

**Kifaru Discussion Guide**  
Pickford Film Center Doc-ED 2019

This film is nominally about the extinction of the white rhino in Africa. Yet it follows the lives of three young men (Jo-Jo, Jacob, and their supervisor James), over the years as they care for the last three white rhinos left on earth. In a sense, then, the film is really about connection: connection among the three humans, connection between animal and human.

The film takes place at the Ol Pejeta wildlife conservancy in Kenya, a location closely guarded by armed rangers. Here lives Sudan, the only surviving male white rhinoceros, and his daughter Najin and granddaughter Fatu. The goal of the conservancy is to keep these three animals alive long enough for scientists to find a way to clone their DNA.

Questions:

1. Why are the rangers armed?
2. Who is threatening the rhinos existence and why?
3. How do animals become extinct?
4. Are there any animals in the United States that are threatened with extinction?
5. What can we, as individuals and as a society, do to save them?
6. Who is more dangerous to animals threatened with extinction: rich people or poor people?

When we first meet Sudan, he is forty years old, which means he has outlived the average lifespan of his species. He is old and infirm and his caretakers treat him with great respect and attention. They feed him carrots in the morning and then free him to forage for vegetation most of the day within the walls of the conservancy. They rub his horn and give him mud baths. They guarantee his safe return to his pen in the evening.

Questions:

1. In every scene in the film, you see Sudan's caretakers. How is their survival dependent on Sudan's survival?
2. Why do you think the filmmaker includes scenes of Jo-Jo interacting with his pregnant wife or Jacob struggling to pay for his child's schooling?
3. What does it mean to say that humans and animals have a long history of co-dependence?

A baby rhino is discovered in the bush and taken to the conservancy for care. He is named Ringo and becomes the special ward of Jo-Jo. James is amused by Jo-Jo playful antics with Ringo, recognizing a special bond between the two. Sadly, Ringo dies after several months and Jo-Jo withdraws from the group of caretakers. When he returns, James visits him, expressing his concern for Jo-Jo's bereavement, but also reminding him gently that he has a job to do caring for Sudan.

Questions:

1. What do you think the filmmaker intend to illustrate with the story of Ringo?
2. What does Jo-Jo learn from James' treatment of him?

At one point, tourists are shown coming to see Sudan and the female rhinos. They take photos and mill around excitedly.

Questions:

1. How do these people contribute to the cause of rhino conservation?
2. Do you think the tourist have any idea about the depth of emotional attachment the African caretakers have for these rhinos?

When Sudan is dying, scientists rush to the conservancy to try to preserve his DNA.

Questions

1. What is in vitro fertilization?
2. What is cloning?
3. Can a dead animal reproduce life?