

# Great African Storybook

*Stories from the African Wilderness  
For children of all ages*



*Written by Leigh Kemp  
Inspired by Africa*

## **A Place Called Africa**

There is a wonderful place called Africa. It is a place of rolling plains and languid rivers, haunting mountains and ancient deserts – and the greatest array of animals on earth. It is also the place where all creatures on earth were born.

Africa is the place of the first and the last  
It is a place of the present and the past  
Aardvark to zebra and all in between  
Where all forms of beauty can be seen

Africa is the place where all life began  
From the lion pride to the hyena clan  
The denizens of mountains and lakes  
And flying birds and slithering snakes

And this Africa is a place of wonderful stories told through the centuries – and new stories that are born in each moment .....

## **The Great African Storybook**

The Storybook is a collection of stories, rhymes and general doodling's written from a lifetime of observing the natural world. The stories are written for children of all ages, some with a message, some simply to crack a smile and others just plain crazy

The Story is in three parts

**Part 1: Great African Storybook – stories and rhymes Inspired by Africa**

**Part 2: Aardvark is First – animal fun with words**

**Part 3: Great Kruger Storybook – fun in the Greater Kruger Park**

## **Part 1: The Great African Storybook**

### **In Praise of Lion – why warthog kneels down to eat**

The proud and arrogant lion told all the animals to show him respect and to shower him with praise at all times. Because lion was so powerful the animals dared not argue.

All the animals thought it best to submit to lion's wants and needs, all except warthog that is who merely carried on with what he always did.

One day lion was walking on the plain when he noticed that warthog barely even looked at him. Lion was very angry and ran to warthog and caught him. Warthog was very scared and promised to go down on his knees many times a day in praise of lion. Happy that he had taught warthog a lesson lion let him go.

But warthog was not happy with the idea of praising lion so many times a day, but he was nervous of what would happen if he refused, so he spent some time thinking what to do. One day as warthog was kneeling in praise of lion he scented the green grass close to his nose and, without thinking, he began to eat. So delicious was the grass that he forgot what he was supposed to be doing.

Lion happened to walk passed and saw warthog kneeling. He watched him for a long time and satisfied that warthog was indeed keeping his promise he moved on. All the time that he was kneeling warthog had been munching on the delicious grass. When he looked up he saw lion walking in the distance and realised that lion had been fooled into thinking warthog was praising him.

Ever since that day warthog has kneeled down to eat, happy in the knowledge that he is fooling lion.

Even today, when lion walks by, all the animals stand to attention and admire him and will very often snort their praises. When lion comes in to drink at a waterhole the other animals will move away and let him drink alone – all except warthog who happily carries on eating on his bended knees.

*A lesson from warthog: Do not be flattered by praise for there are often ulterior motives for people praising you. It is not through respect, but often to deceive.*

## **Fish Eagle and Hyena – why hyena wanders around at night**

Every day the fish eagle would sit in the tree tops and shout arrogantly at all the other animals walking passed, and in particular the hyena when hyena was on his cleaning rounds.

'I can't stand the smell of you. Go away you smelly creature' the eagle would say to hyena. Hyena ignored the eagle and continued to clean but after a time he became irritated and angry at the fish eagle's constant insults. After speaking to his friends it was decided that hyena would stop cleaning in the fish eagle's area.

After some days the eagle wondered why his home had begun to smell bad. He looked down and saw rubbish piled up all around.

'Where are the cleaners' he shouted, but everyone ignored him. After much more shouting and insulting, one of the animals reminded him that he had told hyena to go away.

'Well call him back, he needs to do his work' the eagle said arrogantly, but the others ignored him.

As the smell worsened the eagle moved his perch higher up the tree and as each day passed, and the smell got worse, the eagle had to move higher and higher until he could go no more.

The eagle had been taught a lesson but the smell was also affecting the other animals in the vicinity so they called a meeting where, after great debate, hyena agreed to clean up the area around the eagle's home. It was decided that he would do it at night to stop the insults from the eagle.

