

The City Zoo Written and Illustrated by **George Comminos**. A wonderful tale about teamwork, the value of hard work and self-sacrifice.



The kind old keeper was popular at City Zoo. He never locked the animals up and they roamed the zoo visiting each other for a chat, or spent their days playing with one another. All the animals were fed and protected by their faithful zookeeper, who worked tirelessly to take care of their needs and keep the

zoo
running
smoothly.
Not many
people
visited the
zoo as it
was old
and in
disrepair
but all the
animals
lived
contented
and
extremely
lazy lives.

One
day
Billy
Big
Ears
the bat
was
hangin
g
around
the
zookee
per's
office
snoozin
g. Bats
like to
slumbe



r during the day. Nothing much happened at this zoo, so Billy was surprised to be woken with a start by the telephone ringing. "Hello, City Zoo," said the keeper, smiling. The keeper's smile left his face as he listened to the person on the other end of the line. "What will become of the animals? They will have to be separated and sent off to other zoos. I hadn't realized the zoo was that badly in debt. I could never raise so much money myself!"

The keeper listened intently and then, sighing sadly, he said, "Well, I guess the zoo will have to close, then." The kind old zookeeper, not knowing Billy was in the office,

put his head on the office desk and muttered to himself, "How will I ever be able to tell the animals this sad news?" Billy Big Ears silently soared through the open window of the office and rushed off to tell the other animals this shocking news.

Hearing Billy's story, the animals held a meeting with the Wise Old Owl as the chairman. "I now call this meeting to order," said Wise Old Owl. "The topic for the



meeting will be how to save the City Zoo." He hooted with much authority, "Does anyone have any suggestions?" The animals all fell silent as they concentrated on this problem, until many moments later, the bat Billy Big Ears piped up, "I know, we can find some money for the kind Old keeper and give it to him." The other animals all smiled and nodded in agreement, until Horrace Hippo, with a puzzled look on his face, asked, "What's money and where can money be found?"

By now the Wise Old Owl had heard enough; he knew the animals were not knowledgeable of the outside world but could not help feeling impatient at the time it was taking them to arrive at an answer. Puffing up his feathers as he always did when feeling exasperated at the other animals ignorance he hooted, "You don't find money! Money is something you earn by getting a job!" The animals all looked at one another, appearing none the wiser, and finally Percy Pelican rather timidly asked, "What is a job?" "A job is doing something useful to help others. Sometimes it's done voluntarily and other times special colored paper, called money, is paid to the worker," Hooted Owl, adding, "Money is what the zoo keeper uses to buy us the things we need."

The animals seemed quite satisfied with Owl's explanation. The answer to their problem was now obvious: they would all go outside City Zoo and get jobs. As the animals were of many different sizes and shapes, the meeting lasted late into the night as they discussed with the Owl the sorts of work that would best suit their individual attributes. At the close of the meeting the animals went to their cages to sleep and prepare for the big day that lay ahead.

The next day the animals rose early to start their first day at work. The keeper couldn't work out the reason for the animals departure, they had never desired to leave the

confines of the zoo before. He waved goodbye as they paraded out of the main gate, a puzzled look on his face. "Be sure to be home in time for dinner!" he yelled after them.



The Giraffes Gerry and Jenny went straight to the local telephone company. Their long necks and legs made them ideal for work on the tallest of telephone poles. Gerry and Jenny loved their new job, even if it did mean being tangled up in telephone cable occasionally .

The two cheeky chimps and Big Bertha the Elephant set up a car wash in a nearby car park. The nimble Chimps scampere d about scrubbing the dirty cars clean, making a game of the work at hand. Big Bertha, loading her trunk with water from a bucket, rinsed the soap suds off the now gleaming cars. The chimps and Bertha the Elephant made a great car washing team.





Horrace the Hippo spent his days working as a lifeguard at the local council swimming pool. The children at the pool were delighted at Horraces antics in the pool. Horraced loved his new job, as he was doing what Hippos love best: wallowing in the water and sunbaking.

Sylvia Snake spent her days helping a local plumber. Sylvia slithered down plug holes, helping the plumber clear blocked drains. This was hard work for Sylvia, but work a slithering snake could do well. The plumber was delighted with Sylvia's work and paid her well.





Percy Pelican worked for the Postal Service delivering air mail. Percy flew far and wide, his large bill bulging with mail. Percy loved flying low over the city, enjoying the view and meeting the people he had mail for. This was a fine job for a pelican, indeed.

Russell Rhino, heavy and strong with his big rhino horn, applied for work at a building firm. Russell was well suited to his new career, charging headlong through brick walls demolishing old buildings. Rhinos love to charge at things and to be paid to do this was a dream come true for Russell.





The Zoo's gorillas tried out for the local professional rugby league team. The coach was delighted with the two of them, and they found themselves playing as front row forwards. Needless to say, their team never lost a scrum and the other players admired the playing skill of the gorillas, often trying to emulate it.

At the end of each day, the animals made their way home to the zoo, tired but happy that they were secretly helping the keeper save the zoo from closing. All the animals gave their money to the wise old owl, who was their accountant, and he worked late into the night counting their hard-earned money.



Finally the big day arrived, and the animals gathered around the kind old keeper and presented him with the money needed to save the City Zoo. Needless to say the



keeper was overcome with joy and thanked the animals, adding, "Now I know what you all were getting up to when you left the zoo."

The animals raised so much money that enough was left over to renovate the zoo. The animals were no longer lazy; they liked to work and set about transforming the zoo. The keeper looked on in amazement as the animals made City Zoo beautiful. People of the city soon heard news of this and visited in great numbers, assuring the Zoo of its future. The kind keeper and all the animals lived happily ever after.

THE END