

Whiskers And Wealth

by

Varian Quill

"Jewel Crest Avenue".

A marble plaque on the tall red-brick wall invited with its name those who entered the cul de sac. The street was lined with large houses with white walls, black roofs, and trimmed lawns. Each home was unique in design, with a second floor jutting out like a balcony, another with a tower with a conical roof, and another with a three-car garage. The sunlight glinted off the windows of each building, casting shadows over the well-kept streets.

A small mouse named Cherry stood before this wealthy neighborhood. Her fluffy fur's color resembled a cup of coffee with a hefty amount of whole milk. The rodent's short pink skirt saw better days, like the oversized ribbon on her little head. She had wandered into the city from the country, but she found herself attracted to the sweet smell wafting from the rich suburb. Her stomach growled, and she rubbed it to calm it down. She sniffed around for the source of the aroma, following the scent to a particularly fancy house with a tall wooden fence. Cherry clambered up the fence with ease, clinging onto the wood as she peeked over the top.

The backyard of the house was a spacious, open area with a covered patio, a large pool, and a grassy garden with a stone path winding through it. Cherry climbed atop the fence and looked around for the source of the delicious smell. She spied a long table on the patio with a fine silk cloth draped across it. Two plates were set up, with a glass of water placed between them. Cherry hopped down onto the ground and scurried towards the table, hoping to find some crumbs of food to munch on. She reached the side of the table and peered up to see what lay upon it.

Even when not expecting much, her disappointment was immeasurable. Not only there were just leftovers, but it consisted mainly of fishbones and a few chunks of raw meat. The mouse couldn't understand why any human would have such a diet, additionally being quite a messy eater who didn't even bother to clean after themselves. Or were they just waiting for their servants to take care of their slopiness? While investigating, she found a few colorful hairs, green and yellow ones. It gave her strange vibes, as she didn't have a full picture yet.

Suddenly, she heard a faint meow coming out from the household.

Cherry quickly hid under the table, holding her breath as she listened to the approaching cats. She saw two sets of paws walk onto the patio, one pair yellow and one pair green. The cats sat beside the table, curling up on their cushions. They stared at the leftovers hungrily, licking their lips. They began to dig in, gobbling up the fish bones and scraps of meat. Cherry watched from beneath the tablecloth, remaining hidden from the cats. Her stomach grumbled again, and she rubbed it to quiet it down.

"Did you hear something?" The male asked, purring out loud.

"That must be your imagination." The female responded, rolling her eyes. "You're always hearing things." Cherry held her breath, trying her best not to let a single squeak. She saw their tails swishing back and forth in a hypnotizing way. But she had to look beyond them for a way out. Thanks to the table's length, the mouse slowly tiptoed towards the furthest gap between the furniture's legs, seeing the same fence she hopped through before.

"It's gone now anyway. Let's just eat. I'm tired of your exuberant imagination." The female suggested, focusing on her meal. The mice sighed with relief, finally able to leave her hiding spot. She carefully sneaked past them, and just as she was about to reach the exit, her tummy groaned again, although luckily out of the cat's hearing range. However, it didn't make the main problem go away, which was her uncomfortable hunger and a surge of sadness and anxiety coming with it. Should she try her luck somewhere else? Before Cherry made her final decision, a thin stream of steam floated into her nostrils, bringing her attention to the nearby kitchen. Somebody just placed a fresh pie on the windowsill! Cherry licked her lips, her mouth-watering. This was surely a sign from the heavens to give her some energy for her journey.

Noticing the ajar kitchen's backdoor, the adventurous mouse crawled inside through a pet entrance, before noticing the cabinets being left open. She climbed one of the handles and peeked inside, finding a bag of crackers. While it could be her destination and ultimate reward, the powerful smell of the pastry clouded her judgment, and she continued searching for its source. After hopping onto a countertop, Cherry discovered a freshly baked apple pie with a fork stabbed into it, with a note saying "for Lemon and Lime". The mouse raised her brow, pondering on what it meant. Who names their children by the fruits? Then she remembered the peculiar colors of the cat's hairs, solving the mystery. But her hunger needed a real substance, instead of successfully solving puzzles.

