers and when he saw Russelas he ordered a complimentary bottle of champagne for him and wished him a happy holiday in Hong Kong. I like travelling in style, thought Russelas to himself. He decided that never again did he want to walk through Tsavo or sail on a dhow!

Offering some of his champagne to his neighbours, he engaged them in conversation.

"I'm a banker," said the Englishman. "What's your business in Hong Kong?"

Russelas admitted he didn't have a job, he was only going to Hong Kong because of a personal matter.





Skyscrapers on Hong Kong island.

Hong Kong

In the 16th century, Portuguese explorers went to China seeking tea, rhubarb, silk and spices; Spanish, Dutch, French and British seamen followed. By the 18th century, the Manchu rulers of China (who had belittled their subjects by forcing them to wear their hair in pig-tails) were annoyed by the growing trade deficit with the Europeans, particularly the British who were dumping their own goods on the populace for very high prices.

In the 1830's the British smuggled opium from India to Canton, on the southern coast of China. They had decided that opium was bad for Indians, and the Chinese emperor didn't approve of it either. However, from the opium sales the British made an annual profit of \$10,000,000 which helped pay for their administration of India.



Medicines made from rhino horn.



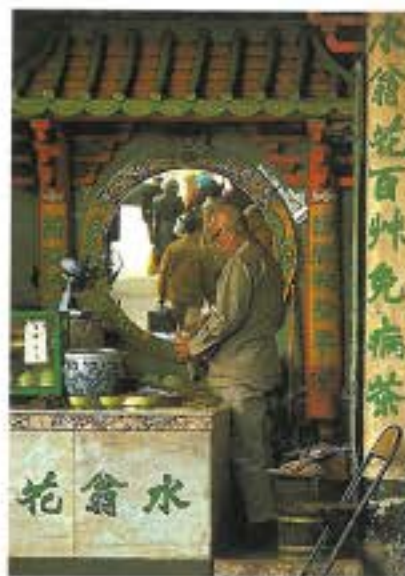
A typical medicine shop.



Diplomatic relations between China and Britain became tense, and the Opium Wars broke out. The British were victorious and in 1841 a naval captain accepted the island of Hong Kong as war booty. After the second Opium War, Britain was given the Kowloon Peninsula next to Hong Kong in 1860. Hong Kong island was a rocky, hilly and barren place when the British took it over. Queen Victoria was not impressed upon hearing that it had been added to her empire, even though it had a superb harbour.

Right from the beginning, the British regarded Hong Kong as a temporary base in the Far East, to be used for military and commercial purposes. The first British merchants did not bring their families with them, nor did the Cantonese who followed to do business with them. The houses they built were nothing but huts with palm leaf roofs and a typhoon blew them all down. By that time everyone was becoming rich on the sea trade, so the construction of stone houses and offices began and is still going on. The buildings of Hong Kong seem to rise higher every day. Dependent upon one another in business, but socially wary of one another in the early days, the Chinese and British had many tiffs. On 15 January 1857, someone sprinkled arsenic on the yeast used for making the bread for British toast, poisoning 400 people. However, the British and the Chinese carried on together, trading, manufacturing and financing everything imaginable. The colony became wealthier and wealthier.

China overthrew its emperor in 1912 and proclaimed itself a Republic that did not want to trade with Britain. Two World Wars followed, and China became a communist power. Hong Kong went through some hard times, but the people cared little for politics. Money-making remained their major interest, as it still is today.



Herbal tea stall in Kowloon.



Star Ferry Pier.



Post boxes come in many forms.



Everyone goes by boat in Hong Kong.

"I can offer you a job in one of my factories," said the Chinese businessman. "If you work hard, you will make a lot of money." He handed Russelas an engraved business card with English lettering on one side and Chinese characters on the other.

Over the next hour, Russelas learned quite a bit about Hong Kong from his two acquaintances. He came to the conclusion that the rush to make fortunes in Hong Kong was a bit like last-minute Christmas shopping. He wondered what it would be like in 1997 when the British Government gives back Hong Kong to China.

It was night-time when the aeroplane landed at the old Kai Tak airport on a runway extending in Kowloon Bay. Russelas soon found himself in a crowd of over a thousand people. Following his fellow passengers, he made his way outside the terminal and stood in front of a row of green Rolls Royce limousines waiting to take tourists to The Peninsula, Kowloon's plush hotel.

Before he had a second thought about the enormous expense, he leapt into one of the cars and was speedily transported through the traffic by an efficient but silent chauffeur. Doormen in immaculate white uniforms with gold braid ushered Russelas into the elegant lobby with gold gilt columns. Russelas was given a suite that was comfortable, but nowhere near as elegant as the lobby.

He wasn't sleepy so he decided to go for a stroll. He had noticed on the way from the airport that the shops were still open and there were lots of interesting things going on. Walking along Nathan Road he noticed the pedlars were selling copies of designer goods at much cheaper prices than the originals. The aromas of Cantonese food were all new to him and they smelled wonderful. Deciding he felt hungry again, he entered a small restaurant. It was so noisy! Everyone seemed to be talking at once; some people in the back were playing the favourite Chinese game of *mah-jong*, slamming the tiles down on the table with force. The menu described the food in picturesque language without giving any idea of what it was. 'Eight Treasures in Winter Melon Soup' sounded promising, but 'Sunflower of the Universe' sounded rather grand, while 'Phoenix milk cream' sounded quite delicious. He asked the waiter to choose for him and soon, dish after dish of exotic goodies arrived on the table. He ate more than he ever had in his life! Afterwards, he continued to roam the streets of Kowloon for a while before the shops finally closed.

Next morning Russelas took the seven-minute ferry ride on the Star Ferry across to Hong Kong island. He could see ships from all over the world making their way into the famous harbour and the massive skyscrapers of the Central Business District towering over the quayside. He was impatient to get down to business but wasn't quite sure where to find the traditional

medicine shops. Just about every neighbourhood in Hong Kong has its own medicine shop, so it wasn't long before Russelas saw one. It had large display windows in which were arranged geometrical stacks of colourful boxes of processed medicines from China, bonbon dishes with paper doilies on which ginseng, dried sea horses and a wide variety of strange-looking exotic herbs were placed. Everything was most attractively displayed, and at first Russelas thought it might have been a Chinese sweet shop.

At the counter, a pharmacist wearing a white coat was carefully weighing a bunch of potato-like roots called *Ho Shou Wu*. He used a hand scale with an ivory bar on top, then turned to an abacus, quickly clinking together its little balls to calculate the price. Wrapping the medicine in printed paper with a red ribbon tied in a bow to hold the package together, he handed it to the grey-haired client. It is just like a sweet shop, Russelas thought, when the client bowed and thanked the pharmacist gratefully.

Turning to Russelas, the pharmacist asked if he had a stomach, head or ear ache.

