

Werewolf 381

Chapter 381: Rumble

Today, leaving the canteen, the students were far more excited than any other day. Everyone was walking together in a large group, following two specific individuals to their match.

Witnessing one of the top rankers fight was usually quite a spectacle, because the top rankers only ever fought against others who were close to the top. This would allow the other students to see a high level of skills being displayed, and showed everyone just how far or close they were to catching up.

However, the reason the students were even more hyped up than usual was that ever since the current batch of top rankers had risen to their position, they had made a pact that they wouldn't fight. This meant that no high level fights had taken place since nobody had dared to antagonise the top rankers so far. Ever since Gary had openly mocked Sty, the students had hoped that something would come out of it, and now that it did they were all elated, even though the green haired newcomer wasn't the one who would fight.

"This isn't good." Izzy said to Ian, concerned for Numba. "Everyone has a right to challenge those in the top ten at any time. It's the whole point of this system, but the others haven't done that because of the pact."

"Ah, you worry too much." Ian shrugged. "Personally, I think this is quite exciting. I mean, let's assume Numba loses, what's the worst that will happen? From what you told me, the primary purpose of that pact was to prevent the other high rankers from challenging the top rankers constantly during the time they have to protect their top rank, not for people like Numba.

"Do you really think they would waste their time beating him over and over again?"

"You don't understand." Izzy sighed as she stopped walking. "I did some research on Apollo and Sty. They don't just have a relationship inside this place, but one outside as well. Sty works for a gang in a Tier-2 city, who works for the leader of the gang in a Tier-1 city... which is linked to Apollo. Do you understand why it's so dangerous now, and why Numba has been listening to them this whole time?"

Hearing this news, Ian wondered what he would do in this situation, and one thing was sure, he wouldn't touch someone from gang in a Tier-2 city, much less one linked to a gang in a Tier-1 city. Their whole Tier-3 business could be wiped out in a few seconds by any one of those.

Just then, Gary placed his arms around the two of them.

“Let's just watch the fight and worry about that stuff later. Besides, remember what you said about gang members having pride. Do you really think this Apollo guy is the type of person who would go running off to his gang if he lost a fight... or call his gang for help with something like this.”

It was true, but it was always better to be safe than sorry, especially in this world. Everyone had now gathered in the large oval room. The students made sure to stand around the outer edge, making place for the fighters in the centre, Sty and Numba.

“It seems like your green haired friend there has gotten into your head, making you think you can take me on. Let me show you that my background isn't the only reason I'm ranked this highly!” Sty shouted.

The match started and Sty began to transform. Immediately his eyes bulged, turning into compound eyes, with a slightly orange colour. At the same time, a pair of wings sprouted out of his back. Finally, his mouth elongated a bit, starting to resemble a proboscis, giving him the overall appearance of a fly.

At the same time, Numba was transforming as well. From the looks of it, his horns had finished elongating at the same time as his opponent was done with his transformation.

The Goat Altered swept his legs on the floor a couple of times similar to a bull. Suddenly, Numba exploded in speed, closing the gap between the two in an instant. With this type of speed many of the onlookers felt that they might go down in a single hit.

However, Sty's eyes weren't just for show, allowing him to see the moment Numba had accelerated, and his body was fast enough to react. Making use of his wings, he avoided the attack at the last second by flying into the air.

‘Where is he?’ Numba wondered, as his horns had failed to make impact. Looking up, he could not see Sty in front of him. The next moment, he felt his back flare up in pain, making the Goat Altered fall down on his knees. Sty had not only avoided the attack perfectly, but positioned himself perfectly in the other's blind area.

“That was your master plan in going against me?” Sty asked in ridicule. “What else have you got, now that your surprise attack failed?”

Turning around quickly in anger, Numba faced Sty again and pushed off his feet, aiming for his horns to stick right into Sty’s body, pinning him in one piece. This time, instead of moving to the side though, Sty flew up with his wings flapping about, avoiding it again.

“Haha, I could just stay up here all day, and you wouldn't be able to hit me. You're just a useless goat, and I can't believe you actually thought you could beat me with your level of skills!” Sty laughed, flying in to deliver a kick right to Numba's face faster than he could react. Blood dropped from his nose and mouth across the floor.

Numba swung a fist, but it hit nothing but the air again. It didn't stop there, as Sty continued his attack pattern, flying in to kick his opponent once, before getting out to prevent his opponent from retaliating in any way. After taking a couple of hits, it became obvious that the Goal Altered had to focus his all on simply defending, not leaving him any room to change the situation.

“Crap!” Gary cursed. “It's my fault Numba is fighting right now, and now he's getting beat to a pulp.”

The Werewolf hadn't been sure if Sty had been all talk, but this fight proved that his arrogance was grounded in his abilities. Of course, the moment Numba had challenged him, Gary had considered the possibility that his buddy might lose... only he hadn't considered that it would be so one-sidedly.

‘Should I go in and help him?’ Gary thought, readying his body to go in.

“If you intend to interfere in their fight, I'm afraid I'll have to stop you.” A deep voice sounded from behind him.

When he turned around, he saw the large figure of Apollo, his arms crossed and a smile across his face, and that's when Gary could see the badge displaying the intimidating number 1.

Chapter 382: You're the Problem

The person ranked Number One was standing right next to Gary. His stature was huge, and although most would be intimidated by just his large size, Gary turned to look at the fight straight ahead after seeing who this person was.

"Are you looking for a fight? Because you can challenge me any time." Gary said while staring at the arena.

Most of the attention in the room was on the ongoing fight. Hence, people watching were unaware of what was happening, apart from Ian and Izzy, who often stayed close to Gary. Besides them, Wu and Snow, who weren't too far off either, listened to everything going on, although they weren't too bothered.

'As I expected, I knew this guy was curious about Gary for some reason, but why?' Izzy thought. 'We didn't even have time to warn him or tell Gary about his background, but knowing Gary, he wouldn't back down anyway.'

She was nervous, not because she thought Gary would lose the fight, but rather about how it would affect the latter's life.

Hearing the response, Apollo chuckled.

"Haha, sorry, I think I misspoke. I have rules that I follow anyway. I agreed to no fighting for a week to move on from this place. There was no one interesting at the time. Anyway, I was talking about the teachers.

"They are overseeing this fight. It's being displayed publicly to everyone. If you try to jump in there, the teachers will stop you, and if you end up hurting any student before they can catch you, there is a good chance you will be punished, maybe even kicked out of this place.

"And I don't really want that to happen, which is why I decided to warn you."

Gary's clenched fists loosened up a bit after listening to these words. Feeling guilty, he thought he had to do something, but there were rules in this place. It wasn't like the outside. Getting kicked out of the academy this soon wasn't an option, he could only stand there and watch the one-sided fight.

