

Raw Meat

by Jake Barnes

I took Annie to the zoo, and the tigers got out. The little tigers, that is. Cubs. Two of them. The zoo employees scurried about, peeking into nooks and crannies.

Where could they be? Lost? Stolen? Call the cops. Check lost and found.

Meanwhile we wandered around. We peered over the rails at the gorillas. “The go-rillas,” I pronounced it. She chuckled. We watched the keepers feeding the lions. Raw meat. The ones who got fed first ate; the others roared in indignation.

My friend thought the polar bears were cute, the baboons yukky. We both liked the elephants. She oohed and ached at the giraffes. She adored giraffes, she said. I hate giraffes, but I didn't tell her that. So ungainly. Misshapen, really.

At closing time, we walked toward the exit. A zoo employee was standing near the gate. She was showing the tiger kittens to a woman and two small children. Found them in one of the out buildings under a pile of hay. We stood there gawking at the little beasts. They were fizzing with energy. Feral, wide-eyed. The air crackled with their vitality. The air smelled like ozone.

