

Strut

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I don't remember how it happened. How i got here. Or where I'm going. I just know, I'm running, because if I slow down, I'm dead.

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Chapter 1 - Survival

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1 - Survival

1.

My paws are cut up, raw, and I'm exhausted. I need to eat, but I can't. I stare hungrily at the little chickens, safe in their little wire enclosed yard. I look off at a colt and it's mother, then some lambs a few yards off. I sit there, tail wagging, as i listen and take in every smell withen a four mile radius. There aren't any others like me near by. A few foxes, or raccoons, but that's as big as it gets.

I see a little girl. She's young, and comes out the house, full winter coat on, and mittens and boots and everything and she smells delicious. I would never eat a human, that's just not right. My eyes watch her as she's eating a sandwich. Some form of dead animal between bread, lettuce, and mayonaise. I move in closer, but keep my distance. If someone sees me, its bye bye birdie. The chickens make a racket, and the girl looks up. She's very young, and doesn't scream or cry ot anything. Instead, she points at me, and laughs. "Puppy!"

She hops off the small wooden stoop and starts moving towards me. I'm walking backwards, away from her. Then she trips. The sandwich lands right in front of me. I gobble it down without a second thought, licking my chops when I'm done. My eyes turn to the girl. She lifts her head up, showing it's now caked in ice cold mud and muck. She starts crying. I edge closer, feeling bad. My mouth open, so i can use my jaws to lift her up, on her feet-- then i hear it. Like thunder clapping in the sky, a gun shot rings out. I jump back, eyes darting around for the source.

A woman brandishing a hunting rifle aimed at the sky glares at me, fear and anger written all over her face. I turn, and run, hoping she doesn't have time to aim. My paws hit pavement as i cross a road, then dart back into a forest. A few more gunshots, and wailing, and the child crying, saying to her mother, "No mommy! Not the puppy!"

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After i take a winding path, and loose myself in the thicket, i find my way to my home. A shelled out house that no one uses, or bothers to go near because of some health hazard. It's very close to a suburb, but there's forest all around so I'm okay. I smell a small herd of deer-- a buck, 2 does, and a fawn-- but what good is that? I've been living off roadkill, and small scraps found near the farms.

Like that sandwich.

I like my lips-- well, chops-- in rememberence. I lay down on the burnt wooden flooring of the second story, looking out one of the bedroom windows. I remember food. All the good stuff. Meat, bread, fruit, vegetables, junk, candy. Oh good lord I wanted Meat, but my hunting skills were as lame as a sheep with two legs. Ugh... lamb chops....!

My stomach grumbles, making me groan. I put my head on my forearms and rest on my paws. I look down at them, the fur, the nails, and the slightly stained red, scorched floor. I moved around, and began

licking my pads. They were raw because i kept near the main roads, finding raccoons or possums. I only ate the ones that weren't sick or carriers. And it was hard because that's pretty much the entire race that's infected.

If i were a house pet, i'd be fed so well. Canned or dry, i wouldn't care. I lay on the floor, paws up, whining, and doting like those dogs in the subdivision. I think this over again, and shudder. The houses in the subdivision don't have chain link, or wooden, fences. The dogs wear electrical collars, and are pretty quiet. I'm already put in a position to steal from children that fall down, i won't become a silence, whining ninny!

...I'll just... go hungry for another night.... maybe tomorrow will be better....

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A bitter sweet smell wakes me up. I'm on my back, dreaming of running through tall grass after a roasted pig, when i smell it. It's faint, and sweet, and I can almost taste it in my mouth. My brain remembers that taste, so I'm up and running down the rickety stairs, and out a hole in the back to follow it. I'm running, and running, jumping over swamping land, and fallen trees from thunder storms, and after two miles, i find it.

A pile of vegetables.

Lettuce, carrots, peppers, mushrooms-- apparently, this had all gone bad, and instead of throwing it away, the people were tosing it out for the animals to eat. They're in a normal house, so no live stock. I'm infront of it, sniffing quietly. It smelled better from a distance, because now i see it, it's positively rancid. I bury my nose in it, and close my eyes. It smells so much better then it looks.... So i keep my eyes close and start eat.

It proves difficult, my teeth failing to keep hold of the soft leaves. These teeth were for trapping, tearing, fighting, gripping-- anything but eating lettuce. So while I'm trying to eat I here noises. My eyes open, and i see someone standing in the doorway of the house, staring at me. I look back, frozen in place. He reaches beyond what i can see, and I can just picture him grabbing another hunting rifle.

I'm frozen. I can't move. My head is down, muzzle in the trash, and he's going to blow my brains out--

But he doesn't go for a gun. Instead, he pulls another person beside him. He whispers, and they both point at me. Other people are moving about, and pointing at me. They stay in the house, scared I'll run away. So my sit down, and keep eating. My head tilted back, I attempt to swallow my first leaf. It's brown and black and slimy-- but still good. As I go for another, I notice a fuzzy white ball next to me. It's pink nose twitched, and it ate with the proficiency I lacked.

Two other rabbits sat on the other side, ignoring me completely. And now the family is taking pictures. I see a flash, and notice the rabbits freeze up. I eye them, but keep eating lettuce, awkward and tilting my head back as though to howl, but just to swallow.

I lick my chops, and watch the largest rabbit-- Mr Bunny Foo Foo himself-- eat loudly. I've never been this close to one before, maybe at a fair where i petter one, and fed the little turkey chicks, and pet the

lamb-- before i realize it, there's a loud squeal, and I have my mouth around it's neck. It's screaming and squealing, and trying to scratch my face off with it's claws, and kicking and shoot--

My instincts take over. My jaws clamp down hard, and i shake the little bastard. I move about in a circle, trying to avoid rabbit scratches to my eyes. I slam him into the ground, into the composte heap, and it takes me a moment to figure out I broke it's neck. My eyes dart to the people in the doorway, they're still watching, eyes wide. I don't want to drop my food. It's blood was seeping from where my fangs had sunk in, and it was so warm-- irony, salty, sweet,-- and it was real food! No body moves, but I move backwards, and take off.

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Maybe a few months ago, I would have thought this was gross, but now I thought it was heaven. I found a parking lot, to DQ, but it wasn't inservice because it was still technically winter outside. I'm hiding behind some buildings, and pinetrees, so no one can see me off the main road. Blood is covering my chops, because I'm stupid and repeatedly bury my face in my kill. After I finish all of it, I wished i had gotten another one, but they scattered too fast. I hope they weren't their pets....

I lick my forepaws were I hade been holding the animal down as i tore sinew and meat from the bones. Now that it was gone, I just sat there, licking myself clean.

I yawn and get up, knowing i need to move. I stop at a deep puddle, and dunk my muzzle in. I swish my face about, then use on paw to attempt to whipe. It's awkward and looks like I'm crying.I look at my reflected, and I see myself. Black fur. Wet fact. scruffy looking, and green eyes. Then the reflection shimmered because i pounce on it with both front paws.It ripples and shows my a girl, with long black hair, brown skin, and dark brown eyes. God. I almost forgot what human me looked like. But it doesn't matter. Because i can't change back anyways.

I moved away from the puddle, my paws now soaked and cold.