

# GIRAFFE JUICE

The Magic of Making Life Wonderful

BY JP ALLEN & MARCI WINTERS  
ILLUSTRATED BY TAMARA LAPORTE





# GIRAFFE JUICE

THE MAGIC OF  
MAKING LIFE WONDERFUL



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# WELCOME



Hi there! My name is Marvel and I'm the giraffe in the story you're about to read. I'm so happy you're choosing to check out this book because I wrote it for you...well...for you and for everyone.

I'm pretty sure you're a human...since humans are usually the ones who read books. Perhaps you're thinking, Giraffes don't talk!? Well... we don't talk the way people talk, but we do have our own special way of understanding each other...it's the reason we've been able to survive on the planet for thousands and thousands of years. Just like people, if we didn't know how to communicate we wouldn't be able to survive.

**I just wanted to let you know before we start, you can give this story to anyone you want for free. When you go to [GiraffeJuice.com](http://GiraffeJuice.com) I'll show you how to pass on the eBook in less than a minute.**

**Another cool thing you might enjoy is the Giraffe Juice Games Book that goes with this story. If you want to check it out you can download the eBook version for free at [GiraffeJuice.com](http://GiraffeJuice.com). There's more about this at the back of this book.**

I hope you have a great time reading this book and it helps you remember the amazing power you have to make life fun.

Your Giraffe Buddy,  
Marvel





~ 1 ~

# BARELY BALANCED



Wow! A magical crystal wonderland, thought twelve-year-old Eva Cassidy. From the warm coziness of her bed, she was delighted to discover that the frosty night air had transformed the grass in her backyard into a glittering fantasyland. It was an unusually cold spring morning in the countryside of Fairtown, South Carolina, and the freckle-faced strawberry blond emerged from the cocoon of her comfy covers. She felt an exciting feeling in her bones that something special was going to happen today.

As she gazed around her bedroom, her eyes embraced one of her

favorite companions in the whole wide world—her electric guitar, Blue Shine (that’s the nickname she gave her guitar because of its metallic blue color). Eva played left-handed, which is pretty rare, so her dad secretly had it handmade for her, and surprised her with it on her birthday. Blue Shine was leaning against the wall and she imagined it reaching out to her and inviting her to play.

Eva whispered to her special friend, “Don’t worry Blue Shine, you and I will have time to jam right after school.”

Eva jumped out of bed and noticed her big purple peace-sign sweatshirt peeking out from her bottom dresser drawer. *Perfect*, she thought. She pulled the oversized, colorful warmth over her head, stuffed her harmonica in her pocket, and followed her stomach downstairs for breakfast.

Eva tiptoed down the stairs very quietly because she remembered that her mom had been up late baking Easter cookies. Knowing that the last step creaked loudly, Eva jumped over it and unexpectedly landed right on her brother’s skateboard that was left out overnight. The next thing she knew it was too late. *OH NO!* Eva was hauling full-speed on an unexpected early-morning ride into the kitchen.

Barely balanced on the board, she went sailing headfirst into the fruit basket on the breakfast table.

—WHAP!—

Apples and oranges flew everywhere. She went tumbling with the peaches...smashed to the ground. *I’m in trouble now!*

Eva held her breath and froze, awaiting the groans and grumbles of her mom and dad upstairs. Her cat, Pumpkin, ran and hid in the corner. Neither of them moved. But to Eva’s surprise, her parents didn’t wake up. *Whew! Thank goodness.* Her eleven-year-old brother Bo was going to hear about this and it wasn’t going to be pretty.

Eva cleaned up the floor, fed Pumpkin, and then she munched down two big bowls of cereal with fresh organic strawberries. Eva thought to herself, *I wonder where I can find an egg carton to plant some seeds for my science project? I’ll bet there’s one in the old barn out back. Dad*

*loves to put old, used cans and bottles and things out there to be recycled.*

She quickly rinsed off her cereal bowl, put it in the dishwasher and scurried out the back door to explore.

