

Werewolf 401

Chapter 401: Running out of time (part 2)

Just throwing out punches wasn't working, so Gary needed to make a change. He was unsure if it would work, but it was something he wanted to test a while ago and with nothing to lose in this situation he had to.

"Stop moving!" Gary shouted, and right after a loud howl was heard.

[Skill activated Magnetic Howl]

Hearing this strange howl, it was as if something took over in the lead supervisor and he came towards Gary. After getting both of his fists ready, he began to pummel the student, hitting him over and over in the chest. Another hit came his way, but the Werewolf was ready to block this one.

"You truly are an idiot! So what if you can make me attack you? My punches are stronger than your stupid hide! Fine, if you want to die quicker, be my guest!" The supervisor shouted.

"Maybe... but at least you're now in range for me to attack you back!" Gary growled.

[Skill activated Claw Drain]

[-15 Energy]

Gary swung his arms out, forfeiting his defence to exchange blow for blow with the adult. After all, thanks to his skill, he was also getting part of his Health back, albeit not enough to make up for the loss he was suffering. Naturally, the lead supervisor was not holding back. Blood was pouring from Gary's mouth and dripping from the several wounds that were all over his body.

"How are you still not dead?! How are you still standing with that much poison in your body?!" The supervisor was shocked. He had never seen anyone take as many hits as the student in front of him, bleed this much and still be alive.

'He's hurt I know he's hurt...this is it... I just have to go on for a little longer.' Gary thought as he saw his HP drop below ten points. Fortunately, there was one last trump card he had at his disposal.

[Skill activated Last Stand]

[-6 HP]

[1/100 HP]

[Last Stand is activated (59 seconds remaining)]

Even though Gary's movements were slowing down, and the supervisor was managing to hit the teenager twice for every hit he received, there was a large difference between the two. With Gary's Health, his Energy and his skills, he had become an unstoppable force.

A frightening being that could take ten hits to give out one. Covered in blood from head to toe, the Insect Altered could only continue to stare into those glowing red eyes. At that moment, another claw went right into his stomach, piercing through him, blood filling the lead supervisor's mouth.

"ARGHHH!" Gary screamed as he continued to stab the supervisor in the stomach. He stabbed and stabbed, Hit after hit, digging into the same place. Blood was now pouring from the supervisor's stomach, as the hole continued to widen.

"ARGHH!" Gary continued to scream as he felt a weight on his shoulder, but he continued to throw his claws again and again until finally, a message had appeared.

[Quest has been completed]

'Wait...what?' Gary thought. He could hardly see, not because of his tiredness but because his eyes were swollen, blood filling in them. His Energy was extremely low as well.

Still, the system screen was connected to his mind, so he could still see the notification before him clearly. Taking a step back, the seemingly lifeless body of the supervisor's body collapsed and fell before him.

'He's moving...he's really not moving.' Gary thought to himself and fell to his knees next to the body that was by his side. His body reverted to his human form, trying to use as little energy as possible.

[Last Stand has come to an end]

[1/200 HP]

Pushing the supervisor's body over, Gary flipped him onto his front, and here he could see a lifeless face. There was no heartbeat, and the colour from his face and eyes had gone.

[Congratulations, you have now reached: Level 21]

[A stat point has been granted]

[Congratulations, Additional Quest has been completed]

[2 Pawn Points have been given]

'Wait, what is this? Pawn Points, does that mean...'

Looking across the room, Gary could barely see them as the effect of the poison was still inside of his body, but he could see the two figures on the floor. If the Additional Quest was completed, it meant both Izzy and Ian weren't dead, but had just been injected with the same stuff he had inside him now.

'Thank you... thank you for not making me mess up again... thank you.' Gary thought to himself, he was relieved, but there was another problem. Now that the worry was out of his head, something else was taking over his natural instinct.

‘My body hurts... and I'm so hungry... so... very hungry.’ Gary thought, as he moved over to the supervisor. Gary could feel his mind blacking out, but with him being so weak, his body was moving on its own.

[Optional Quest (Waste not want not) is still in progress]

[Consume the body of the Altered for additional stat points]

As if he didn't need to tell his body what to do, and he felt himself pick up something and start to chew down. He continued to chew... Everything was a mist of haze as to what was going on. He only subconsciously heard the sound of dings.

It was the system message, but what the message was Gary had no clue because he was somewhere else right now, asleep but not quite at the same time.

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“This is where they took them, Professors.” A supervisor said standing outside a separate training room that hadn't been used in years, away from the facility.

“I reported back to you as soon as possible, and I tried getting inside, but the lead supervisor ordered me to stay outside. Which is why I decided to call the three of you.”

The three professors from the assessment had arrived, but they took a while, having to come from the main academy. Seeing this, one walked up to the metal door, and slid it to the side, breaking the lock on it and slamming it open.

The three professors and the supervisor who had informed them entered the room immediately, and stopped the moment they saw what awaited inside.

“What on earth has happened here?” Professor Wood had to cover his mouth, almost feeling sick, while Professor Humfree was shaking his head, a churning feeling in his stomach.

Standing in the middle of the room, his whole body covered in blood, was Gary. He was unmoving, and his face pointed towards the corner of the room, where two lone silhouettes were lying down. It was as if he was sleeping on his two feet.

However, the surrounding scene was something they had never expected, the injured students, and as for the supervisors, there was hardly a body left for them to bury.

Chapter 402: Evolving

Slowly opening his heavy eyelids, Gary found himself starting into a bright white light. There was nothing else in view, and his hearing appeared to still be muffled, making everything sound as if he was underwater.

‘Am I dead? ... Is this what death feels like?’ Gary wondered. ‘What happened to that supervisor? I remember him threatening to kill me once his poison works... so I just kept hitting and hitting... and hitting... I guess in the end...’

Soon his blurry white vision was becoming clearer and he realised that he was just staring at the ceiling light. Similarly, his hearing was also coming back, followed by the sense of touch, allowing him to feel the soft cotton sheets on his arms.

[Body is back to 100% functionality]

Then hearing the system message had confirmed it, Gary really hadn’t died. He was still alive.

‘So that damn poison is finally out of my system. Is that what kept me asleep, and made me feel so weak!’ The teenager reasoned.

