

Werewolf 31

Chapter 31: Honorable fight!

At the beginning, Gary's Daily Quests had rewarded him with 10 Exp each. Unfortunately, now that his system classified him as Level 2, each Quest was only paying out half that amount. With the requirement to reach the next level having already doubled, it didn't take a math genius to understand that it would take a long time for him to progress by only relying on this method to accrue Exp.

Nevertheless, this didn't mean that Gary intended to stop working out anytime soon. After all, right now it was the only reliable method for him to increase his Strength without any of the stat points he appeared to be getting for a Level Up.

During his brief time with the system, Gary had actually gained the most Exp after fighting against others like the Eton High students. Although he had yet to confirm his suspicion, he strongly believed that it might also be an effective way to gain other stats like Endurance.

Unwilling to go out and look for trouble in the streets, his conjecture had eventually led Gary to just challenge the martial arts clubs in his own school. The teacher of the Karate club was an aged man, whose arms were folded after hearing Gary's declaration.

"I like your spirit, kid, but things don't work like they do in movies. This is a school club. I can't just let anyone barge in here and allow them to fight my students." The teacher explained in a calm tone.

Tom was very pleased that this teacher seemed reasonable and hadn't just outright accepted his buddy's crazy request. Now he would just have to pull Gary out of the gym. Unfortunately, just when he was about to grab his friend by the arm, Tom saw a strange look in Gary's eyes.

'W-why does he have that look again?!' Tom felt himself shaking, everything in his body was telling him that it was a body idea to touch Gary right now. Unsure what it was, he listened to this feeling and took a step back.

Hearing the teacher's response, Gary smiled.

"I just wanted to know if Karate was worth learning these days." Gary said. "These days Altered fights are being shown all over the internet and on TV. Everyone knows that the best fighters are those who

don't just rely on their Altered forms but incorporate martial arts in their fighting style. However, despite being a huge fan, I have never seen a single one of the top Altered fighters use Karate."

From Gary's experience, sport teachers, even more so combat teachers, took great pride in the martial arts they had learned for years. The black belt was proof that his teacher must have spent countless hours honing his skills and Gary couldn't imagine that he would just let it slide that he had basically called his craft 'useless'.

"And that made you think it might not be worth your time and effort? Very well. Steven, please help our enthusiastic friend find a gi in his size!" The teacher instructed.

Immediately, a student with a green belt stepped forward. Steven had short hair similar to Tom's and he was a little larger than Tom and Gary, yet not as big as rugby players like Gil and Barry.

While Steven and Gary had disappeared into the changing rooms, the other students had quickly laid out mats on the floor, creating an impromptu arena for the two boys to fight in. Not long after, the two combatants came out.

Gary was now also in the white uniform just like everyone else. He and Steven both had head gear on as well as shin guards to protect their legs and finally a large cover on the front of their stomach. This entire set of protection gear only made it harder for Gary to move in, but even he understood that there was no way the teacher would let them fight without them.

'I shouldn't be surprised, this isn't a street fight. Not everyone can heal as fast as me, so it's natural he wants to keep us safe. I just hope it still counts as a fight like this.' Gary worried as he took position on his side of the ring.

Fortunately, the system promptly answered his desire.

[New quest received]

[Honorable Fight!]

[You are complying with your Werewolf instincts and have sought out a mighty opponent!

You have initiated a fight against a karateka (green belt)!]

[Win the Match!]

[Quest reward: 120 exp]

'This counts as complying with my Werewolf instincts? When I fought the other guy before I was scared, but this time I feel... a little excited.' Gary analysed.

This method appeared to work even better than Gary could have ever hoped for. As long as he managed to win this fight, he would gain exactly enough Exp to reach Level 3, allowing him to improve his stats even further.

"A hands-on demonstration should be the fastest way for you to get a feel for Karate. Don't worry, Steven here should be capable enough to teach you a lesson without hurting you too badly."

"The fight will end when one of you gives up. If either one of you steps off the mats, stop what you're doing and restart at the centre. Most importantly, this is a friendly spar, so neither one of you is to aim at your opponent's face or their groin! Do you both understand?" The teacher asked.

The two of them nodded while the other students sat down around the mats, waiting for the match to begin. This was far more interesting than their usual training. As for Tom, he wasn't sure what to do. It seemed far too late to play everything off as a joke.

"Say, isn't your friend part of the Rugby club? What is he doing here?" A voice asked.

When Tom turned around, he recognised the girl as Xin from their class.

“Umm... well, let’s just say not everyone was too keen about Mr Root’s decision to let Gary join the Rugby club. He’s been harassed by them, so he planned to get better at fighting.” Tom made up an explanation which wasn’t too far off the truth.

“Okay, but it looks like your friend just exchanged one bully for another. If he had asked normally, I’m sure Mr Fang would have gladly taken him in, but now he’s in for a beating. Steven used to be the strongest member in this club.” Xin pointed out, just in time for Mr Fang to wave a flag, signalling the start of the match.

“I’m more afraid that Gary might not be able to hold back.” Tom muttered to himself.

As soon as the match began, Gary immediately activated his skill.

[Charging heart]

[-10 Energy]

All of his stats immediately doubled, his Strength rose to 10, while his Endurance was now at a 16, but his Dexterity was still slow even though doubled at 6 making his slow speed regular.

‘Even at this level, he will probably be too fast for me, but he’s a lot smaller than the guy I fought in the underground tournament. With all this gear on, I can probably afford to trade punches.’ Gary thought.

Once Gary entered into his range, Steven swung using the full strength of his body and hips to connect his roundhouse kick with the arrogant newcomer. As the bigger and more confident guy he expected Gary to fall, but as his foot connected his opponent remained on the ground.

Thanks to the armour and the increased Endurance the kick felt like just a light shove to Gary. Aware that he was unlikely to get a second opening, he, as the challenger, made use of his opponent’s momentary confusion and used a punch, imitating his favorite fighter Kirk, he started his motions bending slightly. With all his Strength, he sprung up using the strength of his legs to deliver a heavy punch putting his weight behind the attack, his fist connected with the large cover over his stomach.

Despite the protection gear, Steven felt the wind get knocked out from him. The force behind the attack was far stronger than someone Gary's size should have had. Before the green belt could recover, Gary was already holding onto his opponent's shoulder, imitating Innu's actions by pulling Steven forward, kneeing him in the stomach.

As Gary stood above him, it was clear to everyone that Steven had lost the match.

[Quest reward: 120 Exp]

[Congratulations, you have now reached: Level 3]

[A stat point has been granted]

'This guy, he isn't getting back up. I thought he would be like those Eton High kids. I guess he's not really used to taking a beating. Still, just because I can beat up someone my age doesn't mean I would fare well against those gangsters. And I know from watching those underground fights that there are people better than this.'

Mr Fang quickly rushed over to Steven, even forgetting to declare the fight to be over, too worried about his pupil's wellbeing. It appeared as if he had misjudged Gary. At first he had believed him to just be a naive kid, but judging from his fighting style, although it was rough, he was someone who had fought before.

His own student had been at a complete disadvantage. Steven was used to fighting competitions, as such he had stayed overly cautious about not losing any points, trying his best to show off his skills, while the only thing on Gary's mind had been winning the fight.

"He beat Steven, and it was only in two hits."

"It looked like he got winded from the first punch, even with all the armour, that punch must have been strong."

“I think Steven was playing it too safe, he should have gone for a kick to the head.” The students continued to murmur between themselves.

‘What should I do with him? If that kid leaves now he will look down on Karate, but I can’t just face him myself. An adult beating up a kid would prove nothing to him.’ The Karate teacher thought.

It was then that another one stood up from the sitting students.

“Mr Fang, I would like to fight him next.” A voice said.

“W-what are you doing?” Tom asked, wondering why Xin, who had been by his side mere seconds ago, had just volunteered to fight.

“Well, it would be pointless for your friend to fight someone weaker than Steven, wouldn’t it? Who do you think pushed Steven down to being the second strongest in this club?” Xin asked Tom with a smirk.