Running down the big, steep hill in her backyard, she joyfully jumped over Bo's BMX bike ramp and did a spread eagle with her arms and legs reaching out into the air. *Yippie!*

She finally made it to dad's barn, which sat at the far corner of her big backyard. It was tucked away on the edge of a pine tree forest and there were no neighbors for miles. Dad had changed the tall barn into a workshop last summer, but lately he never used it because he was too busy at work.

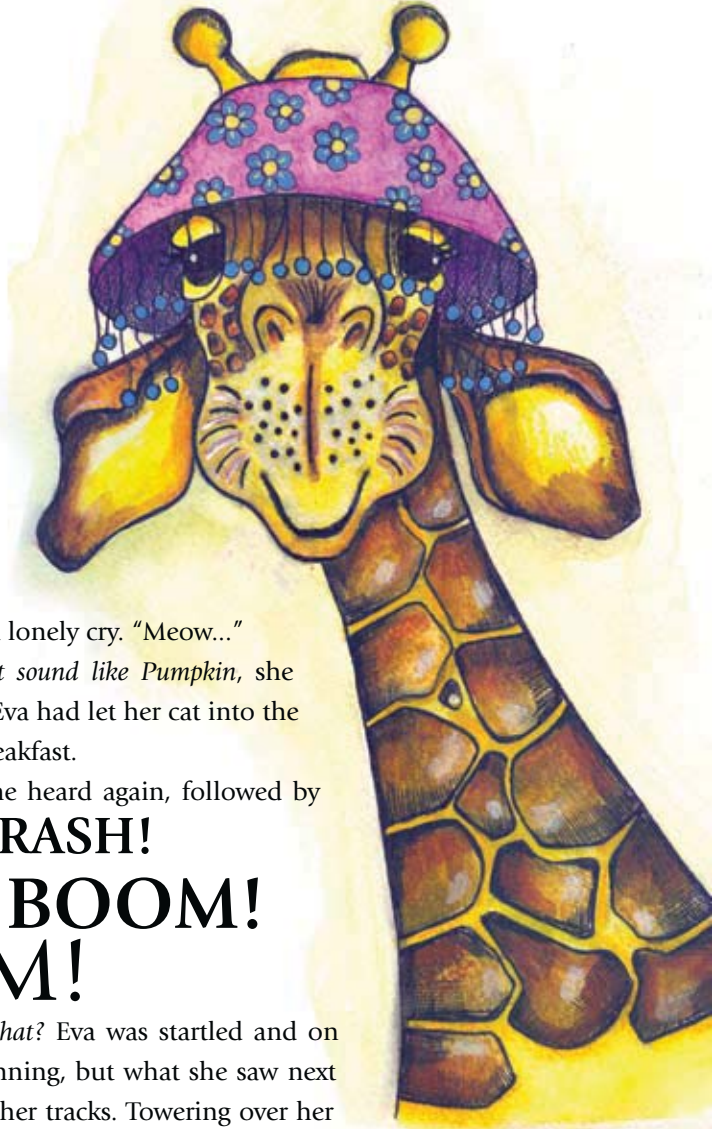
Feeling afraid to enter the darkness of the barn, Eva paused as she approached the doorway. The air smelled musty. She stepped over some stinky gasoline cans and lots of rusty old tools. All of the strange smells gave her the creeps.

She thought about returning to the safety of home, but something called her to enter...she knew there were treasures to be found. Little did she know the unexpected treasure she would find that spring morning.



~ 2 ~

## AN UNEXPECTED GUEST



Eva heard a lonely cry. "Meow..."

*That doesn't sound like Pumpkin,* she thought. Plus, Eva had let her cat into the house to eat breakfast.