Cherry tip-toed closer, eyeing the pie hungrily. It was a delicious-looking slice of apple pie, with the fruits sliced into perfect little circles. The mouse couldn't help herself. She dug her paw into the crust, scooping out a chunk of warm filling. Cherry stuffed it into her mouth, chewing happily as she tasted the sweet filling. It was scrumptious! Cherry took another bite, savoring the flavor of the apples and cinnamon. She had never eaten anything so delicious in her whole life! Cherry finished off the last bits of the filling, licking her paws clean, still leaving most of the wonderful pastry. She felt satisfied for the moment, but her hunger still lingered. She glanced around the kitchen, wondering if there were any more snacks. Cherry spotted a cabinet door hanging open, and she hopped down onto the floor to investigate.

Cherry climbed up the handle of the cabinet and peeked inside. It was stocked full of different foods, from bags of chips to jars of cookies. Cherry pushed aside a bag of pretzels and picked up a cookie, munching on it. It was a delicious chocolate chip cookie, with big chunks of chocolate. Cherry ate another sweet goodness, enjoying the taste. She took another one from the jar and nibbled on it, feeling fuller with each delicious treat. She wondered how much she could eat before she felt satisfied. Then, her ears perked up and moved like tiny radars, catching the distinct sound of a swinging pet door. A few seconds after, another one!

Cherry froze up, listening closely. She heard footsteps approaching, and she knew she had to hide. She tried to remain in the cabinet but the dust kept tickling her nose and she was afraid to let out a squeaky sneeze, ruining her cover. So she quickly jumped out of the cabinet, landing silently on the kitchen tile. Cherry scampered across the room, hiding underneath the fridge. She pressed herself against the wall, trying to stay out of sight. The mouse held her breath as she heard the cats enter the kitchen, their paws tapping across the tile. Cherry watched as they walked past the fridge, oblivious to her presence. The cats headed towards the pie, their tails swishing back and forth excitedly. They sat down beside the table, staring at the dessert hungrily.

"See? I told you something is going on. Who could eat our pie if not an intruder?" The green can said with a smug face.

"Maybe it was the human child." Lemon never used their proper name, not even trying to learn it. "You know its appetite. What's wrong with you today?"

Cherry barely heard the green cat's quiet swear under his nose, making a note that both felines don't necessarily like each other. The mouse watched as the cats began to dig in, gobbling up the pie. Lemon was much more elegant, using her single claw to cut herself a piece of pie and eating it daintily. Lime, however, was much messier, shoving his face into the pie and devouring it. Cherry winced as she watched them eat, their teeth tearing into the crust and filling. She wanted to sneak out while they were distracted, but she was worried they would notice her. While they were distracted, Cherry made her move. She crawled out from under the fridge and scurried towards the pet door, keeping an eye on the cats. The pet door was within reach, while she shuffled on the tiled floor, almost tasting the freedom but sadly being forced to leave all those delicious snacks behind. As she was about to touch the plastic flap, a loud meow stopped her dead in her tracks.



"Where do you think you're going, rodent?" Lemon asked, her voice dripping with venom. Cherry turned around to see the cats glaring at her, their eyes narrowed into slits. "We don't tolerate vermin like you in this household." Cherry backed away slowly, her heart pounding. The cats advanced towards her, their tails swishing back and forth. Cherry looked around for a way to escape, but there was nowhere for her to run. Lime swiftly jumped behind her, cutting the mouse's way out, while the yellow cat gracefully approached the tiny female, towering over her.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to intrude!" Cherry squeaked, her voice trembling. "Please, let me go. I promise I won't come back." Lemon smirked, her whiskers twitching. She leaned in closer, her hot breath blowing in the mouse's face. "You're not going anywhere, little mouse. You interrupted our meal, so now we'll eat you instead." Cherry gulped, her eyes widening. She knew she was in dire trouble, just mere moments from her potential demise.

"But...but why?" Cherry asked, her tail quivering. Lime chuckled, his tone mocking. "Because we can. And because you're trespassing." Cherry whimpered, her ears flattening against her head. She wished she had never wandered into the house, now regretting her decision. Lemon licked her lips, her sharp teeth glistening in the light. Cherry shuddered, knowing she was helpless to stop the cats from devouring her. "Now hold still, and maybe we'll make it quick," Lemon purred, her eyes gleaming with hunger. Cherry closed her eyes, bracing herself for the inevitable. She thought about her little village, all the friends she'd not see anymore. Or even all that delicious food she's going to miss. While trying to find even the smallest weakness in those ravenous felines, Cherry remembered something that could be helpful. Cherry learned about their combusting nature when mixed during their previous barbers. Like hot oil and water!