Chapter 32: Lover boy

After defeating Steven, Gary was fully focused on one thing, his system. So much so, that he remained blissfully unaware of what was going around him at the moment, how the other contestants stared at him with a mix of admiration and hostility and the mixed emotion on Mr Fang’s face.

When reaching Level 2, he had placed the free stat point into his Energy stat, increasing it by ten points. Right now, he was carefully contemplating in which category to place the next point.

‘Putting it into Strength seems like a waste, if I can just increase it by going to the gym. I still have to verify whether getting beat up is a viable method to increase Endurance and I have no idea about how to increase Dexterity manually yet. However, I’m sure there are ways. On the other hand, I doubt I can increase Energy or Health on my own, so which one should I choose?’

‘Getting 10 more points in Health might not be a bad idea. Reaching 0 HP can’t be good, so I should avoid it ever falling that low. Then again, Energy seems overly useful. Not only is it used for healing, but in the future I’ll most likely have access to more skills like Charging Heart. With a bigger pool, I could use them more often.’

When Gary returned to the present, he noticed that a girl was standing opposite him wearing the same type of protective gear like Steven and him. He had only taken a glance, before he went back to his Status screen, but he quickly lifted his head to look at the girl again.

“Wait a second, you—you—you’re...” Gary mumbled like a fool, pointing at her with his finger, yet unable to finish his sentence.

“You came here looking for a fight, right? Don’t tell me that you already got your fill just from that match. You hardly did anything!” Xin spoke as she lifted her hand and gestured for Gary to come at her.

It was something that the spectators had only ever seen done in the movies. If they were to attempt such a thing, most would probably have died from embarrassment on the inside. However, for some reason, the way Xin spoke, the way she acted, was filled with confidence, giving her actions such a natural feel that nobody dared to point it out.

Gary started to look towards Mr Fang, hoping he would step in and at least tell her to back down from the fight. After all, he had just defeated Steven so easily, who the teacher had been quite confident in. However, he just stood to the side, taking care of Steven who seemed to have just recovered.

‘Is he really going to allow this fight to happen, but... she’s a girl!’ Gary thought. It wasn’t that he thought girls were weak or anything like that, but despite Gary being on the smaller side, Xin had a more petite frame than him. What’s more, he knew he carried an unfair advantage. When using Charging Heart, he had the strength of a person twice his size.

Most importantly, the last person Gary wanted to hit... was his crush.

‘Damn it, I can’t allow Gary to continue with this fight. If she gets him in any type of locking position and puts his head closer to her chest... the guy is guaranteed to turn on the spot!’ Tom worried, racking his brain to figure a way out for his friend.

“I’m sorry, I’m just worried that I might hurt you. I know this might sound a bit old fashioned, but I really don’t think I can hit you.” Gary apologised while making sure to bow down. The teenager wasn’t doing this out of respect, he just wanted to cover his face which he feared to be beet red.

“Ha!” Mr Fang let out a loud laugh. “Boy, through this thick armour, you won’t be hurting anyone. That’s assuming you’ll actually manage to hit the young Mrs Clove. I can tell that you have fought a few times outside, but in martial arts, you should never discriminate against your opponent. You never know just how deadly someone with a weapon might be, even if that weapon happens to be one’s own body.”

Gary understood what Mr Fang was saying and it was never his intention to discriminate against anyone. Heck, if a girl chased after him with a knife or went after his family members’ lives, he was a firm believer of true gender equality. It was just... every time he looked at this girl in particular, his heart would beat rapidly... which in his case might lead to more severe consequences than him pitching a tent.

“There’s no way he can fight!” Tom announced as he suddenly looked up. Everyone looked over at him, confused why he had gotten involved as well. “Xin, he can’t fight you because...be-because....he likes you!”

Tom practically yelled out the last part. The whole hall was dead silent, including Xin herself.

‘Tom, what the hell are you doing? Why are you confessing to her on my behalf?!’ Gary was screaming in his head at this absurdity, while simultaneously wishing for the ground to open up and swallow him whole. Just like everyone else, he was speechless, and all he could see was the system displaying his heartbeat, which was rising dangerously close to the 150 BPM mark.

‘At this rate, I won’t even need to use Charging Heart.’

“Oh... so it’s like that?” Xin eventually broke the silence as she placed her hand on her chin. “Well, I’m flattered... I guess. I’m not quite sure how to feel right now. I’ve just transferred here, so all I know about you is your performance during rugby practise and when you were fighting Steven. Oh and that little red sea of sick you made”

Clenching his fists, Gary just wanted to run away from this entire situation. If he had known that it would turn into such a giant mess he would have never challenged this stupid club. At least he was slightly happy that she hadn’t outright rejected him... although he hadn’t missed the fact that she hadn’t exactly accepted his feelings for her either.

"I'm sorry, I just can't..." Gary mumbled, as he began to take off his protective headgear, keeping eye contact to the floor, too embarrassed to look up.

Seeing this, Xin felt a little annoyed, but not as much as Mr Fang. Gary had been the one who had started this little fighting session, yet now he was going to give up there? While the teacher was still looking for a reason to make him stay, Xin had just come up with a plan.

"Hey, wait!" Xin called out. "Is it true what your friend said? About you liking me?"

Gary wasn't quite sure how to answer this. Just as Xin had pointed out, they hadn't known each other for long... or at all, actually.

"Yeah... Sorry that someone like me likes you." Gary answered eventually, mustering his courage to look up.

"How about we go on a date?" Xin suggested. "I can't just promise you to become a girlfriend, but if you can beat me in a match, then we can at least go out once. What do you say?"

"Huh!" Everyone inside the hall was baffled. Xin was a beautiful girl, so some of the Karate club members had tried to ask her out when she had joined. She had instantly refused all but one of them. When Steven had tried his luck, Xin had told him that she would consider it, before requesting a match against him. Unsurprisingly, that event had cemented his position as second strongest.

"I'll only go out with someone stronger than me." Xin proclaimed with a big smile.

[New quest received]

[Win the date!]

[The girl of your dreams has challenged you to a fight.

Swoop her off her feet and into your arms, lover boy!]

[Quest reward: Instant Level Up (+ a date!)]

‘What the hell is wrong with this system?’ Gary thought.

Chapter 33: Xin skills

Gary had been sure that his mind had been made up to get out of the hall as fast as his legs would allow him. Heck, he had even seriously considered using Charging Heart to get out faster and he had been convinced that nothing would be able to change that, yet two things had just made a match against Xin extremely tempting.

For one, there was the Quest that he had just received. As silly as the Quest description was, the reward was clear enough. If he could beat her, he would benefit from an instant Level Up.

‘This system is full of surprises. The fight against that Steven guy had already granted me far more Exp than any other, but it had still been a flat amount, so why is it different now? The system seems to function similar to a game and they usually reward you based on the difficulty of a task, so is it saying that fighting against Xin would really be that much harder? But what about Steven, he was weaker than those other guys?’

In all honesty, Gary didn’t know if the system really worked like a game, so he could only look at the facts that he had in front of him. Beating Xin would result in him instantly reaching Level 4, meaning he would get yet another free stat point to use as he wished.

However, the second reason, which if he was being honest, was far more enticing, was that beating her meant she would go out with him. That possibility alone, resulted in his mind going haywire once more.

‘A date... sh*t, I’ve never been on an actual date before! Where would we go? To the movies? Mini-golf? A restaurant? ... but all those things cost money... Maybe I can just take her for a walk in the park. Yeah, that sounds good. There’s a river there as well! If someone attacks us, like when I was with Blake, and she gets pushed into the river... and maybe she can’t swim ... then maybe I could, jump in and...and...’

“So, are we doing this or not?” Xin asked after Gary had stopped walking. He remained standing there, which she took as a good sign. She was sure he just needed a little more push.

Soon, the hall echoed with a chuckle, and it was coming from none other than Gary.

“I say, I’m gonna save your life.” Gary turned around, madness in his eyes as he pointed towards her.
“Let’s fight.”

With so many strange things happening one after the other, the students didn’t even question Gary’s strange response. They were just pleased that they were about to witness another spectacle instead of doing their boring, repetitive drills.

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Once again, the only who couldn’t share their enthusiasm was Tom, who was on the sideline biting his fingernails.

