

A Very Committed Shopping Trolley

By C. Jade Wyton

A prideful mimic is determined to keep up its imitation of a shopping trolley; even when it is picked up by a teenage boy looking for a thrill.

Contains descriptions of injury.

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By a very busy highway there was an underpass. Designed for animals to use to cross the road safely this little tunnel was, at most times, very dark and quiet. It had very little foot-traffic from people, barring the occasional teenager taking a shortcut.

Perfect conditions for a mimic to nest.

And so, of course, they came.

A nest of about ten mimics, give or take depending on the time of year, spent their nights in the shelter of the underpass.

The biggest of these mimics had been the first to move in.

It had lived by the road before the underpass was built, and when the roadworks were underway it had watched with curious glee at the people tittering away.

It had loved watching them build.

As the mimic saw it, they had made a home just for it to live in!

A nice, comfortable den where it could keep the things it took a liking to.

Like balls and pipes and abandoned toys from the park just up the road.

They were all things the littler mimics could turn into.

All things that were, in the big mimic's mind, too simple to be fun.

Because turning into simple things was boring, to this mimic.

This mimic liked a challenge.

It would turn into the most difficult things that it could!

That was why, when it had found a shopping trolley on the side of the road, it had pulled it back to its den to study.

All the little bars, criss-crossing across each other to make a grate-like texture... it was like an old metal fence! But a much harder shape; like a box. But not a proper square like most boxes were.

No, the trolley was smaller at the front and wider at the back. With a handle bar and complex bottom structure.

And it had wheels, too. Those had been *hard* to copy!

Most mimics wouldn't have done more than a surface-level impression of the wheels. Non-functional. Non-moving.

But *this* mimic had studied the wheels closely, touching them and spinning them and figuring out how they moved, until it had been able to copy the rolling motion that the wheels made.

It was a completely functional trolley, now! And very proud of itself.

It was the best mimic around!

No other mimic could copy things with the level of detail it could!

All the little mimics were impressed by this mimic's skill.

It could mimic anything!

It was *very* committed.

So much so that, even when people came through the underpass and all the little mimics hurried into the shadows to hide behind things in the nest, this mimic would just stay perfectly still wherever it was and wait for the people to pass through.

Not *once* did they glance twice at it, they were so convinced it was a real trolley!

Not once, until today....

It was a young elven boy in the local high-school's uniform. He was carrying a skateboard and had his shoes untied; which the mimic didn't think was a very smart combination.

Though, it was intrigued by the single ear piercing that was dangling off his left ear. It was golden in colour, very shiny and pretty. It made the mimic want to reach out and pluck it off the boy's head.

But the mimic knew that was a bad idea for many, many reasons. So instead it stayed still. Perfectly still, as the boy examined it closely, and committed to being a trolley.

'Oh, sweet!' the boy finally exclaimed, dropping his skateboard into the mimic's basket and grabbing the creature's handles. 'This thing is *nice!*'

*Thank you*, the mimic thought, proudly. Though, it didn't break its composure as the boy began to roll it out of the underpass.

It saw, from the corner of its eye, the smaller mimics peeking out at it curiously as it was taken away....

But it wasn't going to break its disguise.

No; it was committed!

Wherever this boy took it, it would return itself home to its den later that night.... Because right now it was a trolley. And the boy who ran a few paces before jumping up and riding on its back for several meters was none the wiser that he was being deceived.

And he remained unaware all the way to the abandoned factory on the hill.

The mimic was very proud of itself!

It had been worried that its wheels had perhaps been a little stiff and that the boy would notice.... But he didn't. In fact, when the mimic's front wheel got caught in some grass and the creature faltered for a second, the boy had made a comment that told the mimic he seemed to think that was how all trolleys worked!

So the mimic was able to keep its disguise as the boy dragged it into the old factory and stopped a moment to do something with his phone.

The mimic glanced around (careful that the boy didn't see it do so) and saw that the factory was a wreck.

It had been gutted; stripped bare as all valuables were either salvaged or stolen. The windows were cracked or missing. And several of the old catwalks had come loose and half-fallen, creating ramp-like structures that criss-crossed across the factory floor.

And there was graffiti *everywhere!*

The mimic was curious as to what it said but, being a mimic, it wasn't able to read....

*Perhaps it could learn, somehow?*

It was a very smart mimic.

