

Meet Heloise



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Free Online Books for 21st Century Kids

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Chapter 1

They Can't Hear You Wishing



First of all I must tell you that this story's true;
I need to be sure you believe me, I do.
If you don't, how could I ever explain
that there's a rhinoceros inside my brain?



At least, now, so many years on,
that's where I think she might come from.
No one can see her (well, except for me),
but she's always there when I need her to be.

Here is a picture, in case you weren't sure,
since you might not have seen a rhino before.



I know what you're thinking. No, I can't explain
how a rhino so big could fit into my brain!

I also don't know why no one else can see
Heloise, who's so much bigger than me.
Did you say you can see her? Oh, that's a relief!
When I tell most people, they just give me grief.
Did you say you can see just the picture, of course,
of me riding a rhino as you might ride a horse?



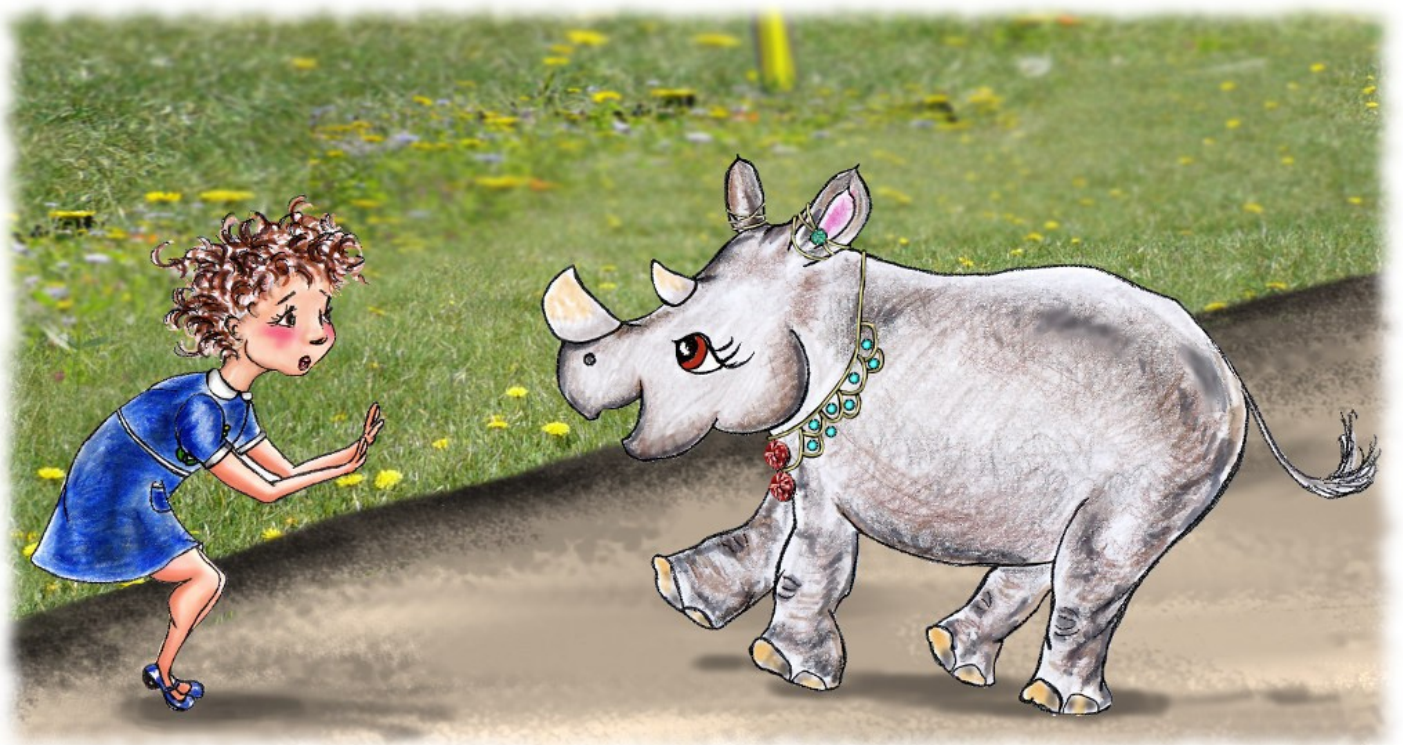
Well, that's a start, but now, if I may,
there's something important that I'd like to say.
You can choose to believe me, and I hope you do.
Remember: someday this might happen to you.

It all started at school, on my very first day,
when all the children went outside to play.



On the edge of the yard, I stood all alone,
and I felt so left out, standing there on my own.
The others were laughing and having fun,
and all the while I was feeling glum.

