

## Werewolf 451

### Chapter 451 A world of gangs (Part 1)

Looking around, the Howlers could only guess who belonged to a gang for those people who were dressed similarly. Of course, without special knowledge, that didn't tell them where those gangs came from. It was of the utmost importance to avoid any type of conflict with those who had established themselves in high-tier cities, especially as a new gang.

To prevent anything from occurring the group was staying together, and they were enjoying their drinks and some casual chat. Still, Marie noticed that a certain person was continually looking their way.

At first, she had decided to ignore it, wondering if she was just imagining things, but as time went on, she could see his eyes were following them.

"Have you noticed that flamboyant man over there? Ever since we came here, he's been staring at us?" Marie whispered to Kai. The girl felt tingles running up her entire back when she looked over. The creepy thing was that the man didn't even try to hide that fact, and even smiled and waved at one point.

"I have noticed him, but I have no clue what he wants," Kai replied, feeling uneasy. At the stage the Howlers were as a gang, there should be nothing warranting Tier-1 gangs to bother looking at them, especially not someone as flashy as that man.

As the son of a gang leader, he knew far more about the underworld than the other members, so how could he not recognise the man with dyed red tips dressed in the large red overcoat in his white fur hood?

Practically everything about Sin screamed 'Look at me!', and yet everyone in the bar appeared to be actively trying to come too close to him. At the same time, there were those that chose to stay far away from him as well. After all, unlike the other Kings, Sin had seemingly made it a point to show off. His action had shown the entire country why the 'Kings' deserved their moniker.

In the past, a Tier-2 gang had stolen something that was meant to go to him. When Sin had learned that fact, he had offered the gang one chance to return it, no questions asked. Of course, the gang had refused to do anything of the sort, and so Sin had paid them a personal visit.

Usually, gang wars would last weeks, if not months. After all, the larger the gang size, the more territories they would control which needed to be fought over. Funds and more were tied into assets as well as businesses. A gang war would occur, when one wanted to take over the other's businesses or to expand their own. So it was important they were to do it right.

What's more, it's not as if other powers at work would just sit on the sidelines and watch the show. Perhaps not White Rose, but the local police force, the mayor, and other gangs would all try to intervene in some way, making it difficult to navigate such things.

And yet, one person had managed to eradicate an entire gang in the span of one day and in the process he had nearly burnt the whole city to the ground...

Rather than hide his involvement, Sin had made his actions quite public, even hiring a team of professional videographers to film it all. Their job had been to show off his vast power, and that was what they had done. The video was spread and talked about other cities for months, and the craziest thing about it all was the fact that he had suffered zero repercussions for his heinous act.

Sin had returned to his own city as if nothing had happened at all. After that, life for the Tier-1 cities got easier. Because everyone understood the possible consequences at hand if they didn't follow their order. Now, whatever the Kings asked, not just Sin the task was completed. The lower cities were to do their bidding, whether there was large involvement with other gangs or not.

'The Underdogs, and the Grey Elephants, both of them were working for higher groups. Could it be... don't tell me that Sin is related to one of them? Or maybe he did business with one of them. I hope not, because even all three of us might not stand a chance against him. Even if Gary was here it wouldn't make a difference. Kai realised as he continued to pretend not to have noticed the King staring at him.

Unless Sin came up to them, he would continue that charade...

As they waited for the doors to open to the auction house, more and more people started to gather. It looked like there were around five hundred in the garden to the side, all here for one thing, from all over the country.

The Dark guild also had auctions that spread to other countries as well, but this was their homeland so they tended to keep the best items for themselves. Although, wars had come to somewhat a halt.

The level of Altered and how strong they were, was a type of sign of a country's strength. Some thought it was why, the government was so lenient on these gangs with powers that roamed around. It was also why there was next to no regulation on Altered solutions and DNA either.

Their mistake was somewhat realised too late, as the situation had become what it had become.

Eventually, a certain group came up to the Howlers and decided to try and make conversation. The white rose was their answer but were too small and weak to stop the power houses at the top.

#### Chapter 452 A world of gangs (Part 2)

"I haven't seen you, people, here before. First time?" An older gentleman asked in a polite tone. He was dressed quite nicely, with a shirt and blazer that barely covered his large tummy. Behind him were two men that looked to have weapons strapped around their side, checking out the gang.

