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Contains: Weight Gain

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## Van Life

Coming up on two years of the nomad life, Sam was beginning to wonder if it was time to start looking for a more... 'permanent' place to live. Something a little more... 'roomy.'

The suspension of their converted cargo van creaked as over three hundred pounds of goth girl stepped down from the side slider door. Sam remembered a time when the process of moving to the cockpit seats from the back of the van was quite a bit easier...

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"This is gonna be so much fun!"

Sam sat in the driver's seat of their new home on wheels vibrating with excitement. When the lockdowns happened and the house cleaning service Leigh worked for was forced to massively downscale, Sam decided to quit her soul-sucking retail job. They pooled their savings and bought a van. With the help of some friends and family they converted it into a camper, complete with a kitchen and a full size bed in the back. It had been an adjustment to go back to sharing a bed like when they were kids; but after a few 'test nights' in the driveway, they ended their lease, sold all their furniture on Craigslist, and hit the road.

"How far are we going?" Leigh asked for the third time that hour.

"The State Park." Sam checked the map on her phone. "It's about two more hours.

Leigh let out another long sigh.

"Why don't you watch some anime or something?" The rainbow-haired driver suggested.

Leigh adjusted her glasses. "The subs are too small on my phone. And I'll get carsick."

Sam had always known her sister was a bit of a grump. It often surprised people they got along at all. Leigh had black hair, multiple piercings, and could have passed for a boy if she wasn't constantly dressed in all black skirts and nets. Sam by contrast had been dying her blonde hair in rainbow patterns since high school; and while she had fifty pounds on her goth sister, they settled in her bust and hips in a way that filled out her girly outfits well, catching the eye of any guys her gloomy sister scared off.

Sam's stomach rumbled, so she flicked the turn signal and took the exit.

"Are we stopping?"

"Yeah. I want to gas up." Sam said as she turned the van into a travel center.

"Alright, cool. I'll make some sandwiches. You want to get me a tea?"

"Sure!"

Leigh climbed out of the passenger seat and into the 'kitchen' of the van while Sam got out to pump gas. While inside the large travel center picking drinks, Sam decided to grab some snack cakes to go with her sandwich. Remembering a meme she saw recently about how a guy should always get his girl a snack when making a road trip stop, she strolled through the salty snacks aisle to get something for Leigh as well. Maybe with something to munch on Sam's big sister would be a little less moody for the next two hours.

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Little did she know that one small decision was like starting a boulder rolling down a hill. Leigh had always been the more responsible — Sam preferred the word 'uptight' — of the two of them. When they lived in a house without wheels, Leigh often cooked; healthy things like salmon, steamed veggies, and fruit smoothies. She'd been a sort of 'casual vegetarian,' never fully committing to the restrictive diet. Sam assumed vegetarianism clashed with her sister's goth aesthetic in some way.

But living on the road, it was harder to eat healthy. Or rather, it was easier to eat unhealthy. Fast food, truck stops, endless bags of snacks packed with sodium... Sam herself preferred sweeter things; candy, trail mix with chocolate, soda and sweet tea. But regardless of whether her sister was driving or riding shotgun, Sam quickly learned that she became much more pleasant with something savory to pop in her mouth every so often.

Eventually mobile internet service got better, the economy started to recover, and both sisters found remote jobs they could do from wherever they parked for the night. But in the early months, they had to get more creative...

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“We got another DoorDash.” Leigh said, looking at her phone.

“Where at?”

“The Chinese place.”

They were parked overnight in a Walmart lot; the Chinese restaurant “Happy Wok” was in the strip mall adjacent to the superstore.

“Should we just get something there tonight?” Sam suggested. It was her night to cook, but it was already 6:30. They’d spent the afternoon watching anime, and now would be driving for the next hour. Assuming they didn’t get even more delivery orders now that the dinner surge was starting.

“Sure.” Leigh agreed.

Anime was one of the few things both sisters enjoyed. While Leigh’s tastes trended to the dark and cerebral, like *Death Note* or *Evangelion*, Sam preferred the more silly and fun Isekai or Idol genres. Since they were together in the small space all the time, they compromised by taking turns watching each others’ shows. Every so often something wholesome like *Yuru Camp* or truly excellent like *Violet Evergarden* came along which they could both enjoy.

Sam tapped the order in on her phone while Leigh queued up the next episode. There'd been a time when she and her sister would have split an order of orange chicken, spring rolls, and crab rangoon; but Sam knew the night would go much more smoothly if her older sister got a full, filling dinner. Especially since they were going to be spending the evening driving the van around yet another unfamiliar small town.

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Leigh grunted with the effort of stepping up into the passenger side of the van.

"You want some help?" Sam smirked. The rainbow-haired girl had gained a pound for every three of her big sister's, but her endocrine system sent most of the excess chub to her chest and rear, while Leigh gained almost entirely in her belly and hips.