I wished they would ask me to come and play,
and as I was wishing, I heard someone say,
"They can't hear you wishing, you know, little one.
They don't know you just want to join in the fun.
Wishing is not what makes wishes come true.
The person who has to do something is you."
I turned round and couldn't believe what I saw,
for I had not seen a rhinoceros before,



and yet there she was, to my great surprise:
a rhinoceros standing in front of my eyes.
"Stop staring at me. That's not very polite.
I did not mean to give you a fright.
I'm a rhinoceros; Heloise is the name,
and I think you might need me: that's why I came.

I think that you need to make some friends,
and a helping hand I'll be happy to lend."

Then Heloise kicked a ball over to me,
saying, "Hmm, I think this could be the key.



Kick this ball to the kids out in the yard.
Put in all your strength, and kick it hard."

Well, what happened next is hard to explain, but it seemed that my kick had started a game.



I made lots of friends, not just one or two, and that was just what I'd wished to do. Out there in the yard, playing football, I couldn't see Heloise any more at all. If she was real, I was not sure then. I decided to ask her, if I saw her again.

Chapter 2

Learning Something New



It was many months later that she came back.

At this point I must say Heloise has a knack for knowing when I need her - she always comes through.

As a friend, Heloise is steadfast and true.

It was multiplication - the problem I had.

At multiplication I was very bad.



For some reason I could not remember my tables,
and although at addition I was very able,
however hard I seemed to try,
I somehow could not quite multiply.

"What is making you feel so sad?
I'm sure that it can't be all that bad."
"How do you know just how I feel?
Oh, and I must ask, Heloise, are you real?"
"Can you not see me, right here, with your eyes?
I know that you cannot be all that surprised.
I'm here to help; that's just what I do.
Now, why don't you tell me what's bothering you?"



I told Heloise how worried I was,
and I told her that I was worried because
I could not multiply in my head.
"I can't multiply at all," I said.

"Learning times tables can be a bore.
I admit that it can be quite a chore.
Climb on to my back, and we'll go for a ride.
Learning tables will be more fun outside."
I had to recite my tables out loud
whilst on top of my rhino I sat tall and proud.



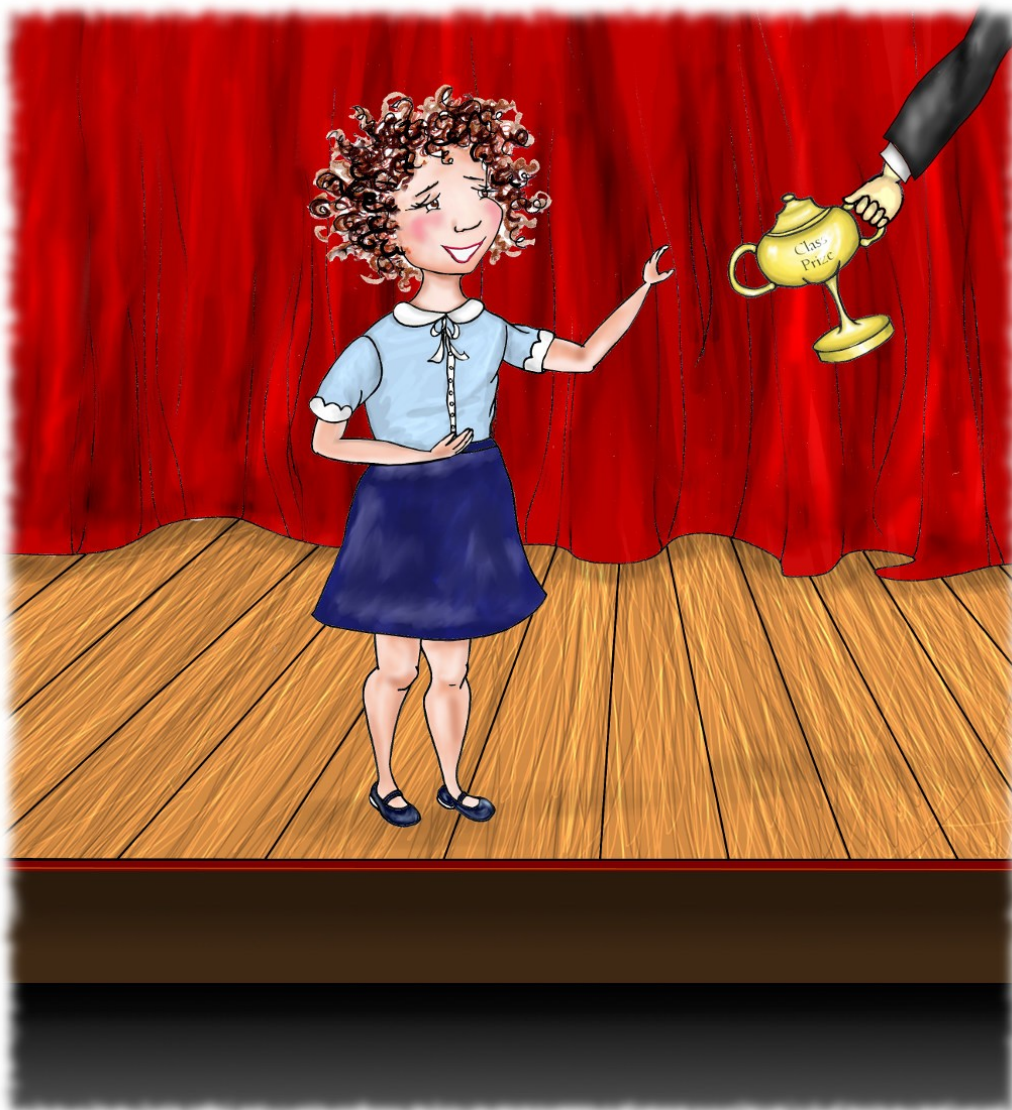
Very quickly I learned that two times two is four;
four times four, sixteen; six fours, twenty-four.
Heloise quizzed me, and I really knew
even numbers divide exactly by two.
Somehow it was easy to learn that way,
and I remember my tables to this very day.