Sty continued to attack while dashing away in the air, making every single one of Numba's strikes fruitless. It wasn't that Sty was too fast; instead, it was hard to predict the angles he would come at Numba and to make matters worse, the latter's reaction time was too slow.

It was a terrible match-up to pit them against each other since Numba's strength came from raw power and straight-headed charge. But, unfortunately, he was no match against Sty's swiftness.

What the crowd did find interesting though, was the fact that Numba was still standing. His face was bloody and had already begun to swell. Even his ribs and arms were badly bruised up, and almost the whole arena was now covered in his blood.

Sty's strikes weren't weak by any means because of the momentum his attacks gained from his speed. It was just that Numba's heart was strong.

"Are you just going to keep running from me?! Don't you have any pride?!" Numba shouted in frustration with a swollen mouth. Even his teeth had turned red because of the blood.

"This is probably the best strategy," Izzy commented. "Since Numba can't catch him, he's trying to anger Sty to make him act out, but I'm not sure it will work."

Ignoring Numba's words, Sty flew in again. Numba waited patiently, and instead of trying to catch Sty, he was no longer moving from the spot he was in, although it was unknown if this was a strategy or if his legs were on the verge of giving up. However, just as Sty was right before him, he threw a fist.

Sty easily dodged, moving his whole body out of the way and then zig-zagging below the former's arm, he sent his own punch at Numba's face. However, Sty didn't stop there as he had finally planted his feet on the ground, readying himself to give a few more blows.

"Pride? Who cares about pride? What can pride do?" Sty asked as he punched Numba in the face once again. "Can pride help you win this fight? Can pride get you into the academy?"

Sty punched and punched again, and bearing the pain, Numba threw out another fist, but Sty caught it with his left hand.

"Remember, you brought this on yourself." Sty pulled Numba's arm, drew the latter's face towards him and threw out a fist with his other hand hitting him straight in the face again.

Numba's head jerked back, and his body reverted to human form. Then, after a moment of pause, Numba's body fell back-first on the arena, and the match was over.

Sty raised his head and looked at the crowd from one side to the other as silence fell around the arena.

Then, as he lifted both his hands in victory, the crowd instantly erupted in resounding cheer.

"Boo, Boo, you damn bug eyes!" From one corner, Ian shouted, cupping his mouth.

Sty turned his head to where the sound was coming from, and when he saw Ian, the latter was whistling away, staring at the ceiling as if he had just found the most interesting thing in the world.

The fight was an expected result to everyone watching, there were no surprises, but Gary looked down at the arena speechlessly.

'Sh*t, what did I do? I pushed Numba to do this. I should have just dealt with that damned bug myself. No...I didn't because Numba said he could get into trouble, but all of this mess is just because I was trying to get friendly with Numba.' Gary thought.

"You want to get revenge for your friend? But in this place, things aren't so simple. You can't just solve everything with your fists like you used to do," Apollo said before walking away.

In the arena, before stepping out, Sty stood above Numba and slowly said to him.

"Tomorrow, you're going to regret everything you did."

After Sty walked away, the crowd of students started to disperse as well, and the teachers were moving in to give Numba some medical treatment.

Before they got to him though, they found there was already someone else in the centre of the room, kneeling beside Numba.

'That student...he got there fast.' One of the Teachers thought, seeing Gary seemingly come out of nowhere.

"Numba, I'm sorry, this is my fault...just tell me what to do. How can I fix this? Is there anything you want me to do?" Gary asked, not knowing whether to just beat Sty or challenge someone else for a higher position to fix this.

Opening his eyes and staring at him, Numba had few words for Gary.

"Just... stay away from me."

Chapter 383: An Annoying Fly

While lying on his bed in his new room, Gary stared at the ceiling with his mind full of thoughts. He was struggling with the current predicament in front of him.

'What do I do?' This was the question in his mind. The scene at the end of the previous fight flashed over and over in his head.

Numba's bloody and swollen face, with which he could barely see or talk, appeared in his mind, yet, in the end, Numba had mustered up the strength to tell Gary to get away from him.

'Have I done the right thing? Did I believe everything else would be effortless after the Underdogs just because I managed to get rid of them? Either way, I screwed up.'

'If I take out Sty, then he'll direct his frustration on Numba, and I'm not sure even getting a higher position than him would do anything. The way they treat Numba might even worsen after this.'

Right now, Gary was honestly missing the Howlers more than anything. Making decisions on his own was hard. If he could, he would have picked up his phone and discussed with Kai about what the best thing to do in this situation.

He was sure that the latter would have some ideas and would have probably explained the consequences to him before he acted on his own ideas. But, unfortunately, communication wasn't permitted in this place, at least not via phone, unless Gary wanted to get disqualified.

Once he was in the real academy, it would be no problem.

'Wait a second? Doesn't that mean Sty and the others can't really do anything unless they have some way of contacting the outside that I don't know about? Still, as one of the Rank Ten, he'll be out of here in a couple of days.'

Even after racking his brain for a long time, no solution came to his mind. Initially, he planned to take out one of the Top Ten and wait a week before going through, but now, he didn't want to leave Numba in a situation like this.

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The next day soon arrived, and Gary was looking for Numba but couldn't find him anywhere. Wherever the teachers had taken him off, he had yet to return. Gary did make eye contact with Sty several times though, who would immediately look the other way and walk from him.

'Tch...I thought I could get them to challenge me to a fight, but they seem to be making a big deal out of this pact thingy.' Gary thought.

While waiting for lunchtime to begin, Gary had resolved his goal. For now, he would stick to his plan of knocking out anyone in the top ten, but before that, he would eat a nice meal for lunch, so he has enough energy just in case he needs it.

Seeing Sty the other day proved that some of his opponents were close to Gary's level. And the latter can't just beat them in a single hit or so.

Right before lunch had started, Numba finally returned.

He looked a lot better. In fact, it was hard to tell if he had ever been in a fight, but Altered's did heal at an incredible rate, so it made sense. With the medical treatment at the academy, students were assured that they could take the risk of fighting every day with their full strength.

As he kept an eye on Numba, Gary saw him heading straight towards Sty, ignoring all the stares he was getting from the other students.

'Don't get involved, Gary. You'll just make things worse.' Gary stopped, wondering for a second if he should get close so he could hear their conversation.

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Lunch had finally arrived, and as usual, Gary was one of the first people there. He quickly began stuffing his food down. The meal was decent enough that his energy levels would no longer go down for the day, but they were neither going up.

[168/300 Energy]

Still, from what he had observed, he should be able to beat some of his opponents quickly, and if it was proving a difficult match, he could always go into his complete transformation. After finishing lunch, Gary walked up to Izzy and Ian. They hadn't fought for a few days and were waiting for their next assessment.

While the three were chatting, they saw the top rankers enter after a while, with Numba following Sty closely behind. Like before, Numba went to collect food for Sty, but there was something strange about his food.

