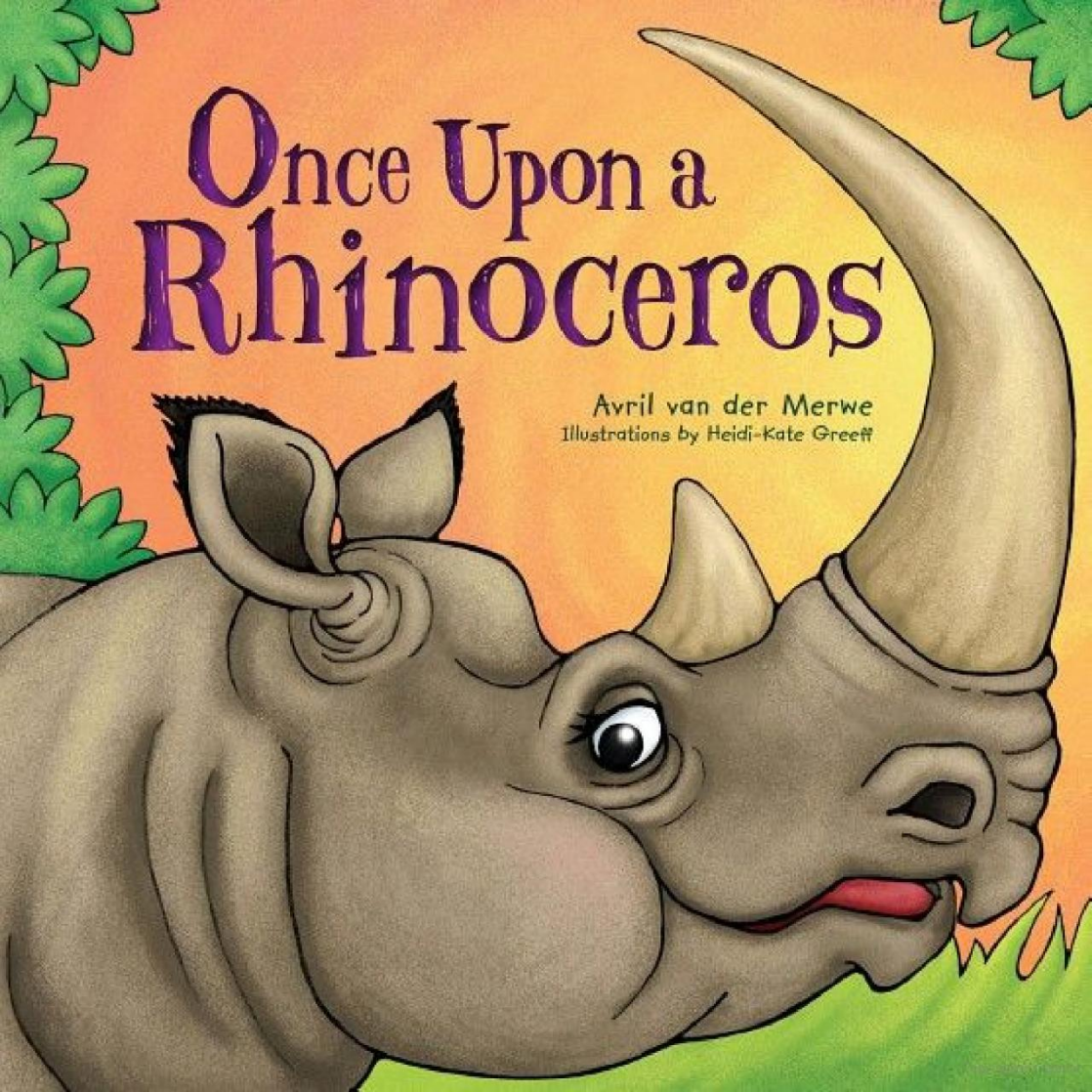


Once Upon a Rhinoceros

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Illustrations by Heidi-Kate Greeff

