

My Werewolf System

Chapter 3: The Underdogs

Over the summer holidays, it had been an eventful time for Gary. It was not just because he had chosen to dye his hair and get a new look, but because he had come to the decision to join a gang. Something that he had kept hidden from his friend, his mother and even sister didn't know about.

"Had you been late I was thinking of chopping one of your toes off, so you didn't forget," the man sitting down told him.

It was only five-thirty, so the night club had a few hours before it would officially open. However, the club itself was actually just a front, run and used by the gang known as the Underdogs. The smoking man, who was talking to Gary, was the leader of the Underdogs, Damion Hawk.

The gang members mostly wore suits, making them look like the average businessman or someone who worked for the secret service. This included their leader, although even a student could tell he wasn't a businessman. He had this crazy look about him which was just too wild for someone who was supposed to sit inside a cubicle all day. He had a black mohawk for his hair and a round earring on his right ear.

Yet the most prominent feature about the man were his eyes. They were the eyes of a madman. Usually, Gary was fearless for someone his age. If he wasn't, he would have never gathered the courage to join a gang in the first place... But these people scared him.

Gary gulped a little, not saying a word. The palms of his hands were starting to sweat a little.

"Hey, I'm just kidding," Damion laughed, "Why don't you head to the back while the grownups do a bit of talking? I'll get someone to fetch you when we need you."

While walking, Gary was shaking a little. It was hard to tell whether Damion had actually been joking about this sort of punishment. There had been times when he had been forced to witness the leader actually cut off one of his own men's limbs.

Before joining this gang Gary had decided to do some research into gangs. Unfortunately, he had only ended up reading a few comics and manga books here and there, and to be honest, this had led him to the conclusion that it wouldn't be too much trouble. Even the odd internet searches and movies had romanticised gangs.

Alas, being in a real gang had turned out to be nothing like in those comics and manga books. The members of Underdogs did anything to make a profit. They didn't shy away from selling drugs, killing, stealing, or extorting others. There were many times when Gary had wished to just leave, but there were two things keeping him there.

One of them was the fear of leaving the place. Would they even let him? After everything he had seen and heard? It was a question he didn't dare to ask out loud.

'Come on, Gary, you can do this! Just think of the money, man, come on!'

And that was the second reason.

Pushing the door open, Gary entered the back of the night club where there was a large staff room. Inside were other teens that were not too far apart in age to him, sitting on a sofa. He sat down beside them, but not a single one of them spoke a word.

Gary had seen them a few times before, but from what he could tell none of them went to his school. While looking at them, he wondered what their reasons could be for being here. Not why they were there today, he knew that, but why they had decided to join a gang. Most people his age only joined out of necessity

The world was a tough place to live in at the moment. The economy had been greatly affected ever since the introduction of autonomous machinery. It had created new jobs, but at the same time gotten rid of many old jobs. Gary's own family had suffered the aftermath.

His old mother had lost her job as a factory worker sorting out parts, but she wasn't the only one. Mass unemployment had ruined many families.

The government's solution to all of this had been to offer retraining in the new skills and departments that the world now required, such as cybersecurity, programming, engineering, mechanics and so on. But it had proven to be too hard for her to go through any type of training with the little time she had. Ever since, she had been stuck doing odd jobs.

All of this had created a tiering system within the towns and cities, making the divide between the rich and poor even more evident. Tier-5 being the lowest, while Tier-1 would be the highest. These tiers were based on how high their GDP per month was. The quality of life, the technology, the medical care, all of these things were better the more cash a town or city generated.

However, there was one sector that had started to boom because of this, and that was organised crime. It was highly profitable for them, as they catered and fed on the truly desperate, who were clinging onto anything that lived in the tier fives, while also serving the very top in the higher tiers.

Gangs would exist in all of the tiered cities, and would often work together as the middlemen.

The Underdogs were one such group. They weren't a huge gang, due to Gary coming from a small town in the first place, but they were widely known and feared in the town. He was aware of the bad things they had committed, but he had chosen to ignore it.

Their town was a Tier-3, so the quality of life was okay, but they had to make sacrifices to stay here. Forced to live in a small rundown place, with little room. Still, they were barely hanging on, and both children knew that despite their mother's best attempts at hiding it from them.

Gary had seen the bills that would come in the mail. If this carried on, then it would just be a matter of time until they would have to move to a lower-tier city. The education would be worse and crime rates would be higher.

He wasn't going to let this happen. Their life had already turned to crap as it was and he didn't want it to deteriorate. No, he wanted a better future for his mother and his little sister... even if he had to pay the price for it.

He was the older sibling, the only man of the house, and he wished to return the favour to his mother, who had been looking after them even when times had been tough. He did not wish to run like that man!

While waiting in the staff room, the double doors suddenly opened again. When Gary saw who it was, his eyes started to light up with excitement.

