

Monkeys

By David Michael Williams

The chorus of a popular R&B song rent the morning, ripping me from my blissful slumber. Motor memory launched me from my mattress, across the cluttered hardwood floor, and over to where the alarm radio blasted its musical message at a mind-reeling volume. After turning various knobs and fiddling with a few buttons, the dream-destroying decibels were banished back to the black and brown box.

The bedroom door was open, as it always was. I lived alone and had no need for privacy. Still half asleep, I proceeded into the living room, where I began to search for the remote control in all the usual places. When the clicker could not be found lodged in the recliner or atop the computer desk, I wandered over to the couch.

That's when I saw it, a baboon regarding me with more than a passing interest. He sat there, perched on the middle couch cushion, following my every movement with those brown eyes of his. Eyes that looked as though they could have belonged to a person. Eyes that harbored intelligence without the burden of conscience.

I couldn't move.

I hated monkeys, secretly feared them. Their very existence is a sick parody of humanity. I knew the little brute, despite his diminutive size, had in him a barbaric strength that could easily overpower my best efforts. In his mind, there was but one rule: survive. No social mores or rules restricted his behavior.

He was capable of anything.

I began to back away slowly, but that only seemed to earn his ire. I recalled that dogs could sense fear in people and wondered if all animals shared this skill. In spite of my growing fear, I took another step backward and practically fell on top of the recliner.

At this point, the deadly primate rose from his crouched position into a more-or-less upright stance. I considered making a break for the apartment's only exit. How fast could the little bastard be? Would one kick send him reeling into the television, causing it to explode and, at the very least, render the hairy fiend unconscious? Or, would my desperate flailing only provide him a limb to sink his yellowed teeth into?

Monkeys have little concern for personal hygiene. They only groom their fur in order to find insect snacks. This baboon represented everything mankind left behind in climbing up onto the throne in the Animal Kingdom. Humans are at the top of the food-chain. Not only do we possess opposable thumbs, but we have the intelligence and integrity to use our skills responsibly. *Homo sapiens* are the rightful owners of the planet, the chosen genotype.

I just wish someone would have explained all that to the monkey.

I couldn't have told him even if I had thought it might do me some good. I couldn't even manage a scream as he vaulted off of the low-riding couch, long baboon arms swinging, and shrieking like a banshee on a sugar high.

I reached for the nearest weapon—my lava lamp. I always wondered what the mock-magma actually was and whether or not it would burn on contact with skin. Now seemed as good a time as any to find out. The monkey-turned-missile sailed through the air, honing in on his human target. His eyelids all but disappeared as his unfeeling eyes bulged out. A stream of saliva trailed from his lower jaw.

He was probably hungry, as there was no food in my refrigerator.

I swung the lava lamp, bludgeoning the baboon, bashing in the side of his hairy little head. He was too stunned to counterattack, so I pressed my advantage. Dropping the lava lamp, which was unwieldy and hadn't even shattered, I reached for my left shoe. I had to finish the job. It was Man vs. Beast, and I didn't intend to let my species down.

As I brought the black shoe down upon his huddled, unmoving body, I went into some sort of frenzy, experiencing a bloodlust that the Neanderthals must have felt as they brandished their clubs against their rivals for survival. By the time I finished, it was 9:52 A.M., and I was in no mood to go to work.

The baboon's body was an unrecognizable mass of blood, entrails, and dirty hair. I ended up throwing the dripping carcass off my back porch. Then the gravity of the situation hit me all at once. I fell into the recliner, shaking, terrified of the animal I had had to become in order to defeat the baboon.

And what if there was another one tomorrow morning?

Now don't you dare feel sorry for the monkey. They are not the cute, innocent little creatures you want to believe. They are wild. Dangerous. Capable of anything. But you won't believe me. You'll continue to write children's stories about them, continue to visit the zoo and wave to them. Only when one sneaks up on you, on some unsuspecting Tuesday morning, will you admit your err in judgment. But by then, it might be too late.