As Numba placed it down, the others could see someone was moving and wriggling about in the bowl.

"As you all know, the top ten students can request whatever they wish. They just have to put in the order at the start of the day. This is why I have decided to be nice to my fellow participant and ordered

some nice worms for him." Sty said aloud so everyone could hear, even the ones who weren't at their desk.

He then pushed the bowl of worms to Numba, who stared down at it. They still had pieces of mud on them as if someone had freshly picked them from the ground.

"This is my treat, and please remember to eat every single one. The staff has worked hard to gather these lovely worms, you know?" Sty smiled.

Some at the table and a few others were put off by their meal, while the rest stopped to see if Numba would actually eat this specially ordered 'food'.

Numba stared at them for a few seconds and picked up the bowl. He stopped a few centimetres away from his mouth before opening his mouth with a gulp. He then chucked them in and tried to swallow them rather than chew.

However, the thought of what he was doing and feeling them wriggling about in his mouth was too much for him, making him gag. Then, putting the bowl back half-empty, he threw up all across the floor.

In the vomit was whatever he had eaten earlier and the wriggling worms.

"Now that's not very nice, that's not very nice at all." Sty said, standing up. He patted Numba on the back as if he was a good friend.

"Look at all of this. It's such a waste. I think you should eat it. We can't waste food now, can we? I think you should get on the floor and lick up every single bit you just threw up." Sty advised.

Numba's body quivered, but he got on his knees. Staring at the vomit, his eyes teared up.

'I...I have to do this...I have to...otherwise my family. I can't let them down after everything they've done for me. I'm sorry...for not being able to do better...and Gary, I'm sorry for saying that to you yesterday. I just know that...you would get involved, and then you would be in this mess.'

Sty put his foot on Numba's back, kicking him towards the mess on the floor, but his attention soon changed to something else. Just like the days before, a certain someone was walking across the room.

"Ah...look, your hero has come to save you again." Sty laughed. "What's he going to do? stare at me again?"

Gary continued walking without a word. He didn't slow down his pace and didn't look up either, and when he reached the table, he picked up the bowl of worms with one hand. Before anyone could do anything, and before even Sty could react, the bowl had been slammed down onto Sty's face. A loud clash was heard as it broke to pieces.

The bowl had smashed on impact, shattering and making scratch marks across Sty. Then, as he lost balance, he dropped to the ground, and worms covered his face.

"Eat the damn f*cking worms yourself, you damn fly."

Chapter 384: A small meal

It was as if time had stopped for everyone in the Canteen as silence descended throughout the dining hall. Even those on the Rank 1 table were stunned and didn't know how to react to this. As for Gary, he just stood there looking down at Sty.

Sty was hurt, but not so bad that he couldn't get up and wipe the worms off his face.

"You bastard! I'll kill you. I'll kill you and your whole FAMILY!" He rubbed away the worms and shouted as he stood up from the ground.

His body was already transforming, but before he could fully get up on his feet, a sudden force enveloped both of them, and a shadow appeared between them, making Gary take a step back.

"Do not act!" A voice said. "Please stay calm until we resolve the problem."

As for the one speaking, it was one of the teachers who constantly kept an eye on all the students. One held Sty before he could take off, and another stood in front of Gary.

"Fighting is not permitted in the Canteen. The attacker and the victim must come with us to resolve this case. Please follow us." The teacher instructed.

A few students were shaking their heads at what they had seen, mainly Apollo and Izzy, because they both had the same fear.

'Gary...Gary, why don't you ever talk to me or think before you act? Doing something like this, attacking him out of the blue without challenging him, the teachers could kick you out of this place for this stunt.' Izzy thought.

Gary and Sty seemed to have complied and followed after the two teachers, leaving the rest of the students in anticipation of what would happen next. The whole dining hall was overwhelmed with commotion as soon as the doors closed.

"Did you see that? He smashed that plate right on Sty's face! Who is that guy? Wasn't he just a recruit, an assessment person?" A student asked.

"Yeah, I think he might have a screw loose or something. If I am not wrong, this is not the first time he walked to the top table. Honestly, I wouldn't be worried about getting kicked out. Instead, I would worry more about what would happen outside the academy after getting kicked out." Another asked.

At the same time, while listening to all the comments, Numba was still on the floor.

'Gary...Gary, what are you doing? Are you putting your position in this academy and your whole life at risk just because of one favour? Don't be an idiot!'

Outside the dining hall, a few others were shaking their heads as well after seeing what had transpired in the hall. In particular, the three professors who had their eye on Gary. They were being updated on everything going on and were even called to make certain decisions.

"This guy." Hai huffed. "He makes no moves in the facility, and then, the first thing he does is cause trouble and break the rules by doing this? You guys know what could happen now, right? That family might even target us for not looking after him."

"Stop being overdramatic." Humfree said, taking a sip of his coffee. "Everyone who enters this place is made aware of the consequences. Just because the person attacking him has a low background makes no difference.

"Besides, there is a simple way to resolve this matter." Humfrey smiled while taking a sip of his coffee and then called a teacher to send some instructions.

For now, the teachers had detained both Sty and Gary in separate rooms. They were medical rooms attached to the facility, but the students didn't have access to them unless they were hurt.

Sty was getting treatment with the best available means to heal the wounds and swelling, and on the other hand, Gary was under observation while the staff decided on what to do next. In the room, Sty was currently in, the teacher standing beside him had received some instructions.

"There has been a resolution put forward to you." The teacher said, "To resolve the matter between the two of you, they wish for the two of you to have a match. This is the professors' suggestion to clear the bad blood between you.

"However, no such scuffle is allowed between you after the match unless it is in an official duel. If you pull off such a stunt once again, we will immediately expel the instigator, if not both of you, without any change of plea. Right now, someone else is explaining the same conditions to the other guy as well."

Clenching his fist, Sty thought it wasn't fair. The other party had started it, but he stood up immediately, because this was what he wanted a long time ago.

"A forced match? That's fine with me. This way, Apollo can't say anything about me starting this crap. Bring it on. I will make that bastard wish he never came before me!"

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While the staff was telling them about the decision they had arrived at, lunchtime was over for the students.

However, almost all the students were still preoccupied with the incident and were anticipating the decision made by the teachers.

And they didn't have to wait for long as the double doors were pushed open, and two teachers walked inside, with the two students following them right behind.

The teachers then brought both of them to the facility's centre, and soon, they were standing in the so-called Arena.

"An official match between Rank 42 and Rank 4 will now take place. No one is allowed to interfere with this match until one of them gives up, is knocked out, or if we decide any of the two to be a winner!" The teacher explained.

Sty walked over to the other side and turned towards Gary. His blood was boiling with rage after what had happened. He had never been humiliated like that before and publicly, no less.

