

Eco-Sys Action presents

***Kid
the black rhino calf
in Maasailand***



"Little Heroes of the World" collection

<https://littlemuseumoftheworld.com/boopy-e/>

Flamingoes were everywhere on this pinkish-coloured lake. *That's the magic of Kenya*, thought Boopy, our little sparrow, completely seduced by the unbelievable diversity of this Eastern African country's landscape. But he has a mission and was on the way to visit one of the most colourful tribes on Earth: the Maasais.

Maasailand is shared by Kenya and Tanzania. Maasais are great warriors and they mostly rely on cattle for their living. Their traditions are kept alive through



Photo: Chripimages

ceremonies spread over their lifetime.

Kenya, a country of 30 million people, is also home to incredible wildlife and many tourists come here for an unforgettable safari experience. Rhinos are high on their list, but their numbers have been sharply decreasing in the last few decades. Poachers are at work once more when Boopy reaches his destination.

Is the situation hopeless? Will someone help Boopy fight the poachers?



Photo: Chripimages

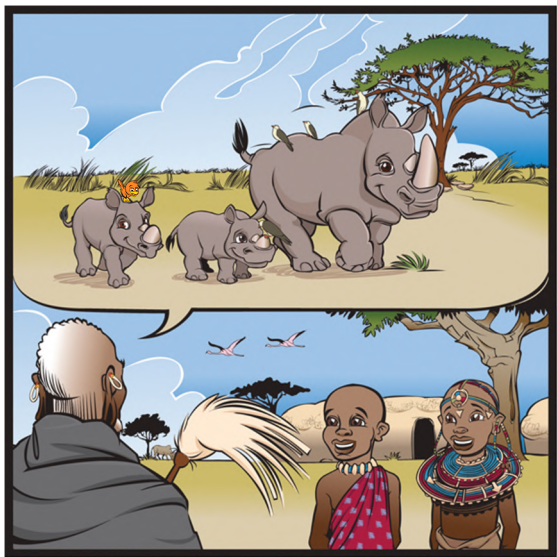


Deep in the African savannah, Maasai warriors are performing another ceremony, hoping for the end to the severe drought striking the village in this part of Kenya. But there is much talk about a white rhinoceros and her calf, which recently adopted an orphan black rhino calf. Jo and Kala, our two little heroes, don't understand why there's all this excitement and agitation. People are also quite nervous because of the two armed poachers in the area.



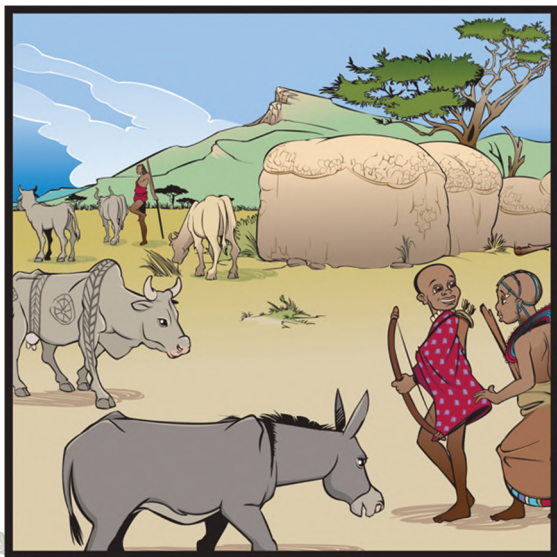
The kids decide to see the Laibon, the most respected elder in the village.

This very wise man says, "Let me tell you the story of two Maasai warriors a long time ago. They came upon a small child all by himself. One warrior didn't want to take the baby, but the second one who belongs to the Ilaiser clan picked him up and raised him as his son. The boy proved to have unusual powers, making rain fall and grass grow. He became our first Laibon. His name was Kidongoi."



"You've heard the unusual story about this black rhino calf. The warriors named him Kid in honor of Kidongoi, hoping the rhino also has unusual powers and would make rain finally come to help our tribe. But they also noticed that there are two poachers around planning to kill the mother white rhino."

