ANIMAL KITABU

By Jean-Pierre Hallet

With Alex Pelle

A FAWCETT CREST BOOK
Fawcett Publications, Inc., Greenwich, Conn.
Member of American Book Publishers Council, Inc.

THIS BOOK CONTAINS THE COMPLETE TEXT OF THE ORIGINAL HARDCOVER EDITION.

A Fawcett Crest Book reprinted by arrangement with Random House, Inc.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 67-22666

Printing History
Random House edition published February 15, 1968
First printing, January 1968
Second printing, February 1968
Third printing, March 1968
Fourth printing, April 1968

First Fawcett Crest printing, June 1969

Published by Fawcett World Library
67 West 44th Street, New York, N.Y. 10036
Printed in the United States of America

To my friends Simba, Pierrot, Bella, Venus
and Sophie, in the hope that a goodly crew
of their fellow lions, rhinos, elephants, chimps
and all the rest will soon be heading for
the New World on board my "Noah's Ark" . . .

CONTENTS

9 *INTRODUCTION by Ivan T. Sanderson*

17 PEOPLE vs. ANIMALS

25 CHUI—*The Real King of Beasts*

45 SIMBA—*The Gentleman of Leisure*

79 MBOGO—*The Vigilant Warrior*

93 TEMBO—*The Solid Citizen*

129 KIBOKO—*The Fat Proletarian*

139 KIFARU—*The Frustrated Delinquent*

163 MAMBA—*The Handicapped Hobo*

181 MAKAKO—*The Well-Organized Tribesman*

203 SOKOMUTU—*The Man of the Market Place*

223 NYAMA—*All Sorts of Animals*

239 *EPILOGUE: Will Noah's Ark Finally Land in California?*

253 *INDEX*

KIFARU

The Frustrated Delinquent

Thundering through a vast cloud of dust, the horned fury charges across the technicolor screen. Will the ruthless prehistoric monster gore and overturn the Land Rover? Will he trample it to scrap iron? Will he eat the White Hunter or the spark plugs?

Open-mouthed, the movie-going public watches the sensational "rhino charge." If the so-called African film is a real stinker, they have already seen savannah-dwelling lions leap out of the steaming, teeming jungle, maddened by the tempting flesh of the White Hunter hero and the heaving-bosomed heroine. Locked in each other's arms, hero and heroine have crouched behind a low rock barrier while unhappy mules, artfully painted with zebra stripes, have been stampeded past them. Inflated rubber hippos, moved by unseen wires, have attacked the couple's boat and dumped them in the water. They have managed to escape from broad-snouted Yankee al-

ligators who have tried to pose as narrow-snouted Nile crocodiles. While struggling onto shore, they have been charged by a troop of well-trained Asiatic elephants wearing fan-shaped plastic ears behind their bulging foreheads. In all, they have been attacked on their brief safari by more animals than any bush native glimpses during his entire lifetime.

These technicolor terrors of the "Dark Continent," from op-art mules to elephants in falsies, have thrilled and chilled the duped audience. Now, as an epic climax, the arch villain of them all thunders toward his classic duel with the Land Rover. How can the watching public doubt what ads, posters, billboards, and brochures all repeat in pictures or in prose—that the black rhino, alias the "horned fury," is Africa's most dangerous and diabolic beast?

No one can deny that black rhinos have attacked Land Rovers, jeeps, trucks, or any other vehicle that has been employed to chase or catch them. Cape buffaloes have done the same. So have zebras, gnus, or even gentle-looking oryx and gazelles. Any animal who normally ignores a car will fight with it, charging pathetically and often suicidally, after being driven to a state of unreasoning hysteria. But the movie-makers can't raise a storm of publicity over a maimed or dead gazelle. It isn't sensational enough, and the public might consider it sadistic. Rhinos, on the other hand, are "ugly monsters" and they have it coming to them: according to their press releases, they will rush to attack any and all passing automobiles.

Africa's black rhino will, on occasion, "charge" a car without apparent provocation. He will also charge at tents, trees, bushes, rats, frogs, men, butterflies, or grasshoppers. Sometimes he will even charge at the sound of his own dung dropping on a leafy shrub behind him. Much more often and for no good reason, he will flee from frogs, butterflies, and all the rest. There is no predictable pattern to his flights or aggressions; the same rhino who retreats in terror from a harmless native woman may gallop moments later toward a group of rifle-bearing white men. If the tourists hold their fire he will, almost invariably, come to a halt some twenty feet away, stare at them briefly, then go trotting off to browse on a thorn bush. But they shoot, and most of them believe sincerely that they shoot and kill in self-defense.

Loud-snorting bluffer and titanic blunderer, more easily stalked and killed than any member of the hunters' Big Five, the black rhino is a rebel without a cause, a chronic but incompetent delinquent. He is, even from the animals' point of

view, the bull in Africa's china shop, rushing from one messy disaster to the next.

Attempting to explain his seemingly demented ways, native storytellers of the northeast Congo tell an oddly touching little tale. Long ago, it seems, the first animals were absolutely naked, having neither skin nor fur to cover their tender meat. Seeing their plight, God gave each of them a needle and suggested that they make some clothes. The ancestral leopard, cleverest of beasts, sewed the most beautiful coat. The others did their best, making fine or mediocre coats according to their talent. But Kifaru—the first black rhino and the dumbest animal in all creation—dropped his needle, couldn't see where it was lying, and kicked it into a thicket.

Tortured by ticks and flies, the naked rhino charged back and forth looking for his needle. It was nowhere. Snatching at a thorn, he stitched away with it frantically, then donned his hastily made coat. It hung in deep folds and wrinkles where he hadn't sewed it straight. Seeing it, the other animals began to laugh and taunt him. Snorting with rage, the rhino galloped from thicket to thicket as he searched for his needle. If he could only find it, he would sew himself a rich and glossy coat like the leopard's. Then the other animals would stop laughing. But he couldn't see the needle, even when he galloped over it. Perhaps, he thought, one of those laughing beasts has picked it up and hidden it. So he started charging every living thing he met, as his whole tribe does today, hoping to find the guilty party and retrieve the long-lost rhino needle.

