

## Werewolf 141

Chapter 141: A new state

The preparations were complete and with a few tugs it looked like Gary was secure.

“I’m not so sure about this, Gary, you broke out of my parents’ storage unit with ease. I’m worried you might be able to break out of this one as well.” Tom shared his concerns.

“It won’t be like last time.” Gary stated confidently. “I’m not sure how to explain it, but I feel weaker now that the full moon has passed. I should still be able to use its power to transform me, but it shouldn’t last too long.”

None of that was true. Gary was actually going to test out his newly acquired Full Transformation skill. There was one thing the high schooler had sworn to himself, and that was that he wouldn’t tell Tom anything related to the Underdogs, which included the system. Who knew if this system was created by them as well. In the worst case scenario, they might kill anyone who knew even the tiniest bit about it.

Gary’s plan was to use his Charging Heart and Claw Drain skills to lower his Energy down to around 35. Using Full Transformation cost him 20 Energy and since it took 10 Energy for every additional minute in that transformed stage, the teenager was sure his transformation should automatically be cancelled after thirty seconds once his Energy value reached 10, thus reverting him back to his original form.

‘These chains don’t need to hold me for long, they just need to buy me thirty seconds.’ Gary thought.

Tom then placed the bags of food, which were filled with raw meat, a small distance away from where Gary was. This would be used for after the transformation. The distance set up was based on these thirty seconds. If he was to break out, it was possible he would reach the food, giving him more Energy and lengthening the transformed state, which was why they needed to be set a certain distance away. So he wouldn’t reach them in time.

“Are you completely sure about this, Gary?!” Tom shouted. “What if you can’t control it? You said last time that you didn’t know what was happening! That could easily happen again, right?”

Gary looked at Tom, he looked strange tied up, but his eyes were sincere.

“That’s what I need to find out, whether I can turn and still stay in control.” Gary replied. “Just trust me, everything is set up so even if I can’t remember everything or my Werewolf instincts take over, I’ll turn back into a human before anyone gets hurt... I hope.”

Hearing this, Tom started to head in the other direction, and turned on the recording of Gary’s phone. Then Gary waited a good ten minutes for Tom to be far enough away.

Finally, it was time. Gary had used a Charging Heart on his walk here. He realised that whenever the skill was used, and he wasn’t actually fighting, a rush of adrenaline would enter his body. It was hard for him to even walk. All he wanted to do was run, but he was holding himself back due to Tom.

Now, with his Energy down to 35 it was time for him to act.

[Skill activated Full Transformation]

[-20 Energy]

[Transformation has begun]

Gritting his teeth, Gary was bracing himself for the unbearable pain that he still vividly remembered. Unfortunately, it hadn’t been a one-time thing and everything was happening all over again. The strong heartbeat, the bulging of his muscles and more.

He wasn’t sure if it hurt more or less than last time, but he was determined to stay focused, so he could remember everything.

‘I have to keep conscious! There’s a good chance that if I pass out, my mind gets taken over by my natural instincts... or however it works. I need to learn to resist it.’

His skin quickly started to fall off his body, as his fur came to grow through his hands, he wanted to claw and rip at his body, but the chains seemed to be doing their job. As he pulled forward, they were digging into the tree, pulling it back and forth, ripping off the bark. However, one of the spikes that were digging into the other tree had ripped out from the tree.

'Stay focused!' Gary told himself, this time feeling even his face change, and eventually the transformation came to an end.

Gary felt like he was slightly taller than before. When he looked down, the teenager saw a hairy pair of legs. He also saw the clawed hands, unable to recognise any sign of his old body, yet he could tell that it was his by the feel of the wind blowing through his 'hair'.

'It...it worked! I've transformed and I'm still conscious!'

"Rawr rawr (it worked)!" Gary tried to say it out loud, but only growls came out from his mouth. It didn't sound even remotely like any human speech. The large tongue and his vocal cords were all foreign to him.

In front of him, his system was displaying an Energy bar, and he could see it was going down rapidly. It was a good thing and a bad thing, he imagined it would be a distraction, but it also served as a warning of when he would turn back.

Still, as it was going down, Gary wanted to check one more thing, and that was his Status. He needed to know just how much stronger he was at the moment.

[State: Werewolf (Omega)]

[Grade: Pawn]

[Strength 18 (+5)]

[Dexterity 14 (+5)]

[Endurance 28 (+5)]

The stats displayed corresponded to his own during Charging Heart, yet that much should have been a given. However, he also benefited from an extra five points in all of them while in his Werewolf Form.

'This looks to be even better than when I got strengthened by the power of the moon. I wonder if those stack. I might actually be even stronger when I turn on a full moon as well. Still, just because I'm still conscious for this, doesn't mean it will be the same on that day. The turning back then... I don't think this one's the same, that day it felt far more aggressive.'

'And what is this Grade thing?'

While thinking about this, his time eventually ran out. The high schooler started to transform back to his normal self. His body was shrinking and, thankfully, there seemed to be no pain associated with his reverting to his normal self.

Unfortunately, the sensation on his skin when he came back was a little weird... what he hadn't accounted for was that his clothes had stretched to the point where they had ripped off him... leaving him pretty naked once again...

'Screw me, I just hope Tom comes back soon. If someone happens to pass by and see me in the woods chained up like this, they'll think I'm some kind of super pervert!' Gary would have loved to facepalm himself, yet he was unable to reach.

Nevertheless, this was definitely a step in the right direction!

'Now...it's time for me to hunt you, Billy!'

Chapter 142: An enemy is a friend

Coming back after a short while, Tom was surprised to see that the chains were all still intact and that his best friend stood there butt naked. He deliberately avoided gazing around a certain area of Gary's, instead hurrying to unlock all the locks.

"So what happened?" Tom asked. "Wait, before you tell me, please change into these!"

Fortunately, one of them had actually prepared a set of extra clothes.

As soon as he put on the boxers, Gary ran in a certain direction, leaving Tom behind. As for where he was heading towards, it was to the location the bags had been placed. A few minutes later, Gary came back, the bags were practically empty. The high schooler wasn't happy the other hadn't followed him to see how he had gobbled everything up.

"How did you know?" Gary asked, returning, and heading towards his phone. "About bringing the clothes I mean?"

"Did you forget that I was the one who had to clean up the storage unit after you? Your clothes were ripped to shreds! Given all the food you had me buy and the lock you asked me to bring, I was assuming you would want to do something Werewolf related, I just didn't know you could actually change." Tom replied, still a bit speechless.

"Hang on, since your clothes ripped again, doesn't that mean... Holy sh\*t, it worked, didn't it?! Did you really do it?!"

There was no need for Gary to say anything, there was a big smile on his face as he turned his phone around for Tom to watch. The screen showed a large brown hairy wolf. Without a doubt, it had worked.

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The two of them talked about Gary's experience and there were a few things that he found out during their talk. For one, Tom was sure that the Werewolf in the recording looked to be the same as the one that he had seen that day.

He went on to describe what Billy looked and how the two of them had different coloured furs. According to his best friend, Gary's Full Transformation form seemed to be a little smaller compared to his natural state, but Tom wasn't a hundred percent sure as he only had the video to go on.

