

the new animal

* while telling the story, put the animal body parts together as each animal discovers how he is like the Zelmgid. Discuss the moral of the story with your children.

A new animal was coming to live in the zoo, and the other animals were excited. One morning a big truck backed up to an empty cage, and out stepped the new animal. The zookeeper hung a sign outside the cage that said, "Zelmgid."

The other animals stared in amazement. The Zelmgid did not look like any animal that they had ever seen. He had a long neck and a long tail, and when he opened his mouth, he barked. One by one the other animals turned away from the cage. Because the Zelmgid was so different, they were not sure how to treat him.

The Zelmgid was very lonely. The animals ignored him, so he had no one to talk to. He was so sad that he didn't eat. The zookeeper began to worry. People stopped visiting the zoo because the new animal was sad and the other animals hid in the back of their cages.

One day the elephant heard the Zelmgid barking to himself. "The Zelmgid does have a good trunk," he told the giraffe. "It's not as long as mine, but it's really quite nice." The giraffe stretched her neck to take a closer look. "Look at his strong neck. He can reach as high as I can."

The lion was looking quietly at the new animal's mane. "My goodness! He has an excellent mane - almost as thick as mine."

Just then the zebra trotted by the cage. "His coat has a very nice pattern," she said.

"And his horns are curved just right," the ibex said. "Just like mine."

When the monkey came swinging from the trees, he said, "Look at that handsome tail. I wonder if the Zelmgid would like to play tag?"

Finally the duck waddled by the cage. "What fine feet you have. You probably can swim faster than I can." she said to him.

The Zelmgid stopped crying and thanked the duck for the compliment. Soon all the animals were talking together. They felt much happier. Even though the Zelmgid looked different, the other animals had all found something about the new animal that they liked.