Hyena returned to his cleaning duties and as time passed all was forgotten, but to this day eagle still spends his days in the tops of the trees cursing the hyena. In his arrogance he has not noticed what hyena has done. But hyena does not hear the curses anymore for he is usually sleeping during the day after a hard night's work.

*Lesson from the story: Do not insult others because you think they are inferior to you – especially if they are helping you - for your personal space will become contaminated and you will have to move further and further away to avoid the smell.*

## **The Ant Who Roared**

The lion was boasting to all the other animals that he had the loudest roar, and not one dared to disagree. Then as lion was about to demonstrate his power a little voice was heard saying "I think maybe I can roar louder than you".

It took a while for the animals to realise who had said the words that seemed to irritate lion somewhat. It was the little ant, now standing alone in front of the lion, as all the others had backed away.

"You .... ha ha ha ha ha" the lion laughed so loud he almost choked.

The other animals joined in the laughter. When the laughter had died down the ant called all the animals closer and told them that he had a louder roar than lion but that it could not be heard as he did not have lion's huge mouth to carry the roar. If lion would agree then ant would crawl into lion's throat and roar, and then all could hear if his roar was indeed louder than lions.

After some time of thought lion decided to grant ant his request. After all how loud could a tiny ant be? After some discussions it was agreed that ant would climb into lion's ear, as ant said he was afraid lion would swallow him if he went through lion's mouth.

It took a while for ant to climb up to lion's ear, and when he got there he waved to the other animals before entering the huge cavern. The other animals were more amused than convinced at ant's challenge but what none of them knew was that ant had hatched a plan.

As he entered lion's ear ant plucked one of the hairs on the ear and began to use the hair to tickle lion as he moved down towards the ear drum. Lion became very agitated and began to growl in frustration, but ant continued. The closer he got to the eardrum the more he tickled lion. After a while the tickling irritated lion so much that he let out the greatest roar anyone had ever heard. Ant stopped the tickling and quickly made his way outside.

He stood on lion's ear and waved at the other animals for he knew they had never heard such a mighty roar. The animals were amazed, and as for lion, he was so relieved that the irritation in his ear was gone that he just smiled happily.

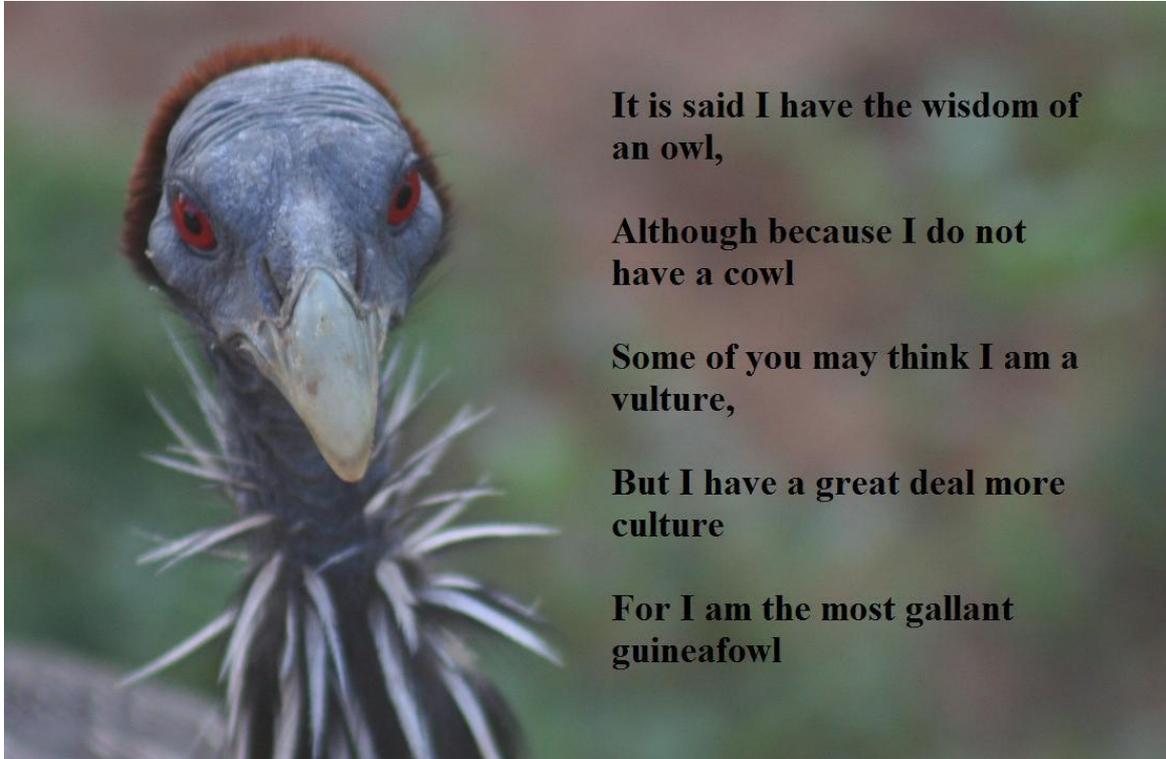
Ant climbed down and went about his chores happily, and even today the animals that heard him roar louder than lion are wary of getting too close to him. And as for lion, he can still be heard roaming the plains trying to roar as loud as he can so as to challenge ant one day again.

