

Werewolf 371

Chapter 371: Your Background (part 2)

Having overheard the conversation from before, Gary was about to explain what he had just seen, but someone else was one step ahead of him.

"It was a trade," Izzy answered. "What we saw earlier at the canteen must have been them agreeing to the terms, and this was the transaction itself. I thought it was strange what the professor said, but now it's clear. People inside here are definitely using their position and connection on the outside to get certain benefits. It's not just a question of who is the strongest.

"Thinking one step further, this means that if you cross the wrong person in here, or get on their bad side, you might not end up as the only one suffering. Worst case scenario, it might be your whole family." Izzy gulped.

If that was true, this begged the question, what position those in the top ten held for them to be treated like some type of gods. Others would constantly approach them, seemingly trying to curry favour. For the one that had just traded away his position, he probably thought it was better to help out his family than himself.

On closer inspection, it didn't seem as bad as Gary had anticipated either, since the losing student's badge had gone from 47 to 48. Meanwhile, the winner's badge was now showing 47, indicating that all those whose rank had been in between the one had theirs adjusted by one.

Eventually, Izzy asked for another meeting, inviting the others. Ian and Gary agreed immediately, while Numba just followed behind and leaned up against the wall, not saying anything.

"After that little demonstration, it should be safe to say that this place here is more complicated than what we were told by the professors. It's in our best interest to find out more information about who is who, like who is from what city and what their backing is! It might be for the better to avoid fighting those from the same city or town as you, or those in your surrounding.

"As a start, how about we properly introduce ourselves. I'm from Pompano, a Tier-3 town. My family owns a few restaurants, and we've also branched out to the surrounding towns in recent years."

Ian was the next one to introduce himself. "I also come from Pompano. Izzy and I are childhood friends. My family operates an IT servicing company there and is helping out some prominent companies from Tier-2 and Tier 1 cities."

"Both our families are doing quite well financially, but in terms of influence, it's not really worth mentioning. They pretty much invested into us becoming Altered to help with that, but first, we'll need to get into the AFA of course." Izzy explained. "No doubt there will be someone from Pompano that has a connection to the gangs, or the mayor or something."

"If we come across them, it would be hard for us to touch them. However, if we work together then someone like you from another town or city, can!" Izzy seemed excited about this idea and plan she had.

Thinking about what Izzy had said, Gary realised that there shouldn't be anyone in here he needed to really worry about then. The Howlers were now the biggest gang in Slough. At the same time, he couldn't think of anyone other than Xin that was an Altered there.

"And what if they're from a Tier-1 city?" Numba asked. "Now I'm not saying that those guys will bother with someone who comes from a lower-tier town or city, but in the off chance they do, and they're close with their parents or something, it could be the end of our families."

Gritting her teeth, Izzy felt a little embarrassed, but she did have an answer for this situation.

"In that case, the best approach would be to wait. I'm sure that there are people who are too big that no one wants to touch them. However, if that's the case, they should easily get a top ten position, and after a week they can leave. There will always be an opportunity at some point."

"There are only so many cities, and so many Altered out there. My guess is that those types should have already gone through. This system creates a stalemate in the top ten, as you are allowed to challenge them. Remember, you have to keep your position for a whole week."

"This gets rid of all of those that everyone is afraid to touch, and leaves the ones constantly challenging them. We can get through this, we just need to know more about everyone and each other."

Izzy seemed to be a scheming type of person. Always coming up with ideas and ways to push herself to the top. Numba agreed with her rationale, and he even suspected that her being the one who had planned Gary's downfall might have played into her getting the invitation with the rest of them. Although the Goat Altered didn't trust her, he also wasn't sure how far he could get with his own backing.

"I was adopted." Numba eventually revealed. "I was adopted by a Tier-3 electronics company due to my potential. My position is pretty much the same as the two of you, the company is currently looking to expand, preferably into a Tier-2 city, and they want me to be their public face."

Finally, Gary had been given an answer to why Numba had felt different from the rest and it was because, like him, he hadn't been born into this position.

"Why are you smiling at me?" Numba asked, taking a step back. "Man, you're seriously weird."

"Sorry, I'm just happy to find someone in a similar position as me, you know?" Gary admitted, though his sheepish smile remained on his face.

"Does that mean you were picked up by someone as well?" Ian asked.

To be honest, Izzy and Ian were holding out for Gary's answer. With how strong the Werewolf had proven and with the type of talent that had made the professors consider admitting him straight into the AFA, they were hoping that he was at least from a Tier-2 city. If he was, surely he would form a family with a strong backing.

Most likely, he was just someone who the scouts happened to miss. Which seemed like a probable thing.

"Ummm, I mean I guess you could say I was picked up," Gary replied, scratching the back of his head. "I'm from a Tier-3 town called Slough, not sure if you've heard of it."

There was an instant disappointment on all of their faces because given their backing it meant that none of them had the power to bully themselves into a better position like they had just seen. As for Slough, other than Kirk and a few news reports that had come out from it recently, it was pretty much an

unknown place. Even then, Kirk had only been the Rookie champion, so only people who really followed the AFC would know of him.

'I guess I shouldn't tell them the whole truth. Otherwise, it would be a bit weird.' Gary thought.

"In my case, I'm being sponsored by a gang called the Howlers." Immediately, everyone's eyes opened wide when they heard that they were next to a gang member.

Chapter 372: Crazy

Gary had already received this type of reaction before from others, but at least he understood why the others were doing that, but now he felt like it made no sense. The only reason he could think of for them to act like this was because of the words that had just come out of his mouth.

"What's wrong?" Gary eventually asked, a little puzzled by the situation. "Is it really that surprising to hear that I'm being sponsored by my gang? I thought it would be fine to mention that in a place like this. I mean, it's not like I'm the only one, nor are the Howlers active in any of your towns."

None of the three really answered his question, so the green haired teenager looked towards Izzy who had been the most talkative up until now. This awkward silence continued for a few moments, but Gary's gaze alone continued to put pressure on the teenage girl until she eventually said something.

"Look, it's nothing against you personally, but... well, you should understand that the relationship between gangs and businesses is... 'complicated' to say the least. They pretty much control everything nowadays

"What businesses are allowed to operate in their 'area', how high the 'protection fee' is, and other things that only ever really benefits one side. I'm sure you understand why we feel like we have to be wary of gang members, since one wrong action could spell disaster for us and our families. The sad reality is that all they've built up until now could crumble at the word of a gang member."

Gary stayed silent since he agreed with what Izzy was saying. In fact, it was a major part of the reason why he disliked gangs so much, and why he had made sure that the Howlers would do things differently from Olivia or Damion.

Admittedly, they weren't completely in the right, either. The property which used to belong to the Underdogs was now in Kai's possession, though following Gary's will, they had leased those places back to the original owners as far as it was possible.

The Howlers also charged protection fees, yet their rate was far more reasonable than that of the other gangs, and the contracts even included clauses that would allow business owners to postpone payments in case business had been bad in a given month.

