

Tortoise the hero

Ntombifuthi Ncwayiba

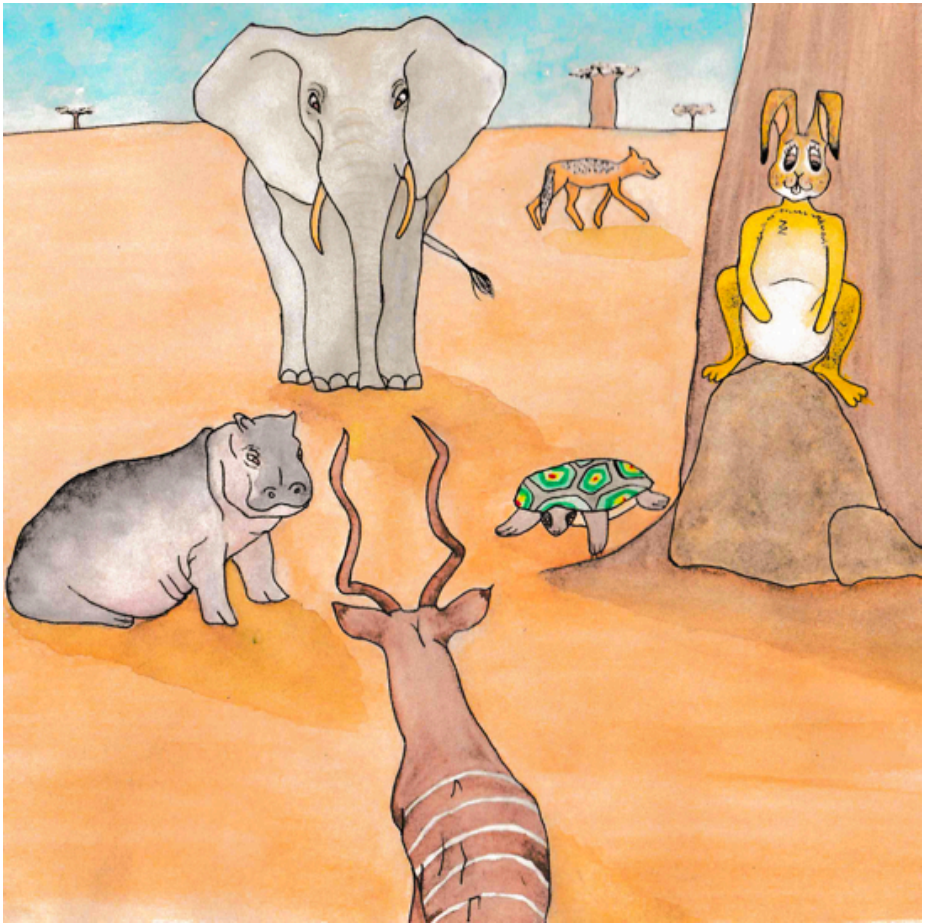
Khanyisa Masemola





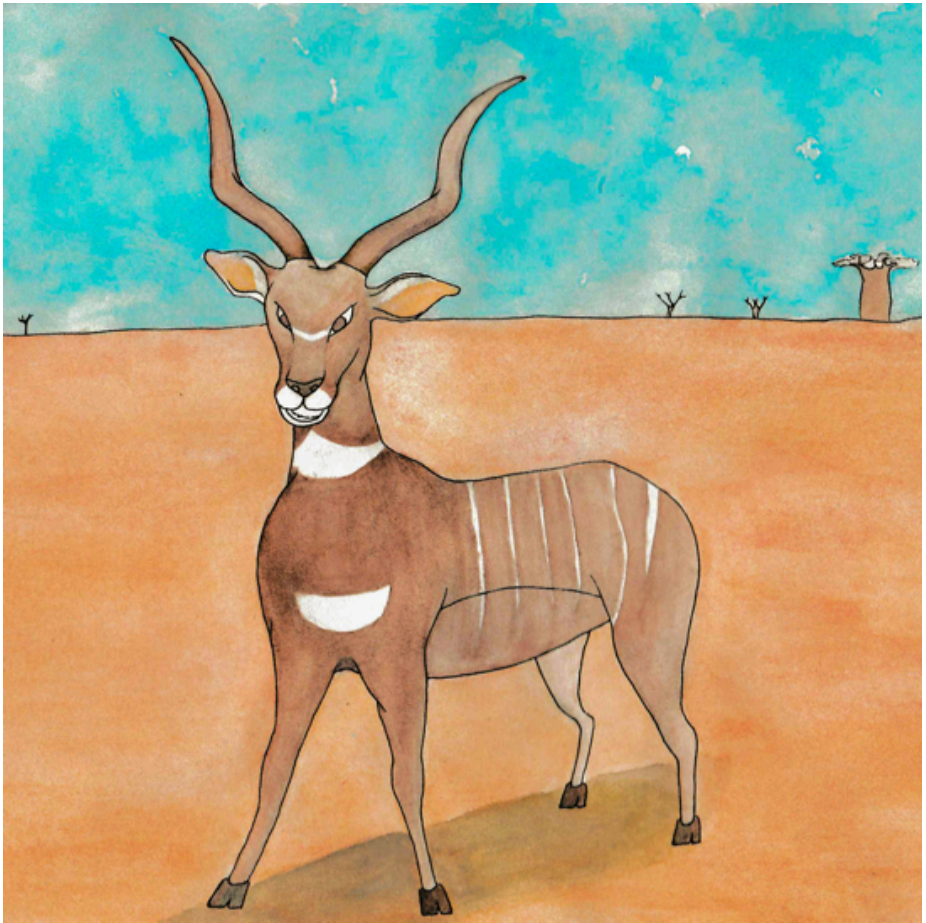
Long, long ago, the wild animals ran out of water.

They looked everywhere but found none.



They gathered to find a solution to their problem. All animals attended the meeting, except Jackal.