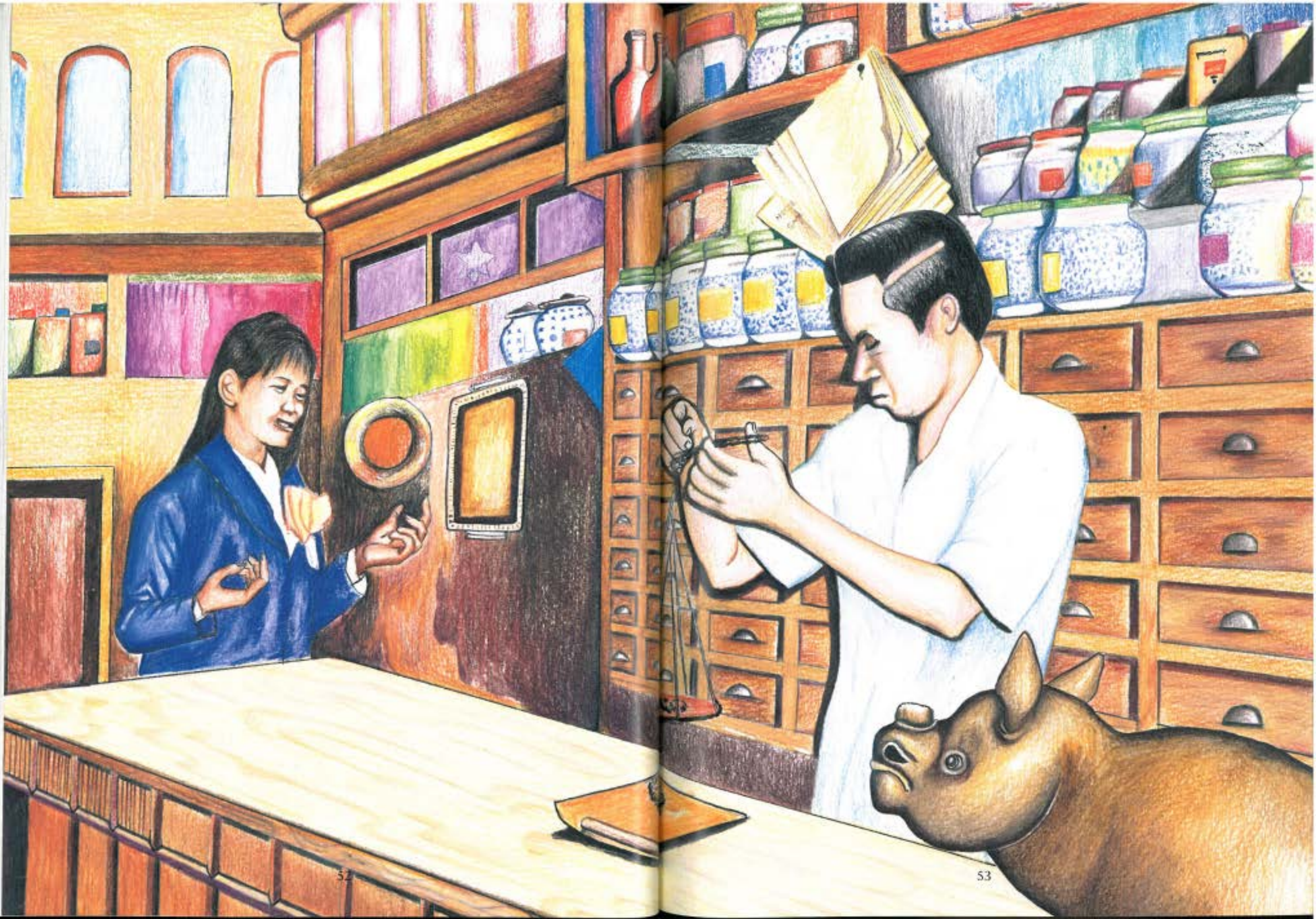
"No, sir," replied Russelas politely, "but I would like to ask you a few questions if I may?"

"Certainly. I am here to help you. Please have some tea."

A young lady brought a steaming glass of the pale tea that is often served to customers in Chinese medicine shops. Russelas was so intrigued with the rows and rows of glass jars on the shelves behind the counter that he forgot to say "thank you". He'd heard somewhere that 1,892 animal and plant products (including snake innards) had been recommended for all known illnesses in the 16th-century classical Chinese medicinal encyclopaedia, *Pen Tsao Kang Mu*, and it seemed to Russelas that most of those must be represented in the jars before him. The pharmacist coughed politely.

"I've lost my horn," began Russelas, bringing himself back to the present. "It was stolen from me two months ago in Kenya. I went to India to try to find it, but was told that it may well have been sold to a trader in Hong Kong. On my way here, a Chinese gentleman on the aeroplane explained to me that if a Hong Kong trader had bought it, he would certainly have sold it to a medicine shop. I wonder if you would let me look through your rhino horn stocks. I very much want mine back, and I'm willing to pay for it, of course."

The pharmacist was most understanding. He was used to dealing with every imaginable malady and trying to soothe patients and their relatives. In Chinese medicine shops the pharmacist often takes on the role of family doctor and prescribes medicines all the time. Even though this was the very first time he had met a rhino face to face, he hid his amazement and spoke honestly and professionally to Russelas.



"I am very sorry indeed. However, on this matter I cannot help you. Since 23rd February 1979, no rhino horn has been allowed to be imported into Hong Kong. Despite the fact that rhino horn is the very best cure for high fever, hallucinations, delirium and several other very serious disorders, we know that rhinos in Africa and Asia are now exceedingly rare. We have agreed to help try to protect them by refusing to import any more rhino products whatsoever. Some of us still have stocks of rhino horn bought before that date, and I will show you mine if you wish, but we usually suggest that patients use saiga antelope horn instead."

"You mean that my horn could not have come to Hong Kong?" asked Russelas who was rather skeptical of the explanation he'd received.

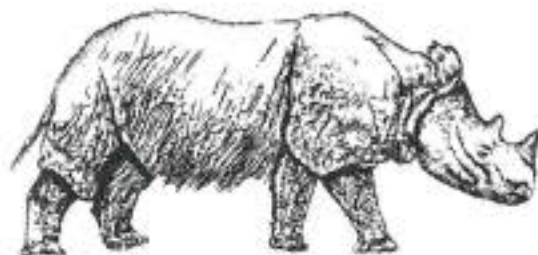
"Well, I won't say it's impossible. The demand for rhino horn is still very high—African horns sell for about \$12,000 a kilogramme—and there have been some cases of smuggled rhino horn, but I sincerely doubt it."

"Oh," said Russelas. He couldn't think of anything else to say.

The pharmacist felt sorry for Russelas and wanted to help him. "I have a suggestion," he offered. "Go to Singapore. There are lots of restrictions and regulations there, but I doubt if the government enforces the laws against rhino horn sales as strictly as those against smoking or jaywalking."



A Saiga antelope.



Chapter 7

Meeting a Hairy Rhino

It was the middle of the night, and Russelas was whispering through the sturdy wooden slats of a pen at the Malacca Zoo, in peninsular Malaysia. Earlier in the evening, when he had arrived at Singapore's airport, he had hired a lorry driver to bring him to meet Jeram, the first Sumatran rhinoceros in many years to live in captivity.

In 1984, a farmer had discovered little Jeram in his rice paddy. He had the shock of his life, never having seen a rhino before. After all, hairy Sumatran rhinos live deep in the jungles of Malaysia and Indonesia and are among the shyest of all animals. The farmer immediately told his neighbours of his discovery and they all trooped back to the rice paddy where they encircled the young rhino and roped her. She struggled desperately and blinded herself in one eye in her attempt to escape. She couldn't get away. Finally, she was taken to Malacca Zoo where she became the star attraction. People from all over the world visited her.

Jeram thought it was odd the way that Russelas insisted that they only speak in whispers, but Russelas didn't want anyone else to know that he was present.

"Do you like it here?" asked Russelas. He thought it would be awful to have to live in a pen all his life.