Lesson: You don't have to be strong to be powerful.

***How the story formed:*** It is said that an ant can drive an elephant insane if it crawls up the elephant's trunk. One day I was watching a lion becoming very irritated at a bee that was trying to get to the moisture in the lions nose. The idea of an ant driving a lion insane was born

## **African verse and rhymes**

African verse and rhymes is a collection of fun writings taken from every-day life and aims to bring a smile to readers' faces



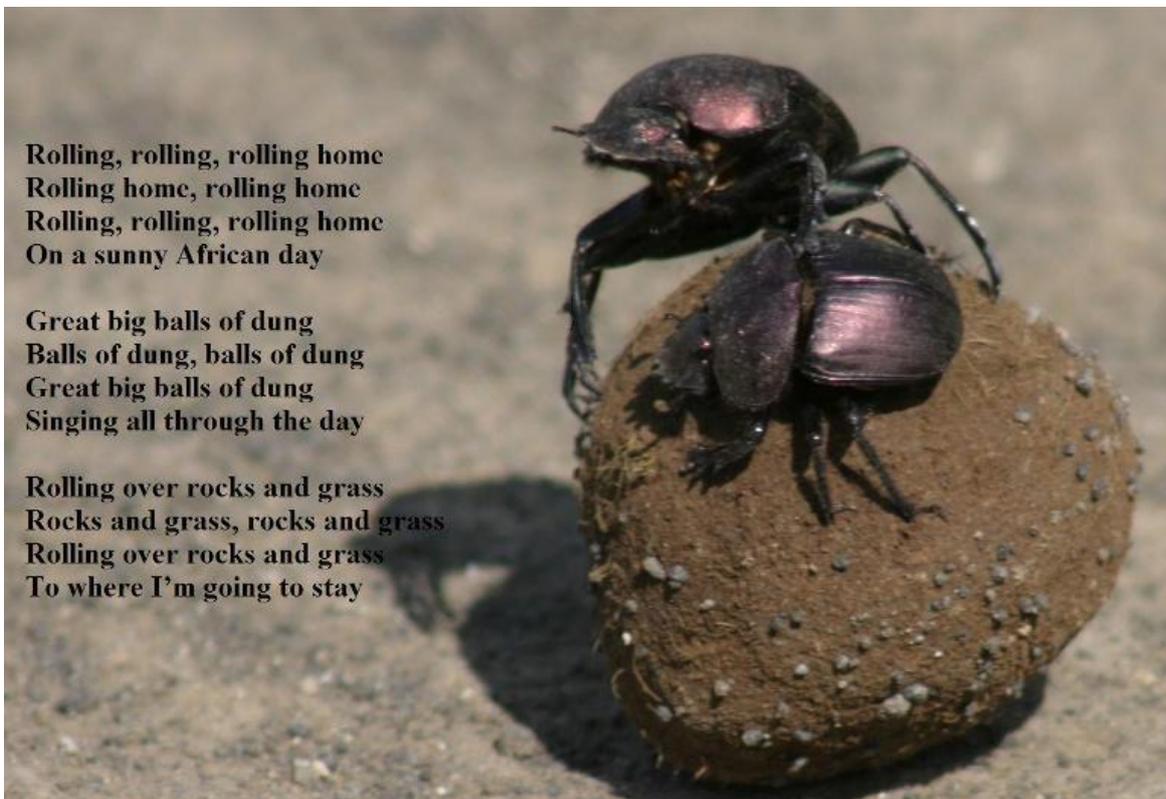
**It is said I have the wisdom of  
an owl,**

