

Werewolf 121

Chapter 121: Screw this

When handing them the box with the syringes, Sin had told them nothing about how to use them, whether one had to inject all of the liquid into one person or if it was supposed to be used multiple times. None of the gang members present had ever heard about a syringe with a liquid being used to turn someone into an Altered.

As such, the first thing Raven wanted to do was test out how effective just a little bit of that unknown substance was by using a stranger. After the earlier exchange he had a good estimate on Austin's power, so he considered him to be the perfect test subject. This way, he could gauge for himself how much more powerful the other had gotten after the injection.

He had pulled out the syringe that was in his hand and slowly crept his way up to Austin. It was pretty crowded but not so packed that moving was impossible. Fortunately, everyone's attention was still on the first fight.

'Now!' Raven thought, thrusting the needle forward... only for someone to grab him by the wrist at the very last second.

"What do you think you're doing?" A voice asked him.

Hearing someone close behind him, Austin turned around to see that Kai had grabbed someone by the wrist who held a large syringe in his hand... aimed at him. Looking up, he recognised the person holding it.

"What the F*ck did you just try and do?" Austin was beyond mad. He had just bumped into Raven's two goons, but was that really a reason to drug him?!

Not wanting to lose the precious syringe, Raven threw out a kick towards the teenager holding onto him. Kai jumped back to evade it, but had let go of the other in the process.

"Why don't you let us take a look at what's in your hands?" Kai asked, having noticed that Raven clearly seemed to value the syringe. Whatever was inside looked strange to him and using such a thing in a place like this, especially at a time like this, clearly wasn't something good.

Austin was lucky that Kai had kept an eye out for him, curious to see how he would react to Gary's fight. That's when he had spotted Raven getting closer and closer.

"I'm going to pound your head in!" Austin shouted, yet Buffin and Riv hadn't been too far away and were now standing by the Grey Elephant leader's side. It looked like a little fight might take place outside of the ring as well as inside.

'Damn it, those two are with him. They're quite strong, and if it's three against one...actually, that guy avoided his kick from earlier. I guess he actually is a fighter after all. Maybe with him-'

"Ohhh!" The crowd suddenly cheered loudly as something in the fight had happened. Instinctively the two turned around for a second, yet when they looked back they could only see that the trio had disappeared into the crowd.

With the small problem dealt with, Kai and Austin preferred to concentrate on the match to see what could have happened, and to their surprise, they could see Gary on the ground with his nose bleeding.

—

A few moments ago, Gary thought that he had figured it out. The problem with the twins wasn't just that they were too fast. No, they were behaving like the annoying squirrels that he had tried to catch in the forest. They were agile and nimble, but most of all, they were flexible.

A few times while getting hit, Gary had tried to throw out a few punches of his own, but both of them had easily avoided them, only to retaliate with more. At the same time, there would be times where a kick or punch seemed like it was going straight ahead, but then it would suddenly change direction.

This was true even for their running movements. They would constantly be able to change direction so quickly that it was hard to keep track of them. Now, thinking about them as if they were the animals that Gary regularly hunted, he could keep track of them. The next problem was to catch them.

It was then, Gary had let a punch go right through, hitting him in the face, and he knew what to do next. His Health hadn't gotten too low yet and with his high Endurance he could afford to get hit. Quickly Sren

pulled his arm out, and just like he had been doing this the whole time, moved it left and right, making it hard for one to see exactly where the arm would go.

At that moment, Gary, for the first time, had managed to grab it with one hand, and he made sure to grip it as hard as possible.

“I’ve been waiting to do this all day!” Gary shouted, throwing out a punch of his own, holding onto the twin so it was impossible for him. Unfortunately, Gary had overlooked the fact that there were more fighters to this match than the two of them.

Just when he was about to get a good hit in, a leg came towards his face, and it was from the other brother, Leng. With the green haired teenager going forward and the leg coming towards him, the leg hit twice as hard, and Gary’s head flung black with blood flying through the air as he fell to the ground.

[-10 HP]

[44/100 HP]

Despite Gary’s strong Endurance with how much he had been hit, his Health had now gone down to half.

“What are you doing, Innu?!” Gary shouted in frustration. “I finally got one of them, and then the other one hits me. Didn’t we agree that each of us would occupy one?!”

Innu was standing by the side, and he had been watching the fight like a spectacle. The teenager had been waiting for his time to join in, but just like Sren he hadn’t expected Gary to catch the twin. When the chance had finally come, he had blanked out, forgetting that he was actually also a fighter in this match, allowing Leng to save his brother.

“Let’s stop playing around and get rid of this onion head. It looks like we’ve hurt him enough!” Leng said as he went to stomp on Gary’s stomach, who managed to roll away, avoiding the hit before quickly jumping to his feet.

“Screw this!” Gary shouted.

Sren charged forward again, clearly being the more aggressive one out of the two brothers. He went for a kick again. This time his leg dragged across the ground and moved far faster than any of the attacks he had done before.

'Don't tell me the two of them seriously have been holding back against Gary?' Innu thought, surprised. However, this time he was ready to help in the fight. He just hoped it wasn't too late.

The kick went towards Gary's head, and the others watching expected one contestant to be down until...Gary had caught it with a single hand. His body didn't move back, and Sren was standing still like a statue.

"I don't give a crap about getting better anymore. I'm just going to win this fight!"

[Skill activated Charging Heart]

[All stats have temporarily been doubled]

[-10 Energy]

Pulling Sren's forward by his leg, he threw the twin off balance. Next, Gary threw out a fist, faster than any he had thrown out before. It was planted right in his opponent's face, whose body flew back a few metres, until it fell on the ground.

Chapter 122: An upgrade

Unlike a few moments ago when Gary had been hit and had fallen to the ground, this time the crowd went silent for a few seconds. Watching the whole fight, it had been obvious that the Vicious Twins were the ones winning the fight so far.

The whole fight had been pretty one-sided in favour of Team Eton High. Gary had been too slow to do anything, which made nearly everyone in the crowd believe that it would only be a matter of time before The Howlers lost.

As such, this sudden turnaround came pretty much out of the blue.

It was something they had never seen before. Both of the twins had done their best to remain elusive throughout the fight, so how did that green-haired teenager suddenly manage to catch what looked like the fastest kick of the entire match?

'Goddamn this hurts! What the hell are his fists made off?!' Sren cursed internally, rubbing his face yet quickly getting up from the ground. 'His grip strength is the real thing, I couldn't move my leg at all.'

It was then that Sren remembered something. During the rugby match, Gary had similarly shown great feats of strength. Since the fight so far had been going their way, they had completely forgotten that this green haired teenager seemed to be far stronger than he looked like.

