

**another pSecret pSociety pshort pstory**



**ZOO ARE YOU?** by Mike Bozart (Agent 33) |May 2014; rev.  
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A delightfully dank, overcast, April Monday found Monique (Agent 32) and I (Agent 33) motoring north up NC 49 towards the NC Zoo. It seemed like a good day to get some help from our animal friends for a short story.

“Parkaar, [my ailing alias] have you ever been to this zoo?” Agent 32 asked out of the gray.

“Not in a long, long time, Monique.”

“How long, 33?”

“Oh, I think it was 1977, the year after it opened.”

“That’s 37 years ago! It’s probably much different now.”  
*Those animals have probably died and been replaced.*

“Yeah, maybe so, Monique. Maybe they’ve removed the walls and fences.” *I bet that he only said that because of that darn digital audio recorder. I just know that he has already switched it on.*

“Removed the walls and fences? Lions, tigers and elephants running free with the people? Are you crazy?!” *Maybe so.*

“Well, you know the answer to that question, Agent 32.”

Monique laughed for a few seconds. Then the conversation stopped. Our thoughts got lost in the passing forest.

After three or four news stories on the radio, we were passing a wooden sign that read:

**Welcome to Asheboro – Home of the NC Zoo**

“So, North Carolina has an Asheville and an Asheboro?” Monique suddenly asked.

“Yep, and neither one is in Ashe County. Figure that out.”

Monique shook her head. “You crazy kanos! [Filipino slang for Americans] What’s up with that?”

I scratched my chin. “I have no idea, Agent 32. I wasn’t around back then for the naming of places.”

Soon we were pulling into the zoo’s North American entrance parking lot. It wasn’t very crowded. We parked away from other vehicles. But, sure enough, one slid in right next to us, on my side.

“All these open spots, and this guy parks right next to us,” I griped. “Why? What is it with some people?”

“Oh, just calm down, 33. Don’t be a grouch today.”

We slugged down some energy fluids and marched on in. I noticed that the asphalt paths were not as smooth as before, as surface roots had created small ridges and cracks. *Looks kind of like the Campbell Creek Greenway in Charlotte, the section near the gristmill ruins.*

And then, for some unbeknownst reason, it made me think of a Korean American girl in my 7<sup>th</sup> grade class at a parochial school in Charlotte, who always put serifs on her 1s, so that they looked like giraffe heads. My calligraphic musing was broken by Monique’s question.

“Does this zoo have giraffes, Parkaar? And, if so, where are they?” *How odd that she should ask about giraffes just now. Psyche-psychronicity? [sic]*

“I think it does, 32. They’re over in the African section. We’ll make our way over there.”

We began our tour of the North American section. There were some non-moving American alligators in a cypress swamp, just lying in wait.

“Are they real?” Monique asked.

“Oh, yes, very real, Agent 32. You don’t want to fall in there. If you did, you would be amazed at how quickly they come to life.” *Yikes! Let me back a way from this fence.*

“They look like plastic props in a C-grade horror movie, Parkaar.” *She’s right; they do.*

“These ancient reptiles don’t waste energy, Monique; they wait for the right moment to attack.”

“Do you think that they would eat a cowhide-covered, three-inch-wide, white ball, commonly called a baseball?” *Now she’s playing for the recorder.*

“Ah, recycling and refining past lines are we, Monique?” *Dang. He remembers them all.*

We both had a laugh and threw out a few more past lines. And that’s about how it went as we passed the bored polar bear. *I bet that bear would love to eat us. Tasty human flesh.*

While continuing on our trek, we watched a seal effortlessly swim several underwater laps for us, as we viewed him/her through a subsurface window. *I wonder if any agents are here today.*

Then it really went to the bears: black, brown and grizzly. *I wonder if they know what I’m thinking. Oh, wait; what am I thinking?*

As we rounded a bend, we came upon a good view of some American bison. They were just lazily grazing on a field, passing time with large boulders.

Monique then chuckled. “Those two look like Blesseltone and the Suzaffalo! [of Group Z, the enemy camp] Let’s not get too close. We might get an epic anal spray.” *Major yuck!*

I laughed. “Gouda won, 32.”

“Nice coinage, 33. Spare change, dude?”

I chuckled. Monique had successfully imitated the intonation of the most recent aggressive panhandler that we had encountered in Plasma-Wigwood (hip slang for the Plaza-Midwood area of east Charlotte).

Next, there were a pair of red wolves trotting the same route over and over. Their narrow path was being worn bare, and quickly becoming an orange-clay gully. *Maybe these guys need a larger pen. They’re going nuts.*

Then it was the hot-and-oh-so-dry Sonora Desert enclosure, surrounded by copious prickly cacti. *What an environment.*

“Wow, what is that odor, 33? Did you heavenly utot? [fart in Tagalog] ... again?”

“No, it wasn’t me; well, not this time.”

From there, we kind of got lost and decided to sit down and take a break. We overheard some other zoo visitors talking behind us.

“So, whereabouts are y’all from?” an older white male asked.

“We’re from Nash County,” a large, white female said.

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