"Meow," she heard again, followed by an abrupt **CRASH!**

**BOOM!**  
**BAM!**

*What was that?* Eva was startled and on the verge of running, but what she saw next stopped her in her tracks. Towering over her

was...it couldn't be...a giraffe? With a lampshade on its head...and meowing? *Giraffes don't meow.*

*No way! This isn't happening. I must be dreaming.* She blinked hard, trying to clear the sleep from her eyes. It was for real! There was a giraffe in dad's workshop...and he was big—really big. He wasn't full-grown, but he was clearly no baby. He was sort of tall and lanky, like a teenage giraffe.

Eva's mind was racing. *What is he doing here? And what's up with that dusty old lampshade on his head? Is he trying to hide? Yeah, right!*

The giraffe began backing into the corner. His long, bony legs bent and stretched awkwardly, looking like they could get tangled up at any moment. Clumsily, he managed to make it to the wall, where he tucked himself into a corner. Eva got the feeling he was really scared.

"Hi...uh...hi," the giraffe spoke, stuttering softly. "My...my name is..."

Eva fell over backward onto a bale of hay. *What's going on here? A talking giraffe? My brother must be playing a trick on me. Where are the video cameras?!*

"I'm lost," the giraffe said. "Would you help me find my mother? I'm scared."

Eva squeezed the harmonica in her pocket nervously, still not sure what was happening.

The giraffe looked really weird with the lampshade on its head. The silk string tassels that hung from the rim of the lampshade looked like windshield wipers as they swung from side to side over the giraffe's eyes. In spite of herself, Eva began laughing. The lampshade tumbled to the ground.

"Actually, I'm, um..." the giraffe said, "I'm out looking for my mom. She was transferred to a different zoo and I really miss her. I'm lost, and I'm not sure what to do."

Eva heard the fear and sadness in the giraffe's voice. She took a deep breath. "What was your name? I'm Eva."

"Well, my mom gave me the name Marshall..." he said, allowing his lengthy legs to take a few steps away from the corner, "...but

everyone calls me Marvel because I'm always marveling about how amazed I am by life."

Just a few paces and he was practically right in front of her. Looking down at Eva, he smiled from cheek to cheek showing his big giraffe teeth.

"I find myself wondering about almost everything Eva...even weird things like why this dog I know won't eat green Jell-O. Even now I'm wondering something...I'm wondering...what you're wondering about, Eva?"

"Well, I'm wondering what you're doing here and how you got here...Marvel? That's kind of a weird name, but it's kind of cool too..."

Eva released her tight grip on the harmonica in her pocket as she relaxed. "Gosh, the last thing I expected to find this morning was a talking giraffe in my backyard." The corners of her mouth rose in amusement.

"I've never met a talking giraffe before. Since when do giraffes talk?"

Marvel laughed, and as he did his long eyelashes fluttered. "Well, we talk in our own special way, but lots of people have forgotten how to listen. Mostly, only young people can hear me. I'm so happy you're listening."

Eva's eyes brightened.

"I am! And I think it would be fun to help you find your mom. Maybe we could break into the zoo and free her! And maybe you could both live here, and I could take care of you!"

Marvel took a deep breath and sighed, "I feel so relieved you want to help me." He closed his eyes and allowed his neck to rotate in a big, big circle.

"At the same time, Eva, I'm concerned that the people who run the zoo wouldn't be happy with our breaking in to get my mom. And even though sometimes I don't like living in a cage, I'm wondering if we can come up with a plan that works for the zoo people too."

Eva was surprised that Marvel cared so much about the zookeepers

who kept him locked up in a cage.

Eva clenched her fists and changed the subject. "There's this bully at school named Jip Jackal who locked me in a closet last week at school. I hope he gets expelled."

Marvel's eyes became soft and his ears began to wiggle gently as he listened.

"He's always pushing me and pulling my hair," she said, crossing her arms over chest. "I've tried everything to make him stop, but he won't."

Marvel began swaying his long body from side to side as he adjusted his back legs. Suddenly, his back end dropped. He appeared to be sitting down. Eva wasn't sure if he had lost his balance, or had deliberately sat down.

