

Werewolf 21

Chapter 21: Rabid Dog

After a while Gary felt fine enough to be able to walk on his own, yet he didn't know how to tell Kai that. His upperclassman was still carrying him over his shoulder and it would be strange for Gary to recover this fast. After the fight he had, it wouldn't be too surprising if it would take a week to recover. Without any better idea, Gary just continued to play the role of an exhausted fighter.

'I really need to find a way to control this power. Whenever my heart rate rises my whole body feels...different, and then soon after when it's all over I get to a low point.'

By low Gary was referring to his Energy value which would deplete after a while and in his actual status he had used a lot of Energy points for healing as well that seemed to affect him.

Eventually Kai arrived at their school.

"Are you going to be okay getting back on your own?" Kai asked. "I've noticed you're walking a lot better."

Gary hadn't even noticed that Kai had stopped helping him as soon as they got close to the school and he was standing fine, meaning his cover was blown.

"Ehh yeah, I'll be fine." Gary replied, nervously, his face turning a shade redder for having been caught. Fortunately, with how late it was, Kai didn't notice it... or at least pretended not to.

"Good." Kai nodded while retrieving a bundle of cash and placing it into Gary's hands. "Here's five hundred for today's fight."

Gary had to repeat the number in his head and he instinctively counted the cash to make sure the other boy wasn't joking. It was only a couple of days ago that he had received five hundred for doing the most dangerous job ever, and now he was receiving this much because of one fight.

"Is this how much I won, for fighting?" Gary asked, still shocked, wondering why he had ever risked his life working as a transporter when he could have just become a fighter.

‘Actually scratch that idea! What are you thinking Gary, you would have lost every single fight before getting this System!’ His voice of reason reminded him.

“Not quite. This is a low level event after all. Normally, you would have received between one hundred and two hundred bucks, depending on how exciting your match would have been. As an incentive from the arenas you get some extra depending on how many bets were placed because of your fight.”

“Most of that is due to the bets I had made on you. As a newcomer your odds were naturally horrendous, so great job pulling through. Since this was your debut fight and you left quite an expression it seemed kind of shabby just giving you the minimum amount. Besides, I haven’t forgotten that you came to me because you were in dire need of money.”

“There’s actually a lot more to it than that, but for now the rest of today’s earnings will be set aside as ‘Gang funds’ for the future. I’ll keep setting that money aside for a rainy day or when the gang needs expanding. Once our gang has grown into a respectable size, you’ll have free reign over it,” Kai explained casually as if he had planned this all along.

“You’ll let me have access to even more money than what I’m holding?” Gary questioned. His brain was trying to process all that information. He had just come out today, to earn some cash, yet his partner in crime apparently had already made plans far beyond that.

“Of course I will let you use the money. I’d advise you to discuss what to use it for with your future lieutenants, but as the leader of a gang your word will be law.” Kai answered nonchalantly.

“Leader?! Now hang on a moment. I know you said you wanted to form a gang and wanted me to work, but this is the first time I’m hearing anything about me being the leader of it! Why would you even do that? It’s your gang.” Gary complained.

“Look, I’ve already made up my mind after watching you fight today. A gang needs a certain type of leader, and I think you’re perfect for that role. Me, I will be the brains behind the whole thing, I don’t really like being in the limelight anyway. It’s not my style.” Kai argued.

However, Gary wasn’t really convinced by that. In school he stuck out like a sore thumb, not to mention all the fancy jewelry and expensive clothes of his practically screamed ‘Look at me!’.

“Do you really think you have much of a choice, Mr. loyal dog?” Kai teased him after seeing the unwillingness in the other’s eyes. “Just think of it as being the public face of our gang. All you need to do for the time being is concentrate on getting stronger. For starters, you might want to pick up a proper style, otherwise ‘Green Fang’ might soon enough become infamous as ‘Rabid Dog’.”

Afterwards they each went their separate ways. It had been a crazy evening that was for sure, and it was hard for Gary to take everything in. Truth be told, he didn’t take it all in. One event was just leading to another for him but most of all he just wanted to figure out this crazy system.

[Level 2]

[Exp 20/200]

Before Gary had 70 points of Exp and needed 30 more points to level up. After defeating his opponent he had gained 50 points of exp, bringing his total to 120/100.

‘At least it looks like the exp carries over, but the way quests come up is so random, the only one that is consistent is the workout one and eating food since they’re both daily quests.’

However, with the level up there also seemed to be a few more changes. For one, he had received a stat point which appears as if it could be used in a number of different ways.

[A stat point can be used to improve a user’s basic stats, or can be used to increase one’s health. If used on health or energy it will be increased by ten points.]

‘Wait I have stats, didn’t see that before, what even are my stats?’

Thinking about this, another status screen appeared in front of him.

[Strength 4]

[Dexterity 3]

[Endurance 8]

Looking at these numbers, Gary didn't really know how to gauge them at all, but he knew based on how high his Endurance was, that his Strength and Dexterity were extremely low.

'I knew I was weak, but that weak?'

'So I have Health, which seems to go down as my body gets injured. Then there's Energy, which is used up just on a day to day basis, but if I start fighting more than it uses it similar to a stamina bar in a game. However, it can also be used in an emergency to heal my body as well.

'As for the normal stats, Strength had to mean how strong I am right? Dexterity must be things like speed, agility and reflexes. I am pretty slow so that makes sense, and then Endurance. I'm glad to know that the only thing my body is good at is taking a beating, but I'm guessing some of that has to do with me turning into a ...I don't even want to say the word. It feels like bad luck or something.'

Thinking about the fight that just occurred, Gary was wondering what the best way to use the stat point was. At first his mind thought something like dexterity would be most useful. He could become a counter hitter using openers strength against them, especially if he was going to participate in more underground tournament fights.

However, his mind started to wander and he found himself thinking about the rugby match and how Xin thought he was kinda cool when he had tackled Blake.

'Don't be stupid, your life is more important then getting some girl.

[Your energy has now increased to a maximum of 110]

In the end, Gary had opted for increasing his energy. With the other basic stats, Gary wondered if he continued to go gym if they would change by themselves. His stats were based on how his body

currently was, so he thought this was possible, but how would he increase his energy or his health without the system?

The energy was important for him to fight for a long time, which would give him more time to come up with a way to defeat his opponents and also healed him up. To him, this was a no brainer.

There was one more message that had appeared in the middle of the match and that was that Gary had acquired a new skill.

Thinking about it again, another screen appeared in front of him.

[Current list of skills]

[Mark: 0/5]

[Charging Heart] (new)

He had already seen what a mark was and what it was meant to do, but it was interesting that he could only have five of them active at one time.

[Charging Heart]

[When activated, the user's heart rate will increase to 150 BPM. The skill will take 10 points of energy to use. When the users heart rate is above 150, all physical stats will be doubled]

'Does that happen even if my heart rate rises that high on it's own? That would explain where the sudden surge of strength came from, but if I had this in the last fight I wouldn't have had to start thinking about... Anyway this is good news, if only there was a skill that could lower it as well.'

After reading all the notifications, Gary thought it was time for him to head home. He couldn't stop counting the money that had been given to him as he walked. With this amount, depending on how regularly he earned it he would be able to help out his family.

He was still unsure how much he could rely on Kai, but it was working out for now. Using some of the money, Gary stopped by a twenty four hour convenience store and bought some raw steaks. They were expensive but his energy was low and he knew to replenish it he needed to eat, plus it didn't hurt to treat himself once in a while.

It was the middle of the night so no one was around and this time it was a lot easier for him to eat. He dug into the steaks so quickly that he didn't realise how much his body needed it.