'I guess what I thought before might be right then. That Werewolf version of me during the full moon should be bigger and stronger.' Gary concluded. 'Still, the only thing I can't figure out is what that 'Pawn' stage meant. It's not there at the moment, so it must be something Werewolf form exclusive.'

“So, what do you plan to do now?” Tom asked, sitting down on the leaves, Gary was doing the same as the two of them were taking a break. Gary’s Energy was refilled, but he wasn’t going to try that again anytime soon.

He was happy that it all worked out the first time, otherwise it would have been expensive to keep on purchasing meat.

“I... I need to find Billy.” Gary answered.

Tom had thought as much, that the other Werewolf was Billy from the news, the suspected murderer. It was all making sense, but what didn’t make sense was how Gary had met with Billy.

‘The two had gotten into a fight but how? I guess I shouldn’t try to pry too much. Gary has been revealing more information to me bit by bit. As long as I’m patient, he might tell me when he’s ready.’

“That might be a bit of a problem. How do you plan to find him, if even the police is unable to? Come to think of it, I wonder how those Altered Hunters knew where he would be? I mean, they were there that day, right? So they must have somehow tracked down one of you. It’s too bad you don’t have their skills.” Tom thought out loud.

Hearing what Tom said gave Gary a brilliant idea. He might not be able to find him, but wasn’t there an Altered Hunter in their very school? The high schooler couldn’t prevent the huge smile from appearing on his face. If he could somehow convince Blake... he might get a head start on finding Billy!

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The day was coming to an end, yet Slough’s police station was as busy as ever. If one was to stand outside the street, they would be able to hear an intense conversation coming from inside. It was clearly a yelling match.

“I’ve been back here three time already, and each time you tell me the EXACT SAME THING!!!” A young man shouted, as he slammed both hands on the desk. “My brother has been missing for over a week

now, and it's not just him! His useless friends that he usually hangs out with have gone missing as well. Admit it, you're not even trying because of who I am!"

The worker behind the desk had an uncomfortable face and didn't know how to handle the situation at all. The one sitting opposite him didn't have the best temper either. For some, this situation might have been unheard of, but it was actually quite normal for gangsters and the police to deal with each other.

"How often do we have to tell you the same thing until it gets through your thick skull?" Anton questioned as he came out. He had been hiding in his office for a while now, but since the nuisance had shown no signs of disappearing on his own, the Chief of Police felt like he had no other choice but to deal with him.

"For the last time, it's nigh impossible to find out ANY information from THAT day. All we know is that your brother and his friend weren't among the list of dead or injured that night!

"You're lucky we even went to look that far for you, when YOUR gang was mostly responsible for that entire sh\*t show!" Anton poked the young man's chest with his finger. "If scum like you are off the streets, then that's fine by me."

Not willing to discuss matters any further, he returned to his office, making sure to slam the door extra hard to send out the intended message, leaving Raven in anger. He knew he was getting nowhere and decided to walk out of the building. Frustrated, he sat down on the front steps with his hands in his hair.

'Goddamnit, where could you have disappeared to, Hawk?! I've tried... I tried looking for you EVERYWHERE! Not only that, but I tried looking for your stupid friends and everything, yet I couldn't find any clues whatsoever.'

Raven heard the sound of the door opening again from behind, yet he didn't bother to turn his head. Eventually, he could feel that someone was standing over his shoulder and that person shoved a paper in front of his face.

Looking up, he could see that it was a young officer.

“Chief might not like you, but we’ve really tried finding your brother. I spent some of my free time looking over his case.” The young Roo revealed. “Unfortunately, we only managed to get a hold of the cell phone provider. Here is the transcript of some of your brother’s last messages.

“It looked like he was talking with some girl. It’s the only thing I can do without being put on the investigation myself. I wish you luck in finding your brother and his friends.” With that, the young police officer went back inside, leaving Raven with the paper.

Shuffling through them, Raven could tell that he had possibly found his first clue to finding his brother.

#### Chapter 143: The grand day

Today was Sunday, and in the past, Gary would have slept in until close to noon. However, today he had woken up at 7 AM sharp. The teenager had gotten used to waking up early ever since his mother got hospitalised, so that he could prepare Amy some breakfast... even though it was usually just a sandwich or some cereal.

As usual, the first thing on his morning ritual’s agenda was to check his Status.

[Name: Gary Dem]

[Level 8]

[Exp 932/1024]

[Health: 100/100]

[Energy: 120/120]

[Strength 9]

[Dexterity 7]

[Endurance 14]

The Bond Marks continued providing him 30 Exp a day, and with another 10 Exp from the Daily Quests he had been accumulating a good amount of Exp each day. With the current tempo, he would reach Level 9 in just three more days, meaning he would be only a single level off from earning himself a class... even though he had no idea what that would entail as a Werewolf.

His little plan of asking Blake to help with locating Billy, that would have to wait until Monday. Gary had no idea where the other high schooler lived. Besides, it wasn't exactly the best idea to enter the home of Altered Hunters, considering what he himself was and how they would treat him.

Why should he enter the lion's den, when he could meet Blake on school grounds?

Picking up his phone, Gary looked at the message from a certain someone.

[Be there tomorrow morning, 8 AM. Last check before the grand opening]

This was the main reason for Gary waking up this early. Yesterday, all members of the Howlers had received the text. On Friday, Kai had given them Saturday off, and apparently he had finished the last renovation, allowing the establishment to open today.

According to the agreement, Miss Degrace was supposed to take care of things during the week, but Kai had insisted that they would at least help out on the weekends. Once the Howlers would grow as a group, the blonde teenager had shared his plans of having some future members work at the place. Right now, though, there were just the five teenagers, and one adult. These were the only people they could really trust until they made a name for themselves.

For the time being, they would only open on weekends, and in the afternoon, a few hours before school started and after school ended. That way once they finished they could help out with extra work, for the time when it would get busy, closing just before it got late.

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Gary looked at his phone and saw that he was ten minutes late. He had tried to surprise Amy with a self-made omelet, only to discover that watching the Poutube instruction video while he made it, had turned out to be a very bad idea.

To his surprise, the other five were standing outside the place, impatiently waiting for him. He had hoped that at least Austin might be late as well, yet nobody said anything. All of them were too excited to get inside. There was a beaming smile on all of their faces as the hard work that they had put in was finally being put to use.

“What are you doing standing outside?” Gary asked.

“Waiting for you, of course.” Kai clarified. “We all worked on this, so it only felt right to enter when we’re all together.”

Looking up, Gary could see a significant difference from the last time he had been there. He had no clue how Kai had managed it, but the building was now decorated with metal or plastic grey letters. It was a good touch, making it look a lot more professional.

“I can see you’ve noticed my finishing touch.” Kai chuckled. “Everyone, welcome to the Wolf’s Pool Club!”

“That’s kinda a cool name. I like it, wolves are cool animals.” Innu stated, only to suddenly remember a particular creature that had constantly chased after him. “Actually, scratch that, wolves are arseholes! They’re pure arseholes!”

Kai gave Gary a meaningful wink, which made the green haired teenager believe that the name of this establishment had been chosen because of him.

Entering the place, they all experienced a drastic difference. For one, there were ambient lights that actually worked. At the same time, there was a green neon light that went around the walls, giving it a nice warm feeling.