It was sure it could learn if it tried!

After all, it had become a trolley— It was probably the smartest and most talented mimic in the whole entire world.

It most certainly could do *anything* it wanted to do!

'Woo! Okay,' the boy put his phone away before taking the trolley mimic and wheeling it around the factory.

He pulled it up one of the collapsed catwalks, kicking aside scrap pieces of metal as he did.... And when he reached the top he got behind the mimic and aimed it centre-straight down the ramp.

The mimic took a breath in as it realised what was going on.

*Oh, no.... The boy was going to ride it down the ramp!*

It should probably change forms. Or stop its wheels from spinning. Something to not let the boy do this.

But....

Then it would have to break its disguise....

And it was doing so, *so well!*

'Okay...' the boy mumbled, licking his lips. 'Let's... *go!*'

The mimic let him kick off and rolled down the catwalk with him on its back.

*It was terrifying!*

The mimic had never moved so fast in its life!

Its little wheels spun at full speed down the steep incline, bumping along the metal grating as it went.

It wanted to let out a cry!

*Oh, oh!*

But it held its breath instead.

Then as they reached the bottom of the ramp the boy leant his weight back and lowered a foot to the ground; causing friction and drag that pulled them to a stop *just* before they collided with the wall.

The mimic held its breath a moment longer before letting it out.

*It was okay....*

It quietly licked its lips, glancing at the teenage boy as he laughed and fixed his hair.

*Oh....*

*Oh what a thrill!*

*Oh, again! Again!*

The mimic almost trilled in excitement as the boy grabbed its handle and tugged it back up the catwalk.

He rode it down again.

And again.

And again!

And each time, the mimic found itself growing more and more excited.

Its heart beat fast, pumping its blood quickly through it as it came to another

stop.

It was like the thrill of the hunt, without the hunt!

Rolling down this catwalk with the boy was more exciting than chasing down a rat— *No!* It was more exciting than chasing down *a hundred* rats!

The mimic couldn't have been happier with itself.

It was not only the smartest mimic in the world; it was the *bravest!* It was the most *daring* mimic in the world!

The smartest, bravest, most dare-devilling mimic that was ever born! And probably that would ever be!

The boy gave a laugh as he leant on the trolley to catch his breath.

'Aw, man, that's fun,' he commented.

*Yes! Yes, it is!* the mimic silently agreed.

'Alright...' the boy gave a long breath and reached into the mimic to retrieve his skateboard. 'Time to practice some grinding.'

The mimic almost gave a disappointed whine as the boy hurried up the ramp without it; it wanted to keep playing!

Perhaps it should break its disguise? Let the boy know it wanted to keep going....

*No, no!*

It was doing too *well* to break its disguise now!

The boy would come back to it when he was done with his skateboard! The mimic was sure— And even if he didn't, the mimic could always wait for him to leave and then continue playing on its own!

A loud metallic grinding filled the room and the mimic winced as it eyed the boy.

He was riding down the railing of the catwalk on his board with impressive balance.

From top to bottom he rode down the railing; leaping off at the bottom and landing on his feet with an impressive, showy flair.

*This boy was talented,* the mimic purred to itself. *Just like it was!*

What luck that he had been the one to pick it up!

The boy retrieved his board as it rolled across the floor and made his way back up the ramp.

Like with the trolley mimic, he rode his board down several times; doing flips and tricks as he did.

He leapt up, spinning the board underneath him, and then landed heavily on its top—

The railing underneath him didn't like his tricks, though. And it gave way under his board.

The boy gave a cry of surprise as he fell from the catwalk about two meters to the floor.... And he gave another cry, this one of pain, as he landed.

The mimic flinched as he gave a short, sharp wail, and it turned to get a better look.

*Oh, ouch....*

The boy took a deep breath, his trembling hands touching at the piece of railing that had punctured through his leg.

*Ouch, ouch!* the mimic shuddered as the boy gave another cry of pain and

tried to sit himself up. *That must hurt!*

The boy took a deep breath, grabbing for a nearby piece of pipe to lean on as he got to his feet.

*Ah, the poor thing*, the mimic thought as the boy stumbled into the wall. *That looked like a very bad injury.*

The boy collapsed back to the floor and rolled onto his back as he groaned and whined to himself.

*A very bad one indeed....*

This seemed worth breaking its disguise over.

