

Geraldine, the giraffe

Geraldine the giraffe was feeling really miserable. It had been a bad day. Geraldine had had a lot of bad days lately.

She wasn't like other giraffes. She had no spots.

Not a day went by without one of the other animals asking, 'Why haven't you got any spots?'

Usually she was polite and answered, 'I don't know why, I just haven't'.

One day a monkey passing by asked, 'Why haven't you got any spots?'

Geraldine gave her usual reply.

'So how do you know you're a giraffe?' he asked.

Geraldine had never thought about that before.

'I must be a giraffe', she said. 'I have a long neck like a giraffe. I walk like a giraffe. I eat the same things as the other giraffes. I just haven't got any spots, that's all.'

The monkey laughed and ran off to find someone else to play with.

It made poor Geraldine feel very sad and lonely. Even the people on safari didn't bother taking pictures of her.

'If only I had spots', she thought, 'everything would be all right.'

'I know', she thought to herself, 'I'll paint some spots on myself and then I'll look just like all the other giraffes.'

Geraldine set to work straightaway. She painted spots on her legs. She painted spots on her back. And, of course, she painted spots on her long neck.

When she'd finished, she really did look like all the other giraffes. She walked around with her head held high and felt so much better.

But then, a big dark cloud appeared and soon it began to rain. It wasn't long before all her hard work had been washed off.

'Why haven't you got any spots?' squawked a parrot who was flying up above.

'OK,' thought Geraldine, 'that was a bad idea. I need something that won't wash off. I know, I'll make a coat with giraffe spots on!'

She began cutting and stitching straightaway.

A few hours later, her coat was ready. She tried

it on and it looked really good. Geraldine was proud of herself and felt a lot happier.

But later, in the afternoon sun, Geraldine felt too hot in her coat and she took it off to cool down.

'Why haven't you got any spots?' growled a tiger who was passing by.

Geraldine felt so upset.

She hid under some large trees away from all the other animals and began to cry.

Just then, a horse came by and asked her if she wanted to play.

'No-one wants to play with me because they don't know what I am,' sobbed Geraldine.

'It's all right', said the horse. 'I understand.'

'How could a horse understand what it feels like to be a giraffe without any spots?'

'Because I'm not a horse – I'm a zebra without any stripes! Come on, let's go and play!'

Geraldine dried her eyes and followed the zebra.

'Does it make you sad?' asked Geraldine.

'Not any more', said the zebra without any stripes. 'It's not what you look like that's important. It's what you do that matters.'

Geraldine thought that the zebra was very wise and she was so happy to have made a new friend.

'Let's play hide and seek', she said. 'You hide and I'll count!'