**Although because I do not  
have a cowl**

**Some of you may think I am a  
vulture,**

**But I have a great deal more  
culture**

**For I am the most gallant  
guineafowl**



**Rolling, rolling, rolling home  
Rolling home, rolling home  
Rolling, rolling, rolling home  
On a sunny African day**

**Great big balls of dung  
Balls of dung, balls of dung  
Great big balls of dung  
Singing all through the day**

**Rolling over rocks and grass  
Rocks and grass, rocks and grass  
Rolling over rocks and grass  
To where I'm going to stay**

## **Man and the wilderness – a selection of stories of man's effect on the wilderness**

### **The Hole in the Ozone**

All creatures were complaining about the heat  
And the hot ground that was burning their feet  
It was never like this before humans came along  
Why did they always seem to do things wrong

It was the humans who put the hole in the ozone  
Making all the wild creatures curse and moan  
For the fierce sun beat down with no remorse  
But humans said it was only the season's course

The animals decided to gather for a big debate  
To discuss how to alter their looming fate  
The speeches went on long into the night  
But by morning there was no solution in sight

*Finally elephant rose and began to speak*

'This is really not the place to curse and moan  
About the big human-made hole in the ozone  
Instead it is time for us all to take a stand  
For humans never asked to settle our land  
It is time to take action and fight the curse  
Before the situation becomes much worse  
So let us plan and decide what we can do  
Before humans ensure our time is through'

The animals all nodded and generally agreed  
That a plan had to be hatched at great speed  
Hyena mentioned he could carry off their things  
And bee said he could manufacture more stings  
While mosquito said he would spread malaria  
Through each and every human inhabited area  
But it was decided that would not be enough  
And each one of them would have to be tough

For all agreed humans were very intrusive  
And wanted the whole earth to be exclusive  
They wondered how best to deal with a creature  
That seemed to not have any positive feature

None of them knew what they wanted to achieve  
Except wanting the wasteful humans to leave  
Someone suggested they simply ask them to go  
'Let's just ask the humans to show compassion  
And keep us out their commerce and fashion  
We will simply ask them to leave our place

And go and live in and abuse their own space'  
But most figured this idea to be mostly in vain  
For greed had already driven the humans insane

But while the animals were trying to be stealthy  
The humans divided up the land for the wealthy  
And said it was to protect for future generations  
Selling the idea in misinformation and incantations

What the future is for the land nobody can tell  
For humans will continue to rape, maim and sell  
So the hole in the ozone will continue to grow  
And the animals will have nowhere else to go

### **Who has the funniest face?**

Warthog was tired of the mean retorts  
About his ugly face and facial warts  
So he called a discussion and debate  
In order that everyone could state  
Who in the whole big animal race  
Had the silliest and funniest face

Wildebeest said it was gangly giraffe  
Whose face made him crack a laugh  
But giraffe said tsessebe was the one  
With a funny face second to none  
So long into the night they debated  
And all the animals' faces were rated

But they all eventually decided to agree  
With the words of the wise chimpanzee  
Who said all creatures find others strange  
For in the animal kingdom there is a range  
Of faces that are hilarious to the others  
However all are loved by their mothers