Looking around the room, and gathering his bearings, he noticed that he was in a medical room. What’s more, this was a private one as there was only a single bed, and Gary was hooked up to several machines surrounding his bed. However, there were no physical wounds, no punctures, no anything in terms of wounds on his body. His clothes had been changed into a light blue robe, but that was it.

‘Well, I guess whoever put me in here doesn’t want me dead... at least not yet.’ The Werewolf thought. ‘But at the end, I completed the Quest. The other two should be alright. Maybe they’re somewhere closeby?’

Just to make sure he hadn’t been dreaming the part about the completion of the additional Quest, the teenager decided to open up his system and check over his last notification.

Things looked good so far, he had levelled up after defeating the two of them, and he now had two unspent Pawn Points, which was a relief. If he was in a hospital then they would be as well, but when looking at the start, Gary’s eyes widened, staring in disbelief.

‘How... how could this have happened... how could this much have changed, unless.’

A quick flash went into Gary's mind, of feeling something in his mouth, but there were no clear images or memories of it, but the system was there to confirm what Gary thought had occurred.

[Name: Gary Dem]

[Class: Warrior]

[State: Human (Alpha)]

[Grade: Bishop]

[Level 21]

[Exp 3788/6789]

[Health: 200 >>> 250]

[Energy: 78/300]

[Strength 27 >>> 35 (+2)]

[Dexterity 26 (+2)]

[Endurance 25 >>> 32 (+2)]

(Editor's Note: The System just shows him the right number. I simply used this format since it's the easiest way to show off how much it changed. If you dislike it, let me know.)

First of all, there was a change in his Health value. Eating Kirk had granted Gary extra stats, but Health hadn't been one of them. The Werewolf had believed that only stat points could increase it, but he didn't mind being proven wrong. On top of that, Strength and Endurance had both increased by leaps.

'I guess that confirms it. 'You are what you eat', isn't just a saying in my case. This body evolves based on what type of Altered I eat.'

Scrolling through the list, he noticed another notification he hadn't expected to find there.

[A passive skill has been gained: Poison Resistance (Low)]

[Your body now has a base level of resistance against poisons]

'This body... It's amazing! To be able to develop even such a thing... Hang on, if I have the ability to keep evolving like this based on the enemies I eat and kill... doesn't that mean that as long as I eat enough, I'm practically invincible?

'Am I really the only one alive?' Gary started to wonder. 'Were the ones before me hunted to extinction by a group like the Altered Hunters? ... or maybe it was something else.'

Both possibilities were interesting to think about, and the teenager became even more interested in finding out the origins of the Werewolf System. Unfortunately, the only ones who might know were already six feet under.

Now, with Gary's head starting to clear and after reading all the notifications, and further ogling his newly gained passive skill which would have been a heaven-sent BEFORE his fights against the supervisor, it was time to face his current situation.

'Whoever picked me up and put me here... they must have seen the bodies... or the lack thereof... Shit, what if they came in right when I was eating those two? Am I still in the facility even? If that is the case, and it was one of the other supervisors, with two of them dead, then I should expect quite the large punishment, maybe beyond just getting kicked out of the school.' Gary gulped.

With his new-found strength and extra stats though, if that did happen, he might have a good chance of getting out of the place. Worst case scenario he was prepared to hide out in Slough before the teachers could do anything.

That's when he looked at the surrounding equipment,

'Wait, I was definitely covered in blood. I had holes in my body. I might have healed from eating, but it wouldn't have been so bad, and for me to be in this hospital. Have they gotten a hold of my blood? If that's the case, they might have found out what I really am?!'

Immediately, the Werewolf started to pull himself out from the bed she was in. All the strange white little plasters that were on his body came off, and a flat line signal was coming out from one of the machines.

'Shut up!' Gary thought, as he felt a sudden breeze by his backside.

He realised that other than the robe, there was nothing else on him. Turning his head around, he saw white toosh. Just when he was convinced that there were no clothes in this room and he was planning to get out of this room, the handle on the door started to turn.

Chapter 403: A way in

Panic started to set in the werewolf teen's mind. His heart was beating rapidly, and he was frantically searching for a way out. Alas, other than a small vent and a small window that he would only get stuck in if he tried to use it as a means to escape, there was only that door.

In the end, amidst his panicking, the door was pushed open, and three relatively old men walked into the room, one after the other.

"Oh, this is a nice surprise, you're already up!" Professor Humfree said with a smile and his hands behind his back. This was all done on purpose, just so Gary wouldn't feel threatened or attacked during this delicate situation. "Mr Dem, please rest and lie down while we inform you about what happened during your sleep."

Gary cautiously looked between all three of them, yet he couldn't sense any hostility from any of them. His rational mind was telling him that if they really wanted to hurt him, then they would have done it while he had been unconscious... or at least put him in chains like Damion had done.

Walking backwards to avoid showing him his bare skin, the green haired teenager hopped onto the bed, and even pulled the sheets over him. At the same time, underneath the sheets, he used Controlled Transformation on his right arm, to make sure he wasn't defenceless in case his earlier judgement turned out to be wrong.

After what had occurred, Gary wasn't willing to fully trust anyone with a relation to the AFA, even the three professors in front of him.

"First of all, all three of us owe you an apology." Professor Humfree began and bowed down, the other two joining him without any protest. Never in his life had the Werewolf expected that to come out of someone working for the AFA. His shock even made him revert his arm to normal.

"Everyone working as supervisors should have been heavily vetted to prevent any student from abusing their status. Unfortunately, it is impossible to stop corruption completely due to how our world works." Professor Humfree explained with a deep sigh.

Gary knew that, and if someone was joining the academy, they wouldn't exactly tell them all the connections they had.

"We deeply regret that one of the students actually managed to influence the head supervisor, of all people, and that you and your friends suffered because of that. We're even more indebted to you that you not only stopped him, but managed to save the life of your two fellow students." Professor Hai added.

For the first time in the conversation, the tension in Gary's body settled a little. He had been worried about Izzy and Ian, so hearing that they were alive and well was certainly great news.

"Gary." Professor Humfree addressed him by his first name with a strong voice. His face was no longer full of smiles, as it sounded like the next subject that was to come was more serious. "We have come here to ask for a favour from you. We've already dealt with the student in question, and hope that you can let it rest at that, rather than seek your own revenge against him."