"So... which one of you is going to eat me? After all, I'm just a bite-size mouse."

Cherry's question made the cats pause, their eyes narrowing. They glanced at each other, confusion written on their faces. Lime cocked his head to the side, his ears perking up. "What do you mean?" Cherry shrugged, trying to act nonchalant. "Well, there's two of you and only one of me. So who gets to eat me?" Lemon rolled her eyes, scoffing. "I get to eat you. I am the older sister, after all." Lime frowned, his back arching up, while its hairs also stood. "That's not fair! I want to eat the mouse too!" Cherry watched as the cats argued, their voices growing louder. She smirked, knowing she had hit a nerve. She watched as the cats bickered, their tails lashing back and forth.

Lemon suddenly hissed, her claws unsheathing. Lime growled, his ears flattening against his head. Cherry watched as the cats squared off, their fur standing on end. Lemon lunged at Lime, her teeth bared. Lime dodged out of the way, letting out a warning growl. The cats started tussling, their bodies rolling around on the floor. Cherry watched as the cats fought, their claws scratching at each other. Lemon pinned down Lime, her teeth inches away from his neck. If they weren't so close to her or the exit, Cherry could get away. Instead, she covered her eyes, unable to watch bloody violence. Until she did what every other potential dinner wouldn't do.

"Stop fighting, you two!" Cherry yelled, her voice echoing through the kitchen. The cats paused, their ears twitching. Lemon glared at Cherry, her eyes flashing. "Why should we listen to you? You're our snack, after all." Cherry gulped, her tail quivering. She knew she

had to choose her next words carefully, or else she would become cat food. "Because that's not how a proper lady fights," Cherry said, her voice shaking slightly. Lemon raised her brow, her whiskers twitching. "A proper lady?" Lime chimed in, his tone mocking. "Yeah, a proper lady! And you're not acting like one, Lemon!" Cherry nodded, hoping the cats would buy her ruse. Instead, the yellow cat squinted her eyes, after hearing her name.

"How do you know my name, mouse?" Cherry froze, realizing she had slipped up. She quickly recovered, thinking of a believable excuse. "Oh, well, your reputation surpasses you after all. Lime's as well." Cherry gestured to the green cat, who seemed flattered by her comment. Lemon wasn't convinced, however, her eyes narrowing. "Reputation? What reputation?" Cherry smirked, knowing she had found the cat's weakness. "Your reputation as the most elegant and graceful cat in the neighborhood, of course!" Cherry gushed, trying to butter up the cat. Lemon preened, her whiskers twitching happily. "Really? Well, I suppose I am quite refined." Cherry nodded, her tail swishing back and forth.

"Yes, you certainly are! But such elegance requires dignity and grace, not barbaric fighting like this!" Cherry exclaimed, gesturing to the cats' tangled limbs. Lemon glanced at Lime, who was still pinned underneath her. She scoffed, her ears flattening against her head. Then the other feline cut them off, apparently wanting to inflate his ego. "And what about me? What's my reputation?" He asked while the yellow cat scoffed, before letting out a mocking chuckle with a subtle shake of her head.

"Um...you're known as the strongest cat in the neighborhood! Everyone talks about how big and powerful you are!" Cherry lied, hoping to appease the green cat. Lime grinned, his tail swishing back and forth. Lemon rolled her eyes, clearly annoyed by her brother's antics. "Of course they do! I am pretty strong, aren't I?" Cherry nodded, trying to ignore the fact that Lemon was still looming over her. The yellow cat sighed, clearly exasperated by her brother's behavior. "But it doesn't change the fact that you're still our snack. So cease your attempts of wooing as over. Me and that poor excuse of a cat will settle this the simple way."

"W-what about a sumo match?" Not having any other options, she said the first thing that came to her head, which still was a better option than the roshambo game, since it would be probably hard with their paws. "Suh-moh?" Lime blinked a few times, while Lemon raised her eyebrow, her whiskers twitching. "Sumo. I know that. But you might better explain it to that thick-head first, I don't need it." Lemon smirked, pretending to be a know-all of this house. Cherry gulped, her tail quivering.