‘Calm down, Tom and check where the exits are. You’ll need to grab Gary in case he shows any signs of turning?’ Now that he thought about it, he had never seen Gary do anything werewolf-like? Apart from his wild anger. Thinking about this calmed his heart a little.

‘He might be just an angry wolf on the inside?’

Mr Fang was ready, Steven was back to his usual self, and both fighters were in their positions.

“Ready, go!”

The fight had started, and Gary’s heart hadn’t settled yet. His active skill Charging Heart had worn off, but he was wondering with his heart the way it was now. Maybe he wouldn’t need to activate the skill.

It was then that he strangely saw that Xin was the one that had charged first. She ran in and suddenly jumped in the air, spinning her body. He saw her back and soon after her whole leg. Seeing this at the last second, Gary tilted his head back. His movements were twice as slow without the skill charging heart, allowing him to narrowly miss her foot, and he soon repositioned himself by moving to one of the corners of the mat.

'How fast was that kick and a spinning kick? If she had hit me with that, I have a feeling my head would have gone flying off. Is she trying to kill me!' Gary wondered as he felt something tickling from his nose.

He tried to sniff it up, but it didn't work, and when looking down, he could see blood on the floor. The back of her heel had lightly grazed the tip of his nose.

"Looks like you're a little slower, and I guess if you don't get the first hit, you're useless." Xin shrugged her shoulders. "I expected more from you for some reason."

"Haha, did you see him running away!"

"Don't go in the corner. Come on, why don't you just use your brute strength like before?"

"Because he knows he's going to get knocked out."

The students mocked and laughed, wanting one of their own to win.

'Sh*t! Was I going easy on her because I didn't want to hurt her, but it looks like I can't hold back.' Gary thought.

[Skill activated Charging heart]

[All stats have temporarily been doubled]

[-10 energy points]

Placing his hand on his chest, Gary could once again feel his heart thumping so loud it felt like it was going to jump from his throat. Although nothing seemed to change from the outside, Xin, who was in the fight, quickly got into a fighting stance again, feeling a change.

“This is what I wanted,” Xin mumbled.

Now it was Gary’s turn, and he decided to charge in just as he did against Steven.

‘I’ll just take the hit. I took a hit from that large blob guy and was still standing, so taking a hit from someone like this is no problem at all!’ Gary thought as he gritted onto his teeth, expecting what was to come.

Xin stayed firm, her leg ready and judged the distance. Then when Gary was within her zone, she spun her body once again and let out a kick with the heel of her foot aiming towards the head.

Gary knew that he was still too slow, even with a charging heart, to react to the kick after seeing the first one, but he was confident in his recovery skills. He could see the kick and attempted to lift his hands up, but even they were too slow, and eventually, the heel had hit him right in the head, underneath the ear.

An immense pain was felt, and his head flung to the side. The others even looked away. The kick had landed so solid, but Gary gritted his teeth, carried on moving, pushing through, and moved forward again.

‘I just have to grab her!...Huh? Why is she moving away?’ Gary thought as the image of Xin started to spin as if one was dizzy. The next thing Gary knew, he was falling to his side and was running straight forward into the crowd of people who were sitting down.

Gary had crashed into the other students and had fallen off the mats.

‘It was a perfect strike behind the ear.’ Tom noticed. ‘His whole head must be spinning at that moment. That’s why he fell over.’

Years of watching Altered fights, Tom knew quite a bit about fighting.

As for Xin, the one who had delivered the blow, she was shocked herself.

'I didn't think he would take the kick head on like that. I thought he had a better plan. I didn't hold back either. How did he do it? Why is he still standing?'

She was amazed that Gary was even still able to walk forward and looked his way. She could see him getting up, but soon falling back over. Eventually, after getting up the third time, Gary was up on his feet all okay again.

It was the quickest she had seen someone recover.

"Reset!" Mr Fang said, with a big grin on his face. He knew as a teacher he shouldn't be smiling at something like this, but he just couldn't help himself.

Gary was ready for round 2, to reset the match and fight again. However, he had received a message from the system at that point.

[Quest failed]

[You are no longer able to complete this Quest]

Since becoming a Werewolf and obtaining the system, it was Gary's first loss and first quest failure.

Chapter 34: Altered Hunter

Club activities had ended for the day, and for the first time in a while, Tom and Gary had the chance to walk back together. The last couple of days, Gary had just rushed home, claiming he had something important to do. Tom had known that he had to be hiding something, but only recently did he find out that it was due to his part time job as a delivery person.

Then the other day, Blake had gone home with him for some reason. Now it was just them two, and since they didn't exactly live in the same area, the time they would walk together would be short.

Tom was hoping to crack a few jokes about what had just happened, how his best friend had seemingly lost to the girl he had fallen for, but the whole way, since they had left the club room, Gary hadn't said a word.

The silence was killing Tom, and he just couldn't leave his best friend like this. Since they were about to enter one of the rougher areas, where Gary lived, they would part ways soon. If he wanted to say something, he would have to do it now.

"Hey man, don't let it get to you. Apparently, she was the strongest person in the whole club. I don't think losing against her is anything to be ashamed of. Who knows, if you learn to get better and stronger and control your Werewolf powers, maybe you can even beat her next time and get that date!" Tom claimed enthusiastically, but in his mind, all he could see were images of his friend transforming in the middle of the fight, and he soon shook his head to get rid of that thought.

"It's not just that I lost..." Gary eventually mumbled out but soon went quiet because he knew it was impossible to explain to Tom. Losing to Xin, someone who weighed far less than him, and someone his age, meant that if the Underdogs or anyone else were to ever find out where he or his family lived, they could easily beat him.

Not just the Underdogs, but other gangs had members that were extremely good at fighting. Different martial arts was just their basis. At the end of the day, the Underdogs also had Kirk. An Altered who had won the Altered rookie championship. If he was ever sent to deal with Gary's family, could he even last a few seconds with the way he was at the moment?

Normally, Tom should have left a while ago to head in the other direction, but he couldn't leave him like this with the way his friend was. As he looked down the street, he could see a red coloured gang in the area, walking around.

The second they met eyes, Tom looked away.

"The red gang are in this area as well now?" Tom whispered to Gary. "I guess the Underdogs aren't in complete control of this area then? This should be a good thing for you for the area."

"You really think I'll be happy about the fact that more gangs are roaming around the place where I live?" Gary scoffed. "It's good because it means the Underdogs have their own problems to deal with, and they won't ruin this place further, but the black coloured gang and the red coloured gang have been fighting in this area more frequently. Thankfully, the main gangs haven't gotten involved yet, but... let's just say even walking to school is getting tough."

Thinking about this, Gary remembered the girl he had seen. He still wondered why the black coloured gang had attempted to abduct her so openly. Even stranger was that she seemed to be somehow related to Kai, yet he had never mentioned her to him.

“Oh, that’s right, I almost forgot to tell you.” Tom facepalmed as he suddenly remembered something in regards to gangs. “You know, the other day, I decided to go out to the shop, it was pretty late, and these guys followed me.”

Suddenly, Gary was deeply concerned about his friend. The story wasn’t starting well, but when looking at Tom, he could see he had no injuries on his body and was relieved. This didn’t go unnoticed, and Tom was happy to see that Gary still cared for him.

“I’m alright. What I was going to say was this guy came out of nowhere, all dressed in black and beat them all up. Honestly, it was pretty badass. Hey, maybe if you had a teacher like that guy, something like what happened earlier wouldn’t have happened.” Tom wanted to tease his friend, but he quickly covered his mouth, realising that he had just poked a hornet’s nest.

“Huh, not a bad idea...” Gary mumbled. “So who do you think he was, a gangster boss out for a walk or something?”

“No, he didn’t really look like one.” Tom looked around at the gang members in the area they were currently in. The man that he met just didn’t seem to fit in with the others. “Come to think of it, he might have been an Altered. That might explain his large frame, and usually, they have superhuman bodies even without transforming. Alternatively... he could have been an Altered hunter.”

“Altered hunter, huh? I guess even the Altered have things they need to worry about.” Gary commented.