Jackal said, "How can I attend a meeting with a stinking tortoise?"



At the meeting, the animals agreed to dig a well.

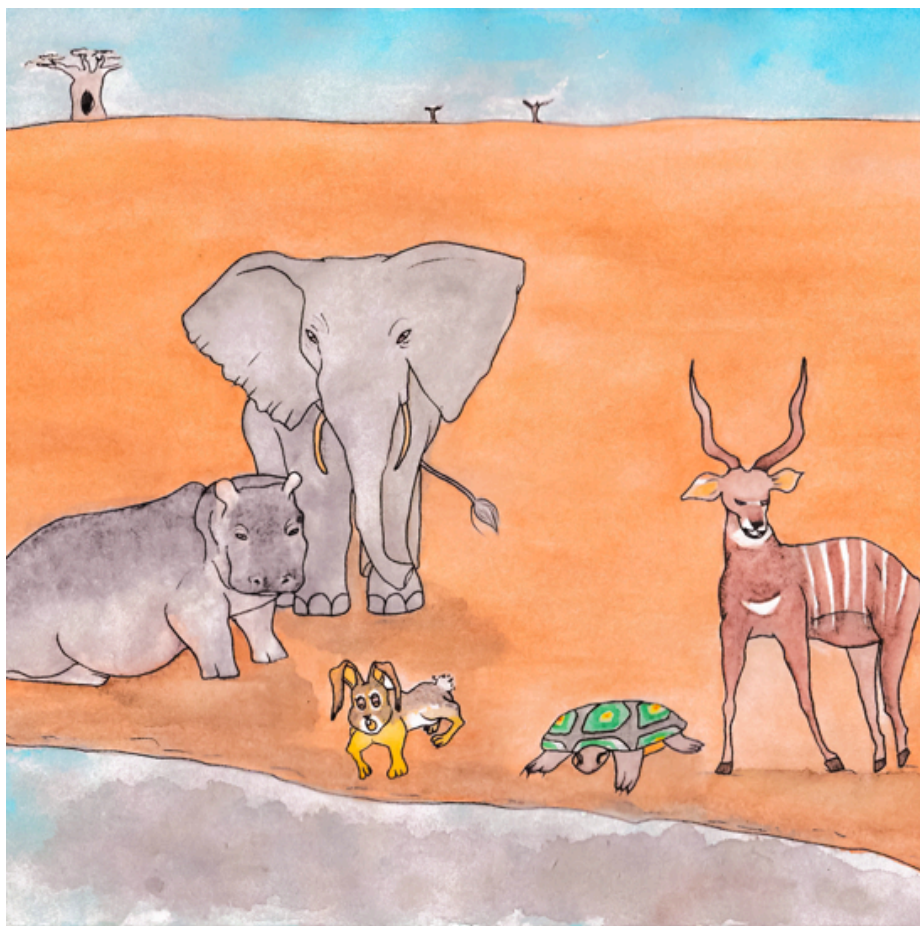
Antelope said, "Our well will be deep and wide. When it is full, we will never run out of water again."



They sang and danced as they took turns digging the well.

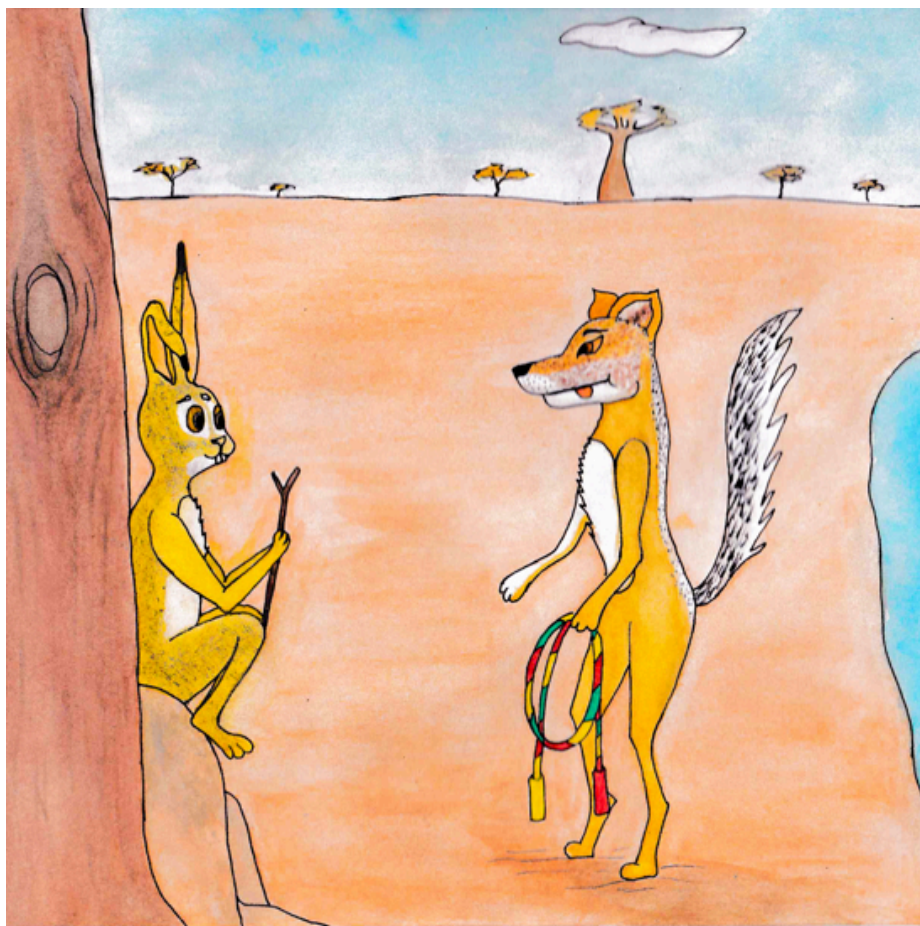
Eventually, water broke through the ground and filled up the well.

They were so happy. They had never tasted such sweet and fresh water.



Then, one day, the animals realised that someone was swimming in the water and making it dirty.

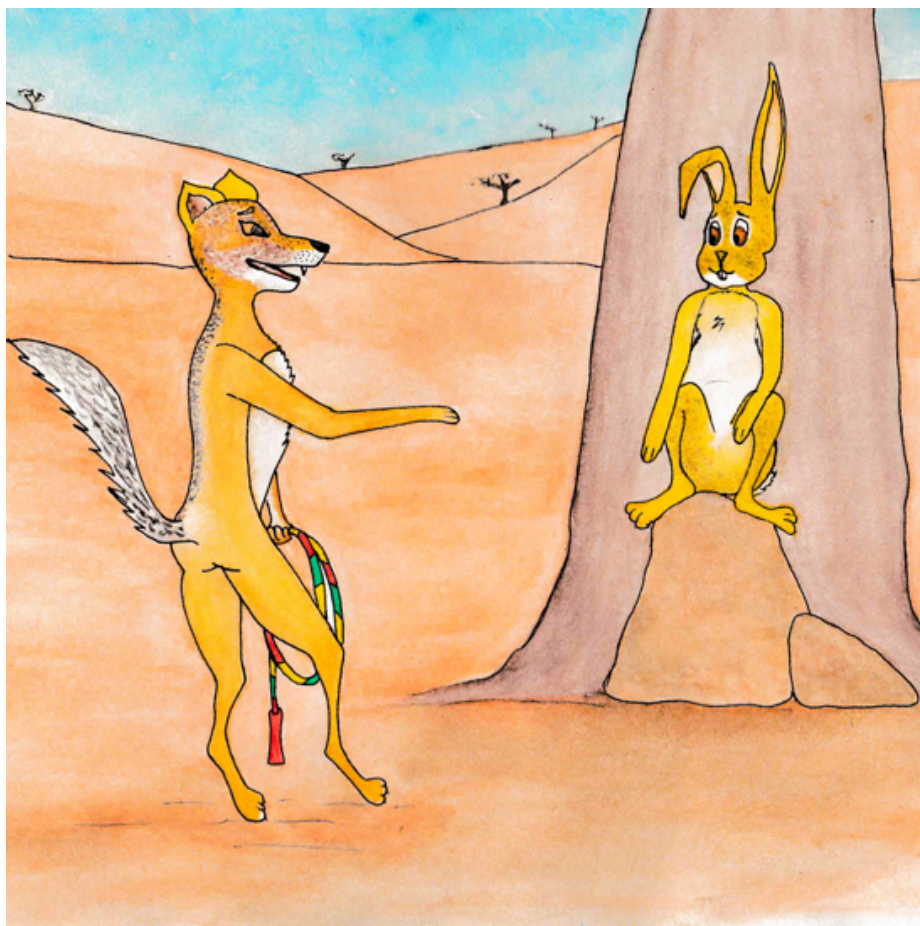
They took turns guarding the well.



Rabbit was on duty guarding the well. Jackal came along with his skipping rope.

"What are you doing here?" asked Jackal.

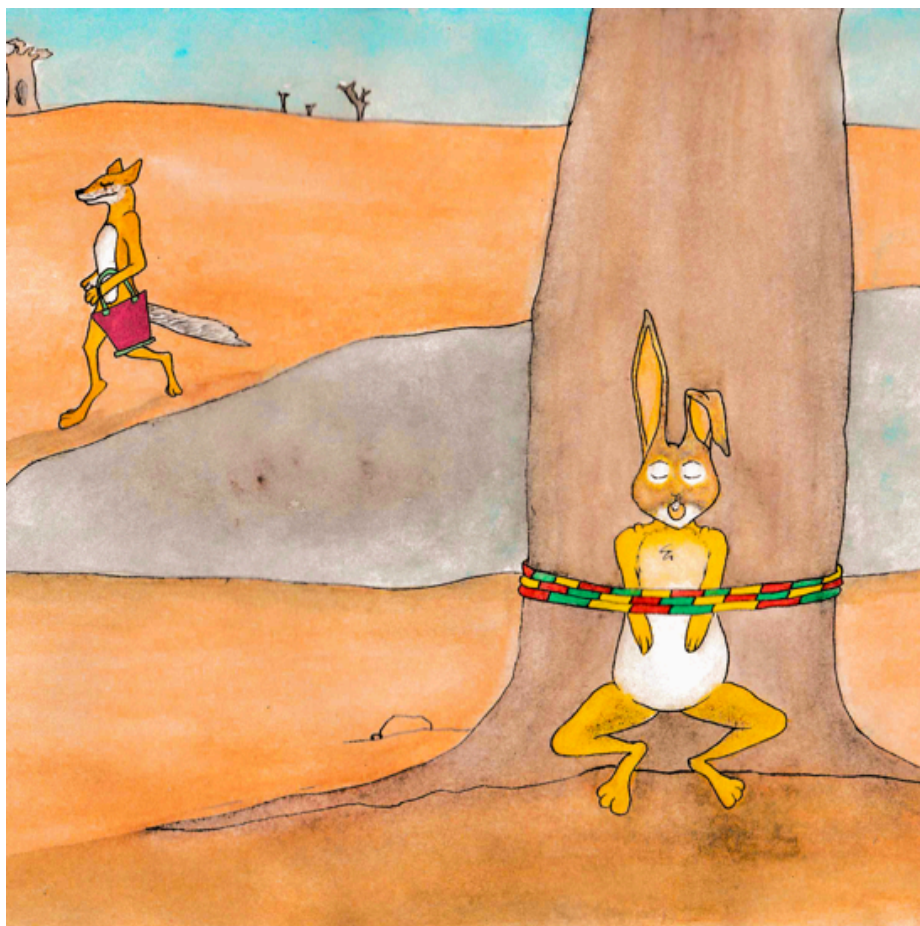
"Guarding our water," replied Rabbit.



Jackal asked Rabbit to play with him.

The game involves a player being tied up with rope, closing their eyes and counting to a thousand.

Rabbit agreed to play.



Jackal tied up Rabbit, who closed his eyes and started counting.

Jackal drank from the well and swam.

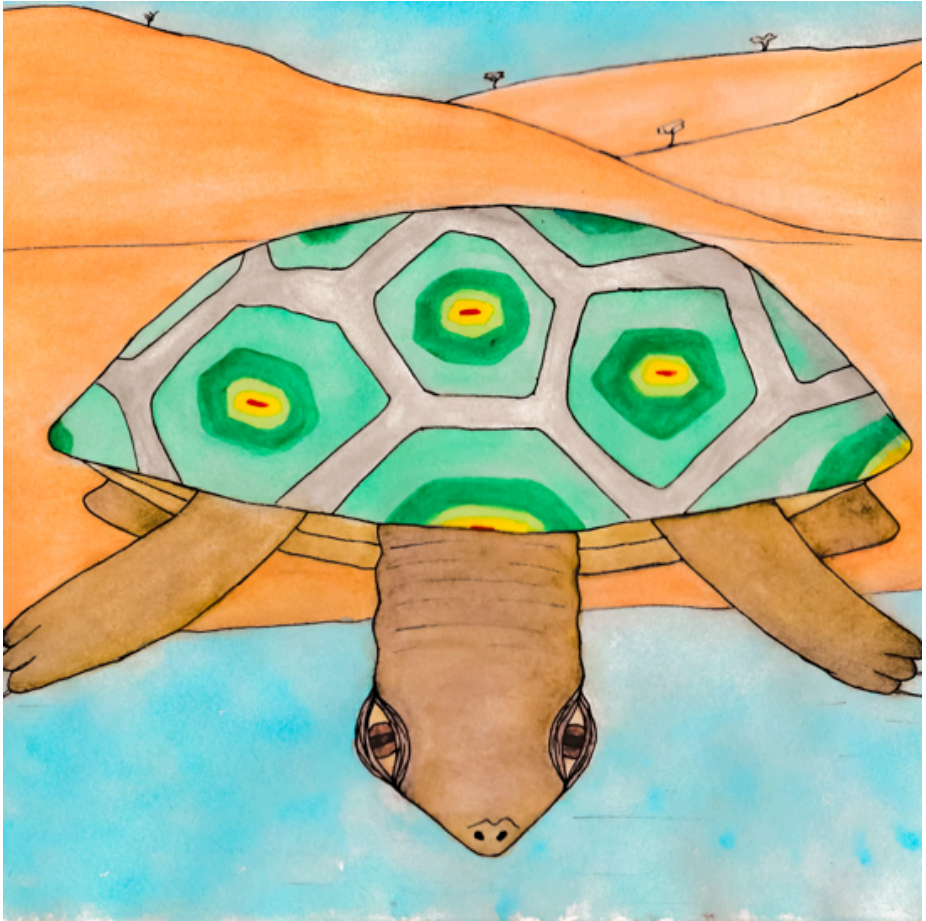
Afterwards, Jackal took some water and left. Rabbit was still counting.



Rabbit finished counting and opened his eyes.

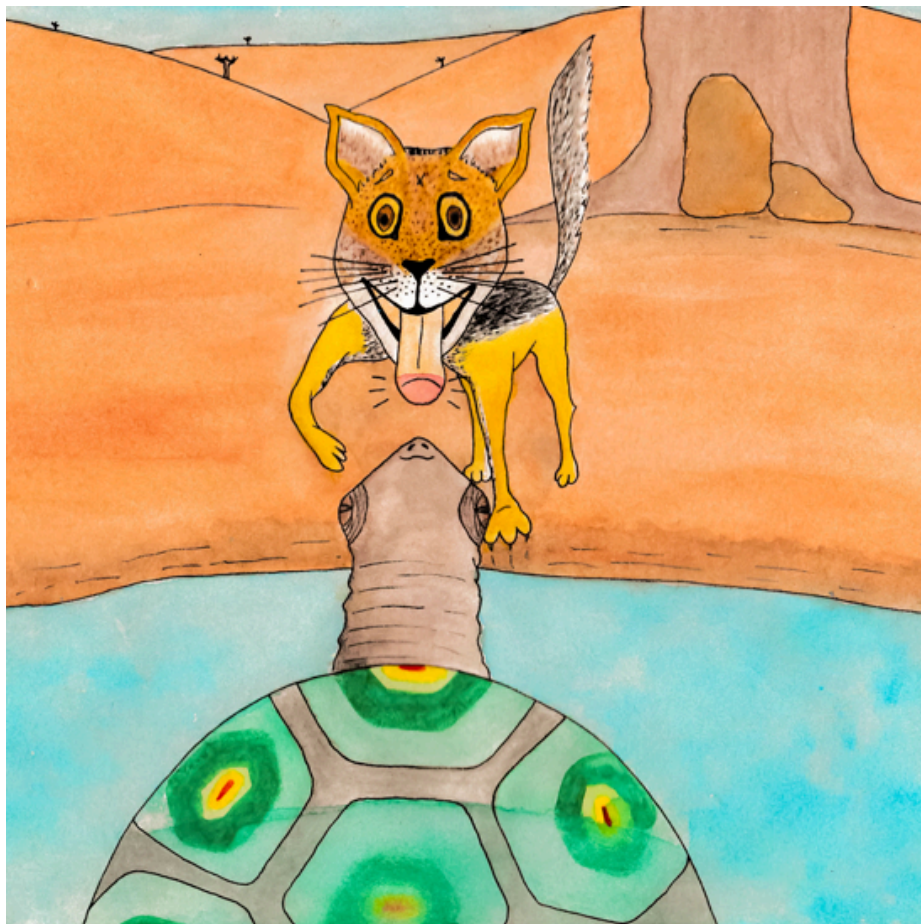
Jackal was nowhere to be found.

Rabbit shouted for the other animals to come and untie him.



The animals continued to take turns guarding the well, but all failed to catch Jackal.

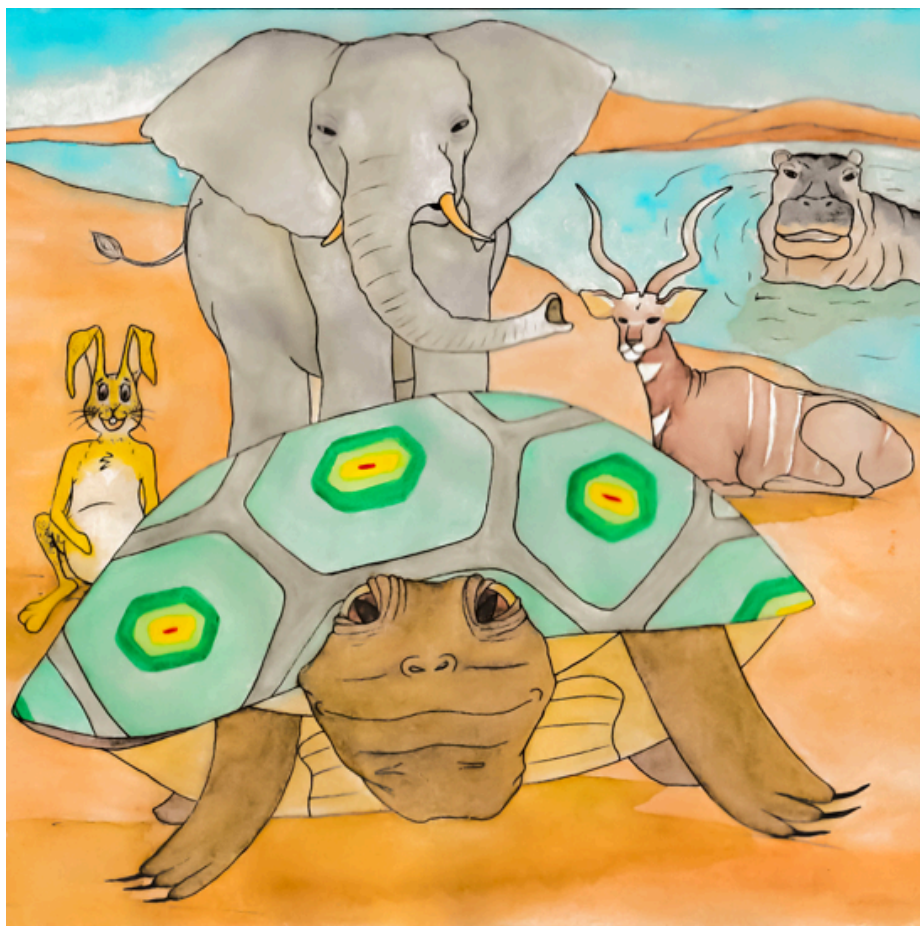
Tortoise said, "Let me keep watch." He dived into the well to wait for Jackal.



When Jackal arrived, he thought, "There is no one here!" He began to drink.

He felt something bite his tongue. Then, he was pulled under the water!

The other animals came running when they heard Jackal crying and splashing.



The animals tied up Jackal.

Tortoise said to Jackal, "You wronged all of us. You will be punished." The animals praised Tortoise as their hero.

From that day, they enjoyed drinking clean water without any disturbance.



Ulwazi Lwethu is a Zenex Foundation funded and initiated project to develop a series of graded and leisure African language readers and teacher support materials. This project is targeted at teaching and supporting learners in the Foundation Phase to improve their home language reading and understanding. The readers have been originated in nine African languages in collaboration with Molteno Institute for Language and Literacies, Nelson Mandela Institute for Education and Rural Development, Room to Read South Africa, and Saide. All resources are developed as Open Education Resources (OER).



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*The Ulwazi Lwethu readers and storybooks have
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