Grabbing the rugby ball, Gary had managed to run through a crowd of rugby players, to the point they had been forced to allocate a good part of the team just to stop him alone.

"Innu, take out the short-haired one!" Gary ordered. "I need to punch the other one as well!"

"What, so now I'm just here to pick up your scraps!" Innu shouted, yet he quickly got in front of Sren.

For the first time, thanks to Gary's hit, the two brothers were quite far apart, something The Howlers intended to put to good use.

Finally getting a hit in, just felt good to Gary, especially after the beating the high schooler had suffered by the hands and feet of the twins. He just wanted to win the fight now, getting better would have to wait for another time.

With Charging Heart active and a lot of Energy to spare, Gary rushed over to the long-haired brother, Leng. His speed was surprising to everyone but him, and by the time Gary threw out a kick, the twin leaned back, avoiding it just by a few inches again.

Gary's body overturned, as he had too much strength into his kick, his back was now facing Leng. Seeing this, the fighter went in and quickly punched the green haired teenager, picking a painful spot just under the ribs.

Before, when making such attacks, he would at least see the other flinch slightly, but this time, no such thing had occurred. Gary swung around trying to get Leng with the back of his fist. Unfortunately, the twin ducked and took a few steps back, wondering what was going on.

[-1 HP]

'It's my own fault for taking this whole 'honorable fight' thing so seriously!' Gary chided himself. 'I should have just made use of Charging Heart since the beginning to double my stats. With 28 effective points of Endurance their attacks barely hurt!'

Now that Gary knew he could take dozens of hits before having to worry, he started to swing quite widely and did the same for his kicks. Without any technique behind it, Leng had a relatively easy time avoiding them and once in a while, he would find the chance to attack Gary.

[-1 HP]

[-1 HP]

'What's going on, Gary? Did all that adrenaline rush to your head, making you forget everything I taught you? Why are you swinging like that?' Innu thought as he noticed his partner's behaviour from the corner of his eye. Unfortunately, he had his own problem to deal with.

Innu had successfully avoided the attacks but had put pressure on Sren to back him up against the corner of the hay bails. Whenever he would try to escape or run to one side or the other, Innu would reposition himself so he wouldn't get out so freely.

Once again, Sren tried, and this time Innu did something else. He swept his leg against the ground, kicking up the dirt from the ground. Dust kicked up, and some of it even went into Sren's eyes. Charging in, Innu found a fist coming his way, which connected with his chest, yet he pushed forward, letting Sren's arm fully extend, weakening its power slightly.

At that moment, Innu went for the grab and placed his hands behind Sren's neck, locking his arms in.

"Now I've caught you. This whole thing is done." Innu announced.

With both fights having entered a critical point, many didn't know where to look. As for the two White Rose agents, they hadn't taken their eyes off Gary for even a moment.

"You noticed it too, right?" Frank asked for confirmation.

"Of course, I noticed it. His speed, the look on his face, everything is different from before." Sadie replied. "It doesn't make sense. That Gary kid was clearly having a difficult time and if he had been holding back, then he's the best actor I've ever seen."

Others might be confused about his sudden change, yet since Frank and Sadie were both Altered, their eyes were more perceptive when it came to these things, and working in the police force, they had to look out for things just like this as well.

'This fight, just like with the rugby game, I can't catch them even with Charging Heart. Yeah sure, my Endurance is great, but eventually, even he will beat me.' Gary thought.

He was starting to suspect that Leng might actually be the faster one out of the brothers, or that the only reason he had caught Sren might have been due to the surprise effect.

'Wait a second, by surprise?' Gary suddenly got an idea.

He threw out a punch again and could see Leng move to the side, narrowly avoiding it and striking back, hitting him on the shoulder. Gary then swung out a kick, and the twin stepped back, avoiding that as well, retaliating with a kick of his own.

'I was right, the way these guys attack, they are fighting me at my own speed. So much, that he has been avoiding them just enough to attack back at the perfect time. Otherwise, even he would be too slow to

hit me. Damn... I hate to admit it, but these guys are seriously good if he is avoiding me narrowly on purpose.'

Gary was right about that. The twins could theoretically move faster than they were doing now, yet their style seemed to be to match their opponent's speed and then win against them by being slightly faster. It was how they had been able to take down most of Eton High with just the two of them.

However, Gary was about to use their skill against them. Stepping forward, he positioned himself perfectly and was ready to throw out his right arm. It was a finishing move, with all his strength behind it.

'I can see his arm. I'll move to the side and counter, giving him a harder hit. I can dodge this one as well!' Leng thought.

He was wary of the green haired teenager as he knew that not only did the other have great endurance, but he also had enough power in his punches and kicks to seriously threaten him. He needed to come in at a counter point. When Gary was attacking, Leng needed to attack so he could use the force of Gary moving forward against him.

With the twin moving forward, he was getting ready to move out of the way at the right time, however...

[1 Stat point has been allocated into Dexterity]

[Your base Dexterity is now at 7]

[Current Dexterity: 14]

Suddenly, Gary's hand sped up mid-swing, moving faster. With all his strength and Leng running forward the fist connected with the twin's face, causing his body to flip around before falling on the ground.

It was obvious to everyone, Leng wouldn't be getting up on his own.

Seeing this, the two White Rose members shared the same opinion.

“Sudden bursts in power and speed like that... it’s the sign of an Altered state.” Sadie stated. “Frank, I think we’ll have to reevaluate the importance of this kid in this entire case.”

Chapter 123: A result

Gary’s arm was still extended out in a punching position, his head facing the floor. All the training he had done, it was so short that he had almost forgotten it in the fight, but still somehow he was able to pull it off. In a way, Gary was expecting for something to happen, for his opponent to get back up, but before even lifting his head something else happened.

After hitting Leng, Gary was greeted with a little nice surprise: it was the system message.

[Quest reward: 500 Exp]

[Exp 542/882]

The Quest was complete, honestly Gary didn’t expect a single hit to end it all, he was also expecting to have to use his little stat boost one more time if necessary, but with the two forces of energy being used the blow was just too much for Leng to handle.

However, getting the system message meant that Sren must have also been defeated as well. When Gary looked up, he could see Innu’s face. It didn’t look to be in the best of conditions, he was huffing and panting, but Sren was similarly lying on the floor.

“That damn slimy guy, he was like a snake. I couldn’t hold him down and his body was so damn flexible, but still after a couple of knees to the stomach he sure did slow down a bit.” Innu shared, looking up half expecting that he needed to help Gary, but to his surprise his friend had won his fight as well.