Eventually, Tom couldn’t venture into the other side of town too far. He needed to go home and mentioned this to Gary. Realising how far Tom had accompanied him, Gary decided to walk him back until he was in a safer area since he might not be as lucky to meet such a mysterious stranger a second time.

It was getting pretty late, around 6pm, which was when the sun was starting to set, and more troubled people would roam the streets. Tom was concerned about this, but Gary reminded him that he wasn't a regular person anymore and reassured him by saying he would be going straight home.

However, pulling up his hood, Gary got his phone out and sent a text to his mother and sister.

[I'm at Tom's and will be coming home late tonight.]

Gary had no intention of going home yet, and he was ready to cause a bit of chaos.

Chapter 35: The new world

When Xin left the Karate club she was showered with praises from the other members. For doing a good job in humiliating Gary. However, for her she felt like the fight wasn't over yet. Her opponent hadn't been knocked out, and was still well enough to fight again, yet for some reason, her opponent had just left having received the first blow.

Before she left to make her way home, Mr Fang had stopped to have a word with her.

"Xin, I'll ask you again, are you sure you don't want to join the winter tournament? If you do well, it's a good chance for you to get noticed. With your talent and in a world we live in like today you could easily get noticed and..."

"Please Mr Fang. I know you mean well, but I really can't." Xin replied. "Besides, I'm not the one with talent in my family."

With the conversation over, Xin quickly left the club to head home. While Mr Fang was left thinking that a wasted opportunity was slipping right in front of him. He could tell that something was up. He had never seen any student with such a pained look before, turning such an offer down.

When leaving the club, Xin saw a group of girls looking towards her. They soon looked away and started whispering to each other, still making glances once in a while.

'Damn it, did I mess with the wrong girl, like dad was worried about. But it was an accident? It might be good if I go and apologise to her tomorrow. Crap, I'm not really good at these things.' Xin thought.

Eventually, leaving the school gates, she took a turn, and a black coloured car was waiting for her. Before Xin could even open the door, the driver had gotten out of the car and opened the door for her.

"Please miss." The driver said.

Xin had gotten into the car with tinted black windows, and had started her drive home. All of this was done. because Xin was The mayor's daughter. The mayor of a tier three city.

Usually, such an important figure of a town or city, would send their family for schooling in a higher tier city. The reason, because to get into the position the mayor was in today, it most likely meant that the mayor had a connection to one of the big gangs in the area. Making a mayor's family an easy target.

At the same time, this also meant that Xin was protected in more ways than one. However, she was sick and tired of her old life. Not being able to go anywhere freely, having to be careful who she talked to, and always being guarded at all times. It was hard for her to even make friends due to the way she lived.

However, this year she had managed to get her father to relax a little by making a deal with him.

'I just have to get through this year and prove to him that everything will be okay. I'll say sorry to Tiffany tomorrow and I'll make sure everything is alright. But what about that Gary guy? Will I have to worry about him?' She thought.

Thinking about the look on his face. She also found it strange that someone who was inexperienced in fighting would suddenly ask to fight trained fighters like that. She honestly didn't like people like Gary, Those that had been blessed with a good body and strength, beating on those that had trained for years.

'Well, his friend did say he liked me, so I don't think he will be causing any problems.'

Eventually, the vehicle had arrived in a more private area of the town. It was driving through what looked like woodlands, and had reached a large black gate. Standing outside there were those that

looked like guards wearing suits, however if one was to look closer they could see that they weren't just any guards. They had tattoos running up their necks, and some even had piercings.

These were gangsters that had been lent to the mayor for protection. In a way they worked as a bigger deterrent than bodyguards for other gangs.

The house was in sight, it was quite a large six bedroom house with a bathroom in every room. This would be a luxury for anyone living in a tier three city. In the first place, not even a mayor of a small town like this one would have been able to live in a place like this, not unless to get into the position they were in and had taken a few bribes here and there, but she knew her dad wasn't a bad person.

'It is just how the way the world works.' Xin repeated in her mind.

Unfortunately, that was the only way to move up in the current world. Still, because she hadn't been here long it was hard to call this foreign place home, that was until she had entered the house and heard a certain voice.

"Hey, is the troublemaker back!" A voice said, coming from the kitchen.

Xin quickly ran in and went inside, to see her mother, and the one whose voice she had heard coming through the doors. Her brother.

"Jayden you're here! Didn't you say, you would be busy shooting at this time?" Xin asked.

Like Xin herself, her brother was quite the pretty boy, having clear skin, and a quite chiselled look yet feminine as well. His eyes were so naturally dark that it looked like he wore eyeliner. However, it was just his dark eyelashes. His body was also what bodybuilders would strive for, but that was mostly due to his job.

"Well, one of my appointments got cancelled, so I decided to head back home early." Jayden answered. He could see a glow in Xin's eyes, leaving him to let out a big sigh.

“Sometimes, I don’t think you’re happy to see me because of me. Fine, let me finish here and we can go for a round.” Jayden said, getting up from his seat.

The two of them moved and headed outside. On the large piece of land where their house lay, there was an annex and inside it was set up with gym equipment, such as punching bags and dolls, and more martial arts equipment.

“Wow, this place looks nearly as nice as the gym I train at.” Jayden complimented. He was waiting to hear Xin say something but could just see her already putting on protective gear. Shaking his head, he knew he had already lost to the fighting obsessed maniac.

The two had gotten into position and it was time. Xin started as she charged forward, leaping up in the air and spun, delivering a kick to the head. She soon saw Jayden lean back and narrowly avoid it.

‘It missed, just like it did against Gary, but this is different.’ Xin thought.

She was right, the difference was, Jayden had narrowly avoided it on purpose to not use too much energy, and if he wanted to, it would allow him the timing to attack himself.

The kicks continued with a few punches here and there, and Jayden avoided all of them, once in a while he would throw a kickback, but it would just be a light tap, showing his sister he could have hurt her at any time.

Eventually, getting frustrated, Xin went to try her strongest attack. She was ready, waited for the perfect time, and spun once again, hoping to hit her brother with the back of her heel, right behind the ear.

She could feel it connect, but her brother was still standing with his arm covering the area, He then took a step forward throwing her off balance and causing her to fall to the ground. Throwing out a punch to her face, he stopped an inch from her nose.

“And that is definitely a defeat.” Jayden said with a smile. “You really have improved a lot, and those kicks of yours are hard to deal with, trust me.” He said massaging his arm.

Helping her up off the ground, he could tell Xin wasn't pleased. Usually his compliments would make her feel better but it didn't look like it this time.

"What's wrong?" Jayden asked.

"Are my kicks really that strong? You're not just saying that to make me feel better, right?" Xin asked.

"That's what you're upset about? That kick I blocked at the end. First of all, I'm twenty five and your body still has room to grow." Jayden said. "Second of all, your brother is one of the top fifty fighters in the country, and to top that off I am an Altered, so I have an unfair advantage. If you kicked anyone your age be it boy or girl they wouldn't be able to stand up again."

Hearing her brother's words, she found it very hard to believe because that very kick he was talking about, there was a person who had stood up again.

"Maybe that boy is someone to look out for after all." Xin mumbled.

Suddenly, she felt a heat coming from the corner of the room, and as she looked at Jayden, she could see the fire in his eyes.

"What's this about a boy! Did he try touching you? You can tell me, right?! You know the rule I and dad set for you. If anyone wants to go out with you they need to at least be strong enough to beat me!"

She knew about this rule, but she knew that was also impossible. There were only a few people in the country strong enough to beat her brother. That's why she had altered that rule slightly to herself, that they had to at least be stronger than her, hopefully then it would be someone her brother would accept, but whether she would ever find a person or not was a different story altogether.

Chapter 36: A Leader

[Will there be one today?]

The message read on the phone.

“Oh, he seems to be getting more impatient, I wonder if something happened to him?” Kai mused as he read the message on his phone. At the very top the name ‘Green Fang’ was displayed.

[There is no need for you to ask me. I will notify you when I need you.]

Kai texted back and placed the phone back into his pocket as he continued on his way to a particular car park. The car park itself was quite large, six stories yet it was empty. Although the night sky was out, it wasn't too late, yet there were no cars present at all.