"It's a wrestling competition between two opponents. They try to push each other out of a circle to win." Cherry explained, hoping the cats would go for it. Lemon snorted, clearly unimpressed by the mouse's suggestion. "That sounds primitive." Lime cocked his head to the side, confusion written on his face. "Primitive? What does that mean?" Cherry ignored the green cat's question, focusing on convincing the yellow one. "It's a very honorable sport! Only those with strength and honor compete in it!" Lemon rolled her eyes, clearly not buying the mouse's story.

"Strength and honor, huh? Sounds like something you rodents play." Lemon sneered, her tail swishing back and forth. Cherry clenched her fists, trying to stay calm. "It's not just us mice! Cats, dogs, bears, even elephants wrestle in sumo matches!" Lime perked up, his ears

twitching. "Elephants?" Cherry nodded, seeing an opportunity to convince the green cat. "Yep, they're huge animals. And they use their size to dominate their opponents."

"So? What about you? Or are you just scared of being worse than an el-eph-ant?" Lime giggled, already liking where all of this was going, proving how easily entertained he could be. Lemon stared the mouse down, as if she contemplated swallowing her right here and then, before eventually straightening up with a cold, stoic expression. "Fine. I'm not afraid of any challenge. I'm ready for anything. Give us a cue and we can start any second now."

"W-wait! It's not that easy! You have to gain weight first. Sumo wrestlers are massive, usually a few times bigger than normal people. But I just know a way how to gain mass extremely fast!" Cherry exclaimed, trying to stall for time. Lemon narrowed her eyes, her whiskers twitching. "Mass? Why would we want that?" Cherry shrugged, trying to act nonchalant. "Because sumo wrestling requires strength, which means you need to be heavier to be able to push your opponent out of the ring. We can make one later with... ketchup!"

Both cats blinked, although for different reasons. While Lemon seemed skeptical, Lime was intrigued. "So... what kind of food we're going to eat, anyway?" Cherry shrugged, trying to act nonchalant. "Whatever is available in the kitchen. Although I would suggest sweets, fatty foods, and sugary drinks. Those are the best ways to gain mass quickly." Lime licked his lips, his tail swishing back and forth. "Ooh, I love sweet things! Especially chocolate!" Cherry nodded, her tail swishing back and forth. "Excellent choice! Chocolate is perfect for gaining mass!" Lemon rolled her eyes, clearly not buying the mouse's story. The other cat noticed that.

"What? Are you afraid of losing and that I can finally eat the mouse? Because if so, then you're a stinky coward!"

"Take that back! And you, rodent. Just show us what you mean, so I can crush that poor excuse of a doormat!" The female cat growled at Cherry, already impatient enough to do whatever it meant to finally end this whole argument. Cherry couldn't be happier, after buying some of the precious time. She gestured towards the fridge and pantry, while the cats followed her. "After me!" Cherry said, her tail swaying nervously. Lemon rolled her eyes, clearly annoyed by the mouse's antics. "Fine, we'll follow you. But if this turns out to be some sort of trick, I'm going to eat you." Cherry gulped, her tail quivering. She knew she had to choose her next words carefully, or else she would become cat food.

With the cat's help, they eventually opened the metallic tower filled with cold goodness. For Cherry, it was like opening a vault, but instead of golden bars, there were much, much more valuable for her stuff. She didn't know where to start. The mouse ignored all the vegetables and other healthy snacks that would not work in this scenario. Instead, she gazed upon all other fattening foods. Then they looked into the pantry, seeing even more junk food. Cherry grabbed as many chocolate bars as she could, along with bags of chips, cookies, candy, ice cream, cake, and other sugary treats. Lemon wrinkled her nose, clearly disgusted by the mouse's selection. "This is your idea of a meal? How barbaric." Cherry ignored the cat's comment, placing the food on the counter. Lime licked his lips, clearly excited by the prospect of eating so much unhealthy food.