Wild as it sounds, the native legend makes more sense than all of Hollywood's automotive-rhino epics put together. What could be more frantic, more maddened by frustration, more suspicious and aggressive, than a three-thousand-pound animal, nearsighted to the point of blindness, who searches constantly for something he can't see?

Insatiably curious, the black rhino is at the same time extremely timid and equipped with only limited mentality. His hearing and his sense of smell are superb, but his vision is abysmally defective. Each of his tiny eyes, set on opposite sides of his bulky, elongated head, gives him a different picture to look at; each picture is tantalizing in its wide-angle perspective but horribly frustrating in its perpetual fuzziness. An animal Mr. McGoo, nearsighted Kifaru cannot tell a man from a tree at distances of more than thirty feet, cannot see any object distinctly if it is more than twenty or even fifteen feet away, and has to cock his head sideways to see,

with one eye at a time, around the bulk of his muzzle and his massive front horn. Moving forward with the horn lowered, he is running blind.

By day as well as night, Kifaru hears and smells a whole world of fascinating objects which he cannot see. His curiosity drives him on to poke and probe among them—to look for the needle, as it were—but his timid disposition makes him fear, and fear deeply, the very objects that he wants to examine. He hesitates, agonized, while the two conflicting instincts boil within him. Usually he runs away but sometimes rushes forward to investigate with the world's most farcical display of bluff, noise, wasted energy, and sheer ineptitude—the notorious rhino "charge."

Once, near the Upemba National Park in Katanga, I watched a typically addlepated rhino stage a typically silly charge. He was busy with a big mouthful of twigs when he heard a frog start to croak about a hundred feet away. He stopped chewing, cocked his head, and listened—with leaves fluttering out of his mouth—then trotted anxiously toward the sound. As he approached, the frog croaked loudly and hopped by chance in his direction. A ton and a half of spooked rhinoceros made an abrupt U-turn, retreating to "safety." He sulked for a few minutes before advancing again. This time the frog jumped in the opposite direction, making him feel more confident: he lowered his horn and charged, smashing the frog under his hoofs without even knowing it. He returned to the spot, sniffing until he found it, and pawed at the little blob of pulp with a puzzled expression.

At the opposite extreme, rhinos have attacked railroad trains. During the early days of the Uganda Railway—while disturbed lions were carrying off the station masters or the signalmen—a frightened and confused rhino charged and jolted a stationary coach, knocking himself down but getting up and trotting away, somewhat dazedly, to brood about the experience. One of the trains was actually derailed when another rhino charged the locomotive, knocking off a steel plate which dropped beneath a wheel. This time the rhino didn't get up.

Such hysterical reactions, whether provoked by a two-ounce frog or a 200-ton train, cannot be blamed on poor eyesight alone. Cursed with equally bad vision, the elephant acts with majestic calm and self-assured determination; his great intelligence enables him to solve the problems that confront him and to keep his warm emotions balanced sanely. Kifaru,

commonly and mistakenly believed to be related to the elephant (if elephants could sue, they should sue for slander), behaves very like his real-life relative—the dim-witted, dim-sighted and hysterically skittish horse.

Adored and sentimentalized for his graceful, even noble-looking beauty, the horse has also been acclaimed for his "horse sense," implying practical shrewdness and a sort of rough-hewn wisdom. He is, ironically, the least intelligent domesticated animal of any size or note, while the much-maligned ass, whose name is linked with gross stupidity or folly, is a genius by comparison. Those who handle both are well aware of the horse's mental failings—a lack of basic reasoning power which has been confirmed by extensive scientific testing. Matched against cows in simple association tests, horses proved only half as intelligent; matched against dogs, cats, pigs, monkeys, rodents, and other animals in multiple-choice tests that demanded more sophisticated reasoning, the horse was tied for last place—with the gopher.

Only slightly smarter than Kifaru, timid and terribly nervous, deprived of binocular vision and fuzzily nearsighted, the horse shies away from a fluttering bit of paper just as the rhino shies away from a butterfly. Although he is far more accustomed to cars, even a well-trained horse may sometimes bolt when suddenly confronted, as he will bolt at any startling sight or sound. To work at all, most horses need blinders on their eyes; they must be shielded from the nerve-racking provocation of the dimly seen objects and imagined terrors of the world around them. In case of fire in a stable, when the terror is a real one, they must actually be blindfolded before they can be led to safety. Then, if left untied, they may rush in uncontrollable hysteria back into the very flames they fear.

Free-living horses, zebras, and wild asses are all, in varying degrees, nervous, timid, unpredictable, and hard to approach. The related South American and Malayan tapirs—pony-sized, prehensile-lipped creatures who are very close, anatomically, to the primitive ancestral stock from which horse and rhino both evolved—are shy, retiring animals who will flee in panic from a tiny dog but sometimes charge at larger beasts, including humans, in a fit of fear and jangled nerves.

Among Kifaru's closer relatives, the same behavior pattern holds, although he is himself the most aggressive of the five living rhino species. There are three Asiatic representatives: the little Sumatran rhino, who is quite hairy, two-horned and only four feet tall; the smooth-skinned, one-horned Javan

rhino, who averages a foot taller; and the Great Indian Rhinoceros, a fantastic-looking creature six feet tall and up to fourteen feet long, with a single short horn and immensely thick skin that is folded into armor-like plates.

Kifaru's fellow African, the white rhinoceros, is even bigger. Measuring up to six foot six at his humped shoulder, fourteen or even fifteen feet in length, and sometimes weighing over two tons, he is the world's second largest land mammal. There are two very similar races: a shorter-horned, flatter-headed type from the northeast Congo and bordering Sudan; and the long-horned white rhino (the record length for a front horn is sixty-two-and-a-half inches) from South Africa's Umfolosi and Hluhluwe Game Reserves. Ironically, neither white rhino race is white but just about the same color as the so-called black rhino—a dark slaty gray. The designation "white" is simply a corruption of the Boer word *weit* (wide) which was used to describe the animal's snout—broad and squared-off unlike the black rhino's rounded muzzle with its tapirlike prehensile upper lip. Less wary than Kifaru, Abu-Garn, as the white rhino is sometimes called in the north, lives in small herds that travel across the open plains, their heads bowed low as they crop the grass.

