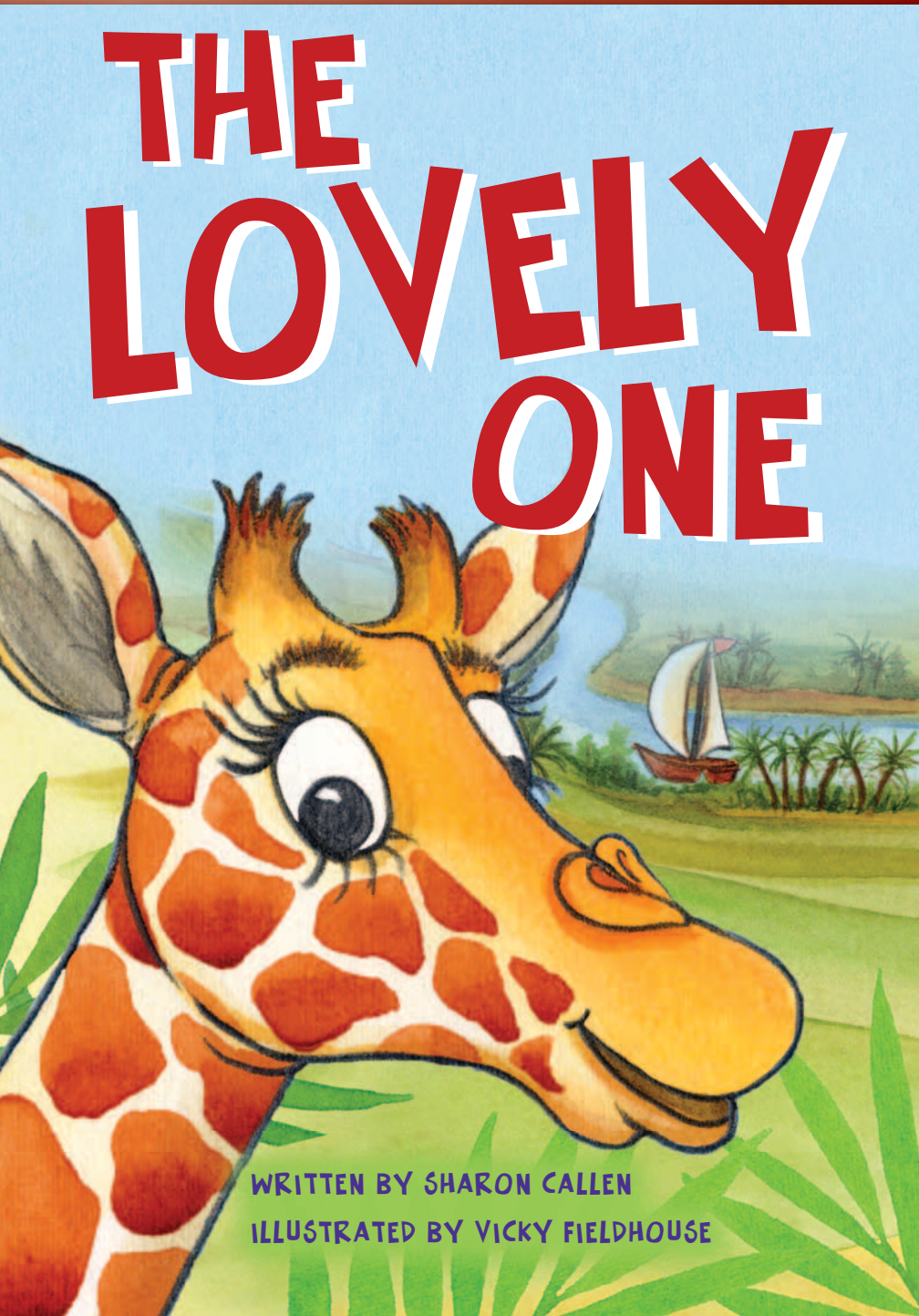
THE LOVELY ONE



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Chapter One

BELOVED

When Beloved's mother first saw her lovely baby giraffe, she looked at its four strong legs. She said, "Those legs will take you on wonderful adventures." She looked at her baby's lovely big eyes and said, "Those eyes will see amazing things."

