

Visiting the Reptile House

(Story words: zoo, face, ears)

When Jen and Zack go to the zoo, Zack always wants to go into the Reptile House. Zack is thrilled to spend a lot of time gazing at all the snakes. When Jen sees a snake, even behind glass, a chill runs down her spine. She sometimes says that she is tired and sits on a bench by the Reptile House while Zack and Mom go in.

This time, she went in with them. A woman was discussing a topic that was just made for someone like Jen. It was, “Why Do Humans Dislike Snakes?”

The woman said that humans like the look of mammals because we are mammals. When we humans look at mammals we are reminded of ourselves. She demonstrated this fact with photos of apes, dogs, lions, elephants, and skunks. The woman noted that all of these mammals have eyelids, noses, and ears. An elephant’s

ears and trunk are big compared to our ears and noses, but we relate to them anyway. She held up a photo of a lion cub and said, “Do you respond to this cub’s cute, infant face?” Jen gazed at the small cub and knew that she did.

The woman added, “But the face of a snake has no ears and no nose. Many people find this disgusting or chilling. Plus, the eyes of a snake are not like our eyes. Mammals have eyelids that can blink or close, but snakes have lidless eyes that are always open.”

The woman concluded: “I love snakes and reptiles, but many people look at them and just think, ‘Yuck!’”

Jen could relate to that! She liked knowing more about how people respond to faces of mammals and snakes. She even felt a bit more relaxed being in the Reptile House.