Kifaru, who is smaller, faster, and more agile, dwells upon the forested savannahs, preferring thorn bush and acacia thickets near a river, stream, or mudhole. He forms no herds but trots along like the prickly loner that he is, head held high as he browses on the shrubbery, using his hooked, prehensile upper lip to strip off leaves and twigs, and sometimes digging with his front horn for tasty roots, salt, or water.

Rare individuals may reach a height of five-and-a-half feet, a length of twelve feet, and a weight of nearly two tons, but the average black rhino is a ton and a half of trouble, five feet tall, and nine to ten feet long. His front horn, which is usually the larger of the pair, rarely exceeds two feet in length, but the record horn measures nearly four feet. His ears are fringed with hair and are somewhat horselike in their shape; his two-foot tail is tufted at the tip and often carried erect; his four feet, like those of all living rhinos, are each equipped with three hoofed toes, the middle one corresponding to the horse's single toe. He can walk, trot, or gallop, sometimes reaching speeds of thirty-five to forty miles per hour, unlike the elephant who cannot really run, even when he is charging at a twenty-mile-per-hour pacing walk.

Asia's three short-horned rhino species fight with their tusks, which are really lower canines, slashing with them like

a hippo or a wild boar. Africa's black and white rhinos, who have no front teeth, gore or toss with their longer horns. None of the rhinos, Kifaru included, makes a determined effort to trample an enemy underfoot—as does a furious deer, elephant, or Cape buffalo—but they may run over him, most of the time by accident, while galloping along.

An inept hunter run over by a rhino probably has the same survival chances as a careless California pedestrian. If a hoof or wheel smashes into something delicate and vital, the man expires. If not, he emerges with some broken bones and a galaxy of bruises. Humans who are gored and tossed usually get off much more lightly, as with Californians who are thrown by a fender. A good half of the rhino-tossed hunters get up and walk away to have their cuts and bruises tended. The rest are carried away for more extensive doctoring, and an occasional hunter, probably no more than one in every dozen tossed, is carted away to the graveyard.

Any fighting bull, forced to demonstrate his powers in a Mexican or Spanish bull ring, does more damage when his horns connect with the matador. They are outgrowths of the bovine skull, prolongations of the frontal bones that are covered with an outer sheath of true and very hard horn, and the fighting bull uses them with some intelligence. Kifaru's so-called horns are merely outgrowths from the skin of his snout, without a bony core of any sort and composed of densely matted hairs. The basic substance, keratin, is the same as that of true horn but the structure is much weaker. Free-living rhinos sharpen their front horns on tree trunks or on concretelike termite hills, just as zoo rhinos whet their horns on bricks or bars, but for all their conscientious effort rarely gore a hunter in a vital spot. Charging blind as they do, they sometimes fail to strike with the horn at all, and rather toss with the head or nose.

As a match for human hunters, poor Kifaru is the laughingstock of equatorial Africa, ridiculed in native folk tales and proverbial wisdom. *"Bairinga kipserageta!"* say the Lumbwa tribesmen of East Africa—"May you be killed by a rhino!"—but they only say it to their worst enemies. They cannot think of any more undignified, cowardly, and humiliating death.

It is exactly that, for the great majority of rhino-caused fatalities or severe injuries come when a man turns his back and runs. An inexperienced hunter, white or black, may panic as he sees the huge animal galloping toward him in its classic dust cloud: he shoots in haste, wounds rather than

kills, drops his gun, and tries to outrace the dazed or maddened rhino. He can't possibly do it, since Kifaru is at least a third faster, while the very fact that he runs increases the rhino's confidence and the noise he makes while running gives the half-blind animal a chance to use his keen hearing and correct his angle of approach which was, most probably, wrong to begin with. Under these conditions, even a badly wounded and further handicapped rhino may be lucky enough to connect or, rather, collide with his target.

This is not idle theorizing. On foot, alone, unarmed and one-handed, I have faced a full-grown rhino, letting him charge me at his pleasure, and emerged from that experience, repeated scores of times, without so much as a bruise. Those rhino-Hallet matches weren't meant to prove a thing about Hallet, but to demonstrate a few basic facts about the much-misunderstood character and actions of Kifaru.

"What the rhino really needs is a good psychoanalyst," I had long maintained to friends in Africa. "Somewhere, behind the bluff and bluster, the frustrations and neuroses, there's a good-natured animal who would like to make friends."

No one would believe it. Brainwashed by the hunters' propaganda, they looked upon Kifaru as a hardened criminal rather than a scatterbrained delinquent. Hoping to refute that point of view, late in 1959, I purchased a recently captured, full-grown black rhino from the Uganda Public Works Department, christened him Pierrot, turned him loose in a 250-by 200-foot kraal at my Mugwata game park, and walked into the kraal, determined to tame and train him.

Pierrot heard the gate close behind me, and stared nervously in my direction from his position some 150 feet away. He worried about the problem for several minutes before deciding on the traditional rhino answer—charge. Then he trotted toward me, accelerating, his head held horizontally. In that position his already poor vision was blocked by his front horn, so, as he launched himself into a furious gallop, he cocked his head to the side, straining to see with a single eye. When he reached a point about thirty feet away, where he could vaguely distinguish my shape, he adjusted his angle, lowered his horn and thundered toward me—a blind juggernaut committed to a fixed direction.

I had about a second to answer or ignore him. If his aim appeared to be dangerously accurate, I could make a quick sideways jump like a rodeo clown; if not, I could stand my tracks and watch his dust.

On this, his first try, Pierrot's aim looked a little too good. I jumped. He shot past, snorting, with his tasseled tail held high in the air. Decelerating to a stop more than thirty feet beyond, he turned around and peered anxiously, trotting back and forth while he tried to find the target. Since I am somewhat smaller than a railroad train, he failed to locate me. I moved back about twenty feet. He heard me, snorted indignantly, "prrrufff!" and charged again.