"Are you telling me that you want me to overlook everything he did? You just said it yourself, ALL THREE OF US COULD HAVE GOTTEN KILLED! How can you ask me to simply ignore that?!" Gary had the right to be upset, after all, because of this one student he had almost died.

"Mr Dem, we understand your fury, but please try to understand our own position as well. Unless you have the express permission from a high-ranking staff member, fights between official students in the AFA won't be permitted." Mr Wood explained.

"Most students are able to leave behind what happened in the facility, but those that don't and wish to complete their revenge only hurt themselves and other students. There have been several cases where we have seen students never come back to the academy again. I'm sure you're smart enough to understand what I mean."

Hearing these things, Gary was starting to think that the AFA, the gathering of those from all over the place, might be actually one of the most dangerous places in the world.

"In your case, the backing between the two of you is just too far and wide apart. The last thing we want to see is a talented student like yourself no longer be in the AFA, Gary." Professor Humfree tried to persuade him.

Yet another reason to let out a sigh of relief as it looked like Gary wasn't getting kicked out. At least he had the option to stay, but could he really not hit Sty if he saw him again, if he continued to play his tricks and games.

"We understand that we're asking a lot from you, and we're also not asking you to do it for free. Not only has he been warned that any attack or provocation against you, or any of your friends will be regarded on a case by case basis and can lead to his expulsion, but as long as you agree to forget about taking revenge, we shall bury any details about the state we found you in."

Gary's heart thumbed louder, hearing those words

'They...saw what I did...didn't they?'

"There's nothing to be ashamed of. You were in a desperate situation, one where your life was literally on the line, so none of us blame you for what you did. Given your advanced transformation state, your Altered instinct might have simply kicked in. We've not told a soul about it, and we don't plan to, so we hope for your cooperation, Mr Dem." Professor Hai admitted.

Listening to this, Gary thought about it for a while, but if he was honest with himself, he didn't want to leave the AFA just yet, not when he hadn't even made it into the real academy.

"It's a deal." The Werewolf agreed not long after. He was about to stand up and shake their hand on it, but he remembered his lack of clothes just in time.

The three smiled and started to head towards the door, but Professor Humfree turned around before closing it.

"We'll send over a teacher to hand you a change of clothes as well as some food. Once you're done, he'll accompany you to the Real AFA academy. Let me be the first to congratulate you for passing."

"Huh, I made it?" Gary raised his eyebrow. "So I won't have to wait for the week to be over like the others?"

"A week?" Professor Hai chuckled as he thought the teenager was joking for a moment, before he remembered why they had come to him at his current location. "Mr Dem, you're one week period has already passed. Compared to your other two friends, there was a lot more poison in your body, so you slept for a far longer time. Anyway, we will see you soon."

After the door closed, Gary immediately went to check something, something that he had completely missed.

[Your bloodlust grows]

[2 Days until the next full moon.]

Chapter 404: Entering the Real Academy

Just as the professors had stated, it was not long before a young nurse entered the room and a set of clothes in her hands. She placed them on the bed after giving a few instructions. Once he was changed, Gary would come out of the room, and she would lead him to a bus waiting for him.

When picking up the clothes, Gary noticed that they weren't the clothes he was wearing earlier. Instead, they looked more like a type of uniform. The shirt was tight fitting, similar to a sports shirt. It was mainly yellow in colour with a few white details here and there. Turning the shirt around, he saw a large white circle on the back with yellow letters with a black outline saying AFA.

'Is this what I think it is?!' Gary held it up in the air to make sure. 'It's the AFA uniform! The one fighters actually use! That's why the material is stretchy, has the cooling ability, and is also quite resistant to certain attacks.'

Gary used his strength to stretch the shirt to test this, and the results came out to his liking. When he let go, it went back to its initial shape. But, of course, he didn't use his full strength because right now, these were the only clothes he had.

When he put it on, the shirt came out a perfect fit for him, and they had even provided him with some shorts to match the top. It reminded him a little of his rugby days, but this was far more prideful to wear.

All the worries he had before seemed to have vanished as soon as he put on the shirt. The fabric was soft against the skin, and when he threw out a couple of punches and kicks, he was even more satisfied with this uniform when he found no restrictions in his movement.

'I wonder if I can take one of these back with me and have Kai make the gang uniform from this kind of material? They can analyse this, right?' Gary wondered.

Finally, after delaying enough, Gary decided to step out the door and face whatever was to come in the coming days. He had come up with a semi-solution to solve his problem in the next two days, and he was hoping not to come across those who would agitate him during that time.

The nurse was waiting for him when he exited the room, and Gary shyly handed over the robes he was wearing.

"You could have just left those in the room, you know." She chuckled but took them anyway while walking to the bus.

To Gary's surprise, waiting just outside the bus was someone that Gary had seen before but didn't know too well. It was one of the teachers during the assessment, the well-built, man who wore a tight-fitting black shirt.

"It's nice to meet you, Gary. You have been quite the trouble maker during your time in the facility, I hear. But nevertheless, after our last encounter, I knew we would meet again." The man smiled. "The name is Eddy, and I'm one of the teachers you'll see more frequently."

The teacher seemed friendly enough, which was a good sign, but Gary now had this subconsciousness not to trust anyone he met for the first time. It was somewhat like how Numba was on the first day.

After getting on the bus, Gary noticed it drove past the facility, which was a good sign. They eventually arrived at the main academy where Gary had taken the original assessment. It was enormous, like a university. Even though the place didn't have many students, it didn't lack any facilities for people to use, which was why there were so many buildings.

"First, I'll give you a tour of the place, so you can see everything we have," Eddy stated.

Gary followed Eddy, and as they walked past each building, the latter explained how there were different teachers in different facilities that would teach him various things, from fighting to survival. For example, an entire building was dedicated to the fighters' dietary requirements. Every Altered was different, so it was quite the specialist treatment they had.

At the same time, they would teach students about their diet so they could take the information for themselves outside of the AFA. There were also massage rooms, infirmaries and a whole section where AFA students would learn about Altered.

Then there was a large oval building, randomly plotted. It looked highly secure as if even a missile could not break it.

