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Tuishi Pamoja

A friendship under African skies

by Sandra Engelhardt & Martin Maria Schulte
(trans. Chris Richardson)

CHORUS ACTIONS
appear in text boxes
throughout the script

Scene One - The Story Begins

[OPTIONAL NARRATOR, dressed in African-style robes, with long stick to beat on the ground for attention.]

NARRATOR 1

Welcome! We're delighted to see so many of you here! We're going to tell you a story about an unlikely friendship, between two very different creatures. And now... listen up! The story's about to begin.

[Exit NARRATOR. GIRAFFES & ZEBRAS enter, some in groups, some alone. Some stand still, some walk around, 'grazing', or playing until the music begins. By the end of the song, ZEBRAS are grouped to Stage Left, GIRAFFES to Stage Right. Now and again, a bolder 'youngster' in each group - including RAFFI in the GIRAFFES - breaks away from the herd, but is brought back to the group immediately.]

HEY THERE! WELCOME ALONG! (© Track 1 / 11)

HEY THERE! WELCOME ALONG!
SHARE IN OUR STORY OF FRIENDSHIP!
HEY THERE! COME AND JOIN IN.
WELCOME ONE AND ALL.

Some beckon
with both hands

Some could beckon
with one hand, then
others cup ears

All spread arms

GATHER ROUND! LISTEN UP!
THEN WE SHALL BEGIN.
WE'RE GOING TO SHARE SUCH A STORY WITH YOU!
WELCOME, WELCOME EVERYONE!

HEY THERE! WELCOME ALONG... (etc.)

As before

Some could put thumbs up

All spread arms

WE ARE GLAD THAT YOU'RE HERE.
MAKE YOURSELVES AT HOME.
WE HOPE THAT YOU WILL BE GLAD THAT YOU CAME!
WELCOME, WELCOME EVERYONE!

HEY THERE! WELCOME ALONG... (etc.) X2

RAFFI strays further away

Finish all with arms spread

[RAFFI has strayed to Centre, and is looking across at ZEBRAS with interest.]

RAFFI'S MOTHER (calling to RAFFI) Hey, Raffi!

[RAFFI turns to look at MUM.]

What are you doing over there? Get back to the herd this minute!

RAFFI But Mum...

RAFFI'S MOTHER No buts! I've told you time and again, it can be very dangerous for little giraffes when they don't stay with the herd!

RAFFI (crestfallen) But I only wanted to...

RAFFI'S MOTHER (interrupting firmly) I know what you wanted! D'you think I haven't noticed you gawping at the zebras all the time?

RAFFI All I wanted to do was nip over there and see if maybe...

RAFFI'S MOTHER (sighs sympathetically) You just don't get it, do you! They won't talk to you! And they certainly won't play with you!
[RAFFI'S MOTHER goes to him. Other GIRAFFES begin to show interest, slowly approaching to listen in on the conversation.]

(puts her arm around RAFFI's shoulder) I'm sorry, Raffi, it's just the way it is. Zebras and giraffes simply don't mix. It's better if they don't talk to each other at all.

[ZEBRAS move Upstage, grouping together to look mistrustfully at GIRAFFES.]

Anyway... (points to ZEBRAS, laughs) just look at them, with those silly stripes! How can they go around looking like that? It almost makes you feel sorry for them...

RAFFI But they have children we could play with... Couldn't I just go and say hello, and then maybe...

[GIRAFFES, who are close by now, whisper, seeming to make fun of RAFFI. GIRAFFE 1 & 2 move to stand next to him.]

RAFFI'S MOTHER (shaking her head with a sigh) Oh Raffi, please try and understand...

[RAFFI'S MOTHER walks back to the herd.]

GIRAFFE 1 (teasing) What's that, Raffi? You want to talk to a zebra? (laughs) You must be joking! Who ever heard of such a thing?

GIRAFFE 2 (*beckoning*) Hey guys – listen to this! Raffi’s at it again; he wants to talk to the zebras!
[GIRAFFES burst out laughing. RAFFI visibly sags, shuffles offstage, or to one side.]

What an idiot!

GIRAFFE 3 (*still laughing and clutching ‘neck’*) Don’t make me laugh, you’re giving me neckache! Everyone knows that animals with stripes are stupid! How can we possibly talk to them?

GIRAFFE 4 (*laughing*) And the way they move the whole time...
(*capering like a horse*) ...with their pathetic little stumpy necks!
(*stops capering Downstage*) They just look so... well... so ridiculous!

[Laughing and pointing, GIRAFFES fill Centre/Downstage, some capering like horses to mock ZEBRAS, who respond haughtily.]

GIRAFFE SONG (Giraffes, Chorus) (Ⓞ Track 2 / 12)

MEET A GIRAFFE AND IT’S INSTANTLY CLEAR,
WE ARE THE ONLY REAL HEROES ROUND HERE.
NO-ONE’S A MATCH FOR US, WE’RE JUST TOO BRIGHT.
WE ARE THE GREATEST! THAT’S RIGHT!

High fives
on ‘That’s
right’

LOOK AT OUR SPOTS! WE’VE GOT OODLES OF STYLE.
WEARING OUR SPOTS GIVES US REASON TO SMILE!
NO-ONE’S A MATCH FOR US, WE’RE JUST TOO BRIGHT!
WE ARE THE GREATEST! THAT’S RIGHT!

GIRAFFES move
into 2 groups,
D/stage L & R
Point upstage at
ZEBRAS.
Regroup to fill
Centre stage, in
appropriately
brash manner.

BEING A GIRAFFE MAKES US ALL SO STRONG.
IT’S SO GOOD WE ALL BELONG.
HAVEN’T YOU REALISED YOU’LL NEVER WIN?
IF YOU’RE NOT ONE OF US YOU’RE NOT IN!
NO-ONE’S A MATCH FOR US, WE’RE JUST TOO BRIGHT!
WE ARE THE ONLY REAL HEROES IN SIGHT!
WE ARE THE ONLY REAL HEROES IN SIGHT!

[GIRAFFES, visibly in good humour, regather Stage Right, to ‘graze’ and interact. RAFFI appears again, shoulders drooping. ZEBRAS return to their original positions, Stage Left.]

RAFFI (*to audience*) I was only looking at the zebras! Talk about making a fuss over nothing. (*glances at GIRAFFES, who ignore him*)
(*shrugs*) Oh well, so long as it amuses them... I don’t care if they laugh at me. They’re just being stupid.

[Looks across wistfully at the ZEBRAS, but not at ZEA.]

Actually, I think stripes aren’t that ugly at all. Makes a change from spots all the time!

[ZEA steps out of her herd and looks across curiously at RAFFI, who meets her eye, then turns away abruptly.]