

Amelia Wint – Long Ride Home

“Actually, I think the biggest surprise since moving here was how friendly everyone is. I used to live in an almost exclusively prey village and I was convinced that coming to university here would mean getting bullied or actively pursued by all the predators.” Amelia explained to the small orange bunny sitting next to her.

Sunny nodded. “Yeah, that's not an uncommon assumption for people coming to the city for the first time. The predation rate might be higher around here but that doesn't mean the predators are any more voracious, just that there's a higher ratio of carnivores to prey.”

Amelia nodded and grinned. “Heh, you should have seen me in my first year. I'd try to duck out of sight if a predator so much as glanced in my direction. It took me quite a while to get comfortable sharing the same building as carnivores and I was so scared of getting caught out after hunting hours that I always made sure I was back home with hours to spare.” She lifted her glass and took a large gulp of her drink.

Sunny glanced at the clock hanging on the far wall. “I can see you got over that hangup.” she noted. “Actually though, shouldn't you be thinking of heading back soon? Not that I'm not enjoying your company but there is only another half hour until hunting hours starts and we're not exactly close to the campus.”

Amelia shook her head. “For tonight at least, that's one thing I don't have to worry about.” she stated. “My friend Tarrol's got a car and my flat has an inbuilt garage. We can drive straight into the building without ever putting ourselves at risk.” She hesitated after saying that, then admitted “Well, I guess there is a little risk involved in getting to his car but he was able to park right outside the bar so we should be safe enough.”

“So where is he?” Sunny glanced around expectantly. She hadn't seen anyone enter with Amelia and part of the reason she had initially approached the other rabbit was because she had looked a little lonely drinking on her own.

“Oh, he's not drinking.” Amelia assured her. “He was meeting some friends in the building next door, but he was willing to drop me off first. Anyway, what about you? Shouldn't you be getting home before hunting hours, although Tarrol could probably give you a lift as well if you like?”

“Nah.” Sunny took another sip of her drink. “I'm in the same situation as you actually. My husband's got a car so I can stay out as long as I like.”

Amelia gave her companion an impressed look. Not many among the prey species managed to save up for their own vehicles. Tarrol was an exception due to having fairly wealthy parents and only four siblings. Apparently her new friend was also fairly well off. “Great. I was worried I'd end up drinking on my own again.” She grinned, then waved at the bartender and ordered another round of drinks for them both.

A few hours later, Amelia was looking much less cheerful. Every few minutes she would pull out her phone and check for any messages, even though she knew she would have heard if one had come in. “I really thought he would be ready to go home by now.” she muttered. “He knows I have assignments due in tomorrow.”

Sunny was also looking worried, although more for her companion's sake than out of any concern for herself. "He's probably just got delayed." she assured. "He didn't tell you what he was doing I take it?"

Amelia shook her head hopelessly then looked up at the clock. In just over an hour the bar would close and everyone would have to leave. She had no doubts about what would happen to her if she was left wandering the streets during hunting hours. Looking round, she noticed that the front room was now almost completely deserted. All the other prey species had left hours ago, leaving only a couple of stoats sitting in the far corner. Right now, they were showing little obvious interest in the rabbits, but Amelia had already caught them glancing in her direction a couple of times and knew that that interest would only grow as closing time drew nearer.

"That's it, I'm calling him." she muttered. Tapping in Tarrol's number she held the phone to her ear and waited.

And waited. Time seemed to stretch as she listened to the ringback tone. "Come on." she muttered impatiently. It wasn't like him. Tarrol always had his phone on him and she wondered what could possibly be so important to have delayed him for so long.

Finally the call was answered. "About time." Amelia snapped. "Tarrol, the bar closes soon and I really need you to ..." she trailed off. The sound from the other end was not her friend, at least not directly. A low rumbling groan came through the phone's speakers, followed by a slosh and then what might have been a muffled whimper.

Amelia listened in horror as whoever was on the other end lifted the phone from their belly, raised it to their lips, then let out a thunderous belch. After that, the line went dead. "Tarrol ..." Amelia whispered in horror. She could barely believe what she had just heard. Tarrol had always been so careful, it was hard to believe he could possibly have let himself get caught. Of course, everyone could slip up occasionally and it was clear that Tarrol had made what was likely going to be his last ever mistake. Still, she was fairly sure she had heard a faint protest through the gurgling of the predator's belly which meant that there might still be enough time for someone to save him.