[Daily quest complete]

[5 Exp received]

The quest to consume two kilograms of meat had already been completed and it was nearly one o'clock at night, but this time the exp awarded was half that of before.

'Looks like I'll have to find other ways to gain Exp later. For now I better head home.' Gary thought, as he ran through the empty streets to his bed.

The next day, with the sun rising, Tom was a little nervous. He had his silver pendant ready and his bag of chocolate.

'Gary, I hope what I'm thinking isn't true.'

Chapter 22: Charging Heart

After consuming the raw meat he had purchased from the convenience store, Gary's Energy bar quickly started to fill up and by the time he snuck back home he already felt as good as he had before leaving for this nightly adventure.

Waking up nearly five hours later, Gary's body felt completely fine. The teenager was unsure whether this meant that he could use the raw protein as an energy drink substitute to keep on going for as long as he needed, but at least his need for sleep appeared to have lessened.

'I feel so alive!' Gary thought, as he moved his body about and got ready to school before anyone else. His mother and sister were not even awake yet. There was one thing he was thankful for though, the fact that his sister was keeping everything a secret for him.

Gary was sure that she didn't know what he was doing, but since the two of them had to share a room, it had been impossible to hide the fact that he had disappeared from her. 'Damn, I bet she's going to ask for some big favour later on.' Gary lamented internally, as he scribbled a note for Amy to make sure she knew he had in fact returned and hadn't gone missing.

Waking up before everyone else proved to be a blessing in disguise, especially since his acquired taste had changed. During his nightly trip to the convenience store, Gary had not only purchased meat for himself to consume. Right now the Dem family fridge was fuller than it had been for weeks.

'If Mum asks where I got it from, I'll just say it was a gift from one of the local stores.' Gary decided. He had already done this a few times during his work as a transporter, so it shouldn't stand out too much.

Anything to lighten the load and stress of his mother. With all this newfound energy, Gary didn't waste time leaving before everyone else, yet on the way out he noticed all the letters that had piled up on the kitchen counter.

'A dozen more nights like yesterday and it should help us get out of this mess. The only question is how can I help us without having to explain where I got all this money from.' Gary wondered.

No normal sixteen year old should be able to get a job that would pay this well, at least not legally and Gary wasn't exactly proficient in coming up with excuses. The fact that he was a miserable liar and his mother could instantly tell when he lied wasn't exactly in his favor. In fact, even his excuse about the convenience stores gifting them those products has been met with skepticism by her, the first few times he had brought it up.

'I guess I'll just have to ask Kai, I'm sure he will know a way.' Gary bemoaned the fact that he was relying more and more on his upperclassman, but at least so far he had been keeping his promise and it was undeniable that he knew how to make money.

This early in the morning, barely anyone was out and about, but Gary still kept his hood up on the way to school. He was afraid that any moment now Damion and the Underdogs could pop up. He was sure that they had not given up their manhunt on him and he was already dreading opening up his phone. In fact, he was planning to purchase a new one after school, and throw this into the river or perhaps bury it somewhere in the forest.

Just as Gary was daydreaming how he could get rid of it without leaving a trail leading back to him, he suddenly spotted a particular girl up ahead.

'She looks familiar... hang on, isn't she the same girl who got in trouble with that colour gang from before?' Gary soon enough had an epiphany about who it was.

They were quite the distance away, but Gary was convinced. It was impossible for him not to recognise someone who indirectly forced him into playing the part of a hero. Despite the school crest on her uniform telling him that they were both visiting the same school, he had never actually seen her before he had rescued her, nor afterwards for that matter. Admittedly, he had completely forgotten all about her due to the plethora of other problems in his life right now, but seeing her again made him wonder what exactly she had done to get into trouble with a colour gang.

'Didn't she learn her lesson last time? How can she walk this way while being on her own again? At this point, she is just asking for trouble.' Gary shook his head in disbelief. He would have loved to just mind his business, but seeing as the two of them were using the same route, he couldn't just not look out for her.

Eventually, Gary decided to catch up to her since there was no real reason for him to hide. He had followed her from a distance for a while and had been happy that there had been no encounters, however a few moments ago the girl had abruptly quickened her pace. The teenage boy had yet to realise that the girl had done so because she had felt that someone had been following her...

'Let's see what I can do, and how close I can get.' Gary thought.

[Charging Heart]

Activating the skill, he could feel his chest in great pain almost instantly, to the point he nearly fell over. His heart was beating as if he was sprinting even though he was just standing still. After the initial shock of impact was over though, he now was filled with energy. Ten points from his energy stat had been consumed, and his heart was now above 150 BPM. With this new energy, Gary started walking faster, but he knew he couldn't just get straight up behind her, so he thought maybe there would be a better way.

Going down one of the alleys behind a small apartment block, he looked at all the pipes and ledges from the windowsills.

'This is crazy, right? Am I really going to try this?'

Chapter 23: The Test

It was only a few days ago, where Gary couldn't do any type of physical activity and now, he was planning to scale the side of an apartment block. Leaping up, Gary had jumped higher than he had ever before and grabbed onto one of the ledges.

He could feel his muscles working, and soon propped his other arm up to grab onto the ledge with both of his arms up. The only way to progress further up, was if he leapt up to the next windowsill, or if he jumped to the metal pipe and attempted to climb that.

After completing the first jump, he was full of confidence and swung his body over, but, at the last second, he hesitated. Still his body weight had swung in motion and his fingertips had left the windowsill.

"Aw Crap!" Gary shouted, as he had completely missed the metal pipe and had fallen onto the solid hard concrete.

"That freaking hurt." Gary said, attempting to get up slowly. His heart was still beating fast though and his energy points were going down quicker than when he didn't use the skill.

'I guess, even if this skill does make me stronger, it still doesn't change me, I need to get used to it.' He started to flex his fingertips a bit and could see that the skin on it had slightly ripped as well, and his arms were now sore from holding onto the ledge, but he could feel the pain going away quickly.

'I guess, double my current strength and stats isn't so impressive. If I can improve my whole-body shape and increase my stats, that will also make the skill more effective. I also have to be wary of my energy points.

'Using the skill itself takes up ten energy points, and it almost feels like an adrenaline shot, but then I have less points to heal myself with. While getting my heart rate up naturally that high, it won't use the energy points initially.

'But other than thinking of that... I don't really have a good method of controlling my heart rate.'

Thinking of that said person, Gary almost forgot the reason why he was trying to scale the wall in the first place. He thought if he got up high, then maybe he could start leaping across rooftops while following the girl.

It was a fantasy that was short lived.

Canceling the skill was easy, and Gary soon just stuck to what he was doing before as he exited out of the alleyway and attempted to catch up with the girl.

The good news was there didn't seem to be any signs of trouble. Gary wasn't sure if it was because it was so early in the morning, or if something else was going on. Eventually though they had reached the school and, at least knowing this place was safe from others, he could take off his hood, but he didn't stop to follow the strange girl.

'Damn, I feel like a stalker, why am I still following her anyway? I was just going to protect her, right?' Gary thought, and eventually found himself on the third floor, where the senior students would be. He never expected her to be a senior student. Just as he was about to turn away though, he saw the girl talking to someone else he knew, and it looked like the two of them were on good terms.

'Is that Kai?' Gary thought. Without a doubt it was Kai, but why would these two know each other? He thought that anyone who would know Kai would also be involved in the underworld like he was. Thinking about this, made him think about how the girl was also being attacked by the gang, could it have something to do with Kai?

Unfortunately, without getting any closer and being found out, Gary would just have to leave it at that, making his way back to his own class.