"Sh-*huff*- shut up..."

Sam felt the van rock as her gothpottamus sister got herself situated. The former blonde was doing all the driving now, ever since the incident about four months ago. Leigh had accidentally blasted the horn with her doughy gut, making a young mom pushing a stroller jump nearly a foot in the air.

Leigh was looking around her black-clad girth as Sam started the motor. "Where's my beef jerky?"

Sam spotted the red and black bag sticking out from under her sister's rear as it filled the bucket seat past its rated capacity. She reached over to tug on the plastic pouch. "You're sitting on it."

Leigh leaned toward the side of the van, relieving the pressure just enough for Sam to yank the two pounds of salty dehydrated beef from under her behind. "Here." Sam said, holding out the first of her sister's 'road snacks' for the day.

As she pulled onto the main drag, Sam remembered the day she started to question the wisdom of placating her sister with food...

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It was an unusually nice family restaurant for the sisters to dine in; but the only store in town was a *Dollar General*, and neither was keen on another night of fifty-cent ramen. Sam had ordered chicken strips and fries, while Leigh wolfed down a sixteen ounce steak with sautéed mushrooms and onions, a full size salad with fried shrimp, and even asked for the dessert menu. They'd gotten chocolate lava cake and peanut butter pie, both of which the rainbow-haired sister ate only a couple bites.

Sam and Leigh were both leaning back in their chairs contentedly when the server returned with an uncomfortable expression.

"I'm sorry miss, your card was declined."

"W-what?" Sam sat bolt upright, widening one of the tears in her ripped jean shorts. She looked to her sister. "Do you have yours?"

Leigh shook her head, glancing self-consciously at her middle where the hearty meal had stretched out her tummy to show a wide sliver of skin under her nets. "I hit the limit on mine last week."

"Oh my god," Leigh looked back to the twenty-something blonde server, "I'm so sorry. We're not trying to dine and dash, I swear!"

"Well, you certainly dined..." the blonde said flirtatiously, "I could let you cuties pay it off by washing dishes?"

"What is this, the 50's?" Leigh asked.

The server's grin dropped. "Or you could leave a phone or ID as collateral and come back to pay tomorrow."

"Ugh," Sam moaned, "we have to get to Spring River tomorrow for that temp job..."

The server looked thoughtful a moment, then put her winning smile back on. “I could comp the meal for you, if you girls wanna... *hang out.*” She put an emphasis on the last two words that left no doubt as to her meaning. Then just to be perfectly clear she added, “If y’all have room in that van for a third...”

“Um...” Leigh began.

“We’re sisters.” Sam finished.

The blonde’s eyes widened. “What, really?”

A pause hung in the air.

“Ohmygosh I’m so sorry. That was so unprofessional.”

Sam waved the comment off. “It’s okay, we get that a lot.”

The server’s cheeks were flushed and her ears were turning red. “Y’all go on and never mind about the bill. It’s on me.”

“Wait, really?” Sam asked.

“Yeah, yeah... don’t worry about it. It’s the least I can do.”

The sisters stood, continuing to apologize.

“It’s fine, it’s fine, I promise you. Maybe leave us a nice review on Google or somethin’”

Leigh was already out the door while Sam was still thanking the young server.

“Go on now, have a good night. Safe travels.” The blonde was practically giggling at Sam’s embarrassment. “Stop by again if you’re ever back ‘round these parts.”

“We will! Thanks again!!”

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Sam smiled at the memory, then tried to imagine herself and her overfed sister squeezed into a restaurant kitchen trying to do dishes. True, they'd been quite a few inches smaller back then, but it still would have been a comical sight.

Leigh was dumping the last crumbs of jerky into her open maw, double chin briefly splitting into a third. Wordlessly the rainbow-haired younger sister pulled a bag of pretzels from the 'snack tote' between their seats and held it up.

*"Fanks."*

Sam took her eyes off the road for a second to eye the way Leigh's belly was spilling out of her triple-XL tank top. Small round diamonds of flesh pressed through her sister's net top. She wondered what ever happened to that cute server. Then she tried to imagine squeezing a third person into a bed that was already getting *really* cramped.

"Hey, sis...?"

"Hmm?" Leigh responded through a mouthful of pretzel.

"Now that the market's starting to calm down, what do you think about looking at houses again?"

The big-bellied goth thought about that for a moment, popping a few more pretzels between her black-painted lips.

"That's probably not a bad idea. It would be nice to settle in one place again. Finally get to just... *relax.*"

Sam held in a scoff at that. Her sister was doing more than enough 'relaxing' these days. She'd briefly thought Leigh might get back to a healthier diet if they quit traveling, but it seemed that bottle couldn't be re-corked. Sam wasn't sure that was a bad thing. After all, her big sister was definitely more fun to be around when she had something to eat.