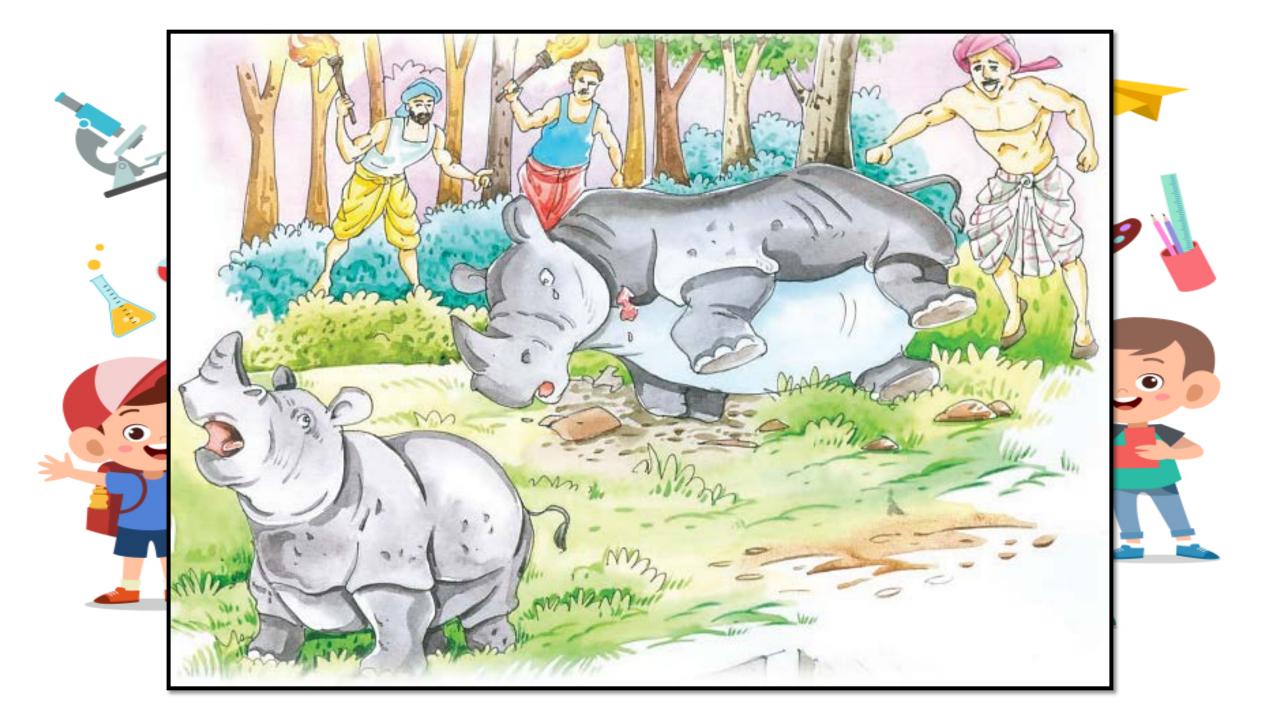


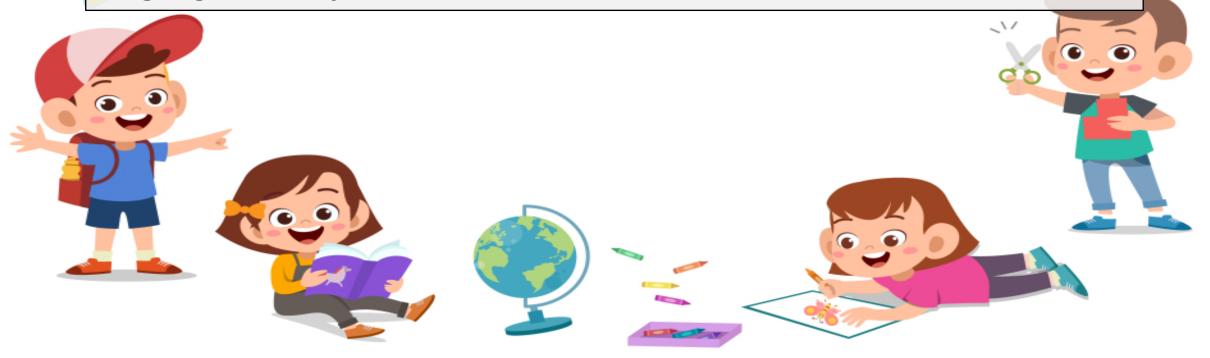
I was playing happily with my mom when suddenly we came across an area covered with strips of bamboo, some mud and hay. Mom stopped at once and said, "Till yesterday on our way to the lake, this patch was not there, was it?" We always take the same route but today the route appeared to be scary, as if it was haunted. I was about to jump over the new area, but my mom pulled me back and in doing this, she lost her balance and fell into the trap with a thud.