Just outside though, he managed to bump into someone that he was actually pleased to see.

"Oh Gary!" Tom said, holding a carrier bag, and nearly stepped back after seeing Gary.

"What's the matter? You seem a little jumpy, is everything okay?" Gary asked, as he walked past and entered the classroom putting his bag on the desk. He was happy to see Tom, because Tom was the only normal thing he still had left of his ordinary life, and he was hoping talking to him would remind him of the time before all this craziness.

Tom went to touch the pendent in his pocket, he grabbed it for a second and was wondering just how he would get Gary to wear it or touch it. Even if he could, or if it would do anything.

"Hey, do you mind if I show you a magic trick?" Tom asked.

'If it starts hurting him, I'll take it off straight away and I'll know the truth.'

"Okay, but I didn't know you were into magic now as well." Gary replied.

"Just keep your palm open and close your eyes for a second." Tom said.

That's when Gary could hear it, something was definitely up with Tom. The two of them weren't far from each other, and now he could hear it. He could hear Tom's heartbeat, beating faster and faster.

'Is he that nervous that the magic trick is going to fail?' Gary thought, and closed his eyes, opening the palm of his hand to give him more confidence.

Then holding the silver chain with the pendent. Tom was about to place it in his hand when he started to have second thoughts.

'Why am I doing this, shouldn't I just ask?' Tom thought, as he felt a little bad, he was tricking his long-time best friend.

Due to how long it was taking, Gary got impatient.

"Come on." Gary said, having opened his eyes and grabbed the pendent. He then looked at it and wondered what it was. Tom nearly shouted out telling him to stop, but there seemed to be no reaction at all. A big, huge smile appeared across his face instead.

"Did I ruin the trick?" Gary asked.

"Umm, yeah but don't worry I need more practice anyway." Tom said, as he took the pendant away and placed it back into his pocket.

'What the hell was I thinking, Gary a werewolf, maybe I've been reading too many novels.' Tom thought.

"Hey so what's in the bag?" Gary called out.

"Oh this?" He replied, opening it up and pulling out a large chocolate bar. He then threw it over with no worries at all to his friend. "I had a craving in the middle of the night, but I can't eat all this on my own so decided to bring it in." Tom smiled.

Class hadn't started yet, as the students were still coming in. The tutor had arrived but wouldn't take the student register until the bell rang anyway. So, Gary thought it wouldn't be bad to take a nice bite of chocolate, after all recently everything he had been eating was a little strange.

Not having a care, Gary nearly bit half of the chocolate bar off as if he didn't have a care in the world. When suddenly, he felt his throat swelling up. He placed his hands around his throat as if he couldn't breathe.

"Gary, are you okay, what's wrong!" Tom asked.

Soon, Gary's body couldn't take it anymore, as it rejected the chocolate, throwing up the contents in his stomach. It spread across the whole floor and soon all the students stepped away.

"What is that? Is that bile? But why is it so... red?" The students thought.

'He threw up... Why did he throw up?! Don't tell me it was from the chocolate bar!!!' Tom started to panic.

Chapter 24: Red Sick

"Is that... blood? That can't be healthy. Should we call him an ambulance or something?" The students started to mumble to each other, unsure how to react given the situation.

Gary could hear everyone around him whisper, but he was too busy after throwing up. At least, he started to feel a LOT better after doing so, but his sense of balance was off, and holding himself up he had his arm on his chair.

[You have come into contact with a substance that is poisonous to you]

[-20 HP]

[80/100 HP]

[Until your body has broken down the poison, you are unable to heal]

'What is happening to me?' Gary thought as he struggled to realise what had just happened.

As if his luck wasn't bad already, the next person to come into class turned out to be Xin. The new girl was at first confused about what was going on, but following the direction everyone was pointing at, she quickly started to get the picture.

'If he's ill then why did he come to school in the first place?' Xin wondered as she walked over and saw all the red vomit on the ground with different chunks of meat that strangely enough looked to be raw. More and more students began to enter the classroom and one of them started to scream at the sight of the vomit.

"What is that?! Why is it so red? That's disgusting, someone get him out of here!" A group of girls huddled up and screamed.

Xin turned to look at them, only to recognise the ringleader as the one who had been so heavily interested in Blake when they had been watching the rugby match. If she wasn't wrong the girl had introduced herself as Tiffany and it was clear she was the one that everyone seemed to follow.

"Tiffany's right, he could be infected with something throwing up like that. He could pass all the disease onto us, get him out of here." A boy agreed, quickly checking up on the class diva.

'What have I done?' Tom still tried to make heads and tails of the suddenly devolved situation. 'Sh*t, I never thought it could have such an effect on you. Gary, don't you die on me, man! I can't be responsible for killing you!'

While the rest of the class was busy ostracizing him, the first one to approach turned out to be none other than Xin.

"What's wrong with you all? Are you sure you're all highschoolers and not just a bunch of kindergarten kids? Have you never seen anyone get sick before? You act as if he is the carrier of a deadly disease when I bet the poor guy must have just drunk some tomato juice or something before coming here. Teacher, I'll take him to the nurse's office!"

She pulled his arm up onto her shoulder, and was ready to take him away. When Gary turned his head, even though he was still feeling groggy, he recognised who it was.

“Are you an angel?” Gary blurted out, his words slurping like a drunk man.

“Easy there, Romeo, if you have the energy to spout such fluttery bullsh*t, then get a grip and help me bring you to the nurse’s office.” Xin replied. If it had not been for his miserable situation she would have been convinced he was hitting on her.

“Wait, let me do it.” Tom insisted, as he clenched his fist. After all, this entire situation was his fault. He had been so focused on wanting to find out the ‘truth’ about his best friends that he had failed to consider the consequences of his actions.

“You probably don’t know where the nurse’s office is yet, and he’s my best friend. Let me take him.” Tom argued, ashamed that the new girl was the first and only one who had been willing to help Gary. Xin was a bit surprised that Tom wanted to take over with such enthusiasm, but she saw no need to argue, as long as someone helped the poor guy.

“Damn Gary, can you please stop leaning on me so hard? You should know that the only muscles I have are in my fingers!” Tom complained in a hushed tone as soon as the two of them had exited the classroom

With the two of them gone, Xin looked over the contents of the vomit one more time before looking at their desks when she noticed something. Tom had placed his carrier bag down on his table and it was full of chocolate while Gary’s seat had a half piece of eaten chlorate bar on his table.

‘Was the green-haired guy allergic to chocolate? Shouldn’t his ‘best friend’ have known that?’

While looking at the tables someone suddenly grabbed her shoulder. Driven by instinct, she grabbed the offender’s wrist, and spun the person around. The next second she had dug her hip into them and flipped them onto the ground... right into the vomit.

Only after finishing her routine did Xin suddenly realise what she had done.

‘Oh no, why did we have to practice throws all day yesterday?’ Xin cursed as she looked at Tiffany, whose blond hair was now covered with the red vomit.

"I'm sorry, let me help you up." Xin quickly apologised, offering her hand, but the other party unsurprisingly slapped it away.

"You bitch!" Tiffany shouted in anger. "What the hell did you do that for? Thanks to you I have puke all over me!"

The two of her friends suddenly appeared behind Tiffany and were now standing behind Xin. One of them was a small girl with short purple hair, while the other was quite macular with black pigtailed.

"I swear, it was a complete accident! You startled me when you came up on me. What possible reason would I have to do this to you on purpose when I don't even really know you?" Xin tried to explain herself. She wasn't the least bit afraid of the physical capabilities of the two goons who had placed themselves in between the two girls as if to protect their queen bee, no she was just unwilling to deal with the possible aftermath this could have if left unresolved.