This time I didn't have to move. Pierrot misjudged his angle badly, missing by a wide margin. His third attempt was even worse, and after five or six failures he stopped charging. Confused and obviously upset, he snorted, growled, shook his head and pawed at the ground. I let him sulk for ten minutes before I clued him to the target, jumping up and down and hooting like a baboon.

Pierrot raised his head, started to trot in my direction, spotted a small cassia tree at a ninety-degree angle, veered, galloped toward it under full steam, veered again, and wound up 150 feet to my left. He spent the next ten minutes trotting back and forth, head cocked, trying to find me. He was concentrating very hard, but he wasted his energy on two more small trees and a big clump of thorn bush. Then, when he finally spotted me, he charged, missed again, and, of course, missed by an even wider margin.

Disgusted by the whole series of fiascos, a ton and a half of unhappy horned fury sat down on his haunches, grunting. As he did, I charged the rhino, yelling like a Masai. Appalled, he scrambled to his feet and stood, staring, until I got to within twenty feet of him. Then he fled in terror to the far end of the kraal. "The greatest bluffer in all Africa," as Carl Akeley once called him, had been shamelessly outbluffed.

We repeated those absurd maneuvers for the next four days, but I never charged the rhino again. Instead, I simply dodged or stood my ground as Pierrot continued to charge . . . and to miss . . . and to try again. If he became familiar with my appearance, I reasoned, he would be eager to satisfy his curiosity as soon as he decided that I wasn't going to hurt him.

The first signs of understanding came toward the end of the fourth day when I moved to a point within ten feet of the rhino's head and he neither charged nor retreated but watched quietly. After a moment, he started to worry again and backed off. Trying to reassure him, I made a noisy little retreat. That brought him back but he didn't charge: I was well within his field of clear vision and I was becoming a fa-

miliar if a somewhat baffling sight. Encouraged, I took a step toward the rhino. He took a step backward. So I took a step to the rear, and he moved forward one step.

We danced that little waltz, with minor variations, for a full month. It was dull work, especially so when compared to the quick, spectacular results that can be obtained with more intelligent animals. Working with my full-grown lion, Simba, in the backyard arena of my place at Kisenyi, I had tamed him in a couple of days and trained him in *less* than a month, to sit, stand, lie down, roll over, mount a series of pedestals, and leap through a hoop of fire. Now, working with Pierrot, the pair of us simply stepped forward, backward, forward, and backward again. Friends and family had predicted my atrocious death beneath the rhino's hoofs, but the way things looked, I was more apt to die of boredom—either that or fallen arches.

The big breakthrough came, one day, as I was standing a couple of feet away from Pierrot's head. He suddenly turned his two-foot front horn toward me, then rubbed his leathery cheek along my arm. I returned the gesture with a hearty slap on the neck, figuring that a rhino would, like an elephant, prefer a firm caress to an irritating little tickle. He nudged me in the ribs with his horn, rubbing it along my body. I took a dozen steps away from him, curious to see his reaction. He came toward me with an accelerating trot. I was in the direct line of charge but I stood my ground as the rhino advanced. He came to a halt with his horn less than two feet from my chest, then cocked his head and ogled me.

I let out my breath, gave him another friendly slap on the neck and led him on a long walk around the edge of the kraal, keeping a position three-quarters forward so that he could see me easily. He followed like a three-thousand-pound lamb, dutifully keeping step—which wasn't at all surprising—turned whenever I turned, and gave me a few playful little nudges in the rear.

Within a week, the horned fury and I were playing ball. We used a three-foot sphere of cattle hide stuffed with straw. I bowled it to Pierrot with my hand and he bowled it back with his horn. John Grindle's cricket-playing elephants would have laughed us off the field, but the rhino found it thrilling sport, smacking the ball enthusiastically but with very poor aim. His physical handicaps made it difficult to teach him more sophisticated games: he was too nearsighted, unable to jump or even to scramble over any kind of barrier, and he

lacked grasping equipment comparable to an elephant's adroit trunk.

Training the rhino as a riding mount appeared to be a more promising project. Although he dwarfed an ordinary horse, his dimensions were approached by France's famed Percherons, an equine breed developed by the Crusaders to carry the weight of knights clad in heavy suits of armor. A big Percheron can reach a height of seventeen hands (five foot eight at the shoulder) and a weight of one ton. The largest horse in history, a Percheron gelding named Dr. Le Gear who died in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1919, had in fact been *larger* than my rhino. The great Le Gear had stood seven feet tall at the shoulder (two feet taller than Pierrot), measured sixteen feet from nose to tail (seven feet longer), and weighed just about the same—2,995 pounds.

The first time I mounted, bent on riding him bareback, Pierrot shuddered, heaved, and stamped angrily. Bucking like a bronco was beyond his powers, but he could have rolled on the ground if he had wanted to hurt me. He relapsed instead into cold, motionless disapproval after the storm of protest failed. I sat, spraddled out uncomfortably on his barrel-like back, for at least five minutes while he waited for me to dismount. Then I kicked him in the ribs, hoping to make him go. He went . . . and I bounced several times before coming to rest in the middle of the thorn bush. Unfortunately, I was wearing *kapitula*—baggy tropical shorts—rather than a heavy suit of armor.

The next time I tried it I put a rope halter around his neck and kicked a little more gently. The rhino broke into a fast trot instead of a gallop and I managed to stay aboard by clutching at the rope. There was, however, absolutely no way to make him turn, speed up, slow down, or stop, although I tried every variety of poke, nudge, gesture, and verbal command during the next couple of weeks. Finally, I had to accept the fact that while the rhino might permit me to sit upon his back while he moved about, he would never learn to take directions like his handsome relative, the horse. Less intelligent and even more stubborn, Pierrot was no Percheron.