"That is a new facility that we are building. It should be ready soon, but we cannot enter now. Anyway, let's head somewhere else."

Eddy had a smile on his face as he said those words. Gary noticed the area they were heading to, and according to Eddy, this was where sparring matches would be organised.

There were octagon rings just like in the real AFC matches, and it also had many more training facilities than other buildings. The two soon stepped into a large room through a pair of double doors, and in the next instant, Gary found his eyes glued to the octagon ring in front of him.

'Wow, it's just like it is on TV, and all the equipment, and..and.'

Gary paused for a second when he noticed a few familiar people sitting on the bench.

"Gary!" Numba called over as he stood up and rushed over to him. "You're okay? You're really okay?! It looks like you finally made it!"

Numba was wearing the yellow uniform just like Gary, and seeing this, a smile appeared on Gary's face. It looked like even without Gary, Numba had managed to make it through.

"I can see the look on your face, but I wasn't the only one that passed." When moving, Gary could see Sty sitting on the bench with his arms folded, but other than him, there were Ian and Izzy as well.

Although Numba's presence made sense, he was more surprised to see those two here.

"It was a special request," Numba explained. "Due to what happened, they were asked if there was anything they wanted, and they said they wanted to go through to the real academy...and now they're here. So we're all here together!"

Gary never thought this would be the case, but it seemed like their set of dire circumstances had worked out for them.

"What a great reunion, but that's not why you are all here," Eddy interrupted with the same smile as before. It was clear he had something planned.

Chapter 405: Introductions are in order

Unfortunately, it didn't look like Eddy had any intentions of sharing his secret. His arms were folded, and he had told the others to enjoy themselves while he had met up with Gary. The Altered students had done exactly as they had been told and tried out the equipment after a bit of catch-up.

Now that the green haired teenager was here, he decided to ask Izzy and Ian about what had happened, but before he had a chance to open his mouth, the both of them bowed their heads in unison.

"Gary, I know you hate when we do these types of things, but we don't know how else to thank you for saving us back there!" Izzy began. "After the poison knocked us both out, we feared we might be all gonners, but the professors informed us about what you had to do..."

There was a nervous drop of sweat running down the side of the Werewolf's face. He had been somewhat worried that they might have seen what he had done, or that the professors might have told them the entire truth, but judging by their actions and words his friends had only been informed about the result, not the aftermath.

"Hey, you don't have to worry about that. I mean, in the first place, I'm the reason you guys got into trouble, right? And besides, we agreed to an alliance, and my part in this was helping you out with my

strength. It's the only thing I can offer, after all." Gary smiled, not at all showing any remorse about taking the lives of two adults.

The two were more than thankful. Honestly, they had feared for their lives multiple times that day. Never had either of them thought that teachers of the AFA would commit such things, and if they were willing to go so far, there was always the worry that they could have gone even further than that.

Ian and Izzy knew how Gary would act, but deep down in their hearts they also knew that they owed him a lot, and they were even more inclined to work with him to repay him for his help.

"Anyway, let's talk about some good things, ok? We managed to skip that whole facility and join you here because of everything that happened." Ian smirked, still staring around the place in amazement.

After giving his thanks, he had wasted no time running over to one of the punching bags that were designed for Altered and gave it a few hits. Naturally, it was a lot heavier than the usual heavy bag used in boxing. A few light hits didn't move it at all.

The others went out to try some of the equipment along with Ian, his enthusiasm was quite magnetic and charming as it made them all wish they were as energised as him. However, there was one person that was left on the bench near the octagon fighting ring.

Both Sty's and Gary's eyes met for a second, but for Gary all he did was smile and look away.

'You're not even worth my time, and perhaps I should thank you since you have allowed me to get even stronger, so I can protect the ones I care about. However, if you try anything funny in here, I'll make sure that you join those two.' The Werewolf swore to himself.

"Holy shit, you're right. I can't get this bag to budge at all." Numba exclaimed. "Maybe if I transformed, I could do something."

There were several bags in a row and the others were using them to test their strength. So far they had somewhat been able to move the bags a bit as they dangled from their heavy chains, apart from the pen at the very end.

Ian, and Numba had used their full strength when punching it, yet it hadn't moved at all.

“Hey Gary, why don't you give it a go? Maybe you could make it move?” Numba suggested.

Looking at the bag, Gary touched the outside, and he could feel that it was sturdy. Perhaps it would even survive a few slashes from his claws, but a lot had changed, and he knew for a fact that his Strength was far greater than before.

‘I should try to move it without using Controlled Transformation.’ Gary looked at his fist, and readied it for a big hit. Eddy was watching carefully from the corner of his eye as well.

‘Hmm, those three fogies told me that he was special. He’s already proven himself to be a fighter but what about his raw strength. Is he on the same level as the last guy?’ Eddy wondered.

Storing up his power, Gary controlled his breathing, getting ready to swing it out at the right time. Just as he was about to throw out his fist, his concentration was broken by the sounds of the doors opening roughly.

Turning around, there was a bright light behind a group of people only allowing them to see the shadow but when they stepped forward, everyone could see the shirts that they were wearing, marking them as true AFA students.

“Alright, Eddy, please don’t berate us like last time. You know that our schedules are busy okay? If you want us to put on a good show, then we need to be well rested, don’t we?” A messy, spiky blonde haired student scratched his head and yawned a little while giving his speech.

“I understand. Now, if everyone could please gather at the octagon, I wish to introduce you all.” Eddy replied nonchalantly.

The others did as instructed, walking over to the teacher. Only Gary continued to look at the bag. It left a sour taste in his mouth to leave it just like that and be the only one who didn’t get to test out his strength. His hand wound up again, and he was ready to throw out another punch.

“Hey, is he really trying to go for the black bag? If he can do that straight after leaving the facility, without transforming then I would be quite impressed.” The blonde student from before said.

“Gary, you’ll have all the time in the world to do that later, so get over here!” Eddy sounded slightly annoyed. Once again, the Werewolf stopped, but after taking a few steps and turning his head, he suddenly stopped completely.

“Did you say Gary... it can't be?” A soft voice asked.

Looking straight ahead, Gary's heart started to thump.

[BPM is rising]

“Xin!!” Gary called out.