Her father had warned her to not use her fists. Even though he was the mayor, it wasn't like the times of the past where they had the highest authority. In reality they had to obey and comply with the many gangs that really ran the area, and angering the wrong people, not even he could help her.

The last thing she wanted to do was make her dad's stressful job even harder.

"You think a simple 'sorry' is going to cut it?!" Tiffany bellowed at Xin, her eyes filled with anger and malice. She could easily just wash off the puke, but nothing could change the fact that everyone in the classroom had seen her make a fool of herself. It was practically a given that rumours would spread about her being 'puke girl'.

The teacher cleared his throat, reminding everyone that he was still there and the sudden tension seemed to relax as the two girls helped Tiffany up. The adult wanted to say something, as they walked out of the classroom but with a glare from her, he quickly zipped his mouth shut.

'Screw me. Judging by her eyes, there is no way she is just going to let things go.' Xin sighed, wishing she could just turn back time a couple minutes to avoid all of this drama.

Tom and Gary had eventually made it to the nurse's office. Fortunately, Gary's metabolism was doing a good job expelling that poison, allowing him to slightly recover. His system had even told him that he was no longer poisoned.

"Gary, you've been coming in here quite a lot." The nurse shook her head. "Well, I guess you can't really help it if you ate something bad. Just make sure to not eat that stuff again and for the time being take this medicine, it should be able to help you. It might be for the best if you rest here for the first period and we will see how you do after that. If you still feel unwell I'm going to have to recommend you go to the hospital."

'There is no way I can go to a hospital! If they find out what I am, who knows what they will do with me!' Gary thought, but outwardly he just nodded weakly.

"I'll stay with him and make sure he takes the medicine!" Tom volunteered and closed the curtain. The nurse had left a small round pill next to a white cup with water for Gary to take, but Tom wasn't sure that it would help. Since Gary had reacted so violently to chocolate that he had been able to eat without any issues in the past, who was to say how he would react to these pills?

The next second, Tom placed the pills in his own mouth and drank the water gulping it down.

"Tom what the-? Why did you do that...don't tell me you've become a ... pie popper!" Gary exclaimed, worried for his friend.

"No, you idiot!" Tom whispered back in an angry voice, he pulled the curtain back to see if the nurse was still there, and while she was, she seemed completely focused on her phone call. Whatever it was, it seemed to have been important and urgent, because soon after she hung up, she left the room, telling the boys she would be back in a few minutes.

"Good she's gone, we can finally talk." Tom sighed out a breath of relief, while Gary was still confused about why Tom was acting so mysterious. While his body might have recovered, he still had trouble thinking clearly.

“Gary, do you even know what happened back there and why you got sick?” Tom asked.

“I have no idea, maybe it’s the raw meat I’ve been eating.” Gary blurted out without thinking, continuing to speak before thinking about what he said.

“Raw meat...” Tom repeated while his hands were shaking. He had to reassure himself that the one before him was still good old harmless Gary and not the beast he had tested him to be.

“Gary... I have noticed you have been behaving super strange these last couple of days? I gave you the chocolate to test a hypothesis of mine, but I didn’t want to hurt you. I never thought it would turn out this way, please you gotta believe me. You know you can tell me anything, right? So I gotta ask... Gary, are you a werewolf? ”

Chapter 25: The Truth

As soon as the question was asked, Gary could feel the palms of his hands getting sweaty and his heartbeat rising. These weren’t good signs, especially if he was going to try and hide it from Tom. He placed his hand on his chest and knelt over slightly, appearing to be in pain.

“What’s wrong, is the chocolate still hurting you?” Tom asked worriedly as he knelt down to see if his friend was okay. “Gary you shouldn’t deny it, being able to poison you is proof that I’m right!” He suggested as he pointed his finger at Gary taking on a pose as if he was some famous detective who had just solved a case.

The sight of Tom acting so ridiculous was somehow enough to calm Gary’s heart rate down a little.

“Come on, don’t you find it ridiculous? Chocolate being some sort of kryptonite for a werewolf? Next thing you will tell me you are a vampire or a dragon.” Gary tried to joke around, but the nervous smile on his face made him appear all the more guilty. He himself was struggling whether it might be better to just admit to it or not.

So far, he had tried to make sense of all those changes to his body by himself, having to learn all these new things on his own... he would actually welcome having someone to talk to about all those. Sometimes, he didn’t know if he was doing the right thing or not, but thinking about it, he couldn’t imagine someone better than his trusted friend Tom.

Since accusing him, and trapping him into a corner didn't seem to have worked Tom tried a different approach.

"Look, I know that the chocolate alone would be ridiculous, but then how do you explain suddenly being able to tackle Blake? Or the puncture wounds on it? You were the only one who held it yesterday. If you have some other explanation, then I'm all ears. I'm your best friend, right? I'm not here to hurt you and I just want you to know that we can handle this together." Tom offered in a soft voice.

From the look on Gary's face this approach worked far better. He had already been on the verge of telling Tom, but with Tom pulling on his heartstrings, it was hard to remain silent.

However, now the question was how much should he tell Tom? Admitting to it, also meant he would have to come clean about his work as a member of the Underdogs gang, who had handed him the metal suitcase that had that strange Werewolf System inside of it. But if he were to tell Tom, there was a big risk of dragging him into all of this mess.

"You know what?" Tom asked while Gary was still debating on how much to reveal. "I'm just going to take your silence as a yes. I mean, you aren't even denying it like you were just seconds ago. Now I have done a lot of research into this matter, because I know you're bad with all this fantasy mumbo jumbo."

"I don't exactly know how much lore is true out there, but now that I have finally met a real werewolf and he's my friend, it's better to be safe than sorry. From all the stuff I have read on the Internet they all pretty much have one thing in common. All sources seem to agree that on the night of full moon, a werewolf turns without being able to control it. That gives us only twelve days to think of a way to restrict you, otherwise you might just go on a rampage killing everyone."

When Tom said these words, he looked directly at Gary staring him in the eye, not facing away. Tom, his friend who never confronted anyone and was bad at all types of physical activity, looked powerful and reliable at this moment.

What worried Gary even more was that he already knew that something was indeed going to happen on the night of the full moon. His system had given him a Quest titled 'Your first turning' that had a countdown for that day. Even more worrisome was the fact that his Quest only specified that he would have to 'survive'...

Since Gary still wasn't saying anything, Tom sighed and was ready to leave the room. He had already done whatever he could and was now hoping that either he had been very wrong, something he seriously doubted after all the time he had put into thinking things over, or that Gary would come to him eventually to confess things on his own.

"Wait!" Gary called out. "Fine, since you've already figured things out, you might as well know the whole thing. You're right...I'm a...I'm a werewolf..." Gary admitted, his face going red saying those words out loud, especially in front of someone who could hear him.

Closing the door, after making sure nobody else had been around, Tom turned towards Gary and jumped for joy, a sparkle in his eyes.

"I knew I was right! Tell me, Gary, since when were you a freaking werewolf! "How did this happen? Did you venture into the woods at night? Did an alpha wolf come, greet you and turn you? What the hell happened!" Tom asked a barrage of questions he had prepared, not being able to contain his excitement.

"Oh man, now my version sounds so boring in comparison. I just got turned by a briefcase." Gary smiley wryly, as he went on to explain the gist of the story. Since the whole werewolf situation was already much to take in, Gary decided to omit the fact that he had been a gang member, and technically was now in another gang, from his explanation. Instead he told Tom that he had taken a part time job delivering items, like a delivery driver.