He was, however, all that I had predicted: a basically good-natured animal who could prove as much if approached with a little understanding rather than a rifle. After making friends with me, he learned to accept the Balese gamekeepers, Bodeko and Bokwe, and the two elephants, Bella and Venus, who lived "next door" in the adjacent kraal. I chaperoned the first five rhino-elephant meetings; then I opened the double

doors between their kraals and let them mingle on their own. Venus and Pierrot paired off for a while, going for walks without the shocked and quietly brooding Bella. But the two majestic ladies must have missed each other's conversation; reconciled after a couple of weeks, they afterwards shared the henpecked rhino between them—not as a lover, I hasten to explain, but strictly as a friend.

Free-living black rhinos, unlike my educated pet, have little to do with other animals, elephants included. There is a hoary old legend, left over from classic times, that rhinos and elephants are at war, but in real life the wooded savannah's two largest animals generally avoid each other. The rhino is frightened and uncertain; the elephant, very sensibly, never goes out of his way to look for trouble.

Hysterical rhinos have, however, charged at occasional elephants, just as they have charged at trains. Most of the time, the rhino pulls up and trots off, tail held high, trying to look impressive as he beats a quick retreat. But the huge juggernaut may thunder on, unpredictably, and collide with his even huger target. What happens next depends on whether he merely strikes a glancing blow and ricochets away, terrified, or scores a square hit.

My Masai friend, Masaka, told me of one such incident he had witnessed somewhere on the Tanganyika side of the Masai reservation. According to Masaka, a male rhino with a fair-to-middling horn charged a big bull elephant, holing him in the belly. The elephant replied by seizing the rhino's neck with his trunk and throwing him, as a lion throws a Cape buffalo. Then he double-holed the rhino with his seven-foot tusks and finished him off by stamping on his head. There were no Tembo-style funeral rites for the dead rhino: the elephant moved away, rumbling to himself indignantly and bleeding from the hole in his belly.

Cape buffaloes and other herbivores give the erratic rhino a fairly wide berth; but lions, the only carnivores large enough to try it, are alleged to have fought and even killed full-grown rhinos. Some of those reports may have been inspired by the sight of lions feasting on a poacher-killed rhino, and some may have involved lions caught by a mother rhino while trying to snatch her baby. Even hunting as a pack, lions are just about at their limit when they tackle Cape buffaloes, some of which are only half the weight of black rhinos. Unless really crazed by hunger or the sort of mania that

drove the Kimaa lion to attack an iron roof, they are wise enough to seek out smaller prey.

Kifaru's only real enemy is, of course, man. His only real friend is the tick-bird. When the busy birds spot approaching hunters, they flap about and squawk their insistent "Chirrr! Chirrr!" to alert the nearsighted rhino. If he is fast asleep—and rhinos sleep like stone sphinxes—the birds persist frantically. Their egret "assistants," who sit upon the rhino's back looking decorative, or dart about snapping up flies, prudently depart at the first sign of trouble.

The tick-bird's reward consists of warble-fly larvae plucked from suppurating boils which he lances with his beak, drinking off the puss, and ticks the size of kidney beans which he picks interminably from the deep folds and wrinkles of Kifaru's skin. The skin is thick but sensitive, like the elephant's, and the rhino feels the pain of the surgeon's beak. He never protests, preferring it to the constant torture of the parasites, and dimly realizing, perhaps, the safety value of his conscientious sentinels.

The tick-birds may sound off, and rightly, when another rhino is approaching. Hearing the first one's downwind movements, the second one may charge hysterically; the first, suddenly alerted, then may make his own frantic charge at the other. Raising the usual cloud of dust, they gallop toward each other while you grit your teeth, watching and waiting for the horrible collision—but it almost never comes. The furious-looking pair usually gallop past each other, having mutually misjudged their angles, and then go wandering off in opposite directions to browse in the bush. When their aim is better or they make compensating errors, they screech to a halt as soon as they get within twenty feet and go their separate ways, once again trying to look as though nothing at all had happened. Each may have his own marked-off territory, but they stage no serious brawls when territorial borders are invaded.

Attempting to explain Kifaru's strange outlook on real estate, the Azande tribesmen blame it on the same brush fire that sent the first hippo diving into the water. The singed rhinos fled by land, led by the hard-galloping chieftain of their tribe. Once they had made it to safety, the rhino leader advised his warriors to build a wall by depositing their dung at designated sites along their daily routes and wetting it down with urine as termites glue their masonry with saliva. When the next fire came, he explained, the entire tribe could safely hide behind the wall of heaped-up rhino dung.

I hate to spoil a good story, but alas, there is no Great Wall of Africa. The rhino visits and revisits his own droppings, sometimes building sizable mounds to mark out the borders of his territory; but from time to time, he breaks up the droppings with his hind feet, like a dog, and pokes and sniffs among them. Scientists have advanced conflicting explanations—that the rhino is trying to publicize his presence, that the rhino is trying to mask his identity—and observing natives also disagree. Tales of the northern Congo claim that Kifaru is searching through the dung for his long-lost needle, suspecting that he might have swallowed it; while legends of the south maintain that he is checking to determine whether "all the thorns have come out of his brain."

I doubt if anyone will ever figure out Kifaru's exact motive, if he has one, but the native explanations have some special interest of their own. "Needles" or needlelike thorns play a role in most rhino legends because the black rhino actually eats them. While nipping off some three bushels of leaves and twigs every day, he ingests a large number of vicious, flesh-ripping thorns. They never seem to bother him at all. Appallingly, he eats the fat thorny leaves of euphorbia bushes whose acrid, milky-looking sap blisters human skin; and he even dines on fallen branches of the candelabra tree, a species of euphorbia whose juice is used by East African tribesmen to poison arrows which they use to hunt . . . rhinoceroses. While toxic enough if it gets into his bloodstream, Kifaru's cast-iron stomach can digest the poisonous euphorbia; in fact, it forms the major part of his diet in regions where it is used also to kill him.

In lightly hunted areas, game preserves, and national parks, rhinos browse during daylight hours, trotting across fairly open country as they wander in and out of trouble. Where hunting has been very heavy, they feed from late afternoon or evening until early morning, hiding out at other times in special retreats which the natives like to call "rhino houses." Each rhino breaks away or pushes back stems and branches in the denser parts of the thickets, clearing a space some fifteen or twenty feet in diameter with a hollowed place at the center where he rolls during wet weather.