"It's not that bad," Jeram replied. "My keeper is friendly and I get lots of mud baths and good food to eat. Most important of all, I know I'm safe here. There are very few of us Sumatran rhinos left alive. Did you know that our horns sell for ten times as much as your African rhino horns? In every country we're found, people want to kill us so that they can make money. Even my own mother was killed by poachers. She got caught in a circle of bamboo spikes that they had placed on the forest path we always used. It was more horrid than anything you can imagine."

The Sumatran Rhinoceros



The hairy or Sumatran rhino lives in Indonesia and Malaysia. No one knows for sure how many are left but guesses put the number between 400 and 600. It is the oldest and smallest of the rhino species, weighing around

900 kg and standing just over a metre tall. Like the black rhino, it has a pointed lip. Leaves, twigs, bamboo shoots, wild mangoes and figs are its main foods.

This rhino is quite at home on the steepest slopes of the densest jungles. It is an expert climber and its tracks have been seen as high up as 2,000 metres. Because of demands on its natural habitat for high quality timber, the Sumatran rhino has been forced to retreat to the most inaccessible places. It is almost impossible for a man to get close enough to a Sumatran rhino to kill it. Even in the early part of this century, it was well known for its elusiveness. One keen naturalist in the 1930's spent 40 days in a remote Malayan jungle, trying to follow an old male. He came within hearing distance a couple of times, but never caught sight of him. Writing about his experiences, he claimed that the Sumatran rhino's habits were "fairly regular until he became alarmed and then he was the cunningest thing in the jungle."

Poachers dig pits in the rhino trails they find. After putting sharp stakes at the bottom, they cover the pit and wait. The rhino comes along, falls into the trap and impales itself on the stakes. In the 19th century, a few Sumatran rhinos were put in zoos in Europe and a number were subsequently born in captivity. Barnum and Bailey Circus had two that acrobats rode. Because the Sumatran rhino's future prospects in the wild are dim, some conservationists got together in 1985 to start a captive breeding programme. There are now Sumatran rhinos in zoos in Malaysia, Indonesia, Britain and the United States, but only one, which was already pregnant when captured, has had a baby.



The Javan Rhinoceros



The Javan or lesser one-horned rhino was not distinguished from the Indian rhino until the 19th century when it was already becoming rare. It had lived in southwestern China, Burma, India, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia, Sumatra and Java. Now it is thought to be the world's rarest large

mammal and is only known to be in Ujung Kulon National Park in West Java, Indonesia, and, surprisingly, in Vietnam, (despite the war there in the 1970's when toxic Agent Orange was sprayed over the forests, and land mines were set in the jungles). Perhaps as many as 12 still live there. In Ujung Kulon there are under 60 and they are threatened by poaching, disease and the possibility of a volcanic eruption.

The Javan rhino is almost as tall as an Indian rhino but weighs under 2,000 kg. Its skin is rather scaly looking, without tubercles. The male has a small horn, and the female's is just a little knob. This rhino likes fertile flood plains in Asia, not the highlands. Hardly anything is known about its social life.



Although he shuddered at the thought of what must have happened next, Russelas wanted to know all the gory details and begged Jeram to go on.

"Mother squealed the moment she got embedded in those spikes and told me to run away as fast as I could and not come back. I was shocked and scared. I was only three years old then and needed Mother to feed me. But I did leave. By the time I came back the next day, she was dead. She had thrown herself about in a hopeless attempt to break away, and one of the spikes had pierced her so deeply that she'd bled to death."

"Oh, I'm so sorry," Russelas said in real sympathy.

"I suppose it was better that way," Jeram went on. "You see, there was no way she could release herself and she might have suffered for much longer. The poachers didn't return until almost a week later. I was hiding in the forest and couldn't help but see what they did next."

"Go on," gulped Russelas.

"First they cut off her front horn, but the back one was just a little knob and they really slashed with their knives in their impatience to get at it."

Russelas rubbed his own bare forehead against the bars of Jeram's cage. "Did the poachers leave after they'd taken her horns?"

"No, they didn't. They wanted as much of her body as they could carry away. They skinned her and took several bones and some meat, too."

"How could you bear to watch?" Russelas demanded, horrified.

"I couldn't move away, I was too close. If they had noticed me, they would have done the same to me. Anyway, having seen what happened makes me feel much better about being here."

Russelas felt sorrier and sorrier for Jeram, but he didn't want to stay any longer. He suspected that if dawn came and he was discovered, he might end up being put into an enclosure. He said farewell to Jeram and headed back to the entrance of the zoo where the lorry driver was impatiently waiting to take him back to Singapore.

Russelas climbed aboard, wedging himself among packing crates. During the trip he had plenty of time to think about Jeram's plight. He loved her long, black hair and her sweet disposition, and even though she was several years older than himself, he'd been surprised to find that she was a lot smaller. What a hard time she'd had! She must have been very hungry indeed when she'd wandered into the rice paddy, and it wasn't surprising that she'd been caught. Yet, it was incredible to Russelas that any rhino, even a primitive hairy one like Jeram, could bear to live in a cage. Esmond had told him that conservationists were planning to capture a lot more Sumatran rhinos like Jeram and confine them to small holding grounds in



an attempt to protect them from poachers. Jeram was even hoping that one would be housed near her so that she could have a friend of her own kind.