Of course, since he was sixteen and still in school, all of this was illegal, hence why he had hid the job from Tom. Technically all of it was true, so Gary's face didn't betray him for once. After that he came mostly clean, sharing how he had been sent out, how other people had wanted to steal the package and how the package had suddenly opened, turning him into a werewolf.

After saying everything he needed to say he waited to see just how Tom would treat him after all of this, would years of friendship be thrown away? This was a worrying thought for Gary.

Chapter 26: A Bond

“All this from a simple package? I’ve never heard of such a thing happening before.” Tom commented as he placed his hand on his chin. “It doesn’t really help that you didn’t even see what was in the package because you said you passed out.”

This bit was partly true, only that Gary had passed out due to being stabbed.

‘I wonder how Tom would react if I told him the real story. I guess I can tell him once everything is cleared up. And I will also have to tell him about Kai eventually...’

“We need to look into where that package actually came from, this could be a big deal! And if it’s a big company they might even send people after you to get their little experiment back. It’s best if you keep this a secret.” Tom noted.

Gary gulped, and was surprised at how quickly his friend had grasped the entire situation. What’s more, the case that Tom was worried about was actually occurring. Fortunately, that at least meant Gary didn’t have to tell him to keep this whole thing a secret either.

“Well, from what you told me it really does seem to be the case that your heart rate might be connected to your transformation, so learning how to control it should be the first thing on the agenda. For the next few days we should also observe your behavior. haven’t seen any huge signs yet, but you might start to get a little bit more moody the closer we are to the full moon. I would also advise you to drop out of the rugby team.”

“Drop out of the rugby team? But then how am I meant to impress Xin!” Gary blurted out.

“Really, Gary? Do you think now is the time to be worried about how to impress the new girl?!” Tom facepalmed. “Part of you transformed when it was you against Blake. What will you do when it actually occurs in the middle of a match? You could hurt or even kill others!”

“Come on, I’m not a monster!” Gary tried to defend himself. Unfortunately, his first ever transformation was testimony that Tom did have a point. Alas, the hormones in Gary’s body were unwilling to lose this opportunity. “Besides, don’t you think if I put myself in more situations where I have to control my heart rate, that it would help me get better at it?”

“Aargh, fine. It’s not like I can force you to do it. You know your body better than me, after all.” Tom was still worried, but he knew Gary long enough to know how stubborn he could be. “Speaking off, it’s a shame, but it looks like I’m going to have to eat all that chocolate I brought myself.” Tom joked, and the two of them were soon well on their way to being the same pair they were once again.

Once the poison effect had worn off, Gary could use his Energy to heal his body once again, but the Energy didn’t seem to recover, and as his Energy went down, he could feel a hunger in his stomach. It was a small pain like a cramp, but he could bear with it for now.

‘I have to keep this Energy bar up, when I’m fighting it doesn’t seem to bother me so much, but when I’m doing nothing it hurts. Hopefully it doesn’t get worse once it falls lower, I can’t exactly bring raw meat to the school.’ Gary thought.

Since Gary was feeling better, the two of them were walking down the hallway heading to their next class. They had decided to stay in the nurse’s office until the bell had rang, allowing them to skip the first two periods and now could go out on break with each other.

The kids filled the hallways, as everyone was excited to get a nice breath of fresh air. Now that Tom and Gary had cleared the air a bit, they were chatting as they did until they banged into what felt like a solid wall in front of them.

It was so sudden that Tom nearly fell to the floor, but Gary’s quick reflexes allowed him to grab Tom by the hand and pull him back up before he did fall over.

“Looks like we got a little super hero over here.” The student said that was towering over the two of them.

When Gary looked at the person, he noticed that there were two of them and recognised them straight away, Barry and Gil. Although they didn’t share any classes together they were part of the same club, the rugby club. These two were part of the scrum in rugby, one of the ones that would fight over each other as they locked and pushed forward the other meaty guys.

They were essentially walls of muscle, explaining why it had felt like they had literally run into the wall, but there’s one thing for certain. Tom looked at the hallway, and it was plenty wide enough for them all to walk in and more.

“Did you bang into us on purpose?” Tom questioned, a pissed off look on his face.

“Watch it, scrub! You were the ones who didn’t pay attention! I still haven’t heard a single sorry from either of you!” Barry went and grabbed the scruff of Tom’s neck. “We were just waiting here for a chance to talk to the onion head over there.”

“Look Gary, drop out of the rugby team, we all know what you did against Blake was a fluke and if you join us, it means one of us regulars will have to warm the bench and become your substitute.” Gil explained, but then noticed that Gary wasn’t looking at him at all. Instead he was clearing towards Will who was holding Tom by his collar.

Suddenly, Barry felt Gary grab onto his wrist.

“Let go of him now!” Gary demanded. Of course, seeing someone so small act like that Gil wasn’t afraid, but the same couldn’t be said for Barry, as he felt something when looking into his eyes.

[Blood lust has been detected]

[A forced bond has been activated]

‘No those eyes, if I don’t do something, Gary might just snap!’ Tom thought.

Chapter 27: Forced Bond

A notification screen had appeared in front of Gary, one containing new unfamiliar terms, but blinded with rage he ignored it, as he continued to hold onto Barry’s wrist. Slowly his grip was getting tighter and tighter.

‘Sh*t, my wrist is starting to feel a little numb. How much power does that onion head have?’ Barry thought.

“Hey look, it’s Mr Root!” Tom suddenly exclaimed, making Barry let go of him.

Both Gil and Barry turned around and in that moment Tom grabbed his friend and quickly pulled Gary away dragging him down the hallway and into one of the other classrooms. Since it was still break, it is currently empty.

“Are you alright now?” Tom asked, as he could even feel his heart settling. “It looked like you were ready to jump that guy.”

“I don’t know, man. I just got so angry when that guy grabbed you. Who the hell do they think they are? It’s one thing to go after me, but you have nothing to do with it!” Gary answered, clenching his fists again.

Tom knew that Gary had a tendency to be hot headed, but this seemed to be a bit out of character even for him. He was normally the guy who would try to run away from a confrontation, but now he seemed to be actively seeking it, making Tom fear that his werewolf self might have already started to influence Gary.

‘I’ll need to keep an eye on him. This time his aggression might have been triggered because he wanted to protect me, but what if it becomes worse? Who knows what he’ll do if there is nobody to stop him?’ Tom worried.

“Look, it’s over. I’m fine, right? We both are. Those guys were just two assholes, heck the world is full of people like that, but we can’t just go around beating them all up. Even if you are stronger than them.” Tom stated, before he added jokingly. “I mean if you tried you would be busy 24/7, then you wouldn’t have time to impress a certain someone.”

Hearing this, Gary started to calm down a little, as he realised that Tom was right. The second part especially helped his best friend get into a better mood, although Gary’s heartbeat was now rising slightly for a different reason.

If word got out about what Gary could actually do, then it wouldn’t just be the Underdogs gang after him, but whoever had asked them to deliver the suitcase in the first place. Now that he had calmed down a little, Gary went on to check just what that message from before was.

[Forced Bond has been activated]

[1/5 Marks have been assigned]

[A Forced Bond is put on a target when enough bloodlust is dedicated towards a certain person, making them a hunting target.

Those that are marked are given a unique scent, allowing the user to track them down at any point in time.

Additional stats will be awarded if one manages to successfully hunt their target down!]

[Those marked due to a Forced Bond will be the first people to be targeted during a full moon.]

Gary's eyeballs widened as he read the screen and came to a few realisations. The Forced Bond seemed to be a different subtype of his Mark skill. He had already encountered the Bond Mark, which allowed him to mark certain people based on agreements, whereas the Forced Bond seemed to be automatically assigned based on pure bloodlust.