"Hey kiddo, you're here again," the man greeted him with a smirk on his face.

"Kirk, I just saw your fight this morning! Congratulations," Gary said, jumping up from the sofa.

The man who had entered the room was the same one from the video that he had been watching earlier today with Tom and their classmates. The winner of the Altered fight.

Most Altered worked for some type of organisation and Kirk was no different. He worked for the Underdogs as well. They were his sponsor or at least they owned the corporation which Kirk was part of. Gary didn't know much of the details of how the relationships between them came to be. Still, he couldn't imagine how much money the Underdogs must have put into Kirk for him to become the Altered semi-superstar he was today.

"When the Frog man jumped up like that, and you used your raw power to smash him to the ground, it all seemed too easy for you," Gary continued to speak excitedly.

"It might have looked easy, but most of the things I did today, I only managed because I was an Altered. Don't go around trying to do things like that yourself, otherwise, you will just end up hurting yourself." Kirk cautioned his overeager fanboy.

"I know," Gary replied, a little depressed as he thought about how different his life would be if he could be an Altered himself.

Seeing the strange look on his face and noticing something else about Gary, a light bulb lit up above Kirk's head.

"I know, you should have some time before you have to do your thing, right? Come with me," Kirk ordered. "And don't worry, if Damion calls for you I'll say you were with me."

Gary didn't know what was going on, but trusted Kirk and decided to follow him. Ever since he had joined the gang, everyone had seemed a bit scary to him, rough around the edges, all but Kirk. With the Altered, everything just seemed to click.

The good thing was, Kirk was also treated as quite the valuable asset to the group, so he could get away with things the others couldn't. If Kirk said he wouldn't get in trouble, then he should be safe.

The two of them left the staff room and went over to one of the empty clubrooms. It was quite a large club with three different rooms that would often play three different music types. Right now, they were in what was known as the cheese room. It would usually play one's favourite hits from the time Gary's mother would have been his age.

Still, during the day, it looked completely different. The lights were on, so there were no fancy coloured lights, and the disco ball above looked less than special.

"What are we doing here?" Gary asked. "You're not going to ask me to dance with you or something like that, are you?"

Kirk started to laugh, Gary seemed to have a talent for making him laugh.

"No, you idiot. I'm going to teach you how to fight."

"How to fight? Why would I need to learn that?"

Kirk pointed to his own nose, and that's when Gary realised. His nose was still broken from the rugby practice.

'Huh, wait, I think he has the wrong idea? Does he think I'm getting bullied or something?'

"No, wait this is -"

“You don’t have to explain yourself. I’m sure the other guy looks even worse. Anyway, it will be good to just show you a few basic things. With the line of work you’re doing, who knows when it will come in handy.” Kirk interrupted him.

Gary didn’t say anything else. He decided it would be stupid if he did try to clear up this misunderstanding. Besides, since one of his idols had offered to give him a personal lesson, he would be silly to try to get out of it.

It started off with Kirk showing him the first basic punch, a jab in boxing. Punching the air, he demonstrated it a few times. A few major points that Gary took from this, was that Kirk’s right hand was always covering the side of his face, even when throwing out the punch.

The left foot would twist slightly while throwing the punch outward, at the same time, his hip would move in as well. Rather than a push, the punch was more of a snap.

It was now Gary’s turn to try these things, and he repeated all the steps in his head. He punched a few times, and it looked good and felt right.

“It looks like I have a talent for this. Maybe I should join a boxing club instead, what do you think?” Gary asked, but turning his head, he could see the look of disappointment on Kirk’s face.

“Sorry,” Kirk said, rubbing the back of his head. “Your punch is good, the movements are perfect, and you did everything right...”

Garry had a feeling a huge “but” was coming.

“But... your punch is so slow. Is that as fast and hard as you can go?” Kirk asked.

Gary would have loved to tell him it wasn’t, but unfortunately that would be a lie. He had been trying his hardest without holding back. Things always seemed to end up this way for him. He understood the theory, understood how things worked, yet, for some reason it was impossible to perform the way he pictured it in his head.

The doors to the cheese room opened and interrupted their training session. One of the men in suits walked in. “There you are, the boss has been looking for you.”

When Gary returned to the first club room, he saw Daimon still sitting down on the sofa. Opposite him were five kids, including Gary, all standing up straight and waiting for orders. Out on the table were five metal briefcases locked with a unique combination.

“Time for you guys to get to work,” Damion said.

This was Garry’s job in the organisation. He worked as a transporter, and tonight his job would be to deliver whatever was in these suitcases.

While Damion was busily explaining the job details, something had caught Gary's eyes. It was just for a brief moment, so he was unsure if his eyes might have played a trick on him, but he felt he had seen something very odd...

'Did that briefcase just move?'
