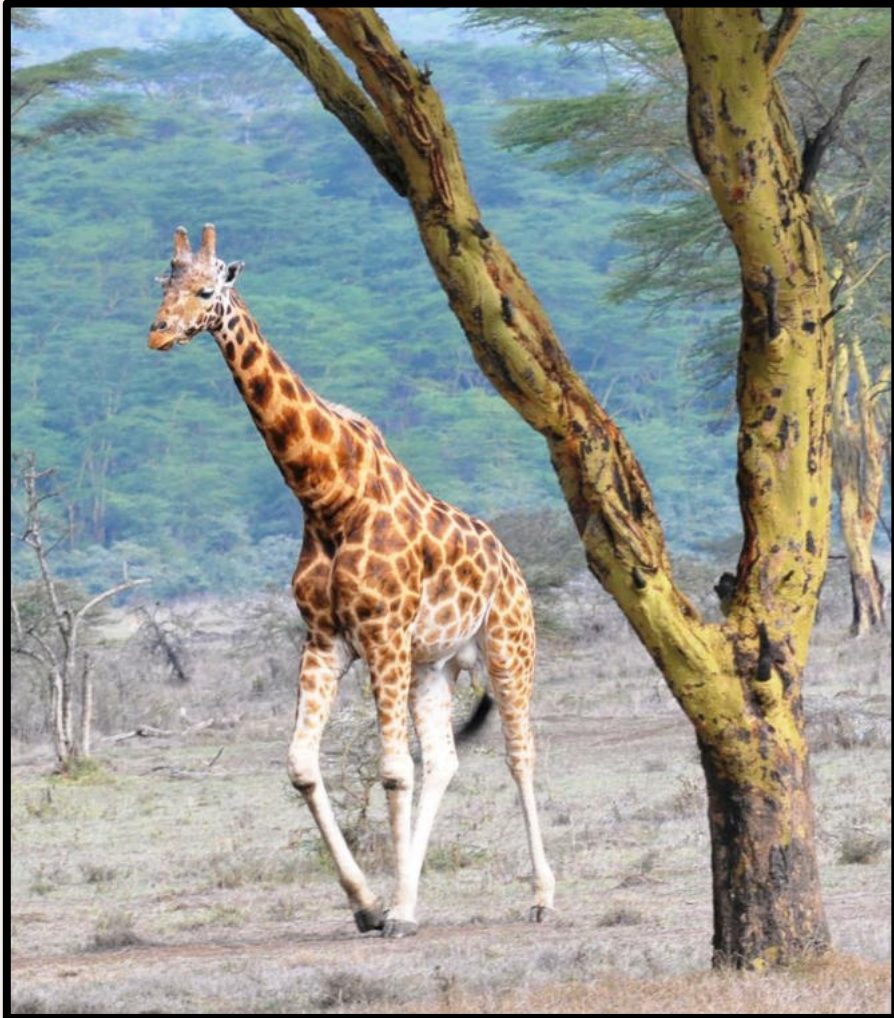




Jyoti has a Secret

Prishna the Giraffe



My name is Prishna and I am a giraffe. I live in the desert of Africa and I am a caregiver/mother who takes care of young giraffes. Many things can happen in the desert. Some are good, and some not so good. Today I am here to tell you about a problem of one young giraffe, Jiya, and how we worked together to solve it.



