

A COLLECTION OF
STORIES
FROM
WEST AFRICA

Compiled and Illustrated by
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HIPPO, FLY AND SPIDER



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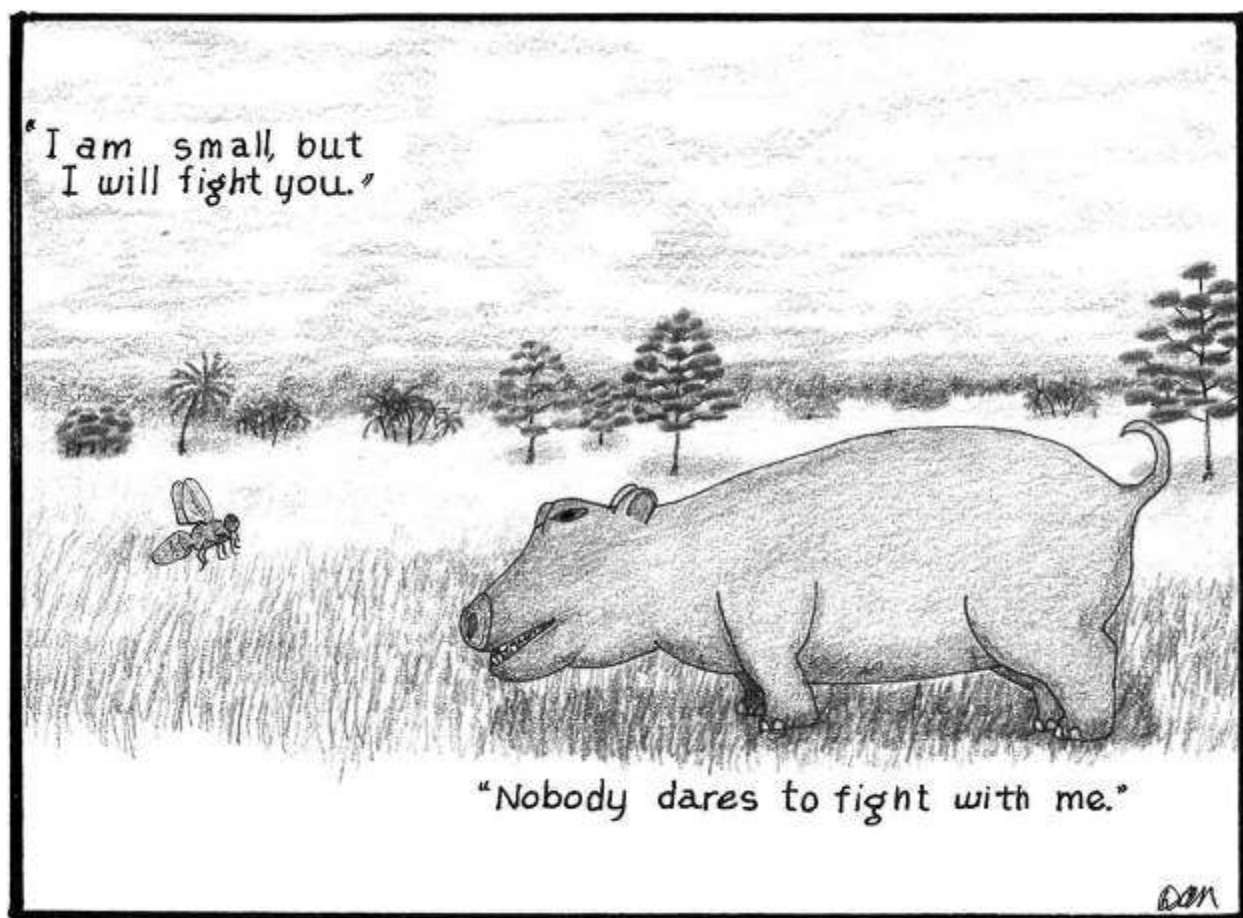
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By Spark Team



HIPPO, FLY AND SPIDER

Note to the reader. Words and phrases typical of West Africa are retained and indicated by italics.