Chapter 406: Teen love

Everyone in the room had heard the two teenagers call each other by their first name, and judging by their slow and awkward movement, it was pretty obvious that this wasn’t the first time those two had met. Slowly the two of them inched forward towards each other, and when Gary was around a metre or so away he stopped.

Now, the real question on everyone’s minds was the connection between Gary and Xin, and this was true for both groups.

“Hey.” Ian gave Izzy a nudge. “From the way he behaves, Gary seems to be head over heels for her. I hope you didn’t have the hots for him yourself because their feelings might actually be mutual.”

Izzy didn't say anything to that. Honestly, she wasn’t sure herself about what her true feelings were with regard to the green haired teenager. She still remembered how she had schemed against him to increase her chances to make it into the AFA. He might have forgiven her for it, but she still felt bad. On top of that, they had made it out of the facility together, but everything that had happened inside had made their relationship more than complicated.

The one thing Izzy did know, was seeing him act like a lovestruck fool did annoy her.

“Hey, Xin.” Ryan, the blonde haired spiky boy, nodded his head towards Gary. “Who exactly is Greeny over there to you? Is he your boyfriend or something?”

When this question was asked, the two of them looked at each other. Neither one was sure how to answer it. Both of their faces lit up bright red and Gary was struggling to control his heart as always. Any second now he could end up transforming.

Ryan had merely asked it as a joke, yet seeing their reaction and neither one refuting it, he was more than just a bit shocked.

‘No way... are they really a thing? How is that possible? Is this really the same Xin who won't slow down for anyone? I mean, she rejected me... four times!’

Gary and Xin had been unable to properly date, or get to know each other very well due to the circumstances back in Slough. Nevertheless, the green haired teenager had made it clear how he felt towards her, and she hadn't completely denied him. On top of that, Xin was also thankful for him saving her.

Still, those feelings were something she hadn't really processed herself yet. They were something she had thought would be in the past. Her immediate goal was to go through the AFA and become a well known AFC fighter, so she could live her life how she wanted.

“How did you manage to get in?” Xin asked eventually. “I mean, you weren't an Altered the last time we met, right?”

“Ah!” Gary scratched the back of his head, trying to come up with a good excuse. “I was sponsored by a... company. You know how I was always into fighting? They saw potential in me, and so they helped me apply for the AFA. Well, one thing led to another, and so I ended up here. It was just a stroke of luck really.”

There was a pause and an awkward moment between the two of them. Gary had played this moment many times in his head. The reason for him coming to the AFA wasn't completely because of Xin, but it's not like she had nothing to do with that, either.

The last time he had met Jayden, Xin's brother, he had advised him to join the AFA and to go chasing after her. Now that she was before him, he was questioning if that was really the best thing.

"I'm happy to see you're doing well." Gary blurted out. "It can't have been easy to make it through, but you got to this place all with your own power. It's... good to see you again."

A large clap was heard from Eddy as he didn't want to continue watching this teen drama catch-up. There would be time for that later. Besides, he had noticed a particular student, Ryan, mumbling profanities under his breath as he was trying to murder his fellow student with his eyes. However, that wasn't the worst setting for why he had called the students to this place.

"These students here are the current top of the top the AFA has to offer. Me and the other teachers have given them our blessings to have their debut match in the AFC in the near future. Before that, though, they'll be showing you guys what it means to be the top dog in the real AFA."

Seeing the smirk on Eddy's face, Izzy quickly figured out the meaning behind his words. "Are you telling us to fight them? On our very first day?"

The others looked towards Eddy, semi-frightened. Even Sty, who had acted cocky and confident now showed unease on his face.

"I see that your file wasn't lying when it described you as a smart cookie," Eddy commented with a light chuckle at their overexaggerated reaction. "Just because you have made it through to the AFA, it's important to know that you can't take it easy, and this sparring match will be good for you to remind you that there's always someone stronger than you."

Looking across from each other, they reached looked at their opponents. It was hard to tell how strong the others were, but they had the advantage of attending the academy for some time already.

"Ryan, would you mind?" Eddy asked.

Still, with a new wave of energy inside him, Ryan nodded and walked past the others. He stared at Gary, who was unaware of why this certain individual had suddenly started to point his anger toward him.

Then, stopping in front of the black bag that they were all standing in front of earlier. He readied his fist, threw it out and a loud bang was heard hitting the bag, it swung widely back in the air, and up. There was no trouble at all for the student as it was seen swinging back down and swinging in place.

For the others who had tried to hit the bag earlier, they gulped. The difference between the performance of their groups was evident.

“Don’t worry.” Eddy added. “You will not be fighting today. Just like with any match, you’re given a certain amount of preparation time. In your case, you have today and tomorrow to prepare as you see fit. Feel free to use the training facilities or rest during that free time.

“The day after tomorrow, though, you’ll have to challenge one of these five.”

Gary’s mind went blank for a second.

“Sir... did you just say we have two days until our match?”

Eddy nodded, and the other students with Xin started to smile. They thought that Gary feared that it would be impossible to catch up in such a short period of time. Xin thought it was unfair, but she herself had been forced to challenge the future AFC fighters and that experience had been both humiliating and encouraging.

However, the Werewolf was worried for an entirely different reason. After all, he would have to fight during the day of the full moon...

Chapter 407: Starving wolf

In two days time, the five students would officially enter the AFA by battling the current top 5 of their student body. For the time being, though, Gary and the others were taken to a temporary room. They were free to rest there, as the temporary bedrooms were being prepared.

As the only girl among the group, Izzy was very happy about that last fact. The room itself was located in the sparing building. On every floor, there was a large octagon in a different style or shape filled with equipment for Altered to train with.

After placing their belongings down, everyone was allowed to order some food. Once more, the former top rankers were free to order whatever they liked. Eddy had even recommended them to make use of this opportunity to have their last 'cheat meal'. Once inside, their dietitian would decide what they were and weren't allowed to eat.

The teenagers didn't waste this chance, as they wished to gain every bit of energy before their matches. An Altered's body required a lot more calories on a daily basis than a regular human. Their bodies would digest food in a short amount of time, which allowed their body to absorb it and produce the energy they needed to fuel them, especially if they wanted to transform.

