

Monkey, Er, Ape See – Ape Do

To take a break from the vacation unpacking, I took the little ones to the zoo a few weeks ago. We had a great time – oh how I love winter zoo visits! There aren't many people around, and the animals can act like the animals they are instead of worrying about the hoards of visiting humans. Well, most of the time it's cool to see the animals acting like animals, unless they are doing disgusting things like the gorillas last week – don't watch this if you are squeamish, but I have to publish it because of how embarrassed the gorilla seems about her behavior. I felt so badly for filming her after she tried to hide that I turned off the camera, and that's when she got up and went and sat behind a post – out of my view. Why would she do something so gross if she is embarrassed by it?

WARNING: it's VERY gross!!!

The chimp was another story! His name is Harvey, and he is a senior citizen chimp – he just had his 52nd birthday, which is quite a milestone for a chimpanzee. Despite his age, Harvey is quite playful and has a penchant for young kids. When we walked over in front of Harvey's window, he was sitting in the corner wearing a sparkly lei, presumably from his birthday party which had just taken place days before.



When he saw us, he pulled off his lei and came over to his window to see the kids and play:

These videos were taken almost a month ago, and I've been trying to get back to the zoo, but my oldest child has decided that the zoo is "boring" – her words, *NEVER* mine. In fact, I'm wondering if I need a DNA test – how could someone with my DNA find the zoo boring???

During the week, I'm so tired and have so much to do that just writing this blog post is quite a challenge – I'm having a towel thrown over my head by my 2-year-old as I write! I think I fell in love with Harvey that January day, and I miss him!

Taylhis' Most Wanted

During visits to the zoo, most kids will fantasize about which animal they would like to take home and have as a pet. There are many reasons why exotic and wild animals should not be kept as pets, but being an animal lover, I guess I never grew out of the mindset of a kid at the zoo – I still think about which ones I would like as pets. Well, actually, I'd like **all** of them as pets, but here are the top 10. Since this is purely fantasy, of course I did not take rational things into consideration like cost or cleaning up after or housing the animals, where's the fun in that? While you're at it, try putting your top few fantasy pets in the comments box below...

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Taylhis Most Wanted:

African Grey parrot – Ugh, another large bird? Do I really want more bird screaming to rile up the kids? But this is a fantasy list, so I'm going to build a huge tropical aviary with a little river for my birds, no problem. Members of this particular breed of parrot are incredibly smart, and their

ability for exact mimicry is hilarious! I once posted a video of a little African Grey character named Silvia who did an awesome impression of Desi Arnaz (*Lucy, you got some 'splainin to do!*) as well as sarcastically (and hilariously) delivering the line, "*Well loddy-frickin'-dah!*"

Manatee – My favorite animal; manatees are gentle and intelligent. I find the manatee's graceful movements relaxing and therapeutic. Watching my manatee swim would be a great way to unwind after a stressful day!

Gorilla – Humans have much in common with these intelligent primates. It'd be incredible to get to know one on a personal basis.

Sea Horse – Well, these guys mate for life, so I'd like a pair of seahorses, which would then turn into hundreds ☺ But many of their behaviors are truly fascinating to watch!



Sea Lion – Like an aquatic dog, sea lions are intelligent, trainable, and beautiful swimmers. And so cute!

Goat – I've always loved goats; now that we live nearby many farms, this might be a possibility some day!

Huge Dog – Dogs are the greatest, and sometimes it seems like

the larger the dog, the friendlier. So for a dog-lover without limitations on house size, wouldn't it be great to have a beautiful 150lb+ lap dog? I was thinking St. Bernard, Great Dane or Mastiff type dogs.

Octopus – A somewhat mysterious animal, though to be intelligent based in part upon its ability to manipulate items like jars and toys for food rewards.

Alligator – Huge reptiles with a bad rap; I would love the time to hand-raise and train a gator.

Tortoise – I really like tortoises, and it'd be really neat to create an exhibit to house one of those super-huge tortoises.

Honorable mention:

Marmoset – a cute furry little primate. Cute as he is, smaller primates are known for being temperamental, so this guy is a runner-up.



So there you have it. My husband commented on my list's lack of felines. True, I always blog about how much I would like a cat, but in the real world, all that's stopping me from getting a cat or two or ten is my cat allergy, so that's not really the point of the list – it's more about forbidden animals. Big cats would be too scary to play with – I had a little cat who passed away, but after watching how suddenly and completely her moods could change, I gained a whole new

respect for big cats, so no thanks!

Match.com – For Gorillas

See if you enjoy this as much as I did – a group of female gorillas is given posters of their prospective mate. How did they react to it? Read:

From cnn.com:

by Nick Hunt

So when three female gorillas at London Zoo heard that they would soon be visited by a brooding French hunk – well, they went a bit bananas.

The latest development in Anglo-French relations sees Yeboah, a 20-stone 12-year-old, leave his current home at La Boissiere Du Dore Zoo, Pays de la Loire, northwest France and head for the British capital by the end of the year.

There he will be greeted by gorilla trio Zaire, Effie and Mjukuu, who were given posters of their prospective boyfriend for the first time Thursday.

One female gorilla shrieked in delight, while another wedged the poster in a tree to stare at it.

A third, clearly overcome by emotion, held the photo close to her chest – then ate it.

Their reception was somewhat unsurprising. The zoo has been without a male gorilla since the demise of Bobby, a silverback, in December.

Tracey Lee, team leader at London Zoo, put in a good word for

the hirsute lothario on the London Zoo Web site, saying Yeboah is “a very charming, fun loving and intelligent gorilla.”

But whom will Yeboah choose to charm first?

Zaire, at 34, is the oldest female gorilla and has been at London Zoo since 1984. The zoo says she’s “happiest when she’s taking down and rebuilding her nest in various spots around the island. She loves to play with fabric and often drags it around with her all day. “

Then there’s Effie, 16, who “enjoys seeing toddlers and often makes her way over to the glass when they come to see her,” according to the zoo Web site.

Finally there’s 10-year-old Mjukuu, or “Jookie.” Dan Simmonds, a keeper at the zoo’s Gorilla Kingdom, says she “has this ‘butter wouldn’t melt look’ to her, and she gets away with murder.”

“The other two females get along with her very well; she seems to have them all wrapped around her little finger.”



Above is a picture of the gorilla who hung up the picture of her new beau.