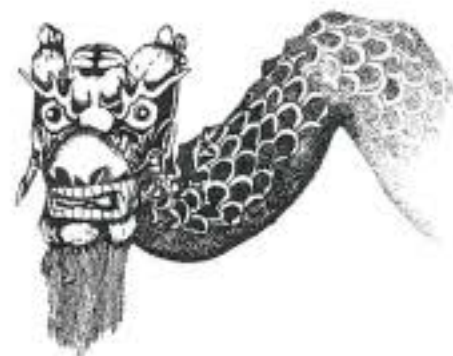
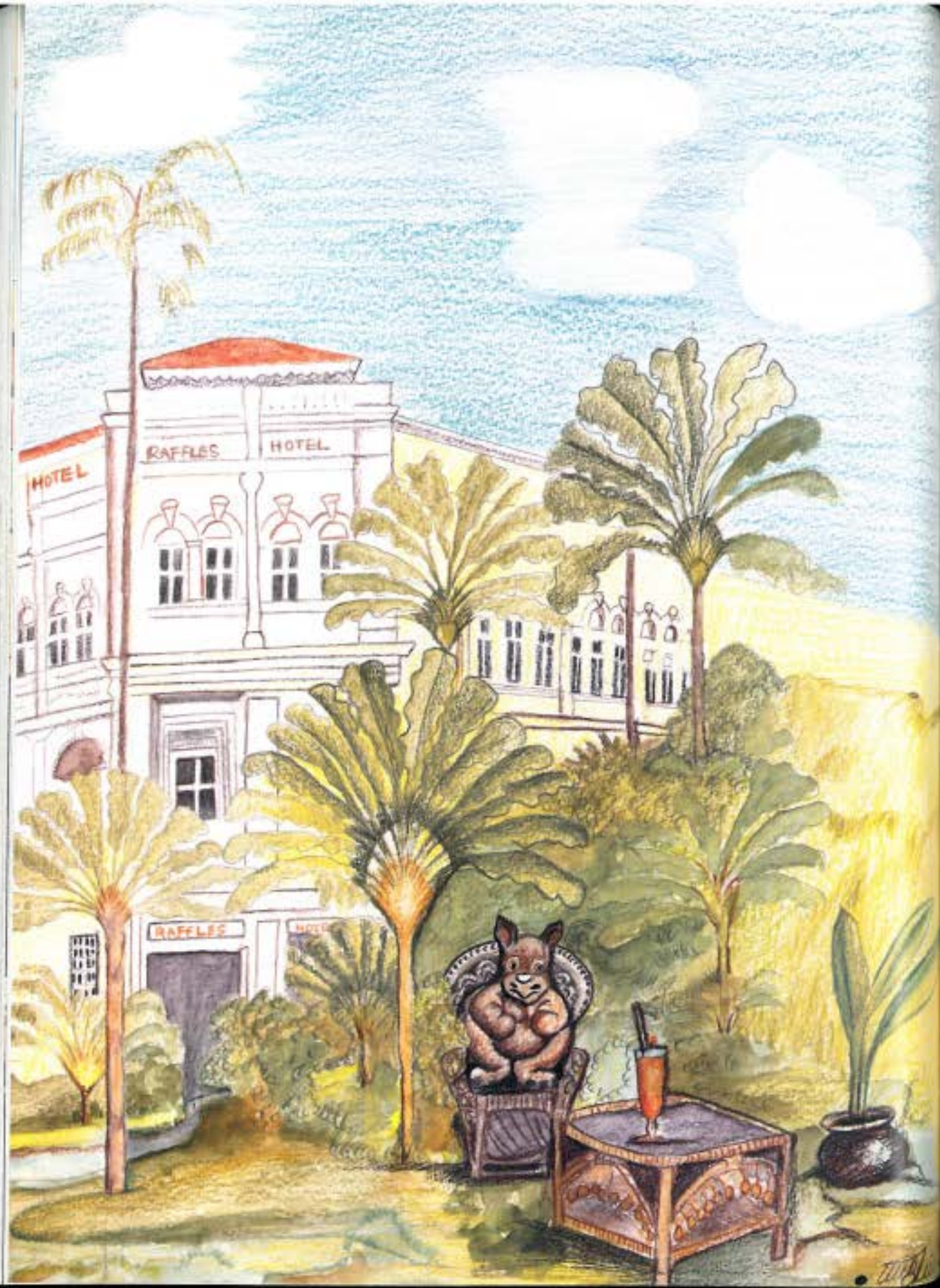
Russelas remembered Jeram saying she'd heard that a famous English gambler, John Aspinall, was going to organize trapping Sumatran rhinos in Indonesia. Some would stay in that country, but others would be taken to the gambler's private zoo in Kent where they would be given the best of all care and only the freshest and tastiest fruits and vegetables. Mr. Aspinall's rhino keeper had looked after black rhinos for more than 15 years and did everything for their comfort, even rubbing their hide with oil to keep them glisteningly healthy. On weekends the gambler himself fed special treats to all the rhinos. Jeram made it sound wonderful, but that was still prison to Russelas' way of thinking. He was miserable contemplating what stringent measures had to be taken to ensure that some rhinos at least would still be around in the 21st century.

Russelas fell into a troubled doze. When he awoke it was to see the tall buildings of Singapore city.



Jeram, the first captive Sumatran rhino, in her enclosure.





Chapter 8

A New Lead in Singapore

It was a pensive and rather downcast Russelas who checked into the old Raffles Hotel in Singapore. However, there is no pleasanter hotel staff anywhere and with smiles all around, they welcomed the rhino and made him feel at home. Russelas was shown to an upstairs room at the back and it was bigger than any of the suites he'd had on his trip. He was delighted to see an old-fashioned ceiling fan comfortably humming. There were stacks of thick towels in the bathroom, and he was just unpacking with a view to taking a long, hot wallow in the tub when there there was a knock on the door.

"Excuse me, sir, but when you checked into the hotel, we forgot to hand over to you this letter that has been awaiting your arrival. Please forgive us; it was a careless oversight."

"Not to worry," replied Russelas magnanimously. "Thank you for bringing it to me." As he closed the door, he wondered who knew he would be coming here? He found a letter opener on the desk and opened the envelope.

Dear Russelas,

I miss you! Since you haven't come back home, I guess you are still looking for your horn. Singapore will surely be one of the places you'll visit, and I can't imagine you staying anywhere but Raffles.

I do hope you'll find your horn in Singapore, which became the major market after Hong Kong banned rhino horn imports. But, now that the sale of rhino horns is illegal in Singapore, I'm worried that the price you'll have to pay will be exorbitant. If you have to go to Taiwan, where people have recently been buying rhino horn as an investment (they think there won't be any rhinos left in years to come), who knows what price they'll ask for it!

You may not have enough pocket money left to buy back your horn wherever you find it, so I'm enclosing a Gold Credit Card for you. Most medicine shops accept payment this way, and you'll also be able to use it to buy any little extras you might want.

Love and kisses,

Chrysosee

P.S. If you have any time to spare in Singapore, please go to the zoo and say "Hello" to our friend Jenny the White Rhino.

Russelas was indeed grateful for the Gold Credit Card. Now he could even afford to order strawberries and cream in the Tiffin Room at Raffles where every afternoon they played an old recording of Noel Coward singing 'Mad Dogs and Englishmen Go Out in the Midday Sun'. Right after tea (strawberries and cream, of course), Russelas went to the Reception Desk to enquire where he should go to look for medicine shops. It was suggested that he should walk down New Bridge Road where there were at least half a dozen.

"Amazing!" thought Russelas out loud. "There must be more medicine shops here than in Hong Kong, even though less than half the number of people live here."

Some of the shops were very modern, others simple places where the medicines were stacked more tightly together than the books in Esmond's library. Not all the pharmacists were talkative, however. Some were actually downright rude! That's not particularly surprising when one realizes that many pharmacists are wary of anyone taking undue interest in rhino horn stocks, especially foreigners who are likely to cause endless fuss and bother. Not to mention those irritating agents of some conservationist organizations always on the lookout for people breaking the law.

"If only the pharmacists would try to understand the problem from a rhino's point of view," Russelas sighed as he talked to his reflection in the plate glass window of one medicine shop. "They trade in so many different herbal and animal products, surely it wouldn't be a hardship for them to give up selling rhino horn entirely? Most people are willing to use saiga antelope horn instead, and fortunately that animal is not endangered. There are millions of them in Kazakhstan where they're commercially harvested, like cows." The window steamed up with the intensity of this one-sided conversation.

In a very large medicine shop, which sold a thousand different medicines as well as soup, noodles, peanuts and cognac, Russelas found a very helpful salesgirl. She was the niece of the proprietor and was attending night school to earn a diploma in Chinese traditional medicine.

When Russelas told her what he thought of the trade in rhino horn, she said: "It isn't just the horn of the rhino that is an important medicine, practically every part of the rhino can be used to treat some ailment. For instance, rhino toenails, like the horn, are often steamed in water to make a potion that will reduce high fever. We prescribe rhino hide boiled with lean pork to cure skin diseases and pimples. Although we don't have any right now, dried rhino blood is a very good tonic for people suffering from vitamin deficiencies and general tiredness."

Russelas was beginning to feel sick and was wishing he hadn't eaten the strawberries and cream a little while ago.

"Please let's change the subject," he pleaded, although the salesgirl was wanting to tell him a lot of other uses for various rhino products. "Tell me," Russelas implored, "from which countries do you get your rhino horn?"

Obligingly, the girl answered: "India supplies most of the Asian horn, it's one of the best, you know," she added. "Of course, it's illegal to send it out of India, but I know of one shipment that arrived here and..." She started giggling, putting her hand over her mouth in a quaint gesture.

"Go on," urged Russelas.

"Well, the shipper was really quite clever. He put a bunch of horns in the bottom of a crate with a lot of live snakes and labelled the package DANGER! POISONOUS SNAKES. Naturally, no customs officer dared to open it. When it arrived here, the snakes were disposed of easily enough, and a wholesaler distributed the horns to a lot of different shops."