Although, his face didn’t look to be in the best condition either. The two of them smiled at each other as the realisation hit them.

“Ladies and gentlemen, you’ve all seen it. The winners for tonight’s debut match are The Hoooooowllllleeeeeerrrrrsssss!” The announcer shouted.

There were cheers among the crowd as quite a few had made good money on the odds given, while others complained. Those were the ones who had clearly decided to play it safe and had bet on the twins. Although annoyed about having lost some of their money, all of them could still respect an entertaining fight, so they too joined in on the cheering.

Surprisingly, in the midst of cheering, there were a few howls that could be heard as well. It sounded like some type of war cry, and clearly people had already had too much to drink trying to imitate a wolf due to the gang’s name. However, the members thought it suited them well, and maybe it would become a tradition of some sort after one of them had been through a tough time.

For Austin he was still in the middle of his thoughts, trying to make up his mind in regards to Gary.

‘The green kid eventually won, but it just looked a bit sloppy, but the look in his eyes when he threw out that punch, I liked it.’ Austin smiled. It was the first fight of the evening, yet after having come all the way out here, the loner was debating whether he should stay or just call it the day. After all, he had seen what Kai had wanted to show him.

“Well, what do you think?” The other boy asked by his side. “Can you see a ‘better future’ for yourself by joining our little gang? ”

Austin continued to look at Gary, as Innu wrapped his arm around Gary’s neck, and started to go through the other’s green hair with his hands. Innu was showboating and enjoying every bit of his hard-earned victory as he bowed down to the crowd.

Meanwhile, Sren and Leng were recovering and getting up from the fight. They didn’t even shake hands and were already leaving the arena. Not that Gary ever expected them to be respectful in the first place, but after a fight like that, the anger that Gary had for them seemed to escape from his body.

“Based on what you asked me before, I’m guessing you want me to join this gang of yours?” Austin concluded. It was a good way to introduce The Howlers, especially since Austin already had an interest in Innu.

“Don’t you think it will be more interesting than what you had planned before?” Kai replied.

“I told you my answer before. I don’t follow anyone who’s weaker than me, so if you really want me to join your gang, then tell me when you want me and you to throw some hands.” Austin was getting excited, especially since he had seen Kai’s form earlier, making him convinced that the other wasn’t the pretty boy he had suspected him to be.

“That’s reasonable, but if that’s the case, you should fight the leader, not me.” Kai replied with a smile. Hearing this, a memory clicked in for Austin. Back when the police had questioned him about Billy’s sudden appearance, he had asked Innu who the green haired boy and the transfer student had told him that it had been his leader.

“Very well.” Austin nodded.

“Alright, but you’ll have to do that another time. After this match right now, he’ll need some rest. Tag along with us for a little bit, I have something to show you after this.”

—

The two White Rose agents were in a similar state of mind. They figured that there was a good chance that Gary would be leaving after his fight, so they had a quick discussion whether they should go after him or stay around longer.

Ultimately, they agreed to treat Gary as a potential lead. Since they knew where he would be tomorrow, they decided the smarter move would be to stay and start questioning people about Billy once the event was over. Since Gary had been in that debut fight, it shouldn’t even be suspicious if they were to ask if someone knew if there was any connection between the two.

“If not, we’ll just have to pay a visit to his school tomorrow.” Saide suggested.

Chapter 124: Not Enough

Leaving the fight, Gary and Innu went to a little area that had been set up a small distance away from where the host was. Here, there were tables laid out, where they had money processing machines, laptops and a little more.

All of them looked to be older than the fighters and others that turned up, and when Gary saw them he could clearly tell that they were gangsters.

“They look scary, right.” Innu whispered to him. “But you know, someday we might be running something like this as well. Do you know why no one fights at these things? Outside of the ring I mean. It’s because the ones that organise these types of fights in the smaller tired cities and towns like us, don’t belong to the gangs in this area and they themselves they belong to the gangs in the cities above, the higher tiers.

“If anyone causes a fight, messes with the ones organising this or is crazy enough to go after their money, it would very likely get the entire gang behind it involved.” Innu explained.

Eventually, Gary could see Kai and Marie heading their way, but what came as a big surprise to both him and Innu, was the person who was following behind the two.

“Austin, what is he doing here?” Innu asked, shocked.

“Say hello to our newest member.” Kai answered in a grin.

“I haven’t agreed to anything!” Austin corrected immediately. “It’s just an interest.”

At a closer look, Austin realised that Gary didn’t look as bad as he thought. Although he had been hit a lot, the markings on his face and even the kick to his face hadn’t bruised up.

This was all due to Gary’s Energy. Now that he was no longer fighting, his Energy was passively being used to heal his wounds. He had plenty of Energy this time, not using a lot of skills, nor breaking his bones due to his strong Endurance.

Unlike his fight with Billy, the system hadn’t even issued out any emergency healing, which was why the markings were now less visible than before.

Kai went ahead towards the desk, and after a little bit of talking back and forth, he had returned with four bundled up wads of cash. Gary couldn't even imagine how much he was carrying right now.

"Alright I have good news and some bad news." Kai said, approaching the gang. "Let's start with the good news. You're now looking at 4k."

Straight away, money signs were appearing in Gary's eyes. With this much money, he could pay for his mother's hospital stay, food, electricity and other bills they were behind!

However, it did make him wonder just how much money Kai put up in the first place. Although he had ended up resorting to spending the money from those he had eaten at the Kobe Karaoke Club, their total cash had amounted to around only a few hundred.

"The bad news, it won't be as easy to make this much cash from fights like this again. For one, you've managed to defeat a quite well-known as well as skillful pair of opponents, so after today our gang's name will be quite known, so our future odds will be far less 'generous'.

"As for the other reason, after talking to the guys for a bit, I've learned that these venues aren't meant to bring in this much cash in the first place. There are a few hundred people here, and with how much we bet and won, they won't be making any money from your fight, and only off the others. We could go to higher events...but we're not ready for that yet. Unless one of you is an Altered, or think you can face one."

There was silence from Gary on that part.

"At the end of the day, this event is still like a business. Luckily for you lot, my silver tongue managed to get them to pay our share for today at least." Kai explained.

It was pretty bad news, but still if he could make a stable income through these fights then Gary was fine with that, though perhaps Kai had another way to make money. The first thing the upperclassman did was keep one of the bundles to himself.

“This one’s for the gang moving forward. We need the seed money, so we can start investing in ourselves. Besides, all these clothes didn’t come for free.” Kai explained. He then pulled out some of the cash and handed it over to Marie, and kept the rest for himself out of another bundle.