Those were unfortunately a necessary evil to ensure that the gang members stayed loyal and could support their own families. Gary could try to explain that the Howlers were better than most, but he doubted Izzy and the others would just take his word for it.

"There's more than just that." Izzy continued. "Gang members are just... 'different', usually vicious, people who don't give a damn about who they hurt, and I bet that includes the ones in here. If we're lucky, we might meet someone who is prideful and won't ask for help from their family."

"The problem is that just because one gang member might be reasonable, that doesn't mean others in his gang are the same. Let's say I beat a low ranking gang member, there's a chance that because I wronged one of theirs, the whole gang will go against me."

"Even if they're facing another gang that is clearly bigger than theirs, those who are deathly loyal will still risk their lives. Now that we know that you're in a gang, it certainly explains how you were able to do those things before so...easily."

Gary understood that she was referring to, how he had broken Ian's leg and clawed at the others. There had been next to no hesitation in the Werewolf's strikes, and it was because he had already fought with his life on the line multiple times. As for the others, yes they were Altered, but their fighting experience had been far more limited and curated.

"Should I keep it to myself, then?" Gary asked. "If other people ask me what my background is, I mean. Should I just lie and tell them that some business is behind me?"

This was something the green haired teenager wasn't so sure about, because the whole point of coming here had been to become a famous Altered, one that the Howlers could actively support.

“No, it's best if you're honest about that.” Izzy shook her head. “I'm sure there will be those in here who have a way to gather information on us somehow. Besides, your backing is actually advantageous for you. None of those from Tier-3 towns will bother to mess with you unless they're from a gang themselves.

“Heck, even those from Tier-2 cities will probably want to avoid getting into trouble with you, unless they have big connections. Don't rely on my analysis, though. There is so much we don't know, that there still be some who will challenge you, maybe just see what you're like or what type you are.

“After all, you might be a gang's Altered, but it's not like that automatically means that your gang will protect you from anything in here. It's not like your the leader who can declare a gang war on the Howlers' behalf.”

Gary scratched his chin at this comment. “Right...”

He wasn't the type of person to do something like that in the first place, and besides the gang was busy doing their own thing.

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It had been a while since the group had all travelled together, but today was an important day for the Howlers. They had been planning this for a while now, and they couldn't help themselves but be excited in the car on the way to their destination.

“Freaking hell, I never thought I would ever get to step foot into a Tier-1 city, and now we're travelling by limo!” Innu exclaimed.

“Of course, we have to travel in style!” Kai replied. “And with more of us, it was important we upgraded the vehicle. Otherwise, we would be squashed.”

While most of them seemed to be excited, there was one with her hand slumped on her chin, staring out the window.

“What’s wrong, Mai?” White asked.

“It's nothing... I just wish Gary was here. I know he's busy and all, and he’s living his dream, but it would be nice if we could enjoy this together.” Mai replied.

“Don’t beat yourself up too much. Think about the surprise on his face when he returns. Gary won’t have to feel so alone any more.” Kai answered as the limo passed the sign stating they were entering, Morfran.

The city was mostly controlled by a group of people, known as the Dark Guild.

Chapter 373: The high rankers

The first day passed without any major problems for the green haired Altered. Surprisingly, nobody had challenged any of the newcomers. Due to the lack of decent food, Gary had felt hungrier than usual, but since there had been no need for him to act, it had been tolerable.

As intended, Gary had simply spent his time observing those who had been here for a longer period of time, and the Werewolf continued doing so on the second and third days. His Energy reserve had fallen to 178, but he had at least learned a lot in the meantime.

For one, those public fights in the centre had been a daily occurrence. However, the green haired teenager had discovered that the fights held there were mostly the ones following some secret agreement between both parties.

Far more interesting were the seemingly spontaneous fights that had happened elsewhere.

As it turned out, fights could take place practically anywhere and at any time during their ‘free time’, so outside of meals and bedtime. Interestingly, even if it was an awkward place that was relatively small, the teachers would come out to clear the area, making sure the other students wouldn’t get hurt. These fights were mostly issued by those who ranked highly, who didn’t seem inclined to show off necessarily.

The training facility was one of the places where fighting was prohibited. Gary had visited it, and he had to admit that it was filled with some seriously advanced stuff. At the time, around a dozen low-ranking students had been using it, all seemingly striving to get better. Of course, since he had no access to the

higher ranking training facilities, Gary couldn't compare the two, though most of the high rankers preferred to chill in the main area as far as he had observed.

At the same time, the Werewolf had kept an eye on those that had joined together with him. Izzy had taken a far more active approach than him, and whenever he had spotted her, it had been with a different set of students. She was obviously gathering information for her next move, but only a few had been willing to actually talk with her.

Using his hearing, Gary could tell that she was being looked down on, simply because she hadn't been scouted. Unsurprisingly, this wasn't limited to her. Gary, Numba, and Ian all were being discriminated against since they had entered through the assessment.

Things changed on the second day after Ian had challenged a boy ranked at 105. Gary wasn't sure whether Ian's Altered was one that had great regenerative properties or the AFA had used some means to heal him up that well, but the teenage boy had been able to fight as if he had never been injured. What's more, despite being unable to transform, he had easily won.

After that, there were those that had gathered and started to talk to Ian a bit more. Asking about his background and such. From the sound of it, there were even those that asked if they could do business with him.

'I guess it's not all negative, then. If you can prove yourself here, you can even make connections for your gang, You don't just have to be afraid of others.' Gary thought.

This morning, Numba had fought a girl ranked 98, and he had won his fight without too much trouble, allowing him to upgrade from the chicken soup that Izzy and Gary were being served once more.

"Don't get your hopes up just because they won." The teenage girl warned, sitting next to Gary. She had taken an interest in the Werewolf, and given his strength, she was surprised he hadn't acted yet.

"What do you mean?" The green haired teenager asked after slurping his soup, recovering his Energy to 180.

“Haven't you noticed how those ranked closest to us are on the older side? It's because a lot of them are like us, those who came in here after passing the assessments and have just remained here for a while. They all still seem to be hoping that they can get out of this place at some point.

“From my calculations, we are a long way off in strength compared to the others... I'm speaking just about the three of us, of course. You, Gary, are a different story, and honestly, I'm looking forward to what happens once you stir this place up.”

The Werewolf had a grin on his face, their relationship might have started off on the wrong foot, but after getting to know her a bit he had somewhat forgiven Izzy for what she had done. He didn't want to hold a grudge forever, after all, she had just been using whatever she could to get through the test and in the worst case, he would have lost the opportunity to attend the AFA, not his life.

After their meal, everyone automatically went to the main area, but something was going on. A circle had formed, and a certain student started to clap. It was loud and was itching around the halls.

It was a lean student who had four others following him, all of them under the fifty number rank, and as for himself, why he had gotten the attention of the others was due to the number 4 on his badge.

“Congratulations on your fight this morning. Now I think you and I should have a little talk.” The rank four said, pointing at Numba. The Goat Altered looked straight at the person and eventually walked off.

He wanted to pass him and head to his new room, but as he did, the others started to follow. A lot of people thought a fight was going to start, and we're about to follow after to have a look, but strangely a few others came to stop them from advancing.

