

HORNLESS

SCENE 1 – DAY – AFRICAN SAVANNA

A rhino herd grazes in open land.
A small rhino with two horns moves among them.

VOICEOVER

I was born in the savanna.
With two horns.
That was before they started calling us hornless rhinos.

SCENE 2 – DAY – SAVANNA / WATERHOLE

Rhinos eat, rest, bathe in mud.
Calm. Playful.

VOICEOVER

We spent our days eating, resting, bathing in mud.

SCENE 3 – DAY – SAVANNA

Two young rhinos play — running, bumping into a larger rhino, who reacts angrily.

VOICEOVER

I had a buddy.
We ran together.
Pushed each other just to see who was stronger.
The herd said we were annoying.
Always running for no reason.
Always getting into trouble.

SCENE 4 – DAY – SAVANNA (DISTURBANCE)

Trucks race toward the herd.
Dust rises. Panic spreads.
The herd runs.

VOICEOVER

One day we heard humans.

We all ran.
That day, he didn't come back.

SCENE 5 – DAY – SAVANNA (AFTERMATH)

The next morning.
The buddy rhino returns — **hornless**, with a **white chalk mark** on his side.
The herd stares. Then relaxes.

VOICEOVER

The next morning, he did —
without his horn.
With a strange mark on his side.
The herd stared.
Then relaxed.
Since he was missing a horn,
they called him *Trinket*.

SCENE 6 – DAY – SAVANNA

The two young rhinos reunite.
Our rhino tries to play — Trinket does not respond the same way.

VOICEOVER

I thought he didn't care.
Weeks passed.
Months passed.
Even his horn grew back a little.
He was still my buddy — just not the same way.
Something in him stayed quiet.

Trinket walks away, calm but distant.

SCENE 7 – DAY – SAVANNA (ELDERS' EXPLANATION)

Men marking a rhino.
An electric chainsaw removes a horn.

VOICEOVER

The elders said he wasn't hurt by hunters who wanted to take his horn.
They said men had saved him...
by taking his horn.

We didn't understand a damn thing.
So life went on.

SCENE 8 – DAY – SAVANNA (POACHERS)

Trucks return — this time armed.
Gunshots. Chaos.

VOICEOVER

Then one day...
men came again — kicking up dust.
This time with guns.
They left my kin bleeding in the dust.
I heard gunshots...
Screaming...
Then silence.

SCENE 9 – DAY – SAVANNA (DEATH)

Blood-stained bushes.
A dead rhino lies on the ground, horn removed.

VOICEOVER

I ran.
I didn't look back.

SCENE 10 – DAY – SAVANNA (MOURNING)

The herd grazes in silence. Fewer than before.

VOICEOVER

The next day, a few were gone from the herd.
They never returned.
We mourned them.
The elders told us why men killed us.

SCENE 11 – DAY – SAVANNA / POACHING

A rhino is shot.
Poachers approach with chainsaws.

VOICEOVER

Some believe our horns heal.
That they give power.
Funny thing is —
all they ever gave
was death.

SCENE 12 – NIGHT – ILLEGAL MARKET

Horns on a desk. Powder weighed.

VOICEOVER

Our pain became profit.
Our bodies — currency.

SCENE 13 – NIGHT – RITUALS / TRADE

Powder exchanged, burned, consumed.

VOICEOVER

Hope sold in small bags.
Belief turned into rituals.
Some drank us as remedy.

SCENE 14 – NIGHT – LUXURY INTERIOR

A wealthy man admires horn-handled weapons.

VOICEOVER

Others bought us just to look at us —
to feel rich, powerful.

SCENE 15 – DAY – SAVANNA (AFTERMATH)

A truck drives away with a bloody horn.
A dead rhino remains.

VOICEOVER

And so born as rhinos,
we died as potions, pendants, dagger handles, trinkets...

And then...
life went on again.

SCENE 16 – DAY – SAVANNA (TIME PASSES)

Our rhino is older now. Close to another rhino.

VOICEOVER

Until one day
the sky screamed.
Loud.
Too loud.

SCENE 17 – DAY – SAVANNA / AIR

A helicopter chases the herd.

VOICEOVER

The ground shook.
We ran again.
My lungs burned.
My legs felt heavy.
When humans chase you,
nothing good usually follows.

SCENE 18 – DAY – SAVANNA (RESCUE)

A dart hits our rhino.
He collapses.

VOICEOVER

Something hit my back.
My legs gave out.
I fell.
I couldn't move.
The world spun.
I heard voices.

Rescue team surrounds him.

VOICEOVER

Felt hands on my skin — calm.

Someone touched my face.
Said they were there to save me.
My vision blurred.
They covered my eyes.
Then nothing.

Darkness.

SCENE 19 – DAY – SAVANNA (AWAKENING)

He wakes alone. Uneasy.

VOICEOVER

When I woke up,
I was alone.
Quiet.

He realizes his horn is gone.

VOICEOVER

My head felt lighter.
Soon I realized.
My horn was gone.
My chest tightened.
Fear hit hard.
They had taken a part of me.

SCENE 20 – DAY – SAVANNA (RETURN)

He approaches the herd. They stare.

VOICEOVER

The walk back felt endless.
At first, they didn't recognize me.

Trinket steps forward.

VOICEOVER

Then Trinket walked up to me.
Looked me over.
Snorted.
Now I understood his pain.
Guess that makes two of us.

SCENE 21 – DAY – SAVANNA (TRUTH)

Images contrast: poachers vs rescuers.

VOICEOVER

That day I learned something about humans.
There were two kinds.
The ones who kill us so they can take our horns —
and the ones who take our horns so we can live.
Turns out the safest horn
is no horn at all.

SCENE 22 – DAY – SAVANNA (NAMING)

The herd gathers.

VOICEOVER

The herd gave me a name too.
Handle.
They laughed.
But I didn't like being a handle at all.

SCENE 23 – DAY – SAVANNA (TEMPORARY PEACE)

Our rhino rests by the pond.

VOICEOVER

Still... I was lucky.
This time.
Not hunted by killers.
Not today.
And so my herd, my buddy Trinket, and I stood there in the savanna.
Some hornless.
Saved by men...
from men.
Not whole.
But alive.
Still breathing.

SCENE 24 – DAY – SAVANNA (UNCERTAINTY)

The rhino herd grazes in open land.
Trucks approach again.

VOICEOVER

Always on alert for men...
not knowing which ones are coming.
Death...
or hope.
This is how we survive in the savanna.

TEXT ON SCREEN (OVER LIVING ANIMALS)

In the last decade, more than 8,000 rhinos have been lost to poaching in Africa alone.

Today, roughly one rhino is killed every 15 hours for its horn.

Illegal markets are driven largely by demand in Vietnam and China, where rhino horn is believed — without evidence — to cure illness or signal wealth and status.

Rhino horn is made of keratin, the same material as human hair and fingernails. There is no scientific evidence of any medicinal benefit.

BLACK OUT

At peak prices, rhino horn has sold for tens of thousands of dollars per kilogram — more valuable than gold.

FINAL TEXT

To protect rhinos, wildlife authorities sometimes remove horns under sedation. The horn gradually regrows — most rhinos require dehorning every 1.5 to 2 years. This practice has been shown to significantly reduce poaching risk and save lives.

Despite conservation efforts, fewer than 22,500 African rhinos remain in the wild. Fewer than 50 Javan rhinos. Fewer than 50 Sumatran rhinos. And as of January 2026, only two Northern White rhinos remain — both female: **Najin** and her daughter **Fatu**.