“Wait, why did Marie get cash when she didn’t even fight?” Gary asked. He felt bad about doing this, but at the end of the day he desperately needed their money while the others looked less needy. Most of all, he felt like he had rightfully earned that money with his sweat and tears.

“Gary, you’re the gang leader, but as a leader you also have to reward those that follow you. One of your most important duties is to make sure that you keep everyone happy in our group. Everyone in your company has helped you out somewhat today.

“You wouldn’t have known about this place if it wasn’t for me, if I hadn’t put up the seed money we wouldn’t have won as much as we did. Without Marie and her mother, we wouldn’t have been able to come here without problems. Also Marie has many uses for it. Trust me, you won’t regret paying her her share.”

Gary felt a little guilty after that, he had been thinking only about himself, yet Kai was right. If it wasn’t for Marie’s mother, then he and Amy would have had a lot of problems in the hospital. He might not like it, but he owed them.

Finally, Kai threw two of the bundles to both him and Innu. After seeing the 4k, it had quickly gone down to one. All of those hopes he just had, paying rent, the apartment and hospital bills... all seemed to be down the drain.

“It’s not enough.” Gary mumbled. He held his head down, and everyone could tell that Gary was somewhat down now, compared to his mood from before. Whatever his situation was, they could tell that he needed the money, the problem was...it was the same for them as well.

“Come on, before I take you guys back, I want to show you guys something. Maybe it will make you all feel better. Austin you come along as well.” Kai said.

Sren and Leng felt completely defeated. Trying to make up the money that they had lost from the betting ring, they had placed a bet on themselves winning tonight's match, leading them to lose their pride as well as their money.

This was the second time that the green haired boy had gotten in their way.

"What should we do, Leng? We could call up everyone from Eton High and raid their school. Or get all the guys to beat every Westbridge student they see!" Sren suggested.

"What's the point?" Leng questioned back. "He can beat us. If we can get some guys, what's stopping him from doing the same? The most important bit is that he can just beat us again. Unless we get some extra help on our side, going after him would be useless."

"Maybe I can be the help you guys need." Raven offered as he approached the twins. "You two seem to lack that extra little bit of strength to beat those Howler guys. I just so happen to have something that can provide you that certain boost."

Chapter 125: A surprise

Leaving the venue the group returned to the car where Marie's mother was busy waiting for them. The middle-aged woman had stayed behind the whole time, though it would seriously surprise Gary if she was unaware of what was going on at such a place.

To be honest, the teenager felt a little strange seeing her there. He had always pictured that if he were to join a gang for real, not just as a transporter but as a full fledged member, one that would do whatever his superiors told him to do, that it would be something he would do his darndest to keep from his family. Gary had even been prepared to take it to the grave with him, just so that his mother and sister could keep him in their memory, as the good boy and brother they remembered.

Yet here, Marie's mother was actively supporting her daughter and her friends by driving them around. It made Gary wonder how his own mother would react? Would it be possible that she too might be this supportive? ... The high schooler seriously doubted it, and if it was up to him he would very much like to never find out her stance on it.

While the five took their places in the car, Austin followed after them on his bike. The loner had agreed to accompany them for now, since Kai claimed he still had a little more to show him before he left for the night.

“Hey Kai, how come you invited Austin along? I know he’s strong and all, I mean he might be just a tiny bit weaker than me, but I’m like really really strong so that means he’s somewhat strong, but

If you’re just looking for strong people for our gang, wouldn’t those twins be a better fit?” Innu inquired, now that Austin would be unable to hear him. “I mean, they’re already involved in these kinds of activities, so I don’t think they would have refused.”

Everyone in the car had heard the question and all of the teenagers were interested in Kai’s reason for going after Austin, especially since he seemed to have gone the extra mile to invite him.

“Well, let’s ignore for a moment whether they would have actually wanted to join us after the two of you defeated and pretty much humiliated them ‘in public’, but before I answer, let me ask our leader a quick question here. Gary, how would you feel if those twins joined our gang?” Instead of answering, the upperclassman asked a question of his own.

The high schooler didn’t even have to answer, his face said it all. He was obviously against the idea. It wasn’t just the fact that they had hurt Tom, but he was sure that they were also the ones who had sent out their goons to take out the Westbridge rugby players.

From what he had seen, the two of them had no shame and would do whatever was needed to achieve their goals, not caring in the slightest who they may end up hurting. In a way, they acted like the colour gang members had during the gang war. Gary had no respect for these types of people at all.

“Easy there, Green Fang, you’ve already defeated them. It was just a hypothetical question.” Kai teased his underclassman whose dislike for the idea had been very open. “Now I want you to imagine Austin joining us.”

Thinking about it, Gary hesitated for a bit, but in the end, he realised that he didn’t actually have any problems at all.

"I'm having a bit of trouble picturing it." The teenager replied eventually. "When we met on the roof, the first thing he did was try to pick a fight with me, but somehow I can't fault him for that. I have a feeling that that's just the type of person he is.

"When Billy attacked Innu in school, he could have easily run away. After all, he had nothing to gain, yet he valiantly stayed and helped us fight him off. Overall, my impression of him is that he isn't a bad person and that he would be someone I wouldn't mind hanging out with."

"Just like with you, I had a feeling about him being... Let's call it 'special'. Since our leader likes him, there should be nothing to complain about, right?" Kai did his usual smile that would capture girls' hearts in seconds. "Although there are other reasons, getting him to join will push us into the next step."

In the middle of Kai's explanation, an incredibly loud growl could be heard coming from one of them in the corner. It caught everyone's attention as they turned to a red faced Gary holding his stomach.

"I'm sorry, but I'm really hungry after that fight. Is there any chance that we can stop somewhere to eat first?" Gary asked. Using Charging Heart, fighting and then healing the sustained damage, his Energy was slightly above half capacity. The teenager was getting the hunger pangs that he had grown accustomed to, yet that didn't stop his stomach from reminding him.

A short while later and they found dinner that was open at this hour on the side of the road. It seemed like Austin was happy to follow along and when they pulled over they just mentioned they were grabbing something to eat.

Before they entered through, Gary stopped outside for a few seconds...he felt kind of bad. When was the last time he and his family had gone out to eat? It had been a long time since they were able to afford it and here he was about to spend this precious money.

If they hadn't been on the road, he would be looking for wild animals, but he couldn't do that while in the company of the others. This made him feel incredibly guilty.

"Don't worry, since I wasn't fighting, I should at least treat our fighters to a meal." Kai patted him on the back as he came over to him, before he placed something into his hand and whispered. "And this here is something you've earned."

Looking in his hand, Gary noticed another set of bills.