"You have made the biggest mistake of your life. I'll rip out all your teeth, break all your bones, and beat the crap out of you until you beg for a swift death! But that won't be the end of it! Because my anger won't calm just with your death.

"I'll find your family, your friends, every single person you care about, and make you watch as I beat them all to a pulp and take everything away from you that you ever owned!" Sty's words resounded throughout the arena, and all the students stopped talking.

Gary didn't reply and stood there, not acting, not showing how he was feeling.

"Gary, he can win this, right?" Ian whispered, trying not to attract any attention.

"He can, of course, he can," Izzy replied, "But it's going to be difficult, and I am sure Sty will do exactly what he said he would if he wins. He won't let Gary off with a simple beating."

In the arena, the match began. Sty had sprouted his wings and eyes. He immediately started flying right toward Gary as if he was about to hit him, but at the last moment, he changed direction.

'Sty... he's flying much faster than when he was fighting against me. He must be furious,' Numba gulped.

Flying from area to area, Sty was making it hard for Gary to predict the direction from which the former would come.

"I will torture you till the very last ounce of your breath!" Sty shouted, finally flying in once again.

"You made a mistake," Gary replied.

He then opened his mouth and let out a resounding howl, making everyone at the scene have a strange feeling run through their body.

'This is what I wanted...this is who I thought you were.' Apollo smiled.

At that moment, Sty was affected the most by the howl. He suddenly had the urge to fly straight toward Gary, There was no other thought in his head other than to attack Gary, and his speed had increased once more.

[Full Transformation Activated]

Before Sty could reach him, Gary's entire body started to transform this time. The hair on his arms and legs grew, and clothes ripped apart as his body enlarged. His mouth elongated, and his ears became pointy.

Some of the students couldn't believe what monster they were looking at, and at that moment, Gary grabbed straight onto Sty's shoulders mid air stopping him dead.

His sharp claws dug into Sty, causing the latter to scream in extreme pain, and made it so he was unable to break out unless he could rip his body away.

"Report report, what do we do!" Seeing the situation, the teachers shouted for instruction from the higher-ups.

Gary tightened his grip, digging in his nails more, making Sty cry for his life. No matter how much he struggled, Sty couldn't get out.

"You don't threaten my family or friends, no matter who you are," Gary declared as he opened his jaw wide and his razor-sharp teeth dug right into Sty.

Chapter 385: Little Wolf

Some Altereded in the facility couldn't believe what they saw in the arena. The Altereded in front of them wasn't the typical one they would see.

With razor-sharp fangs, long claws, saliva dripping from his mouth, and red eyes, he looked like a monster out of their worst nightmares.

Many felt a chill just looking at Gary's form. It was a rare sight for a lot of them to see. Altereded first learned how to transform their certain body parts, and as time passed on, they would mix and change their body to whatever was best suited to them, but Altereded were rarely able to change into their full beast form.

Some Altereded didn't even know what their actual beast form would look like since it was hard for them to imagine what their beast was based on from the few parts they could change. Although, depending on how they became Altereded, companies such as NIRV would allow one to see the beast which had been used for their DNA.

Either way, Altereded were still seen as human by many but seeing Gary, it was hard for them to believe that he was actually a human.

In the arena, Gary stood there staring at Sty. He had grabbed him hard, dug his claws in, and using his large mouth, he had crunched hard over his shoulder. The fang marks had reached up to Sty's chest.

During the bite, Gary realised what he was doing and restrained himself from chewing off half of his opponent's body.

Although from the sight, the others wouldn't have believed that Sty's life was saved just because Gary restrained himself. Blood dripped down from the tip of his claws. In front of him, Sty had utterly passed out from the shock.

At that moment, Gary had decided to let go, dropping Sty on the floor and into the latter's own pool of blood, which was continuously spreading.

'I didn't mean to transform fully.' Gary sighed. 'I just got so angry. Why can't I just learn to control myself when I'm angry? Although he deserved it, now I've gone and shown everyone what I really am.'

Immediately, Gary started to revert to how he was. His clothes were ripped but still covered the essential parts of his book. Once he returned to his human form, he stared down at Sty again.

'Shit, I bit him as well.'

When Gary was frustrated and fully transformed, he realised he had somewhat lost himself. Especially now, he just had this urge to bite the person in front of him. Maybe his werewolf instincts were kicking in, telling him to eat the prey in front of him to get stronger.

One thing had changed though, the number on Gary's badge. It had turned to number four, meaning he had successfully gained the position. The fight was over, but that didn't come as a surprise considering Sty's state.

What many of the students were concerned about was if Sty was still alive or not. The teachers on the side quickly rushed to the arena and began checking Sty's condition.

"Damn it, kid! Couldn't you have gone easy on the guy?" One of the teachers said while lifting unconscious Sty off the ground.

"Don't blame him." Another teacher retorted, "No one saw this coming, it was our fault, and he won this whole thing fair and square. So let's just get this student to the infirmary."

Then turning towards Gary, the teacher added, "As for you, don't cause any more trouble. We will be watching you."

The teachers quickly left the arena, taking Sty with them, but there wasn't enough time to clean up the blood on the floor, which was still there, and Gary was also standing on it.

"Hey, hey, hey. Was any of this in your calculations?" Ian asked.

"How could it be," Izzy said, still staring at Gary, but now she knew why she was feeling so afraid of the latter. She didn't understand it before, but now it made sense that her natural instincts told her not to mess with this person.

"I didn't know he could fully transform. I don't think anyone did. He was already strong enough, and to think he was still hiding some of his power. Did he lie to us about his background?"

It was the only thing Izzy could think of, but Gary didn't seem like that kind of person. Was he just naturally talented? But then what about the Altered DNA he had? If there was something this strong, surely the more prominent gangs would have kept it for themselves, unless this Howlers group was something special.

Other than these two, the most surprised person around the whole arena was none other than Numba, the person who was the epicentre of this mess. Looking at Gary standing in the pool of blood, his eyes started to well up. It was unknown how long ago he cried and how long he had kept these emotions at bay.

'He beat Sty...He beat them...how was he able to beat them, just like that, and so easy? The two of us even have a similar background as each other. So what is the difference between the two of us? Is it strength? Would all my problems disappear if I was that strong and had the power to beat Sty? Would I be able to help my family?' A thousand thoughts were running through Numba's mind.

"Gary!" He finally shouted out, seeing how Gary looked lost in his thoughts. "Thank you...thank you."

Gary came out of his stupor and turned his head towards the cry. When they made eye contact, he smiled at Numba but walked away.

Without stopping, Gary went to his room while his mind was preoccupied with many thoughts.

'I've achieved my goal of reaching the top ten, and I smashed that guy's head in, but why did I have to bite him? Is he going to be okay? He isn't going to change, is he? I remember Billy bit that White Rose agent, but nothing happened to her. A Werewolf can't turn Altered, can they? It should be okay. I hope.' Gary thought.