The reason why it was empty was because today was due to it being another day like before, it was a fight night, and the multiple gangs in the area had made sure that those that didn't need to know about it, wouldn't stumble upon this place.

“So tell me again, why didn't you invite that Green Fang guy? Are you worried he might go crazy again?” Innu asked, having caught a glimpse of Gary's message on Kai's phone.

The newest member of their yet to be named gang was wearing the new uniform he had been given. The black overcoat with a golden trim and his matching trousers suited him surprisingly well.

“Because it would be a bit much to invite our leader to such a small occasion.” Kai answered with a smirk, not turning around.

“Our leader? That green haired guy that could barely fight is supposed to be our leader? Didn't know you had a sense of humour, but seriously tell me the real reason.” Innu insisted.

However, Kai didn't say another word, and just continued to move towards the car park. There were two guards up ahead who didn't look like they quite belonged there. Still, it was a perfect way to stop anyone nosey from snooping around.

Innu, for a moment entertaining the possibility that Kai wasn't just pulling his leg, stopped in his tracks, making Marie, or Mai as she liked to be called, nearly walk into him. At the last moment, she gracefully sidestepped him.

“He really is not joking? I need to know what the hell I signed myself up for!” Innu asked the girl, who just shook her head before following behind Kai.

The two guards appeared to be adults in their late twenties or early thirties. They checked over Kai and his entourage briefly, yet didn't say anything else as the trio walked past them. Inside, the three could hear the sounds of several people cheering.

Innu knew that once they went further in, he wouldn't be able to ask Kai as many questions, so he had to ask now.

“Fine, fine, let's say that kid is our leader, then isn't that all the more reason to bring him along? Not to belittle him or anything, but he clearly isn't really used to these kinds of things and some more fighting practice couldn't hurt either. The way he currently is...”

The leader of a gang could be said to be their most important person. In a way, they alone symbolised the prestige of their respective gang, hence why in most cases it was the gang member with the most strength.

Due to the 'No Lethal Weapons Act', individual strength was important these days. In cases of disagreement when one side needed to 'convince' another, the most forward way was to do it the good old fashioned way.

However, this wasn't always the case, especially for established gangs it wasn't rare to have a wise leader at the top, one who wasn't just a musclehead. In those cases it would either be their right hand man or those under him with the frightening strength that would ensure that others followed their command.

Usually, those kinds of leaders had something special about them, a type of unique charisma that had allowed them to get trustworthy people to work under them in the first place.

Innu had joined in the belief that Kai would be the latter type, which was why he was shocked to learn that Gary was supposed to be their leader. He didn't even fit the former type, so with him as their gang's representative it was practically asking for trouble. The fighter could already foresee them getting picked on by other gangs.

“Alright, seeing that you’re asking out of concern for the new gang you’ve joined, I suppose I shouldn’t keep you out of the loop. You see, in my opinion there are certain qualities that distinguish a great leader from a good one.” Kai replied, not slowing his steps.

“A great leader needs to have a reason to keep growing his territory. Putting it simply, they need ambition and hunger. At the moment, I’m testing that person’s hunger since I want to see just how far he will go. If I’m right, then it’s just a matter of time for Gary to start acting on his own. Once he does, it will be a perfect opportunity to find out just how ambitious he is.”

At this moment, the three could see several cars that had been parked in a way to make an arena. Crowds were cheering from behind them as a fight was already taking place. The first thing Innu noticed were certain students from Eton High. His fists tensed up as images of what happened before flashed through his head.

‘He said that they will be our next opponent, I guess we are here to scout them today then.’ Innu thought.

“Don’t worry.” Mai spoke up. “With the amount of different prospect gangs, sub divisions, and coloured gangs here, no one will be stupid enough to start a fight, so your body can stop shaking.”

“I’m not scared, but angry!” Innu replied with gritted teeth. “I can take on any one of those backstabbing bastards on their own. They only beat me because they ganged up on me!”

The girl just smiled and lightly patted him on the back before she looked for a good spot to watch the ongoing fight. Meanwhile, Kai had been paying attention to something else. On top of one of the cars, a little behind the arena, there was a large digital board that had the names of today’s fighting roster, as well as the betting odds.

‘Strange, I was sure Billy Buster was meant to be fighting today.’ Kai thought. ‘Given his fighting record the gangs must have already tried to scout him. Were it not for his loss that day, I’m sure he would have gotten a serious offer.’

‘Was his pride hurt so badly that he wants to wait for people to forget... or did Gary actually manage to hurt him more than I thought?’ Kai wondered.

At that very moment, Billy opened the fridge in his apartment complex.

'I'm so hungry.' Billy thought as his eyes latched onto some raw lamb at the bottom of the fridge that had still yet to be cooked. Without even a moment's hesitation his hand grabbed it and before he knew what he was doing, he had started digging into it with his mouth ripping it apart.

Eventually, when he was done with his meal, he let out a satisfied burp, scratching his neck, which showed a mark on his neck, where he had been bitten.

Chapter 37: Turf war

In the town of Slough there was an unwritten rule concerning the area where Gary lived. When the sun went down, that was when the underworld came out to play. The coloured gangs and more would roam the streets.

If Gary hadn't told his mother he would be staying at Tom's, who lived in a more affluent area, then she would be worried out of her mind. He had also often lied about his parents dropping him off by their apartment as well.

As a former transporter for the Underdogs, Gary had needed to learn not only where their own territories were, but also what territories belonged to which colour gang as well as which areas were the most common fight spots. The knowledge that the entire town, except for a few key areas, had been divided in so many sub areas which the gangs claimed for their own, had left quite the bitter aftertaste in his mouth.

It had been vitally important to memorise the safest route as it was rarely the most direct one. Gary often would have to go through a bunch of different territories to reach his destination. It was safe to say that he had been quite good at his job, which was why he had never failed a delivery until that day.

'At least I got this strange system out of this all.' Gary thought to himself as he quickened his pace. He had his hood up covering his green hair, not that it stood out among all the other punks that were currently out on the streets. After all, he had chosen that hair colour for that reason specifically.

Still, for what he was about to do, he needed to make sure that he wouldn't be recognisable.

Using what money he had left, he bought a few cheap rags from the convenience store that were black in colour. Leaving the store, he searched for an unoccupied alley and started to rip them up, then tied them around his arm and legs, covering them fully. Once he was done, Gary headed towards a certain area of town.

It didn't take him long to find what he was looking for. The graffiti on the wall that had marked this area as belonging to the black coloured gang appeared to have just recently been tagged over with red paint. This was the same as claiming ownership over this area.

Gary closed his eyes and concentrated on his ears. All his senses had been sharpened ever since he woke up with the Werewolf System. Listening carefully, he could hear the sounds of some people talking amongst themselves. Although he was unable to hear exactly what they said, he did make out the sound of a spray can. Opening his eyes he walked in the direction the sounds came from.

'It seems like luck is on my side tonight. But for the red colour gang to have spread this far out into the black colour gang's territory and to do it so brazenly... Surely they should know that the black colour gang works for the Underdogs... are they just brave, stupid... or do they actually have the backing of someone who is willing to go against Damion and his goons?' Gary thought as he stepped out.

"Hey, this ain't your territory! Do you really think you should be doing that?" Gary asked, his heart beating louder with every word he spoke. Just as he had heard, there were three of them, all wearing red colours. One of them was clearly holding a spray can in the midst of tagging yet another wall, but as for the others, Gary had no clue what type of weapons they might have on them.

The three young adults looked at each other for a second and started to laugh. The one closest to Gary, who also happened to be the largest among the group, therefore most likely designated as the lookout, came at Gary.

"Let's get him!" The man swung at Gary, sure that the height difference would play out in his favour, but the high schooler was able to duck the first punch.

'Luckily, I used Charging Heart as soon as I entered the alleyway. Were those gang members always so aggressive? Here I thought I would need to taunt them a bit more.' Gary saw an opening, a chance to attack, so he quickly kicked the first person right in the stomach, using the tip of his toes to dig in.

The man hurled over and Gary mused that if he had gone in again he could have finished off the first member, but instead he decided to turn around and run.