“That’s what you earned from your own bet. I just wanted to give it to you away from the eyes of everyone else. You put in a 100 so you got 250 back and I added another 50 on top since I know it must be hard for you and your sister right now.

“Use it however you like and Gary... sometimes you’re allowed to be a little selfish and look after yourself before you can look after others. If something happens to you, then who is left to look after your family?”

With this said the group went in to eat, and there were two people who surprised everyone with how much they were able to stuff inside without getting full. It was a cheap place and Gary had ordered multiple burgers, yet he wasn’t the only one.

Austin did the same, and the two of them had their trays completely full.

“You said you were paying, right?” Austin looked at Kai, as he bit into the burger, devouring half of it one bite. While doing so he never took his eyes off Kai, and stared into his eyes intently, eating each one.

Strangely, Gary was keeping up with him, despite being half the size of the other one. It was a strange group of characters that was for sure, but Gary was enjoying his time with them all.

“So where are we exactly going?” Innu asked with a mouth full.

“That...is a surprise.” Kai replied.

Chapter 126: A home

After their impromptu meal, they drove on and soon reached a part of town that wasn’t in the best of shapes. It was between the borders of Chavley and Cipher, two territories belonging to two different gangs, making it a problematic area. Most of the fighting between the two colour gangs would be in this area, meaning any type of night business would struggle.

The car had eventually stopped outside what looked like a boarded up bar. The windows had hard cardboard covering them up, and spray paint on the outside. It was hard to tell what it was because there were no signs, nor did that establishment have a name or anything. At least the letters that used to be there looked to have been taken off or stolen. The group got out of the car, and were looking left and right to see if there were any signs of trouble and were happy to see that it seemed to be a silent night. Perhaps the gangs were being a bit more cautious due to the rising tensions.

“So what exactly are we doing here?” Innu asked.

Kai walked forward and stood in front of the bar, turning to all the others.

“Don’t you remember asking me about our hideout? At the time, we didn’t have any, but every gang needs a starting place, a place that they can call home and regularly meet up. What you see behind me will be our base from today onwards.

“Right now, it’s all under Mrs DeGrace’s name.” Kai looked in the direction of Marie’s mother when saying this. “We’re just renting it, but soon enough we should be able to buy it. This business now belongs to us, making this our territory! It will be from here that we’ll grow, and today is the day the Howlers become a real gang!

“Welcome to the Howlers base!”

Walking up to the door, Mrs DeGrace pulled a key out of her pocket. It looked like everything had been planned beforehand. The door swung open, letting out a musty smell. Gary immediately covered his nose, and started sneezing a few times.

His nose was far more sensitive compared to the others. Seeing this, the others were even less inclined to go inside, but ignoring everything Kai walked inside. Not wanting to stay out in the cold, the others had no choice but to follow behind.

When entering, they saw that the place had been completely ruined, there was broken glass on the floor and dust everywhere. It was hard to say when was the last time someone had been inside this place. However, at least the actual size of the place was quite large, and there were some things they could use.

There was a large bar area that was surprisingly intact, all it needed were some stools, and alcohol or drinks, then there were multiple pool tables all over the place, eight of them in total.

“Looks like this used to be a pool club.” Innu commented. “Pretty neat, if i say so myself.”

“Well, maybe in the past, right now I’d say this place is a dump.” Marie complained about kicking one of the glass bottles that rolled across the floor. “It will cost a pretty penny to renovate all of it.”

“It might be a dump but you guys need to use your imagination a bit.” Kai smiled. “We have some seed money, and we have hands. With a little work we can clean up this place. Purchase a few things to make it look nice.

“Mrs DeGrace will be the bartender. She has some experience and is quite the beauty to get the older customers in. The deal is that after rent and all expenses get paid the Howlers will get ten percent of all the profits.”

“What about the area?” Gary asked. “You should know that this isn’t exactly the most ideal place.”

Of course Kai knew that, and it was probably exactly why the rent had been so cheap and why the facility had been abandoned in the first place. Whoever owned this dump, would need good protection from the other gangs. Looking at the place there had probably been a few fights, before the last owner gave up.

“For now, the business will only be open during the day. I think it might be best to just use it as a pool club for young university students, or high school students to go to after school. We all go to schools and know people, just invite them along.

“Heck, Austin’s the top dog of his school, so he can just pretty much force them to come here, meaning we would have guaranteed customers. Then later on we can open up the business at night, further expanding our streams of revenue.”

“And when would that be?” Innu asked.

“When, we are confident enough to stop anyone from touching this place. When the name of the Howlers will not only be known among those who go to underground fighting events, but all the other gangs and I don’t mean colour gangs. It might be shabby right now, but don’t worry, this is just the start!” Kai gripped his fist.

It was the first time the others had seen him so passionate about something. Every word he spoke was filled with excitement. This guy’s dream was to rise to the top, and it looked like he would do anything to get his way.

“Everyday bit by bit, we will come here. You and Innu can continue training, and it should be a safe place away from Billy. Marie will be in charge of stocks, handling our money among other things. Think of her like the accountant of our business.”

“Hey!” Austin shouted. “I think you’re forgetting something. I haven’t agreed to anything yet. You remember my deal. This is all great and all, but your plan doesn’t work if you don’t have the strength to back it up... If you can’t even beat me, how can you beat all those out there?”

It was then that Kai looked over to Gary.

“Well Gary, you wanted to rise to the top with me. You want to change your situation, right? To do that, we need Austin. So what’s it going to be?”

Following the conversation, Gary pretty much knew what Kai was asking him to do.

“Austin, don’t you think this is a bit unfair? Gary was in a fight not too long ago, can’t you have your stupid fight tomorrow?” Marie asked.

Looking at him, Gary was debating internally. His Energy was full, his health was full, he was actually in perfect condition to fight Austin.

[New quest received]

[A person wishes to test your strength]

[Task: Knock out or make your opponent submit!]

[Reward: ???]

Chapter 127: A brick wall

After seeing the Quest message, Gary had pretty much made up his mind. He would defeat Austin to make him join the Howlers. So far, listening to Kai had always worked in the green haired teenager's favour.

And now, after he had just listened to his upperclassman's speech about this place, Gary was more convinced than ever that his friend had already planned out the next dozen steps. He was a person who intended to truly change the status quo.

If Kai claimed that they needed Austin in their gang, then Gary was sure that there might be more than just one reason for it. As such, the high schooler would fight like he meant it. The only thing the teenager was partially curious about was the Quest reward. Unlike his fight against the twins the system kept it a secret from him.