“Everyone, it's best if you just mind your own business and stay out of it!” Their leader with informed them. The students were quick to listen as they walked away doing their own thing, as for the reason why they had listened. It was due to the number on their badges. Number 8, 6 and 5.

Just then, Gary started to walk towards where Numba was, as he was interested in what they had to say. At the same time he owed Numba a favour so if anything was going on, Gary wanted to help, but after just a few steps he felt someone grab him by the arm.

“What do you think you’re doing. I know I said I was excited to see what you were going to do, but even crazy should have its limits!” Izzy whispered as she pulled Gary in. “You don't understand what's going on, but I do.”

“You remember what I said before, about how staying in the top 10 for a week would be difficult. From what I’ve gathered, we came at a strange time. The current top ten have all come to an agreement.

“They publicly announced that they would back up each other if one of them were challenged and to not fight each other for a week. Apparently, it's been hard for students to pass at the moment because of that rule, and that's why those high ranking students just jumped in just there.

“Once these ten are through, there’s always a large free for all that goes on for the next top ten positions. That's going to be our best chance, and yours, if you want to get to the real academy.”

Holding onto Gary’s sleeve tightly, she could still feel that the green haired teenager was going to pull away, despite the warning.

‘As I thought, gang members are crazy!’ Izzy pulled on his shirt again, trying to convince him.

“Whatever they're planning to do to Numba it won't be bad. They have nothing to gain from him. He’s from a small town, and he’s a low rank, so don’t worry.”

Gary pulled his arm away with just a bit extra force to the point where Izzy could do nothing.

“Worrying is what I do. Maybe it's because I’ve worried about my mother and sister for so long...but I just don’t like seeing this stuff. If it’s nothing, then you won’t have to worry about me either.” Gary said as he walked over to where the three high ranking members were.

“Stop!” The rank 8 shouted and placed his hand out in front of the Werewolf.

Chapter 374: The top of the top

A second ago, everyone had been about to leave and do their own thing, worried that staying there might get them in trouble with the top rankers. However, when they heard Gary being shouted at, they couldn't help to turn around to satisfy their own curiosity.

"You think that guy has a death wish?" One of the students murmured to the one standing next to him. "When's the last time someone dared to go up against anyone in the top ten?"

"I dunno about that death wish part, but that fresh blood's stay is destined to be miserable now. The poor idiot probably doesn't even have an idea what kind of mistake he just committed." Another replied.

"I feel bad for him. He's going to get killed if someone doesn't pull him out." A third one chimed in.

"You're a Cat Altered, aren't you? If you want to play the good Samaritan, go sacrifice one of your nine lives to save him. I'll make sure to pray for the both of you after they've sent you to the other side." Another one ridiculed the notion.

At the same time, watching from the third floor, there was a trio of students that were watching things unravel from above. Because if something did occur then in the end they would probably have to step in.

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"Hey, Snow, Appolo, did Sty tell any of you that he would be doing this?" A topless student questioned. Scratching his short hard hair, at an incredible speed, one would think he was trying to start a fire or had nits. Even while talking he seemed to be doing this action. His jacket was tied around his waist, and the badge that all the students wore was pinned on it, showing the number 3. This student was called Wu Chen, and there were many that knew his name, as he was the most often seen top ranker. Spending most of his time training in the standard training rooms that anyone could use.

Wu was scowling since he was in the middle of training when he had been called. "Didn't we all agree to sit still for one week? Ha, didn't you guys even bet that I would be the first one to break the pact? Looks like you'll have to treat me once we're in the AFA!"

“No, he didn’t warn any of us, Wu. He better have a good explanation why he did that. Otherwise, I say, we should punish him by reducing his rank.” The tallest student among them replied. Seeing the scene in front of them, his hands tightened around the bar, and he was starting to grind his teeth.

Seeing how Snow Light, the currently second-strongest student, reacted like that, the person to his left handed him a carrot. Not even looking up, Snow grabbed the treat and started chomping down on it aggressively, his overly long ears whipping up and down while all the tension in his body began to disappear.

Seeing this sight, Wu couldn't help but pull a face.

‘I don’t think you should be saying anything, Snow! With enough carrots, he could easily bribe you into pretending like you hadn’t seen anything.’

“I don’t mind him taking action, to be honest. There are already rumours going around that those in the top 20 intended to challenge us all on the last day to stop us from advancing.

“I’m not sure how reliable those rumours are, but given that their background isn’t too far off from ours, we can’t just ignore that possibility. Besides, I’m sure our actions have caused us to make some enemies inside here.” He let out a big sigh, almost tired of the situation.

“I was the one that proposed the idea of no fighting, so I guess I will also need to be the one that enforces the rules.” Stopping there, the student began to stare at the green haired student. “I prefer honest people like that guy. At least you know what to expect from his type since they express their feelings openly.”

Apollo Zorian was looking at Gary specifically when saying these words. Underneath his dark clothes was a chest bigger than anyone else’s in the facility. What also stood out was his incredibly pale skin that looked like it would be burnt just from the lights in the room alone. On top of that, there were visible scars on his knuckles and a few on his chin as well.

Usually just seeing such a person most would avoid them. For altered there weren’t many with scars, because their bodies would heal them. This meant, at first glance, it was obvious that he wasn’t someone unfamiliar with the world of fighting, as he was someone who had fought before he was an

Altered even at this age. Yet in here there was another reason to avoid him. He was the one whose badge showed the number 1 right now.

‘I wonder what type of surprises the rest of this one week still holds for us.’ He thought to himself with a mild grin.

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On the first floor, Gary continued walking toward the high-ranking individuals. He showed no fear and others had already coined him a dead man walking, though they were also looking forward to witnessing a one-sided beating.

It was then that the two high rankers looked at each other as well wondering what to do, or perhaps suggest which one would fight the person in front of them because at the moment, Gary’s number indicated he was one of the weakest people in this place.

That was until Gary stopped around 30 centimetres away from the student's hand, that was still up in the air.

“You don’t have a problem with me just standing here? Don’t worry, I won’t interrupt you guys.” Gary said.

‘I have no idea what he’s thinking.’ Izzy shook her head in disbelief. ‘Does he plan to annoy them into attacking him first? Or is he just hoping that if he shows off his confidence that they might not attack him, fearing the kind of backing he might have?’

In the end, the two high rankers simply nodded, unwilling to call the Werewolf’s bluff. They didn’t wish to act before they were sure about who this newcomer was, and as long as he behaved they were willing to tolerate his antics.

As for the reason why Gary had stopped just short of them, it was simple. From that position, he was able to hear everything happening to Numba. A normal person wouldn't have been able to hear from this distance, but then again, the green haired teenager was anything but normal.

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Inside his newly earned room, Numba sat down while surrounded by a bunch of uninvited guests.

“What do you want? Given her ranking, I doubt the one I defeated was a friend of yours, so you shouldn’t be here for revenge.” The Goat Altered came right to the point.