While he is sleeping in his house, an adept stalker can approach close enough to jab Kifaru with a poisoned spear or put the muzzle of a gun to his very ear. But if there are tickbirds present, they sound the alarm, even beating themselves against the sleeping rhino's head if they have to. Kifaru then

rushes out of his house, if he awakens in time, to gallop off in terror through the bushes.

If the retreating rhino runs over a hunter, he has allegedly "charged" at his "victim." If a rifle bullet wounds him, he may rush toward the hunter but he still isn't "charging": he is dazed and confused by the shock. If, however, the hunter places a quick-killing shot in eye, ear, or temple, the rhino literally drops in his tracks; he never falls on his side like most dying animals but sinks down with head between his outstretched forelegs, looking as though he had suddenly gone to sleep.

Left undisturbed, the rhino wakes up by dusk or by late evening if the sky is overcast, and goes trotting down a well-worn path to his stream or mudhole, nipping a few thorny tidbits along the way. After a good drink and a soothing roll in the mud, he takes another beaten path to his favorite feeding ground in more exposed country. There he browses, digs for roots with his front horn, and makes his faithful contributions to the rhino tribe's legendary great wall. As morning comes, he sets out toward the water on another of his intersecting paths, takes another drink, and goes home through the thorny labyrinth to sleep away another day.

When he meets a second rhino, they may make a few sham charges; then, if they know each other fairly well, the pair may touch or even rub noses before trotting off in opposite directions. That is just about the limit of Kifaru's normal social life, except when rhino cows come into season.

There is no fixed time of the year, nor any fixed time of night or day, for mating. When nubile cows are anywhere in the neighborhood, ordinary set routines are abandoned: sniffing the cows' love-perfume from distances of more than a mile, bulls sleep and browse less, roaming farther from their customary feeding grounds and, very often, getting into trouble with the native or white population of neighboring settlements. If the cow rhino voices her alluring mating call, a falsetto "Wheeee! Wheeee!" bulls go crashing through the thickets, snorting as they try to find her.

If a bull rhino meets a well-seasoned cow who is strolling all alone, their courtship antics begin. If, however, she is accompanied by her calf—which she cares for devotedly until it is almost as big as she is—the calf, large or small, male or female, shows its own devotion to its mother by attempting to defend her from the would-be lover. The bull retreats repeatedly as the valiant calf charges; he knows that the cow her-

self will attack, and attack in earnest, if he tries to harm her baby. The comedy continues until the cow manages to calm the calf, or the calf decides on his own that the suitor means no harm.

After accepting the situation, the calf trails along but ignores the subsequent proceedings. Other animals, however, seem to take a special interest in the noisily prolonged rhino courtship demonstrations and matings. Gnus, who are fanatically curious about anything, are the most dedicated animal voyeurs; but elephants, Cape buffaloes, hyenas, baboons, and human hunters may look on from a distance with comically absorbed expressions. The preoccupied rhinos generally ignore them.

The cow rhino walks, walks, and walks, with the bull trotting close behind her. When she urinates, as a rhino cow in estrus does very frequently, he sniffs appreciatively and raises his neck, pointing his front horn toward the heavens while curling his prehensile upper lip in a tough-looking snarl. From time to time, as he follows, he may move up and jab her in the ribs with his horn; frequently they stop and face each other, playfully jousting with their horns or tenderly butting heads.

After a while, the bull advances toward the cow with a curious gait, holding his front legs rigid and dragging his hind legs along the ground, one after the other. Then he defecates and, as a strange accompaniment, swings his head from side to side like a pendulum, scraping his front horn and hooked upper lip against the ground. Since he may perform the same maneuvers when he nears one of his established dung heaps, it appears to be a generalized display of rhinocerous virility.

The cow looks on, presumably with coy approval. But occasionally and for no apparent reason, she may charge, snorting loudly as she beats or gores him with her front horn. The bull, bruised or bloody, gallops away and then returns to circle cautiously, moving with a mincing trot while swinging his head pendulum-style. After several repetitions, she lets him come and maneuver himself into position, standing on his hind legs with his forefeet resting in the middle of her back. But he doesn't try to copulate, although he may have spent several hours trying to attain his present vantage point. He just stands . . . and stands . . . and stands, doing absolutely nothing, with his front horn and tasseled tail pointing toward the sky.

He may stand for all of ten minutes; then the cow moves

away, dislodging him. Sometimes she will charge, belting him with her horn—who can blame her?—but she usually walks off. The sequence now has to start again, and the bull may mount and stand in his bizarre pose up to fifteen or even twenty times during the next few hours.

When he finally decides for reasons of his own that the proper time has come, he lowers his tasseled tail and inches forward. Then he takes the cow and takes her for half an hour or more, while she squeals periodically. Any poachers within earshot can approach at their leisure.

She walks away at last, dislodging the bull, and both browse ravenously. Sometimes she lies down very briefly and the bull lies down beside her. They look like a real married couple, but their paired life may last no more than a few hours, depending on the cow rhino's whims. Unlike the sentimental elephants who engage in long-term marriages, monogamous or polygamous, rhinos seem to favor free love. Although they may accept the same bull for several days or, rarely, several weeks, cows sometimes seek and accept two or three partners during a single day.

If two or more bulls contend at the same time for the rhino cow's favors, the candidates strike pugnacious-looking attitudes—upper lip curled in a snarl and ears flattened—but they rarely strike each other. Instead they engage in sham charges, threaten with half-snorting, half-shrieking cries, drag themselves around with stiffened legs, defecating, and either swing their heads like pendulums or jerk them up and down. Bulls rarely gore each other, as a cow may gore a bull, but they sometimes joust with the front horns, attempting to club the side of the head. One of them eventually decides to retreat, or while the so-called battle goes on between two bulls, the cow may sneak off with a third one.

The result of all these rhino high jinx comes some eighteen months later, after a gestation period longer than that of any animal except elephants. The single black rhino calf, some two-and-a-half feet tall and weighing about seventy pounds, is a playful somewhat coltish little fellow who trots along behind his attentive mother; while the white rhino baby always walks before her, nudged and guided by her front horn.

