

Foreword

I have always loved rhinos since I first went to Africa in 1960 and met a young male, Billy, who had been rescued and raised on a farm after his mother had been shot. He was quite happy for me to sit on his back while he wandered around feeding.

In those days there were probably as many as half a million rhinos in Africa and parts of Asia. The black rhino and the white rhino lived in Africa. In Asia there were three different species. Today all species of rhinos are highly endangered. What has happened? Unfortunately, poaching has hugely increased — by 700 percent in just the past seven years. This is because in some parts of Asia people have the false belief that the rhino's horn has medicinal or other magic properties. And so poachers go to all sort of lengths to kill rhinos and cut out the horns. Even very young ones are killed so that the poachers can make a bit more money from their tiny horns, just beginning to grow. And because they make a lot of money per pound of horn, the poachers take great risks. They even fly into some of the big African parks in helicopters, shoot a rhino, steal the horn, and fly out.

This book is about a young Sumatran rhino called Andatu. This species is critically endangered — at the very most there are only 200 remaining in the wild.

And if we don't help them the species will disappear altogether.

Rhinos need champions, and fortunately there are dedicated individuals fighting to save them. There are the brave anti-poaching teams on the ground, and the game rangers who are there to protect the animals in the national parks and reserves. There are captive breeding programs in zoos in many countries. And there are organizations that are raising awareness and money.

But there are no better champions than today's students. They are more aware of the need to protect wildlife than ever before and will be our up-and-coming conservationists and wildlife biologists. And they can play a vital role in assuring rhino survival. One thing is for sure: If we don't work together now, the children of the future will know rhinos only from photographs in books and old films. We must not let that happen.

The children of P.S. 107 in Brooklyn have made an important contribution to rhino survival by writing this book. For one thing, Andatu's poignant story will engage the hearts and minds of other schoolchildren, many of whom will, I am sure, want to help conservation efforts. Moreover, all proceeds from the book go directly to support the remaining Sumatran rhinos, through the work of the International Rhino Foundation.

Well done, fifth graders of PS. 107 and congratulations!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jane Goodall". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name of the signatory.

—Dr. Jane Goodall, DBE

Founder, the Jane Goodall Institute & UN Messenger of Peace