'The only other time this happened was when I fought against that Altered Hunter. It might let me choose another skill or it might be something as good. Who knows, maybe the system hasn't decided yet and it will depend on my performance? Argh, Tom would be the better person to ask about this type of thing.' Gary thought, making a mental note to perhaps pretend to have found a game to ask his best friend some questions.

The teenager went across to stand on one side of the room, standing on top of a few pieces of broken glass and took a stance. Austin understood that this meant the other had accepted the fight, so he went to the other side of the room to do the same.

The others decided to move over to the bar, a thin area that wasn't as messy as the rest of this place. Now they were out of the way and could carefully watch the fight. Meanwhile Marie's mother, Miss Degrace, was standing behind the bar. It looked like she was already filling in her role well as she sorted through whatever alcohol bottles there were left. It was almost as if the fight wasn't even happening behind her, the middle aged woman was that calm about it.

"I just don't understand you boys, why do you need to solve everything with your fists?" Marie commented, leaning on her elbow with her hand pressed against her face, clearly not interested in the fight at all. She was paying more attention to what her mother was doing and was mentally calculating how much money they would have to put into this place to fix it.

"You're not wrong, not everything needs to be solved using your fists." Kai said as he playfully ruffled her hair, earning him an annoyed look. "However, there are certain things that just can't be solved with words. Besides, we're in an area where the only universal language is violence.

"Just let them talk it out with their fists today. It's also important for our gang to know each other's strength so we can rely on each other."

On the other hand, Innu was very interested in watching the fight and honestly he was also quite nervous for Gary's sake. After all, despite their break, it was undeniable that the two of them had just been through a tough fight, and Innu hadn't forgotten how many punches their leader had taken.

There were bound to be some bruises and taking too many hits from bare fists wasn't good in the first place. Although Gary's endurance was praiseworthy, unlike the twins, Austin seemed to be a heavy hitter rather than a speedster.

"Come on then!" Austin challenged his opponent with a smile on his face. He walked over, not taking a real fighting stance or anything, yet the amount of pressure and confidence emanating off his body was frightening.

'I've learned from my mistake, so I will meet you with all I've got!' Gary decided.

[Skill activated Charging Heart]

[All stats have temporarily been doubled]

[-10 Energy]

The green haired teenager thought that maybe now Austin would take him more seriously but the thing was, the loner had been taking him seriously from the very beginning.

Seeing Gary run towards him and throwing a fist, Austin stepped to the side at the right time and readied his fist. He swung it, hitting the other right on the rib. It was a short and compact blow, but twisting his body he had all his weight behind it.

[-4 HP]

'What the hell? How strong is he that he can do this much damage against 28 points of Endurance?! F*ck, this seriously hurts and it didn't even seem like he used his full strength!' Gary lost a bit of his earlier confidence. The high schooler had been convinced that he would be able to ignore whatever Austin could dish out and subdue him in a dogfight.

"Looks like you're using your full speed against me from the start." Austin's smile got bigger. "I'm glad you're taking me more seriously than you did those twins. I might not be as fast as them but if you can see your opponent's attacks and time it correctly, you don't need to be fast to dodge them and guess what, I can see yours perfectly!"

The way Austin was talking was a little strange, but Gary didn't have the leisure time to care for that.

'Hmm, that's certainly an interesting approach...' Kai thought since he had no such problems.

There was no need for Austin to explain what he was doing. It was clear that he had spoken out loud on purpose as if he wanted his opponent to hear. It was almost like Austin was trying to teach Gary how to deal with an opponent faster than him, or what he would have done if he had been the one to go up against the twins.

Regaining his composure, instead of running in, Gary decided to move in instead, and tried to remember what Innu and him had practised. There weren't two opponents attacking him this time. It was a one on one.

'I can do this!' Gary thought.

Chapter 128: A heavy fist

Seeing Gary charge in, Austin stretched his arms out wide, and held them by his side, waiting for Gary's next move, which turned out to be a thigh kick he had practised with Innu countless times. Alas, once again, at the perfect time, Austin whacked the green haired teenager's foot away, almost parrying it, and stepped forward, quickly throwing a fist of his own aimed at Gary's stomach.

[-4 HP]

Gary hurled forward from the heavy blow, not moving away from Gary this time, Austin grabbed the back of his opponent's head, holding onto his hair and pulled him up. The loner held the other's head in place and then swung his fist hitting Gary's face, and sending him down.

[-6 HP]

"Hey, isn't that a bit much grabbing his hair?" Marie worriedly asked.

"Does that matter in a street fight?" Innu questioned back.

The girl had nothing to say to that. She was very well aware that out there people would use weapons and all sorts of dirty methods to win, not caring in the slightest whether something was 'fair' or not.

Landing on the floor, Garry felt something go through his hand. Lifting it up he could see it was one of the glass shards. It pierced right through his hand, but it was shoved in quite deep, and blood was already flowing.

[-1 HP]

[You are suffering from minor blood loss]

[Foreign object detected in body]

[Unable to perform emergency healing.]

The high schooler quickly stood up. Gritting his teeth, he didn't hesitate to pull the glass shard out and threw it across the floor. Marie flinched a little bit seeing this, imagining how much pain she would be in if it had been her, but Gary didn't even flinch, instead he clenched his fist as if there was no pain at all.

[Emergency healing now in progress]

"I've been through a lot worse!" Gary shouted, remembering the two times he had been stabbed by a knife, a glass shard through his hand simply couldn't compare to that. As for the pain, compared to the emotional pain his family had gone through and the stress he had been through these past few days, this wasn't even worth mentioning!

The fight so far had been pretty one sided, Gary hadn't managed to land a single hit, while he himself had suffered hits several times. It was beginning to look like a repeat of the earlier fight against the Vicious Twins. Only this time, Gary had gone all out using Charging Heart from the beginning meaning he had nothing else to use to gain an advantage over his opponent.

"This is what I was worried about." Innu sighed. "For someone like Gary this matchup is the worst. Our leader is someone who seems to be blessed with natural speed, strength and endurance that allows him to take quite a beating.

"He also knows a few basic skills, so he can take down the average thug. Even if they are trained, his endurance and strength can make up for that.

"But with Austin...he's a natural street fighter. You can tell he doesn't have any training at all. There's no pattern that one can follow, and he just does whatever his instincts tell him would be the optimal move.

"Gary hasn't fought enough to deal with this type of unorthodox fighter."

Kai was of the same opinion. It would have been far more favourable if they had sent out someone trained like Innu who could use his skills to support his fighting style to deal with Austin. The thought of watching a fight between these two interested him as well.

That or it would take someone who would have been a lot faster or a lot stronger than Austin. Unfortunately, Gary was neither of those things.