“Oh that? No, you’re correct, I don’t know who she is and she is nowhere near my type. I’m not focused on that aspect for now. As I’ve said, I’ve just come here to talk to you.” Sty, the number 4 student answered. “You see, I heard that TS services plans to expand. They’re the ones backing you, correct?”

Hearing this name, Numba’s attitude changed from nonchalance to actual interest. Even a smidgen of respect could be found on his face.

“You see, your father, or I guess adoptive father, recently came over to my family asking to do business with us. I thought since the two of us are the ones who will represent our companies in the future it would be in our mutual interest to get to know each other. Besides, I have some influence in here, so I can make sure that your stay will be more comfortable sooner rather than later.” Sty smiled.

Numba thought about it for some while, because his number one rule was not to trust people, and he didn’t understand what exactly Sty would get out of all of this.

“What’s exactly in it for you? For the time being, I have nothing to give you, least of all in this place. My rank is far below yours, not to mention, you will soon be leaving this place as well.” Numba replied.

“That’s where you’re wrong. There is one thing you have in here that I desire, yourself. I’m always in need of loyal people. I wish to build up my own group, you see, and what better place than the AFA? Agree and will tell my folks to treat yours nicely. All you need to do is do as I say.”

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A short while later and the conversation ended. Sty was leaving the room, followed by his goons, and eventually Numba. The Goal Altered looked unhurt, which led the onlookers to speculate as to what they might have been talking about.

Sty headed to the other high ranking members and that's when he saw Gary standing there.

"What are you looking at?" He asked the green haired teenager.

Gary looked him up and down, before smiling. "Nothing, I just didn't know shit could stack so high."

Chapter 375: A personal pet

Saying those words, Gary simply turned away, though not before seeing Sty's face turn completely beet red. Before the top ranker had a chance to say anything, the Werewolf had run off.

Not because he was scared or anything like that, but because he knew this would be far more annoying to someone high and mighty. In the end, Gary arrived in his room to think about what he had heard just now.

The reason he had insulted Sty was because those had been his real feelings towards the guy. Just listening to him talk for a bit, he was convinced that the top ranker was someone who abused his power and position. It reminded him a lot of how the Underdogs used to participate and how Damion used to act.

In a place like this, there were lots of little Damions all over the place, it was taking a mental toll out of the Werewolf to avoid following his gut instincts to outright punch them in the face during his time observing them.

Still, he understood that he had to bide his time, so he kept his feeling buried inside. Just from watching how others acted and used their position to abuse others, Gary was actually learning a lot.

He might not like it, but he knew that what he was seeing inside this place was the unfortunate reality of how these types of people truly acted. It was something that Kai had a lot of knowledge about, but for Gary, whose social standing had been at the bottom before obtaining his system, he knew nothing about it.

Perhaps there would be a day when Gary's input would benefit the group and be a better suggestion than what Kai could come up with.

"Who was that?!" Sty questioned, barely holding himself together, his cheeks still a bit red and filled with anger.

"We're not really sure. The guy's rank suggests he is one of the newcomers, so it might be for the best to just ignore him for now. It's not really worth our time fighting someone like that. Remember, we all agreed to try to avoid fighting for this week." The rank 8 reminded him.

Hearing this, Sty took a deep breath. Before he had reached the top 10, he had often been linked to stirring up trouble through fighting in this place. He couldn't help it, as he found it exhilarating to see how hopeless the other Altered looked once he defeated them.

Still, he had agreed with the other top rankers that he would lie low for one week until they were allowed to advance. Since Appolo had been the one to suggest the idea, it was a given that he would be the one to enforce it. Sty knew he was strong, but he knew better that the top three were more powerful than he was.

As such, even someone of his position could be kicked out of the top ten, replaced with someone else. In the end, he made up his mind to let it go... at least in here. If he saw Gary in the AFA, that would be another story...

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Two more days passed, and Gary had still not challenged anyone. According to the rules, an assessment would take place soon, which was another opportunity for people to change their rank. However, the green haired teenager didn't care too much about the assessment.

From what Izzy had told him during yesterday's lunch, most of those inside shared his sentiment. The main way to rise in the ranks was through fighting.

Ian had participated in two fights just this morning, winning both of them and obtaining rank 77. The Altered had stopped there, claiming it was a lucky number for him. It was quite impressive considering how he was unable to transform into his Altered form.

However, he hadn't been the only one who had fought. For the first time, Izzy had shown off her skills. Granted, the teenage girl had only fought against the student with the next higher ranking, but that fight had looked like a carefully prepared choreography.

Without suffering a single injury, she had continued to fight two more times, eventually reaching rank 101. After doing so much research into what other peoples' Altered forms were, and their fighting styles, she had set her goal to reach the double digits.

Unfortunately, against rank 99, she had also suffered her first loss. Izzy's head had ended up swollen, her ribs bruised, all of that due to one single mistake. Whether she had overestimated herself after consecutive wins or underestimated her opponent, she didn't know.

However, the loss had been a devastating one, the difference in skill had been obvious.

Fortunately, the medical care in this place was top notch, so Izzy was back on her feet for lunch. Ian had earned the privilege to sit at yet another new table, but he had decided to come over to where Gary was, probably because Izzy had done the same.

Although the newcomers had been told on the first day that they should sit according to the numbers on the table, nobody was actually enforcing that rule.

"Guys, you have got to get out of the hundreds as soon as possible!!" Ian said. "They have meat! I admit, those are merely pieces of meat, but it's way better than that soup, I tell you."

By now, Izzy had gotten used to eating the soup, but after her loss she had shown no appetite, playing with her food before handing it over to Gary.

"Don't worry too much, you did well. You had four fights in a row, and we have plenty of time to help you rank up." Ian tried to cheer up his childhood friend.

"My problem is, I don't see how." Izzy eventually mumbled listlessly. "I know my body better than anyone, and I just don't see a way for me to beat rank 99. Not with my current skill set even if I had been at 100%.

"My only chance might be to unlock my Altered form, but who knows how long that will take!"

Gary didn't say anything, focusing on gulping down the soup. Sadly, there was no input he could give her. After all, he wasn't an Altered in the first place. His system was what allowed him to get stronger, and he wasn't the best when it came to techniques either. One of his good points was his ability to analyse, but Izzy didn't seem to have a problem in that department.

Just then, though, they saw Numba enter the canteen. The group didn't really have many friends in the place, so they had silently agreed to sit together and talk to each other most of the time.

"I guess he's doing it again huh..." Ian said.

That's when they saw Numba head to the table with the top rankers, stopping next to Sty. After a while, the Goal Altered left, before he came back with a meal meant for the rank 4 student. Not only that, but while Sty was enjoying his steak and soda, Numba was giving him a back massage.

Essentially, the lower ranked teenager fulfilled all whims of the top ranker, starting with the evening after their talk. The trio of newcomers found it an odd sight to behold, because although they hadn't known Numba for long, his current attitude was a clear contrast to his initial prideful self.

"They might be from the same city or they're blackmailing him in some other way." Izzy guessed. "There's not much we can do about it. I know it's sad, but it's unfortunate that one of the top rankers has picked Numba to be his lackey. Anyway, without any incidents, he will only have to endure that for a few more days, and then he will be able to do what he wants again, I imagine that's why he is putting up with it for now."

