

I went to the zoo earlier this week and I started thinking about what it would be like if the animals went crazy and broke out of their cages. This is it. Please Enjoy.

The Zoo

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The air was stale and thick, pressing down into the family's lungs with force. It should be one of the most exciting days of the little boy's young life, but something was off. Even the majestic creature beyond the cold glass couldn't take his mind off the eeriness of the world around him. *King Cobra or Snake Eater*, the sign read. It was his favorite of the all the snakes, he'd been excited to be standing in this very spot for a month. Though now that the time had come, all he could feel were pangs of anxiety.

Meeting the eyes of the Cobra beyond the glass, the little boy wondered if the snake knew he was staring at him. The Cobra began moving, raising its head slowly and the boy took a step toward the moving his head forward until his nose was touching the display. Somewhere in the background he could hear his parents calling to him, but the words were nothing more than distant mumbles. As it rose the snake reminded him of the ones in the movies when the charmer would play music and call it out of its basket. It danced back and forth hypnotically, with its eyes firmly locked on the boys own until finally it stood still and expanded its hood.

His heart pumped and his stomach was slowly dropping as he stared at the creature. Behind him, he could hear the echoes of animals speaking with all the different voices God had given them, and people talking and yelling loudly. Yet, it all seemed to be coming through earmuffs. Once the Cobra's hood was fully expanded the little boy understood why it had been named the King of snakes. Had he not known better he would've thought he was lost in the eyes of the Devil himself.

The Cobra lunged at the glass where the boy's nose was pressed and it made a loud cracking noise. Falling backward the little boy thought he was going to throw up. Instantly, the invisible earmuffs that had been cloaking the sounds of the zoo fell away. Panic screaming and the sounds of angry animals flooded his mind. He jumped to his feet staring at the broken glass holding in the Snake Eater and again it lunged, cracking the glass in two more places.

As he turned around he saw movement on the ground and joined the rest of the people who ran out of the reptile house as a Green Viper almost slithered over his foot. He looked around in a panic, people were running and shoving each other and there were patches of blood on the ground with bloody footprints leading in every direction.

"Mommy! Daddy!" He screamed. Where could they have gone? Slowly he took a step forward toward the herd of people trying to escape. He knew they wouldn't have just run away without him, would they? Maybe they couldn't find him and panicked trying to escape with the rest. Thinking back on the day the little boy couldn't quite remember the details. It was as if a heavy fog was clouding his short term memory. He thought he could remember walking with them to the reptile room, or had he run off to see the snakes?

From the bushes next to his right something shot out in front of him. The boy turned to run back toward the reptile house before remembering the moving ground-full of venomous snakes. Turning back to face whatever adversary this strange day had placed in his path, he saw a llama chasing the people ahead.

His stomach was threatening to eject the hot dog and french fries he'd had for lunch, and the way his heart pounded he thought it may come out with the food. Frightened noises and screams were coming from somewhere behind him, beyond the reptile house, and the panic finally won him over.

Running into the crowd of people, he stared into every face he passed hoping to find the familiar face of his mother or father, side-stepping the large patches of blood as he did so. A little further into the herd of people he had to be careful not to step on the fallen humans who'd not been fast enough and now lay trampled. He was small and quick, making it easy to weave through the frightened people who ran toward the exit gate of the large zoo.

Above his head, he could see giant, colorful birds circling various areas in the park and he was even happier to be near the ground. Close behind him screams erupted and he turned in time to see a gorilla tear a small girl in half and bite off most of her head as if it were a soft piece of candy. There was a sour burn in the back of his throat and he clenched it tightly, as the image of the small girl tearing in two played on repeat in his mind.

He kept moving and that same hazy fog seemed to fall over him, his heart beat harder than it ever had in his short life and he kept putting one foot down after the other, trying to stare into every face he passed. The thought that one of the poor, squished people on the ground could've easily been either of his parents had already crossed his mind, but he decided he wouldn't believe that. He was sure they'd just gotten separated and that all he had to do was make it to the exit and there they'd be, waiting with tears in their eyes.

The little boy continued fighting the nervous urge to vomit as he tried to focus on only his parents, with his instinct and will to survive pushing him forward. Nothing more than a frightened animal among animals.