Amelia was out of her seat and halfway to the door before Sunny caught her by the arm. "Let me go. There's still time. I can still find him and ... and ..."

"Amelia, you know that isn't true." Sunny answered as comfortingly as she could. "Even if you knew where his predator was, and had some way of forcing them to spit him out, you still wouldn't make it to the end of the street." as she spoke she half turned her head towards the far corner of the room and, following her gesture, Amelia noticed that both stoats were already out of their seats and staring back at her. Seeing that they had been spotted, they sank back into their seats and glared at her.

Ignoring the predators, Sunny lead Amelia back to their place at the bar. "I'm sorry about your friend, but that's just life." the smaller rabbit stated as she returned to her stool. "There's really isn't anything you can do to save him and you need to start thinking about yourself. Is there anyone else you can call to get you home?"

Amelia's only answer was a horrified whine. She had been so concerned for Tarrol she hadn't even considered where this left her. Glancing out the window, she could see his battered old car still sitting where they had left it. If she ran, she could easily reach it before the stoats could catch her but, without Tarrol and his keys, it would do her no good at all. She looked around helplessly. There was no other way out and, even if there had been, there was no where she could go that the stoats

would not be able to follow. She was trapped.

"Come on," Sunny prompted the trembling bunny. "you must know someone else with a car. Isn't there anyone who could pick you up?"

Amelia shook her head in helpless despair, then suddenly froze and stared back at the smaller rabbit. "You," she stated abruptly. "Your husband is coming to pick you up. He ... he could give me a lift as well, right?"

For a moment Sunny looked completely stunned by the question, then she shook her head. "Sorry. That ... wouldn't be a good idea. Isn't there anyone else you could call?"

"Please?" Amelia begged. "I know I'm asking a lot here but I really don't have a choice. I'll pay you for the fuel and the time, of course. I ... I can pay a lot more if you want." As it happened, her student loans were almost exhausted but, right now, nothing mattered more to her than getting a lift home.

"I'm not trying to extort you," Sunny insisted. "I'm really sorry, but we just can't give you a lift, okay? You'll have to find someone else."

Amelia stared at the little orange rabbit and shook her head. Mentally, she ran through every friend she knew but Tarrol was the only one who had owned a car. Even if there had been someone else, the list of people she could rely on to come out during hunting hours was pitifully short. Looking over her shoulder, she risked another glance at the two stoats. They weren't even trying to hide their interest in her by this point. Meeting her gaze, the male smiled then slowly and deliberately licked his lips.

The simple gesture was enough to send Amelia into helpless sobbing. This couldn't be happening. She hadn't studied so long and worked so hard just to end up as some weasel's dinner. She had known when she started her degree that the majority of prey that enrolled did not make it to their graduation but she had always been convinced that she would be one of the few that did. The thought that all her hard work would be wasted hurt almost as much as knowing that she would soon be a softening lump in some stoat's midsection. "Please?" she begged Sunny. "I'll do anything you want just please don't leave me here."

Sunny looked up at the tearful rabbit and sighed. "Look, my husband is a predator, okay?" She knew from experience that many people avoided her after they learned that particular fact about her and preferred not to mention it until she knew them well enough to guess how they would react. "The reason I came here is that he wanted to spend the night hunting so I'm waiting for him to finish."

Amelia wiped some tears away and stared at the smaller bunny in shock. Sunny certainly didn't seem the type she would have expected to date a predator but the rabbit looked perfectly sincere. "But ... but you could vouch for me, right?" she tried. "I mean ... if you are married then you must have some kind of arrangement for him avoiding your friends, right?"

"Well yes, but it doesn't work like that," Sunny explained. "It would be a different matter if I'd let Sigmund know about this before hand and we'd chosen a time when he wasn't hungry but, while he's hunting, anyone he catches is fair game." She thought about it a moment longer, then added "Although, I guess it's possible that he'll already have made a catch tonight. If so, then the chances are pretty good that he'll give you a lift home, although you can bet that he'll complain about it the whole way there."

“And ... if not?” Amelia asked, although the answer was obvious even to her.

Sunny shrugged. “Well, at least you'll have more room than you would in a stoat's gut. For what it's worth, it's apparently not that bad in there.”

