

CEDAR FALLS ZOO

by Sienna Swan

In the city of Cedar Falls, there was a big zoo, and in that big zoo, there were some small animals. These animals weren't in cages, and they weren't fed and cleaned and looked at like the other animals. They were spiders, and they were the workers that kept the zoo running nice and smoothly.

Every morning, these spiders would grab their briefcases and put on their hats, and would file off to work, one after another in a single file line, each stopping off at the cage they were assigned to. Cedric was stationed at the elephant enclosure by the entrance, while Lance was in charge of the petting zoo by the merry-go-round. Rachel kept watch over the gazelles and impala, while Daphne spent her days with the whales and dolphins. Every day they would go to their spots, and every day they would climb up into their web, sit in the middle, and wait.

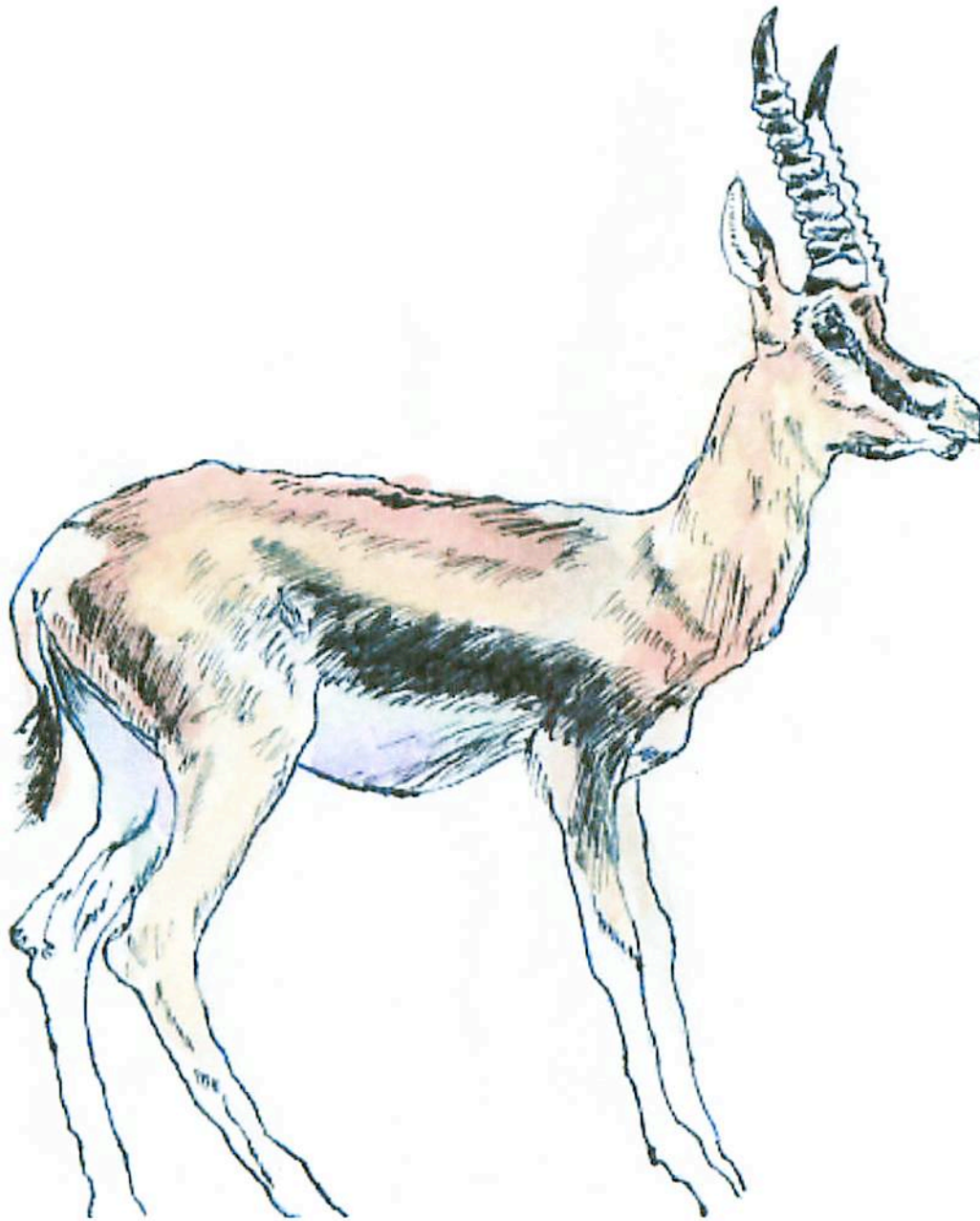
As soon as the sun appeared, the flies would start to descend, and soon enough would begin to bug the zoo animals. They would fly into the elephant's ears, and every morning Sandy the elephant would shake her head and laugh. "That tickles! Uh ha..Uh haha! Quit it!" Sandy would chortle, and every morning Cedric would come out from behind the water tank and would eat all the flies.



