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Mrs. Hippopotamus

Mary Graham Bonner

"Ladies," said Mrs. Hippopotamus, "are often very vain. They care about their figures and about their looks and about their hats and about their shoes. They care about their dresses and they care about the styles, while I, the fine Mrs. Hippopotamus, am above such things.

I do not care if my legs are short and my body enormous and all out of proportion to my legs.

I do not care if my mouth is like a cavern—it is so large. I do not mind it that my skin is so odd, of a funny color with all sorts of little holes and marks and such all over me.

I have horribly oily stuff over me too, but I do not mind. What is more, there is great sense to that. That keeps me from getting ill when I go about rivers in Africa where there are all kinds of fevers and much sickness.

I have great teeth, teeth such as no lady would like, I'm sure. They like little white even teeth, silly little things. I'm above such things. I'm not ashamed of my teeth. I like them. They're good sensible, strong teeth. And I'm not going to worry because they're irregular. I'm not so vain as to long for regular teeth.

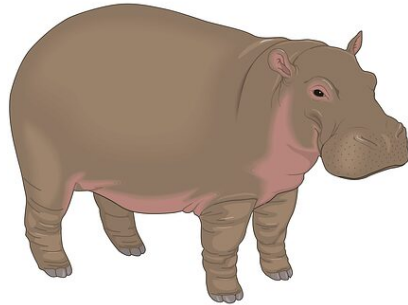
My teeth and tusks can act like scissors for they're shaped so as to act that way. That's better than having white even teeth.

I live in the water and there I go and look for my food. I don't go into silly shops and to market as ladies do.

But there is just one thing I feel in sympathy with ladies about—at least all ladies who are loving mothers—I can understand what it means to have a baby look at its mother out of its lovely baby eyes which are as beautiful as anything in the world. And I can see its love for its mother, and oh, my whole heart goes out with love for it.

Yes, sometimes when you see the great old ugly hippopotamus you must not only think of the ugliness but you must say, 'Back of that thick hide, behind that awful jaw and those hideous features, deep down in the heart of a mother hippopotamus there is love and devotion and the beautiful joy of giving of that love to one's own baby.'

For a baby hippopotamus is a baby to be loved by a mother hippopotamus."



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