"What about African rhino horn?" Russelas enquired.

"Most of that comes from East and Central Africa. Not directly, but via North Yemen. Unfortunately, by the time we get it, it's been cut up and there are only little pieces left—scraps from carving, I think. What the Arabs make out of it, I haven't the slightest idea, but I do know it's in great demand there." She smiled at Russelas to try and cheer him up. He looked so glum!

Russelas was deep in thought. He vaguely remembered way back, when he had first lost his horn and Esmond had told him that rhino horn was used for making medicines that he had started to saying something more, but didn't.

"Please," insisted Russelas, "tell me everything you know about the rhino horn trade with North Yemen."

"It seems that the Arabs who live there are the people who pushed up the price of horn in the 1970's. Before then, my uncle used to buy African rhino horn for less than \$30 a kilo. He told me so."

"Does rhino horn from Kenya go there?"

"I'm sure it does. Why haven't you gone to North Yemen to look for yours there? It's the biggest market in the world for it. When there were still lots of rhinos in the 1970's, the Yemenis bought an average of three tonnes of rhino horn every year."

"Are they still buying it?"

"Oh, I heard that the government passed a law prohibiting its import after some conservationists wrote lots of letters to the Prime Minister."

For once, the conservationists had done something worthwhile, Russelas

The White Rhinoceros

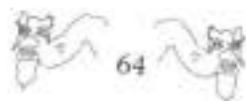
The white rhinoceros got its name because of its big mouth, which the Dutch in South Africa called 'wijd', meaning wide. English speakers misunderstood, translated the word as white, and also wrongly presumed that this rhino was lighter coloured than the black rhino. The name has stuck, but sometimes it is more fittingly called the square-lipped rhinoceros. With straight, broad lips, it pulls grass stems into its big mouth, sweeping them towards its teeth, in the same manner as a horse grazes. Its diet is almost entirely grass, which it consumes in huge amounts. The white rhino is the largest of all living rhinos, is taller than most men, weighs up to two and a half tonnes, and from nose to tail can measure three and a half metres. It loves water as much as any other rhino. It drinks 200 litres a day but it cannot swim and often backs into a water hole or a lake so it can safely move out if the water is too deep. Avoiding rivers, during dry, hot seasons it will spend almost the entire day wallowing in mud. Then it has to stay up most of the night to eat enough grass to fill its 79 kg stomach. Being a grazer, it is relatively cheap to keep in captivity where it breeds well and becomes tame.

Unlike a baby black rhino that follows its mother, an infant white rhino walks in front. When it is two years old, the mother will chase it away and have a new calf. Often the young rhino will join up with another of around the same age, but sometimes an adult female who has no child of her own will adopt it as a companion.

There are close to 7,000 white rhinos, more than any other species. Almost all are in South Africa. Until recently, there was a fairly large population in Zimbabwe, but poachers killed about two a week in 1993.



Jenny, the white rhino, in Singapore Zoo.



thought to himself. But then the girl continued: "It didn't make much difference. People in North Yemen aren't disciplined. They mostly do what they want."

"Really?"

"Why haven't you gone there to see for yourself?" she asked a second time. "I've never heard of North Yemen before now," confessed Russelas. "But I'm on my way there as soon as possible!"

Thanking the girl for her advice, he scurried from the medicine shop and ran back to Raffles so fast that he almost tripped up everyone on the street.

"Take it easy, sir," said the doorman as Russelas raced inside.

Forgetting his manners entirely, he didn't apologize but rushed to the Reception Desk. "Get me on the very next flight to North Yemen!"

Singapore

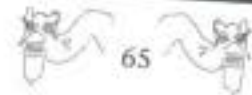


Raffles Hotel in 1905.

In 1819 Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, one of Britain's ablest colonial administrators and a wildlife enthusiast, landed at a fishing village on the island of Singapore, at the tip of the Malay peninsula. Within nine months he turned this 41 km long and 22 km wide island into a rich trading centre with a free port, strict law enforcement and a college to teach 'moral and intellectual improvement'. Chinese, Indian and European settlers followed in Raffles' wake to

make their fortunes. Two Armenian brothers, Tigran and Martin Sarkies, built the Raffles Hotel. Sultans, maharajahs, assorted royalty, movie stars, writers, politicians and especially a tiger (that jumped into the Billiard Room from the verandah) gave the hotel great fame. The port, Southeast Asia's largest, was later rivalled by Hong Kong, but Singapore continued to thrive as a trading centre and from the sale of rubber and tin. It was the Americans who bought most of the tin in the 19th century when they started canning food to sell in grocery shops. The multi-racial society of Singapore is still very strictly governed.

When Raffles went back to England to retire, he founded London Zoo. Singapore Zoo only dates from 1969 but it is the best zoo in Asia and one of the best in the world. The 1,600 animals of 170 species live in spacious garden surroundings. Some of them go for bicycle rides with their keepers. Visitors may book breakfast with orangutans. Elephants have baths at 9:30 in the morning. Sealions jump through hoops and catch balls for fun. And, there really is a white rhino named Jenny who sometimes lets people ride her.



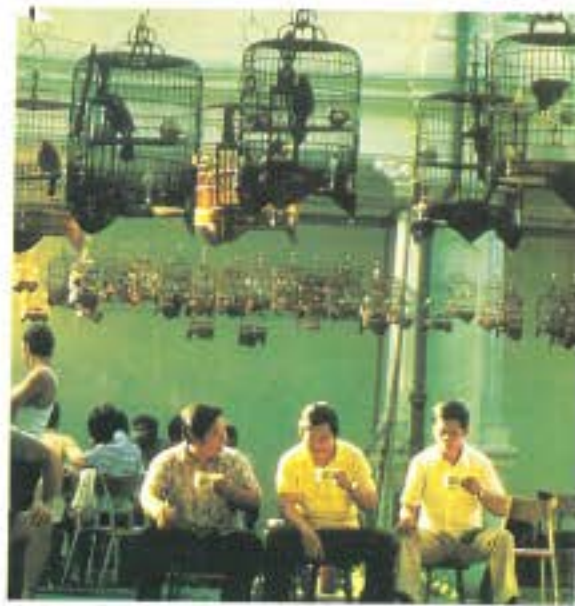
Singapore



Singapore Harbour.



A Rickshaw...from ages past.



Sunday morning with a difference:
Singapore's Bird Singing Concert.



Calligrapher at work - his busiest time is the
Chinese New Year.

North Yemen and the Demand for Rhino Horn

In the middle of the 20th century, North Yemen was a forgotten country whose ruler rode a white stallion and had a morbid fascination for purges. He would not allow foreigners to visit his country and proudly proclaimed that he would rather see his people eat grass than be wealthy under foreign boots. The country was the most miserable place in all Arabia. Civil war broke out in 1962 and carried on for eight years. At the end of the war, the oil-rich Saudi Arabians poured in millions of dollars to keep the Yemenis happy and stop them from looking at Saudi Arabia too enviously.

The new government in Sanaa was delighted with the money it received and soon opened its doors to Russians, Chinese and Americans who built roads, schools, hospitals and factories. A few tourists and anthropologists from Europe

ventured to North Yemen; and many, many Yemenis took advantage of their new freedom to travel and to work in Saudi Arabia and the Arabian Gulf States. They sent back part of their earnings to their families at home and by the 1970's, \$3,000,000 a day was going into North Yemen. That money spelt doom for the rhinos of Africa.



