

# what are our motives

by Sara June Woods

We were sitting in a cafe, by the window, and you were trying to tell me something, but I was distracted, watching a road construction crew across the street. *He has been in intensive care for the past week*, you said. The men in their orange vests had taken cables from their truck. They attached it to something in a manhole. *I want to visit him soon. I think we both should go.* I stirred my coffee idly. The men began to haul an anaconda the size of a tree trunk out of the sewer. *Do you think that's a good idea*, you said. *Sure*, I said, as the men coiled up the anaconda and put it in a second truck that had arrived. *You don't think anyone will wonder what our motives are?* The men got the snake in the truck. It seemed to be dead, or possibly tranquilized. *What are our motives*, I said. The second truck sped away and a third one arrived. I sipped my coffee. You said, *well, you know I don't mean anything but the best, he and I were always so close.* The men opened the third truck and began to pull out a second snake, this one a boa, maybe half as thick, but easily twice as long, and clearly alive. The waitress came and brought you a second coffee. *But you know, there's still what happened with Carol. They'll think we're these horrible people, and I don't want anyone to think we mean anything but the best.* I took another sip. *I don't think anyone will think that. He and you were always so close. They all know that.* The men had gotten the new snake, the boa, halfway into the manhole, but seemed to be struggling as the snake tried to slither backwards through the grip of the cables and the men's hands. *I suppose you're right*, you said. *I just worry.* The crew finally got the snake in the manhole, the third truck left, and they began cleaning up the worksite. My coffee was nearly gone by this point and I noticed something in the bottom of the mug. *I know, but I think it'll be fine*, I said, as I fished the thing out with a spoon. *What in the world*, you said. I poured the contents of the spoon onto a napkin. A little mouse corpse, brown and wet, lay there between us.

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