

AFRICAN TALES

How Zebras Got Their Stripes



This story happened a long time ago in Africa. One day, Baboon, who was very fierce, decided to leave the jungle tree where he lived. He wanted to live next to the river. He was so mean that he told all the other animals that the land belonged to him. Baboon stated he was the only one allowed to drink from the river.



The animals were upset. They were sad because they needed water to survive. But all of them were afraid of Baboon. He had a big head with thick eyebrows and long teeth. He showed his teeth every chance he got to scare the other animals. They didn't know what to do.



Zebra was young and brave. He was fearless and handsome in his pure white coat. In the old days, zebras had all white coats. Zebra said to the other animals, "I am not afraid of Baboon. I will tell him we are going to drink from the river."



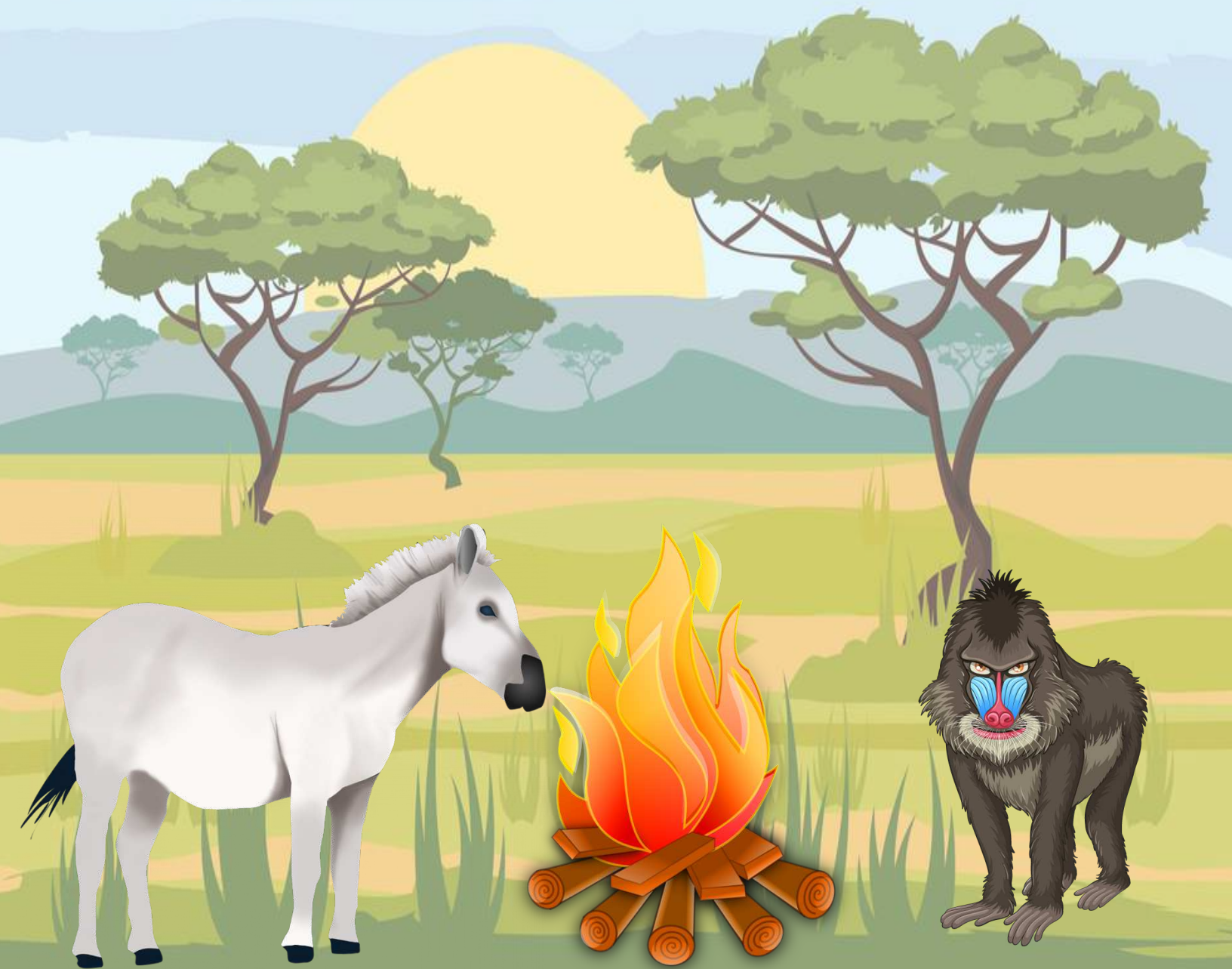
The next day, Zebra met with Baboon, but Baboon refused to talk to Zebra. So Zebra challenged Baboon to a fight. Baboon laughed. It had been a long time since he had lost a fight.

They agreed that the loser of the fight would have to leave the jungle and river. He would have to live on the barren hill. The empty hill was not a place anyone wanted to live. They would meet the next morning in Baboon's yard next to the river.



The next day, Zebra came to Baboon's yard. Baboon had built a bonfire. Zebra's white coat glowed in the sun. It looked like Zebra was lit from inside his body. All the animals came to watch the fight. They knew that it would be difficult to beat Baboon.

Baboon and Zebra were both strong and used all of their skills. They knew what they were good at. Zebra used his powerful legs to run at Baboon. But Baboon was very swift. He used his quickness to jump out of Zebra's way. Before Zebra could stop, he was suddenly close to the bonfire. He was so close that the heat from the fire began to burn him.



Zebra turned around and kicked Baboon over the river and onto the empty hill. He wasn't injured, but his pride was hurt. He knew he had lost. The animals could drink from the river.

Zebra won, but he was left with marks. The fire had burned long black stripes on his white coat. From that day on, all zebras had black stripes and were proud of them. They were a symbol that Zebra had fought and won to keep water free for all animals





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