Above all else, the thing most Yemeni men prize is a jambiya, a prestigious dagger with a handle carved from rhino horn. During the late 1970's 15,000 rhinos were killed to supply this demand. Poachers were paid by middlemen who sent the horns either by dhows or aeroplane to North Yemen. The cost of rhino horn soared, as the Chinese in Southeast Asia also wanted some for their medicines and were willing to match the prices the Yemenis offered. Poachers pursued the luckless rhinos more and more relentlessly. Rhino horn became so expensive that the poachers earned more from selling a few kilogrammes of it than from a year's honest work.

In 1982, the North Yemen government banned rhino horn imports but did little to stop them. However, rhinos were becoming scarcer in East Africa and so was money to pay for their horns. The economic boom was over, and western countries were cutting their aid to North Yemen.

Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States also sent back many of the labourers. In 1990 South Yemen merged with North Yemen to form one country, but each kept their own army. By 1994, southerners and northerners began fighting one another, using tanks, guns and jambiyas. It doesn't seem as if the demand in Sanaa for daggers with rhino horn handles will decline in the near future.



Chapter 9 Success in the Sanaa Souk

There is no direct way to fly to North Yemen from Singapore, and the Raffles hall porter was trembling when he had to impart this information to the impatiently pacing rhinoceros in the lobby. The only thing he was able to suggest was for Russelas to fly to London and take another flight on the following evening to Sanaa, North Yemen's capital city. The hall porter need not have worried. Russelas was basically good natured and had learned to make the best out of almost any situation and was looking forward to spending some time in London. He knew just what he wanted to do there.

The stewardesses on Singapore Airlines took good care of him and even gave him some presents, including a miniature chess set and a key ring. In London, Russelas stayed at a famous hotel where he was given a very soft bed in a tiny room with pink flowered wallpaper. A delicious breakfast of fresh orange juice, steaming porridge, eggs and bacon, toast and marmalade was enjoyed in the company of titled ladies sipping China tea and waiters wearing black tie. Suitably refreshed, Russelas went off to Harrods Department Store which is less than a two-minute walk from the hotel. Harrods is a world of its own, and Russelas spent the whole day there, going from one exciting display to another. He was treated with great respect by the salesmen who wrote out bills in little green books for all his purchases and bowed each time he paid with his Gold Credit Card.

At four o'clock Russelas went to the ornate dining room for tea with Chryssee and Esmond's friend, Elspeth Huxley whom he had telephoned in Wiltshire to ask her to join him. By the time she arrived, he had already ordered scones with strawberry jam and several cream cakes. Elspeth was the best conversationalist he had ever met. She made the past come alive with her stories about Kenya in the days when she had lived there and he felt almost homesick listening to her. However, she was a bit pessimistic about the future of all rhinos.

"The 1970's were a decade of disaster for rhinos," she said. "One in every two was killed."

"There are only around 2,400 black rhinos left in Africa now," Russelas stated somberly, "but what I can't understand is why conservationists don't do much for us. They say they care, but..."

"The tendency of large organizations to combine a maximum of words and a minimum of action has not left the world of conservation untouched," Elspeth declared wryly.

"Well, I could certainly have done without the misguided action of those conservationists who took my horn away," Russelas replied. "I wish instead that they would get together and sort out the real problem of protecting rhinos in the wild."

"Good intentions, like some African rivers, are apt to run into sands of reports, conferences and global strategies. They keep a lot of people busy but don't stop the poacher with his gun or poisoned arrow, the smuggler in his dhow or the importer with his faked documents," Elspeth replied.

Russelas didn't understand all the details of what Elspeth was saying, but it was clear enough that little was being done for rhinos.

"I'm going to North Yemen to find out what happens to rhino horn there. If I get mine back, I'll do something to help my relatives. I'll try and arouse the conservationists, too. They've helped the elephants and there are half a million more of them than us in Africa!"



"You're a vulnerable and endearing creature," Elspeth smiled warmly. "I wish you luck!"

It was time for Russelas to leave London. He slept all the way on the aeroplane to Sanaa. On his arrival he made straight for the souk, a walled market that dates from medieval times and is perhaps the most colourful and exotic in the world today. Russelas was intrigued by the sights: veiled women in multi-layered skirts carried buckets or baskets on their heads; turbaned men also wore skirts which they topped with embroidered sports coats and most carried daggers with rhino horn handles.

There were shopkeepers selling silver trinkets, baubles and bangles. Donkeys of every shade, from pitch black to stark white, were laden with fresh grapes and vegetables. Motor scooters were decorated with plastic flowers on their handlebars while tiny trucks, overflowing with passengers and goods, pushed their way through the crowds. All this was set against a background of elegant, 18th-century brick houses with plaster mouldings and alabaster window-panes.

Russelas had no trouble finding the dagger-making quarter of the souk. At the very first stall he visited he was shown some pieces of rhino horn from which handles would be carved. A man named Mohamed took pride in explaining the work to him:

"Once a month, when we receive a shipment of rhino horn, we use an electric sawing machine and cut each horn into as many pieces as possible for dagger handles. From one kilogramme of rhino horn we can make as many as three handles. It is the middle part of the horn which is best."

Mohamed took Russelas to a very small stall where a carver was hard at work, using rasps and files to shape a piece of rhino horn into a handle. Next to his stall was a man burning a partially carved handle that he would later soak in water and rub with a soft cloth.

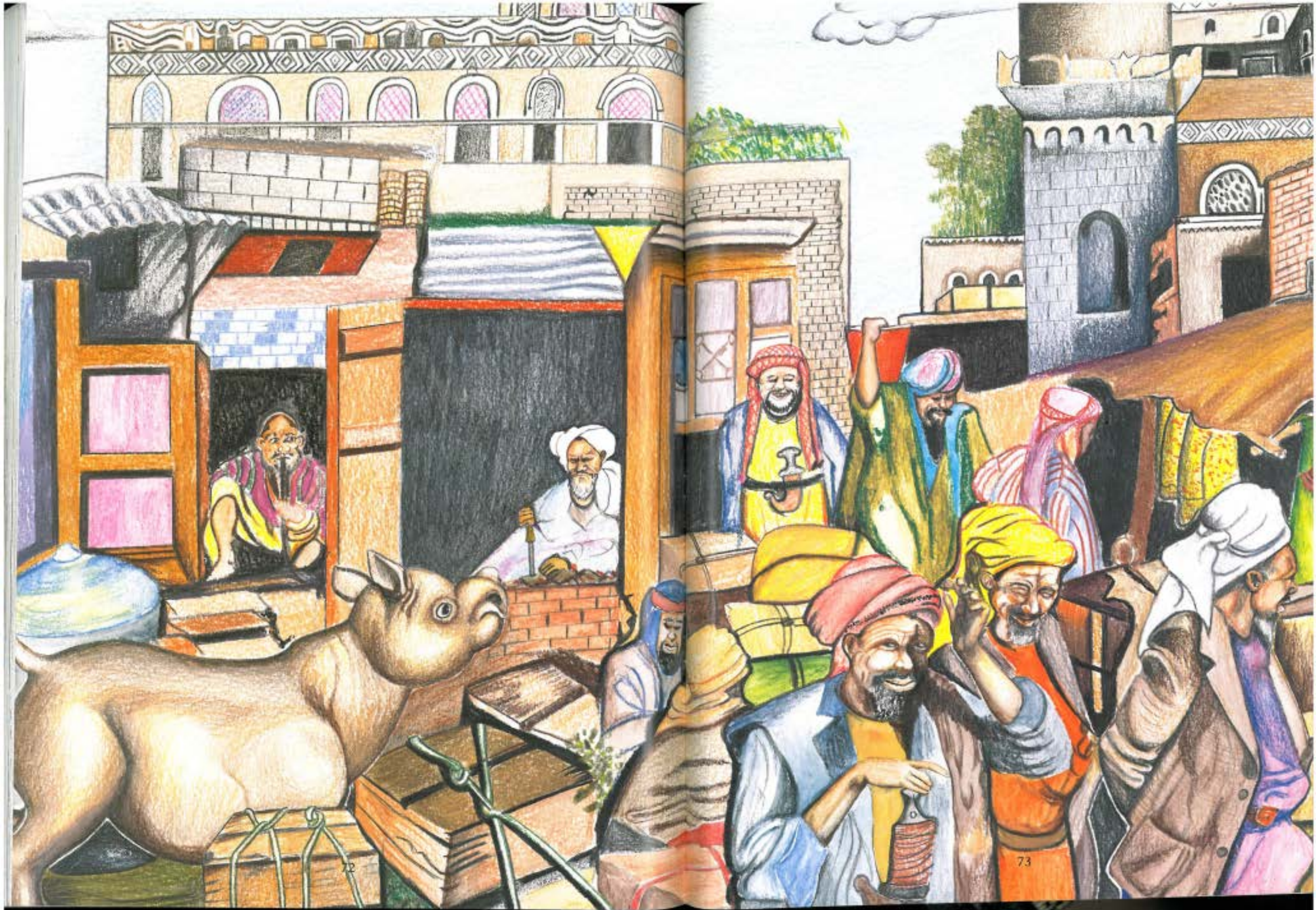
"Why is he doing that?" asked Russelas.

