It didn’t really matter how I got there or what had happened to me. What matters is the present, and the present was that I was three quarters of an inch tall or so, and I was standing in front of a lioness.

In most situations this would mean I was done for, an easy meal for a predator many times larger than myself. Luckily, she didn’t immediately lounge to crush me, or to eat me. I could see it, there was some...intelligence in those eyes. It didn’t mean I was out of danger, but it was somewhat comforting to know I was looking at something that maybe wouldn’t be invaded by their hunger.

“You can’t stay here. I’ll carry you out of here.” she said, looking around in the area we were in, the arid terrain extending into the horizon. I fully agreed! This one didn’t devour me right away, but that didn’t mean others wouldn’t! I had to get out of here as soon as possible! Sarabi – that was her name, turned out – said she would help me.

When she said she’d carry me out, I accepted, thinking perhaps she’d get me on her back. I wouldn’t have ever guessed what would happen now.

I saw her jaws open slightly. I thought she would speak, but instead, her head moved closer, until her lips grazed against me when I jumped back. “What are you doing?! Don’t eat me!.” I should have known lions can only grab objects with their mouths. Idiot me, not figuring that out – but surely she would listen if I say something!

But she didn’t. There was no reason to listen to a little creature that couldn’t even do anything by himself right now. I didn’t even get to see if she was annoyed or not before she moved her head closer again, this time her tongue coming out and touching me, me getting stuck onto the surface immediately.

I never had thought about how a tongue was like, much less a lioness’. Why would I? But if I had to make a guess, I’d have thought it’d be like sandpaper, like a rough thing that’d grind me into dust after a while, somehow dry and coarse. It was nothing like that. Just one touch with it told me two things:

One, there was nothing coarse about it. Maybe it was my size, but it felt like I was hit with a large mat.

Two, it’s wet – wet enough I got stuck onto it with just one touch!

...make it three things: after getting stuck, the next thing that would happen was that I would be brought into her mouth. One moment I was outside under the merciless sun of the prairie, the next I was in a cave I feared I’d spelunk further.

I don’t even know how it happened! I instinctively clung to the tongue, feeling myself sink into it. Above me there was the rough palate; under me: endless muscle. I was at Sarabi’s mercy; she could do whatever she wanted with me! If she wanted to swallow me I could do nothing to stop me, bathed by her saliva, doused with it!

But no, I felt her begin to move. Maybe she had been sincere when she said she would get me out to a safer place. I wasn’t going to find out until we got to wherever we were going. Until then I could only wait and hope I wasn’t going to go down her gullet.

The trip was anything but unstimulating. It was too full of sensations, in fact.

At first it wasn’t too bad, it just was...exceedingly wet.

Even though I was small, I still was big enough to leave an indent on the tongue. I could feel the muscle buckling under my weight, making a small pit around me, tastebuds cushioning it all. Some would have said it was comfortable, but there was nothing comfortable about the way saliva trickled into the indent. It was slowly at first, me lying down on the spongy floor, waiting and having nothing to do but looking at the teeth in front. It all began with it trickling over my head and back. Watery, somehow not all that viscous, it flowed behind me, a thin film between me and the tongue. I didn’t bother moving – why would I? There would be more of it, no point in even trying to get it off me.

I felt it course down my skin, soaking into my pores. Could Sarabi taste me? Probably? I laid there, closed my eyes and arched my neck so I wouldn’t get saliva on my face while it wetted my back. I could hear the strange, almost alien sounds when I moved my head, I could imagine the strands that would link the back of my head and the tongue – the same kind of strands one would see from the lioness’ fangs when she opens her mouth. I could see it clear as day in my head, vivid enough my eyes snapped open.

Around me, bubbles had formed. Like a bubble bath, bubbles as big as my fist gathered around me, the result of me not moving. I could see the saliva flow, and the red pink muscle of the tongue underneath. It was mesmerizing...something I wouldn’t have ever been able to see unless I was right here!

...I was curious, I raised my arm and saw, yes, the strings of saliva connecting my arm to the tongue. When I did, I must have awoken something in Sarabi, or maybe my taste was too much to resist, because the tongue began moving.

Like a moving bronco under me, it rose up. I rolled to a side, splashing into puddles of saliva, feeling the density increase. I couldn’t get a grip, I couldn’t – everything was so soft yet slippery, strangely pleasant, and although I had my eyes closed while my entire body got soaked with saliva, I felt as if I was floating until I fell off the edge of the tongue. To my side the gums hit me, the startling hardness making me open my eyes just in time to see myself stop right at the edge. It was a miracle I didn’t careen right off under the tongue, instead hanging right at the edge.

