

BABYCAKES

A few years back all the animals went away.

We woke up one morning, and they just weren't there anymore. They didn't even leave us a note, or say good-bye. We never figured out quite where they'd gone.

We missed them.

Some of us thought that the world had ended, but it hadn't. There just weren't any more animals. No cats or rabbits, no dogs or whales, no fish in the seas, no birds in the skies.

We were all alone.

We didn't know what to do.

We wandered around lost, for a time, and then someone pointed out that just because we didn't have animals anymore, that was no reason to change our lives. No reason to change our diets or to cease testing products that might cause us harm.

After all, there were still babies.

Babies can't talk. They can hardly move. A baby is not a rational, thinking creature.

We made babies.

And we used them.

Some of them we ate. Baby flesh is tender and succulent.

We flayed their skin and decorated ourselves in it. Baby leather is soft and comfortable.

Some of them we tested.

We taped open their eyes, dripped detergents and shampoos in, a drop at a time.

We scarred them and scalded them. We burnt them. We clamped them and planted electrodes into their brains. We grafted, and we froze, and we irradiated.

The babies breathed our smoke, and the babies' veins flowed with our medicines and drugs, until they stopped breathing or until their blood ceased to flow.

It was hard, of course, but it was necessary.

No one could deny that.

With the animals gone, what else could we do?

Some people complained, of course. But then, they always do. And everything went back to normal.

Only . . .

Yesterday, all the babies were gone.

We don't know where they went. We didn't even see them go. We don't know what we're going to do without them.

But we'll think of something. Humans are smart. It's what makes us superior to the animals and the babies.

We'll figure something out.