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PRIVATE GAME RESERVE



## THE FIRST ZEBRA



**In the beginning**, when all was new on Earth, the animals were all similar - none having special horns or colourful coats. The Creator was busy finishing off his great work and fashioned a multitude of horns of various sizes and shapes and coats of many types and colours. When he had finished, he left them in a cave close to the shores of a great lake.

The Creator then sent a message to all the animals living on the grassy plains that they should go to the cave the next morning and select the horns and coats that they thought would suit them best. This caused a great flurry of excitement and anticipation, as the animals were all eager to see what the Creator had made for them.

All, except the Zebra, whose only concern in life was food. In fact, it was well known among the other animals that Zebra was a glutton. When all the other animals moved off towards the lake at first light, Zebra did not join them. If he was going to take such a long walk, he was going to have a good breakfast of luscious grass, and he could not see why all the other animals were so carried away with the idea of horns and coats. All the other animals urged him to hurry along to the cave. Zebra muttered that he would follow in due course, when he had finished his breakfast. This was done through a mouthful of grass, so the other animals left the ill-mannered Zebra in disgust.

Several hours later Zebra decided that he had had his fill and slowly sauntered off towards the lake, following a broad trail left by the other animals. As Zebra neared the lake, some of the animals were returning to the plains and Zebra was amazed by their change in appearance. Elephant had chosen a rather drab grey coat but set this off with a magnificent pair of ivory tusks. Lion had chosen a sleek dusky coat with a regal mane of long black hair. Sable had a glossy black coat and vicious sweeping horns.

One by one Zebra passed all the animals in their brand new finery. Finally, just as he was about to enter the cave, Zebra passed Rhinoceros. Unfortunately Rhino is very near-sighted, he had chosen a coat several sizes too large and it looked rather baggy on him. Also, he had chosen two horns that were not the same size and stuck them on his nose. All in all, Rhino looked rather odd, but he seemed very pleased with himself.

When Zebra went into the cave, the only coat left was a boldly striped black and white one and he could not find any horns at all. After such a long walk, Zebra was feeling quite hungry again, so he quickly tried on the remaining coat. This strange black and white coat did fit very well, and as his belly was rumbling, he did not care that it looked different, nor did he mind that no horns were left over for him.

Meanwhile, back on the plains, all the other animals were admiring each other in their brand new finery. When Zebra got back to the plains, he ignored all the others and just put his head down and started chomping away at his lunch. The other animals soon noticed the startling black and white coat, so they greeted Zebra with jeers and laughter.

"Look at the greedy Zebra in his funny new coat and without any horns!" cried the Duiker scornfully. Soon all the other animals had taken up the chorus.

Zebra did not care. What did horns matter, when all that really counted was plenty of tender green grass to eat whenever he wanted? To this day Zebra has not needed horns, but he is always fat and glossy in his peculiar black and white coat.



The **END**