Reluctantly, the mimic hardened its wheels into legs and made its way over to the boy; giving a chirp to get his attention as it did.

The boy lifted his head and looked around in surprise. ‘H-Hello?’ he managed. ‘Is someone— *Mm! Ow...! Ow....*’

He lay back down, his eyes squeezing shut as he groaned and gave a hiss through his teeth.

‘Fucking hell... that *hurts....*’

*Oh, I bet it does*, the mimic thought, giving another chirp.

The boy’s eyes opened wide at the sound and he looked over to the trolley mimic. ‘Oh, far out.... how hard did I hit my head...?’

The mimic gave a concerned trill and sniffed at the boy’s wound.

*Yep.*

Just as it thought.

It was a bad one.

He was never going to get home on his own with his leg like that....

Hm....

The mimic sniffed at him again, thinking about its options.

It could leave him here. Mind its own business, and leave him to deal with himself in this abandoned building that people very rarely visited.

Though... that didn’t feel quite right....

Perhaps it could *eat* him?

Put him out of his misery?

The boy gave another groan of pain as the mimic licked at the blood on his leg, and it decided that... *no...* that *also* didn’t feel like the right thing to do....

It sniffed him over, moving from his wound to his face before giving him another lick.

Perhaps it could move him where other people would find him?

That felt a little more right!

The creature grabbed the boy’s shoulder in its mouth and gave him a tug, intending to drag him outside— But it stopped when he gave a shriek of pain and it dropped him, snuffling over him curiously.

‘*Ow...*’ the boy whined, half-rolling onto his side and stammering through grit teeth. ‘A-Are you tr-trying to h-help me, or d-do I have to be w-w-worried?’

The mimic huffed a breath into his face and sat down at his side; trying to show him that it meant no harm.

‘O-Okay...’ he panted. ‘Okay.... C-Cool....’

Another sniff, and the mimic wished the boy was just a little bit smaller.

If he was it could have scooped him into its mouth like a baby and carried him

back to the road to get him some help....

Though, being as smart a mimic as it was, it started to have an idea!

It gave a chirp and stood up, and the boy made a confused, frightened noise as it grabbed at him again and sprouted several tentacle-like limbs to lift him into the air with.

‘AH! Whoa! Whoa— *WHAT?!*’ he shouted as the trolley-shaped mimic shifted and contorted and hefted him up high into the air. ‘Ah! What are you—’

It deposited him in its basket, then, before sucking its tentacles back in and appearing again as a mostly-normal trolley.

‘F... Faaa... *oooh...*’ he groaned as the mimic chirped proudly and headed for the factory door. ‘O-Okay.... Th-Thanks?’

*You’re welcome!* the mimic gave a prideful snuff as it carried the boy out of the factory.

‘Oh... ow,’ he shifted in the mimic’s basket to get comfortable and examine his leg. ‘Oh... th-that’s... ow....’

The mimic began down the hill towards the road, trotting at a comfortable speed so that it didn’t jostle the boy too much.

‘Oh.... H-Hey. Th-This is pr-pretty hardcore, r-right?’ the boy managed, rubbing at the wound on his leg. ‘I-I’m n-not even cr-crying about it or an-anything....’

*It sounded like he wanted to,* the mimic thought as it came to the bottom of the hill and began to follow the road back in the direction of the small town.

‘I bet T-T-Toya’s gonna— Gonna be impressed!’ the boy said through grit teeth. ‘She’s g-g-gonna think I’m— I’m really t-tough, n-now!’

*Oh?* the mimic gave a curious chirp. *Did this young elf have himself a mate to show off to?*

What a lucky little boy, he was!

Well.... Perhaps not *too* lucky. Or he wouldn’t have been injured in the first place....

*Ah! A car was coming! And far enough away that it was safe to try and communicate with!*

The mimic gave a loud trill and jumped up onto the road; rearing up and screeching at the woman in the car— Who braked and came to a stop several meters away.

She poked her head out curiously as the mimic dumped the boy ungraciously out of its basket onto the asphalt.

‘Ow!’ the boy complained. ‘Be *careful!*’

‘Hey! Oh my gods, are you alright?!’ the woman in the car exclaimed, climbing out and rushing over to the boy.

*Ah, good! She got out of the car,* the mimic thought, jumping back off the road and starting home towards its den. *You’re her problem, now!*

—END—

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