Everyone was different in how fast that process was, but there were even those who could eat an entire three-course meal and fight right off the bat without it affecting them at all. His friends had long since accepted that Gary was that type of Altered, so it came as a big shock when the only thing he had asked for was one measly steak with some potatoes on the side.

"Is everything alright with you? Does that measly meal even count as your appetiser? Usually you would order steaks by the dozens. Are you still feeling sick, or something?" Ian asked worriedly.

"No, it's not that. I'm just... not that hungry right now." The Werewolf replied in a dejected manner.

His friends looked at each other, but didn't say anything. They thought that he must simply be nervous about fighting in front of his old girlfriend. They couldn't blame him, as they themselves felt nervous about the tough fight in front of them.

'What the f*ck do I do?!' Gary screamed internally, his mind had been like this for a while now. 'How can I get out of that situation? I can't tell them that I'm not feeling well when they have state-of-the-art machines to check me out. They won't take me seriously, especially not if there's nothing visible wrong with me! They'll just think I'm scared of fighting. Oh god, I don't want Xin to think of me as a loser when we finally met.'

The Werewolf still had no idea about what to do to avoid having to fight on that. He just one thing for sure, he had to make sure his Energy would stay under 30 that day. Thanks to the experiment during the last full moon, he had discovered that the key to surviving the full moon was by starving himself so that he would lack the Energy to transform.

However, while he had already proven the success of that method, it came with a number of big problems. First of all, the overwhelming desire to eat was prone to make him act far more snappy than usual. He was also more likely to give into his natural urges. Ideally, the teenager would have preferred to avoid interacting with anyone at all, just to make sure he wouldn't accidentally devour anybody.

'Sh*t, why couldn't it have been the day before or after?! Am I really just meant to fight on a hungry stomach? Should I just surrender and live with the shame?' Gary wondered. He didn't like that course of action, but if he didn't come up with anything better, that might just be his fate.

When everyone's food arrived, the green haired teenager enjoyed his meal... for the entirety of roughly thirty seconds. After that, he had to force himself to stop glancing at the meals of the others. The scent alone made him hungry, and his stomach started to grumble. Nevertheless, he pretended like everything was fine.

In his head, he imagined his mother and sister together in a room with him. No matter what, he would suffer through whatever it took to avoid eating them. This scenario helped him come to terms with his fasting.

Sty was the first one to leave the room. The Fly Altered knew that he was on thin ice, so he ignored everyone else in the room. After all, he knew perfectly well that they all hated him. He headed towards one of the empty rooms to train for the fight.

"What do you guys want?" Gary asked as he noticed that Izzy, Ian and Numba were all looking at him expectantly. Izzy was a bit startled by the Werewolf's tone of voice. He sounded annoyed, nearly angry.

"We just thought that you could teach us... You helped us improve before, so we hoped you could help us again. With only two days time, we should do our best." Ian explained their reasoning, also having noticed Gary's erratic behaviour.

"No! ... Now is not the best time." The Werewolf shook his head. He could see the look of disappointment on their faces. It sucked, but he couldn't explain that he wanted them to keep their distance from him because he was afraid of hurting him due to the state he was in. The hungrier he got, the more likely that he might snap at them, and he had yet to find out how strong he currently was.

"I'm sorry, I need some time to myself. With how long I've been asleep, I want to focus on some basic conditioning training. Just repeat what we've been doing in the past, and you guys should be golden."

Before they could reply, Gary ran out of the room at his top speed. This way, he was continuously using up his Energy and it allowed him to focus on something besides his protesting stomach.

"I guess we were being a little selfish." Numba sighed. "We have relied on Gary for a while now, it's not right for us to keep relying on him. We are now in the AFA, so we need to start acting like it."

Izzy and Ian let out a sigh each as well, but they agreed with Numba. Taking Gary's advice to hear, they headed over to a training room. After warming up together, they each trained in their own way, before they started to lightly spar with each other.

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Late at night of the same down, Eddy called in the AFA students for a meeting.

"I hope all of you took the time to check out our batch of students. As is tradition, your rank 1 will fight their rank 1 and so on. Well, I'm sure you all remember how it goes."

On the TV screen, the faces of the AFA students appeared with a number below them. Numba at rank 1, Gary rank 2, Sty rank 3, Ian rank 4 and Izzy rank 5.

'This is great!' Ryan smiled to himself. 'Let's see Xin continue to ignore me after I kick her boyfriend's butt!'

Chapter 408: Hunger is pain

"Is it just me, or do these guys look kinda weak?" Shingi, one of the top students soon to debut in the AFC asked the question. While speaking, he was twirling thick strands of his black curly hair.

"I guess you could say that." Another student chimed in. Stark had the appearance of the typical Altered celebrity, with his neat blonde hair and a perfect V shape body. "The last set batch already gave us quite a surprise, so it should be expected that nearly anyone after them would seem weak in comparison. Hey, Xin, you seem to know that green haired guy.

"Is there anything you can tell us about him? It would be great if we could finish things early."

The reason he asked that question was because other than their name and rank there was no other information given to them. It was to keep things fair between the two teams. The only thing they could go off of was what they had seen earlier in the day.

Xin didn't really know what to say. She had only fought against Gary once, and at the time he had proven to be someone hot headed who had charged forward recklessly. Nevertheless, the one thing she still remembered was his tenacity. Despite her attack, which had even received Jayden's praise, he had stood up from it. And that was before he even became an Altered... at least she thought that was the case.

"My only advice would be to not go easy on him. I think he'll be a tough opponent for any of us." Xin replied eventually.

"Haha, really?" Ryan chuckled. "A tough opponent? The guy didn't even make rank 1. Just look at the group of people he ended up passing with. You know the students get worse as the year goes on, since the top of the top have already left. Anyway, I'll take your advice, and I won't go easy on him."

"Just don't forget to do your due diligence." Shingi reminded the overage teenage boy. "You know, if there is a conflict of interest and that crap. We should check out their backgrounds, and if it messes with any of ours, report it to Eddy, so we can change who we fight."

The others agreed and would begin their research for the rest of the night, while Xin was left wondering what had happened to Gary after she had left.

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The next day, Gary was down to 100 Energy. While the others were enjoying their breakfast, he had ordered a small meal once more, making his friends even more concerned for him. They could see the visible struggle on his face, not to mention the sounds of protest coming from his stomach.

