

# The Ugly Giraffe

Story By: Andrew Frinkle

Whitey was a weird-looking giraffe. His mother was the only one who never said so, but the rest of the herd sure commented on his appearance. Sadly, it was obvious that he wasn't as good-looking as them.

They were all tall. He was short. They all had long, magnificent necks, but his was short and thick. They had great spots, but he had stripes. They had slender legs with knobby knees, but he had thick, muscular ones.

He was weird. That's all there was too it. Sometimes it made him sad, but usually it didn't bother him. It was lonely not to look like the others, and it was often hard to get something to eat, because he couldn't reach the high leaves like the rest of his herd could.

One day, he was walking along with the herd, when he heard some of the other giraffes his age start laughing. He thought they were laughing at him, because they often teased him, but they weren't.

"What are you laughing at?" Whitey asked the others.

They snickered and nodded toward a pack of weird-looking giraffes. "Look at those goofy giraffes."

Whitey looked. They were short. They were white and black striped. They had short necks and thick, muscular legs. They looked pretty familiar. "They look like me!" Whitey wondered aloud.

"Hey, he's right." The other giraffes agreed.

Whitey found his feet moving toward the other weird-looking giraffes that looked like him. "Hey, I didn't know there were any other weird-looking giraffes around here." He called over to them.

"We're not giraffes." They called back.

"What are you?"

"We're zebras, just like you."

"Zebras?" Whitey looked at the other giraffes, who shrugged.

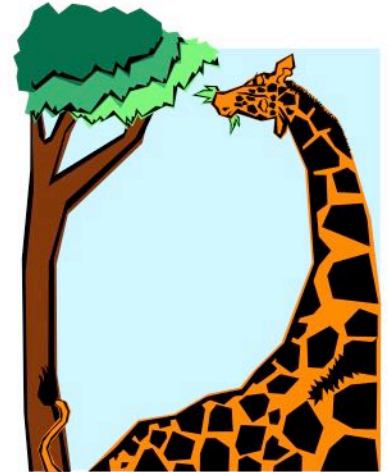
"What are you doing with those giraffes? Come join us." The zebras shouted over to him.

Whitey was confused. "Why?"

"Because they're weird-looking. They have ugly spots, knobby knees, awkward necks, and funny ears."

The other giraffes were surprised to hear the zebras think they were weird-looking, but Whitey realized then that everyone looks different, and 'normal' is a matter of opinion. Weird-looking and pretty were also opinions.

So Whitey said goodbye to his mother. She told him she'd taken care of him when she found him as a baby, and she wished him good luck with his fellow zebras.



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Use the information in the story to answer the questions below.

1. What kind of animal did Whitey think he was in the beginning?
  - A. A giraffe
  - B. A lion
  - C. A hyena
  - D. A zebra
  
2. How does Whitey feel about his looks?
  - A. He doesn't know he's different.
  - B. He likes looking different.
  - C. He hates being different.
  - D. He mostly doesn't mind, but sometimes he wishes he looked like the others.
  
3. What does Whitey see one day?
  - A. A pack of lions
  - B. A herd of elephants
  - C. A herd of zebras
  - D. A bunch of hyenas
  
4. What kind of animal was Whitey really?
  - A. A giraffe
  - B. A lion
  - C. A hyena
  - D. A zebra
  
5. What lesson does Whitey learn at the end?
  - A. His friends lied to him.
  - B. Everyone has opinions about what is normal or pretty.
  - C. Lions are dangerous.
  - D. Never trust your family.

## The Ugly Giraffe – Answer Key

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