

Penguin  Readers

JAMES
PATTERSON
& MICHAEL LEDWIDGE

ZOO

SOMETHING VERY BAD
IS HAPPENING OUT THERE ...



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CHAPTER ONE

Mosa and Dominick

Griffith Park is a large piece of land in Los Angeles. It is home to two **golf courses**, the Botanical Gardens, and the Los Angeles Zoo. Ten years ago, the **government** stopped spending money on the zoo, and now it looks tired and dirty. It often smells, too. At the north side of the zoo is a large lion **cage**, which has water around it.

It is eight o'clock in the morning, and it is already very hot. The cage looks empty until Mosa, the zoo's **female** lion, suddenly runs across it. Then she lies down in the long grass. Next to her lies Dominick, the zoo's biggest **male** lion. He **shakes** his head and looks at Mosa. She touches his neck with her nose, then begins to clean her **paws**.

Lions usually make lots of different noises when they speak. But today Mosa and Dominick make no noise at all. This **behavior** is very strange.

Behind them the **gate** to the cage opens. The lions smell the man first, and then they hear him.

Then they both do something they have never done before. They stand, and their ears go forward. Dominick moves out of the grass and into the center of the cage. He is an enormous lion—nine feet long and four and a half feet tall. He begins moving slowly toward the man.

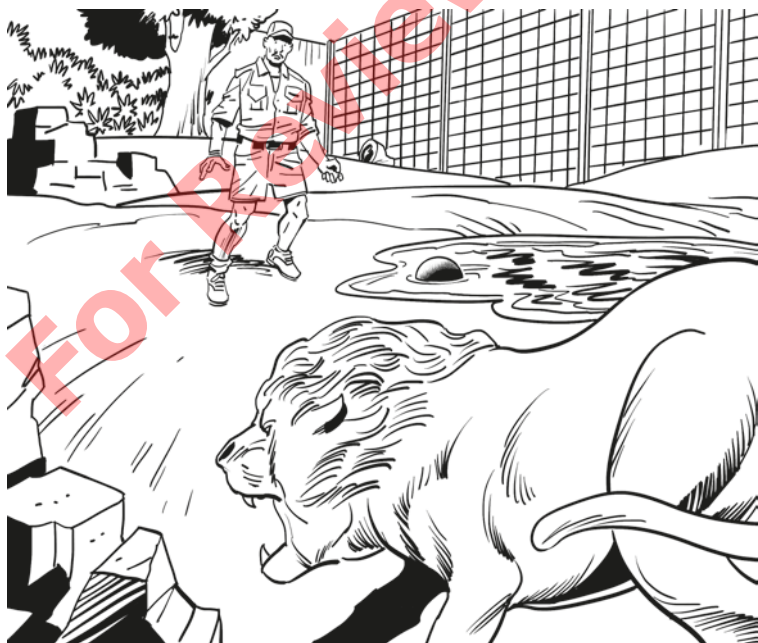
The man's name is Terrence Larson. He drops a large piece of meat on to the ground and steps away. He knows that he should wait behind the gate, but he has worked with the lions for a long time, and he **trusts** them. But where are the lions? Terrence turns and looks around for them. Mosa is usually waiting for him when he opens the gate. She always comes running when she smells her dinner.

Then he hears the sound of something hitting water.

A lion in the water? No! Lions hate water. Mosa fell in it once before, and, when they got her out two hours later, she was very wet and frightened.

Terrence quickly runs toward the sound. Then he stops and smiles when he **notices** a large ball on the water. How did the ball get there? But it doesn't matter—it's a ball, not a lion. Then Terrence turns, and the first thing he sees is Dominick. He is watching Terrence with his large eyes, and his tail is moving quickly from side to side.

“He looks like he’s **hunting** me,” thinks Terrence. “But he’s playing a game.” Dominick knows Terrence well, and he trusts him.



“Hey there, Dominick,” Terrence says, slowly. Then he suddenly hears something to his left. He turns, and, at the same time, Mosa **roars**. Then she jumps from the grass and falls on top of him. Her head hits his **chest** hard, and he falls back on to the ground. Then she puts her enormous paws on his shoulder and **bites** his face. She ~~shakes his~~ head from side to side, and his neck breaks.

Mosa and Dominick eat Terrence’s body, and then they turn and run toward the cage’s open gate. They start moving quickly along the road to the other side of the zoo. They jump its gate easily and run up a hill into ~~some~~ trees. When they get to the other side of the trees they see a golf course, and there is ~~the str~~ong smell of another **human**. This time ~~it~~ is a young man in a red shirt and black pants. ~~He~~ looks very surprised when he notices two lions on the golf course.

Dominick runs at the man and bites his neck. The man is dead in seconds. Then Dominick drops the man and quickly jumps away as a police car comes down the road by the golf course.

He and Mosa can smell humans in the car, too. The two lions turn and run back into the trees. At the top of the hill, Dominick stops and looks down at the city. He can smell humans everywhere now. The smell comes from the buildings, houses, and roads. The air is full of it. But Mosa and Dominick do not run away from the smell. They run toward it with their mouths open because they want **blood**.



CHAPTER TWO

The start of Human-Animal Conflict

My name is Jackson Oz, but everyone calls me Oz. Two years ago I was at Columbia University. I was a very good student of Environmental Biology, and I was doing a PhD. My life was great. But then I noticed something wrong, and I had to do something about it.

HAC—Human-Animal **Conflict**. For me, this was the most important topic for **scientists**. I believed that, around the world, animal behavior was changing. And that was not a good thing. In every country, from Romania to Colombia, animals were beginning to show very angry, and **violent**, behavior. But they were only showing it toward one other animal. That animal was humans—*you and me*.

So I left Columbia University to learn more about HAC—and I wanted to **warn** other scientists about it, too. My information was frightening. In the last four years, animal attacks against humans have doubled. And it has been *all* animals, not just