At that moment, a bit of food dropped on Numba's shirt, and the others began to laugh. It was then that Gary stood up from his seat and began to walk over to where the others were.

“Damn it, why does he always move so fast? I don't even have time to grab that stupid moss head!” Izzy cursed, slapping her forehead.

Walking across the canteen, Gary eventually reached the top rankers’ table. The Werewolf stood by the side of the table, looking at the Goal Altered and his handler. Sty, who had already forgotten their encounter, just looked at him. He looked familiar, but he just couldn’t put a finger on who it was.

‘Oh, isn't this the same person from the other day?’ Apollo thought as he recognised who it was.

The rest of the top three, including Snow who continued to munch on his small pile of prepared carrots also instantly recognised the person, though none of them stopped enjoying their meal.

“Numba, I don't know how you can do this? I don't know if you're scared or what, but I just can't watch you act like this. Is it really worth it? Can't your family make a deal with another company or something?

“Anyway, if you're that scared, remember I still owe you a favour, so I will happily beat this person up for you if you want?”

Chapter 376: A predator (part 1)

Gary was making it crystal clear who these words were directed at by looking straight at Sty during the last part of his sentence, making the rank 4 student experience an odd feeling of Déjà vu.

‘Why am I getting this annoying bubbling feeling when looking at this guy... for some reason, seeing his annoying green hair is reminding me of something. Am I just annoyed, because my Mom forced me to eat broccoli in the past? No, that's not it. But his Green hair is making alarm bells ring in my head.’ Sty was left puzzled.

Since Sty had only seen Gary for a brief second before, there wasn't a solid image in his head.

Usually, he would take any small threat seriously, teaching the other person a serious lesson, but the moment his eyes wandered to the number on the green haired teenager’s badge, he just chuckled. The scene reminded him of a baby trying to threaten an adult, and he just found it amusing.

“Numba, this person is being an eyesore. Make sure that he leaves.” The rop ranker ordered, waving his hand nonchalantly towards Gary as if he was a fly pestering him.

The top rankers sitting next to him at the table laughed at this comment, looking forward to what would happen next. They all knew that the teachers would stop a fight from taking place in here, but they wouldn't act straight away.

Numba moved towards where Gary was and there was a smile that appeared on the other's faces seeing this.

“Please leave, Gary... I understand that you mean well, but if you really want to help me, then you should leave this table right now.” Numba urged in a soft, defeated voice.

It was a complete contrast to when the Werewolf had first met him. Where was the confident teenager who would never take crap from anyone? The Goat Altered had been a person that had resonated with Gary, because his gut instinct had told him that the two of them were alike.

Right now, this was also true, but the current Numba resembled the Werewolf during his time in the Underdogs when he had been merely a Transporter. Just like he had feared Damion, the Goat Altered seemed afraid of Sty, a situation where both of them had felt helpless.

Gary remembered the feeling well, often wishing there could have been someone that could help him at the time. In a way, Kirk had done that, pulled him out of the situation before he drowned, Gary wanted to be the helping hand.

“What do you think you're doing?” The rank 4 student questioned in annoyance. “Do I really have to spell it out to you? When I tell you to ‘get rid’ of him, I don't mean to ask him nicely! Go beat him up! Come on, even someone of your calibre must be able to do something. Or do you really not care about the deal?”

Gary slammed his hand on the table, making some plates jump up for a second before falling back down. He had shut Sty's mouth right there before he said anything else and his eyes started to glow faintly red. Immediately, the others stood up, ready to jump on Gary at any second if he were to try something. These actions also caught the eyes of the teacher guards, who started to pay a little more attention.

At the head of the table, where the top 3 sat, they felt the vibration across the table and both Wu and Snow stood up.

“What the hell? That guy made one of my carrots drop on the floor!” Snow complained. “I'm going to kick his arse.”

Just as they were about to move, though, they felt someone push on both of their shoulders, forcing them back down in their seats.

“Calm down, you two, things are about to get interesting,” Apollo ordered, not moving his eyes away from the low ranking student who had disturbed their meal time.

Apollo himself even sat down, grabbing a large turkey leg, and continued digging into his food as if he was watching a movie.

‘Hahaha, I can tell from just looking into that guy's eyes. He's a predator, one that has tasted blood!’ Apollo kept it to himself, rather than warning the others. It wasn't his business anyway. He only regretted the fact that Gary came so late, as he would have loved to spar with him. Unfortunately, it would look bad if he broke the agreement he himself had instated.

However, his gut was telling him that the two of them would meet again in the future.

Sty didn't move, there was a certain chill going through his body. His hair was sticking up on his arms and all over. The eyes of everyone inside the canteen were focused on the current scene. If he said nothing, did nothing then the others might start to think of him as someone weak.

Realising the same problem, Numba grabbed Gary by the wrist, though it wasn't particularly strong. The Werewolf took his hand off the table, and looked at the Altered who pleaded with his eyes to make him go.

“Fine, I'll leave like you asked, just know that I hate seeing you like this. Just remember, I owe you one, no matter what it is.”

After those events, Gary didn't go back to sit with the others. Instead, he decided to just leave the canteen as he needed to calm down, yet the other students were surprised by one thing. The fact that such a low ranking member was allowed to go up and threaten someone on the top ranking table without any immediate consequences.

Of course, many assumed that Gary had just lived to see another day, as they were sure he would become a huge target of whoever he had just decided to cross soon enough. With him gone, and the top rankers continuing their meal as if nothing had happened, the others were doing the same.

What nobody noticed was that one of the teachers had been speaking softly into a microphone during the entire commotion.

"This is the first time in a while that I've seen you pay so much attention to a new student, Wood." Hai commented as he took a sip of his coffee. "I understand that it is rare for the scouts to miss someone, but it's not like this is the first time. Don't you think you're wasting your time on him?"

"Perhaps, but perhaps not. You've seen it yourself, he is in an entirely different league than the rest." Wood answered as he drank his tea. "He has yet to actually fight anyone, but his actions have already caused ripples to the place."

"From the reports we've received, he's only been observing the others. Sounds to me like he's simply looking for the best opponent to beat, nothing uncommon about that." Hai shrugged.

"Please, we both know that he can easily become one of the high rankers. If that was his goal, he could have achieved it on the first day. I, for one, am looking forward to what happens when he finally decides to act.

"There are already interesting things happening in the AFA and I predict that he will make it even more interesting, just like that feisty girl who came here before."

“Man, I know Gary is strong, but I don’t think he can just go around doing whatever he likes,” Ian whispered to Izzy. “You’ve been gathering intel so far. Based on his strength, what rank do you think he could get if he were to fight for real?”

Izzy was left staring in the distance for a while. They were still in the canteen and quite a few people were talking about what had happened. She shook her head for a moment, before answering Ian’s question. “Based on what showed us during the assessment, he should at least be able to enter the top 50. As for what rank he would end up with, I’m not too sure. Practically all the high rankers should be able to do what he did.