Meanwhile, staring at his disappearing back, Apollo's fist was shaking. He placed his hand on his chest as he sensed his speeding heartbeat.

'I...want to fight you so bad...little wolf.'

Chapter 386: An offer is made

Gary put his brand-new room to good use... by hiding in it. The teenager even went as far as to skip his next meal to avoid having to face the consequences of his actions. He simply didn't know how to cope with all of this sudden unwanted attention.

Naturally, his absence did little to nothing to stop the rumour mill that was coming up with crazy ideas about what the strange Wolf Altered would do next. However, the other students were just as curious about how the other top rankers intended to handle him.

Since the Werewolf had won the duel, everyone else had their rank adjusted. Normally, that would be barely worth mentioning, but this time around, one of the former top rankers suddenly found himself disqualified from advancing to the AFA.

Only... what exactly could he do about it? By himself, barely anything. Challenging Gary after the teenager had revealed that he was actually capable to fully transform into his Altered form was akin to suicide.

The only ones who might stand a chance against him were Apollo Zorion, Snow Light or Wu Chen, and it was questionable whether they would risk their own position with their advancement only a few days away. Not to mention, the duel had been set up by the adults so that there would be no more bad blood between the two duellists.

“What do you think about the rumour that Gary is going to challenge the top three next?” Ian asked as he and Izzy headed towards a certain location. “If someone had told me that earlier, I would have called that person crazy... but now... after what he did to Sty...”

“I’m not sure.” Izzy replied cautiously. “I asked around, but nobody ever saw any of the three fighting, so it’s hard to say.”

Stopping in his tracks, Ian’s face was one of pure confusion. He was unable to figure out how such a thing would be possible in this kind of place.

“Sty was the one actively fighting, until he eventually ended up as rank 1. After that, Wu, Snow, and Appolo challenged him to a duel. Each of them ‘defeated’ him with a single strike. I don’t think I need to tell you that those were all just show matches.

“All of that happened right before we entered the place, and then Apollo suggested that the top rankers enter a pact so that they could all advance together. Since he had some connection with Sty who defeated all of them, and all of them stood to benefit from that type of arrangement, they had all agreed to it.

“Well, that’s when we came into this place, and now Gary managed to destroy their little utopian dream...”

Finally, the two of them stopped before a door and knocked on it. A few moments later, Numba came out, his head held low.

“You ready? All three of us agreed to do this, remember?” Izzy reminded them, and the two boys nodded their heads.

— —

Gary staying in his room wasn't all bad. He had barely noticed the time passing with how much there had been to check out in such a luxurious place. Even Jayden's top suite paled in comparison. Gary's favourite boon of the room was definitely the jacuzzi style hot tub.

As he was soaking in it, he suddenly overheard some students talk outside.

"Hey, it's Sty, he's back." A student said.

Hearing a knock on his door, the green haired student put on a luxurious bathrobe before he opened the room. Next to Sty were some of the teachers who were there to help him move some of his things.

Moving rooms was a somewhat annoying process for the students involved, but since this place valued strength above everything else, the top rankers had the most luxurious rooms. As such, it was always an extra hassle whenever one of them was defeated and had to move rooms.

Sty looked to be in a lot better shape than at the end of the duel. The wounds on the back of his arms from Gary's claws looked to have healed a lot, but there was a certain part that hadn't healed yet. His chest was banged up, and part of the blood could be seen having soaked through the bandages, revealing fang marks.

"Hey." Gary greeted him with a nervous smile. "Are you feeling alright? You don't have a craving for meat, right? And you don't smell things any differently than before?"

Everyone was surprised to see the wildcard newcomer suddenly act so chummy after having defeated the top ranker. The strangest thing was that it didn't seem to be an act on Gary's part, rather genuine concern. That was because it was, as the green haired teenager was worried about Sty's condition after he had bitten him.

Although the System had been unable to turn Kirk, the Werewolf didn't really have a complete understanding of his mostly silent helper, and after what had happened to Billy, he wanted to avoid any such surprises. The easiest way was simply to ask Sty himself.

Unfortunately, the other teenager wanted nothing to do with Gary any more. He headed straight into his room and started gathering his things. What nobody noticed was that his hands had been shaking the entire time Gary had looked at him.

'I can't even look at him without getting like this...' Sty thought. 'He's acting like nothing happened... trying to be friendly with me... What a joke. Has the realisation finally kicked in what I might do to his family? ... Tsk, if only Apollo would let me. Still, I don't need to tell him that part. Hopefully, he'll suffer nightmares throughout his stay here.'

Eventually, Sty and the adults left the place. Just as Gary was about to go back to enjoying the hot tub, there was another knock on the door.

"What is it? Did you overlook something?" The Werewolf asked, only to look into three familiar faces.

"Holy shit, your new room is awesome. No wonder you haven't left it at all. You could fit about a dozen of us in here without it getting cramped!" Ian stated, as he shamelessly went inside, passing Gary who just stood at the door.

Hurrying behind him, Izzy slapped him on the back, reminding her childhood friend why they had come here in the first place. As for Numba, he seemed a little more reserved compared to his usual self.

"So, did you just come to enjoy the sigh of my new room?" The Werewolf asked, closing the door behind the Goat Altered.

Izzy pulled the other two towards herself, and made them stand. All three suddenly got down on their knees.

"We've all come here to ask you for a favour, Gary." Izzy answered with her own head held down as well. "Please train us. With your help, we'll be able to get out of this place and advance to the AFA. In exchange, we're ready to help you with whatever you need.

"If you need manpower, we'll fight at your side. If you plan to expand, our families will help your gang with that. Please help us enter the AFA, and we promise that for the rest of our lives, we'll be in your debt!" Izzy bowed her head again until it was touching the floor.

Chapter 387: Train us

With Izzy suddenly pleading their case with such fervour, Gary was left speechless. He didn't really know what to say. He had half processed what they were saying, but at the same time didn't really understand.

"First of all, can you guys please get off the floor? It makes me feel uncomfortable when you act like that. We're the same age, and I'm just a student like you guys. Heck, technically all of us are still just student candidates for the AFA." Gary said, pinching the bridge of his nose.

Lifting their heads off the floor, all of them had eager faces since the green haired teenager had not yet refused their request. He was certain that Izzy was putting on a pair of large puppy eyes, which made things extra hard on him, and just made him want to look away.

"Gary, it took a lot for us to ask that of you." Ian confessed. "It's nice of you to say we're the same, but let's be honest, it's obvious we're not. Take a look at the number on your badge, and then take a look at the number on ours. If we do things our way, it might take us months or years to reach your level.

"Do you think anyone can just challenge someone like Sty? I mean, look at what happened to Numba!"

"Watch it." The Goat Altered retorted and punched Ian on the shoulder. "I might have lost, but at least I fought against one of the top rankers. I stood my ground."