Both types of bonds seemingly occupied one of Gary's five slots. He was unsure whether there was a maximum of any one type of bond. Although, he felt like it didn't matter how much he had of one or the other. The major difference seemed to be that a Forced Bond directly designated the other party as a hunting target, whereas the Bond Mark only did so, in case of a broken promise.

The most worrying thing of all was the fact that the message had warned him that those that had been marked would become his target during a full moon.

Gary gulped as he thought of what could possibly happen.

'If I really do turn in twelve days' time, doesn't that mean I'm going to kill Barry if I don't learn how to control myself?'

He couldn't be too sure until it happened, but it was something he didn't want to risk. 'Screw this, if I can assign these Marks, then there has to be a way to get rid of them, right?'

Exiting the room, the two boys were now ready to head back to class, and finally participate in their normal school day. Fortunately, they didn't run into any more trouble along the way. As Gary entered the halls he noticed something. He could see a strange lingering red marking in the air, and it wafted into his nose making a particular smell. It smelled similar to the scent of raw food.

It was faint, and as he followed it, it took on a stronger shade of red. It looked like a strange floating red fog. He looked at Tom, but the other appeared blissfully unaware of what Gary was perceiving.

Following the marking quickly, it led to a certain classroom, and as Gary looked through the window he could see where the red smoke was leading to... right to Barry who was now sitting in his seat.

'Is this what the marking does? Does it leave a trail so I can find them around the school? Maybe I should try to activate a Bond Mark on Kai after all. It would be handy to be able to find him whenever I need, and I would also instantly know if he broke the promise.'

'Sh*t, but if he does, then that would make him another hunting target! Or maybe this thing only follows things that are meant to be hunted.'

Still in 12 days time, if he didn't find a way to remove the marking Barry might be in trouble.

Chapter 28: Eton High

There wasn't much Gary could do for now in general with his powers. He was only a level 2 after all. Although he may have the power to become superhuman at certain moments, he still wasn't the best when it came to fighting on top of other things. Not to mention it was a secret in the first place, so it was best he stayed out of trouble.

The classes continued as normal, with a few people staying away from Gary. They were a little worried about his red sickness from earlier, but it looked like it had been cleaned while they had been at the nurse. Xin was also in the classroom, but she was unable to concentrate properly due to Tiffany staring daggers at her.

When the day had finally come to an end, it was time for everyone to head to their club activities. The members of the club were to appear on the rugby field for training and when they arrived they could see both Barry and Gil staring at the two of them.

“Damn those guys, it looks like they didn’t quite get the message, huh?” Gil said provocatively.

However, Barry stayed quiet. He looked down at his covered wrist which had been bruised and was slightly red. His better judgement was telling him that it might be better not to get involved with Gary after all.

The rugby team had been together for a long time now, and it had been a while since anyone new had joined them. That was also the reason why the duo had wanted to scare Gary away. Even if he were to tattle on them, Gary knew they wouldn’t back down, so it was pointless.

The training had continued like usual, at least at the start it did. It was clear that during the practices the regular members were doing everything they could to target Gary. Covering him even when he didn’t have the ball, even tackling him when he didn’t have the ball, and lastly, hitting him in the gut when they were in the middle of a scrum.

Each time, Tom had to be there to calm him down, but he could tell it was getting worse. Thankfully they had made it through the whole training session without Gary retaliating. At the end of the class Mr Root had an announcement to make.

“Alright everyone, our first match is going to be in around a week’s time and we will be going up against Eton High, so you better be on top of your game! As for you Gary, remember you’re part of the team now, so watch yourself!” Mr Root shouted at them.

Among the club members and the actual rugby members they all started to mumble and share odd looks on their faces as they talked about the upcoming team. Although a newbie, Gary knew why. Eton High’s rugby team wasn’t exactly the strongest, but that also wasn’t Mr Root’s main worry.

Eton High had a reputation for being one of the roughest schools in the entire town. A place where gangs frequently recruited their next members upon graduation. There were even a few students that already belonged to different small time gangs, some even from a different city.

There were rumours going around how often times, certain members of the opposing teams would end up in accidents right before big games. This was why Mr Root had cautioned him to be safe.

Living in this city, everyone knew that the ones actually in charge were the gangs, so the students of Eton High were certainly special.

"If Mr Root is even telling us to be careful, then it has to be true." One of the members said.

When the game was over, a certain member had decided to approach Gary and it was one he wasn't expecting.

"Hey there Gary, I see your nose is all better sorry about that again." Blake said, as he smiled showing his beautiful teeth.

'Damn it, I can't stay around this guy. If Xin sees me next to him it's going to make me look like a frog and him a prince.'

"Yeah don't worry about it, it wasn't as bad as I thought." Gary replied to cut the conversation short.

"Do you mind if the two of us walk home, there was something I wanted to talk to you about, and I think it might be better for you." Blake offered, as his eyes moved to the corner, and the other members including Gil and Barry were looking towards their direction.

Tom, seeing this, and living in the complete other direction decided to head home.

"Hey, Gary you go ahead, take your time to think about the stuff we talked about earlier. Just remember to give me a call tonight, okay." Tom said and ran off.

Tom was still hoping that Gary would quit the rugby team like he had asked. It was the best choice in the end. Gary didn't really want to walk with Blake, but it was obvious that the athlete was offering to shield him from the others. Out of all the members who were on the rugby team Blake was the most reasonable and easiest to talk to.

“Sure we can walk for a bit.” Gary answered as he put on a fake smile, and the two of them headed off. As Gary and Blake started to walk off, they passed by the front gate where Kai was standing with his eyes half closed. When Gary walked past he opened them, and gave him a little wink, before continuing onward.

‘Who could he be waiting for? A girlfriend perhaps?’ Gary wondered.

Seeing him and Blake walk off, Kai continued to wait at the gate, until a student in a dark blue uniform, different to theirs, had arrived. A boy who had his hands banged up all the way to his knuckles.

“You wear those things, even in school? That must be uncomfortable.” Kai commented with a smirk.

“You never know when you’re going to need to fight. Not in this day and age. Anyway, I believe you still owe me the promised sum of money.” Innu reminded Kai. As soon as he said it, a bundle of cash flew right towards him.

“Here you go. I always keep my word.” Kai said as Innu happily counted the money.

“I did a little bit of research on you. Turns out you went to Eton High last year? Since you agreed to join our little gang, mind telling me what exactly happened that forced you to transfer to another school?” Kai questioned, as the two of them began to walk off.

From the look on Innu’s face it wasn’t a pretty story at all, and it was clear that they were bad news.

Chapter 29: Surrounded

There was a park not far away from Gary’s school. It had a playground with swings, benches, climbing frames and all sorts of other things, making it a popular hangout spot for the younger kids, whereas the older ones usually played soccer once school was out.

“Ergh, isn’t this a weird place to discuss things?” Innu asked as he looked at all the little kids and mums around. “Don’t you guys have your own place? You know, a regular hideout spot like an abandoned warehouse or something?”

When Innu had followed after Kai he had expected to be led into that type location. Instead they had gone to this park and on their way a girl had started tagging along. The gold and black outfit made it obvious that she was part of Kai's group, but so far she hadn't even said a word. Innu couldn't help but think she didn't belong in the underworld, except for a damsel in distress perhaps.

"Nope, don't have one of those yet." Kai replied matter of factly. "Come to think of it, I didn't really have time to fill you in last night. Oh well, no better time than the present. Right now there's just you, Green Fang who you've already met and this here's Mai, or Marie is a full name."

