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**UNFINISHED**  
**DINNER**



a short story by

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**The cat stretches one grey paw, head down and sinks its teeth on the flesh of the poor rodent, just hard enough to hold it firm in its mouth, not enough to puncture its stomach. Lifting it high, there is a dash of victorious grin on its face. The rodent struggles, fluttering its captive hind legs and tail but only made the cat plant its teeth harder on its flesh.**

Looking to settle down for a more jolly moment with its catch, the cat now sits and has its front paws clasped, forming a hemisphere. When the cat is comfortably settled, it spits out the frail little rodent with one of the paws firmly pressed on its back, diminishing its chance of escaping. To doubly secure its catch, it taps the other paw on the rodent's flinching hind legs.

Completely drenched in the cat's saliva and flesh torn in the unmerciful battle, the rodent gathers its strength and pushes forward its last straw of strength to lift its head and steps, attempting to stand again. Just when a dash of hope crosses its mind that it may be free again, a quick and heavy burden lands on its back, forcing it down on the chest, yet again.

The shocking weight has knocked it semi unconscious. Beat and exhausted, the little rodent is still mulling over the idea of regaining its freedom as a rebellious resident on the street lined with high-end restaurants and independent fashion boutiques. When it tries to move again, it gets another slap from the gigantic paw. Suddenly, it strikes him that if it pretends to be dead, it may fool the cat to believe it as such and loses interest on a non-responsive game.

Positively convinced of the feasible idea, the rodent lets its head drop and lets up the pent up energy, and lands its face, side up, on the floor. Its limbs stop kicking and its body succumbs to the cat's drool that covers its tiny nose. Just as it lets go of the tension, suddenly it feels its heartbeat again, the heavy burden on its back gradually lightens.

Slowly but cautiously, it opens its eyes to inspect the possibility of another escape. Just before it is overcome by its very own fantasy, the heavy paw now flicks its body and gets thrown left and right in between the cat's paws. In seconds, another flick sends it bouncing off the hemisphere.

This time, it lands with its limbs and back free of burden. Now it is about 10 cat-steps away from where it was and closer to life. The cat is still standing with its head cocked in the original position, half giving up, waiting and guessing if the game is of any use at all.

The chance of a lifetime is finally within reach, overjoyed by the possibility that it could run back to his leftover dinner; the rodent's adrenaline is back again, pumping and steady.

With all its might, it transfers all the energy downward to its four and ran at the opposite direction. Its eyes are set on the hole beneath the pavement in front. It runs without looking back. It is half running, half stumbling, dashing across the tarmac, determined to stay away.

Drawing its distance further away from the thunderous paws and merciless claws, it only managed to skip and hop a short distance when it felt the vibration again, the same vibration he felt when it was first captured.

Furious and fooled, the cat gambles all its energy to regain control of the catch, charges forward with its laden body.

Seeing the cat's shadow closing in from behind at the speed of lightning, its heart now beats twice as fast. With all the pent up energy in its throat, the rodent leaps and pushes its limbs to hop faster. As if on impulse, a light bulb seems to have brightened up the gloomy and daunting chase, it lifts his body and dives into the hole it has been aiming at.

The dive was less than perfect when the rodent's body gets stuck at the mid section. Just as the thunderous steps gets closer and closer, the rodent wiggles doubly hard to force its mid section through.

The pressure continues to mount when the cat suddenly slaps its paw on the rodent's back. Squeaking even louder and wiggling twice as hard, the rodent found no better way but to forcibly pull its stomach through to escape the monstrous claws. With a skinned stomach and trembling four, it continued to take no chances and ran for its live.

The cat finally succumbs to the loss, scratching frantically at the hole, hissing in disgust and refuses to admit its failure. With its tail held low, it stops scratching and hissing. It knows better that it has lost control over the catch that was once but entirely hers.

Keeping its pace, the rodent emerged from the other end of the pavement, dashing across the streets, beneath cars and passing wastes that piled up along the tarmac drain, drawing its distance further and further away from where the furious cat stares.

The hope of surviving is gleaming ahead of the rodent as it imagines smelling the rotting smell of its unfinished dinner, just the way it liked it, tucked at a corner of its home.

It has reached the tarmac surface that is now brighter and cleaner, too clean to its liking in fact. It slows down a little to regain lost breath but decided not to take things for granted. It picks up its pace again and hops and runs through another street. It finally reaches its familiar ground and no cat is in sight.

The back lane is now in its normal state with zero level of danger, echoing only its sturdy panting and excited heartbeat. The stench from the surrounding assures the rodent that it is home and safe again.

The rodent chuckles weakly at its action-packed encounter, beaming at its hard earned second life. It wipes off the drool remnant from the cat, shoddily shakes off the fear and marches forward, proposing a toast for its success in its imagination.

Triumphant, the rodent forgot how much the torn flesh hurt. All it could remember was that its date with the half-bitten cherry and a slab of pasta would come to materialize soon.

Just as it steadies its breathing, it feels a chill at the lower abdomen, torn and bloody. It inhales again, used up its energy to crawl into its dwelling. Before it reaches the edge, it falls side way with eyes closed, smiling. The rodent is still murmuring under its breath, giving thanks that although it may not be able to meet its unfinished dinner, he is glad that he has not become the cat's dinner.

THE END 