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's 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. I asked her if she had ever seen an elephant with an erection. “I have,” I said. “It's enormous.”

Later on we got into an argument, and there went my plans for the evening. I wanted to go back to my apartment and do the big trick. She said uh-uh, shook her head.

She brightened when we got to the field where the giraffes were kept. She adored giraffes, she said. I hate giraffes, but I didn't tell her that. So ungainly. Misshapen, really. I looked at my watch; almost 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.

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