Whichever species they belong to, rhino babies show the same extraordinary and unique trait: they are the only young animals in Africa who will fight courageously, and fight to the death if they have to, in defense of their mothers. Even a three-foot-high rhino calf will charge repeatedly at a gang of native poachers to protect the arrow-studded body of his

dead mother. The baby must be killed or captured before the poachers can approach and cut away the "monster's" coveted horns.

Unlike ivory, rhino horn is apt to crumble when carved and has no real beauty or utility. But, paradoxically, it commands a far higher price—about $15 per pound at African ports of exit. That figure is multiplied many times over in the Orient and Arabia, where dealers may realize between $1500 and $5000 from the sale of a single horn. They usually break it up into gravel-size pieces for sale to superstitious nitwits who believe that it has medical or aphrodisiac powers.

Because the rhino mounts his mate so often and maintains his position for an extended period, wistful Asiatic watchers have believed for ages that ingesting rhino horn—a blatant symbol of the animal's virility—will magically stimulate the user to unparalleled performance with wife or harem. Some aging lechers drink the powdered horn in their wine; others take a piece of horn a square inch in diameter, grind it to a powder, put the powder in a sort of muslin tea bag, and boil it in a cup of water. They drink the wine or dark-brown rhino-horn tea, and many feel a surge of sexual desire, just as nitwits and neurotics of the Western world can obtain relief from imaginary ills by gulping down placebos or sugar pills prescribed to humor them. The effect is purely psychological, for the rhino horn itself has no more aphrodisiac power than ground-up human hair or toenails.

Complete horns with carefully scooped-out centers are purchased by those who are wealthy and fatuous enough to pay several thousand dollars for a "magic drinking cup." According to an old superstition, should an enemy slip some poison into the owner's rice wine or tea, the lethal drink either froths out of the rhino horn or the horn itself flies to pieces. Presumably, disappointed clients don't complain.

Rhino hoofs, hide, hair, bones, blood, viscera, and even urine all have their own pseudo-medical, magical, or religious uses among the varying peoples of southern and eastern Asia. To obtain or profit from the sale of these repulsive medicines and talismans, Orientals have hunted their three native species to the point of near-extinction, beating them out of the bush with lines of howdah-bearing elephants or resorting to their own varieties of poisons, pits, and snares. There are today an estimated 40 Javan rhinos left, at most 170 Sumatrans, and about 600 Great Indian Rhinoceroses in Northeastern India and Nepal. Most of the surviving rhinos dwell in

sanctuaries or reserves, but government officials find it very difficult to protect the animals from poachers who will risk life imprisonment or a game warden's bullet to obtain and sell the immensely profitable horn.

Several Asiatic governments, it must be said, set a very poor example to their people. In recent years, with the sanction of official permits from high-level Burmese officials, rhinos have been killed "for medicinal purposes," and although the living animals are "protected by law," the open sale of rhino blood and parts is absolutely and absurdly legal. In Nepal, where less than 200 Great Indian Rhinoceroses dwell in the Rapti Valley region and wardens have orders to shoot poachers on sight, King Mahendra organized a special hunting expedition just a few years ago, so that he might make an offering of rhino blood in memory of his father, King Tribhuvan. Where the king disregards the law, it must be difficult to preach conservation to the people.

To supply the Orient with fake aphrodisiacs and nostrums, and to a much smaller extent for locally used meat and hides, Africa's white rhinos were slaughtered without mercy. They were approached with relative ease on the open grassy plains, and since white rhino cows grow longer horns than the bulls, the cows were singled out for slaughter—a particularly disastrous practice with a slow-reproducing species. In the north, there are probably about 400 white rhinos in the Congo, where they have little chance for long-term survival, and some 600 in Sudan, where they are now fairly well-protected. There are another 1000 in South Africa, where their numbers are increasing due to the very strict conservation laws and meticulous enforcement.

Poor blundering Kifaru, hiding out in his beloved thickets, is seemingly far from extinction: there are an estimated 10,000 to 13,000 black rhinos left, most of them living in national parks and game preserves. That sounds like a safe, even impressive figure, but the rate of attrition keeps increasing as the money-minded poachers swarm into so-called sanctuaries with their rifles, snares, and poison arrows. Even the Masai, tragically corrupted with the rest, are now spearing *e-muny*, as they call the black rhino. They claim "self-defense" but their real motive is the money or, God help them, the illegal drugs they can obtain from the sale of the horns.

Every year poachers kill some 20 per cent of Africa's living black rhinos—and the rhino's birth rate is a scant 5 per cent. The carnage could be reduced if collective fines were imposed on tribesmen living in heavily poached areas and a

joint Oriental-African embargo passed against the rhino-horn traffic, forbidding any and all sales. Instead, rhino horn is auctioned off legally in Mombasa and legally imported in the East where, within twenty years or so, Africa's last black rhino will wind up as magic powder in a little muslin bag.

Meanwhile, Western hunters who deplore the Easterners' superstitious follies are attempting to enhance their own virility by killing and decapitating rhinos. Those who fail for some reason or another to obtain the impressive-looking trophy on their own, buy a rhino head in Nairobi or Arusha taxidermists' shops to bring home and palm off as their personal kill. More ambitious hunters—the real "barfly sportsmen"—buy their record or near-record heads on the sly.

Another even more obnoxious token of virility is manufactured from the rhino's penis. Hung in the hot sun with a three-pound weight suspended from the end, it is dried, stretched, trimmed, and polished into a vicious three-foot *sjambok;* a single blow from such a whip will lay a man's flesh open to the bone. Substitutes made from hippo hide are not supposed to be as tough and springy. They also lack, I presume, the same masculine mystique.