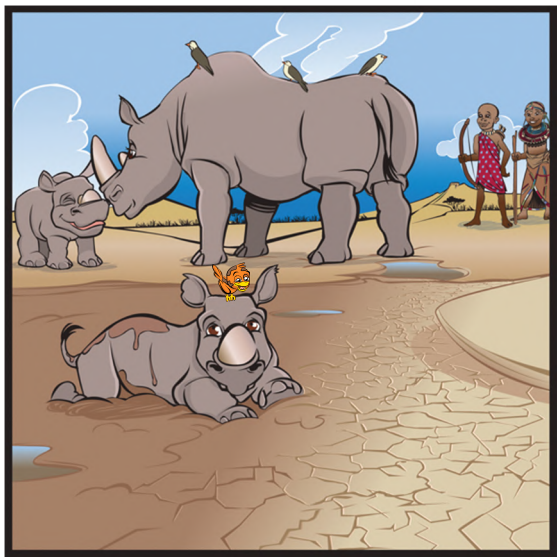
"That's an incredible story, Respected Laibon!" say the stunned kids. "Can we do anything to help?"



He simply replies, "You're still too young to do anything, but always remember that a leg cannot gallop without muscle". This is a Maasai saying for "one cannot resolve issues without ability".

"Kala, we must do something!" Jo says on the way to their boma.

"You're right Jo, but it may be dangerous," warns Kala. "You should take your bow and arrows."



The kids spot the rhinos with birds perched on their backs. The two animals are natural friends because birds help clean up rhinos by eating the parasites on the rhinos' backs. Rhinos, on the other hand, can help birds find insects for their food when they walk around on the grass.

"Look! Boopy the little sparrow is right there bathing in the mud with the little orphan. He can help us safely approach the rhinos! They don't have very good eyesight, and they might think we're going to attack them if we suddenly go near them," says Kala.



Kid recounts his story, "Last week, my mother was killed by poachers for her horn, which is used in traditional Chinese medicine and in Yemen to make dagger handles. I walked alone all night and met Mama Bama and little Jaya who adopted me, even though they're white rhinoceros. The name "black" or "white" is not related to our colour. It's a mistake between the Afrikaans and English languages! But you can tell us apart because a black rhino's upper lip is different from that of the white rhino!"



Mama Bama explains, "We rhinos have lived through many centuries and now there are five species of modern rhinos. There are over 11,300 of us white rhinos in the wild today. But only 4,000 of black rhinos are left when there used to be 65,000 of them thirty years ago! Our kind also lives in Asia, but our numbers are getting smaller. There's only 300 left of the small Sumatran rhino and only 2,400 Indian rhinos, and only 60 Javan rhinos left in the world. Even our habitat is getting smaller every day."



"We know that two poachers are looking for you," Jo tells them, "but you don't need to worry, because we have a plan to catch these two men!" While Boopy leads the bird team commando, Jo details the strategy to fight the fierce poachers. "Mama Bama, you should stand right under this tree as a bait, and I will be hiding in the grass with Kala..."

"Jo wants to be the greatest warrior in Maasailand," Kala explains.



It's time to put their plan in motion.

"Let's go," says Boopy to the other birds, and they harass one of the poachers, flying around and swooping down on him. The other poacher isn't doing any better. Jo sends an arrow right into his bottom. The poor poacher, who can't see Jo and Kala hidden in the grass, can only shoot at the air.



The birds push one poacher into the mud pond while the two little rhinos throw the other one in the air. "We got them!" says a very happy Jo.

Kala cheers and says, "Yes, and you're really going to be the best warrior in Maasailand, Jo! You really beat these poachers!"



Alerted by the gunshots, the village's warriors promptly arrive and circle the two poachers. The younger one explains, "We're not bad people. We just want to feed our family. Please don't kill us! We promise we'll stop being poachers and become the best rangers in this area."

The Laibon arrives as well and says seriously, "Kids, you should be punished for not following my orders, but the entire village is proud of you for saving those magnificent animals!"



Suddenly, Boopy notices that rain is starting to fall. The spirit of Kidongoi is in the air--Kid indeed has magic powers too! And the poachers start their lives anew and become rangers.

There's no better way to show the harmony of Maasai life with nature. Both Maais and rhinos see their territory getting smaller and smaller, but their love and respect of Mother Nature shall triumph in the end. Culture and wildlife conservation are very much the same fight. Like our little heroes, let's take action and save the rhinos!

Kid and his new family shouldn't lose hope! Even on the brink of extinction, there is still hope for rhinos thanks to groups like the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy. Located at the foot of Mount Kenya, this organization has developed an efficient strategy to protect rhinos and to help them reproduce, paying special attention to the black rhino. This paradise on earth has combined community-based projects for local tribes with tourism and wildlife management to give rhinos like Kid a future.

Lewa has also set up schools and clinics around the reserve and ensures that every kid understands how important it is to protect the wildlife.

To find out more on how to save Kid, you can visit Lewa at www.ecosysfun.com



Photo: Chripimages

A school sponsored by Lewa



Photo: Chripimages



Boopy Edition

Copyright © Eco-Sys Action Foundation