“Hey, bro, I know you're meeting your girl and stuff tomorrow, but you don't need to diet for her. You look fine.” Ian joked in an attempt to lighten the mood.

Alas, Gary didn't say anything and instead left the room to go train. Usually he would have at least let out a courtesy laugh, but right now every little thing was annoying him. Just during breakfast, he had felt part of his teeth start to grow out, urging him to feed on something. The only thing keeping him sane was letting out stress by training.

During the last full moon the Pack had come together and following Kai's suggestion they had performed a little experiment to discover the optimal way to deal with their common condition. After drawing sticks, Olivia got to power herself out completely and barely ate anything during the last 72 hours. Gary's task was to continuously power himself out for that same duration, whereas Kai was to power himself out completely on the last day.

From what they had been able to tell, Olivia's method had led to her being the most irritable of them all due to her prolonged hungry state. On the other hand, Kai had been the most aggressive one, since his body had the least amount of time to cope with his starved state. Gary's path had been the middle ground between, yet it was hard for the other two to copy since the Alpha Werewolf was the only one who could actively check how much Energy he had left thanks to the system.

Unfortunately, this time, not only was he on his own, he also didn't have the luxury to tie himself up to make doubly sure he couldn't attack anyone. Tomorrow it would be a mental game, he would have to constrain in front of all those people, so he wanted to get used to the feeling of hunger and build up some resistance.

‘The hunger is one thing, but this stupid full moon is also making me feel like everything is pissing me off!’ Gary thought as he practically drained the entire water bottle in a few gulps. He was huffing and panting in the training facility.

Seeing how agitated Gary was, the others decided to stay out of his way, for lunch and dinner. In the end, they also had to worry about their own training for tomorrow's match. Although they had been told that this match was mostly for show, none of them wanted to let themselves get beat up.

At around 11 PM all of them had gone to sleep. Only Gary remained in the training room, not feeling sleepy in the slightest.

'My Energy is still high, and this damn pain is pissing me off!' The Werewolf cursed silently as he punched the bag in front of him. He continued to hit it with all his power, again and again.

"ARGHHH! Just a little more!" Gary shouted and threw out an almighty punch.

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Walking through the hallway, Shingi was planning to go for a late night training session himself. He was whistling through the hallways when he overheard the sound of someone hitting something.

'No way, someone other than me is training this late? Man, what's up with these new guys? It seems like that Wu guy isn't the only gym rat. Oh well, the more the merrier.' Shingi thought amused.

Heading to the door, he decided to open it, and take a look at who exactly it was that was powering themselves out before their big match. To his surprise, as soon as the door opened, he could see the green haired teenager only a few feet away from him, covered in sweat huffing and panting.

Shingi wanted to say something to him, but his eyes seemed lost as Gary continued to walk, and just went past him and down the hallway.

'So it was that Greeny that was the one training this late, huh? I mean, a light session is okay but going that hard, he's not going to be able to fight tomorrow.' Shingi thought, as he went forward and got ready to train himself.

However, he stopped in his tracks the moment he noticed the state of the training bags. At the very end, the black bag, the heaviest of them all, had several large holes through them. It looked like cannonballs had been shot through the things.

‘I... I’ve never seen anyone do something like this before. I need to warn Ryan before his fight tomorrow. If he doesn’t take it seriously tomorrow, he might end up with a hole in his body.’

Chapter 409 Don't fight It was finally the day of the big match. Izzy, Ian, Numba, and even Sty were dealing with their nervousness in their own ways to give it their all. As for Gary, he was currently sitting on top of his bed, his eyes closed. The Werewolf had barely gotten any sleep. Unlike the rest, he cared little about the outcome of his fight, far more worried about the state his opponent might end up in.

During the last full moon, the Werewolf Pack had found out some interesting things, among them that it wasn’t just the night that they had to worry about. Even before the moon came out, one was at risk of snapping. In Kai’s case, the Grey Werewolf Shapeshifter had gotten feral during his transformation, forcing Gary, with some help of Olivia, to subdue him before he could cause any damage.

“Gary.” Izzy called out in a soft voice as she knocked at his door. “It's time for us to head to the octagon.”

The green haired teenager slowly opened his eyes, wincing, like he was in pain. He took some controlled breaths before he changed into the outfit the AFA had prepared for them.

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At the same time, in another room, the five that the group would be fighting today were also getting ready. Only the students from the AFA weren’t in the least bit worried about today’s matches. In fact, most of them saw these matches as nothing more than an annoying task that came with their position.

‘I... I just can’t get that bag out of my head.’ Shingi thought in the boys’ changing room. ‘It wasn’t just one but multiple holes ripped right through it. The power had even reached the wall behind it. How the hell do I tell Ryan about this? It would be a total embarrassment for him to throw in the towel in front of a newbie.’

As the boys exited their changing room, Shingi tapped Ryan on the shoulder. The other two boys continued to walk towards the octagon, barely noticing that half of them had stopped.

“Hey, Ryan, I need to talk with you. Look, I know we haven’t exactly been best friends in here. If anything, we were more like rivals, but I hope you know that I at least respect you in that capacity.” Shingi began.

“Oh, come on, if you say it like that makes it sound like I’m the bad guy. We might not have hit it off at first, but as far as I’m concerned, you’ve proven in those tag-team trainings that I can trust you with my back.” Ryan replied with a grin, not sure where his fellow Altered was going with this.

“Good, ‘cause I want you to take what I’m about to say seriously, man. You see, yesterday, I went to train like I usually do at night... and I saw the black bag ripped to shreds.”

Ryan had no particular reaction to that piece of information. Sure, the black bags were famous for being durable and sturdy, but they were a far cry from being indestructible. “So? Eddy or one of the other teachers must have been using the room. What’s that got to do with me?”

Shingi shook his head. “Eddy is the only teacher who would come down here, and he’s been busy with other stuff. No, it wasn’t any of the teachers, man. Now I haven’t seen him do it, but right before I entered, that green haired kid went out of the training room.”

A few seconds later, Ryan just started to laugh. “I didn’t take you to be the funny type, Shingi, but that was just what I needed right now. There’s no way it could have been him. I’ve done my research. The guy’s a nobody. Someone who simply lucked out during the assessment and made use of the vacancy the last lot left.”