"Because when you heat rhino horn you get a better colour, and then with soaking and polishing, it will feel nice to touch," Mohamed explained. He handed Russelas a finished dagger handle, and Russelas could scarcely believe it really was rhino horn. From the black, rough, opaque protuberance on the nose of a rhino, a beautiful amber-like ornament had been made.

Russelas noticed that these people had no idea that he was the kind of animal that produced such a horn. Indeed, the Yemenis told him it came from a zarafa, which sounded to him like a giraffe, but no one could describe the creature.

Wanting to learn more about the making of *jambiya*, he willingly followed Mohamed as he showed him more stalls where craftsmen were drilling two holes through some of the rhino horn handles, then placing gold coins on one side and attaching them to plugs held by metal plates on the opposite side.

"The best dagger handles always have two gold coins on them," said Mohamed as they watched the process for a few minutes. "In the old days," he went on, "Jews living in North Yemen made magnificent silver-encrusted scabbards for daggers. You still see some of them around, but they're becoming rare."



Next, Mohamed led Russelas to the part of the souk where metal workers were sharpening Australian blades for the daggers. An old man came up, carefully removed his dagger from his belt and gently handed it to a worker who placed it on a wooden board. He secured the point of the blade to a hook at one end and tied the handle of the dagger to the board with leather thongs. Rubbing the blade very hard with a cloth, he then sprinkled grey powder on it and started sanding down the blade.

"It's as shiny as a mirror!" exclaimed Russelas in surprise.

"Yemeni men like to keep their daggers in good condition," Mohamed replied. "You never know when you might want to use it! Would you like to buy a dagger for yourself?"

Russelas pondered. He had no use for a dagger, he only wanted to find his own horn. But thinking it was best to be diplomatic with all these fierce-looking men around, he asked to see some recently-made daggers. At the third shop he visited, Russelas saw a superb dagger.

"Tis nice, veeeeerrrry nice," said the glittering-eyed Arab salesman. "It was only made a month ago, but the handle comes from a very good rhino horn. Look, I show you." He produced the remains of the horn from which it had been carved. There were only tiny bits and pieces, but Russelas knew instinctively that they were from his very own horn.

"I must have that dagger!" he gasped. "And what's left from the horn."

The salesman handed everything over. Seeing the expression on Russelas' face, he quickly opened a trunk under the counter and brought forth a magnificently embroidered antique scabbard and dagger belt. "I think you like these also?"

Russelas paid a fortune for them all without even attempting to bargain, then hurriedly said farewell and left the Sanaa souk. "Good Heavens," he said out loud to himself. "I've found my horn at last! I wondered if I ever would, but here it is! I can go home to Kenya now."



Daggers for sale in Sanaa souk.



Chapter 10

The Return Home

Chryssee was overjoyed when she saw Russelas suddenly appear on the doorstep. "You're back! Oh dear Russelas, how wonderful to see you again!" She hugged and rubbed him until he thought he would collapse.

"Did you stop at the post office to bring my mail?" asked Esmond as he came to greet Russelas. He always wanted more letters.

"No, I'm sorry. I forgot again," replied Russelas. "I only thought about this." He solemnly held out to Esmond the Yemeni dagger.

"Is that made from your horn?" cried Chryssee in dismay.

"Yes, I'm afraid so."

"Oh," said Esmond. "I hoped that wouldn't have happened."

"But I had some excellent adventures," said Russelas.

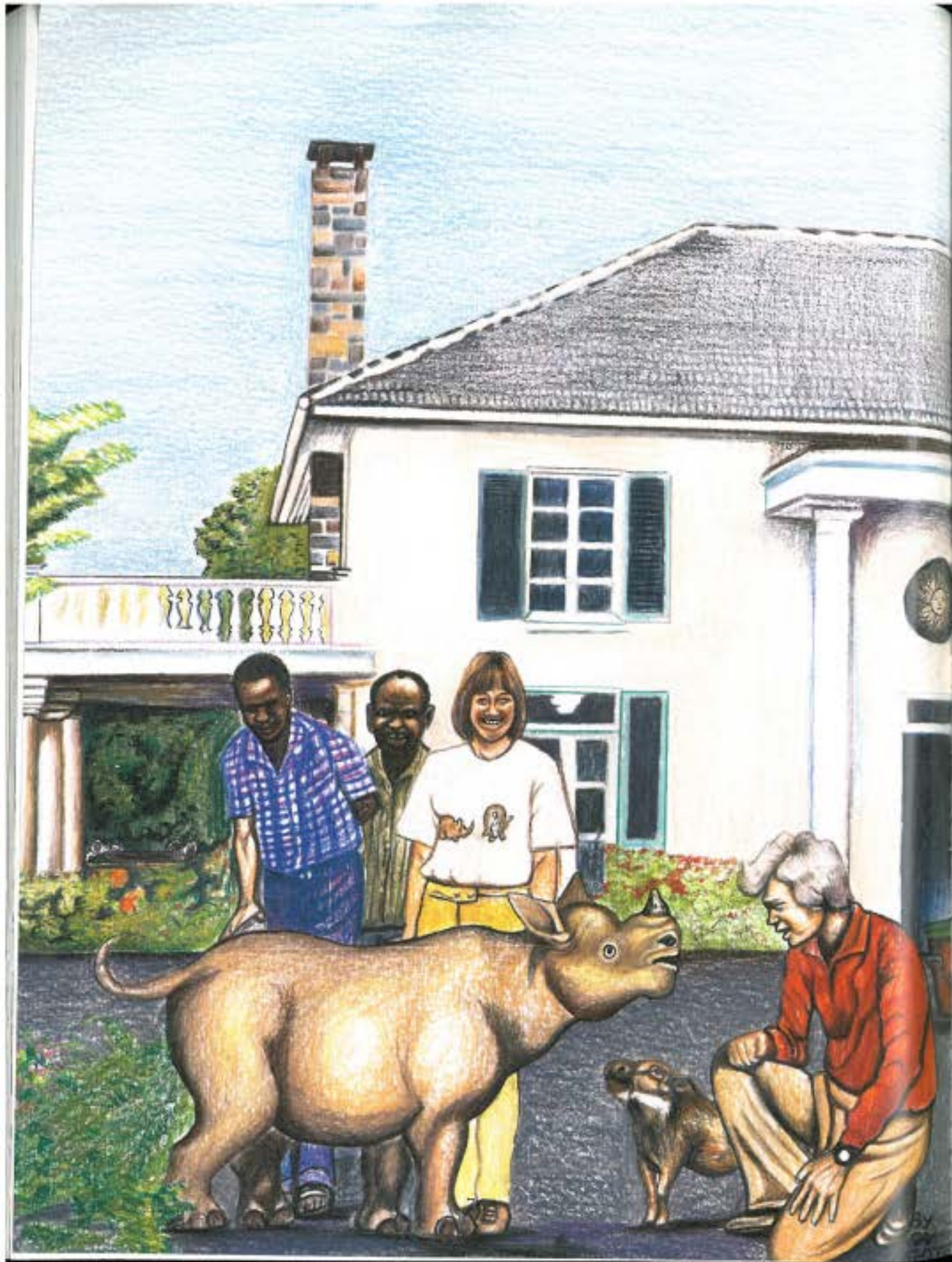
"You were gone for so long," complained Chryssee. "And now look at yourself—you've grown up so much!" Staring intently at Russelas, she nudged Esmond. "Esmond, do you see what I see on Russelas?"