The pool tables had been re clothed, the balls wiped, so they could be used, cue clubs had been replaced, and the bar finally had stools for people to sit in. The only thing that seemed missing was an assortment of alcohol behind the bar. Right now it was rather empty, though they did have drinks and snacks ready, and the windows still hadn't been fitted.

Gary had to pinch himself, unable to believe his eyes, he never thought such a dump could be turned around, especially in so little time.

"Man, it's beautiful right, I think I'm tearing up." Innu spoke for them all. "All that scrubbing, and building all that crap... now I can see it was all worth it. This is ours! I can't believe this is our place!"

Gary had the same feeling, he never thought he would feel this way in his life before, but this belonged to all of them, the gang known as the Howlers.

The club was set to open at 2 PM, just a little after lunch, and then they would stay open until 8 PM, just when the streets started to get dark. Right now, Marie went to the front and was going through the cashier system, checking that the prices of everything had been set up correctly.

There were so many things the group had to learn, the various membership cards they were offering, monthly payments, snacks, and food. Between them, they thought they would be okay as each person decided to remember one thing, but alone they held no chance.

"Look, just come to me if you don't understand anything, I've got it all right here." Marie stated as she hit her thick pad of notes on the table, a big grin on her face.

After doing a few practice runs, Austin made some calls, informing his underlings and friends about the place. Gary and Innu wanted to do the same, yet they quickly realised that the contact numbers on their phones were next to non-existent.

'Great... Mum, Amy and Tom... the last two people I don't want to invite here at all.' Gary sighed.

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Of course, that hadn't been the only advertisement. Kai had actually paid off some paperboys to distribute their flyers this morning. Eventually the area would come to learn of their presence so why not sooner rather than later.

One of the flyers just so happened to end up in the hands of a grey colour gang member, who had immediately informed his leader, Buffin.

"What should we do, Boss? It looks like that business will open up today. From the looks of it, they don't have protection from the Underdogs or any of the other gangs yet. Should we inform the Grey Elephants?" The Grey colour member rubbed his hands, imagining that this information might be valuable enough to earn him favour in the gang.

The first thing Buffin did was to check the location. He noticed it was a troublesome place. It had a lot of foot traffic during the day, but when night came, there would be a lot of trouble in the area since it was bordering the territory of two gangs. Businesses like that only lasted a few months at most, having to constantly pay for repairs, and or protection.

"There's no need to bother the Grey Elephants with something like that, go and call on the new guys. Let them check it out!" Buffin ordered.

#### Chapter 144: A Real Gentleman

The Wolf's Pool Club was finally open for business, yet it was hard to say whether it was a success. The place was busy, and Gary was hardly able to catch a break as he was busy serving people and answering their questions. There was a good flow of income coming in at the same time.

The reason Gary found it difficult to call it a successful opening or not, was because ninety percent of the customers were from Austin's school. At first, when some of them arrived, they had a worried look on their faces. They had even asked who they were facing and what school they were going up against now.

It quickly became clear that Austin hadn't actually explained the situation to them at all. Since their school's top dog had ordered them to be here, they had naturally expected there to be a fight. Regardless, after they realised that it wasn't a call for a big fight, the teenagers decide to stay, playing a few games of pool and buying some snacks. They seemed to be enjoying themselves, but all the Howlers could do was hope that they liked it enough to decide to return.

'I guess...that's the power of a real leader right there.' Gary thought. He looked at the room filled with around twenty high school students who had all come just because of Austin.

The cash register was constantly going off, and since it was busier than they had expected, even Marie had to help out as a waitress, as she had a couple of cokes and snacks on a tray. She went ahead and placed it down on the table between two sofas. As the high school girl went to bend down, two boys sitting down on either side were eyeing up her legs, and the skirt she was wearing.

The high schoolers exchanged looks, before one of them imitated hitting her back side, leading the other to giggle at the gesture.

"Here's your food, I hope you enjoy it." Marie said with a smile. To those who knew her, Marie seemed like a completely different person. She was all smiles, talked politely and was generally a pleasure to be around. It was the complete opposite of the commanding girl who had drilled them what they needed to know like a drill sergeant.

As soon as Marie turned around, though, she felt some had whacked her on her back. Immediately, the boys behind started to laugh and whistle. As for Marie herself, she remained slightly frozen, clearly unsure how to react.

The boys continued to laugh at each other until one of them felt someone grab them by the wrist, lifting them off the seat to a standing position. It was so forceful that he thought his shoulder was going to be dislocated.

"What the hell did you just do?" Gary asked.

"Are you crazy, man? You're hurting me! Let go! I'm a paying customer, you have no right to treat me like this!" The student yelled, and the others turned, looking like they were ready to jump in at any moment.

"So what? That doesn't give you the right to do that! What...what if that was your sister, or your mother?" Gary asked. Just thinking about it made the green haired teenager's blood start to boil. Marie's small body frame made her have a similar resemblance to Amy, and it was because of this, he was reminded of an unpleasant scene.

“Are you her boyfriend or something?! If you want to simp for her, don’t get me involved. It was just a little tap, she wasn’t hurt or anything. She can just ignore it, and I didn’t hear her complain either!” The harasser didn’t show any signs of remorse.

However, it was clear from her reaction that she didn’t like it at all, and the student’s tone was just annoying Gary further.

“GET OUT!” A voice from the other side resounded throughout the pool club. As for who it was coming from, it was Austin. The other guests were making way for him to get through.

Seeing this, the high school student grinned. “You’re dead now.”

Gary was unsure what to do, while he wanted to teach that guy a lesson, Austin was the one who had called them all over. Not to mention, it would cause a big problem if the two of them were to fight.

When the large high schooler arrived, he grabbed the student that Gary had held up by the collar.

“Not him, but you, dipsh\*t!!” Austin clarified, pushing his forehead up against his.

“As for the rest of you, no one is allowed to treat them like this! These guys are a part of my group, you understand?! What he did was no different from harassing my little sister!” With that said, the latest member of the Howlers dragged the offender by the scruff of his neck and opened the doors.

“You can come back once you know what you’ve done wrong! You better have a sincere apology ready for her!” Austin clapped his hand as he threw him outside, and slammed the doors shut.

There was silence in the room when Austin turned around. No more laughter and cheer.

“The show is over, everyone, go back to having fun again. Let’s forget that idiot!” Austin shouted.

It took a while but eventually things returned to normal, only that Kai told Marie to stay behind the counter, as the rest of the boys picked up speed. After everyone got served, things started to quiet down in the place.

By the time new customers came in, they had somewhat gotten used to the process, making things quicker and there was no need for them to go back and forth between Marie. The initial impact of a full place with the students made the place look popular, attracting even more customers.

Eventually it allowed Gary to take his first break. He sat down by the bar, where Marie and her mother were working, while watching the rest have fun.

Kai, Innu, and Austin had started playing against the others, and it looked like the blonde teenager was making some bets playing against the others. To nobody's surprise, a few minutes later, money was being exchanged, all of it going to the Howlers.

"Thank you." A soft voice eventually said. It was so soft that it was barely audible with all the surrounding noise.

"What did you say?" Gary asked, as he hadn't been sure he had heard correctly. While he was not too far away, it had been hard even with his enhanced hearing. Having already found it hard to muster her courage to say that to him once, Marie's face was turning red.