For the first time Kai seemed to acknowledge the girl's existence, who in turn just bowed. Innu wasn't sure if she was just shy around him or if she might be mute. Innu's mouth opened wide in disbelief and he slapped his forehead.

'I thought he looked like someone who knew what he was doing. Was I wrong about him? Is he just some rich kid who has too much of daddy's money and decided to create a gang after all? Heck, can we even be called that? Right now we seem more like a group of friends if anything. And why did he exclude himself?'

Eventually, he sighed in defeat. Innu had never been the type to go back on his word. He might have been someone whose academic performance would only qualify him for construction based jobs, but at least he had integrity. The best way he knew how to make money was with his hands, knees and elbows, which was why he had chosen to fight in the fighting event in the first place.

"Don't worry." Kai spoke up with a smile on his face. "Every prominent gang started out just like us. I promise you that as long as you stay with us you won't regret it. Our group will be one that focuses on quantity over quality, so you should be proud that you even qualified."

Hearing Kai's arrogant tone wasn't making Innu feel any better about the decision he had made. Talk was cheap in his opinion, but as long as the money would continue to flow he wouldn't complain.

"Anyway, I believe you wanted to know about my past with Eton High. What they're like and why I transferred, correct? Well, I'm sure you've heard the rumours. Let me tell you, it's worse than what they say. All the delinquents the other school deem incorrigible get sent to Eton High and the school welcomes them happily. Calling it the garbage heap for the scum of society would still be putting it mildly. The only reason it doesn't get shut down is that this makes it the perfect recruitment place for gangs. Heck, it wasn't even rare for some to come from other cities!"

“Other schools might have a top dog, one that at least instills a sort of order, but Eton High is more of a lawless zone. Not all of them behave like wild animals, but whatever factions there are seem to change on a weekly basis. It’s rather common for multiple weak factions to gang up on stronger ones just ‘to put them in their place’. They are not afraid to use weapons either.” Innu’s fists tensed as he explained the situation, thinking about what had happened to him before.

It wasn’t hard for Kai to puzzle his past together with that much information. Anyone could see from the way he fought that Innu was capable of becoming the top dog in most schools. They must have ganged up on him, so badly that he had to transfer.

“Anyway, why did you want to know about Eton High so much?” Innu finally asked.

— — —

At the same time, Gary and Blake were both busy walking down the street heading the same way home. If the high schooler were to use one word to describe the current situation it would be ‘awkward’.

‘That must have been the tenth time a girl has looked our way!’ Gary thought bitterly. Their faces would turn a shade redder when they peeked at Blake, only to turn sour upon seeing the one walking beside him. What hurt Gary even more was they didn’t even try to hide the obvious difference in treatment.

“I want to apologise, Gary.” Blake’s opening line surprised him. “I have heard that Barry and Gil have bothered you during the break and I’ve seen how the guys have been hazing you during the training. I’m the captain, so it’s my responsibility to make sure things like that don’t happen.”

Scratching the back of his head Gary didn’t really know what to say. Blake was the last person who should have to apologise to him. He seemed to be a person who really cared about the rugby team, making Gary feel bad since his primary reason for joining was to impress Xin.

Was it really okay for him to take another player’s position just because of his infatuation?

“It’s not your fault, I understand how they feel.” Gary replied eventually. “Besides, isn’t that like an initiation ritual between guys?”

"No, it's not right. You're part of the team now. Instead of messing with you, they should get along with you and help you integrate with the team. Given your talent you will be a great asset. I'm going to have a word with them all tomorrow so they don't do pull that stupid crap on you again. If they cause you any more trouble, I want you to come to me!" Blake stopped walking and turned around, staring right at Gary, offering his hand.

'How can someone be this nice in a Tier-3 city? Who the hell could hate him?' Gary thought, looking at the hand in front of him. He was reluctant to shake it, since he had already 'repaid' Barry. He only had so much time to find a way to remove the Forced Bond from that poor guy to prevent him from ending up as the secret ingredient in a Barry Burger...

"I..." Just as Gary was about to make up some excuse, he noticed someone coming up to them. They were coming at the two boys fast and one was holding an object, swinging towards Blake.

"Duck!" Gary warned the athlete moving forward. He was about to push Blake's head down, but surprisingly his classmate had instantly followed the instruction. Not expecting to grab at nothing but air, Gary helplessly watched as the wooden plank connected with his cheek. The attack had enough force behind it, that his body fell to the floor, leaving him with the taste of iron.

"Gary!" Blake called out, seeing his classmate lying on the floor with blood dripping from his mouth. He understood they were in trouble, so Blake quickly spun around moving forward slightly. He heard the sound of something hitting the ground where he had just stood.

In total, there were four guys all wearing the Eton High school uniform. Two of them had wooden planks while the others looked to be unarmed. However, it was just as possible that their weapons were concealed.

"Hey, looks like one of them is fast." The Eton High student who had just missed chuckled.

"He wouldn't be the ace of their team, if he wasn't." The other one with the plank, who had just hit Gary joined in the laughter.

Up until now Blake had only heard about this type of incident Mr Root had warned them about earlier. Their P.E. teacher had once called him into his office, stressing to Blake that he was the most likeliest

target. All the opponents Eton High had faced, had their ace involved in some 'accident' right before a match.

However, Blake had never expected them to be so brazen to attack someone in the open like this. They were away from school but the police shouldn't be too far away. The only reason they could be so confident in attacking them here was if they had the backing of a gang of some sort, then it wouldn't matter if the police were informed or not.

'These guys don't look like pushovers when it comes to fighting, either. Who knows when the police will come... or if it even does?' Blake started to worry.

One of the high school students without any weapons tried to punch Blake, but before he could reach Blake, the ace of the rugby team quickly kicked the student's thigh. It caused it to go numb and his punch weakened slightly. Still the punch was coming towards his head as the kid gritted his teeth. Pain alone didn't seem to stop him, or perhaps he was just pissed off enough to want revenge.

Whatever the case, it didn't matter to Blake because he just wanted to weaken the punch slightly as he went forward with his forehead. When the punch connected the Eton High's student's wrist bent awkwardly and his fingers were in pain.

When his body with the plank came over, Blake made sure to remain calm, pushing his wrist and moving so the student would be off balance, then kicking him at the back of his leg where the knee would be, allowing him to trip the other.

"Looks like he can fight." The student with the damaged wrist commented. The student with the wooden plank on the ground, dropped his weapon and charged forward in an attempt to tackle Blake. Although the other tried to side-step the charge, the Eton High student managed to grab on to him.

"Now!"

The other three Eton High students surrounded him. The wooden plank had already been picked up and the two with the planks were about to take a swing, while the third one made sure to cut off any way of escape.

"I'm just going to have to take this hit!" Blake thought as he had to decide between getting rid of the student holding onto him or protecting himself.

When the planks came down, they were stopped dead, inches from his face. Blake could see the green haired boy who had been injured holding on to both. Blood was still dripping from his mouth, from a cut on the inside of his cheek.

"That freaking hurt!" Gary shouted as his heart rate was starting to increase.

"It never hurts knowing as much as you can about your enemy. From the sounds of it, you won't have any problem fighting against your former schoolmates. Eton High will be the first opponent in the underground tag team tournament in around a week's time." Kai answered Innu's question.

Chapter 30: Here to Fight!

The Eton High students who had come to the park were all members of the rugby team, which meant they were used to bashing into walls of muscles. Strength and speed were both key factors in sport to take down an opponent, but looking at Gary he had neither on his side.

As such it was all the more surprising to see him hold onto both planks with a single hand. The two students from Eton High had struggle written all over their faces as they attempted to yank their makeshift weapons free. The injured teenager merely tightened his grip until a snapping sound was heard.

The two Eton High boys stumbled a few steps back still holding onto the planks. Looking down they could see why they suddenly felt that much lighter. One end of them had been ripped off.

'They're still in his hand! Can a normal human even have such a grip strength?!'

The next second, another student slammed a wooden plank against the back of Gary's head, snapping it in place and causing him to fall back to his knees.

'These Eton High guys are ruthless. How can they not even hesitate to hit his head? Aren't they afraid they might accidentally kill him? All of that for a stupid match?!' Blake thought to himself, as he was ready to help Gary. Yet, before he could even reach their position Gary had already recovered and threw a punch back.

The student managed to block in time raising his forearms, but the next second he found himself looking at the sky.

'What the...? Is this some sort of joke? Did Gary set this up somehow or how is he able to knock a guy twice his size? Has he been holding back all the time? No, could it be that he is one of us as well?' Still, the main concern for Blake was the blood that was dripping down his classmate's head. The athlete was surprised the other was still standing after such a hit.

He might be okay for now while the adrenaline was pumping in his body but once it was over it would hurt like hell. They had to deal with those guys before that happened. Right now Gary was dealing with the first two that had arrived, leaving Blake with the other two.

This was a number that he could easily deal with. When one of the Eton High students came rushing forward pulling his arm back to throw a fist, Blake simply threw out a quick jab hitting the student right in the face, almost lifting his legs off the ground.

"If you charge forward like that, it's going to hurt a lot more when someone hits you!"

Now it was time to deal with his buddy, but as Blake turned his head around, he only saw the other Eton High student's back. He had actually run off, abandoning his comrade.

'Guess they're not really the loyal bunch.'

Turning around, he was ready to help Gary. His chin nearly dropped to the ground as he saw the other two already on the ground. Still, his classmate didn't look good, he was huffing and panting, with a hunched back, his hands by his side looking like some type of weird beast.

However, all the other three students had been beaten rolling around the floor in pain.

‘Damn, those guys’ strength were similar to mine, even after I’ve used Charging Heart.’ Gary thought. ‘I guess that shows how weak my original body is. Maybe I should have considered it some before putting my stat point into Energy after that level up. And I’m not the best fighter. It’s one thing knowing what to do, but another knowing how to do it. I was getting hit too much, and now my Energy is low having to heal all these wounds.’

“Hey Gary, we need to get you checked out at a hospital!” Blake said, rushing over.

[Emergency healing in progress]

[Energy will be consumed]

[Energy has been used up]

[Healing unable to complete]

[Eat more meat to restore Energy points]

During the fight, Gary had seen this a few times already, and now the system was healing the rest of his wounds until it had stopped. As long as he got some food, he would definitely be fine after this fight, and was worried the hospital could find something out.

“Don’t worry about me, I’m tougher than I look.” Gary shouted, already running off. “Just look after yourself. You’re the ace of the team, not me!”

Blake wanted to give chase, but Gary was faster than he should be, even if this was still the adrenaline. Unsure, where the other teenager actually lived, Blake decided to just check up on him tomorrow.

Looking around him, Blake looked at the sorry state of the Eton High students.

‘He was able to take three giants like this down? He’s a bit different.’ Blake smiled.

— —

When the healing was complete, the first thing Gary did was head to a shop to purchase more meat. There were two reasons for this. The first was the fact that whenever he could he wanted his Energy bar to be at a 100 percent.

He never knew when the Underdogs or something like what had just happened would occur, and he needed to be at full strength if a fight was to break out. The second was because he needed to complete his daily quests.

‘I need to get stronger as quickly as possible, and levelling up seems to be the easiest way. After replenishing his energy, Gary headed to the gym once more.

Usually, after school Gary would head to the Underdogs to complete his transporter duties. His mother was used to him coming home a little late so it was no problem. During the session at the gym, Gary was able to lift weights easier than the time before, his muscles weren’t sore either.

What Gary didn’t know was that usually beginners would suffer from extreme muscle soreness the next few days after weight training, but Gary experienced no such thing. The muscle fibres in his body were breaking down and healing at an incredible rate. Far faster than anyone could even if they were to take enhancing supplements.

[Congratulations! Your body is seeing benefits of working out]

[Strength +1]

‘So my stats can actually improve without needing me to level up! Looks like using that stat point on Energy might have been the right choice after all. My Strength was only at 4, which I’m guessing is still low. I wonder how long it will take me to gain the next one.’

The best thing about the skill Charging Heart, was it doubled all of his stats for a certain amount of time period. So increasing his natural stats like so would be extremely beneficial.

[Strength 5]

[Dexterity 3]

[Endurance 8]

Looking at the stats, Gary wondered what he could do to improve his Dexterity since it was the lowest of the three. Perhaps asking, Professional fighters of sorts, or someone who knew what they were doing would help. As for Endurance, he could only think of one thing for that, getting hit more. Which he wasn't looking forward to.

No matter what though, he needed to improve all of these things, through levelling up or his natural strength and he had come up with the best solution to do both at the same time.

'I don't know when I'll be found by the Underdogs or have to fight in that underground fighting area again, but if I want to live and protect my family then I need to get stronger.'

— —

The next day Gary woke up and was heading to school as he did every day. After going home, he hadn't received any texts from Kai. On the one hand, he was glad not having to fight after his earlier scuffle, on the other hand the upperclassman was currently his only way to gain any cash.

'Hmm, should I just go and approach him instead? I don't really want to come off as needy... then again, will it make any difference? He already has me by my balls...'

When arriving at school, Tom greeted him as normal and asked him a hundred questions about how he was feeling and more. Of course Gary replied he was feeling fine and told him the events of what happened yesterday.

"They're seriously going that far just because of a some stupid high school sports event. I really don't understand people." Tom said, shaking his head. "Anyway, that's two reasons why you should leave the

rugby team now. Let's tell Mr. Root today during club practice. You can still play rugby just not be part of the team."

"Don't worry, I won't be going to rugby practise today." Gary replied. "I need to go to another club instead."

When school ended, Blake was out on the rugby field, looking for Gary, but he never turned up.

"Where is that damned little broccoli head?! I've already told him that we have a game coming up soon! Does he want to set a record for fastest player to be kicked off the team?!" Mr Root shouted.

"Coach Root, me and Gary ran into some kids from Eton High yesterday." Blake reported. "They wanted to jump me, but he was unlucky enough to get involved. I assume he must still be recovering from that."

Looking at Blake's knuckles, Mr Root didn't need any more proof. Despite his rough appearance and his tendency to yell at his students he nevertheless cared about their well-being. Unfortunately, he knew about the special relationship Eton High enjoyed, which meant that there was nothing he could do about it.

"Alright, I'll let him off with this once, but make sure to tell him this is an exception. I don't need him getting a big head and think he'll get any special treatment. As for the rest of you, let this be a lesson! Although they went for Blake yesterday, they might go after one of you as well. Make sure to go home in pairs!" Mr Root ordered.

"Hang on, so you bailed on rugby practise to come here? Be honest with me, has becoming a werewolf made you LOSE YOUR MIND? This might be even worse than rugby!" Tom whispered angrily, trying to appeal to his best friend as he followed him to the front of the school gym. The two friends could already hear the sounds of chanting from the outside.

Inside, there were around a dozen students in white robes all in sync performing a set of moves.

Off to the side, there were several students that currently sat down, one of them being Xin. When the teacher noticed the newcomers he asked: "Oh, are you guys interested in the Karate club?"

Gary clenched his fist, and shook his head. "I'm here, to fight!"