Susie is five years old today. Her mother and father, who are shop owners, have taken off work to treat her to a wonderful trip to the Zoo. Susie is happy and excited.

Susie and her parents arrive at the Zoo when the gates open at 9 A.M. They spend a lot of time in the morning in the African Safari exhibit. They see zebras, lions, and giraffes. Susie loves the giraffes. At 11 A.M., they stop at a snack stand and eat hot dogs and drink chocolate malts.

In the afternoon, they go to the Birdhouse and ride the bus around the whole huge Animal Park. At 3:00 P.M., a novice Zookeeper forgets to lock the door to the lion exhibit, and a young female lion escapes from the compound. There is a panic and a stampede of Zoo visitors. Susie's father grabs Susie and finds shelter in the reptile house, but Susie's mother is trampled by the mob and seriously injured, losing a great deal of blood. When the lion is subdued with a tranquilizing dart, paramedics rush to Susie's mother and hustle her into an ambulance. The nearest hospital is 45 minutes from the Zoo, but it takes them an hour and a half to get there because of a traffic jam. Susie is frightened and cries inconsolably during the whole trip to the hospital. Susie's mother is in a coma for one week after the tragedy but recovers after two months of hospitalization.