'I can't underestimate them, and I can't let them see my face clearly! There's three of them and only one of me.' He reminded himself as he widened the distance, but at the same time made sure to allow the gang members to follow after him.

Running away, the red coloured gang members were soon chasing after Gary. Three members soon became six, then nine. The first three hadn't exactly kept quiet, making others notice them and join in the chase.

The sheer number of them which continued to grow, reassured Gary that he had made the right decision in choosing not to fight. If he had been caught up with the first three, then there was a good chance the others would have joined and eventually outnumbered him.

This morning, with Gary's brimming overconfidence after becoming a type of Altered who had even won a fight in the arena, he would have decided to fight the three of them. After all, there was that one instance when he had managed to defeat five members of a coloured gang, but after losing to Xin, he felt humbled. His crush had reminded him that one shouldn't judge someone by only their outer appearance.

"That guy, he's not fast but he isn't slowing down!" One of the Red gang members huffed as they continued to chase.

Gary couldn't deny that fact, not when his system had assigned him a mere 3 points of Dexterity which he figured was linked to his speed. Even after using Charging Heart his running wasn't much faster than the average person's. Fortunately, he more than made up for that in the stamina department that he had already confirmed was linked to his Energy bar.

Eventually, Gary arrived at his destination, a park with an open platform. Using his sensitive ears he could hear what he had been hoping for.

“I need help! Red colour gang has come to fight us!” Gary shouted out loud.

It was only then, that the dozen or so red coloured gang members noticed that they had been following Gary all the way into an entirely different area, one that was under stricter control of the black coloured gang. A group of black coloured gang members that would regularly use the park as their hangout spot was already present and quickly surrounded the trespassers.

[New quest received]

[My enemy’s enemy...]

[Using your knowledge you have caused quite the stir]

[You have instigated a turf war!]

Choose a side and make sure they win!]

[Quest reward: 50 Exp per defeated person]

There were around ten of them in total, making the fight more or less even. The red members, seeing no situation out of this mess, decided to go ahead and fight. The two sides clashed bringing out their weapons in the form of bike chains, pocket knives and baseball bats. Some just used their fists and those were the ones who knew how to fight a little better than others.

As for Gary, he didn’t just stay a bystander in all of this, he was also joining in, mostly because he needed to. For one, he needed not to blow his cover and then there was also his Quest reward.

Nevertheless, Gary was sneaky enough to wait for the right chance before delivering the knockout blow to the weakened enemy. Were all of this a game, the gang members might complain about him essentially kill stealing, but as it was, the other black coloured gang members just regarded him as an other member. In this intense moment they didn’t care who got the last punch in, yet for Gary it was

vitaly important, because the counter that had appeared would only go up when he would knock someone out.

The fight didn't last more than a few minutes, and in the end the black coloured gang had won. Huffing and panting, three of them were still standing, well four if one included Gary, while the rest had lost consciousness. Surprisingly, despite some of them having had pocket knives, nobody was bleeding badly apart from a few scratches.

[Quest reward: 450 Exp]

[Congratulations, you have now reached: Level 4]

[A stat point has been granted]

[50/460 exp]

Seeing this, Gary was pleased that he now had two total stat points to allocate, since he had not yet allocated the previous one. It wasn't that he hadn't been able to decide what to use it for, but he had come to the realisation that it was wiser to allow his body to naturally improve until it hit some sort of limit, before he would start using them.

"Hey you were quite skilled there man, what group are you from?" One of the black coloured gang members approached Gary from behind who still had his face turned away.

Unfortunately, as a transporter Gary had only needed to know about the coloured gang's territories, so he didn't know the ins and outs of the gangs. While he was racking his brain on how to get out of the situation, he heard another sound from the system.

[Optional quest received]

[...is also my enemy?]

[The truth is you belong to neither of these gangs and now you can come out on top.]

[Defeat the remaining gang members!]

[Quest reward: 50 Exp per defeated person]

'This system...'

Chapter 38: The power of the moon

Although this new Quest offered him the same rewards for the same type of work, Gary actually felt a bit conflicted. As the description had pointed out, he wasn't really a member of the black colour gang, yet these people had helped him out and he had literally fought side by side with them just moments ago. Gary might be unable to lie his way out of the situation, but he could always just flee.

'I... I can't backstab them.' Gary thought, but just as he was ready to get out of the park, someone let out a scream. Turning around, he could see that it had originated not too far from where he was.

"You should have stayed on your side, bastard!" One of the black colour gang members gleefully exclaimed as he whacked his baseball bat down on the back of one of the red colour gang members who was unable to do anything about this sort of bullying.

'If that guy keeps hitting him like that, he... might even kill him.' Gary realised, clenching his fists.

It was then that the high schooler recalled how five members of the very same colour gang had tried to abduct that girl not too far away from his home. During his time working for the Underdogs, Gary had seen that not every member was a scrumbag, some still had some humanity left inside of them like Kirk, but watching this group of ruffians, they clearly didn't belong in that category.

They robbed people, made it so the streets were unsafe, and didn't even think twice about hurting others. In a way, the actual big gangs above them were far more respectable as they at least made a real effort not to get regular civilians involved, yet it was different with the colour gangs.

“Hey didn’t you hear me, I’ve asked what group you’re from?” The black colour gang member repeated his question, but Gary just kept looking at the guy with the baseball bat having fun against his helpless victims. What’s more, the third member of their group picked up one of the dropped pocket knives, and brought it really close to the red colour gang member’s face.

“Let me give you a little reminder of what happens if you barge into the wrong territory.”

Seeing this, Gary couldn’t take it any more.

“Screw this, the system’s right.” Gary mumbled, the other person had heard what he had said but didn’t quite understand the context. “I don’t belong to any of these gangs!”

The black colour gang member needed a moment to gleam the meaning behind the last thing the high schooler had said, but by that time a fist was about to connect with him. Gary had also activated his Charging Heart skill once more, making his fist speed up mid swing, as it aimed right at his opponent’s chin, sending him flying to the ground.

Gary didn’t hesitate as he moved onto the next one. Having watched Gary just knock out his buddy with a single hit, the gang member dropped the pocket knife in a panic, quickly trying to pick it back up. However, that proved to be a big mistake. The moment he looked down, the high schooler took it as his opportunity to kick him square in his face, making him join his buddy in dreamland.

Unfortunately for Gary, the last member of the black colour gang that was still up, was faster on the uptake. Before he could turn around to deal with him, it was Gary’s turn to take a beating. Moments after his kick to the face, he felt a strong force on his back, stemming from a baseball bat.

‘Damn it! Why do all these goons have to aim at my ribs?!’

[-10 HP]

[Congratulations! After repeatedly taking a beating your body has grown stronger. Don’t get used to this though, otherwise people might think you’re a M.]

[Endurance +1]

'Is this really the time to congratulate me? And what the heck is a M!' Gary thought, as he could feel the baseball bat continually pound him. He had curled up into a ball, placing his hands above his head to protect it. The only silver lining was that the subsequent hits only took off 5 points of his HP, though he was unsure whether this was because the gang member was exhausted or his boosted Endurance.

Gritting his teeth, Gary bared through the pain, and let the adrenaline take care of the pain. He decided to go for his legs charging in tackling him. A move he had been practicing in Rugby many times before. Lifting him up with his strength, Gary then soon slammed him down on the concrete floor, knocking him out and causing him to drop the bat.

[Quest reward: 150 Exp]

[200/460 Exp]

[You are a lone wolf that is growing]

[Would you like to Force bond marking any of those that you have defeated? (1/5)]

[During the Hunt, you will gain additional Exp for each successful Mark you have successfully taken down]

[1/5]

Gary had naturally declined the offer to Mark more people. He still didn't understand what a hunt was, he had an idea, but he wasn't prepared to kill people, not if it could be avoided.

'I still need to figure out how to get rid of Barry's Mark. Should I try to talk to him after Rugby practice?' Gary contemplated.

It was getting late and it was time for Gary to head home, otherwise his mother would start to get suspicious. Due to his 'little fun' with the colour gangs, he hadn't had the time to go to the gym. It looked like he had to give it a miss for today and fail his Daily Quest.