'Come on, Gary! I know you have it in you. For the first time, you agreed to a fight yourself. I can feel it, you are also starting to see the goal, aren't you?

'In the grand scheme of things, Austin is just a small pebble on our long and thorny road. If you want us to reach the top, you need to take him out!' Kai thought. Even for him, fighting the loner wouldn't have been easy and wasn't a hundred percent sure that he would be able to win.

Gary's kicks and punches were unable to reach his opponent. Austin's style wasn't like the twins who had been dodging narrowly, yet it was as, if not more, effective. The green haired teenager still had one unallocated stat point over, yet he wasn't sure that a stat boost alone would help him win, no matter which stat he would choose.

'He's not countering me because I'm too slow, but because he has keen eyes. Dexterity won't help me change that and what's the point of putting it in Strength if I can't hit him? My Endurance is already stupidly high yet his punches hurt.

'Come on, Gary, use your brain, there's gotta be something you can do to beat him!!!'

Charging forward again Gary let his body do what it had trained to do many times before, Austin had been expecting a lot of desperate measures Gary might resort to at this point, but the other trying to tackle him as they were playing a rugby game wasn't on that list. Once reaching him, the green haired teenager held onto the loner's waist, and tightly gripped around it.

"You got me, but what are you going to do now?!" Austin shouted, as he grabbed both of his hands together, and slammed them down on Gary's back like a hammer.

[-4 HP]

Gary held on though, not letting go of Austin's waist. He gripped tightly, and started to squeeze tightly.

'I don't even know what I'm doing, but what else can I do?!' Gary wondered, hoping he could make use of his doubled Strength.

Meanwhile, Austin continued to slam both hands down the other's back.

[-4 HP]

[77/100 HP]

"Did you guys hear his back click?" Innu looked around to the other two, whose faces showed that they were mentally sharing Gary's pain.

'What do I do, I can't just keep holding. Should I use Drain Claw? No, I can't. Not with the other three watching...'

Chapter 129: Your body is special

Another attack hammered down and it was even harder than the last.

[-6 HP]

It was then that Gary attempted to lift Austin at that moment. The loner could feel this, but he could only laugh at that idea.

"Do you think that really would work, while you let me continue to slam down on your back? If you don't give up soon, I'll break it!" Austin shouted, swinging his hands down again.

[-7 HP]

Gary didn't know if Austin was getting stronger with each hit, or whether his Endurance was weakening bit by bit as the fight went on. The one thing that was clear was the attacks were hurting and doing a lot more damage than before.

'When trying to lift him, I can tell that I'm close. I just need to be a little stronger. Should I dump that stat point into Strength now?' Gary thought.

With Charging Heart, one stat point would be as effective as two.

'No that's still not enough. I need more Strength.'

Thinking about this, there was one time, when Gary had managed to summon more strength than before. It was when he had seen his sister's injured face. When he had seen what those people had attempted to do with her. Grabbing on, Gary fought against the pain, as Austin slammed his back, he thought about the people counting on him, his sister and his hospitalised mother.

'If only I was a bit stronger! Why don't you help me out for once, you sh*tty system?!!!'

[BPM is rising rapidly]

[BPM 160]

[BPM 170]

Austin, wasn't sure if he was imagining it or not, but he believed he could actually feel Gary's body pulsing at the time, yet it was at an unbelievable speed. If it really was a heart beat then what was going on in this little body of Gary's?

[190 BPM]

[200 BPM]

[You have exceeded 200 BPM]

[Partial transformation has begun]

[All stats increased by 125%]

Once again, Austin lifted up his fists, and when he swung down this time, Gary knew it was his chance. He quickly moved to the side, making the swing hit nothing but air, and now Gary was directly behind him.

'System, put one point in Strength!'

[1 Point has been allocated into Strength]

[Your base Strength is now at 9]

[Current Strength: 20.25]

Thanks to his Partial Transformation state, the teenager's Strength was now over 20, giving him a 25% increase in power over his previous 16 points he had due to Charging Heart.

Austin could immediately attest to the difference. His body was being lifted off the floor. It was as amazing as it was comical seeing Gary lift the other, and without thinking about what he was doing. It looked like he was about to do a suplex until he moved to the side and pushed down Austin, the green haired teenager slammed his opponent onto the floor, making the glass shards around that area fly up.

[44/120 Energy]

Gary was huffing and panting, and looked at his downed opponent. His Energy was going down a lot faster now his Heart rate was above 200 BPM, and it looked like it was already calming down. At the same time the Charging Heart skill had also deactivated bringing his Strength back down to 9.

'Don't get up...please, don't get up...' Gary silently prayed. He didn't want to go and beat on Austin. After all, they were supposed to recruit him, and after all that beating he also needed a moment to just catch his breath.

'I guess Energy and Stamina aren't one and the same after all.'

However, at that moment, he could see the loner slowly getting up from the floor. He wiped some spit that had come out from his mouth and then stared into Gary's eyes.

'This guy is a freaking tank! I can use Charging Heart again, but I might not have the Strength or Energy to beat this guy!' Gary thought, getting ready, until.

"I... admit it's my loss." Austin smiled. "You...really are one little warrior, aren't you... I can see now why you're the leader. If I have to follow someone, I believe you wouldn't be my worst choice."

With that said Austin started to walk towards the door leading outside. Before he went out though, he stopped for a moment.

"I'll see you guys tomorrow." Austin mumbled, closing the door.

"What... just happened?" Gary asked, confused, left standing there.

"Didn't you hear him? You, our mighty leader, won." Kai explained, slapping him on the back.

It caused Gary to let out a little yelp.

"Why...of all the places." Gary whined, feeling the pain run through his body.

As soon as the older teenager had said those words, the system also confirmed his victory.

[Quest reward: Instant Level Up]

[Congratulations, you have now reached: Level 8]

[A new skill has been unlocked]

[A stat point has been granted]

[Exp 542/1024]

[Current list of skills]

[Mark 4/5]

[Charging Heart]

[Claw Drain (Level 1)]

[Full Transformation] (new)

From a glance at his previous rewards an Instant Level Up was impressive from one person. It was in a way the hardest Gary had ever had to fight before. Usually beating down random goons on the street only gave him 20 or 25 Exp, or 50 Exp.

Gary was most happy to see that the Instant Level Up hadn't just given him 340 Exp which he needed to reach the next level, but seemingly 882, so that he was already halfway to Level 9. He was very much looking forward to reaching Level 10 and fulfilling the only Main Quest the Werewolf System had issued him so far. Hopefully, it would give him the power to beat Billy.

When he thought about the other Omega wolf, he recalled that not even Austin's blow had been able to hurt the other, and that was when Billy had still been in human form. Was Billy doing the same right now, was he out there getting stronger just like Gary.