That was the first time I rode Heloise,
and she told me I rode her with grace and ease.
She said, "You may ride me each day to school."

I said, "Yes, please! That would be so cool!"

On our rides Heloise taught me so many things;
most of all, she showed me the joy learning brings.

Now, when I have to learn something new,
even if it is hard, I know I'll come through.



I like a challenge and can overcome
any challenge at all by making it fun.

Chapter 3

Becoming Me



Apart from our rides to school every day,
Heloise sometimes came to me some other way.
I remember when I was twelve or thirteen -
neither kid nor grown-up, but just in between -
in the mirror I was glaring at my reflection
and saw her staring back in my direction.



I said, "Heloise, just look at me!
My frizzy hair is all that you see.
I wish I had hair that was smooth, straight and long.
My hair makes me feel as if I don't belong."

I was brushing my hair very hard as I spoke,
although it looked worse with every stroke.



"Oh, you *are* feeling angry," Heloise said.
"You're getting upset, and your face is all red."
"I can do nothing with it; it won't straighten out!"
"Well, I don't think hair is what this is about."



I think it might be your identity:
when you think of yourself, the picture you see.
You're figuring out who you'll grow up to be,
and you'd like to fit in, quite naturally.
Right now, you feel that you don't belong,
and that feeling you're feeling is terribly strong.

You've decided there's something wrong with your hair,
but I can tell you that there's no problem there.
You can change your hair - there's no harm in that -
or you can simply put on a hat,



but the real you will always be there,
hiding under the hat or your hair.
You're still going to have to figure out
what being you will be all about.
With your hair, what I think you should do
is try to find a look that suits you.
Don't try to look like someone you're not;
instead make the best of what you've got.
Use your hair to show you're a confident girl;
a girl with big, bouncy, beautiful curls;
a girl who does not need to change to belong;
a girl whose belief in herself makes her strong."

Well, I washed my hair, let it dry naturally,
and ended up looking exactly like me.
My curls, well, they stuck out every which way,
and I looked very much as I look today.
I never have managed to straighten my hair,
but I have to say that I don't really care.



Heloise was right when she said to me
that my hair could show my personality.
She knew that what would be best, you see,
was for me to get on with just being me.

Chapter 4

All Grown Up



Since I have grown up, from time to time,
Heloise calls in to check that I'm fine.
She always reminds me that she really cares
and that no matter what, she'll always be there.
When I went to college to get my degree,
I thought everyone was much smarter than me.



The more that I read, the less I felt I knew,
and it was Heloise who got me through.

She told me to set all my books aside
and take a walk in the sunshine outside.