Amelia shuddered at the idea. Her first instinct was to reject Sunny's offer. No matter how bad her chances of making it home on foot were, surely it was still a better choice than to willingly accept a lift from a carnivore. “Um ... how likely is it that he'll already have eaten?” she asked weakly.

Sunny had to think about that for a moment. “Fairly good I'd say.” she concluded. “He usually makes a catch when he goes out hunting. Then again, if he had found someone, I would have expected him to be here by now.” she glanced at the clock that was now showing only forty minutes until closing time, then shrugged.

Amelia squirmed, still unsure about what the best course of action would be. “And ... if he has, how sure are you that he won't want a second helping.”

Again Sunny didn't give a very helpful response. “Not certain.” she answered. “It really depends on how large whoever he caught was and whether he takes a liking to you. Your chances aren't bad though.”

Amelia wavered for a minute or two longer then made her decision. “Okay, I ... I really would appreciate it if you could give me a lift. Even ... even if that means ...” She shuddered then turned to the bartender and ordered an extra strong drink.

Fifteen minutes later a large black convertible pulled up in front of the bar, directly behind Tarrol's battered old car. Amelia didn't have to ask if that was the one, the way Sunny bounced down from her stool made it clear even if the vehicle's size had not. Heading to the door, Sunny glanced back and gestured for Amelia to follow. The larger rabbit let out a little whimper, then drained the last of her drink for courage before following her companion out into the night.

The moment they left the building the stoats were out of their seats and following them. Amelia picked up her pace, hurrying towards the gigantic car despite how much it terrified her. Sunny, on the other hand, showed no signs of alarm at being pursued by the two carnivores. Walking casually, she glanced over her shoulder, smiled at them both, and gave a little wave.

The stoats proved to have far more sense than most predators she had met. They glanced at the car she was heading towards, then back at the cheerfully waving bunny, then quickly took off in the opposite direction.

As the stoats retreated, Amelia once again considered whether she wouldn't be safer on foot. The immediate threat was gone, and it was just possible that she would be able to make it back home on foot. Unfortunately, she knew that was mostly wishful thinking. Had they been anywhere near her apartment then maybe she would have had a chance, but at the current distance it was hopeless. Trying to walk home at this time of night was almost guaranteed to land her in someone's stomach. The best she could do was to trust Sunny and really hope that her husband had made a catch.

Sunny sauntered casually over to the car and pulled open the front door. “Hey Siggy, mind if we make a slight detour before heading home?”

Cautiously, Amelia peered into the car at the hulking figure inside. When Sunny had told her that her husband was a predator she had been picturing a fox or cat, maybe a wolf at largest. Nothing the other rabbit had said had prepared her to find herself face to face with a lion.

The enormous feline leaned across the passenger seat and gave her a critical look before turning back to Sunny. "Care to explain?" he growled.

Amelia took a step back, several deeply ingrained instincts telling her to put as much distance between herself and that creature as quickly as possible. Before she could break into a run, however, Sunny caught hold of her arm and shoved her forwards. "This is Amelia." she told the lion. "Her ride home got a little bit digested so she was wondering if you could give her a lift instead."

The lion's stare switched from Sunny back to Amelia and lingered for several seconds. Finally he grunted "Get in." at her and shifted back into his seat.

Amelia wanted to turn and run more than anything in the world but she knew he would be able to catch her in seconds if she did so. Even if, by some miracle, she escaped she would still be outside during hunting hours. Terrifying as Sigmund was, she knew he was also her best chance of surviving the night. Trembling, she clambered up the footwell then onto the enormous seat. Sunny was quick to join her, and there was plenty of room for them both on the passenger's seat. Stretching out, the smaller rabbit slammed the car door shut behind her then, much to Amelia's relief, allowed her to swap sides of the seat so that Sunny was sitting beside her husband instead. "So are you up for a little detour?" she checked.

The lion groaned. "Come on, Sunny. It's been a long day and the pickings so far have been nonexistent. Are you really asking me to ..." He got no further before the little rabbit scrambled into his lap then kissed him, cutting his protests short.

"Yeah, I'm asking." Sunny chirped as she finally broke free of the kiss. "But if you really don't want to, feel free to gobble her up instead. She was going to get eaten whatever I did so I figured there was nothing to lose by offering her a lift. Either she'll get home safely or you'll be the one to get a meal instead of a stranger. Win-win from where I'm standing."