"I don't care! I love sweets!" Lime exclaimed, drooling slightly. Cherry smirked, knowing she had found the green cat's weakness. "Great! You can eat as much as you want, while Lemon..." Cherry trailed off, trying to think of a way to convince the yellow cat to eat. Lemon raised her brow, clearly unimpressed by the mouse's story. "Me? What about me?" Cherry shrugged, trying to act nonchalant. "Well, you need to eat to gain mass." The more sophisticated feline sighed dramatically, picking a bag full of bagels, before ripping it apart with her claw, releasing all of the buns for her to munch on. In Cherry's eyes, that may not be enough, so she quickly hatched a plan on how to convince them to eat as much as possible.

"Look at all those crunchy, deliciously salty potato chips, how they're begging to be eaten! Can you resist their siren song? And how about that leftover chicken in the fridge? Or pastrami? Or ham? All waiting to be devoured!" Cherry gushed, trying to entice the cats. Lime grinned, his tail sweeping the floor. "Chicken? I love chicken! And I love potatoes! I'll eat all of that!" Lemon rolled her eyes, clearly annoyed by her brother's antics. "Not without me, you won't." The other feline cut them off, apparently wanting to inflate his ego. "Oh yeah? Well, I bet I can eat more than you!"

"You're on!" Lemon snarled, clearly not backing down from the challenge. Cherry smirked, knowing that everything was going according to her plans. "Good! Now, let's get started!" Both cats nodded, before digging into the food. Cherry watched with amusement as the cats stuffed themselves with junk food. Lime ate the most, shoveling food down his throat with reckless abandon. Lemon took her time, savoring every bite. The green cat started with sweets, gorging himself on chocolate, ice cream, and cookies. Then he moved on to savory foods, wolfing down meat, bread, and pasta. Lemon preferred healthier options, nibbling on carrots, celery, and other vegetables. But even she couldn't resist the temptation of sugar, eyeing the treats occasionally with hunger in her eyes.

"Come on, Lemon. Don't you want that chocolate bar? This one is full of nuts and nutrients! And after eating that sweet goodness, you'll need to continue with something salty, like that delicious jalapeno jerky!" Cherry encouraged, trying to tempt the yellow feline. Lemon rolled her eyes, clearly annoyed by the mouse's antics. "Jerky? Really? That's hardly a proper meal." Cherry shrugged, trying to act nonchalant. "Of course it is! It's packed with protein and vitamins! And it goes great with cheese!" Lime perked up, his ears twitching. "Cheese? I love cheese!" Lemon snorted, clearly unimpressed by the green cat's reaction. "Really? You would eat anything that mouse tells you to, wouldn't you?"

"Yep! I'm already full, but I can still eat more! I'm not a quitter! I can do this all day!" Lime exclaimed, licking his lips. Lemon sighed dramatically, picking up a triangle of edam with her paw. "Fine. If you insist. But I'm doing this because I want to, not because that rodent told me to." Cherry smirked, knowing that she had found the yellow cat's weakness. "Excellent choice! Cheese is perfect for gaining mass!" Lime giggled, already liking where all of this was going, proving how easily entertained he could be. Lemon stared the mouse down, as if she contemplated swallowing her right here and then, before eventually straightening up with a cold, stoic expression. "Fine. I'm not afraid of any challenge. I'm ready for anything. Give us a cue and we can start any second now."

Meantime, Cherry opened a lying bottle of ketchup and jumped onto it, causing the sauce to squirt out, covering the floor in red goo. Lemon wrinkled her nose, clearly disgusted by the

rodent's selection. "This is your idea of an arena ring? How barbaric." Cherry ignored the cat's comment, taking a piece of celery before using it as a pen, drawing a large circle on the tiles, and occasionally dipping the tip in the ketchup. Lime looked briefly entertained by the silly mouse's actions, he returned to his treats moments later, while Lemon returned to eating bagels, before taking a few bites of the leftover chicken. Cherry watched Lime's belly growing significantly with each passing minute, resembling a balloon. The green cat burped loudly, patting his swollen tummy. "I think I'm done. I feel so... bloated." Cherry nodded, already liking where all of this was going, proving how easily entertained she could be. Lemon squinted her eyes, her whiskers quivering at the sight of the gluttonous feline who looked more like a blob than an animal. Although she realized that she might lose to that gigantic mass alone.

Cherry looked at the other cat who refused to eat anything more, but it was only half as big as Lime. It briefly worried her that Lemon may be able to catch her anyway, but she decided to trust her plan. "Are you sure you don't want to eat more? Maybe some cookies? Or ice cream? And you could also add some bacon to your meal. You know, to gain more mass?" Lemon showed her sharp teeth, releasing a quiet hiss, clearly losing patience after losing so much time choosing whoever could finally eat the mouse. The rodent gulped audibly, deciding not to push any further. "I mean, we can start now."

