

The Story of Grateful Gorilla

by Mrs Mann



Gertie the Gorilla had what you might call a “sunny disposition”. She was, by nature, cheerful and fun-loving, and very little in life got her down. Gertie lived with her family in a lush, tropical rain forest in equatorial Africa. She loved her forest home: the tall trees provided shelter and food, and the canopy was host to many different species of animals and birds. It truly was a beautiful place to live.

One particularly rainy day (and there were a lot of those in the rainforest, you can be sure) Gertie set out to find a playmate to join her at her favourite spot – the river falls. Gertie loved the thundering waterfall, which splashed down into the crystal clear water of the river.

“I wonder if my friends would like to join me for a splash about,” thought Gertie. After all, we’re wet already, so we might as well make the most of it!

The first animal she came across on her walk was Maxie the Monkey.

“Hi Maxie, do you want to come and play?” called Gertie.

“No thanks,” replied Maxie. “It’s too wet – I think I’ll stay up here where I can shelter under this big leaf.”

“Okay,” said Gertie. “That’s a shame though, as the rain is so refreshing, and I was planning to go down to the river to play in the waterfall. I figured I can’t get any wetter than I already am!”

“Mmm,” pondered Maxie, swishing her tail. “I suppose that’s true.”

“I am so lucky to have such a fun place to play on a rainy day,” smiled Gertie, and she skipped off in the direction of the river, leaving Maxie scratching her head and thinking hard.

Soon enough, Gertie came across Pete, the Poison Dart Frog.

“How’s it going Pete? Do you want to come and play?” asked Gertie. Pete scowled crossly.

“Another rainy day!” he said, rolling his eyes. “The forest floor is all wet and stinky, so I’m staying up here on this branch.”

“Just as well,” smiled Gertie. That damp, dark forest floor is home to all the insects you like to eat. You wouldn’t get much of a meal without it!”

“Mmm,” pondered Pete, flicking his tongue. “I suppose that’s true.”

“Aren’t we lucky that the forest provides all the food we need?” smiled Gertie, and she carried on towards the river, leaving Pete sitting on his branch and thinking hard.

Gertie had only walked for ten minutes more, when she came across her friend Suzie the Scarlett Macaw.

“Hey Suzie,” called Gertie, “Do you fancy coming to play in the waterfall with me?”

Suzie shook out her wings and moved her head from side to side. “Oh, I’m not sure,” she squawked, “I’ve just woken up. It’s such a boring, rainy day I took an extra nap.”

Gertie was surprised. “How can you be bored when there’s so much going on around you?” she asked. “Look – the butterflies are hatching from their cocoons, the beetles are burrowing, the flowers are blooming. What’s more, we have a beautiful waterfall to play in – there’s no time to be bored.” With that, Gertie hurried on her journey, leaving Suzie preening her feathers and thinking hard.

At the water’s edge, Gertie came across Percy the Pygmy Hippo enjoying the mud on the riverbank. She called to him as she approached.

“Hi Percy, fancy a splash in the waterfall?”

“Mmm – why not?” replied Percy and together the friends swam across the river to the falls. Suddenly there was a commotion from the riverbank and Gertie turned to see Maxie the Monkey, Pete the Poison Dart Frog and Suzie the Scarlett Macaw all jumping up and down and waving from the river’s edge.

“Wait for us,” Suzie called. “We’re coming to play.”

Gertie was quite surprised. “I didn’t think you were coming,” she said, with a puzzled frown.

“Well Gertie,” Maxie replied, “You made us all realise that we were wasting our time moaning and groaning. There is so much to be grateful for in our lovely rainforest home.”

“I’m glad you think so too,” smiled Gertie.

“Thank you for helping us to appreciate this rainy day and a chance to play with our friends,” said Pete. “From now on I think we should call you Grateful Gorilla.”

And the name stuck!