

Chapter One from

Amateur Assassin

By Sue Denver

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Werewolf Sara Flores was sitting on the New York City 4-train, heading to where she could catch the Staten Island Ferry and see the Statue of Liberty from the water. It was number one on her to-do list for her first vacation in over a year.

She was *not* in rural Oklahoma anymore — the sensory cacophony was astonishing. Her ears were probably leaking blood from the high, loud screams of the train brakes, and she for-sure had a bruise on her shoulder from slamming into a pole when she first boarded. She realized riding the subway was like being in a bumper car, and she had to either sit down or hang on tight to something.

And then there was her nose...

The nose overload started on the airplane here. She'd been seated next to someone who needed lessons in how to wipe his butt. While all smells were wonderful when she was in wolf form, some were really disgusting in her human form.

There was some of that on this subway car — a hint to her right of urine and beyond that a few molecules of days-old vomit. All cleaned up probably good enough for strictly human noses.

There was fun for her nose here as well. She was currently sorting the passengers into meat-eater and vegetarian and further sorting the meat-eaters into those who liked spices in the meat instead of the plain steak-and-potatoes smells of most Oklahomans.

The breaks screamed as the car jolted to a stop. Two people stood up and left the train. Just one person entered the car, but Sara's head jerked to the short black woman as if pulled by a magnet.

The woman was reeking of fear.

Nothing — absolutely nothing — captured the attention of Sara's wolf as did fear.

The woman looked like she might turn and run at any second. Instead she moved into the car and sat at a seat across from and about 25 feet away from Sara. She lowered her head, but her eyes were darting left and right — furtively. Like she didn't want to attract attention, but she wanted to memorize everything she saw.

She was very tiny — no more than 5' tall. Attractive. Sara couldn't guess her age well — she was maybe in her 40s. Her hair was natural and floated around her face.

Sara's wolf found her fascinating.

The woman was very skinny — but not fashionably so. Skinny like she didn't get enough to eat. Like it was affecting her health.

Maybe that was why her clothes didn't fit her very well? She was dressed the same as some other women in the car. She had a long skirt that covered some unusual-looking sneakers. A light jacket — appropriate for the early October weather.

The clothes were worn — but not worn into her body. Like someone else had worn them until recently.

Her fear was like catnip to Sara's wolf.

Before she could stop herself, Sara stood. She grabbed onto the metal bar that ran the length of the car to steady herself from the swaying motion. Using the bar, she walked — casually, she hoped — towards the woman, dodging other “strap hangers.”

The train made a jerking turn, and she nearly fell into the lap of a young male school kid with pimples and a huge backpack sitting at his feet. He was somewhere inside his head, eyes glazed over, and didn't even notice her.

Finally, she stumbled past Mystery Woman and up to a schematic of subway train routes on the wall. She traced her finger along the route they were traveling — to explain why she'd moved. And she inhaled through her nose.

The fear was strong, but there was another scent she'd missed before. More subtle. Something, not fear. Something like determination — or resolve. Sara looked at her from the corner of her eyes.

The woman's teeth were clenched, and her face... was interesting. Her head was down and her shoulders hunched in on herself — all signs of fear and trying to blend into the woodwork.

But her eyes didn't match the rest of the body language. They were checking out everything. Assessing everything. As her eyes moved towards Sara, Sara faced her eyes forward on the map. She carefully did not move her eyes to the woman — but only used her peripheral vision. She saw the mystery woman's eyes stop on her. Pause. Evaluate. Then move on.

They were almost like cop eyes!

Sara turned back and returned to her seat, taking another deep scent-breath as she passed the woman. She found yet another mystery to the woman — her you-are-what-you-eat smell. It was different from any of the other passengers. She didn't smell like a meat-eater or a vegetarian. What the heck was this woman eating?

Once seated again, Sara considered. A woman who's both afraid and determined. Could she be a terrorist? That would make sense — but there was no smell of explosives.

Sara knew the smells of explosives because she had a friend who trained dogs for the Tulsa police. Sara had made sure both she and her wolf dog Skidi could recognize explosives by smell.

The subway car screeched again and pulled into Wall Street Station. The curious woman got up and left the car. Sara got up and followed her out.

Mystery Woman worried her. The Staten Island Ferry could wait.

*[This is the first chapter from **Amateur Assassin**, a novella which is included in **WEREWOLF VIGILANTE** along with two other novellas.]*