"I do indeed," said Esmond, grinning hugely.

"What's that?" asked Russelas timidly.

"Look at your forehead, Russelas!" shouted Chryssee. She not only shouted when she was angry, but also when she got excited about something. "What was left of your horn is beginning to grow back again!"

Russelas gulped. He had never been so flabbergasted in his whole life. He didn't hear what Esmond was saying to him but ran upstairs to the mirror in the blue room and stared intently at his emerging horn. It looked even thicker than when it had first sprouted. Not only that, but the little knob behind was beginning to look like a real horn.



"I said, Russelas, what are you going to do now?" repeated Esmond following him upstairs.

"I think I'll take a little nap and a real mud wallow would be nice, too."

"No, no, no!" stormed Chryssee. "I want to hear everything about your trip right this instant!"

"So do I," chimed in Voltaire who had just joined them. He was in the kitchen when Russelas arrived, begging Benjamin and Joseph for just a little snack before dinner.

Everyone went into the sitting room and Russelas stretched out on the sofa and told his tale. When he finished, Esmond said there was a beautiful little orphan girl rhino, named Samia, who was living at Lewa Downs up-country in Kenya.

"She's also had some unusual experiences," he added. "She even saw the Pope when he came to Kenya!"

"I'd like to meet her," ventured Russelas. After all he was almost an adult rhino now, and it was time to have a girl friend. Perhaps one day they could start a family of their own and show the rest of the world just how wonderful rhinos are when they can live contentedly and at peace. But first, he would have to get the conservationists to understand the importance of stopping all trade in rhino products and making every park and reserve in Africa safe for rhinos—with their horns intact!

"I've still got a lot to do," said Russelas, and Esmond and Chryssee both applauded him.

Voltaire scampered back to Benjamin and Joseph. "PLEASE!" he insisted, "May we have lots and lots of food to eat tonight? We're celebrating Russelas' return!"



Pope John Paul II meets Samia in 1985.



About the Author

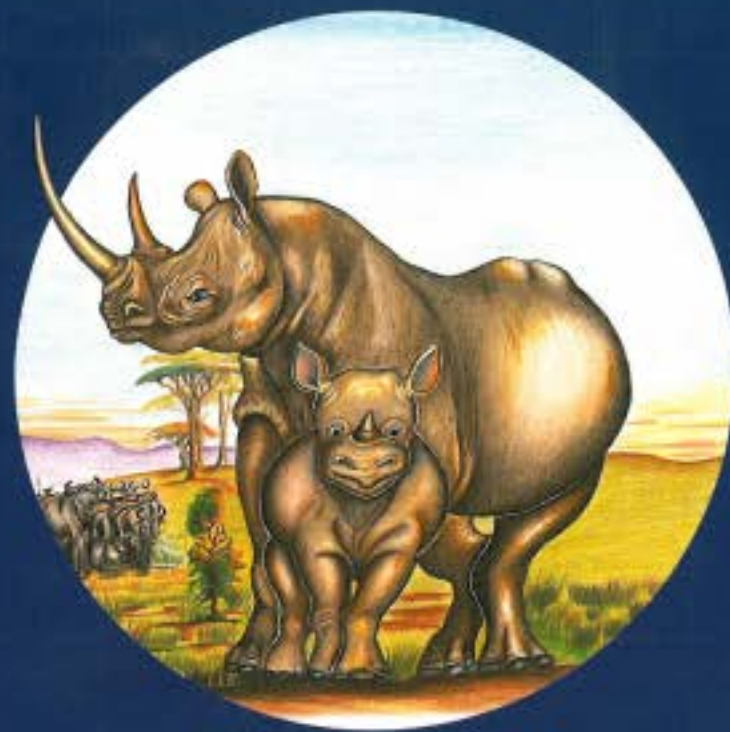
Chryssee Perry Martin

Chryssee Perry Martin was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and settled in Kenya 25 years ago with her husband, Esmond Bradley Martin. Originally a student of French literature, she became involved in Esmond's research on the dhow trade of the Indian Ocean. Studies of ivory and rhino horn exports followed. Chryssee and Esmond's book, *Run, Rhino, Run*, published in 1982, was among the earliest efforts to publicize the endangerment of rhinos due to the demand for their horns. Chryssee works tirelessly in the Animal Orphanage at Nairobi National Park, while their home on the outskirts of the city has been a haven for many wild animals—from warthogs and duikers to cheetahs. Chryssee hopes that the story of Russelas will encourage rhino preservation. Part of the revenue from the book will go to this cause and to the Animal Orphanage of Kenya Wildlife Service.

About the Artist

Samwel Okinyi Ngoje

Samwel was born at Kamagambo in the Migori District of Kenya, near Lake Victoria. During his earliest school years he discovered his talent as an artist which was often stimulated by his days of goat herding. His drawing ability was further developed under the guidance of renowned Kenyan artist Joel Oswaggo. Samwel's work has been exhibited at the Signature Gallery and the National Museum's Art Festival in Nairobi. He excels in portraying the people, animals and landscapes of his lakeside home, and is well on the way to achieving his ambition to become an internationally recognized illustrator and artist.



I enjoyed the clever blend of the ridiculous with the factual; imagination with reality.

Elsbeth Huxley

*Fantasy and humour are excellent ways to convey important messages.
I have enjoyed Russelas and I am sure others will too.*

Dr. Richard Leakey

About this book

The exciting travel adventures of Russelas, a rhino calf in search of his missing horn will delight young readers as they trace the illicit rhino horn trade route from Africa to India, to Southeast Asia and the Far East, then on to the Arabian Peninsula. Learn what happens when Russelas encounters lions, elephants, poachers, sea captains, and smugglers! Meet the other four species of rhino alive in the world today, and discover the joys and fears of these magnificent creatures.

This extraordinary book also illustrates the need to further our preservation efforts for all rhino so they may live in peace and multiply.

A portion of the sales revenue from this book will go toward this worthy cause.



Nairobi, Kenya