“Still, the confidence Gary has to just do what he wants... I don’t know if he is just crazy, or he actually has the strength to back it up. If only it was true that this place merely cares about strength... With people from Tier-2 and even Tier-1 cities, his actions might actually prove harmful to those Howlers back home... yet he doesn’t seem to be too worried about it.”

“I wish I could be the same.” Ian sighed, rubbing his leg. “Every time I get close to him, my leg starts to hurt, even though it has already healed. I have no idea how many people in here might be stronger than him, I just know that he is the last person I would really want to fight against.”

— —

Later that night, there were many that struggled to get some sleep. Numba was left in his room thinking about what Gary had said, and to get out his frustration, he punched the wall in his room.

A small dent appeared on the wall, but since he hadn't transformed, it wasn't too big. However, the material of this place was quite sturdy, enough that his knuckles were bleeding from his action.

‘Damn it, Gary, don’t you think I WANT to hit that asshole in his stupid face? I’ve thought about... but I just can't do it... I can't. If I do, someone like him will definitely punish my family. Even if they aren’t the ones who raised me, they were the ones who gave me everything.’

— —

At the same time, Izzy was having her own difficulties falling asleep. The teenage girl was restlessly lying in bed, reviewing her match to Rank 99. She couldn't help but stare at the ceiling thinking of how to win, but no matter what she couldn't think of anything but there was one option.

'I have nothing to lose, I have to go for it.' Izzy thought. She got up and left her room. Outside it was dark, the lights turned off after midnight, but there was no rule about students having to stay in the room and sleep. It was just that nearly everyone was on that pattern.

Walking not too far from her own room, she had reached Gary's. Being one of the lowest ranked rooms, there wasn't even a proper door, so Izzy was able to peak in.

'If I want to get better then I'll have no choice but to train. Who better to ask than the strongest person I know.' Izzy thought to herself.

Plucking up the courage, she looked inside, but there was no one there. 'Where could he be at this time?'

Walking around, Izzy was really scratching her head. Places like the canteen were locked at this time of night, and since he had kept to himself, it was unlikely that he was in someone else's room.

Following her hunch, she went past one of the teachers that just stood there like a statue. Theoretically, they were meant to enforce certain rules, but just like with the intended curfew, they appeared to be just slacking on their watch.

"It looks like you're lost." The teacher supervisor pointed out the obvious.

"Oh, just looking for someone." Izzy revealed, surprised that the adult had decided to say something. "You didn't happen to have seen a certain green haired boy by any chance, did you?"

The man simply pointed towards the training rooms. He hadn't even needed the description of Gary, since the teenage boy had been the only other student who he had seen come out this late at night.

'I've never seen Gary train since getting here, but I guess everyone has to train at some point.'

Thanking the man, she headed to the training room. Opening the door, Izzy was surprised to see the lights were off, but that was when she could suddenly see a pair of red eyes move across the palace, jumping from one side to the other at a great speed. It was difficult for Izzy to keep track of, but suddenly the pair of eyes started to head right towards her.

At that moment her flight or fight response triggered, but rather than run away, her knees gave out, making her drop to the floor in complete fear.

“What are you doing here?” A familiar voice asked. Stepping closer Izzy could now see Gary, he had his top off, and his hard abs were showing clearly, while there was a bit of fur on his chest and covering both of his arms. It was retracting into his body, as he continued to walk forward, and the glow in his eyes disappeared.

“I... I... I just w-wanted to ask you something.” Izzy plucked up the courage and tried to stand on her two feet, only to nearly fall over again, before Gary caught her with one hand, making her face go red slightly.

“Thank you.” She said. “I wanted to ask you... to train me. I want to be a stronger fighter.”

Gary looked at Izzy for a while, before he started to wipe his sweat away.

“Alright, I’ll help you, but not right now,” Gary replied as he walked past her, heading towards his room. “I can’t let my Energy drop any lower than this... so I guess it’s time I start doing things. Once I can get a good meal, I’ll help you train.”

Izzy was left there confused, wondering what he meant by that statement.

Chapter 378: Who's scarier?

The next day, the students were woken up by a loud announcement, calling them over to the main oval room. One of the teacher supervisors stood there with a piece of paper in his hand. The moment everyone was inside, he began reading out the contents.

“Due to certain circumstances, the next assessment evaluation has been moved back and will take place in four days time rather than today. This also means that the students ranked 1 to 10 will have to keep their position for that additional time period if they wish to advance.”

As soon as he was done, the adult turned around and left the room. Since the ones mostly affected by this sudden change were the top rankers, the other students just smiled and continued doing what they would usually do.

“Has this ever happened before? Am I the only one who feels like they’re blatantly targeting us?” Wu asked, visibly annoyed at this kind of treatment.

“Who knows?” Apollo shrugged. “I’m not surprised that they decided to act. From the start, it was impossible for them to not notice that the ten of us haven’t really been fighting since we became the top rankers. If anything, I’m surprised that their approach is this lenient, given that we’re circumventing the rules.

“Still, we should be careful. Who knows what will happen in these next four days.”

The others weren’t sure what he meant by this, but when looking at his new favourite subject, Apollo noticed that there was a different air around the most prominent newcomer.

— —

Izzy and Ian weren’t bothered by the announcement and simply performed their morning ritual of watching the fights that were happening before breakfast. She was watching them mostly to figure out how to counter her potential future opponents, while he was doing it to hype himself up before fighting himself.

As they watched, Izzy told her childhood friend about what had happened last night.

“Wow, I never thought you would actually go to him to ask for help.” Ian gasped at that shocking revelation. “I don’t think I could do the same, his presence alone makes me feel off. Still, let me know if there is some secret involved to his strength.

“Until then, I think I’ll just continue fighting until I hit a wall. The more I fight, the more I can feel that I’m getting one step closer to grasping my Altered form! Just you wait, once I can transform like the others, you’ll see me rising through the ranks!”

There was a smug smile on Ian’s face. He had gained a lot of confidence based on his recent fights. Originally, he had believed that he would have a hard time competing with those who had been scouted, but he was doing fairly well as someone who was unable to transform.

At that moment, two people came up to them from either side. Izzy and Ian wanted to move out of the way, but the two made it obvious that they wouldn’t let them, blocking them in with their bodies.

‘Damn it, what did we do to make the high rankers come to us?’ Izzy wondered as she stared at the badges of the brothers, rank 44, and rank 42. The former belonged to the long haired redhead, while the latter belonged to his short haired brother. They seemed to be fraternal twins, rather than identical ones.

“From what we have been able to gather, the two of you took the assessment along with that Broccoli Head, correct?” Rank 44 began to question them.

They hadn’t turned their heads while speaking, pretending like they had just joined the duo in watching the fight.

“That’s correct, but what’s it to you?” Ian replied, not liking where this was going.

“You see, we were told to gather some information on him. So we just wanted to know a few things about him, nothing you shouldn’t know. What’s his Altered form, his fighting style and most importantly, what’s his backing?” Rank 42 explained why they had come to bother them.