Kifaru's thick but soft hide, easily penetrated by a bullet or hunting knife, becomes extremely hard and durable when dried. Worth about ten pence a pound, it has been used for everything from native shields to table tops, sandal soles, and chair seats. The black rhino's flesh has never been too popular with the natives, since he never has any fat and his meat is rather dry. His hams have been praised, however, by some enthusiastic game gourmets; and at least one of them, a certain Dr. Kolb, was fanatically devoted to his liver. Teddy Roosevelt, America's first conservation-minded president, described in his book *African Game Trails* how Dr. Kolb, hunting "north of Kenia," had killed scores of rhinos for their livers and was then charged and killed by a wounded cow who "thrust her horn right through the middle of his body." Hopefully, she got him in the liver.

Teddy himself, who was hunting museum specimens, pronounced the flesh of the white rhino to be "excellent," especially the hump on the withers. African natives agreed, savoring the huge quantities of fat which the white rhino lays on from March through August when his flesh assumes a fine, almost beefy flavor. They ate all of Abu-Garn's meat, especially relishing the hump which was cut out and cooked, skin and all, in an earthen barbecue pit.

To kill black and white rhinos, natives formerly employed

all of their traditional methods: pits, snares, poison arrows, and the rest. Sudan's Hamram Arabs used to hunt rhinos as they hunted elephants—mounted on horses and armed with their two-handed broadswords. Kifaru was, however, much more difficult to hamstring. Smaller and able to maneuver with more agility than the giant elephant, his greater speed rivaled that of their finest horses; and since, unlike the elephant, he can keep on the move with one disabled leg, the tendons of both of his hind legs had to be sliced through. The heavier and slower white rhino—who carried larger and more lucrative horns—was easier to kill.

Early European hunters concentrated on the white rhino for the same reasons. Although mounted on horseback like the half-breed Sudanese Arabs, they needed less skill and daring, since they used modern rifles that killed at a distance. Frederick Courteney Selous, a turn-of-the-century professional who was generally accepted as "the greatest of the world's big-game hunters," described his technique with the vulnerable white rhinos:

> They are, as a rule, very easy to shoot on horseback, as, if one gallops a little in front of and on one side of them, they will hold their course, and come sailing past, offering a magnificent broadside shot, while under similar circumstances a prehensile-lipped rhinoceros will usually swerve away in such a manner as only to present his hind-quarters for a shot.

Despite Kifaru's elementary caution, he was still easy game for rifle-bearing mounted hunters. Selous, the top all-around professional of his era, ranked the black rhino at the bottom of his Big Five, while placing the lion at the top. British East Africa's Lieutenant-Governor Jackson, one of the most proficient contemporary amateurs, also ranked the rhino last, giving his first-place vote to the Cape buffalo. But Sir Samuel Baker—possibly crazed by too many bowls of hippo soup—pronounced the black rhino to be more dangerous than the Cape buffalo or lion.

Even Teddy Roosevelt, a self-admitted novice on the East African savannahs, knew better. He commented tactfully in *African Game Trails* that Sir Samuel had "less experience" than the other big-name, big-game hunters. Then Teddy went on to cast his own first-place ballot for the lion. Sensibly, he judged by results rather than size or appearance. As he explained it:

> . . . during the last three or four years, in German and British East Africa and Uganda, over fifty white men have been killed or mauled by lions, buffaloes, elephants, and rhinos; and the lions have much the largest list of victims to their credit. In Nairobi church-yard I was shown the graves of seven men who had been killed by lions, and of one who had been killed by a rhino.

Kifaru improved his score a few years later, when he killed the first American White Hunter, Charles Cottar, a friend of Teddy Roosevelt's. Since then, he has managed to kill an occasional hunter or poacher, while they have managed on their own part to kill some hundred thousand black rhinos. Native poachers armed with modern weapons do the grand-scale killing, as they do with all of Africa's game, while trophy-minded tourists and their guides probably account for no more than two hundred black rhinos every year. But a single white man, the well-known and aptly named professsional, John A. Hunter, killed over a thousand black rhinos in little more than two years—between August, 1944, and December, 1946—with the aid of only three native trackers.

Hunter was far from an old-time profit-minded adventurer. He was a conscientious, responsible veteran in the service of the Kenya Game Department, which had asked him to conduct what he called "the biggest rhino hunt in history" in the Makueni area of the Machakos District. The Wakamba tribe, whose population had already multiplied at least sixfold since the British colonial administration had supplied modern health services and stopped the Masai from killing them, was demanding additional land for settlement.

Hunter, who was not only a crack shot but a fairly astute observer of animal behavior, went into the dense thornbush and acacia thickets where the rhino population had taken refuge. It was far more dangerous work than trophy hunting—almost always practiced where the cover is lighter so that the "sportsmen" can select the finest heads—but he was able, despite the tick-birds whom he called "feathered spies," to carry out his orders. He told the story of that East African pogrom in his popular book *Hunter*, and told it without bravado, comparing Hollywood's so-called horned fury to "an irritable, shortsighted old colonel who suddenly finds a trespasser in his garden."

Afterwards, when thornbush, acacia, and every other living thing was cleared away by labor gangs, the land, "as bare as a polished table," was turned over to the Wakamba for exten-

sive cultivation. By now it is probably worthless, due to the severe soil erosion that usually accompanies such complete destruction of the natural ground cover.

Looking back on his thousand dead rhinos, Hunter himself commented: "Is it worth killing off these strange and marvelous animals just to clear a few more acres for a people that are ever on the increase? I do not know. But I know this. The time will come when there is no more land to be cleared. What will be done then?"

The timid disposition of the rhino makes him fear, and fear deeply, the very objects that he wants to examine. He hesitates, agonized, while the two conflicting instincts boil within him. Usually he runs away, spooked like a giant cat, but sometimes rushes forward to investigate with the world's most farcical display of bluff, noise, wasted energy, and sheer ineptitude: the notorious rhino charge.

Photo Satour

Kifaru's only real enemy is, of course, man. His only real friend is the tick-bird. When the busy birds spot approaching hunters, they flap about and squawk to alert the nearsighted rhino.

Designed by nature as a fish-eating, crab-eating, garbage-eating scavenger, this decrepit hobo of the riverbanks and lakesides has become, despite himself, Africa's Public Enemy Number One.

Top and left: