

The Unicorn's Wish



By Leanne Johnson

Dedication...

This very special story is dedicated to my two nieces,
Kirsten and Claire, and my new little friend, Mia.
Because sometimes we just need to believe in
unicorns.

Inspiration...

'Of all the legendary animals of art, folklore and literature, the Unicorn is the one with the greatest hold on our imaginations. Other fabulous beasts are clearly inventions, existing only in a mythical landscape of our own collective creation. But the Unicorn strikes us as more than imaginary. It seems possible, even probable – a creature so likely that it ought to exist.'

[Nancy Hathaway]

Faraway, in a land of dreams and imagination, lived a little unicorn. Her name was Adelynn and she was all alone. That is the problem with unicorns; they travel Dreamland all on their own. Nobody knows why. But from the time dreams began, it's just the way it was.

The land that Adelynn lived in was a magical make-believe world found in stories, dreams and imaginations. It was so beautiful.



During the day, Adelynn played under shimmering rainbows and pranced among fields of dancing bluebells.

Tiny fairies flitted from glistening snowflake to snowflake, their laughter a soft melody.

Mermaids swam among the musical waterfalls and at night, when all was quiet, the stars sparkled and the moon sang a lullaby.

Adelynn's world was enchanting. She knew there were fantastic stories written about her. She also knew she was beautiful, but none of it felt real.

Something was missing.

She had no other unicorn friends and she could never meet those who dreamt about her and believed in her. She was so sad and lonely.

Each new day she would wake up wishing her life was real, wishing she could have friends and be a friend and belong with others and make a real difference.

There was nothing she could do to make her sadness and loneliness go away. And when she heard the stories that the soft breeze told of her travels across the world, Adelynn felt even more alone.

The breeze told stories of elephants and giraffe roaming the African savannahs. Stories of koala bears climbing Eucalyptus trees in the Australian outback and stories of polar bears braving the snowy mountains of Alaska. Stories of panda bears in the ancient forests of China.

Stories of wild horses running free on the Mexican plains. Stories of dolphins swimming and playing in the Atlantic Ocean, and stories of tigers roaming the jungles of India.



The breeze would whisper these stories and Adelynn would listen to them over and over again.

'How I wish I could visit some of these places,' said Adelynn one day to the breeze.

'Oh no!' whispered the breeze. *'You don't want to visit these places. They are real and dangerous. It is much safer to stay right where you are in Dreamland.'*

'Oh, but I really do,' begged Adelynn. *'My world does not feel real. It is only make-believe and I have no real friends. Please, please, please will you take me with you next time?'*

The breeze thought long and hard. She had seen how sad and lonely Adelynn was.

'Once a year,' whispered the breeze, *'when the sun hides behind the moon, and all becomes dark, I can take you with me to the real world. But I must warn you Adelynn, you can never come back to Dreamland. Once we pass through the sphere of imagination and make-believe, you will be changed into something real forever. You will no longer be a unicorn. You must think very carefully about this.'*

Adelynn sat down and thought very carefully. She was quiet for a long time.

'I have decided,' said Adelynn, *'I would like to come with you the next time the sun hides behind the moon.'*

'Very well,' whispered the breeze. *'But you will first have to journey to the magical waterfall that is beyond the enchanted forest. Make sure you are there when the sun decides to hide behind the moon. Goodbye, Adelynn.'*

Adelynn was so excited! She danced about in circles and the bluebells rang their delicate bells.

That very day she started wandering over the rainbows and through the enchanted forest. It was a very long journey and she often became tired, but she never gave up.



After many, many days of travelling, Adelynn finally heard the gushing of the magical waterfall. It sounded like thunder and she became a little frightened, but she took a deep breath and went closer. The waterfall sprayed droplets of water that shone like diamonds and she sat down next to the waterfall and waited.

She waited next to the waterfall for many days.

One day, a mermaid appeared from the gushing waterfall and came to sit next to Adelynn. A fairy, too, landed gently on Adelynn's nose.