"Look, that might be noble or whatever you guys tell yourselves, but the whole point of this place is to reach the top and stay there for a week. Right now, we can't do that... because we're weaker than them." Izzy sighed. "Gary, we want to form an alliance. Not just between us, but our families as well.

"It's the only thing families like ours can do in a place like this."

Gary started to pace backwards and forwards in his room... It was something he often did when trying to think properly, but the problem was he couldn't really grasp what was being offered.

“Can you explain this to me like I’m five?” Gary asked in slight embarrassment. The idea itself didn't sound bad to him. Kai did tell him to try to attract more business and so to Slough, or perhaps even find opportunities to expand, and it might be what he needed. “Is it really alright for you guys to make that type of promise without speaking to your family beforehand?”

“Sorry, I forgot that you’re backed by a gang, and that things work differently for you. Our families invested into us becoming Altered, sending us here in the hopes that we would meet other great people and form relationships with them.

“While a gang in a Tier-3 town might not be all that great, all of us are convinced that in the future you will become a great person, and we want to help you achieve that potential. As the futures of our respective families, we have the power to help you, even if it might be somewhat limited at first. Once we prove ourselves though, we’ll be able to do more for you!” Izzy placed her hand out, trying to get Gary to shake it, but the Werewolf was still looking at it with caution.

‘I have some open Marks, so perhaps I should enter a bond with her. At least that way, I would know in case she tries to betray me in the future, though she seems to be serious about her current offer.’

“I’ll be honest, Gary.” Numba said. “You know I don't trust anyone, and it's the same for my family. I might have to place a meeting between mine and yours, but I promise that for what you have done I will have your back, in return for having mine.

“Just like in that assessment, we can do this together as well.” Numba put his hand out as well, and seeing this Ian soon followed with all three of them placing their hands out.

Scratching the back of his head, Gary eventually put both of his hands out,

“I can't shake all three of your hands at once. Of course, I’ll teach you, and this can be the start of our alliance.” Gary said with a smile.

The training began that day, more specifically at nighttime. Given Gary’s new privileges, he brought the three of them along to a private training room. That way no one could see what they were doing. His

Energy was around the halfway mark, but that wasn't much of a concern. The Werewolf was already looking forward to breakfast since he could now order as much food as he liked, something he planned to put to very good use.

Inside the training room, the first thing Gary did was have the three show off what they were capable of. In a way, it reminded him of the days when he would watch and analyse Altered fighters on the TV, only now he would be the one to actively give them pointers.

The three Altered looked a bit tired after showing off, and that's when Gary started to walk forward to each of them.

"Alright, I've seen enough. There are few things that we should do to make you improve at the fastest speed. Truth be told, I don't plan to stay here longer than I need to, so that gives us around a week.

"The quickest way to improve will be to focus on your respective strengths, since we lack the time to effectively combat your weaknesses. I want you guys to think about what your strengths are. This will be important for your next task."

Gary's arms started to transform, and he got into a fighting stance himself.

"There is one thing that all of you lack, and that is experience. The experience of fighting with your life on the line. Remember what I said, so let's try to kill two birds with one stone! All of you fight me at once!" Gary started running forward as he looked over his Status.

[Exp 3788/5302]

'Defeating Sty resulted in a nice Exp boost. Let's see if fighting them might also net me some Exp. If so, I might get something out of our training as well, and get one step closer to Level Up.'

The next day was special for more than one reason. Not only was it the day the assessment would take place, but today was the last day the top rankers had to hold on to their rank to be allowed to advance, so many were expecting for things to get quite interesting...

Chapter 388: Stubborn

The next day, Ian, Izzy, and Numba woke up groaning in pain. Their bodies felt sore all over after their nightly exercise. It took each one of them half an hour of stretching and twisting until their aches and pains had gone down to tolerable levels, just in time to head to the canteen.

"I knew he was a monster, but if this is his idea of training, I'm worried we might not survive our stay here." Ian complained as they met up in front of the canteen. "It's frightening how much stamina that guy has. Sh*t, I just realised that he did all of that pretty much on an empty stomach. Doesn't that mean, tonight it's going to get even worse?!"

"His stamina isn't the only concerning thing." Numba added. "Even after the three of us finally managed to trap him thanks to Izzy's idea, we were unable to damage him, even though I made sure to not hold back my punches. I might not have been in peak condition... but he didn't even flinch. It was as if I was punching an iron wall!"

Unbeknownst to the Goat Altered, Gary had felt it. Unfortunately for him, given the Werewolf's high Endurance and large Health pool, he had remained calm, aware that he could sustain dozens of punches without having to worry about his well-being.

"He's surprisingly good at analysing fights." Izzy spoke up. "All those points he made about us were spot on. When you showed off, I noticed the same thing as he did. However, his talent to do that during a fight is clearly one notch above mine. Sigh, it's as if he was practically born to become an AFC champion."

While the three of them were bantering casually, they entered the canteen. The atmosphere inside was unusually heavy. Rather than the normal chit-chat, the place was filled with hushed whispers as everyone was waiting for something to happen between the top rankers and those in the top 25.

"That's right, I nearly forgot that today's the last day before the assessment. Apollo and his group just need to keep their positions to advance. Since no one has seen them fight, there are some people that are going to hedge their bets and challenge them. At least that's what most students assume is going to happen." Izzy commented, when the three of them sat down at their table.

“Well, Gary won't have to worry about anything then. Truth be told, I hope something will actually go down today. No offence, Numba, but if we ignore the fact that Sty kicked your butt, him fighting was pretty impressive. I wouldn't mind seeing the other top rankers show off their abilities.” Ian said.

“Speaking of rumours, I've heard one about our future treatment in the AFA being linked to what rank we end up with before advancing. However, seeing as the top rankers don't exactly seem overeager to challenge those above them, it might only be something the teachers spread to encourage fighting.” Izzy shared her thoughts while enjoying her meal.

“In that regard, it's actually a smart way to force us to fight each other. It would certainly fit in line with those weekly assessments where the teachers decide what rank each of us should have instead of allowing the rank 11-20 students to become the new top rankers.

“Any one of them who fails to enter the top 10 would automatically have an incentive to challenge the new top rankers, thus making it hard for everyone to keep their positions for a week...”

“Only Apollo broke that System, so who knows what kind of assessment awaits us today.” Numba pointed out.

Numerous dishes were being brought out one after the other. Just the ingredients that were being used to make them rivalled the yearly income of the average Tier-3 family. While everyone was staring at this spectacle, a certain green haired teenager only had eyes for the food in front of him.

Atop five plates were different types of steaks, but the one thing they all had in common was that all of them had been cooked blue. What's more, there were eight to ten per plate, spreading their aroma throughout the canteen.