Warthog was happy with the explanation  
Hoping others would lose the inclination  
To tease and taunt and make him unhappy  
All he wanted to be was a normal chappy  
So next you think you see a funny face  
Remember it is beautiful in another place

### **The magic horse and the angry suricate**

There was once a magic horse  
Black and white stripes of course  
He used to do many great tricks  
With sand and grass and sticks

Once he put his hoof in his hat  
And pulled out an angry suricate  
Who launched into a vicious attack  
So horse decided to put him back

Later horse pulled out a rabbit  
As is a magicians usual habit  
But the rabbit would not perform  
Which was really not the norm

Rabbit seemed to be distracted  
And his face was all contracted  
It was if he had been in a spat  
Oh dear  
The angry suricate was still in the hat

### **When you smile**

When you smile the world smiles too!  
This may be true but often a smile is taken as something other than friendly.

When zebra smiles  
The world smiles too  
When wildebeest smiles  
The world sniggers  
When lion smiles  
The world is grateful  
But when hyena smiles  
The world wonders why

People will always have their own interpretation of why you are smiling so just go ahead and smile.

### **What is that I hear**

What is that sound I hear  
Is it very far or is it near  
Is it the buzz of the bees  
Or the flight of the fleas  
Maybe the dance of a deer  
It is still not very clear!

What is that sound I hear  
Is it a laugh or is it a cheer  
Carried on a warm breeze  
Whispering to the trees  
Is it something to fear  
It does sound very austere

Oh dear I know what it is I hear  
It has become all too clear  
Everyone run for your lives  
Or hide before no one survives  
Elephant is on bended knees  
Trying hard to stop a sneeze

## **Part 2: Aardvark is First**

**Aardvark is First is a collection of fun rhymes and verses that show the fun side of the English language – allowing kids to learn language through rhyming verse**

### **Aardvark is first of all words**

Who chose beasts by name  
And gave aardvark his fame  
Who selected aardwolf next  
Be it only in matters of text

Before the snakes and tall trees  
And creatures of the seven seas  
Before the light of the new day  
And all those that pass its way  
Before all beasts in great herds  
Aardvark is the first of all words

### **All the animals cursed**

When Aardvark was first  
The other animals cursed  
When Aardwolf was next  
All others were perplexed

How could this really be  
But it was all there to see  
For it is written in words  
For all the bees and birds

There was no reason to dance and sing  
If aardvark was really first in everything  
So a delegation was sent to lion to hear  
If man's alphabet was anything to fear

Lion had to be careful with what he said  
For he did not want them to be misled  
He knew it was man who was to blame  
For making him king of beasts in name

He pondered a while before he spoke  
Worried at what his words might stoke  
He said whether they were wild or tame  
All creatures on earth were the same

### **How many ways are there to write the sound 'or awe oar'**

#### **Awe or ore**

Lion woke up one day at four  
And decided 'twas time for war  
So he began a lengthy roar  
But instead of been in awe  
His wife told him no more  
And showed him the door  
Because his throat was raw  
He could not ask her what for

#### **A vain lion called Shayne**

The lion celebrated his reign  
With a bottle of champagne  
But it went straight to his brain  
Through his arteries and vein  
And this drove him insane  
So he went on a campaign  
To have himself called Shayne

#### **Don't laugh at hippo's calf**

Hippo dressed her young calf  
And went off to visit giraffe  
But the others began to laugh  
At her bright pink silk scarf  
So she smacked them with her staff

#### **Paws pores – Homophones**

Some words are pronounced the same but are spelt differently and have different meanings – these words are called homophones

Take a moment and pause  
To wonder how dust pours  
Through a lion's huge paws  
Cluttering the minute pores

**Giraffe and gnus**

**Garrulous, guttural and gauche**

Giraffe genuflect  
Gauche are the gnus  
One is spotty in effect  
The other comes in hues

One is cacophonous  
The other is silent  
Both can be obstreperous  
But neither is violent

You cannot say either yomp  
But maybe both galumph  
Or it can be said they clomp  
Surely this is not bumph

