

THE MIXED-UP CHAMELEON

by Eric Carle

On a shiny green leaf sat a small green chameleon.
It moved onto a brown tree and turned brownish.
Then it rested on a red flower and turned reddish.
When the chameleon moved slowly across the yellow sand, it turned yellowish.
You could hardly see it.
When the chameleon was warm and had something to eat, it turned sparkling green.
But when it was cold and hungry, it turned grey and dull.
When the chameleon was hungry, it sat still and waited.
Only its eyes moved - up, down, sideways - until it spotted a fly.
Then the chameleon's long sticky tongue shot out and caught the fly.
That was its life.
It was not very exciting.

But one day... the chameleon saw a zoo!
It had never seen so many beautiful animals.
The chameleon thought: How small I am, how slow, how weak!
I wish I could be big and white like a polar bear.
And the chameleon's wish came true.
But was it happy? No!
I wish I could be handsome like a flamingo.
I wish I could be smart like a fox.
I wish I could swim like a fish.
I wish I could run like a deer.
I wish I could see things far away like a giraffe.
I wish I could hide in a shell like a turtle.
I wish I could be strong like an elephant.
I wish I could be funny like a seal.
I wish I could be like people.

Just then a fly flew by.
The chameleon was very hungry.
But the chameleon was very mixed-up.
It was a little of this and it was a little of that.
And it couldn't catch the fly.
I wish I could be myself.
The chameleon wish came true.
And it caught the fly!