‘They weren't kidding about serving whatever my heart desires. This is EXACTLY what I've been dreaming of!’ Gary didn't care about the fact that he was drooling, without caring the slightest bit about his image, he started digging in at an incredible pace.

To the onlookers, it appeared as if he was barely chewing his food, devouring all of it like a black hole. Even after he had topped up his Energy, the Werewolf didn't stop. After all, it was all free!!! In his eyes, he was earning money for each steak he consumed.

'I'm going to eat my fill until my stomach explodes!' Gary thought in glee.

"For a small body, you sure eat a lot." Apollo laughed when the rank 4 student asked for seconds.

"Oi, Wolf bastard, there are other people at this table. Can't you mind your manners even a little?" A girl whose badge showed the number 8 complained.

"Sorry." Gary apologised while licking the juice off his fingers. He hadn't bothered using a knife or fork to eat. "After having only soup for days, I really needed this. You guys will leave after today, so I hope you can tolerate my behaviour for one day."

It wasn't that he didn't have manners, his mum had brought him and his sister up well, it was just that for the first time in his life, he wanted to act as he pleased without having to care about others. Since this place advocated might make right and neither Apollo nor his friends said anything about Gary's behaviour, the Werewolf enjoyed letting loose for once.

With breakfast over, the students were excited because the time most challenges and fights occurred was between breakfast and lunch, followed by after lunch. When heading back and exiting the canteen doors, everyone was looking around, looking for the first challenger.

"Sty!" A voice shouted and pointed towards the student whose badge now showed the number 5. "I challenge you for your position."

The challenger was rank 11, the student who had left the top ranks due to Gary. Many found it reasonable that the guy would be pissed, and since Sty had been seriously injured in yesterday's fight, he might not be in peak form today.

As for the pact between the top rankers, with this being the last day, it was practically useless. After his fight, rank 11 could make use of the rules to refuse any challenges for this day, so he had nothing to fear.

The two of them walked into the fighting arena, and the match began. Immediately, the challenger ran across and punched Sty, who just stood there taking it. He didn't transform and just remained on the floor.

'What is he doing?' Izzy thought. 'If he just wins this match, then he gets through and can join the academy!'

However, the Fly Altered remained on the floor and didn't get up. Only once the match had been deemed resolved, and his badge changed to the number 6, did he finally get up.

'I'll stay here, and I'll make sure that damned Goat quits on his own. It's because of him and his green haired friend that I got so humiliated!!!' Sty thought, as he pointed at the student whose rank was one above his current one, Rank 7.

"I challenge you to a fight!"

Chapter 389: Last Day

Everyone in the facility was stunned, as it was hard for them to tell what Sty's goal was. It was clear that he had lost the last match on purpose, so why was he now the one challenging his fellow top ranker, especially one he already outranked?

His action was completely legitimate. The rules merely stated that someone who had already fought was allowed to refuse any further challenges on that day, yet there was no limit to how often someone could challenge others. As long as a challenger didn't have any severe injuries forcing the teacher to take them away for healing, they were technically free to fight to their heart's desire.

Usually, only students at the lower ranks would fight more than once, as the strength disparity between them wasn't overly great. The higher the rank, the bigger the gap became, so fights between high rankers normally resulted in injuries for both sides. However, the situation right now was outside the norm.

Since the rank 7 student had nothing to lose by accepting this challenge, he agreed to it.

"I forfeit the match." Sty announced loudly, the moment it started.

'He's purposely losing to others. Why would he do that?' Izzy wondered, trying to come up with a reason why someone so close to the finish line would act in this manner. The only one that came to mind was that he might... want to stay. Coming to that conclusion, she looked over to Numba, who looked quite tense.

"It looks like we're thinking the same thing. He must want to stay to mess with us... and by us, I mean me and Gary." Numba stated, although he wasn't so sure how Sty would deal with Gary after the Werewolf had beaten the Fly Altered in the duel. Nevertheless, he understood that he had to tread carefully in the future.

'No, I should see this as an opportunity. If he is staying here, then I can't pass this place, until I beat him!' Numba reassured himself.

As suspected, Sty continued to challenge those lower ranked than him, until his badge finally displayed the number 11. Turning towards Numba he smiled before walking out of the place to his new room.

"Man, that bug guy is seriously weird." Gary uttered out what had been on the mind of every other student.

The rumours had been correct about the top 25 planning to challenge the top rankers today. Unfortunately, Sty's bout of challenges had made it impossible for them to enact their plan. Everyone who had beaten the Fly Altered were now protected by the rules and could simply refuse the challenge.

This meant that only the top four could now be challenged. Some of those in the top 25 looked at Gary, yet soon turned their heads. They knew their own strength well enough to understand that they would be unable to beat Sty, so none of them dared to challenge the one who had beaten him.

"Hey, why don't we just go for it?" One of the students whispered to another. "It's not like we have much to lose. Worst case scenario, we remain at our current rank. Best case scenario, they turn out weak and we can boast our reputation and make it so that the others might not want to challenge us during the next week."

In the end, rank 15, a lean student who had been spending most of his time in the training room, walked forward and pointed towards none other than Wu Chen, issuing a challenge.

“Me? Hey, Apollo, you saw it, right? I didn’t go looking for a fight, he chose me of his own volition!” Wu exclaimed, jumping up in excitement, over a few of the other students’ heads, even kicking off the bald head of another student to help him get to the main stage faster.

“Come on, let’s do this!” Wu shouted, ripping his shirt and revealing his body. His hard trained body was already covered in sweat. His body fat was so low that the saturation of his muscles could be seen as he tensed his arms and chest. He wasn’t large and muscular by any means, but there looked to not be an ounce of fat on him.

The moment the fight began, the challenger started to transform, and out from the side of his ribs, a pair of extra arms grew out. By the time his transformation finished, Wu was already directly in front of him.

The rank 3 student grabbed one of the freshly grown arms and with a kick up, he bent it in the wrong direction. Wu slammed his foot on the ground, or more correctly on his opponent’s toes. It was so hard that the floor beneath actually cracked, and the same was true for the challenger’s entire foot.

Pushing through the pain, rank 15 tried to punch him using his two hands on the other side, but before he could, he suffered a direct punch towards his chest. He lifted his foot, and the student was sent hurtling to the other side, being caught by the teachers just before crashing into the crowd of onlookers.

“... a complete defeat.” Ian uttered, his mouth left open. “It wasn’t even a contest and the guy didn’t even change into his Altered form either. Looks like they’re not just there because of their position. They actually have the strength to back it up.”

Izzy agreed with Ian. If Rank 3 was already this strong, it was most likely that his two friends were even stronger. Seeing how one of their own had been dealt with, none of the other high rankers came forward to challenge Snow or Wu.

Lunch came and passed, turning into evening. During the meal, there had been only a single question on everyone’s mind.

What would Gary do?!