Sigmund turned to Amelia and gave her a critical look. "Alright, miss ...?" he trailed off and in her frightened state it took Amelia a moment to realize that he was waiting for her name.

"Wint." she squeaked. "Amelia Wint, and please, please don't eat me?" Her head was still buzzing from the alcohol she had consumed but the presence of such a large carnivore mere inches away was having a very sobering effect on her.

"Well, where is it that you want to go?"

Amelia bit her lip, still shaking badly but managed to give him her address. "But... but please don't go out of your way." she added quickly. "If that's a problem then you could drop me off anywhere near and I'll walk the rest of the way."

Sigmund thought about that for a moment. "That's near the university, right? I take it you're a student there then?"

Amelia nodded nervously and glanced at Sunny hoping for some kind of help. Unfortunately, the smaller rabbit simply shrugged, evidently content to leave Amelia's fate to her husband. Whether

that meant that she believed Amelia would be safe enough without her input or simply didn't care much which outcome would be decided on, Amelia couldn't tell.

"Fine, that's not a bad place for hunting so here's the deal. I'll drive you there and if I happen to spot someone else on the way then I'll stop and go after them instead. If I do catch someone then everything will be fine but if we get to your address and I still have an empty belly then you are going to fill it. Sound fair to you?"

Amelia hesitated. It wasn't a great deal but she had a horrible suspicion that the alternative was worse. "Yes. Thank you." she squeaked.

Sigmund gave her a look that suggested he was already regretting his lenient approach but said nothing more before nudging Sunny back out of his lap. The smaller rabbit gave him a playful kiss before returning to the passenger seat and sitting on the opposite side of Amelia.

For several minutes they drove in silence, Amelia trembling, Sigmund focused mostly on the road but keeping an eye out for anyone walking home, and Sunny kneeling in her seat in order to stare out the passenger window.

Unfortunately, it was not a good time for hunting. At the start of hunting hours there would always be a few people who had lost track of the time or been unexpectedly delayed, but a few hours later almost all of them would have either made it back to the safety of their home, or already been tucked away into somebody's stomach. By now, the streets were deserted and even the larger species seemed to have given up and gone home.

Amelia watched as the roads crawled past. Sigmund was undeniably keeping to the spirit of their bargain and driving slowly so he would have the maximum chance of spotting anyone still out, but the journey seemed to be passing impossibly quickly none the less. Already she was starting to recognize the street names they passed and knew they were getting close to her home. Each second seemed to draw itself out to an agonizing length yet as a collective they somehow managed to race past until Sigmund's car was pulling in to the driveway in front of her apartment.

"Well, here we are and my stomach's still empty." the lion stated.

Amelia considered running. Her front door was in sight. Once out of the car it would only take her a few seconds to reach it. Unfortunately, this close to such a large predator, those few seconds were more than she had. In desperation she turned to Sunny. "Please?" she begged. "There's got to be something you can do."

Sunny shrugged. "Sorry but that was the deal."

Finding no help there she spun back to face Sigmund who was already reaching for her. "I ... wait ... there has to be something I could do to change your mind." An idea came to her and she quickly stood up in her seat. "You ... you like bunnies, right? Maybe there is something I could offer you instead of a meal." Fear made it difficult to put much seduction into the words so Amelia compensated by rolling up her shirt and flashing her breasts at the hungry lion.

It didn't get the desired response although it did temporarily stop the lion from grabbing her. "No thank you." Sigmund growled, refusing to look directly at her. "I'm quite happy with Sunny so you can stop that right now." A slight tint of crimson was already showing through the fur on his cheeks.

"But ... but you could have me as well." Amelia insisted, not yet willing to give up what might be

her last chance of survival despite how uncomfortable it seemed to be making the lion. Bending down, she stripped out of her pants as well, then stood before the predator in what she hoped was her most seductive pose. "I'll do anything you want if you'll just let me go afterwards."

Sigmund looked even more uncomfortable at the idea, but Amelia could hear Sunny laughing from behind her. "Now that's not very nice." the smaller bunny chided although it was clear she did not consider Amelia a threat and was more amused than annoyed. "Trying to steal my husband after I went out of my way to help you."

Amelia risked taking her eyes off the predator long enough to glance in Sunny's direction and struggled to find the words to explain that, as her life was at stake, her attempt to seduce the lion really should get to take priority right now. Unfortunately, she didn't get the chance before feeling Sigmund's hand close round the scruff of her neck.