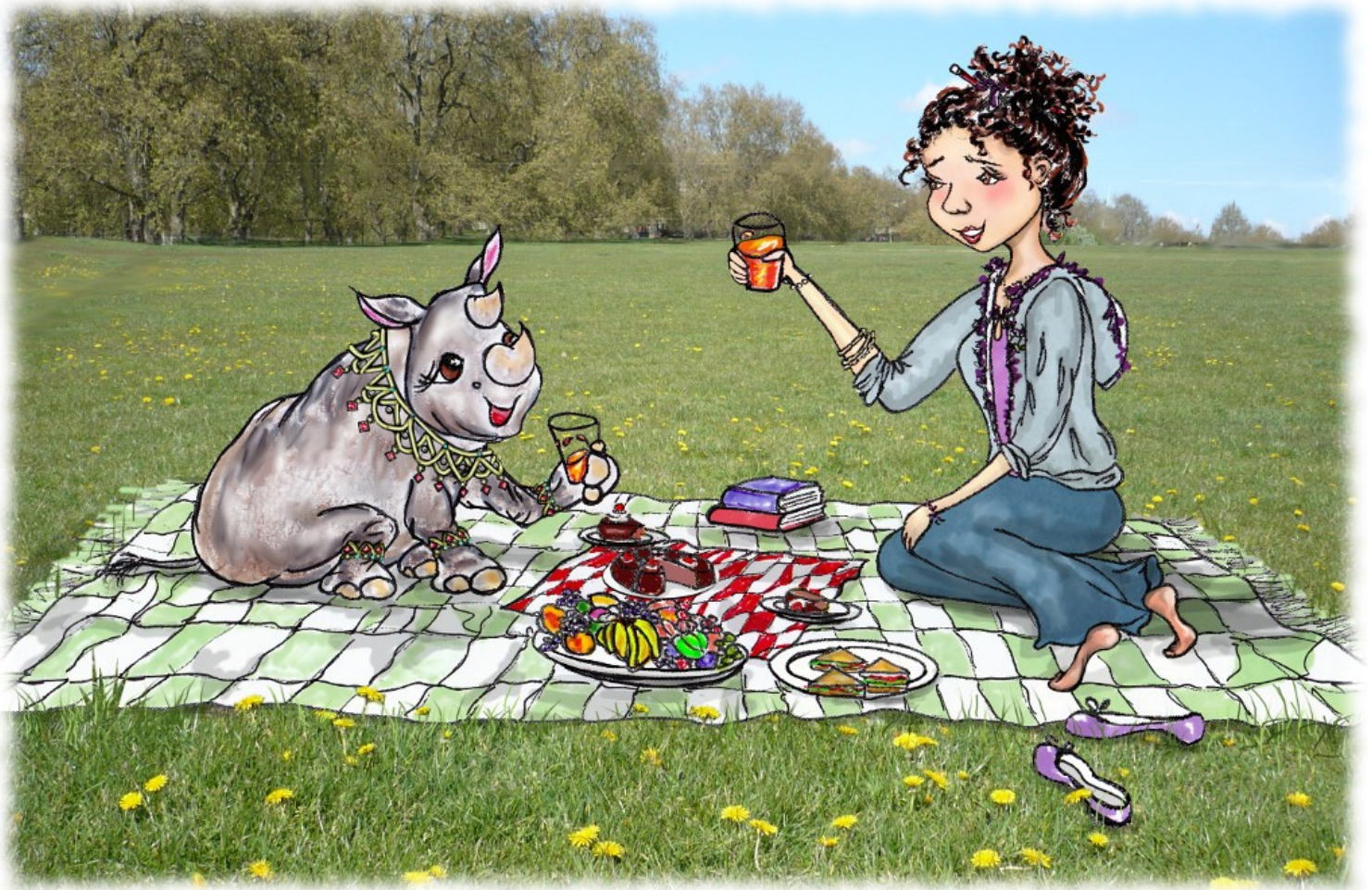
She said, "Sometimes if you just step away,
you can think of things in a whole different way."

When I went back to my desk inside,
I picked up the books that I'd put on one side.
This time I could understand all that I read;
my thoughts were fresh, as Heloise had said.



For graduation, she came to see me.
Well, it was thanks to her that I got my degree.

It comes in handy to this very day,
that advice about just moving away.
If you have a problem you just cannot solve,
it does not signal a lack of resolve
if you decide that just for a bit
you might need to forget about it.



Heloise would say that by taking five,
you were just letting your brain revive.

She's helped me at work and she's helped me at home;
she's helped me when I've felt all alone.



How does she find me? Where does she go?
How did she come to know all that she knows?
She makes me a champion by cheering me on,
but still I'm not sure just where she comes from.
Do you think there is some other way to explain,
or do you think there's a rhino inside my brain?

I don't suppose that I'll ever be sure,
but I don't think it matters any more.
For me Heloise has always been there,
and when I need to be brave, I'm always aware
that Heloise stands, steadfast, at my side,
and in her I now take a great deal of pride.
After all, without her, who would I be?
One thing's for sure: I wouldn't be me.



Heloise has helped me become who I am.
When I think I can't do something, she says that I can.
Heloise makes me the best I can be.
With her by my side, I'm proud to be me.

Now remember, I said that this story is true
and that someday this might happen to you,
so if you see Heloise, sometime, somewhere,
you just have to believe she really is there.



All you have to do is believe what you see,
and she'll be part of you as she is part of me.



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