"I said thank you!" Marie repeated herself, slightly louder this time, her eyes fixed on the glass she was currently cleaning. "... and I don't just mean today. I've yet to thank you for saving me that time with the black colour gang. Sorry, it took me so long."

"Oh that, well, yeah, I mean, those guys deserved it and so did that pervert." Gary said, a little embarrassed himself now. After all, this was the first time he had ever been praised for doing something 'heroic'.

Now that she had reminded him, the first time he had seen Marie had been when those black colour gang members had been picking on her. Usually, Gary wouldn't have thought twice about colour gangs picking on anybody, but the strangest thing had been that it had happened during the day.

'Maybe I should ask?' Gary thought.

#### Chapter 145: A monster

However, before Gary could ask about that day, Marie surprised him with a question of her own.

"Are you an idiot?"

Now the high schooler was really confused. One moment, Marie had been thanking him, yet the very next she was insulting him?

"I'm sorry, that came out wrong. I just don't get how you can not get scared in these situations. Back then, the black colour gang members seriously outnumbered you. There was also a good chance that everyone could have jumped you earlier as well."

Now Gary understood a little more what she meant.

"Well, I guess I am a bit of an idiot, then. I dunno, but it just felt wrong to stand there and watch it happen. In the past, I guess I never acted when I saw it. Now, though, people around me are getting hurt, and no one is acting out about them.

"So I thought, what would happen if I became that person that instead of just watching, and wishing for help, started acting. Man, when I say this stuff out loud, it seriously sounds lame... Like those weird superhero film crap... only I'm far from being a superhero.

"I mean, for one, I'm not good-looking, scrawny and my personality sucks balls. Well, not actually balls, but you know what I mean..." Gary said as he was trailing off, and eventually looked towards Kai, Austin and Innu.

"When I look at them, they fit that role a lot better than me."

Somehow, Gary's talk only ended up depressing the teenager. He hadn't had the time to talk about all the things going through him with anyone. Tom used to be the closest person he had.

A clack was heard in front of him and when he looked up, he could see a coke in a pint glass in front of him.

“It’s on the house... huh, I guess since you’re kinda the boss of this whole place it’s a given... Anyway, you deserve a free drink.” Marie said as she handed him the glass.

“Just remember what I said, you’re the boss, not them. Who’s to say when they look at you, they don’t think the same way? Did anyone else come forward before you did, Gary? No, they might have come forward, but you were the first one to act and that’s what makes you, you.

“And besides... you’re not that bad looking. In fact, you’re kinda cute.”

Gary was in the middle of drinking the coke, when Marie said that, and it nearly made him spill it out all over. Before the teenager could react, though, she had already run off to the far end of the bar to serve another customer.

‘I guess...she’s kinda cute herself...’ Gary thought, yet he wouldn’t dare to say that out loud.

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After a successful ‘night’, it was time for them to count how much money they had made in a single night. Surprisingly, the place had managed to earn around three thousand after the cost of paying for the drinks and food had been subtracted. It was far more than any of them would have imagined in a single day.

It sounded like a huge amount, at least until Gary started to do the calculations.

‘Wait a second, ten percent of that is three hundred, and then that would need to be split between all of us...that means I hardly get anything... it’s far from being enough...’

“I can see that look on your face.” Kai said as he put a hand around his shoulder. “If it would be so easy to get rich, do you think anyone would remain poor? This was just the first day and the business will grow. We will be able to open for longer and possibly at night as well.

“Once that happens, we should easily be able to earn double this amount. Besides, this is just the first of many priorities, and most of that money needs to stay with Marie and her mother, so they can deal with all the bureaucratic stuff such an establishment requires.

“They are working the hardest out of all of us, after all. Eventually, we won’t even have to lift a finger and all of that income will turn to passive income.”

In the end, Kai pulled out a hundred and handed it to Gary. Part of it was from his share of the ten percent, the rest was from the bets he had won earlier.

“Making money can be quite quick, and it will be, but we can’t make it suddenly appear overnight. Trust me, we will get there. For the time being, just be glad that I can’t bear the thought of you making your cutie of a sister starve. You earned that, and good job standing up for one of our members back there. You’re becoming more of a leader every day.”

Gary instinctively grumbled a bit at the blonde teenager’s teasing, but he still thanked the other for the money, and he also appreciated the compliment at the end. He did trust Kai, so if he claimed this was a step in the right direction, he believed him.

Nevertheless, this meant that for now whenever an underground fight would take place, they would probably have to join it, unless something drastic were to change.

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On Monday, Gary’s attempt at an omelette for Amy turned out far better than yesterday, even though the end result became scrambled eggs. With that done, the green haired teenager hurried to the gym to complete his Daily Quest.

Unfortunately, even after all that time, he had seen no more improvement to his stats, to the point he began wondering whether those 5 Exp were really worth the effort. The fact, that it would start to cost

him money at some point didn't make it any more appealing. After a quick bite to replenish his Energy, he checked his progress.

[Exp 982/1024]

'Damn, I'm so close to Level 9... Argh, I will have to wait until Wednesday for it to naturally occur. System, why do you have to taunt me so much? Can't you give me 2 extra Exp tomorrow? Please, just once, give me that small extra bit!' Gary's begging was met with the usual silence.

When he arrived at school, there were a few students already inside, one of them being Xin, who seemed to be staring at Tiffany for some reason. Gary wasn't sure how to interact with the new girl. The teenager still somewhat fancied her, but given their last interaction, he didn't know what to do.

On the other hand, things seemed to be back to normal with Tom after their little experiment. While Gary had been busy helping out at the pool club, his best friend had been busy trying to find out more information about Altered and Werewolves on Sunday.

When it was time for the lunch break, Gary excused himself by claiming he needed to go to the toilet, leaving both Innu and Tom to their own devices. However, the real reason for him being in a hurry was because he saw a certain someone walking through the hallway.

"Blake, wait, do you have a moment? I need to talk to you." Gary said.

'Oh crap!' Blake thought. 'I still haven't processed everything I heard that day, and now he wants to speak to me? I could live with you being an Altered, Gary... but since the test was negative...if you're not an Altered... are you a monster?'

Chapter 146: The hunters trouble

Hanging outside the school window sill wasn't exactly a normal thing that students did these days, yet Blake had done exactly that. The high schooler had done so out of great concern for his fel- ...No, he had done so because it was his duty as an Altered Hunter who was worried about an Altered possibly being at his school!

Seeing White Rose agents at their school meant that there could be even worse things roaming around the school than Gary. Which was why he needed to act fast. However, after listening in to their entire investigation, the only thing the young Altered Hunter had learned was that Gary was not an Altered...It was a head scratching moment for Blake.

For the rest of the day, Blake had been very absent-minded. Hurrying home after rugby practice, the teenager felt strangely relieved. His heart was no longer beating fast, but he had a lot on his mind.

'I definitely saw him transform from a dog-like beast back into a human. Human to beast transformation should be something that only Altered can do?' Blake thought to himself.

'But then why did that test fail? Even if they are faulty, it usually comes down to human error of not conducting the test properly, otherwise White Rose and us wouldn't use them for verification. However, it's impossible for two experienced agents to make such a rookie mistake. But then, how's that possible?' It was clear that it was something that was beyond what Blake could figure out on his own, so he was hoping that a certain someone might help. Someone that could give him answers.

