

BAZAAR ANIMALS

BY

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"Okay, here's the deal. For three days out of every month--the night before the full moon, the night of the full moon, and the night after--you can be any creature you want. But, here's the thing--you have to choose now. No returns, no money back guarantee, no crying to Oprah. If you choose a cat, and a month later come complaining to me about fleas and the high price of shots, then that's too bad. You made your litter box, got me?"

"So, I can be any animal I want? For three days out of every month for the rest of my life?"

The proprietor mumbled something about leap year being a wild card. The patron deliberated his choice for a long time... "I could be a tiger, then I could prowl the countryside at night, tearing my chosen prey limb from limb. Or, I could be a were-snake--sneaking into my foes' rooms and sliding into their beds, quietly injecting them with my dangerous poison. Or--"

"Oh for the love of the bright moon! Do you know what time it is?"

The patron looked startled. "Closing time?"

The proprietor's shape began to change; he became hunched, and as the proprietor huddled to the earth, the patron noticed the sun slipping down beneath the trees.

"Here's the deal, kid..." The proprietor squawked as he finished transforming into a raptor. "I usually only eat small animals, but for you I'll make an exception."