

THE QUARRY

Luna

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My lap human had gotten fat, it wasn't the soft squishy type of fat that was comfortable to sleep on. This type of fat was the ballooning of the tummy which looked ready to pop if I tapped her with my claw. Once I had gotten around the stomach, I found there was still some space to sit on. Lap human ran her fingers through my fluffy fur.

'Left a bit, ah.' I push harder into the fingers that scratched the back of my ear.

My body vibrated with purrs of bliss, Lap human always found the best spots to pat. I purred louder as my other ear was scratched. As she got underneath my chin, a little drool slipped out and onto her hand.

'Can you get me a tissue?' Lap human asked Food human who had just entered the front room.

I rubbed my scent onto her giant gut. My purrs continued even when she had stopped stroking me. Relaxed as a puddle of fur, I settled down my head for a nice nap.

Then I got kicked by her bursting belly. I yelped and stood up. Lap human kicked me! We were fine a moment ago, patting, stroking, purring and napping. There must be a thing inside her that made her kick me, like a hairball. My fur puffed up when her tummy moved. It's going to kick me again, I thought. My ears flattened back. Claws were out.

I scratched her ginormous gut then hissed as I leapt off her lap. 'Cough up the furball, fatty!'

‘Ouch!’ Lap human clutched at her bulging tummy. ‘Ah, help me!’

Food human sprinted to Lap human, he almost trod on me! I growled and hurried away from them. My tail swished in agitation. Food human was now sprinting towards the doorway I stood in. Look down before you move, I nearly growled but changed my mind. I hissed and retreated, making my escape through an open window into the backyard, just in time to hear the vroom vroom leave. Lap human kicked me first.

My humans have been gone for days, well just Lap human. Food human is gone every morning.

‘You forgot to feed me again!’ The door shut behind Food human.

Where do they go? This is the third day food human hasn’t fed me. My bowls have been licked clean, where’s my wet food? Food human has left dry tasteless bits from the inside of a bag with a horrifying image of a tabby smiling. No healthy cat can smile that way and eating that stuff will force that sickness onto me. I will not lick it.

I’ve been yowling down the hallway and scratching at the front door. My humans come when they hear me call. I trained them better than the yodelling dog, Teddy, next door could. They feed me, brush me, pat me and play when I command them to. If they continue to misbehave, I’ll have to find a small animal to entertain me inside the house. That will make them jealous, being replaced.

‘Where are they then?’ Teddy asked.

I glared down at him from my perch on the fence. I was going to steal some of Teddy’s food, a slightly better alternative. While I decided what to say, I feigned interest in cleaning my paw. Dogs were all stupid with their muzzles poked into everything.

‘They’ve gone to work.’ No, it’s not a workday for them. ‘On an errand.’

‘Why didn’t you go with them?’

‘I’m not going out of my territory with these strays ready to claim what’s mine!’ I growled.

Teddy sniffed at my tone. ‘You cats are all so stuck up, can’t even go for a walk.’

My ears flattened back, and my throat vibrated with the rumbles of a warning. Teddy growled back in answer. My fur spiked up as our growls rose in volume. This standoff would

stop the moment one of us moved. I had planned out two options for myself. If Teddy moved first then I would beat the hell out of his face, if I did, then I'd aim for his eyes. I ignored the vroom vroom's roaring return. My claws were ready.

'Luna!' A man shouted.

Food human, I recognised the voice. I jumped off the wooden fence into my yard and raced towards Food human. He called for me, will he give me wet food? Teddy had gone into a barking frenzy, unable to reach me with a fence between us.

'Get back here Luna!' He chased me on the other side of the fence.

Food human jumped when Teddy got his front half up on the fence. I slowed down to a confident stride. My mouth filled with saliva knowing that I'll have a bowl full of bird in gravy. I won't ignore Food human if he gets my food ready for me, I decided. Lap human is still going to be ignored for getting fat and not being here, where she can be my seat.