Right now, he had finally arrived home. On the side, there was their clinic. It wasn't a large hospital, just a small place that treated the locals, typically for small wounds here and there, also selling medicine at their pharmacy and rarely helping out the local hospital.

The clinic was owned by the Hunt family, but next to it, was where Blake and his family lived. There was a large wall that blocked off the outside, so onlookers would be unable to see inside.

On the wall itself there was a wooden gate that could be slid open, once a passcode was entered, and Blake did just that. On the other side, they had a garden, and towards the back of this garden was a traditional Asian style inspired house made out of wood, with only a single floor. It was quite the large house but it was hard to tell whether this family was wealthy or not as the building was a bit rundown.

Walking up, Blake took off his shoes as he slid the door open, and in an instant, he could hear something striking the air. Blake immediately jumped to the side, rolling, and here he could see his father holding a baton.

"Although you avoided the blow, you were slower than usual." The father chastised his son as he stood there in his white robe. It looked like he himself had just gotten off work at the clinic. "If I was an Altered

based on some speed type beast, you might have been now. You should always remain vigilant and do your best to be active rather than reactive.”

His father walked back in, before pausing just before his whole body was inside. “I’m guessing something’s on your mind, for you to slack off. Come in, let’s talk.”

Heading inside, there was what looked like a normal, standard training room, similar to that of traditional dojos. He and his father would regularly train with special weapons, but of course these special weapons were illegal under the No Lethal Weapons Act, hence why they had made sure that nobody could see inside.

The adult walked towards one of the walls and on a table at the back there were three monkey statues. The left one was covering its eyes, the middle one was covering its ears and the one to the right was covering its mouth. After touching them in a particular order, a click sound could be heard.

A mechanism had been activated and the wall to the far right started to spin around, until it stopped halfway, revealing a staircase that led downstairs. The two of them walked down, small lights by the side illuminating their path.

Eventually, Blake and his father reached the bottom of the secret Altered Hunter room. There were shelves filled with old books. Blake warily stared at them. He still remembered the countless times that he had been told to read them over and over again as a child.

They contained a lot of the information regarding their family history, and why they did what they did. Aside from that, they had information of all the different beasts of old their ancestors had hunted, knowledge that proved invaluable when going up against any Altered.

Then, further along, there was a type of work bench as well as an experimental table next to it. On the other sides there were also the weapons and sets of armour their predecessors had used. Each one was different and unique, and it was the same with the armour sets, there were different ones that looked to have been made centuries ago, although each subsequent generation had improved on them.

“I thought you might feel more comfortable discussing what’s on your mind here.” His father began. “Are you still hung up about what happened? You know, if you really want to hurry up and become a

one-star Altered Hunter, we could move to one of the higher tier cities once we've taken care of Slough's Altered.

"After that we'll be able to meet the others, and you won't feel so... left out."

Hearing this, just reminded Blake of who he was again. His father, Ozacas Hunt, was a three-star Altered Hunter, which meant he had killed more than fifteen Altered, while he hadn't even killed a single one yet. In fact, he had actually let, what would have been his first kill, go.

His father would often talk about meeting others, but so far Ozacas had been the only Altered Hunter he had ever met. The reason for that was that his father didn't want to introduce him to the others until he had at least earned his first star.

Blake loved his father, but he hated that side about him. He had read that the past generations of the Hunt family had enjoyed a lot of prestige among their own kind, yet Ozacas 'hiding' his son, made Blake feel as if his father was ashamed of him.

"It might be slightly related to that matter..." Blake confessed. "I was just wondering, the books talk of beasts that used to roam earth long ago... and I know that their fossils are what is being used to create the Altered, but... is it possible that those beasts still exist today?"

"That is actually a popular topic among Altered Hunters." Ozacas replied, scratching his chin. "While there has yet to be a definitive answer to that question, I personally believe there are. Although I have never met one, there are rumours of certain special 'Altered' being out there.

"Do you remember reading that there were beasts that had attained a humanoid form? These were the most dangerous during their time, since they were said to display clear signs of intelligence. I suspect that some of those special 'Altered' are exactly that, hiding among us today. "

Was that the answer? Was Gary actually some type of Humanoid Beast who had taken on the appearance of the naked teenager to invoke some sort of sympathy from Blake? However, if that was the case, his blood should have been black... yet the teenager was certain it had been red. He was quite sure of it, after all, he had been the one who had to wash it off his outfit.

His father went ahead to place the baton away. While it was a good tool to prepare his son for surprise attacks, if the police caught him with such a thing, it would lead to a very bad outcome.

“Then... have you ever heard about a beast not bleeding black blood?” Blake asked.

Just as he had reached the top, his father froze when he heard this question. His fingers still clinging onto to the baton.

“Why does it sound as if this isn’t a hypothetical question?” His father questioned him, slowly turning his head around, making Blake gulp down hard.

#### Chapter 147: Tracking the Omega

After Gary had told Blake that the two of them needed to talk about something, they had made their way outside to the bench next to the art block. This time, the green haired teenager was the only one to sit down, while the young Altered Hunter insisted on standing.

“Oi! Earth to Blake, are you here with me?” Gary waved his hand in front of the other high schooler’s face. “Is everything alright with you? Were you out and about with your Dad yesterday or something? You seem a bit out of it.”

“Huh? My bad, I just got a lot going on, and... honestly I still don’t think it’s a great idea for the two of us to meet outside of Rugby practice.” Blake replied, and it looked like he was ready to leave again.

“Wait!” Gary grabbed Blake by the arm. “It’s important, it’s about the other Altered from that day!”

He had deliberated how much he should tell the Altered Hunter. After all, Blake had already discovered Gary’s secret, only that he should believe that the green haired teenager was actually an Altered, an honest mistake Gary wasn’t too keen on correcting. However, if it meant gaining his trust and cooperation, the high schooler was somewhat ready to tell him the truth.

“That Altered... I think I know who it is. I’m sure you heard about White Rose coming to Westbridge and asking for me the other day. They came to ask me a few questions about Billy Bruntin, the guy that was on the news a while ago.

“Anyway, last time you and your dad were there to stop us. Somehow, you were both able to track down the Altered before even White Rose could. Could you tell me how you did that?” Gary requested. As long as he had the method, he could do it himself, allowing him to face Billy alone.

“And what do you plan to do when you find the Altered, Gary?” Blake asked, the teenager had a plethora of other questions in his head, like what exactly was the relationship between the two. They looked to be the same type of Altered or beast, so surely there had to be something connecting them. However, Gary had indirectly admitted that he was unable to find or contact the other.

The green haired teenager could see it in Blake’s eyes, that he wasn’t going to budge until he heard a satisfying answer. Fortunately, the one person who Gary believed might be alright with the answer to that question, would be the young Altered Hunter.

“I want to get rid of him!” Gary answered with no hesitation. “He’s hurting and killing people. He might be lying low right now, but I know he hasn’t stopped. You know Innu, the guy who transferred here not too long ago? I’m convinced he’s being targeted by Billy.

“That’s the reason that guy was in the forest that day. I know your situation, which is why I’m not asking you for help, I just need to know how you did it.”