It didn’t take long for Izzy to figure out that these two had to be working for one of the top rankers. It seemed like Gary’s confidence had made them hesitate before acting, so they first wanted to verify whether the green haired teenager was someone they could afford to touch.

“Sorry, but we have no idea. He didn’t look impressive, so we didn’t pay attention to him during the first test. After that, he kicked all of our arses without transforming, so the only thing we know about him is

that he is far stronger than us.” Izzy quickly splurged out a cover story, before Ian could accidentally spill the beans.

Just then the fight had stopped, and the female Altered was getting ready to move away, but her hand was grabbed before she could leave.

“Nice story, but we’re not buying it. You’ve been sitting together during the meals like real chumps, so I don’t believe that he hasn’t told you anything of value about himself. Let me warn you, if you don’t tell us exactly what we need to know, then starting today, we’ll make your stay here a living hell.

“Every day, the two of us will challenge you two, and during the fight, we will beat you before you can give up, and we’ll also make sure nobody else will fight you. We will continue to do that until you eventually leave!”

Pulling her arm away, Izzy continued to walk and Ian made sure to stand behind her and the twins.

“Fine, go ahead!” Izzy shouted as she walked away. “Your threats might work on others, but it's not going to work if I'm more scared of the other person!”

“Yeah, if you two want to get involved with that crazy person, then be my guest, but I'm not going to sell him out.” Ian shrugged and shivered as he thought back to what Gary had done to him on accident, as he had later revealed.

The brothers were left dazed as this was the first time their threats were ineffective. They couldn't believe that these two newcomers were actually more scared of this Gary person. It just didn't make sense, but Izzy's words were true. After seeing him yesterday at night, she knew that she should never cross this person if she wanted to live.

As Ian and Izzy walked over to head to the library room, they soon saw another large figure stand in their way. They looked up, and gulped at the large person's chest, as they could see the tip of his smile.

“Oh, here I was waiting for just you two. I was wondering if you could tell me a couple of things about your green-haired friend.” Apollo requested with a toothy smile.

“Umm, Izzy... I might be afraid of this person a little more than Gary.” Ian whispered to her.

Chapter 379: A nice meal

‘Gary, just how did you manage to make even the rank 1 of this place interested in you?’ Izzy thought as she gulped hard. ‘I asked about what happened at the canteen, but from what I’ve been told, the only one you antagonised was Sty. Is Apollo asking because of the pact that the top rankers made?’

‘Was he the one who sent over those twins? No, I doubt it. From the things I’ve heard, he is the type who acts on his own just like he is doing now. Unfortunately, Ian has a point, although I haven’t seen Apollo act, making an enemy of the strongest person in this place isn’t a good idea.’

Apollo continued to do nothing but smile at the duo who looked at him like a pair of frightened bunnies. Ian was looking at Izzy for an answer.

“What exactly do you want to know?” Izzy asked cautiously.

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After answering all of Apollo's questions, the top ranker simply walked away, even thanking them for the talk. The two breathed out a sigh of relief, while the large student decided to head back to his room. Thankfully, for Izzy and Ian, Apollo's actions were more friendly than his looks.

The rank one's room was great in size and included everything anyone could ever wish for, rivalling the suite in a luxury five-star hotel.

A large super king-size mattress, the comfiest sheets, a bathtub and a rainfall shower were just the tip of the iceberg. In fact, it was so nice, that his two friends would often come over just to hang out, despite their rooms not being too far off.

When he came in, he found Wu and Snow already playing a game of cards on the table.

“So, did you find what you wanted?” Wu asked, as he looked over his cards, raising the pot.

"Yeah... but it was a bit disappointing," Apollo answered with a sigh. "Turns out he comes from a Tier-3 town, apparently one that hasn't any redeeming qualities. The only interesting part about it was that he is backed by a gang."

"Honestly, what exactly did you expect from someone who wasn't scouted? If he was worth his salt, he wouldn't continue being a low ranker. He's probably just acting tough because he's in a gang." Snow replied, revealing his cards and winning all the snacks that had been in the middle of the table. The first thing he did was munch on a carrot in delight.

"Haha, looks like your killer instinct is getting dull from you not doing anything." Snow teased his friend. "Don't worry, you're not completely to blame for that, given his confidence he even made a fool out of Sty."

Apollo laid down on his bed, wondering whether there was some truth in what his friend said, but there was one thing he kept thinking about, something he had overheard from Izzy and Ian's earlier conversation.

'She said, she was more scared of him than the twins? From what I've seen, she seems to be a smart cookie, so she must have realised that those two had been sent by Sty or another of the top rankers... and there's also the look in his eyes. If he can actually fake that, he deserves an oscar.' Apollo thought.

At that moment, there was a light knock at the door. "Come in."

Opening the door and closing it behind him, they saw that it was just the guy they had mentioned. Immediately, Apollo laid back down on his bed, as he wasn't really interested in what Sty had to say.

"Skip the formalities, alright? That's only for outside this place and when our two families meet. Why did you come to me?" Apollo asked without much enthusiasm.

"Alright." Sty replied, his voice a little shaky, indicating that he was nervous in the other student's presence. "I'm here to ask for your permission to deal with the annoying guy. You all heard what that guy said at the canteen. He needs to be taught a lesson before others start thinking they can do the same to us."

"I'm not here asking to break the pact. I agree that it's far more important for us to move onto the next stage and enter the academy, which is why I'm asking if you won't mind me sending my men to act."

Hearing this, Apollo actually rose up from his bed, and looked towards Sty. "That's a far more reasonable request from you than I had expected. Sure, feel free to send out some of your guys."

Having been granted permission, Sty immediately left the room, though he found the reaction odd. He had been prepared to convince Apollo somehow, only to be given his full blessing.

Of course, he had no way of knowing that the rank 1 student was already looking forward to how the person of his interest would deal with the twins.

— —

Gary had gone down to breakfast, but as usual, the food really wasn't enough to fill him up. His Energy had finally dropped below 150, which had only strengthened his resolve to act today.

'Should I just go and teach that Sty guy a lesson? No, it might affect Numba if I do that. Unfortunately, it looks like he will have to endure his treatment for four more days. Hmmm, what if I go for Rank 3 instead? If I win that fight, then maybe I'll have a bit more influence over Sty and can tell him to stop.'

Contemplating this possibility, Gary was ready to leave his room, but just then, a pair of red-headed brothers entered his room. It was already a small place, so they blocked almost all the light coming in.

"Next time, think twice whether you should open your stupid mouth." The student with the rank 42 mouthed off, as his face started to change and transform, while his brother was doing the same.

Gary looked at the small space he was in, it wasn't the best place to fight, but there was one good point about it. Nobody should be able to see what he was about to do.

"I'm sorry guys... but your red hair and the fact that you're brothers really piss me off. I've been hangry for the last few days and since you came to me, don't blame me for retaliating." Gary replied, his eyes starting to turn red.

— —

Finally, it was time for lunch. The students flocked in, and Ian went over to sit with Izzy at Gary's table, so they could enjoy their food together. Numba stood by Sty who had a large smile on his face for some reason.