Galumph – awkward jump [move in a clumsy, ponderous, or noisy manner]  
Gauche – socially awkward  
Genuflect – bend knees as sign of respect  
Yomp – march with heavy equipment over difficult terrain  
Clomp – To walk heavily and noisily

### **Part 3: The Great Kruger Storybook – Stories from Greater Kruger Park**

#### **Noah's Ark in Kruger**

It is often said that the Kruger Park  
Is so very much like old Noah's Ark  
With wild animals and trees galore  
Who would surely want for more

With names like Skakuza, Shingwedzi and others  
Kruger is a place for all kids, fathers and mothers  
It is a park for all the seasons, cold, heat and rain  
Where nothing can ever be said to be inane

From the north to the south Kruger is paradise  
A place you will want to visit more than twice  
You can have sundowners looking from a ridge  
Or have dinner under the stars at Crocodile Bridge

In Kruger the A to Z of animals is found  
The tall, the short, thin and the round  
Aardvark to Zebra and all in between  
The timid and wise, the scary and mean

There are lions and buffalo and all the Big Five  
But this is not all that brings the Kruger alive  
It is the sunrises and sunsets waking the senses  
And destroying our unnatural human defences

But if the Big Five is all you desire  
Then you will find Kruger to inspire  
But it is better to enjoy all you see  
Every beetle, impala, bird and tree

### **Can I see a Beluga in the Kruger**

A little boy wanted to see a beluga  
So decided to visit the wilds of Kruger  
But when he got there he was upset  
The ranger had not seen a beluga yet

Then when he asked to see a cougar  
The ranger told him not in Kruger  
There were lions and others meaner  
Like the honey badgers and hyena

The little boy learnt all about giraffes  
And heard how the hyena laughs  
He also saw colourful birds on display  
And flowers and trees in vast array

He may not have seen the beluga  
Or the rare and elusive cougar  
But he saw all Africa's creatures  
And the rangers were great teachers

The little boy returned home content  
Knowing his time in Africa well spent  
He did not see what he initially desired  
But what he had seen left him inspired

## **Impala and Earth's Meanest Creature – Is man the protector?**

There was a timid male impala  
From the wild land of Mala Mala  
Who was once chased by a cheetah  
From the neighbouring land Singita  
He ran through the grass and trees  
Dodging the danger with ease

But the bush of the Sabi Sands  
Is not at all like any other lands  
Here is much danger at every turn  
A fact impala would quickly learn  
As he ran he saw a lion and leopard  
Which made him feel less intrepid

Leopard and lion joined the chase  
As impala tried to up his pace  
But lion leopard and cheetah  
Were catching with every meter  
So he tried a change of course  
And his agility gave him force

He galloped across the savannah  
Moving in a very elegant manner  
And with each step he looked back  
But the cats were still on his track  
So he decided to head for the gate  
Hoping that he would not be late

It was already getting quite dark  
When he reached the Kruger Park  
He worried he would be barred  
As he did not have his wild card  
But he was allowed to pass through  
Even stopping to refresh at the loo

The three cats were close behind  
But the gatekeeper was not so kind  
He found them brash and very rude  
And scolded them for their attitude  
He sent them back the way they came  
With advice never to do the same

So impala had escaped certain harm  
Despite there being a deal of alarm  
As he headed on the road to Skakuza  
He realised he was no more the loser  
It was the cats who had not succeeded  
And had their hunt for food impeded

He had temporarily saved his skin  
But the night was quickly closing in  
He heard roars and grunts and growls  
And the screeching of the many owls  
He tried to quicken his pace into a run  
But the bush at night is not much fun

His steps echoed in the closing night  
With each sound he jumped with fright  
Soon he saw a bright glow up ahead  
Where he knew he would find a bed  
But when he got there it was packed  
Now he knew he could be attacked

He had survived the cats of the Sands  
But Kruger is as dangerous as other lands  
And where he thought he would be free  
Great danger lurked behind every tree  
So at Skakuza he hid in the restaurant  
And next day they had impala on croissant