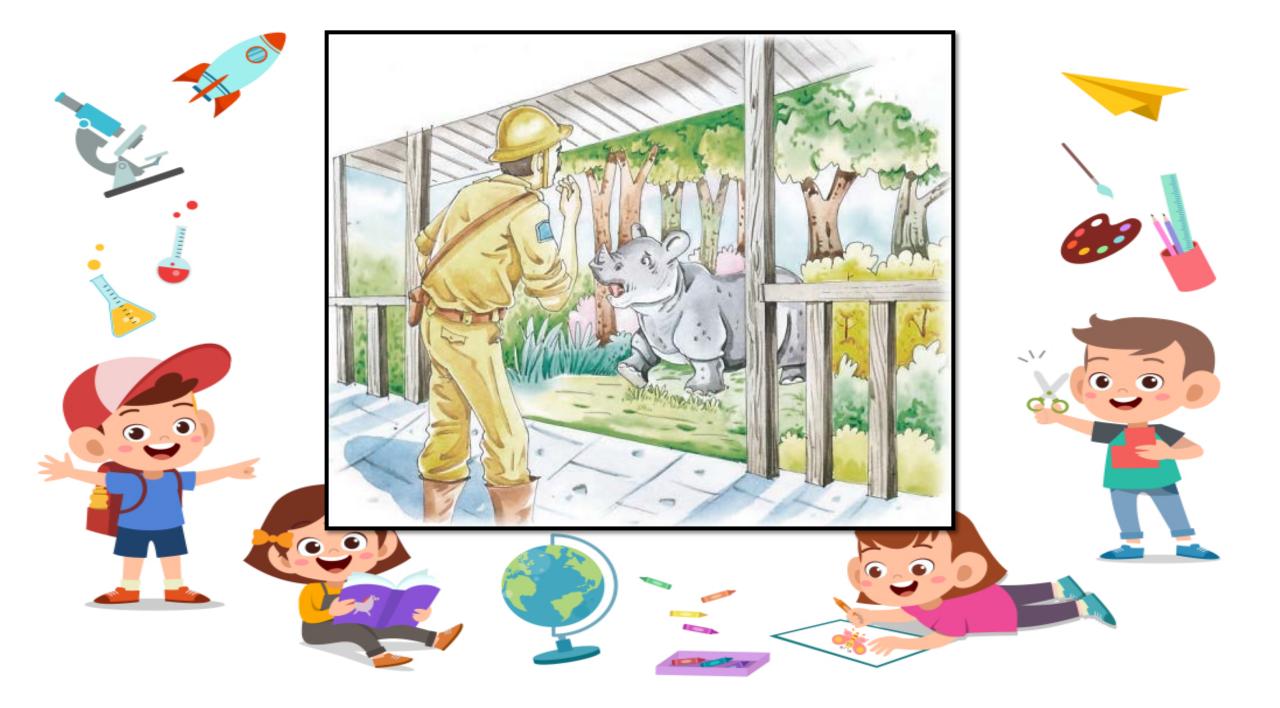
- I cried out for help but no help arrived, instead three strong men with sharp weapons and bamboo torches came from nowhere. They rejoiced at my mom's fall.
- My heart sank, it stopped beating; could they be poachers; the ones who had killed my dad? I could hear my mother grunting, repeatedly asking me to keep away. Helpless, I stood in the tall elephant grass, dreading every sound.



My mom made futile efforts to come out of the pit. The poachers smiled at each other. They had strong ropes with them. Will they tie her too, the way they had tied my strong dad Rhino, and hack her snout and take away her horn, and leave her to die of pain? No, they cannot repeat it. They cannot make me an orphan. The images of Dad covered with blood are still fresh in my mind. The poachers were still struggling with their torches.

A strong wind was blowing. The delay was a sign that God was with me. This was enough for me to challenge the poachers. I gave out a loud cry and rushed to call my friends. Jumbo alerted his relatives, while I raced to meet the forest officer. The forest officer couldn't understand my language, but my face said it all.





He sounded a red alert, In a second I found every member of my wildlife family and their caretakers marching to help me. The trumpets, the roars, the whistles, the gun shots..... the poachers were taken aback. Their bamboo torches fell down from their hands, they ran for their life. The forest officers caught them and put them in prison.

My Rhino Mom was pulled out from the pit, she was with me, and for me. **Together we thanked the** forest officers and our friends for making the difference in our lives. I wish the poachers too understand that we are not just horns, we are a family too, and how it hurts to lose a member of a closeknit family. I know it.