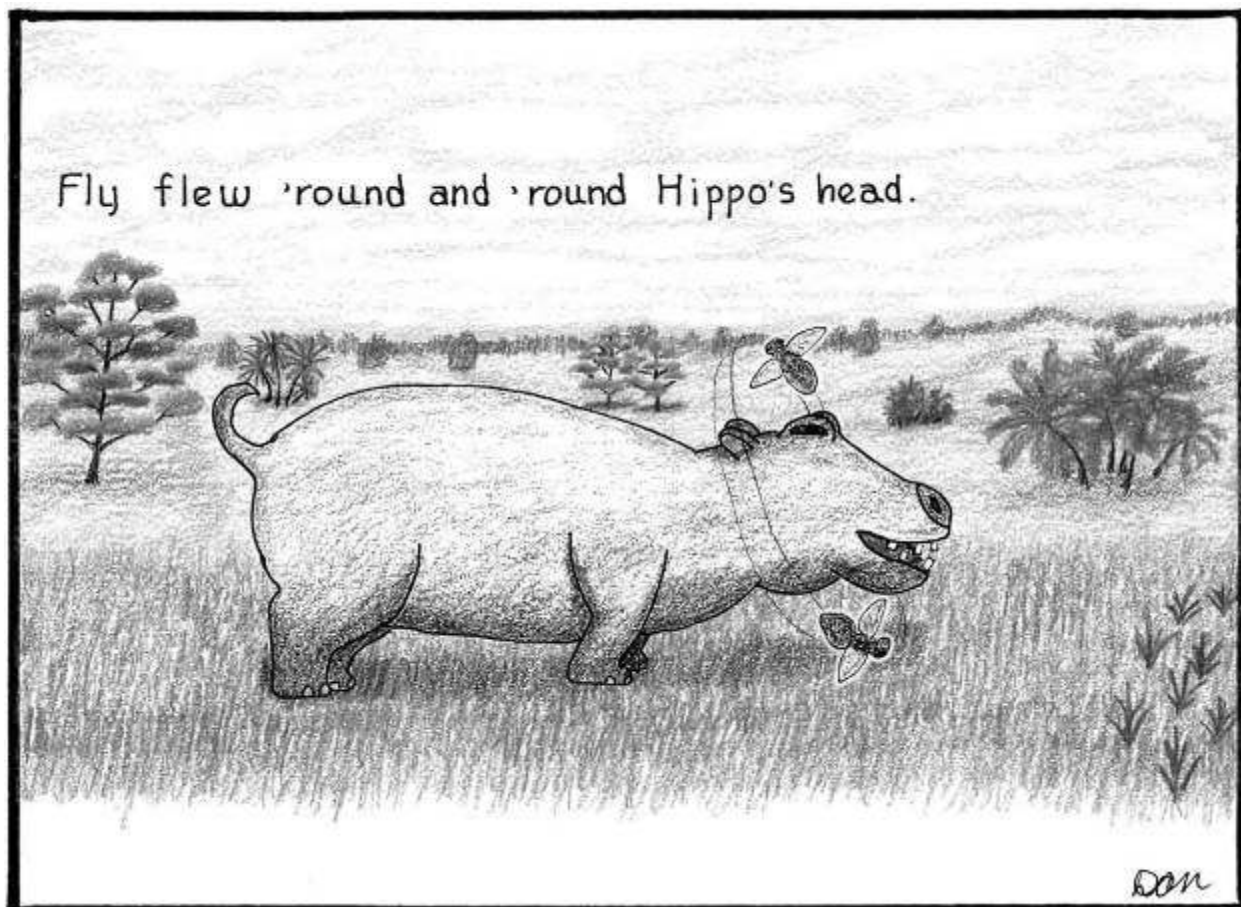
"Well done is better past well said."

This story is about pride - no one can do everything.

"Look at my huge muscles," boasted Hippo. "Look at my large body. I am the strongest animal in the bush. Nobody is *strong past me*."

Hippo was always boasting. "No one in the bush can fight with me," he would say over and over.

All the animals in the bush were tired of Hippo's boasting, but *what to do*?



One day, Fly decided to put a stop to Hippo's talk, talk, talk. He lighted on a leaf near Hippo's ear and said, "I may be small but I will fight you."