'I'll chew your tail in half!'

Teddy's threat was typical of a dog. My tail raised up in the air with my butt facing Teddy, stupid dog. I paused briefly to look up at Food human. Dark smudges under the eyes, I'll lick them clean later. While he sleeps.

'I'm hungry.' I informed him then rubbed my right side against his leg, before going through the cat flap into my house.

Food human didn't follow me inside, he needs to be reminded who's queen. Lap human's scent has been fading out of the house. I want her back, wait somethings changed. Boxes and bags all over the front room. I sniffed and smelt something new mixed with Lap human's fresh scent. She's back, but what's this other smell? It was a little bit like the chemical smell from where the Scary humans live, jabbing needles and poking at my wounds.

They didn't come here, I sniffed and glanced around. Not in the boxes or bags. The scent was stronger down the hallway towards the bedroom. Muscles tensed as I slowed to prowl closer for a peek. In the bedroom Lap human cooed over something she had on the bed. I sat and stared at her in contemplation. No Scary humans, the thing inside her was gone. How had Lap human lost all that weight over a few days? She was still on the tubby side, but it wasn't like she was going to explode with a bang. My ears twitched when the front door opened and closed.

‘How is he?’ Food human walked into the room without looking down, I sprinted away from his feet.

‘He’s still asleep, did you get the cradle?’

Cautiously I stalked forwards, but she didn’t notice me. I felt irritation along with the urge to claw her. That thing on the bed had taken all their attention. Look at me. I haven’t seen you for days and your eyes are all soft gooey like when you gazed upon my litter. My stomach clenched. I need to eat something far away from them.

I left the bedroom and wandered down the hallway into the kitchen. The bowls next to the bin had those dry tasteless bits, I sniffed but could only smell that inedible stuff. My stomach grumbled at me. I swished my tail and looked back to the entrance of the kitchen. Neither human seemed to notice me waiting for food. They’ll come, I trained them.

‘Feed me.’ I meowed, then waited.

Food human didn’t come into the kitchen. Maybe I’m not loud enough, it takes several commands at sunrise to get Food human to the kitchen.

‘Food!’ I yowled loudly.

No Food human. Why isn’t he feeding me? I huffed and anxiously padded back to the bedroom doorway. Both Lap and Food human were focused completely on that thing on the bed. I swished my tail banging it against the door frame with my ears flicked slightly back. They should be focused on me.

‘Feed me, I’m dying from hunger!’ I made my yowl loud and miserable like the stress hunger I felt. ‘You left me alone!’

‘Shh, Luna calm down.’ Lap human didn’t glance away from the bed.

‘Look at me!’ I wailed back.

Food human smiled at Lap human and walked over to pat me on the head. I smacked his hand with my left paw. The claws were out and cut into his skin. Why won’t Lap human pay attention to me?

‘Don’t pat me I want Lap human!’ I hissed.

‘Ow, Luna.’ Food human backed away from me.

Lap human had come over to look at his bleeding hand. I glared while they fussed with his hand. Should have listened to me and given me food, shouldn't have left my house for days.

'We need a band aid.'

Lap and Food human left the bedroom.

'Don't ignore me!'

Neither human returned. I jumped when a gurgle sound was heard from the bed. They were focused on the bed, was the thing a Scary human? I waited then ducked down to the floor and prowled closer. Gurgle.

I jumped back then ducked down low. Waited for a while, nothing. No sound. Was it a ghost? I sniffed the air. The smell was the same. Lap and Food human mixed with that new strange smell. Not chemically but different. I prowled closer then lifted my top half to get a look. Can't see, the bed's too high. My front paws clawed into the quilt and I pulled myself up higher.

Something pink squirmed. My ears twitched forwards to hear it better, I sniffed at the thing. That was where the scent had come from. I leapt and scrambled onto the bed. The thing was wrapped in a blue blanket and had one arm free.

