

Hi, I'm a giraffe. My name is Emerald. I'm not big on introducing myself. So I'll tell you about this part of my life. Not the pretty much boring part where I'm stuck in this place with a fence around it and I eat leaves all day. I occasionally sneak out beauty products from the people who come to see us giraffes, even though I'm already naturally pretty with my long lashes. But that's not the point. The point is, this is the part of my life where everything turns, um, well, *way* different. This is the part where I'm whisked off in a rolling machine (That's what I called it when I was little) or a 'truck' to this huge house. But that's just the beginning.

Hello, my name is Matt. I'm going to introduce myself a little better than Emerald did. As you probably do *not* know already, I'm Emerald's mate. Now, we're not a lovey-dovey kind of pair like Bob and Cindy, our cage-mates (I'll explain that later). No, no, we're more like a 'funny couple'. We play silly pranks on each other. Just to clear that up. Now, to explain the reason I said cage mates. I said that because this cage they put us in is outrageous! Sight-seers look at me like I'm some souvenir that doesn't eat, sleep, or pass gas. Why do people have to make me suffer? Sometimes my eyes are shining and I'm grinning from ear to ear about a good prank forming in my head, but other times I feel like am unable to breathe and that I could droop and scream in here.

Hi, I'm back. 'I' is Emerald. I was too busy listening to some people's conversations to write more. I said what I did earlier because I could tell it *was* the beginning. I overheard bits and pieces of conversations from the drivers of this truck I'm being transported in to understand that I'm going to live somewhere else with a new master. I have arrived, and this place is classy! The main house alone is about as big as ten of these humongous trucks (which are as tall and as wide as me with some room to spare). Pathways lead you through a bright garden filled with flowers in full bloom bursting with color. I just love flowers. They're so beautiful and graceful. The pathways are paved with those teeny bricks with a kind of glazed surface. My hooves go clippety cloppety clop on them like a horse's hooves. I am seeing all kinds of different outer buildings. I think that one on my far right the size of one of my trucks is the kitchen, by the smell of it. Some of these outer houses are connected to the main building by passageways, like the kitchen. One of the outer houses was a greenhouse. Others looked just like storerooms. I'll tell you more later after exploring more (and maybe planning pranks!).

Hi, it's Matt here now. I guess this house is not as outrageous as the cage. It looks perfect for planning pranks! I'm going to check out the kitchen on my right. It's HUGE! At least bigger than I'm used to. The smells in here are mouthwatering! It smells like foods I don't know about (delicious ones, might I add!). Oh, and here's the cook! He looks Italian! Oh boy, oh boy, oh boy! He looks nice! Oh, he's going to let me taste the Italian dishes! Oh, boy! Num, num, signing off!

Emerald back again! I found all kinds of stuff in the storerooms! I found old bikes, new bikes, balls, toys of all kinds, and layer upon layer of dust.

Oh, here's my master calling Matt and me with her high pitched, ladylike voice, "Emerald! Matt! Time for diinner!" Matt ran there like it was the end of the world. I followed more slowly, contemplating all that I had heard and seen from the time in that truck on, until now. I guess this is, um, pretty cool!

I entered the dining room now. It looks fancy with the huge, complex chandelier on the ceiling. Its crystals were shimmering and glimmering in the light. The table was long and made of hard, shiny wood that looked possibly like cherry wood. All very expensive, I presume. Matt looked ready to dig in, but I flicked him with my tail to remind him of his manners. But when I looked at the table, I couldn't stop my mouth from watering. There was pizza, mac-n-cheese, bread and butter, shish kebab, burgers, fries, tall glasses of fruit drinks, soup, casserole, and many other dishes spread about the table. Matt knew they would bring in dessert after that, so he told me to keep part of my stomach empty. We dug in, and it was good. But the dessert, oh the dessert was thick chocolaty cake with the words, "Welcome to us, Emerald and Matt" written in pink and blue icing. It was delicious, and filling. We were shown to our bedrooms, and I slept in my huge, soft, pink bed. Good night, sleep tight, and don't let the fleas bite.

Matt here. This bed is nice, but my sensitive ears are picking up sounds of someone stomping around and clinking and rattling things. I'm going to check it out. Ugh, my hooves are

too loud! This is annoying. Oh, the person is running! And, they're gone. Better not disturb my masters and go back to my big, huge, blue bed.

The following night, I awoke to the same noises, except *way* louder. So did Emerald, because she came out of her bedroom at the same time I did. She asked me quietly, "What's going on?"

I answered, "I don't know. I heard this last night."

She took one step out of her bedroom, and then stopped. "It echoes too much," she whispered.

"I know," I answered.

She backed into her carpeted room and flicked her tail for me to follow here. I walked very slowly into here room and she shut the door softly. She then said, "When I walk on the carpet, it doesn't make a sound. But when I walk on that marble floor, you can hear my footsteps all the way in Connecticut. So, I think we need to use something like sponges on our feet.

I was impressed. "That sounds like a great idea! I'll try to get some," The following day, I paid a visit to the kitchen. This was my lucky day! I found a stack of eight sponges and a bunch of rubber bands. I grabbed all the sponges and some rubber bands and planned to make my escapade. Unfortunately, the cook entered at that precise moment. I was prepared. I stood in front of my stuff and bared my teeth and tried to growl.

He said, "Sure you can have that, Matt. I don't mind," I licked him and left. I went to Emerald's room and entered. She was putting on makeup.

When she was putting on hoof-polish, I asked her, "Do you have black hoof polish? I want to look good, too!" So I put some on. I admired myself in the mirror while she put on her lipstick.

Two giraffes exited a room at midnight. They wore sponges attached to their hooves with rubber bands. They listened for sounds. They heard stomping and clinking, so they went in the direction they heard it coming from. They walked down the stairs and stopped in front of the door that hid the source of the noise. Both giraffes were having anxious thoughts. The female was wondering what was in there and how they were going to handle it. The male was wondering why he ever participated in this. They looked at each other, then the female opened the door very slowly and entered with the male strait on her heels. The room was a mess! Necklaces and shiny bracelets were strewn across the floor, and brooches were piled against the walls. And there, in the corner, was a man ransacking the drawer that stood there. Moonlight leaking from a large window bathed the area with a bright, white light, and exposed him.

Then things happened in a flash. The female hurried to the man, grabbed him by the seat of his pants, and carried her screaming bundle, still holding jewels, to her masters' bedroom. The male opened the door, and woke the masters. They looked at the thief and the jewelry, then got out of bed, tied him up, and called the police. Flashing lights appeared out the

window, indicating they had arrived. Policemen filed in, with their weapons raised. A policeman exclaimed in surprise, “We’ve been tracking him for *five* years! You’ll get a big reward for finding him,”

“Oh, but we didn’t find him! Out giraffes did!” Boy, did that policeman sure get a shock when two giraffes stepped out from the dark shadows. He fainted from surprise.

Emerald, again. So, after that interesting happening, Matt and I were heroes. Video cameras and interviewers piled in and piled out as fast as they could go. One moment we were celebrities, the next, we were ordinary. Here I am now, in what I call my “normal” life now, and I have a feeling this is just the beginning of my life here.