"Fine. Let's get this over with." Lemon said, jumping onto the floor. Cherry cleared her throat, trying to act nonchalant. "Great! Before we begin, I would like to remind you of the rules. No biting, scratching, or clawing. Only pushing and shoving. The winner gets to eat me. Any questions?" Both cats shook their heads, clearly not backing down from the challenge. "Good! Now, let's get started!" Cherry announced while the cats entered the makeshift arena. Lime smirked, clearly excited by the prospect of eating a mouse, even after devouring a mountain of junk food. Although it was more about his ego than her taste itself. Lemon rolled her eyes, clearly unimpressed by the green cat's antics. "Let's do this." Cherry nodded, before signaling the start of the match.

Both cats circled one another, waiting for the perfect moment to strike. Lime charged toward Lemon, hoping to use his superior size to his advantage. While none of the cats knew how to properly wrestle, they charged at each other, hoping for the best. Lemon dodged the green cat's attack, before countering with a shove, trying to knock her opponent off balance. Lime stumbled slightly but managed to regain his footing. The yellow feline smirked, clearly pleased with herself. "Is that all you got? Pathetic!" Lime growled, clearly annoyed by the yellow cat's antics. "Shut up! I'm just warming up!" Lemon snorted, clearly unimpressed by the green cat's statement. "Sure you are." The other feline snarled, clearly annoyed by the yellow feline's attitude. "I am! Just watch!" Lime exclaimed, charging once again. Lemon rolled her eyes, clearly unimpressed by the green cat's words. "Whatever you say."

The green cat tried to grab Lemon, but the yellow feline dodged his grasp. Lime huffed, clearly frustrated by the yellow feline's evasion. "Stop moving! I should win by default. Look how big and strong I am!" But Lemon only snorted. "Big, yes. You're just a fat blob." Lime gasped, clearly offended by the yellow feline's insult. "Hey! I'm not fat! I'm just... muscular!" Lemon chuckled, clearly amused by the green cat's antics. But she underestimated her less intelligent opponent, who flopped towards her at alarming speed like a chubby manatee. Lemon yelped, before quickly rolling out of the green cat's path. Lime grinned, clearly

pleased with himself. "Ha! I almost got you! Admit it, you're scared!" Lemon narrowed her eyes, clearly annoyed by the green cat's taunts. "Scared? Of you? Please. You're nothing but a lazy oaf. And you call yourself a predator?" That last line was enough for the Lime to launch a final, most destructive attack.

The green cat roared, before tackling the yellow feline with all his strength. Lemon grunted, clearly surprised by the bigger opponent's sudden burst of energy. But she managed to hold her ground, refusing to give up without a fight. At the last moment, she successfully dodged the green cat's charge, causing Lime to stumble. Lemon smirked, clearly pleased with herself. Then she realized how much energy Lime needed for that last attempt, now becoming a wheezing, exhausted mass. Thinking how pathetic his state was, she only chuckled and placed her paws on the round belly, before rolling the cat like a ball of yarn.

Cherry gulped audibly, thinking fast about how to help the fatter cat. Not because she wanted him to win out of pure compassion, but from simple calculation, since Lemon was far more agile despite her gained weight, although not as much as her opponent. She quickly tossed a few slices of bologna right under Lemon's legs, causing the yellow feline to slip and accidentally lose grip on the chubby cat's belly, right before falling forward outside the makeshift ring. Cherry smiled, clearly relieved that her plan worked. Lime blinked, clearly confused by the yellow feline's loss. "Wow! I didn't know you were so clumsy!" Lemon glared at the green cat, clearly annoyed by the bigger opponent's antics. Seeing it as a perfect opportunity and the fact that Lemon's tail was outside the ring, she swiftly leaped closer.

"Lime is the winner! Congratulations on a delicious snack. That's me!"

"What? Oh, please. Look at that pathetic piece of lard. He can barely breathe, not to mention being able to move an inch to get you. He's disqualified." Lemon snorted, gazing angrily at the mouse.

"W-what?"