"Hey... Gary he's late." Izzy said. "You don't think, that someone went after him?"

"I mean, that guy is never late for lunch...it can only be that... do you think that top ranker acted even though he promised he wouldn't do anything?"

Just then as the two were about to leave the canteen, they saw someone enter through the double doors.

"Phew, he's here." Ian let out a sigh. "Hey, Gary, we've been waiting for you. If you don't hurry, your soup will get cold."

Gary just gave him a thumbs up. "I'll be over in a second."

The Werewolf took a moment to locate the seat numbered 42, and grabbed the food from there.

'Finally, a worthy meal!' He thought to himself, as he stared at the steak, potatoes and extras.

Chapter 380: Match up

BZZZ

The familiar sound that indicated that it was time for the next meal resounded through the place. Despite practically starving throughout his stay, the Werewolf had nevertheless been looking forward to

each meal time. Looking at the timing of his two uninvited guests, it became clear to him that their appearance wasn't a coincidence.

Right now, everyone would go to the canteen, making this the time the teachers were at their busiest as they made sure no fights would break out. However, one of the brothers was standing slightly behind the other, making it impossible to see inside.

With his head held down, Gary's body started to shake.

"Look at him, Brock!" The twin ranked 42 laughed. "That scaredy-cat is shaking all over from fear. Let's get this over and done with quickly, so we don't miss lunch."

Immediately, Brock rushed towards Gary. His face had transformed into that of a gross looking insect. He had huge eyes and a giant forceps on top of his head, similar to that of a beetle.

When running forward, the Insect Altered tilted his head down towards his target. His forceps looked sharp and strong, and they looked to be controlled independently as he snapped them shut a couple of times before reaching Gary, creating a large echo sound.

"Let's see your mouth off after I snapped right through your weak bones!" Brock taunted.

"You guys..." Gary growled in a low tone. When the Insect Altered was close enough, the Werewolf transformed both of his hands and grabbed onto the closing forceps of the intruder.

'I... I can't close them!' Brock realised as he intensified his struggles, but the green haired teenager's hold on him was absolute.

"What are you doing, Brock? Just cut his hands! It's not like it will be your first time. They'll patch him up, anyway." His brother hurried him, unaware that the situation was no longer in their control.

"How dare you get in the way of my lunch?!" Gary shouted as he used his strength to pull apart the forceps until they snapped. Blood rushed from Brock onto the floor, but Gary didn't stop there, using his leg to kick the Insect Altered in the stomach and sending him back to his brother.

“Make sure to hold him steady.” The two of them heard Gary’s order, and looking up they saw him sprint from one end of his room to the other, throwing out a fist, hitting Brock right in the stomach. The strength of the hit resulted in a loud crack, indicating that more than one rib had been broken.

The attack was so strong that the twins flew out of the room and ended up embedded in a wall, both losing consciousness.

— —

A teacher had taken care of the two, so Gary had simply headed to the canteen, where he was enjoying the taste of the superbly grilled steak. Of course, the potatoes and sides weren’t much worse, but the meat was the real kicker.

[10 points of Energy have been restored]

[158/300 Energy]

‘That really hit the spot... but I’m still hungry. I should have asked if I can ask for refills. I could still eat a dozen more, maybe even a hundred, after I had nothing but that soup for nearly a week.’ Gary thought, rubbing his belly as he looked over at the others at this table.

They were baffled at seeing the green haired teenager sit at their table, but the number on his badge convinced them that he had every right to be there. Looking down on their own badge, they all saw that their numbers had shifted, further proving that a fight must have taken place just before he had appeared. As to who he had thought, that was also obvious, since two seats were empty.

“Hey, are you guys going to eat that? If you're not, I could do with some extra food.” Gary asked, eyeing up their plates full of meat, as he licked his lips. “I really just want the the meat, you can keep the rest.”

The student next to him, who was now the new rank 44 just nodded, handing it over. His rank had been in between the twins before and seeing that the newcomer had been able to even beat the stronger twin, he understood that he wasn’t his match. Making an enemy out of him over a piece of meat really wasn’t worth it.

Over at the table with the top rankers, they had been aware that Sty had received permission to deal with the nuisance, but his appearance made it clear that the plan must have failed. Apollo noticed that Sty was tensing his fists. His head was practically shaking, and everyone on the table could hear him grinding his teeth in frustration.

‘How is that possible? The twins might not be the strongest in this place, but there were two of them against one of him! Just who is this person?!’ Sty was left speechless.

Given the priceless look on his face, Apollo couldn't help but laugh out eventually. He had done his best to hold it in for a while, but the visible confusion was just too hilarious.

“You still think my killer instinct is off?” The rank 1 student gloated, snatching one of Snow’s carrots out of the Altered’s hands and taking a huge bite.

“Whatever, how far can a Tier-3 bumpkin like him really get in here? All he did was beat up two scrubs who could barely be called high rankers, that doesn’t make him special.” Snow replied, rolling his eyes before he grabbed another carrot.

Of course, Sty didn’t miss that information and shot up in disbelief. “Tier-3... that rubbish dares to spout off when he comes from a shitty Tier-3 town?!!”

Numba was speechless as well. He didn't know what to think as he looked at the green haired teenager who was gobbling up meat without a care in the world.

‘Gary, how are you not afraid about the consequences of your actions? Your family is from a Tier-3 town like mine. No matter who you are, even if you're a member of a gang, the guys in here can crush the likes of you and me like a little bug at any second. Don’t you care about your gang members, or your family...or is it just...’

It was then that Gary, after finishing his second meal from the one on his table, stood up, and once again started to walk towards those on the top table. Heading over he walked to where Numba was as well and while doing so he made direct eye contact with Sty.

“Your two goons might be incapacitated for a while.” Gary revealed. “Once they wake up, please let them know that they only got hurt because you were the one that sent them over to me. I was never planning to go for them myself.”

“Damn you!” Sty shouted, ready to go for the Werewolf, but at that moment Apollo hit the table. It wasn't a loud hit, in fact it was quite a soft one, but strangely it looked like when he hit the table a vibration was sent through it that was directed straight to Sty's place, making his plate and cutlery jump up and down again.

Getting the message, the rank 4 student glared at Gary, but sat back down.

“Oh, I thought you were going to challenge me?” Gary questioned in a cocky manner. “Don't worry, I have no interest fighting you, not until this guy asks me.”

Just then, Gary thought it was time to put his plan into action, he looked over at the table and his gaze stopped at the rank 3 student, Wu Chen.

“I challenge you to a fight.”

‘Wait a second, I didn't say that?’ Gary was confused, looking as to who had said it. Turning to his side, he saw that Numba was pointing at Sty.

“I challenge you to a fight, let's get this over and done with. I'm sick of you treating me as your personal butler.” The Goal Altered clarified, his eyes burning with fire.

After seeing the Werewolf act without fearing the consequences, something had been lit up inside Numba.

“Has everyone suddenly gone crazy? You want a fight, fine then you got one!” Sty shouted, standing up. “If you manage to win, I'll follow through with our deal, no questions asked... but if I win, you're going to wish you were never born!”