"Well, Eva," Marvel's calm voice made her assume that he hadn't fallen. "Are you frustrated because you've tried really hard to get Jip to leave you alone?"

Eva looked up into his big giraffe eyes. They looked deep, like the sky at night. She smiled. "Yeah, that's right. Thanks for listening, Marvel...I...I just don't know what I ever did to Jip to make him want to be so mean to me. We used to be friends. He even told me once he was embarrassed about his real name—Jaypeeski. And I've always kept it a secret."

Marvel spoke gently. "Are you bummed because you're missing your friendship with Jip?"

"Yeah. I guess I feel sad because we actually used to have a lot of fun together."

Eva was surprised at how comfortable she felt sharing so much with Marvel. The way he listened and understood seemed to melt something inside of her. Her eyes welled up. "You know, I actually feel better seeing that I don't hate Jip; maybe I just miss being his friend."

Eva walked over and began petting Marvel's fur. "Jip and I used to hang out at the park and he'd act like a monkey and tell me funny jokes. We laughed so hard together." She smiled at the memory, but then suddenly her smile vanished. "Well, that was before he started

hanging out with all his bully friends.”

Eva looked down at the ground but then suddenly her eyes lit up. “Do you want us to be friends, Marvel? We could make a buddy pact—I’ll show you how! Reach out your hoof.”

Marvel’s eyes twinkled as he put his hoof in Eva’s hand. He was wearing a big watch with a grape-juice-colored wristband. Eva tilted her head, becoming aware of how strange it was to have a giraffe in her dad’s barn that talked and was wearing a watch. She shook his hoof, performing the secret handshake she had learned from her best friend, Ike. The dawn’s rays poured into the barn as the sunrise seemed to smile a giraffe orange that morning.

After the secret handshake ritual was complete, Eva suddenly realized she still didn’t know the answer to an important question. “How did you get here anyway, Marvel?”

“Someone brought me here, but I’d rather not talk about it just yet because I don’t want this person to get in trouble for trying to help me. Is that okay, Eva?”

“Sure.” Eva got the feeling Jip Jackal might have something to do with it but she quickly changed the subject.

“Hey Marvel. Do you ever wonder why some people like to bully and other people like to be nice?”

Marvel paused and scratched his chin with his hoof. “You know Eva, I have wondered that...but I think about it a little differently. I listen to people talk from my cage at the zoo all day. Of course, they usually don’t know that I can understand them,” Marvel grinned and went on, “I’ve been trying to figure out why some people choose violence, when it seems to me that the thing people really love best is to make like fun and to take care of each other.”

As he walked past the workbench, his front leg grazed a corner, and a loud clattering of tools startled him.

He jumped back, almost tripping over himself. Realizing that it was just the sound of tools, he relaxed. Marvel planted his legs and stood as still as a tree. Stillness appeared to be the best way to keep his big, lanky body from bumping into things.



He cleared his throat as if nothing had happened and just as he was about to speak, they both heard a roar. "Eva! Where are you? It's time for school!"

It was Eva's mom projecting her voice from the top of the hill with her hands cupped around her mouth.

Eva rolled her eyes. "Coming, Mom!" She quickly looked over to Marvel and whispered, "Will you keep this a secret for now—you know, our meeting here?"

"Okay," Marvel agreed. For now it was their secret. "Will you come back and meet me here after school, Eva?"

"Of course," she responded with excitement.

"One more thing, Eva, if it's possible, could you bring me some green tea and a cinnamon stick? My mom and I used to enjoy it together on special occasions. I find it calming."

Eva skipped backward away from Marvel, keeping her eye on her friend for as long as she could. Before she turned and blasted out the door, she called out, "Green tea and a cinnamon stick. Cool. I'll try to hook you up!"

As Eva ran full speed toward the house her heart was pounding. She promised herself that she wouldn't tell anyone about Marvel. If Jip Jackal got wind that she was talking to a giraffe, he'd probably tease her about it forever.