The flies would climb into the pig's eyes, and every morning Fergus the Pig would squeal. "WHERE ARE MY SPECTACLES! THESE CURSED FLIES ARE IN MY EYES AGAIN!", and every morning Lance would scuttle down from the ceiling and crunch all the flies.

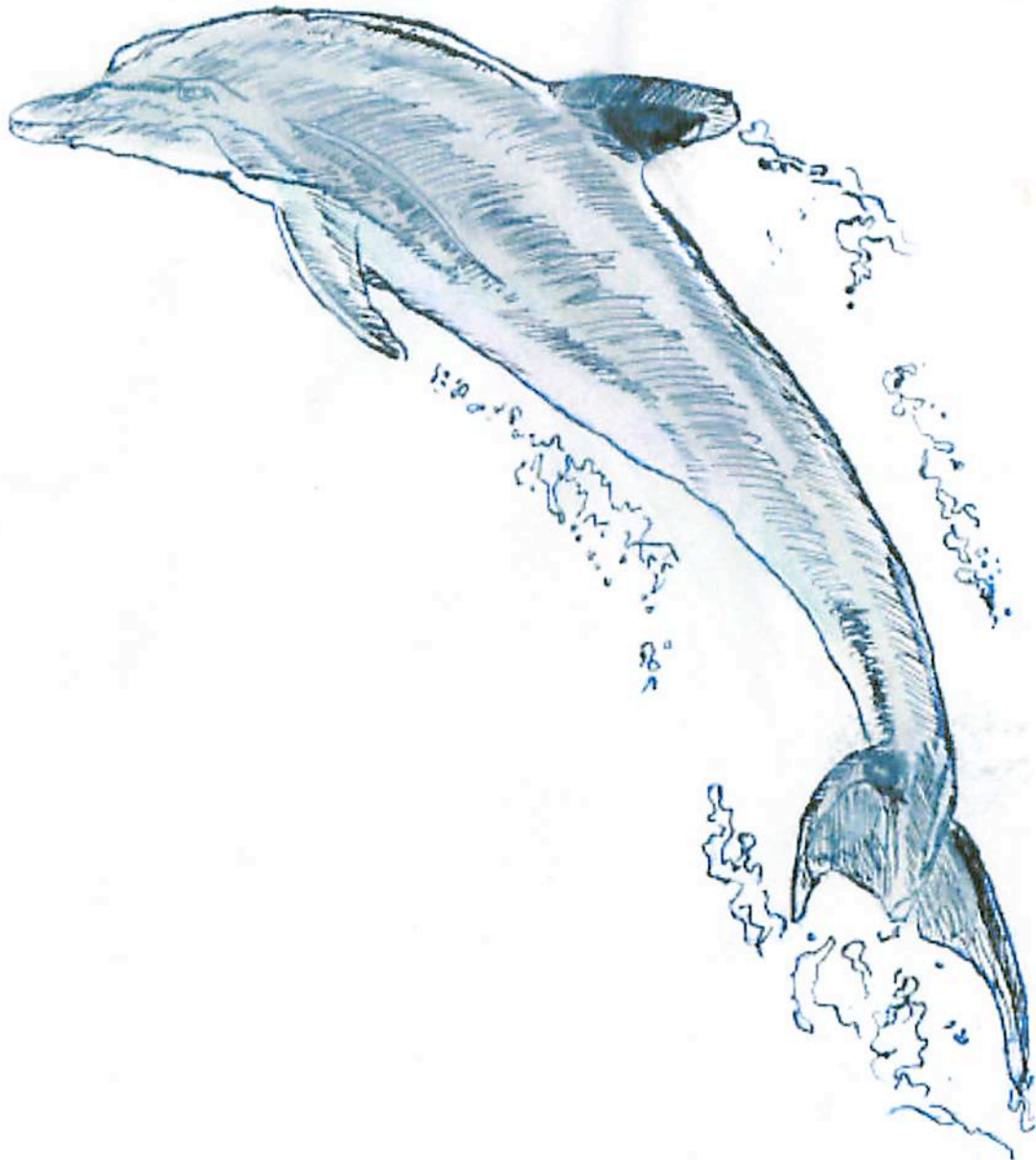


Every morning the flies would irritate the Impala's skin, causing Iman the Impala to shriek with dislike. "It itches!" She would say. SO BAD!" and Rachel would come and work her magic, and soon they would be gone.



Worst of all, every morning the flies would come and land all over the Dolphin's breakfast anchovies.