Still, he had gained way more Exp than he would have in the gym. Nevertheless, he imagined that with what he had just done, tensions between the two colour gangs were guaranteed to rise and they would most likely act more cautious by travelling in bigger groups for the foreseeable future. It was unlikely that he would get another chance to farm so much Exp, but just doing it once had already been worth it.

Gary might be unable to complete the gym part of his Daily Quests, but nothing was stopping him from stopping by the shop as he had done these past days to purchase some more protein. After finishing the raw steak away from the eyes of others, the high schooler once again had his Energy restored, which helped him heal his injuries, yet there was still one problem.

'My money is going down a lot faster than I thought it would. I still don't have a consistent supply. What should I do? I thought Kai would be calling me more often, how long can this last?' Gary thought seeing that he had about two hundred dollars or so left out of his total five hundred, the money from the initial transportation from the Underdogs he didn't want to touch, planning to give that to his mother somehow...

On his way home, Gary was surprised by the scent of raw food. He rubbed his eyes, because he could visibly see the scent in the air. It looked like a red mist that led up to a certain apartment.

'This... looks like the same thing I saw at school. It's the trail that allows me to follow those that are Marked, so does that mean Barry lives in this area?' Gary wondered.

It was only a few streets away from where he lived, and he didn't like this thought at all. Sure, Barry often used his status to get what he wanted at school, but that still wasn't enough of a reason to kill him. He might not have been the nicest person, but there were far worse people than him.

'I can't just turn up at his door, especially not this late. I'll have to try to think of something tomorrow instead. I still have some time before the full moon anyway, and who knows maybe Tom was just making a big deal out of nothing.'

Getting home, Gary greeted his mother and sister and ate the dinner that she had left for him quite easily, despite already having eaten 2kg of meat. His stomach just seemed endless ever since he had turned.

When trying to go to sleep that night though, Gary was having trouble. He couldn't stop thinking about what would happen when the full moon was to come out. It didn't help that he could see his sister Amy sleeping on the bed next to him.

Then, when the clock went past midnight over to the next day, the system delivered him a new message.

[The power of the moon is starting to run through your body. The fuller it gets, the more powerful you'll become.]

[Current bonus: All Stats +1]

Reading the message, Gary could feel that his body felt slightly different. When checking his stats, he could see that each of his three base stats now displayed a (+1) next to them. This was similar to what it looked like when he used Charging Heart, which told him that it was a temporary boost.

'Wow, I feel so alive right now. Will this seriously continue to happen as we get closer and closer to the full moon?' Gary wondered.

However, his happiness soon went away as the next set of messages appeared.

[Your bloodlust grows]

[11 days until the next full moon]

Chapter 39: Breaking news

It was safe to say that after receiving that message in the middle of the night, Gary didn't get the best of sleep. Every time he would close his eyes, his brain would play out images of himself turning into a werewolf who would start clawing out his sister, since she was in the bed right next to his.

It wasn't that his body felt like doing it, in fact, although the system claimed that his bloodlust had increased, Gary didn't feel any differences, least of all a sudden desire to harm anyone. The high schooler still felt like his usual self, apart from all the super strength and speed he felt from the powerful moon, but that was becoming more ordinary by the second for Gary.

[You are exhausted from a lack of sleep]

[Until you get some proper rest, your Energy bar has been lowered to 75%]

'Well, whose fault is it that I couldn't sleep, you stupid system?' Gary thought irritated, as he made his way to school. Still, even with 82,5 Energy he could still use Charging Heart and do plenty of other things. It was also a pleasant surprise, that aside from Energy, all his other stats weren't negatively affected in any way due to this.

Entering his classroom, there was a brief encounter when Gary and Xin locked eyes with each other. The girl had actually been ready to approach Gary as she had developed a slight interest in him. Alas, unlike yesterday, he didn't pay her any special attention, completely ignoring her greeting. Leaving her to just give an awkward wave.

The boy had headed straight to his desk, put his bag next to him and then immediately put his head down. Now that he was in school, a wave of drowsiness came over him, so he planned to use the time before the teacher would arrive to get a quick nap in.

'Did something happen to him yesterday? Could he not sleep because he lost that fight to me?' Xin wondered. Having failed to make up with one person who was supposed to like her, Xin was now very worried about how her conversation would go with the girl who was holding a grudge against her...

By the time Tom finally arrived, he found his desk mate lightly snoring on his desk. Since this wasn't Gary's usual behaviour, he decided against waking him up. Be it sheer dumb luck, his teachers not caring or perhaps having some sympathy for Gary, nobody had found a fault with him sleeping through their class. Eventually, it was break time, giving Tom a chance to talk to his friend.

"Good morning, sleepy head. Well, technically it's noon now, so how're you feeling? Was your impromptu nap some sort of statement about how useless all this stuff is we're forced to learn or was it

because it's getting closer to a..." Tom looked left and right to see if anyone else was listening. "Full moon."

Hearing those words just reminded Gary of what the system had told him.

"I just couldn't get any sleep yesterday. It's nothing to do with that crap." Gary replied groggily after Tom had woken him up. "Come on, why don't we just talk about something else?"

"Sure, but it's kinda important, seeing as we only have 11 more days." Tom said. "We have to figure this stuff out, check if there are any changes... Say, are you going to quit the Rugby club? If you don't someone could seriously get--"

"Enough." Gary was so annoyed that he almost shouted. "You're nagging me worse than my Mom. Look, I know you mean well and I swear I was thinking about that stuff and also worrying about it. However, I can solve things my own way, and it's hard to explain this stuff, what's happening to me."

It was hard on Tom as well, honestly, he couldn't remember the last time he and Gary had an argument, but lately it seemed like he was stepping on his nerves a little too much, but Tom had to admit he probably was being a little bit too overbearing.

Gary was right, he couldn't imagine what it was like to be in his shoes right now.

"Right now, Rugby is actually one of the only things going well for me, so I don't want to give up on something that can keep my mind off of everything else that's happening." Gary replied.

--

When classes had come to an end, instead of heading to the next fighting club like Tom thought Gary would do, they found themselves on the Rugby field once again. Due to there being a match coming up next week, they had asked the non-regulars to stay on the bench and observe, this included Tom.

The regulars were split into two groups as they had a practice match against one another. Blake and Gary were on one team, while on the opposing team were Gil and Barry, who didn't exactly have good feelings towards the newest member of their team.

'This is a good chance for me to test a few things out.' Gary thought as he looked at his stats.

[Strength 5 (+1)]

[Dexterity 3 (+1)]

[Endurance 9 (+1)]

The boost from the moon was still present, but what Gary wanted to test was how much these small increments of numbers affected him. The whistle blew and as soon as it did he activated Charging Heart.

His base stats, but he could see that he was also still receiving the one extra point of boost from the power of the moon. The ball was in a player's hands, but running past the others on the line, it looked like Gary had come out of nowhere, as he tackled the player with the ball, going straight for the legs.

The large high school student went down almost instantly, and recovering straight away, Gary was also able to pick up the loose ball that was on the ground. Soon two others went to stop him, and he was able to dodge two of them with his reflexes and their predictable tackle patterns, until he eventually had been hit from the side and piled on by the rest of the team.

'Has he gotten faster? Heck, even his tackling has gotten better.' Blake noticed.

"What are you doing, broccoli head?!" Mr Root shouted. "I got you so you could mainly play defence. Did you think your slow self could go for a point all on your own. If you manage to get possession of the ball, I want you to lure them and then pass it!"

Gary admitted that he got a bit carried away, but his body felt great. It felt so light when using 'Charging Heart', it was almost addictive. It was a strange feeling suddenly becoming twice the person you once were.

As the rest of the game went on, Gary showed off his skills and it was noticeable to many of them on the field. Gary was soon becoming a prime tackler, and a reliable player. He had also tackled Barry thinking that with a touch he might be able to get rid of the Marking, but it wasn't that easy.

"This is a bunch of crap!" Gil said. "Look how much they're praising that guy just because he's having a good day today! If this keeps happening, Harvey will never be allowed back on the team. We have to do something."

Barry looked at Gary, but for some reason, ever since he had stood up to him, a chill ran down his spine whenever he saw the other. He either wanted to completely avoid him, or his instincts were telling him that he needed to do whatever he could to get rid of him, before he disappeared.