Darsha the Elephant

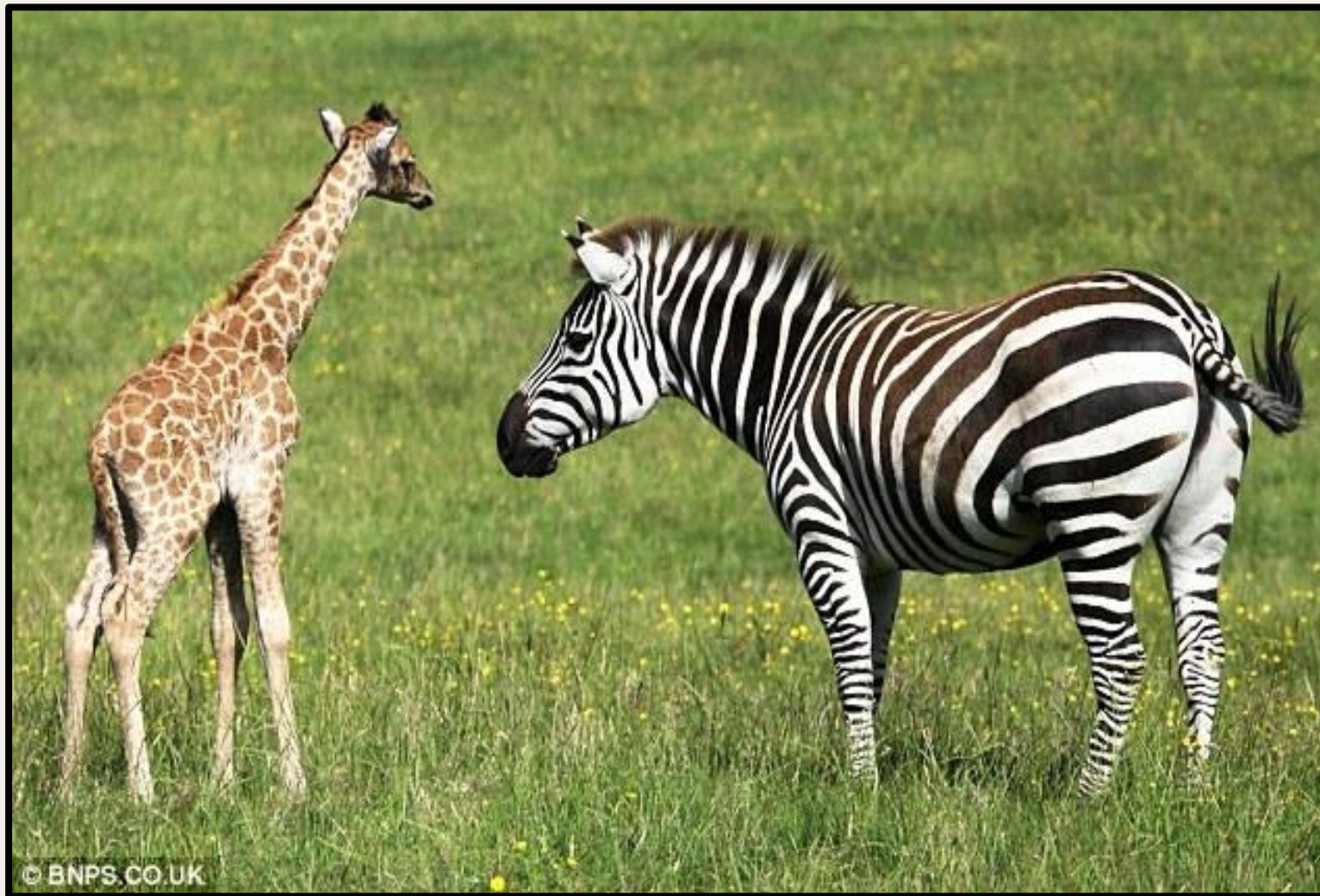


Mr. Rangan, Father/In-charge

One day I needed to take Darsha, the elephant, to the doctor. Jiya and the other young giraffes were doing their school work quietly. I told the lion, Mr. Rangan, who was the father/In-Charge that I needed to leave. He said his friend, Mr. Gupta the zebra could help the young giraffes with their school work while I was gone. Mr. Gupta had helped the giraffes before, and often came to meals and special occasions. I told Mr. Rangan, the father/In-charge, I would be gone only an hour.



Mr. Gupta



When I left with Darsh for the doctor, I saw Mr. Gupta helping the young giraffes with their school work and explaining a math problem to Jiya. When I returned I thanked Mr. Gupta for his help and asked how the afternoon went. Mr Gupta said that all of the giraffes had completed their school work and were now playing outside.



I then began to get the young giraffes ready for bedtime. I read a story and went around to tuck each giraffe into bed.

As I leaned down to tuck Jiya into bed, she whispered, “Can I tell you something?”

I asked, “Can it wait until morning?” Jiya hesitated and then said, “I think it’s important. It’s about the stuff I learned in Life Skills Education. You know, the stuff about touches and secrets?”

Jiya seemed very worried, so I asked, “You mean feeling uncomfortable about a touch?”

“Yes,” replied Jiya

“Okay, let’s talk,” I said.



“Well, after Mr. Gupta was helping me with my school work for a while, he started rubbing my neck. I didn’t like it. It made me feel uncomfortable and funny inside. He thought I liked it but I didn’t. I told him to STOP! He looked at me and said, ‘Don’t tell your caregiver/mother Prishna. She will get mad at you. It will be our secret.’ Something about this secret didn’t feel good or sound right to me. I turned away and went to my mango tree right away. I was *scared*, Prishna. Are you mad at me?” asked Jiya.





“No, you did the right thing,” I said. “No one has the right to touch you if you don’t want to be touched because your body belongs to you. You did everything the social worker in the Life Skills Education told you to do. You said ‘No!’, got away to a safe place, and you told someone you trusted. I am very proud of you. You were very brave.”

Jiya was still nervous and upset when she asked, “What are you going to do about Mr. Gupta?”



I said, “I am going to have a talk with father/the In Charge and tell him about what happened. Mr. Gupta doesn’t have the right to touch anyone who doesn’t want to be touched. Also, he should not have told you to keep it a secret. Secrets that make you feel scared or uncomfortable are bad secrets and shouldn’t be kept.”

“Thanks, mother/Prishna. I am glad I told you. I feel better now. It is good to know I have someone to talk to about things that bother me,” said Jiya, and she gave me a big hug.

Jiya did not look worried anymore when she said, “It’s good to know that I can take care of my own body and that I can tell you if something makes me uncomfortable!”