“Why does everyone expect me to do something?” Gary complained when Ian asked him that very question. The four of them were in his room, getting ready to go to their next training session that Gary had planned for them.

“Because you have nothing to lose!” Ian replied. “You can challenge them without the risk of losing your rank, and it will let you see how you fare against them. If you don’t do it now, you might not get a chance to fight them. I heard that in the normal academy fighting between students isn’t allowed without the permission of a teacher. Are you really going to waste your chance?”

“Well, I don't really care.” Gary shrugged. “Sure, I like fighting, but if it's meant to be, then I'll end up fighting them some time down the line in the future. I have no grudge against any of them.”

There was another reason Gary wasn’t feeling competitive. He knew that he wouldn’t hold back, even if just for a ‘simple spar’. Seeing Wu in action, the Werewolf understood that he would have to fight all out if he wanted to win. If that was the case there was a high chance of something going wrong. After what happened with Sty he didn’t want to have yet another Billy scare.

The students here weren’t like the Underdogs, or the gang members he had been fighting in Slough. Many of them might be arrogant, but none of them had committed any crimes... at least not that he was aware of.

“Come on, let's go train. You guys don’t want to be stuck here forever, right?” Gary said, walking forward. Opening the door, he nearly collided with the large frame of Apollo.

Chapter 390 Hit Rank 1 Apollo had not expected for Gary to come out of his room the moment he had been about to knock. His hand remained in mid-air for a moment before he took it down and smiled at the Werewolf.

The other three behind Gary gulped as they saw why the green haired teenager had suddenly stopped. Since the day was mostly over, none of them had expected that another fight would break out. However, why else would Apollo appear right at Gary’s doorstep if he wasn’t looking to challenge the newcomer away from prying eyes?

“Aren’t you going to invite me in?” Apollo asked in a humorous tone to break the awkward silence.

"I think that's a bad idea. You see, I have a terrible stomach ache. Must have been all the food I ate earlier." Gary quickly replied, holding in his stomach. Just like everyone else, the Werewolf hadn't even entertained the idea that trouble might come looking for him. He had thought that as long as he avoided the other, all would be good.

Alas, the rank 1 student simply entered the room before Gary could close the door in his face. "Your excuse isn't very believable when you have three other visitors waiting inside your room, especially when your outfit clearly shows you were about to head out to train. Don't worry, I haven't come here to challenge you.

"Should the two of us fight, then I want you to be at your very best... and I've noticed in your fight against Sty that there appears to be something holding you back in here."

Gary wasn't sure how to react to being seen through. Apollo was right, since all their fights were being watched, the green haired teenager didn't feel it safe to fight at his full strength.

"I've simply come to offer you a piece of advice before I leave." Apollo explained. "Maybe you or your friends have already heard some rumours that your rank dictates your treatment in the AFA. That is only one half of the truth. The time it takes you to advance is also very important.

"Given your earlier performance, I don't think I'll have to worry about what rank you end up as. But I have one word of advice, go through at least in the top three if you wish to see me. I'll be waiting for you in the academy then."

Having said his piece, Apollo was already on his way out and when he finally left, Gary heard three loud breaths behind him.

"Man, I was only one second away from taking cover behind your bed." Ian blurted out, touching his heart in an attempt to calm down his racing organ.

"Well... that wasn't at all what I had expected, but I think this might be the best result in the end." Izzy commented, as she got ready to leave the place and so did the others, but as the door was opened, and she turned around, she could see Gary just thinking as he stared at the floor, his fist was shaking.

'I see...you're one of those types.' Izzy smiled. "Earth to Gary, you promised to train us, remember?"

Inside the personal training room, the three weren't sparing against the Werewolf, at least not together. After some intense warm-ups, he had asked each of them to use their best skills against him. It was part of the homework he had given them yesterday, when he had told them to figure out what their strengths were and come up with ideas to improve upon them.

This was the way for them to get stronger quickly in this place. The fundamentals were important, but all three already had a good set of fundamentals so rather than to try and improve those to a master level, he wanted to help them come up with something that would allow them to become top rankers like him.

Izzy, and Ian had done well in showing off, and had improved far quicker than Gary could imagine. Ian was focusing on trying to get his Altered form to come out, since it would be hard to do much in terms of improving his strength. As for Izzy, her strength came from her logical thinking and how she used her head to come up with strategies. Honestly, she was seeing a lot of improvement just by being able to fight someone at Gary's level.

"Gary... I want to thank you." Numba said when it was his turn. "Your words, the stress I was suffering from and the will to push through, I feel like what I have learnt to do, all of it was because of you. Which is why I'm asking you now...to be careful and brace yourself!" With that the Goat Altered started to transform and began his attack.

A few moments later, both Ian and Izzy were left with their mouths wide open, completely speechless. Numba who was on the floor, panting and sweating, yet above him stood a partially transformed Gary, whose frame had been pushed into the wall, surrounded by cracks.

"Thanks for the warning." Gary coughed, his body a bit tensed up. "I think you've got this."

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The next day started with an announcement, informing the students that all those who had been eligible had passed on to the AFA. They were quickly escorted out of the place, as the other students

had things they needed to do as well. They were then told to follow the teachers who would accompany them for today's assessment.

According to what they had learned the assessments differed from time to time, it could be a game similar to what they had done when joining or just a simple series of tests. As it turned out, today was the latter. 100-Metre sprint, strength test, flexibility test, reflex test among others.

Everything was being done in the open, with no real surprises. One was allowed to transform during the test, yet Gary had chosen to remain as he was. Nevertheless, he gave it his all because Apollo's 'advice' was still ringing in his head.

"Everyone, please pay attention!" One of the teachers called out to the students who had returned to the facility. "The screen will display the ranks of everybody. If you're dissatisfied with your ranks, do better next time, or claim the rank you feel you deserve!"

The screen flicked as it showed them their results, starting from the bottom, going up.

Izzy's name was the first one to show up. Her new rank was 54, and she was very satisfied with it. While some students were already eyeing her with a challenging look, she felt that after Gary's Draconian training, there was no need to fear them. In fact, she might even try to secure a place in the top 50 after a few more days.

The next name to show up was Ian's. His new rank was 23, a very impressive feat for someone unable to access his Altered form. Similar to Izzy, he wasn't afraid of having to defend his rank, in fact he was looking forward to being challenged. Perhaps it would give him the needed push to allow him to transform, even if only partially.

Then there was Numba. He was by far the biggest surprise, ending up as rank 15. Meanwhile, Gary's name showed up as the very last one, right after Sty's.

'I could have done even better if I had chosen to transform, yet it was enough to get me to rank 1. Did the teachers take that fact into account?' Gary wondered as he looked up at the display. The Werewolf had already spent a while in this facility, and this morning the system had reminded him that he didn't have time to idle.

[15 days until the next full moon]

'I have to make sure to pass this week.'