I didn’t want to fall down in there, preferring to stay on the tongue – and judging by how her tongue wiggled and curved slightly, she also didn’t want me to fall there. If I did, Sarabi wouldn’t be able to taste me any further. No, she wanted more, so she had to get me back where she could taste me safely, back onto the center of her tongue. I tried to contribute to that, trying to grab the tastebuds and the bumps in the way to push myself in the right direction. The downside of her tongue not having the coarse texture I thought it would have was that I didn’t have much to grip! It was difficult, and no matter how hard I tried I couldn’t make much progress, the saliva hindering me too, too sticky, my hands splashing uselessly into little puddles of it. Sarabi would have to be the one to do the most work here.

“I got you.” I heard her voice mutter behind me, from the throat. Indeed, she got me – her tongue swooped from the side, bowling me over while she pressed her tongue upwards and to a side, trying to make that push me in the right direction. I sprawled against the gum, the root of one of her upper fangs stopping me, and then the tongue scrapped me against it, upwards, rising towards the roof of the mouth suspended above, meaning for me to fall onto the center of the tongue. For a brief moment I felt my heart accelerate, the feeling of floating amidst the mist of her breath taking my own away for a moment, before I crashed right onto the target.

I let it happen, eager to let Sarabi take control while I experienced sensations I never thought I would, the softness receiving me. I was now more on the center of her mouth, the throat ahead of me, partly hidden by her tongue. I didn’t feel threatened by it, instead I just looked away, just in time for Sarabi to resume walking, moving somewhere away. I had no idea where I was now, and I didn’t really care, content with staying inside Sarabi’s mouth for a while longer.

Sarabi wasn’t going to let me simply lounge there, though. Perhaps me moving so much had made her realize my taste was something remarkable, because while she walked she began moving me around in her mouth. Her tongue wiggled like a worm, trembling as if she wanted to start right away but was having a hard time deciding what to do first, or perhaps she wanted to make me aware she was going to taste me like a piece of candy and there was nothing I could do. I had no idea what exactly she was thinking, but I sure would find out the effects of those thoughts.

The tip of the tongue raised up and, almost like a wave, it whipped the rest of the tongue, making me flip over. I fall on recently formed bubbles, finding the consistency of the saliva had changed – having turned denser, stickier, her entire mouth salivating due to my presence. I was food that would never be swallowed – hopefully – but that didn’t stop her body from getting ready for me, the humidity increasing exponentially, the saliva making it hard for me to move, weighing me down, leaving me even more at her mercy. It didn’t even flow when I fell over onto another part of the tongue, making another small pit – that was how thick it was right now.

I planted my hands on the tongue, trying to push myself up, but I lost my balance when I felt it propel me towards the roof of the mouth, me hitting the side of the fangs. I was dragged over a few of them, luckily avoiding injury of any sort, partly because I was all over the smooth surface and partly because the tongue behind me was so pliable, so soft. My skin felt the hard enamel.

Fortunately there were no pieces of food or any grime. In fact, the entire mouth was surprisingly nice. Even though it was very warm here, enough I would be drenched in sweat if I wasn’t already drenched in saliva, it was nothing I couldn’t get used to, and Sarabi’s breath, although heavy with hot air and scents I didn’t know what to think of, wasn’t unpleasant. I would have never guessed the inside of a lioness could be so...so amazing, so pleasant!

Sarabi wasn’t having a bad time either, I knew that. I was getting swept all over her fangs. Behind me, deep within her throat, I could hear curious noises, a rumble that although I had never heard it before I knew it hinted she was enjoying herself, enjoying the little human me in her maw.

Just ten minutes earlier if I had been asked if I wanted to be in an animal’s mouth I’d have said no, obviously I’d have said no! But now, absolutely soaked with saliva I felt as if I had a layer of that all over myself, tossed over and over by a tongue, not knowing how long I would be here or if at any moment Sarabi would surrender to how good I must taste and swallow me once and for all...

...I liked it. I was enjoying it so much I let myself fall slack, tossed everywhere like a ragdoll, willingly giving myself to the mercy of a carnivorous animal many times larger than myself, depending only on her mood and her willingness to help me to survive and see the outside ever again!

So be it, I thought.

I bounced from side to side of the maw, visiting crevices I would never have dared to reach if I had any say on where I was going on what Sarabi would do, dragged like a piece of morsel throughout corners of the mouth I never thought about ever before. I visited the depths of pits of saliva, full of foam and liquid and slime that received me, made me splash on it, and then lifted me up while always having a cord of spit connecting me to it. I never was thrown into the same one more than once – there were more than enough for me to soak in, marinating like a piece of meat! I should consider myself lucky Sarabi didn’t think of me as one, because I sure was getting treated like one!