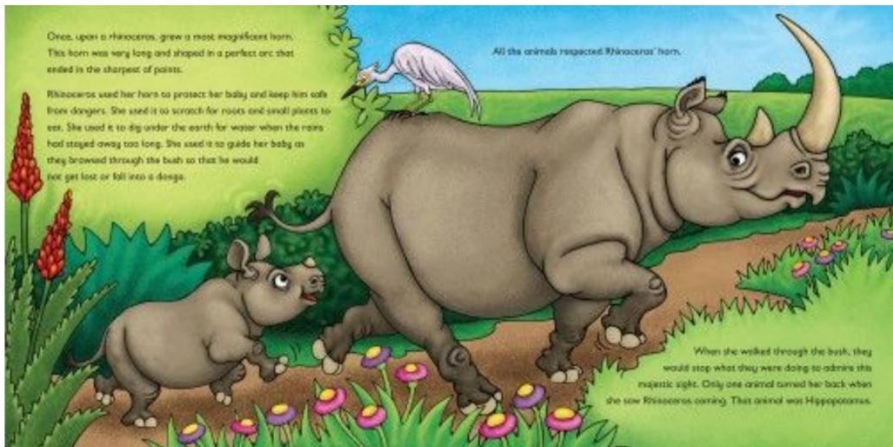


Once upon a rhinoceros, grew a most magnificent horn.
This horn was very long and shaped in a perfect arc that
ended in the sharpest of points.

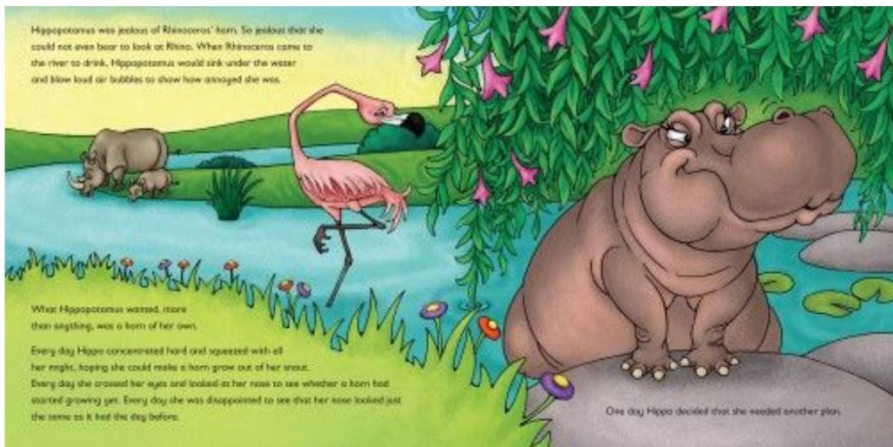
Rhinoceros used her horn to protect her baby and keep him safe
from dangers. She used it to scratch for roots and small pieces to
eat. She used it to dig under the earth for water when the rains
had stayed away too long. She used it to guide her baby as
they browsed through the bush so that he would
not get lost or fall into a danger.

All the animals respected Rhinoceros' horn.

When she walked through the bush, they
would stop what they were doing to admire this
majestic sight. Only one animal turned his back when
she saw Rhinoceros coming. This animal was Hippopotamus.



Hippopotamus was jealous of Rhinoceros' horn. So jealous that she could not even bear to look at Rhino. When Rhinoceros came to the river to drink, Hippopotamus would sink under the water and blow leaf or bubbles to show how annoyed she was.



What Hippopotamus wanted, more than anything, was a horn of her own.

Every day Hippo concentrated hard and squeezed with all her might, hoping she could make a horn grow out of her snout. Every day she crossed her eyes and looked at her nose to see whether a horn had started growing yet. Every day she was disappointed to see that her nose looked just the same as it had the day before.

One day Hippo decided that she needed another plan.

Hippo waited for the hottest part of the day, when Rhina was fast asleep under a tree. She slipped softly through the long grass until she was standing right in front of Rhinoceros who was curled up with her baby. For a moment Hippo stood as still as a rock, to make sure that Rhina did not wake up. Then she opened her huge jaws wide. In one snap, she nipped Rhina's horn, spun around, and raced away with it.

Behind her she heard an angry bellow, but Hippo did not stop. Instead she ran and ran until she reached her river. With a mighty splash she belly-flopped into the water and swam as fast as she could, all the way to the other side. Now at last she was safe and could enjoy her new horn all to herself.