"DISQUALIFIED! Besides, I'm famished after so much exercise. So, come here!"

Cherry quickly dodged Lemon's paw, knowing well it wouldn't be possible to reach the exit, so she jumped inside the closest thing that could give her temporary safety. A jumbo-sized bag of potato chips! Cherry squeaked happily, seeing that the bag was already open, allowing her to hide inside. Lemon hissed, clearly annoyed by the mouse's antics. "Get out of there! I won fair and square!" Seeing how deep the mouse went between all those salty and greasy slices, she tried to reach inside with a thick paw. Seeing it was no use, Lemon used her jaws to eat all that junk food, just to get one, final feisty snack. Cherry squealed, clearly terrified by the cat's actions. "No! Stop! You'll choke!" Lemon snorted, clearly unimpressed by the rodent's concern. "So? I'm willing to risk that!" Cherry shook her head, seeing she couldn't outmatch Lemon's stubbornness so easily.

In a panic, Cherry used her teeth to bite through the bag's bottom so she could search for another hiding place. With no luck, the closest food she saw was a massive plate of, ironically, lime gelatin. Cherry sighed, clearly not thrilled by the idea of jumping inside, but having no choice. Lemon narrowed her eyes, clearly displeased how the mouse for prolonging the inevitable. "Don't you dare!" Cherry shrugged, already knowing how to play

the cat's game, although deep inside she was shaking from fear. "Or what? You'll eat me?" Lemon showed her sharp teeth, clearly annoyed by the rodent's comment. After a short stare-down, Cherry blew raspberry before showing her tongue, cannon-balling inside the jiggly goodness. Lemon growled, clearly furious by the whole situation and all the work she had to do just to get a measly bite-sized snack. But it wasn't about food anymore, but an act of pure revenge.

Cherry swam through the lime-flavored goop, clearly not enjoying the weird sensation of a slimy substance against her fur. But it was worth it if it meant to annoy the cat. Lemon narrowed her eyes. "Come out! You can't stay there forever!" Cherry stuck her head out, taunting her enemy, simultaneously taking unnecessary risks. "Watch me!" Lemon snarled, tired of Cherry's constant obstinance. Finally, the female cat pounced without warning, opening her maw wide, trying to devour as much jelly as possible. Cherry squeaked loudly, startled by the feline's action. She quickly dived deeper, hoping to avoid sharp teeth. Lemon swallowed a few bites of gelatin, before realizing how much more difficult it was to catch the mouse while eating.

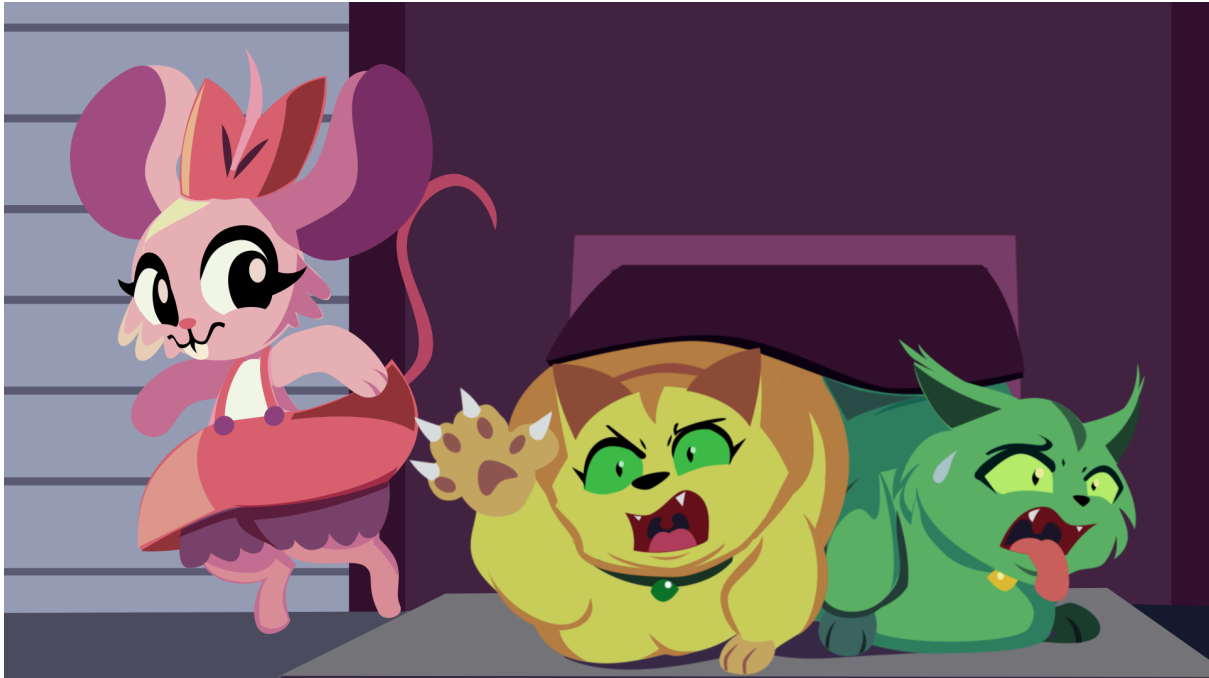
Cherry emerged from the dessert, gasping for air after holding her breath inside the substance. Lemon huffed, clearly frustrated by the rodent's antics. "You think you're so clever? Well, I'm not giving up!" The mouse didn't want to either, but her luck was running out. Although the massive bottle of soda was opened, she wouldn't be able to escape from the back. Seeing Lemon's whiskers nearby, almost tickling her ears, she climbed the nearby chair, took a deep breath, and jumped headfirst into the watered-down syrup. Lemon blinked, clearly confused by the mouse's actions. "What the...? Is she that stupid?"