Blake wasn’t sure whether the other teenager was telling the truth or not, but he knew he could use the current situation to his advantage. Gary needed something from him, and he had questions only the green haired teenager could answer,

“Alright, I’ll tell you how to find him... If you can tell me how you’re related to Billy. And I want the ACTUAL truth, Gary... I’m aware that you’re not really an Altered, so first I need to tell me WHAT exactly you are then.” Blake demanded.

This was not the reaction Gary had expected from Blake. How did he even find out that Gary wasn’t an Altered? Was it some sort of sixth sense that Altered Hunters had? Did they perhaps have some type of mole in the police force, updating them?

Ultimately, it didn’t matter. The important part was finding Billy. The longer he waited, the stronger the other Omega wolf could become, and the bigger the risk would be for everyone around Gary to get hurt.

"I... I'll tell you..." Recently, Gary had been telling others the truth a lot more often, and it felt good to get things off his chest. Of course, to Blake, there was no need for him to explain how he had become a Werewolf.

At the same time, he made sure to leave out one critical piece of information, that being that he was actually the one who had turned Billy into a Werewolf. If Blake, or the other Altered Hunters, were to learn that all it seemingly took for Gary to turn others was a simple bite, he was sure they would do everything to hunt him down.

After 'confessing' to everything, Blake's reaction was not what Gary was expecting at all. The young Altered Hunter merely let out a big sigh of relief.

"Thank goodness, so you're just a Werewolf." Blake smiled, but the smile soon changed as he came closer to Gary and placed a hand on his shoulder. "I'm sorry, but I lied. There's really no easy way for us to track down someone like Billy. Altered Hunters use a lot of tools that help us, but we don't have a guaranteed way.

"Unfortunately, there isn't some sort of secret I can just share with you, and those instruments require some in depth knowledge, so I can't just loan them out. You should understand that, right?"

Gary looked upset, and he had every right to be. Just when he thought there might be a way to get one step closer to get rid of one of the biggest problems in his life, it turned out that his only lead had disappeared. He also didn't appreciate being lied to like that, even if he hadn't been totally honest with Blake either.

"However, there is something I can do for you. If anyone ever finds out what I'm about to propose, they'll probably excommunicate me... Why don't the two of us try to take him down together?"

"I mean, I'm an Altered Hunter, and even if he's a Werewolf, he's kinda like an Altered who needs to be taken down, right? No offence, but if I managed to deal with you, you'll have a hard to impossible time going in by yourself.

“He’s managed to go up against my three-star Dad and survive, so calling him tough seems to be an understatement. While we might not stand a chance on our own, together we might just be enough to pull it off. What do you say?”

#### Chapter 148: Better together

Gary was hesitating on whether he should accept Blake’s offer. Billy was his responsibility, and he hated the thought that his friends might get involved. The fact that the Omega wolf had attacked them still haunted the teenager, especially since it had boiled down to dumb luck that none of them had gotten killed that night.

However, Blake was different from the rest. In the first place, he was an Altered Hunter, belonging to a group of people who risked their lives to kill Altered on the daily. Even if he were to refuse, chances were that Blake and his father would be looking out for Billy anyway.

‘But is working with an Altered Hunter really the best thing? I can trust Blake, can’t I?’ Gary wondered. ‘He did let me go that night, even though I was too injured and too weak to resist. He could have easily killed me... well, I guess he could always tell his father about me if he wanted to...’

That was when a certain idea popped in his head. Instead of worrying about things he couldn’t control, why not make use of his system? At least that way, the teenager would get a warning if his trust turned out to have been misplaced.

“You’re right, the two of us stand a much better chance to take down Billy together. However, I have one condition. I want you to promise me that you won’t try to kill me.” Gary requested as he held out his hand for a handshake.

Strangely, Blake was now the one who hesitated and thought things through. However, in the end, he shook the other teenager’s hand.

“Seems fair... I promise I won’t try to kill you.” Blake answered, yet remained careful with his words. Although he might not make an attempt on his life, he couldn’t promise that others wouldn’t.

[A spoken deal has been made, would you like to Mark “Blake Hunt”?]

[Yes]

[5/5 Marks have been assigned]

[Please reach a higher level to increase the number of available Marks]

‘Oh! So that’s how I can get more Marks.’

Gary was pleased to find out that information. The high schooler had kept one Mark free, just in case he needed to make a bond with anyone else he cared about. Of course, it could have also been used to initiate a Forced Bond with anyone he might have needed to track down in the future.

Fortunately, he had already created a Bond Mark with those close to him, and this promise with Blake also had another nice benefit. With the additional 10 Exp he would gain, it would only require Gary to finish one of his Daily Quests tomorrow to reach Level 9.

‘Maybe then I will finally gain that Iron Body skill I saw a while ago. It might be too much to ask to give me more Marks to assign that early, but possibly Level 10 will do the trick. It seems special enough, seeing as the System called it a Main Quest.’

“However, do you mind if we start looking for Billy tomorrow?” Gary asked Blake. “I still need to get some things sorted out today.” As much as he wanted to take down the Omega wolf, that extra stat point he would get tomorrow might end up playing a vital role.

“Not at all.” Blake shook his head. “It’s going to take me a couple of days before I can gather the things I require anyway. Just to let you know, but we probably only get one shot at this. Honestly, I don’t like doing this stuff behind my Dad’s back. If it doesn’t work out, or it turns out to be too dangerous, we should leave it.

“Worst case, I can just pretend to have found him on my own, without mentioning you. With all the leads, he will probably be able to take care of it.”

Gary nodded, although he didn't completely agree to the deal. He wanted to make sure Billy was truly gone, rather than leaving it in the hands of others. As long as the Quest was still there, he was sure the Omega wolf would be after him.

The two split their ways, and Gary now had a new contact in his phone, Blake, adding it to his small list of numbers. Seeing the number, the green haired teenager considered inviting Blake to the pool club. Kai did say that they should invite their classmates since it was a business after all, and if they were working together, it wouldn't be bad for their relationship to be closer.

'Maybe after all that Billy stuff is taken care of.' Gary thought, not wanting to stop his friend from making the preparation he had talked about.

Coming back from that break, classes continued as usual, until it was time for them to go to their club activities. Right now, Gary and even Tom were on the field. Ever since the last match where substitutes had been used, Mr Root had started involving them more in practice, just in case another similar incident was to occur.

"Say, do you plan to do more Werewolf stuff later? Since we know you can control it now, it might not hurt testing out your limits and such." Tom suggested, while pretending to kick a ball.

"Ah, actually I'm busy... Hey, how about you just come along after club practice instead?" Gary had been about to decline his best friend's suggestion, but then he offered to take him along. "I recently got another part-time job. The atmosphere is relaxing, and you actually already know the others. It shouldn't be a problem, and it will let you see what I'm doing. Stay there for as long as you like, or leave if it's not your thing."

Tom couldn't quite believe his ears, Gary was actually inviting him to his job. Thinking about this he gulped slightly wondering what it could be, but if his best friend was inviting him it had to be safe... right?

He didn't want to further distance himself from Tom, who had always been helping him out. After their first day of business, Gary didn't have to worry about them talking about any gang stuff, simply because they would be far too busy taking care of things in the Wolf's Pool Club. As such, it became nothing more than a hang-out place, so there was no reason to keep that a secret from his best friend.

“Sure, that would be great!” Tom agreed enthusiastically.

When practice was over, Tom, Gary, and Innu were all waiting outside the school gate. Gary had explained to Tom that all of them worked at the same place, so they were all currently waiting for Kai, who from Tom’s knowledge was the one with connections to the place.

Tom didn’t really like that Gary was hanging around Kai and the others, especially since he was still under the assumption his best friend had gone gambling with them. He was simply worried that they might influence him to do other, potentially worse things. However, he also hadn’t forgotten that without them, he might have ended up as a snack for the other Werewolf he had initially mistaken to be Gary.

“Customer or another pair of helping hands?!” Kai asked teasingly, as he waved over and joined the three boys.

“Where’s Marie?” Innu asked, noticing that their upperclassman was on his own.

“Ah, she didn’t go to the club. As far as the school knows, she’s gotten injured recently, making her unable to participate in club activities for a while, so she gets to leave earlier than the rest of us. In other words, she should already be there.” Kai answered.

Thinking of Marie, Gary’s face was feeling a little hot as he recalled yesterday’s conversation. Rather than enjoy her free time, she was diligently going to the pool club and working hard. In fact, as he thought about it, Marie had diligently been working while everyone else was cleaning. The high school girl hadn’t even taken a single break herself, working at the cash registry and the bar simultaneously.

In the end, the group started to walk together, and Tom couldn’t stop asking questions about the place. Luckily, after Gary had answered the initial questions, Kai had taken over and had answered all concerns that Tom seemed to have had.

“I can’t believe you’re working at a place called the Wolf’s Pool Club, of all things.” Tom said while glancing at Gary. This didn’t go unnoticed by Kai, who made a mental note that he might not be the only one to know the green haired teenager’s secret.

“Relax, man, it’s just a normal pool club!” Innu finally said, placing his arm around Tom. The two of them were more comfortable with each other since they were in the same class and seat neighbours. “Your boy is okay, you don’t have to worry, and none of us are going to get in trouble. It’s one of those under the table things. As long as no one reports it, nobody gets hurt and we all profit.”

When they finally arrived at the place, the door was left wide open, which seemed unusual, and not just because it was supposed to keep the heat in. All the boys hurried their steps and as they entered the pool club they couldn’t believe their eyes.

“What the f\*ck? Who did this?!” Innu shouted, as he looked around for a perpetrator.

Chapter 149: What now?

Innu was clearly letting out his frustration by shouting and yelling at the scene in front of him. The other two boys were left too shocked to even say anything, while Tom remained silent. He had never seen this look on Gary before, who was beyond mad. His hands were clenched so tightly that the veins on the front of his hand were showing.

“Who did all of this? Screw me, this place might look even worse than before!” Innu continued to yell, and rightly so. The place had been completely wrecked. The pool tables, cues, and even the barstools had been destroyed. Glass shards were also everywhere, surrounded by the liquid that was once inside the former bottles. All of their hard work had been ruined just like that.

“This... has to be intentional.” Kai slowly spoke. “Sh\*t! They were supposed to come to us to talk first! ... Why didn’t they send out their representatives?! ... I made a mistake... F\*ck! I never thought they would act this fast.”

It was clear that Kai wasn’t his usual self, yet all of them turned around as they heard the sound of an incoming motorbike. Austin could feel that something was wrong when none of the other boys greeted him and Gary continued to stay in the door. Getting off his bike, he entered the pool club, his reaction being somewhat similar to Innu’s.

“Who did this? Who dared to touch our place? Tell me their names, so I can pound their heads in!” Austin shouted, punching his fist into his other hand.

Tom was just left there baffled, and was wondering who this new scary figure was that he hadn't seen before. He could only assume Austin to be another employee, but now didn't seem like the best time for an introduction.

What he also didn't understand was why everyone was so upset that their place of work had been destroyed. Their employer should have insurance which would cover all of this damage. Sure, they had every right to be a little upset about being unable to work for a while, but each one of them took this really personally.

He hadn't been told that they were actually the ones who 'owned' this place, nor that they had been the ones who had invested their own time and sweat to transform it into an establishment. It had only been open for a single day, yet someone had come in and destroyed all of their hard work...

While the others were still busy coming to terms with the grim situation, Gary was still standing by the door.

"Tom... I smell blood." Gary finally said. "Why do I smell blood?"

Tom suddenly understood why his best friend had been more than just a little angry about his place of work being destroyed, if he smelt blood, it could only mean one thing.

"Guys! Where is Marie? Didn't Kai say she was supposed to be here already?" Tom loudly asked, having connected the dots.

In the room, another one of the group was standing there frozen by the bar area, they were looking down, and Gary noticed that was where the smell of blood had come from and had rushed over. Kai fell to his knees and held Miss Degrace up. The middle-aged woman had been beaten and there was a cut from the top of her head.

Seeing Miss Degrace in this way, was sending images back to Gary's head of when he had found his own mother like this.

"No! No! No! Not again!" Kai screamed, holding her. "Wake up! Can you hear me!?"

Soon the others had gathered just behind to see the state she was in, and what state Kai was in. The calm person was startled and clearly was out of it.

Eventually though, through the shouting, Miss Degrace had opened her eyes and looked like she had regained consciousness.

“Kai, you’re here...” She said as her eyes immediately started to well up. “I’m sorry, I tried to contact you... I tried to stop them.” Her voice sounded very weak.

“They took her...they took Marie. I’m sorry... I really did try to stop them.”

“I know you did!” Kai held her hand, tears running down his face. “Don’t worry, I’ll get her back! Just tell me who did this to you!”

“They were wearing... grey... I think it was the grey colour gang...but there were another two with them.” Mrs Degrace answered in a weak voice, the act of speaking was clearly exhausting to the current her.

Kai’s main suspects had naturally been the black and gray colour gangs who would fight over the area. Normally, they should have sent out their scouts, so the real gangs would visit the business to offer their ‘services’. However, two things didn’t make sense to him.

Why did they outright attack them rather than try to force them to pay up? With the pool club in its current state, there was nothing to be gained from it. Nevertheless, the more pressing matter was why did they take Marie with them?

‘I can’t... think straight.’ Kai realised. It was then that an unexpected person, and placed their hand on top of Kai’s shoulder giving him some reassurance.

“Let’s get her to a hospital first. They’ll make sure, she will be okay.” Gary said, concerned that her condition might worsen. “Tom, can you take her there? Get a taxi and make sure she’s alright. An ambulance might take too long.”

“Wait, what are you going to do? Aren’t you guys going to come with me?” Tom asked, as he had already dialled the number.

Gary looked at the faces of the other teenagers. Everyone seemed to feel the same, and he couldn’t get the image of Marie out of his head yesterday.

“We’ll go and find Marie. Please, Tom, take care of her for us.” Gary requested.

His best friend had heard who had attacked this place. It was the grey colour gang, and while they might not be as dangerous as the main gang backing them, he couldn’t imagine what Gary and the other three could do on their own. He wanted to stop them, but Gary’s words seemed firm.

“Alright, but promise me, Gary, don’t do anything you will regret.” Tom said, as Austin helped lift Miss Degrace, and the two of them went out to wait for the cab. When Austin returned, he could see that Kai was standing there in place, still looking at the spot where the woman had been.

‘He’s too angry, his head isn’t in the right place, but who can blame him. Usually, he would be the one to tell us what to do in this situation, but since he’s out...’

Austin turned to Gary. “So, boss, what are we going to do now?”

It was then, Innu turned to Gary, and even Kai had turned around to look at him. All eyes of the Howlers were on him.

“Isn’t it obvious?!” Gary asked aggressively. “This is our place... and Marie is part of the Howlers. They’ve messed with us and our place, so we’re going to storm their fu\*cking place, get her back and MAKE THEM PAY!!!”

Chapter 150: Kai’s gift

Gary had been ready to go on his own in the worst case scenario. He wouldn’t have blamed any of them, since what they were about to do was crazy for any normal teenager, yet not a single member of the Howlers hesitated. They were all willing to go along with their leader’s decision, and go rescue one of their own.

In the short amount of time that the group had spent together, they had formed a bond that couldn't be explained with just words. On top of that, they all seriously wanted to punish those who had destroyed the pool club.

'If anything, now is the perfect time... I'm sure the grey colour gang should still be suffering from the fight they had with the black colour gang and Underdogs. There shouldn't be as many of them active as they were before.' Gary thought.

Now knowing who their target was, Kai began making some calls to find out where exactly they needed to go. However, in case he couldn't come through, Gary already had a pretty good idea where the grey colour gang hangout was.

That time, he had followed Gil's scent to an abandoned warehouse. There he had watched his former schoolmate go through some type of initiation, and the leader was there as well. He was sure of it, that if they needed answers, that was the place to go to.

'Still, it might mean we'll be going up against the entire grey colour gang if they're at their hideout, but Marie could be with them... who knows what they're doing with her? She could end up getting hurt just like Amy... or Mum. ... If it comes to it, I'll have to use everything.'

"You guys prepare yourselves, I need to get something first." Gary excused himself, as he headed to the back, which had a staircase leading underneath the pool club. The group had used the cellar to store supplies and equipment. The high schooler could see that the door had been destroyed, so he wasn't very surprised to find their supplies stolen and most of the equipment destroyed.

'How much damage did they cause?' Gary wondered, yet he was thinking about who had been affected the most by this, and it was clearly Kai, Marie and her mother. Even when typing on his phone, calling whoever he needed to, his upperclassman had practically pushed his thumbs into the piece of technology.

Walking through the cellar, Gary eventually found what he was looking for, as it had been left lying on the floor. It was Kai's gift for telling him the truth. It wasn't really anything special, which was why the grey colour gang members hadn't bothered taking it. Bending down, he picked up the item, and he thought back to the conversation with Kai that day.

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“As you know, the leader is the most important figure in any gang.” Kai said after leading Gary down to the cellar. “You’ve heard of the Kings, I assume?”

“Of course.” Gary answered. Even before he had done any ‘research’ into gangs, that had been a name, all of them would know. The Kings were a different thing entirely. They were beyond untouchable by their local government, more so working hand in hand with them.

“Since you were part of the Underdogs, I’m sure you already know that as grand as they might sound, they are pretty much just the biggest gang leader of the Tier-1 cities. However, how many of them do you actually know by name, and I don’t just mean what gang they belong to?” Kai questioned, yet after naming two of them, Gary was already scratching his head.

“Exactly!” Kai pointed out with a slight grin. “Aside from those two who act a bit more flashy and whose faces are already well known, the others make sure to hide their identities. The ‘unknown’ is always scarier than anything you can put your finger on.

“Rumours of their exploits continue to spread, allowing their names to strike even more fear. I thought it wouldn’t hurt if we start doing the same, even if we are only small-time right now. I’ve prepared this for now, and I think it’s important you use it. Now that I know what you are, even more so.

“I’m sure you would like to continue a normal school life, with your family and friends being none the wiser about this part of your life, right? This should make it easier for you to live that double life.”

“Thank you.” Gary said, yet at the time he had left the gift in the cellar, and not just because he was worried Amy might find it and start asking questions. He truly did want to separate the two lives that he had, but perhaps in the future the line between the two would come closer and closer.

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Gary wiped the dust off the item, before he placed it on top of his face. It fit surprisingly well.

It was a mask to hide who he was. A hand-crafted accessory which covered the top half of his face, from his forehead to the tip of his nose. It had been painted black, with a few details that were in a golden trim, matching the Howlers' gang colours. There were stylish claw marks on either side, coming towards the face. It was the same on the top of the forehead as well.

'Kai... this should be the perfect time to use it. You gave this to me... so I didn't have to hide from others. I will use this well.' Gary thought as he stood back up.

He soon changed into his clothing, the black and gold blazer and black trousers underneath, with a white shirt still from school. Walking up the stairs, he could see the others were ready as well, and even Austin had changed into this uniform.

The others were surprised at suddenly seeing their leader come out in a mask. It was obvious that Innu was holding it in to ask what was up with that, but due to the tension in the room, none of them commented on it.

"Did you get the information?" Gary asked.

Kai looked at his phone one more time, shaking his head.

"I found out that there were a few people that saw the grey colours come to this area, and I know where their hideout is, but we can't be sure that Marie is there."

"Let's go there, anyway." Gary replied. "Even if she won't be there, we should be able to find someone who might lead us to her."

"Wait, you want us to take on the whole grey colour gang? With just the five of us?" Innu questioned. He wasn't afraid of anyone in a one on one fight. The teenager had also seen the strength of his fellow gang members, so he wouldn't have minded fighting off a larger force, but this... this just seemed suicidal.

Colour gangs had hundreds of members. Their hideouts would naturally have at least a few dozen members, no matter the time. They would practically be walking into the den of the lion.

“I called for help, but it might take them a while.” Austin said as reassurance. “I’ll share my location with them, as soon as we get there.”

“We will go there first.” Gary insisted. “We don’t know what they’ve done to her, or what they still plan on doing to her. Whatever it is, it can’t be good, and I don’t want her to be scared.”

The others nodded and left the establishment. The sun hadn’t quite gone down yet, and it wasn’t dark enough for the colour gangs to wander the streets, but it didn’t matter. Since the pool club was between the two areas, the grey colour base wasn’t too far away.

Walking the streets they hardly ran into any trouble due to what time it was, but as they got to the docks where the abandoned warehouse was located, there was a fence that went around the entire place.

Standing in front, four grey colour members could be seen acting as some type of guard, and Gary had received a message.

[New Quest received]

[When you mess with the bull, you get the horns!]

[Your enemies have abducted someone close to you.

Show them the consequences of going against you!]

[Quest reward: 30 Exp per defeated person]

“Hey, what the hell are you kids doing here?!” A tall, lean man walked towards them. “This is the grey colour gang area, do you guys have some type of meeting?” He asked again, frowning at all the kids in front of him.

“What’s with that stupid mask? Does he think he’s some kind of superhero?” Another one laughed as he pointed at Gary.

“Charging Heart, activate.” The high schooler mumbled to himself.

“Hey, what did you say?!” The man leant forward and went to grab the masked teenager by the collar. As he reached out, Gary clenched his fist and threw it out as hard and as fast as he could. Blood gushed out of the man’s nose as his head flew back, his body dropping to the floor.

“Where is she?!” Gary shouted, his fist now covered in blood.