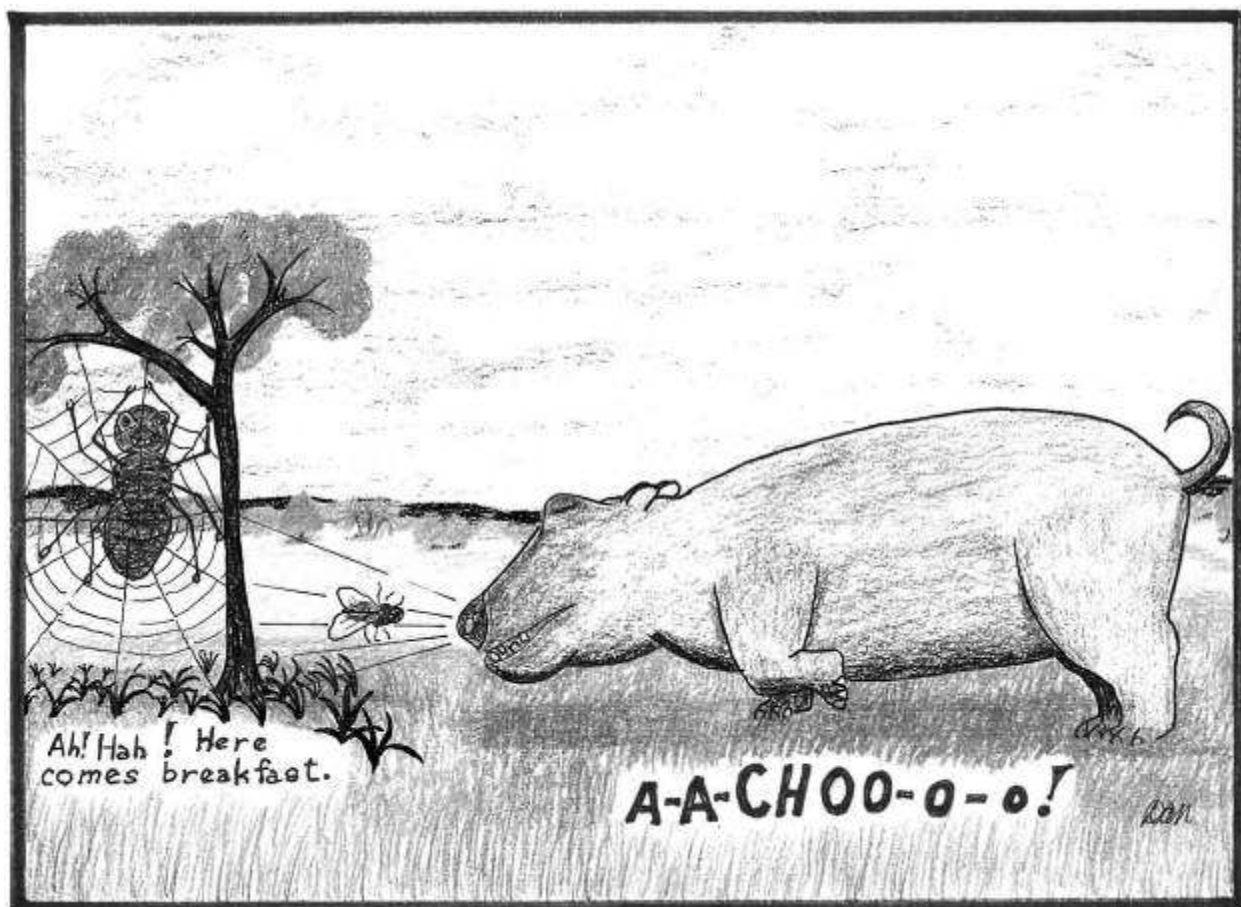
"Whaaaat!" roared Hippo. "Who said that? What voice of some tiny little thing dares to challenge me!"

"Me, Fly. I'll fight you," squeaked Fly.

"Little thing, I'll smash you!" roared Hippo so loudly all the animals in the bush trembled with fear

"Catch me first," said Fly and he buzzed and flew around and around Hippo's head. Hippo twisted his big head this way and that way snapping with his big mouth. Fly flew around Hippo's head so fast it made Hippo dizzy and confused. He could not catch Fly. Most of the time he could not even see Fly.

"Buzz, buzz, buzz. Catch me, Hippo, if you can. Buzz, buzz, buzz," Fly boasted.



Then Fly flew right up into Hippo's nose.

"Tickle, tickle, tickle," went Fly as he walked around in Hippo's big nose. Hippo's sides began to heave, in and out.

"Ahhhhhh, Ahhhhhh, Ahhhhhh, AhhChoooooo," sneezed Hippo.

Fly was blown right out of Hippo's nose like a shot from a gun. He landed right in the middle of Spider's web!

"Good morning, Fly," greeted Spider. "You are just in time for my breakfast."

"Zzzzzt! Zzzzzt! Zzzzzt!" went Fly. "Help, I can't get loose. Zzzzzt! Zzzzzt! Zzzzzt! I am stuck fast. Help! Zzzzzt!"

Spider smiled, "Relax, Fly, We will breakfast together, just me and you -er that is, me on you."

So, you see, Fly became Spider's breakfast, and Hippo went around sneezing for two whole weeks with a fresh cold, all because of boasting. The only one who came out ahead was Spider, who had Fly for breakfast.

Ah, yes, boasting is not doing. When friends fight someone else may be the real winner. The devil has won many a battle when there is boasting, pride and lack of love in a church, a marriage, a home, a mission, between friends...

I can think of two Bible verses that help us to understand this. Proverbs 27:2 says, "Let another man praise you and not your own mouth. Let a stranger and not your own lips."

Then, Ephesians 2:8, 9 says, "For by His loving favor you have been saved from the punishment of sin through faith. It is not by anything you have done. It is a gift of God. It is not given to you because you worked for it. If you could work for it, you would be proud."

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