“I told you I wouldn’t joke about such matters.” Shingi insisted with a serious look on his face. “I’m not talking about some teensy weensy hole in the black bag. It looked like swiss cheese, as if he had some grudge against that damn thing. If you get in that ring... you better take things seriously!”

Ryan placed his hand on Shingi’s shoulder. “Are you even listening to yourself? If their rank 2 is already scarier than most of our teachers, doesn’t that mean their rank 1 would wipe the floor with Xin? Did any of them look capable enough of such a feat?”

"I'm telling you, it must have been one of the teachers. I got one of my contacts to look into Greeny's background. He's from the same town as Xin. The only difference is that he's a nobody who got picked up by a no-name gang."

"What did you just say?" A female voice asked from behind the two teenage boys.

Turning their heads, they both saw Xin had gotten out of the girls' changing room and was ready to fight. She wore the same yellow and white AFA tops as them, only hers was more similar to a sports bra, revealing her midriff and her abs slightly showing through.

"About what?" Ryan questioned. "The backing of your old friend, you mean? His sponsor is this gang who call themselves the Howlers. My contacts told me they're not a big deal, but you should probably know better."

Hearing the name, certain conversations flashed through Xin's head. She hadn't been in contact with her family since joining the place, but she did remember her father angrily commenting about a new gang that was on the rise. Then there was also a news report she recalled about more and more businesses coming under those Howlers.

'So that's why you avoided your gaze when telling me a company sponsored you. You actually became an Altered by joining a gang.' Xin had hoped that Gary would have done better, especially after she herself had been captured by a gang. To hear that he had actually joined one, it just didn't sit too well with her.

"The name doesn't really ring a bell. Come on, let's go and show these guys what we got." Xin said walking forward.

Chapter 410 Lock me up (Part 1) Eddy himself had arrived in the dormitory of the newly joined students. He had a big smile on his face as he looked over everyone, though he noticed that nearly all of them weren't looking too good, especially one of his favourites.

'Hey, hey... don't tell me the pressure is getting to him as well.' Eddy thought, looking at the sweaty and tired Gary. 'I guess these guys are kids after all. They don't have much experience yet, but I thought he was different. Maybe I was wrong in the end.'

"Everyone, remember, the outcome of this match doesn't matter whatsoever." Eddy reminded those from the facility. "Even if you lose in one punch, you will still be granted entry to the real

academy. You have already made it. That being said, I advise you to try and avoid such a fate unless you want to get teased by your peers about it.”

The joke made some of them chuckle, at least. “These fights are tradition and their purpose is to show you how far you still have to go, and of course what you can achieve by giving it your all during your stay in the AFA! If you give it your best, one day you’ll be the ones teaching others a lesson!”

Eddy’s little pep talk had lightened the mood a bit, especially for Izzy, Ian and Numba. All they needed to do was show their best and that’s exactly what they intended to do.

The group followed the teacher through the large double doors, and on a bench, just outside the fighting octagon, the students were sitting down waiting. All the nerves that had disappeared from their bodies had come back in a second, seeing them again.

“Man, I’m worried I might let out a log during the fight. I should have gone to the toilet or something.” Ian commented.

“You’re so disgusting, you’re going to make me sick,” Izzy replied.

“Please don’t be sick, when someone’s sick, that just makes me sick,” Numba replied.

The others could all hear this conversation and couldn’t help but smirk, but at the same time, it just made the other group more confident that this whole thing was going to be a walk in the park.

Xin moved her head, trying to get a look at a particular student, and that’s when she could see Gary, walking sloppily behind the rest of the group.

‘He looks quite pale... and he’s already sweating, I think I just saw some drip from his nose. Is he really sick or something?’ Xin wondered, as she couldn’t help but worry, but the conversation from before had entered her head, making her clench her fist.

‘I’m sorry, I don’t know what your situation is Gary... but if what Ryan found out is true, I don’t really know how to act.’

Numba, along with the others, sat on the bench on the other side of the cage. Both groups could see each other but only through the cage, so they were unable to see clearly one another.

“The order of the matches isn’t fixed, and I’ll use a random generator app to will be in a random order through my phone random generator app!” Eddy held his phone, showing everyone. “A number between one and five will show up and you guys will have to enter the ring and face your opponent.

“Just to let you know, your own rank will determine who you face on the other side if you know what I mean.”

Izzy certainly understood, both rank 1s would go against each other. Which meant that there were going to be no easy matches for any of them.

Pressing the button on the app, the numbers rumbled through and eventually stopped at number three. All heads turned to the first person which had surprised them all.

“Ha, you guys are already shaking in your boots.” Sty stated, standing up confidently. “If you're worried about something like this, then you’ll never make it far in the AFC.”

For a second, Sty paused his tough talk as he looked at Gary who still had his head held down and a towel over his head. The whole time he had consistently been drinking water, rehydrating himself.

No one had talked to him today. He had made it clear to his friends that something was up with him, so they had collectively decided to not bother him, at least not until his match was over and done with. “As for you, I'm the most disappointed in you out of all of them. I can’t believe I lost to someone like you.”

Sty walked over and entered the octagon, while his opponent did the same. Standing opposite Sty, was a tall specimen of a person. If one thought Blake was the ideal candidate to become an Altered then they had yet to see the student known as Stark, who had a superhero like figure in the movies they all used to watch.

“Rank 3, huh. Let's see if your group is as interesting as the last lot.” Stark said, slightly crouching down and having his hands away from his face, getting ready to fight at any moment.

“Oh trust me, I’m the best of this bunch of losers, so tough luck!” Sty shouted as his whole body transformed. His wings came out, his mouth elongated into a fly’s proboscis, and immediately he started to fly straight towards Stark.

Just like in the battle against Numba, Sty shot out a strange liquid from his mouth. Using just his toes, Stark pivoted avoiding the strange liquid, and while doing so, he spun his body backwards throwing out a spinning back fist at the Fly Altered’.

At the last second Sty was able to fly upward avoiding the attack. “Oh, you have fast reflexes. I guess this won't be a boring fight after all. Let’s see if you can entertain me as much as that Wu guy.” Stark commented as he could see Sty flying towards him throwing out his leg for a kick.