I was pressed by the tongue against all kinds of surfaces. I was pressed against the rough roof of the mouth, ribbed bumps I was barely small enough to fit in, with the soft tongue on my front and the hard palate on my back. I was pressed against teeth, a hint of danger always making my heart beat even faster. I was pressed against the floor of the mouth, the tongue lying on top of me, then pushing me downwards until I could feel myself be in some sort of pit on the soft tissue. The only place I never explored, luckily for me, was the back of the mouth, Sarabi having far more control over her actions than most creatures would. I saw that pit be within sight more than one, a dozen times, opening and closing and threatening to throw me in if I made a wrong move.

So much happened I couldn’t even describe the sights, as it was too blurry and the saliva made it hard for me to see anyway, me being forced to try to get it off my face every few seconds. What I do remember, though, were the sensations. The heat that, even though it was less warm than how it would be deeper within Sarabi, was warm enough I didn’t know if I had sweat or saliva on myself, the blasts of air that kept washing over me when Sarabi panted because of my taste, when she breathed through her mouth, the heat of her breath, emanating from deep within her like the blast of a furnace, only made me lose myself into a strange fog of sensations I didn’t even know how to put into words properly.

The density of the spit, the red colors everywhere, the tongue with its bumps, its buds and its pliable softness that made me think of soft pillows, the way light sometimes filtered through fangs and lips and made me question of anything around me was real or not.

I couldn’t believe this experience had been granted to me, and if it wasn’t for how strange it would be, I would have thanked the lioness for taking me into their mouth and unknowingly give me this experience – although, well, she got something out of this too. I must have tasted really well, to be swished all over like this, to hear that strange, bass-like purring coming from somewhere within her gullet, making the mouth vibrate. I could be in there for hours, and I wouldn’t have minded. That was how much I was enjoying myself, that was how much I knew Sarabi liked it, too.

But all good things come to an end.

Everything stopped. For a minute or so all I could hear was Sarabi’s breathing, roaring above me while I laid on the tongue, sprawled over, exhausted and probably tasteless by now after how much the lioness enjoyed my flavor. I couldn’t move and didn’t want to move, too comfortable and too eager to close my eyes, when everything moved forward. I thought she was just continuing her fun, but instead there was a blinding shower of light coming from in front of me. I shielded my face, saliva smeared over my forehead when I covered my eyes, and didn’t witness the tongue going forward slowly.

I expected to find the sun shining over me. I expected the arid wind, the heat of the afternoon, to be left on dirt and abandoned as if nothing had happened, left behind by a lioness who would return to her usual life after having gotten some weird bug out of the turf of the lions. There was no reason to expect anything different – and if there was, it’d be getting eaten.

But instead of all that, I found cold and stone. I wasn’t out in the open, I was inside some sort of well-lit cave, sunlight filtering from the ceiling. I was lying on a small rock, looking at Sarabi, who after unceremoniously leaving me there, retreated a few feet away, laid down, put her head over her paws, and gazed at me with something I wasn’t sure how to interpret. Interest? Indifference? Where was I, anyway?

“I decided to keep you for a while. You have no objections, I assume” she said, as if I could do a thing if I had some. I was too small and too...too interested in her maw to even think of having any objections! “You taste too good to push you away, so I decided to keep you for a while”

“...thanks...?” I said, unsure. Was this a good thing? I was alive, so it probably was, but I had just been told by a lioness I would be kept as a tasty thing to swish in her mouth every once in a while.

Well, she hadn’t said exactly that, but I hoped I could convince her for it to be like this. It’d be good for both of us.

So I thanked her again, more resolutely this time.

“That’s all?”

I hadn’t expected Sarabi to reply with that. Wasn’t it...wasn’t it enough? I was unsure what she expected of me. I asked her what she meant with that.

“If you’ll be here then I want something from you” and without giving me even time to ask what exactly it would be, she lunged at me! I cowered, afraid, but the sensation I hoped for enveloped me: the sensation of Sarabi’s tongue, colliding against me. I knew right away what this meant, and what Sarabi had been referring to.

She wanted to taste me again – and many times more, I knew. While I was dragged into her maw, I knew two things:

One, that I didn’t mind. If anything, I was so glad!

And two, that we weren’t alone right now.

It was from the corner of my eye, but I was pretty sure another lioness had seen her do this. She had seen me. I had no idea who that other lioness was, but I wasn’t sure if I hoped she had seen me or not.

This could either be really good, or really bad.