Amelia yelped as her feet left the fabric of the seat and she found herself being held above the lion's head, her long ears brushing the car's roof. Hunger had clearly won over the lion's initial discomfort at her seduction attempts. Opening his mouth, he guided Amelia's legs inside. The feline's rough tongue left a trail of warm drool through Amelia's fur as she was lowered into a sitting position on it. As Sigmund released his hold on the scruff of Amelia's neck the poor bunny found she had to hold on to his muzzle to prevent herself from slipping.

The lion's nose pressed against her belly and she stared into his face. Her paws were already dangling over the back of his tongue and into his gullet. "W... wait!" she cried. "Don't swallow! I can pay you ... anything you like. I swear it." Seduction had not worked well, and she suspected that bribery would do no better but she tried it anyway.

Sure enough, the only answer she received was for Sigmund to tilt back his head and take a long gulp. Amelia's legs slid down the lion's throat, followed by her butt and most of her torso as she slithered over his drool coated tongue and into the waiting gullet. When she finally stopped she found herself waist deep in the lion with his jaws covering most of what remained unswallowed. Only her head and arms still remained outside Sigmund's lips.

Amelia could have tried to wriggle free but she already knew that there was no point. The lion's peristaltic muscles had a firm grip on her lower body and there was nothing she could say or do that would deter him. All she could do was relax and get ready for the next swallow. She wasn't left waiting for long.

With a quick gulp, Sigmund effortlessly downed the last of the chubby bunny. The car's interior, and everything else, vanished from Amelia's view as she was funneled down into the lion's dark esophagus. A few minutes later, Amelia's descent came to an abrupt end as she was deposited with a splash into the lion's stomach.

It was pitch black inside the lion so Amelia was forced to fall back on her other senses. All around her, she could feel the slick squidgy walls of Sigmund's stomach, close enough that she couldn't stand up but, at least for now, giving her enough room to move about. At the bottom, several inches of digestive juices had already pooled in anticipation of her arrival and she could feel her butt gently tingling as it was submerged in the fluids.

Running one hand over the walls, she briefly searched for some way out but, of course, there was none. The passage she had entered though had sealed tight behind her and she knew that she would not be leaving the way she had come in. The surrounding walls were soft and pleasantly warm to her touch. She wondered how many people had found themselves in here before her. All of them

were gone now, converted into fuel for the powerful feline just as she would be in time.

To her surprise, she found herself fairly calm about her situation. She had done everything she could to survive and it had not been enough. Continuing to resist at this point would not save her or achieve anything worthwhile so she might as well accept what was coming.

Leaning back against the stomach walls, Amelia listened to the organic noises of Sigmund's digestive system starting up. A few droplets of acid trickled down onto her as the walls began to secrete the enzyme rich cocktail that would soon turn her into a pool of bunny flavored soup and she felt the tingling sensation spread wherever the juices touched her. With a defeated sigh, Amelia allowed herself to relax. It didn't matter what happened to her, she was just food now and Sigmund's body clearly knew what to do with her.

Outside, the lion licked a few traces of slate gray fur from his lips. "Well, she was tasty," he commented. "Sorry if you're going to miss her."

Sunny shrugged. "She seemed nice enough but I didn't get much time to know her," she answered. "Honestly, it was pretty sweet of you to look for someone else before eating her. I'd warned her that if you turned up with an empty belly that would likely be the end of her."

"It wasn't much out of my way," he answered. "and it's not like it makes much difference to me whether I caught her or someone else." He covered his lips before letting out a satisfied belch.

Sunny got up and hopped from the passenger seat into the lion's lap. "Well, I thought it was a nice gesture," she replied. Stepping forward, she clambered up his belly, unconcerned that she was climbing over a fellow rabbit. Not that Amelia made anything more than the slightest of curves in her husband's waist. "Now, how about I make up for the offer you had to turn her down on." Sunny whispered before unbuttoning her shirt.

A soft rumbling purr rose up in the lion's throat as Sunny's lips met his own. Sigmund's car remained on the driveway in front of Amelia's apartment for quite a while before finally reversing back out. The next day, her lecturer would make a note that Amelia had not submitted her assignments or turned up to her lectures. After a couple of similar notes were added on the following days, Amelia's name would be removed from the register, just like the names of most of the prey species of her class and, within a fortnight, her apartment would be put up for rent again.