"Yeah, but there's nothing we can do! Blake made it abundantly clear that we're not to touch Gary. If we do something stupid, we might be the ones to get kicked off the team ourselves." Barry replied.

Looking over at the benches, Gil's eyes set on someone else.

"Fine, we might be unable to touch Gary, but there is someone else that we can go for instead."

With Rugby not really being interesting to Tom, especially knowing that given his physique he would never amount to anything in that sport, he had decided to play on his phone and keep up to date with whatever he could. That was when he received a notification from the local news channel.

[Breaking news; Murderer on the loose!]

[In the small town of Slough in the Montay area a husband and wife were found dead in their apartment block this morning. Police have yet to reveal any information on what exactly had occurred but at the moment they are looking for any tips on their missing son, Billy Bruntin.]

'Whoa, I know the police haven't said it outright, but if they are looking for the son and he's missing, doesn't that just make him the prime suspect? What would make someone go so bad that they would kill their parents though?' Tom wondered.

It wasn't long after that, Gary received a disturbing message from his system, one that he didn't quite understand.

Chapter 40: Omega Wolf

After club activities had ended, the members of the Rugby team were praising Gary for his skills on the field. The majority of them had been worried about Mr Root choosing him. After all, Gary had been a member of the club ever since last year but he had never shown any real talent.

Somebody getting better overnight should only be possible in mangas, novels or on TV, but in reality it would take a lot of effort... and yet somehow Gary seemed to have gone through some sort of growth spurt since the start of the week. He hadn't grown in height, yet he had still vastly improved in terms of speed and strength.

Receiving so much praise was a new experience for Gary. He hadn't really been unpopular in class, in fact there was nobody in his class who really hated him. If one were to ask his classmates to describe him, most would have probably used 'class clown' or 'a bit of a weirdo' ever since he came back with his new hair style. However, his relationship with anyone but Tom had never really progressed past the level of an acquaintance.

'This feels amazing.' Gary thought with a slightly smug smile on his face. Before the system he had never been particularly good at anything except perhaps for Altered trivia, so getting some recognition from his fellow peers, the high schooler discovered that he quite enjoyed the feeling.

Walking away from his teammates who had patted him, some playfully, others more seriously, Gary checked over his stats, hoping that one of them might have improved. As expected, he had no such luck. The only change was his Energy that was now at 58 points since he had used Charging Heart a couple of times during their practice. Fortunately, his earlier sleep session had been deemed as enough rest for the system to revert his Energy bar back to 100%.

'Huh, what's this?' Gary wondered as he noticed that he had a new notification which hadn't popped up on its own. 'When did I get it? Was it at night when I finally fell asleep, or was it during my nap?'

Clicking on it, it opened up before him. The notification time indicated that it had appeared at 4 AM in the morning, which was around the time his desire for sleep had overwhelmed him. Unfortunately, even after reading the message, Gary didn't understand exactly what it was trying to tell him.

[An Omega has been created]

"What the hell is an Omega?" Mumbling this question, Gary had been hoping for his system to shed some light on that topic. Alas, it wasn't that type of system. So far it had only provided him with insight whenever it chose to. Realising that he had slept through something important, he quickly checked the Quest tab and indeed it had the red dot to show that something had been added to it.

[Optional quest received]

[Start your own family]

[You were young, stupid and didn't use protection, so now you gotta deal with the aftermath!]

[Turn the Omega into your Pack and turn it into a Beta!]

[Quest reward: Unlocking of the 'Pack' tab]

'I'm only 16! What kind of pervert designed this system to ask someone to start a family at my age?! I'm not even able to support my own family, so how could I even afford to start another?! No wonder this quest is optional!' Gary felt a strong urge to punch the creator.

Nevertheless, since those strange messages had appeared through the Werewolf System, he was sure that they were important. Gary was sincerely hoping that his best friend might be more familiar with those terms and would be able to make some more sense out of those.

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“I believe I did stumble upon those terms when looking into your... ‘special condition’.” Tom said, as he checked their surroundings, making sure nobody paid close attention to them. However, that wasn’t too much of a problem. The players who had actually been running around, were now in the showers, while those like Tom, who had done nothing but warm the benches, had quickly changed into their normal clothes and already left.

“However, I don’t know if they really apply to you. Like I said, there is a bunch of different lore for everything and who knows which one’s true. In case you’ve forgotten, the silver pendant that most of those sources had agreed should be your bane, had done nothing at all, whereas chocolate nearly became your cause of death.”

“Look, get some good rest today, you still look dead tired. Tomorrow’s Saturday, so if you want we can both head to the library and do some research. ... well knowing you, I’ll probably end up as the one to do all the research to figure out what these things mean most likely. Say, where did you even hear those terms from anyway?”

Gary was trying to figure out how to answer Tom, after all he hadn’t informed him about the system part of his transformation into a werewolf.

“Well, given my ‘special condition’, I looked some things up by myself. It’s a bit of the reason why I’m so tired, actually.” Gary answered, touching the back of his head. “But like you said, everything is too confusing so I didn’t really get most of it.”

Tom looked at his friend for a few seconds, he still remembered how Gary had told him off just this morning for talking about werewolves too much and now he was asking him for help. Were it not for his earlier outburst, he might have yanked on his best friend’s chains by playfully demanding a date with Amy in return, but in the end Tom just nodded.

“Alright, then it’s a deal. We’ll meet at the public library at noon. While we’re at it, we could also look up other things about... the moon and stars and such.” Although Tom didn’t say it, he was thinking of ways and learning of what exactly happened on a full moon.

Instead of instigating another fight, Gary had once again stopped by the supermarket, before heading to the gym. Following the instructions the system provided, Gary had worked out until the system had rewarded him with 5 Exp. It was a welcome surprise, since he had been half expecting it to be cut down to 1 Exp or less, seeing that it had been cut in half once he had hit Level 2.

Still, he was a bit down that he had not experienced any other physical improvements. He understood that it would take him far less time than normal people, but he still couldn't help but be a bit impatient, not knowing when he might need to be more powerful.

For once, Gary was able to head home like a normal high schooler. Kai's phone was still dead silent, so he decided to spend his evening with his family, something he didn't get to do often. As it turned out, just because he had time, didn't mean the rest of the world would accede his desires.

Shortly after he came home, his mother had rushed out because work had asked her to replace one of her co-workers, leaving the two teenagers on their own. In turn, Amy seemed more interested in spending time with her cellphone than spending precious time with her brother.

'If only we had more money, Mom wouldn't have to work so hard.' Gary thought.

While enjoying his meal, Gary also paid attention to the TV that had been left on a news channel. The high schooler was very interested in the local part, since it had allowed him to keep up to date with things that were going on in Slough.

Especially interesting were any updates to the gang situation and Gary was currently even more interested about any new discoveries in the case of the recent killings that Gary himself might have been involved in.

Today, the channel was reporting on a different story though. The breaking news that was playing all day were about two individuals who had been killed in their own home. Gary had been in the middle of cutting up a piece of steak and eating it like a normal human would, until he saw the image of the deceased couple's missing son appear on screen.

"What the hell?! That's Billy Buster!" Gary blurted out.

“Huh, how do you know that guy? According to the news he doesn’t go to your school.” Amy asked. Despite her appearance, she had actually also been paying attention to the news, but Gary ignored her.

‘I knew he was a scumbag for using those brass knuckles on me, but I never figured him for a murderer. What’s more, to kill his parents...’ Gary thought, the steak in front of him, losing some of its taste...

With Gary having his own plans again, at one point he had parted ways with Tom. Unbeknownst to the both of them, this turned out to be a mistake. Tom had been lost in his own thoughts, walking pretty much on auto pilot, until he hit a meaty wall. Looking up, he saw a familiar face and when he took a few steps back, he bumped into someone else.

“Gil...Barry...err how ‘nice’ to see you. If you don’t mind, I kinda need to get home.” Tom said nervously, already aware that that wasn’t happening. Neither one of them should be living in this direction, and judging by the sneaky manner that they had appeared, they weren’t just there to have a friendly chat with him.