Cherry swam through the carbonated liquid, trying to find a safe spot to rest, despite not having much oxygen. The only thing Lemon could do would just sit there and watch the mouse come out by herself. But after going through so many obstacles, the sophisticated feline lost all of her patience and usual demeanor, wanting to get Cherry right then and there. She wrapped her paws around the bottle, before tilting it over and drinking its contents. Her belly expanded rapidly, causing her to belch a few times, acting unladylike against her will. Lemon licked her lips, clearly pleased by the sweet taste of soda, since it was her first time having it. But she couldn't enjoy it for long, feeling the mouse's tiny feet against her tongue. Focused on the sugary liquid, she suddenly had too strong grip around the plastic vessel, releasing lots of soda directly onto her head, along with the mouse who used this opportunity to jump between the ears, sliding on Lemon's back, finally using the tail as a ramp. Her eyes widened, seeing how close she was to freedom, jumping through the air at a great distance. But it wasn't over yet.

"Lime! Wake up, you piece of lard, and catch the mouse!"

The green feline shook his head, suddenly regaining focus before seeing the fleeing rodent. Even when both cats had massive girths and weight, they still were faster than a much smaller mouse with even shorter limbs. Cherry ran for her life, knowing well that if she made one mistake, it would be all over. Lime charged like a bowling ball, rolling towards a mouse, who felt like an adventurer from old movies. In the same second, Lemon used all of her remaining strength to leap forward, taking all the extra weight with her, along with a belly full of soda. The only thing Cherry saw, was the light coming from the plastic flap on the kitchen's backdoor.

"Geronimo!" Cherry shouted, jumping through the cat's exit, right before hearing a reverberating thud. Although all of her instincts told her to keep running, she looked behind, seeing something she wouldn't forget for her entire life. She could even barely hold her laughter!



Both cats were stuck inside the cat's door, desperately trying to push themselves out. Their massive bellies were blocking the passage, preventing them from squeezing out of the plastic entrance. Cherry giggled, clearly amused by the whole situation. Lemon hissed at the other cat, more furious at his failure than Cherry's successful escape. She couldn't live with the thought of losing to a mere rodent, especially after being so close to tasting her flesh. Lime, on the other hand, had enough of the female's attitude.

"Move aside!"

"No! You move! Just go away and let me chase the mouse!"

"I'm not moving until you do!"

"Me neither! So, stop complaining and deal with it!"

Cherry kept laughing, holding her tummy as if she was afraid that it would burst. She forgot about all the dangers she just experienced, extremely close to her demise. Eventually, she simply waved both silly felines goodbye before running away, giggling all the way. Lemon and Lime growled, unable to move out of their trap. "This mouse... I'll get her! I swear!" Lime whined, wanting only peace and quiet. If only it was the first thing he thought before the whole mess.

Concept Art



