

SOVIET WOMAN

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THE WHOLE COUNTRY TOGETHER

READERS' LETTERS

EXQUISITE PORCELAIN • FESTIVAL IN TASHKENT

GRACE AND AGILITY • MOTHER OF AREQUIPA



INTERESTING ENCOUNTERS

DEAR IMAGES

RAIM FARHADI

Drawing by V. Plevin

Ever since childhood he was such a clumsy, sluggish hippopotamus. What he liked most was to sleep in boggy water. One of his friends would often come to the edge of the bog and begin calling:

"Hippo! Hippo! Come on out, let's pla-y-y-y!"

For a long time he'd be silent, then he'd lift his head and reply—always in the same way:

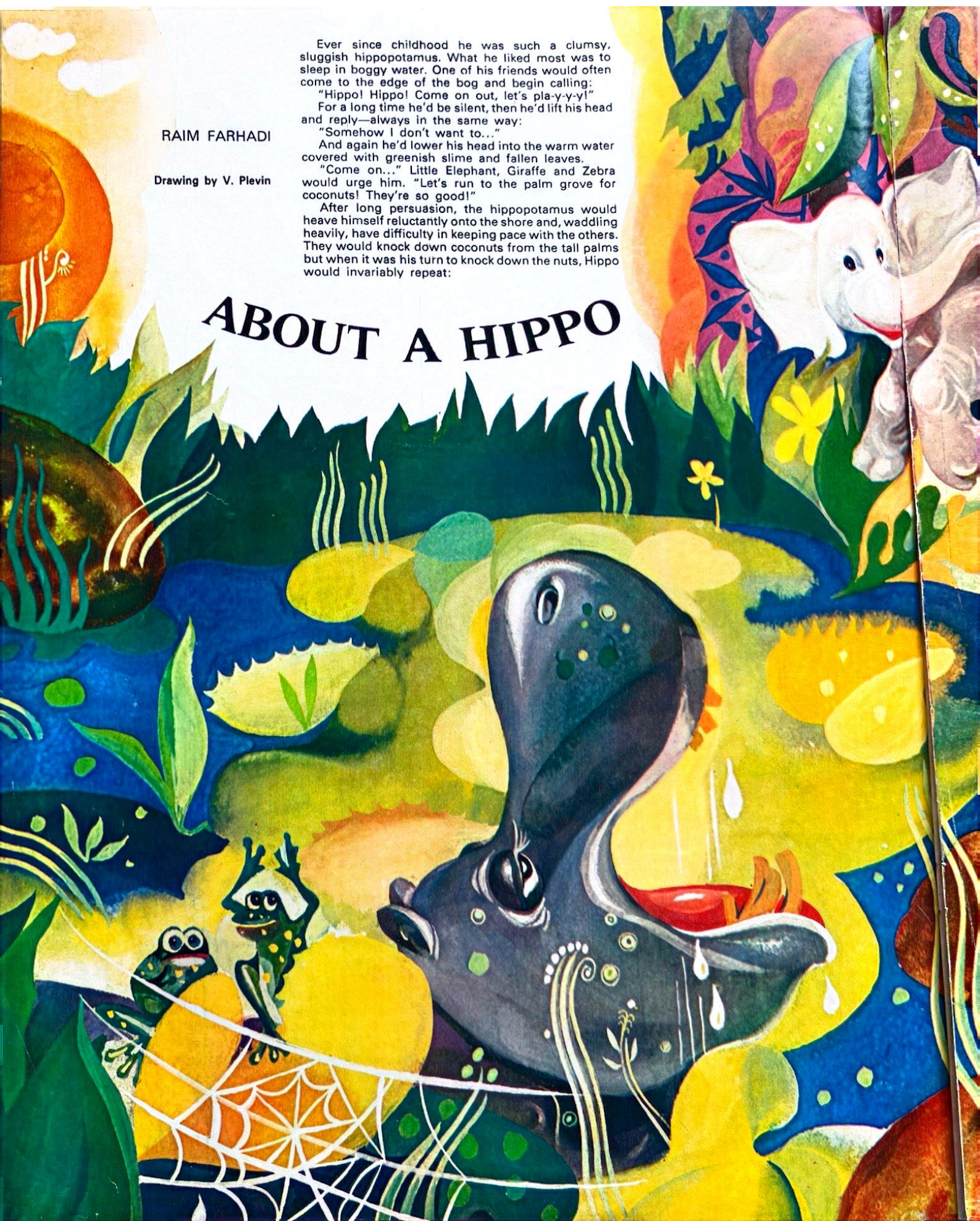
"Somehow I don't want to..."

And again he'd lower his head into the warm water covered with greenish slime and fallen leaves.

"Come on..." Little Elephant, Giraffe and Zebra would urge him. "Let's run to the palm grove for coconuts! They're so good!"

After long persuasion, the hippopotamus would heave himself reluctantly onto the shore and, waddling heavily, have difficulty in keeping pace with the others. They would knock down coconuts from the tall palms but when it was his turn to knock down the nuts, Hippo would invariably repeat:

ABOUT A HIPPO





CALLER "DONTWANTO"

"Dontwanto..."

"At least run a bit in the fresh air and jump!" his friends would plead.

But with every day Hippo would lie longer and longer in the boggy water, closing his eyes and listening while all around him pot-bellied frogs croaked away harmoniously.

His former friends, Little Elephant, Giraffe and Zebra, grew up and less and less often ran to the shore to call Hippo to come with them. And they nicknamed him Dontwanto.

Naturally, Hippo also grew but, in the main, in width. That is why he almost never climbed out of the water now. Imperceptibly, he became covered with slime and grass, and the frogs now fearlessly jumped all over his back and sang their songs.

One day Little Elephant, Giraffe and Zebra went up to the shore of the boggy lake to call to Hippo. But they saw a huge greenish hummock in the place where he usually rested.

"It's Hippo!" Little Elephant guessed.

"Really?" Giraffe stretched out his neck in amazement.

"It can't be!" Zebra said. "It's a marshy hummock!"

"Let's check," Little Elephant begged. "Let's call him. Hippo! Hippo!"

No one responded.

"No, it's not Hippo," Zebra exclaimed.

"Hippo! Come with us!" Little Elephant shouted as hard as he could for the last time.

And can you imagine!—the green marshy hummock heaved ever so slightly and replied:

"Dontwanto..."

"That's all that's left of lazy Hippo," the friends sighed and left.

People say that today, if you go up to a big bog and shout loudly: "Hippo! Come out..." some time later the marshy hummock covered with slime, leaves and grass, will respond faintly: "Dontwanto..."

Don't you believe me? Go there yourself and call as loudly as you can:

"Hip-po-po-ta-mus!..."

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