"Groossss!" said Boots the Dolphin every morning, and every morning Daphne would skitter down her web and into the bucket of anchovies, and soon enough the flies would be all eaten up.



Things worked smoothly like this for a long time, until somebody new came into the picture and disturbed the order of things. The Zookeeper had been getting older and older, and had finally decided to call it quits and to hand the reigns over to a younger generation. The new zookeeper was a nice enough guy, but he hated all insects, especially spiders. This caused a little concern among the spiders, but they decided that with a little persuasion, the new zookeeper could be persuaded to see their side of things.

But it didn't work. The spiders, horrified and concerned, watched from a tree while all the webs they had built were swept away, and sprayed with DR. DEATH'S SPIDER SPRAY, once at first and then again for good measure.

"We're ruined!" cried Rachel, tears trickling out of all eight eyes.

The spiders made some sad little webs in the tree, and hunkered down for the night.

The next morning, the sun dawned bright and early, just like every day before it, and all the animals rose with it, just like every day before it. Sandy the Elephant shook out her ears, Fergus the Pig squinted into the morning light, Iman the Impala flicked her tail, and Boots the Dolphin leapt from the water with a splash, stretching his fins.

And then the flies came. Down they flew, hundreds of them, thousands of them, buzzing in the animal's ears and eyes, flying into their water, and eating their food, just like every day.

"My ears!!" Trumpeted Sandy

"My ~~eyes~~^{eyes}!!" Squealed Fergus.

"My skin!!" Cried Iman.

"MY ANCHOVIES!!" Screamed Boots.

But no help came, because the spiders were gone. The flies that were there called their friends, and those flies called their friends, until millions of flies covered everything, and Cedar Falls zoo was buried in a sea of black flies.

“Where are the animals?!” Asked the zoo-goers. “We were promised we would see animals! Instead there are just flies!” And flies there were.

The animals were miserable; their food was full of flies, their water was full of flies, their ears, eyes, noses and mouths were full of flies, and their beds were full of flies.

“Something must be done!” Yelled the new Zookeeper. “This Zoo will have to close if this keeps up! We have to take action!” And take action he did.

First, he tried shooing them away with a broom. The flies just laughed at him and buzzed around, becoming louder and more obnoxious. Next, he tried fly spray. No luck there; the flies loved it! They styled their hair with it and impressed each other by doing Elvis impersonations. The frustrated zookeeper went online and ordered a fly light called FLY-B-GONE, which was supposed to attract the flies and then zap them to death, or so the website said. The zookeeper paid for rush delivery, and the next day he rushed out to the animal cages with his new light. The flies had left at sunset, but were back, and worse than ever; now they were playing loud music and bothering the animals even more than before. Putting the FLY-B-GONE up on the fence, the Zookeeper smiled at what a clever fellow he was, and left to go clean the fish tanks. When he returned an hour later, the flies were tanning in the light of the FLY-B-GONE, and not a single one of them was dead.

“WHAT?!” Screamed the Zookeeper. “NOTHING WORKS! Why didn’t we have this problem before! What’s changed?!”

“The Spiders!” trumpeted Sandy, but the Zookeeper walked right by her.

“The Spiders!” Squealed Fergus, but the Zookeeper just turned away.

“The Spiders!” Screamed Iman, but the Zookeeper just looked thoughtfully up at the trees.

“THE SPIIIDDDEEERRRSS!!!!” Clicked Boots, but the Zookeeper just ignored him.

“I’ve got it!” Declared the Zookeeper. “It’s the spiders! We must find the spiders and bring them back!”

By this time it was dark, and the flies had packed up their bags and headed home. The Zookeeper had put aside his fears and organized a search party for the spiders, and soon enough dozens of people were searching the woods around the Zoo, calling for the spiders.

The spiders, who had spent the past couple days playing cards and knitting sweaters, heard their cries, and looked down from the branches of their tree to see what all the fuss was about.

“They’re looking for us!” Cried Rachel. “They want us back!”

“Careful!” warned Daphne.

“It could be a trap!” Said Lance. But Cedric was already halfway down the tree, scuttling towards the search party with tears in his eyes.

“We’ve found them!” yelled the zookeeper, and the searchers gathered around the spiders, lifting them up and promising them everything, anything, if only they would come back.

The spiders did, and the next day when the flies returned, the spiders had a feast. Roast fly, fried fly, candied fly; the spiders had it all, plus enough to pickle and save for winter. The zookeeper vowed to treat the spiders with respect and dignity, and never to

break their webs again, and the zoo animals had a new appreciation for the spiders, even writing them thank you cards and remembering their birthdays.

Sandy was happy, Fergus was happy, Iman was happy, Boots was happy, the Zookeeper was happy, and most of all, the spiders were happy, because they were finally getting the thanks they deserved.