What should I call this thing and how do I get rid of it? The top half looks slightly human but the rest of it is like a cocoon. I prodded at one side of the blanket with a paw. Got a few claws out and caught a couple of threads then yanked. The blanket came off a little more. No wings. Not a moth or a fly. My humans shouldn't be bringing in strange things, a bird or a lizard is better than whatever this is. I lifted my right paw up above its tummy. My body tensed up uncertain how this thing would react. I smacked my paw down.

'Wahhh!' The thing cried.

'My ears!' My ears were flattened hard against my skull.

Fur puffed up like I was shocked by static. I leapt from the bed and ran straight for the door. Food human sprinted in and we almost collided. My claws gripped the carpet for traction to help change direction and get around the leg in front of me. Down the hallway wasn't far enough away. That thing was too loud, my ears were bleeding, I was sure they were. The cat flap left a bruise from the solid bang on my head as I retreated outside. Its wails

were muffled but still not enough. I hurried over to the next-door neighbours' yard. Could still hear it yet was easier to ignore.

'Luna get off my grass!' I turned to spot Teddy charging at me.

'Wait stupid dog!' I turned tail and raced back towards the crying.

My ears flattened harder against my skull, I didn't want to go back to that screaming thing. I skidded in a sharp turn; my back half swung wide. Teddy couldn't turn fast enough, and his face splattered onto the fence. There wasn't enough time to snicker at his lack of grace, Teddy had recovered. He snapped at my tail.

I raced to the fence for the next house over. Jumped and scratched my way up the wood to the part I could stand on, so long as I keep an eye on my balance.

'Wait, it's all that thing's fault.' I huffed.

Teddy glared at me. 'This is my yard just like that's your yard, stay out.'

'They brought home a thing and it's too loud and they won't look at me.' I complained.

Teddy sighed and shook his body. I looked over at my home. Invaded by a thing. It has to be thrown out; my humans were so focused on it that they ignored me. If I can't throw it out, then replace it with a lizard. They'll be busy playing with the lizard while I feed the thing to Teddy.

I could hear the screams again. Food human opened the front door to go and search inside the vroom vroom for something. Teddy stared with perked up ears. I watched his tail wag in an accelerated speed. He seemed excited about something.

'When did you get a puppy?'

'What puppy?' I was confused, wait. 'No, that thing is a puppy?'

Teddy turned around to stare at me. No wonder I found Teddy annoying. My humans brought home a puppy. I don't share, dogs cannot stay in my house.

'Yeah, humans have puppies too.'

When it was dark, I returned to my home. A replacement for the puppy was in my mouth. Couldn't find a lizard so I killed a noisy miner. Easier to carry a dead bird than a live

one. I pushed open the bedroom door, they never closed it before. Lap and Food human were asleep in bed. A little cage on a stand had been added to the bedroom.

In it was the puppy as Teddy called it. Closer inspection didn't reveal a tail or lots of fur like a puppy should have. I thought it strange while I got into the cage. These bars were so wide apart I could go through them. This thing would have no problem escaping.

Its eyes were closed. Asleep then. The young of a human, I padded around it. What does it do? Can't feed me and has no lap. I glanced at the pink feet. Too feeble and weak to go for walks.

With its eyes closed it reminded me of a kitten. Born blind and dependant on its queen. I still miss my litter. Four tiny kittens, taken away by other humans. I had them for three months, I didn't want them to go. If my human's puppy is like my litter, they'll send it away just as soon. I don't want to wait a few months. I stared at the thing. Too big and heavy to carry, though very weak. Like a kitten but a human kitten. A Kitten human, I named it.

This Kitten human can stay, but it will leave. I placed the dead miner on top of Kitten humans' belly. Meat will make it grow faster; it won't stay here for long.

Kitten human was quiet, I turned on my purr motor. Silent and asleep is perfect for the few days it will be here. My body curled around the Kitten human's head. I purred into his left ear, while our warmth was shared.