Perhaps the other Werewolf would always just be a bit ahead of him. Still, there was one thing that possibly might turn the sides if Gary and Billy were to meet again, and that was the last reward for completing the quest.

'Full...Transformation...does this mean what I think it does?'

Just as Gary was going to check out the description of the message though, he heard someone running over to him. Before he could react the high school girl had already grabbed his arm.

"Come over here." Marie demanded as he pulled him along. She quickly pulled up one of the fallen bar stools. One of the few that weren't broken and got Gary to sit down on it. Then in front of him he saw a bottle of alcohol as well as an open first aid kit box.

"It seems like no one had ever used the one in this place. The owner must have bought it shortly before going out of business. Now show me your hand, we need to get that cut checked out! Depending on how deep it was we might even have to go to the hospital to get it healed. If we don't do something it could get infected." Marie berated him as she opened the younger teenager's hand.

The boy couldn't even say anything, Marie turned out to be a force that couldn't be stopped, and before he realised it was too late.

Marie had cleaned the wound, but there was no pain after clearing it with alcohol. She had experience with some nasty cuts like this, and the normal reaction would be for the one getting treated to scream like a little girl, yet Gary was as silent as he had been when he had pulled the shard out.

That's when she noticed the reason for his behaviour.

"What the? Did I see wrong? Was it your other hand?" Marie asked in confusion, looking over to Gary's other hand. "No, but all this blood, how can there be no cut?"

Chapter 130: Finding out the truth

More and more often, Gary found himself being put in situations that forced him to lie because the truth was just too bizarre and there were things he needed to hide no matter what. Making matters even worse, he had more than one secret and all of the people around him only knew certain parts or had been lied to in regards to others.

His mother was currently in the hospital, yet when she woke up he would someday have to explain where he had managed to acquire the money to help them pay for bills. Gary had told Amy that he had been helping out another friend of his with their family business, yet he had deliberately avoided mentioning that this 'family business' had him work as a Transporter for the Underdogs.

As for Tom, his best friend still believed that Gary had become a Werewolf due to a strange package, yet he knew nothing about where it had come from. Overall, the green haired teenager had done his best to keep the other away from anything gang related, be it him having been in one, and naturally him being the active leader of another. Thinking how Tom would react knowing these things shook him at times.

Then there was Kai who was the only one aware of the situation with the Underdogs and now that he thought about it, his upperclassman also knew about the Dem family problems, as well as Billy. He knew pretty much everything except that his underclassman wasn't exactly a hundred percent human anymore.

There was a worry on Gary's mind about how the others would react if they found out the truth. It would be one thing if he had been an Altered, yet his situation appeared to be something else entirely. He didn't want them to know for fear he would lose them. Aside from his family and Tom the Howlers was all he had right now.

The worst part of it all, was that Gary was a horrible liar. Often he said the first thought that came to his head, which this time was. 'Whoh, it really healed I must have superpowers.' Thankfully he bit his tongue back this time before saying anything.

When Marie tried to look at his other hand, he had instantly hidden both of them behind his back.

'What the... am I an idiot? It's not like if she can't see my hands she will now believe whatever I say.' Gary chided himself.

“You two also saw that glass shard pierce his hand, right?” Marie questioned the two high school boys who were still behind the bar. “I’m not going crazy, heck he even took it out and right here I have a rag full of blood!” The high school girl lifted it up seemingly to convince herself as much as Innu and Kai. Meanwhile, Gary scooted around to reposition himself so his fellow gang members wouldn’t be able to see his next action.

While Innu looked on the floor and could see that there was indeed a large shard with blood on it. There was no doubt in his mind that they had all seen the same thing.

‘What do I do? Should I just confess to being an Altered? No, that will just open another can of worms, meaning I would have to come up with more lies to hide it. There’s only one thing I can do.’

Instead of adding it to the web of lies he had already spun, the green haired teenager decided to do something more drastic.

[Skill activated Claw Drain]

[-15 Energy]

His fingers started to grow slightly and so did his sharp and hard nails. It would hurt but Gary had no choice and with his hands behind his back the others wouldn’t be able to see. It was at that moment, that he used the ‘claw’ to dig into his hand, creating a large cut across it.

[-2 HP]

[You are suffering from minor blood loss]

[If too much blood is lost it will continue to lower your HP]

‘Sh*t, this hurts way more than that stupid little piece of glass. The things I do to keep up this lie... maybe it would have been easier to tell them the truth.’

There was a worry on Gary's mind though, that since he wasn't in a fight his passive healing or perhaps even his emergency healing might take effect.

Claw Drain only lasted a total of 2 seconds at Level 1 and while that might be detrimental during a fight, for his current purposes it was perfect. By the time everyone looked from the rag back him his hands had already reverted to normal. He lifted up his hand with blood dripping down it.

"Sorry, I just didn't want you to put alcohol on the right hand." Gary apologised. "Alcohol on an open wound seriously hurts, but you're right it needs to get disinfected. I just put some blood on the other hand hoping you wouldn't find out. The cut is still there, it's just on the other hand."

Hearing this, Marie let out a big sigh.

"Just come over here, you big cry baby." The high school girl shook her head, while Gary willingly went over, and placed his hand out. She could see a big cut, and started to get to work, not even questioning why it looked so 'fresh'. The green haired teenager didn't even have to act to let out a cry when the alcohol came into contact with his wound. He just hoped that the emergency or passive healing wouldn't kick in so quickly that Marie could see it healing on the spot.

In the end, Marie bandaged it up, and it looked like she hadn't noticed anything strange. However, the other two boys in the room weren't as convinced. The high school girl might not have paid enough attention to the fight, but both Kai and Innu were more than ninety percent sure that the shard of glass should have gone through the other hand. To top it off, his strange actions were definitely because he was hiding something.

'Why the need to cover it up, Gary?' Kai wondered, as he started to think back to certain events. 'Wait, could it be possible... it seemed too crazy to be true, but if I put everything together, your fast improvement and what happened in the park with Tom and that wolf-type Altered, but how... is that it? Was that what was inside the briefcase Damion is so crazy about and why you're running from the Underdogs?'

Of course, Kai had no way to test out the conclusion he had reached. Confronting the other directly wouldn't yield much. He would have to either wait or find a way to make his underclassman confess to it himself, though he didn't know how close his thoughts were to the actual reality. For now, he intended to keep their gang leader's secret a secret.

'This is getting exciting. If that's really the case, we'll be able to seriously accelerate the progress of my plans.' A large grin started to appear on the bleach blonde teenager's face.