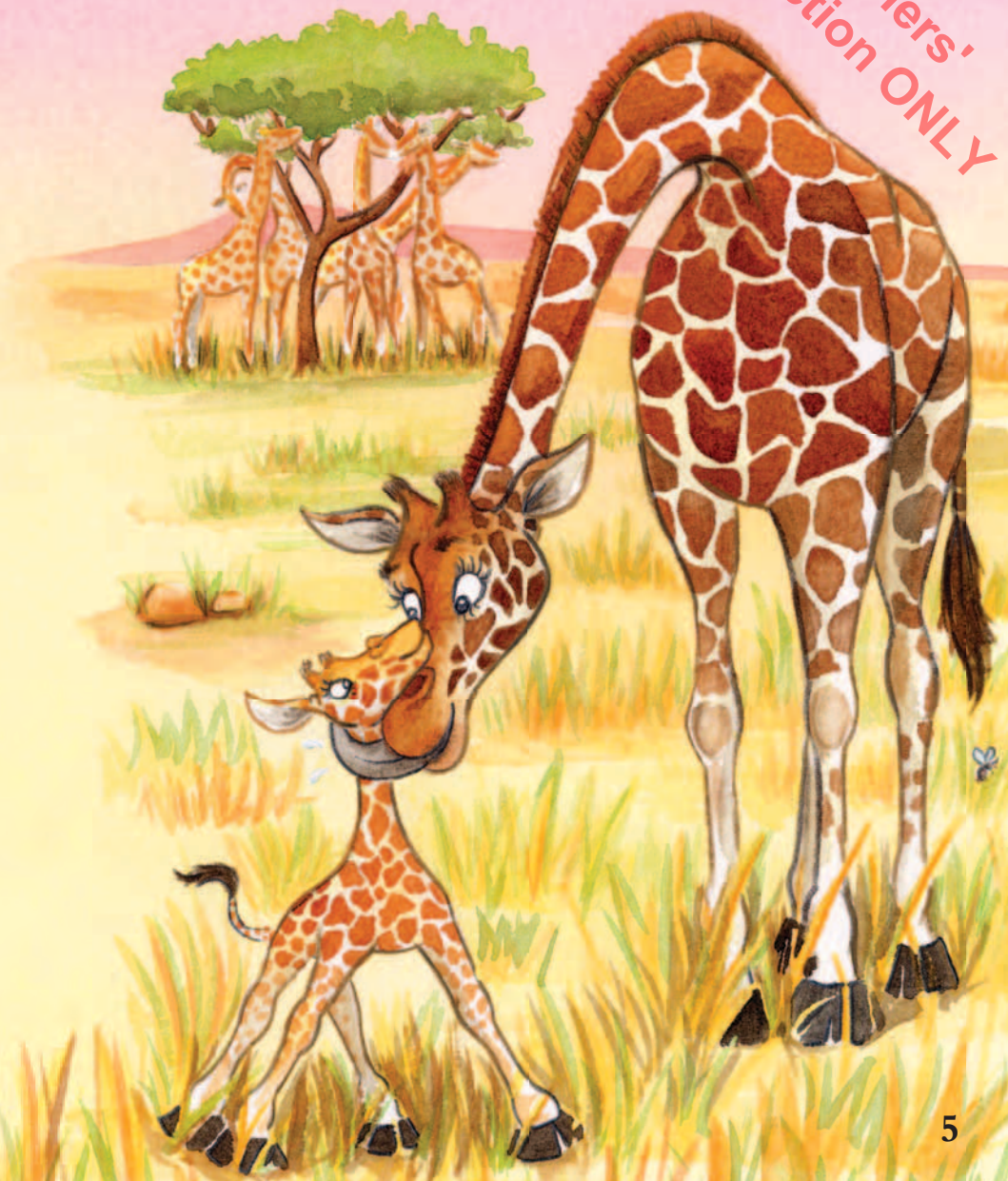
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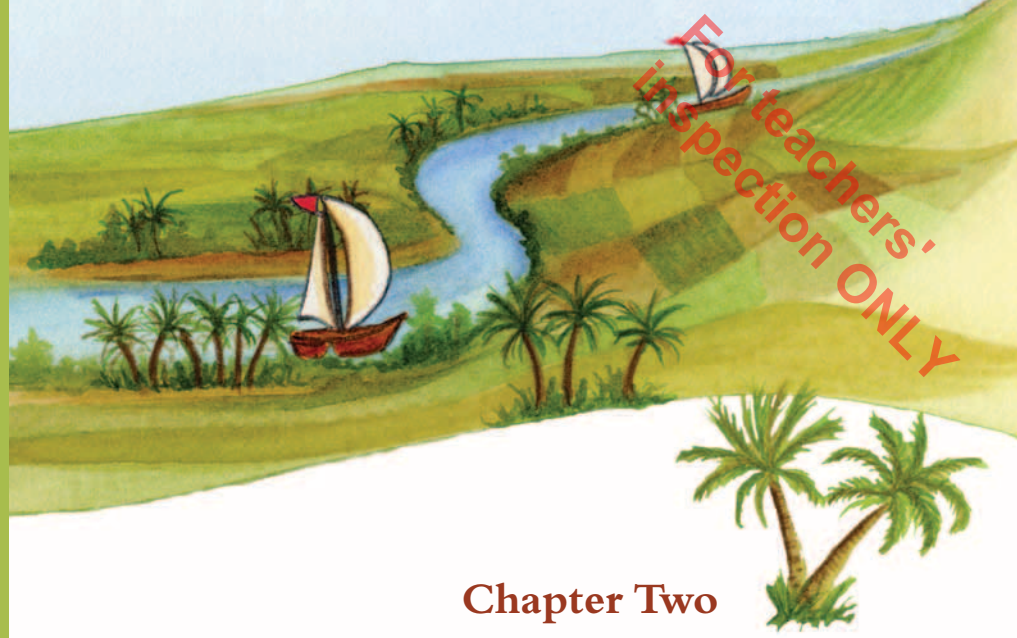
She watched her baby sleep on the first night after she was born. She murmured, "My baby is so sweet and dear. I will name her Beloved because she is. And she will be beloved forever."

Beloved was a tangle of legs when she first tried to walk. On her first day, she learned to stand without falling. When she stood next to her mother, Beloved was already as tall as her mother's hips. Beloved's mother taught her to stand tall, to know that she was beautiful, and to be kind.

Beloved and her mother spent all their days and nights together. Sometimes, they went walking. Sometimes, they went exploring with the other giraffes. Sometimes, they just watched what was happening around them in the beautiful highlands of Africa.

All the other animals admired the giraffes. No other creatures had such long necks, long legs, or long tongues!





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Chapter Two

AN AMAZING PLAN

The General of Egypt wanted to give the King of France a very special gift that would help unite their countries. The general asked his advisor what the king would like more than anything else in the world.

"There is nothing more beautiful than a giraffe," his advisor said. "The King of France has never seen a giraffe. Let's send him one!"

"Hah! We live in Africa. France is on the other side of the world!" said the general. "How can a giraffe go from Africa to France?" he asked.

"I think I have a plan," replied his advisor. "The first step is to choose the loveliest giraffe in Africa."

"What about Beloved? She is said to be the loveliest giraffe ever," said the advisor's assistant.

"Fetch her!" said the general. And so the advisor and his assistant traveled to the deepest parts of Africa to find Beloved.





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