'We have been watching you,' said the mermaid. *'What are you doing here?'* This is a secret place. There is only one reason anyone comes here.'

'I have travelled through the enchanted forest for many days and I am waiting for the time when the sun hides behind the moon so that the breeze can take me with her on her travels to the real world,' answered Adelynn.

'But you are a unicorn,' said the tiny fairy. 'You are rare and beautiful. Why would you want to go to the real world where you will no longer be a unicorn? You may no longer even be beautiful.'

'My beauty does not feel real,' said Adelynn sadly. 'Nothing about me feels real. I have no friends like me and I cannot give real joy to others or make a difference in a real world. I am willing to take the risk.'

'So are we,' said the mermaid and the fairy. 'We are also waiting for the breeze to carry us on her breath to the real world.'

'Did the breeze warn you of the many dangers we may face when we get there?' asked the mermaid. 'Dangers of being shot or poached or caught or killed by evil hunters?'

'She did,' answered Adelynn. 'But she also told me that I would not be alone there. I would have friends like me and I would belong and that there are others who are protectors who are stopping those evil hunters. She also said I would bring joy to many.' Adelynn looked very brave as she said this.

The mermaid and the fairy nodded, for the breeze had told them the same thing.

One afternoon, as Adelynn, the mermaid and the fairy were about to lie down to rest, they heard the soft whisper of the breeze calling to them, and the next thing everything went very dark as the sun hid behind the moon.

Adelynn, the fairy and the mermaid felt themselves being carried along by the breeze, but they couldn't see anything. They seemed to float on the breeze's breath for what seemed like an age, before everything in front of them suddenly changed.

'You now need to say goodbye to each other,' whispered the breeze, 'as each of you will be going to different places in the real world.'

The breeze first dropped the mermaid off in the blue ocean among crystal waves. Before their eyes they watched her change into the most beautiful sea creature they had ever seen.

'What is she?' asked Adelynn, amazed.

'She is a dolphin,' whispered the breeze. *'Look, there comes a school of dolphins to welcome her. She will bring much joy to many as she jumps over waves and sails the seas.'*

Next, the breeze gently dropped the fairy over a colourful field of Namaqualand daisies. Before Adelynn's eyes, the fairy changed into the tiniest, most beautiful and dainty fluttering creature with wings she had ever seen.

'What is she?' asked Adelynn in awe.

'She is a butterfly,' whispered the breeze. *'Look, there comes a kaleidoscope of butterflies, all fluttering around her to welcome her. She will be happy here, I think.'*



'What will I be?' asked Adelynn, as they carried on travelling on the breeze's breath.

'Wait and see,' whispered the wind. *'But I promise you, Adelynn, I am taking you to a place where people from all over the world will want to learn about you and will want to visit you and protect you. You will no longer be a unicorn, but you will be marvellous and unique and rare. We are almost there.'*

Adelynn suddenly felt her feet touch some hot and dusty soil. Before her was a waterhole. She hesitantly walked closer, feeling heavy and strange, and her skin felt wrinkled and leathery. She nervously peered at her reflection in the water. She stepped back in fright then slowly stepped closer again. She did not recognise herself. She could see her horn; it was no longer shiny and a little bit shorter, but it was still there. She felt very frightened.

'What am I,' she asked the breeze. *'I don't look beautiful anymore.'*

'You are a black rhino,' whispered the breeze. *'You are incredibly beautiful in the real world and very rare. There are not many of you left. You will face danger and will need to be strong and brave. But you will have others to help you and many protectors. Look! There come some of your new friends. They are excited to meet you. You will bring much joy to children and people all over the world. You are very unique in the animal kingdom.'*

Adelynn walked to meet her fellow horned friends. They all crowded around her, kicking up dust in their delight to meet her. She was excited, but also a little bit scared.

One of her new friends came closer.

'Welcome to your new home. We are so happy to meet you. What is your name and why do you look so frightened?' she asked.



'My name is Adelynn,' she answered shyly. 'The breeze told me that I might face many dangers in this new world.'

'The breeze was right,' said the kind black rhino. 'There are a lot of dangers in this world. But the breeze has brought you to this sanctuary. It is a safe place. We are protected here and we all stick together as a group to look after one another.'

That night, Adelynn went to sleep under a thorn tree, feeling like she belonged. Her sadness and loneliness had disappeared.

A black rhino! She suddenly felt proud and strong.

When she woke in the morning next to the waterhole, she was amazed to see a whole group of children excitedly calling to her from the other side of the fence. They were pointing at her.

'Why are they pointing at me?' asked Adelynn.

‘Those are some of our protectors,’ said her new black rhino friend. ‘They are excited that you have arrived. They are friends who love us and believe in looking after us and saving us from evil hunters. They have also come to learn about us.’

Adelynn felt so honoured that she could meet some of the friends who believed in her and loved her.

She slowly walked up to the fence to greet them.

The end

Did you know? Over 7,000 rhinos have been killed for their horns since 2008
Together we can be the protectors of black rhinos.



About black rhinos



Physical Characteristics

- **Size:** the black rhino is the smaller of the two African species
- **Weight:** adult males weigh up to 1,350 kg and females up to 900 kg.
Weight at birth is 35-45 kg
- **Shoulder height:** black rhinos stand at approximately 1.6 metres tall at the shoulder
- **Skin colour:** the black rhino is actually a dark grey colour, but this can vary depending on local soil conditions (as rhinos tend to wallow in the mud or dust, their skin may vary in colour accordingly)
- **Hair:** they only have hair on the ears, tail tips and eyelashes
- **The horn:** black rhinos have two horns, which grow continually from the skin at their base throughout their life (like human fingernails). The shape of the horn also differs between sexes: with males tending to have thicker horns, and the females often longer and thinner ones. The horn is made of thousands of compressed hair-like strands of keratin (like hair and fingernail fibres), making it extremely hard and tough, but it can be broken or split during fighting.
- **Distinctive characteristics:** black rhinos are smaller than white rhinos, and have less of a pronounced hump on the back of their necks. They have a smaller head than white rhinos and they are browsers, so they eat from higher bushes or trees, requiring less muscle strength around their necks than white rhinos. The most distinguishable characteristic between a black and a white rhino is that black rhinos have a hooked lip, as opposed to a flat-based lip, which is related to their eating habits
<https://www.savetherhino.org/rhino-info/rhino-species/black-rhinos/>

The Unicorn's Wish

Adelynn is a unicorn who lives in the magical make-believe world of stories, dreams and imaginations. She is sad and lonely as she has no other friends like her. After hearing about the breeze's stories from her travels all over the real world, Adelynn wishes she could travel with the breeze to some of these places. But if her wish comes true, she will forever be changed and will no longer be a unicorn and she will never be able to return to Dreamland. Will it be worth it? Will she take the risk? Read **The Unicorn's Wish** to find out. [A story for 7-10 year olds]

The inspiration:

The **Black Rhino** is an endangered species in Africa. Black rhinos are hunted by poachers for their valuable horns which are illegally sold for high prices to make handles for daggers or to be ground to be used as medicine. Awareness is often the key to making a difference.



Educating children on the facts enables them to grow up with a sense of responsibility and compassion, hopefully modelled by the teachers, parents and adults in their lives. What better way to do this than through a story?

Hence **'The Unicorn's Wish,'** where imagination and reality come together.

The author:



I love stories. I love to read them and write them. Stories can take us places and introduce us to characters (real and imaginary) who become our friends and often teach us lessons about life. I live in Montagu, a pretty Klein Karoo town in the Western Cape.

'The Unicorn's Wish' is my fourth children's story.

You can find my other children's stories - **'Mulberry Bee,'** **'The Township Fairy,'** and **'Princess Carmen's Song'** - in the [KIDDIES' PLAYROOM](#) on my website: [Pause-Read-Engage](#)