The others turned toward Kai, just like had been instructed to, and let him be the one to talk for the group. The fox masked teenager had expected that their new appearance and new faces would attract some attention, yet so far nobody else had come over.

Of course, all he hoped for was to meet someone from lower tier towns, as those above would already have all the connections they needed.

"I doubt we're the only ones who've arrived here just for today. We're the Howlers from Slough. Perhaps you've heard of us. It's nice to meet you, Mr. ?" Kai placed his hand out for a shake, which the old man accepted. Feeling the Werewolf's grip and seeing him up close, he was in for quite a surprise.

"My name is Harry Cardenez, and I represent Cardenez Electronics." The old man admitted, after staring at the rest of them, noticing that they were all young. "I thought I recognized you all, though you're younger than I expected. To be honest, I'm a bit surprised that you are here."

“Why wouldn't we be?” Kai questioned, trying not to sound the least bit surprised. “There are some things that we need to get, and it's always good to make connections. As someone whose company is located in a Tier-3 town, I'm sure you understand.

“With the boom in electronics your company has been able to expand quite well, perhaps

demand has even gotten a bit too much for you to handle in Brighthum Town alone. You know, Slo-”

The old man raised his hand to stop Kai right there. “I have to admit, I've underestimated you and your group. You've really done your research. However, you should understand that there is no use in us talking... not until you hold the key to your town.”

Hearing this, Kai smiled and send the adult man off with a polite bow.

“Hey, what was that? Why did that guy come over if he wasn't interested in doing business?!” Innu asked with some confusion in his voice.

“He was and he is.” Kai corrected Innu. “We aren't the only ones who have done their research, though. As much as we might want to expand, it's too early for us, because there is still one problem that we have to take care of.”

The others started to think about what I could possibly be talking about. The Underdogs had been able to freely do as they wished, and only the Grey Elephants had been able match up to them, yet both of their gangs had been eliminated.

So then who were the Howlers supposed to take care of?

“You guys may not have noticed it, but they have been causing problems for us from behind the scenes.” Kai explained. “However, the real problem is our mayor.”

The Mayor of Slough, Xin's father Ben Clove, had quite a few medium-sized gangs under his fist. Individually they were all weak, but as a unit, they were just as troublesome as the Grey Elephants or the Underdogs.

Originally, they had planned to swoop in and take over the city just after the new war between the Underdogs and the Grey Elephants, but in the end, the Howlers had joined the fight and had done that instead.

However, the mayor was quite a powerful figure if not controlled by a gang, because he was fighting in ways that only he could. For example, by rejecting proposals to rebuild new areas, not offering tax breaks and cuts to new businesses that were coming in.

Any progression to do with the city that had the Howlers name on it had been halted in some way. When making a contract with these new businesses in order to prove that the Howlers were involved in them for their protection, and so on. Legally, these terms as well as a percentage, were written in the contract.

All of this information was passed onto the mayor, so it was easy for him to reject anything that had Howlers LTD on it. There were ongoing legal battles, but the lawyer that Olivia had introduced them to had told Kai that there was nothing that they could really do at this point and time.

Fighting back would take a considerable amount of time, especially since the mayor had the power to make the judges delay those things until the last day. Until a decision really got overturned, they would have to do this on a case by case basis.

Kai gave the other gang members a summary of those problems, making them realise why he had been holed up in his office for most of the day. He wasn't just sitting and planning some mastermind things, there was a lot that needed to be done and to run an efficient gang.

“Then what are we meant to do?” Marie asked.

“It's actually simple. Cardenez said it right there. He is interested in working with us, not with the mayor. The people on the outside are rooting for us. We just need to control him, giving us full control over all of Slough.”

Not many others approached the gang after. There were a few people from Tier-4 towns and such that said hello out of respect to the Howlers, but none of them mentioned any business.

This was fine for them, though, as everything else was secondary, they were here for the actual auction itself.

The large double doors could be heard creaking as they were pushed open by two large men, dressed in a dark purple outfit. A giant man, who was a wall of muscle, came out.

“The auction house is now open. The event will be starting in fifteen minutes. Please come inside, where you will be escorted to the right area!” The man shouted.

Finally, it was time.

#### Chapter 453 Dark guild (part 1)

Following the instructions, two lines formed, five metres apart from each other, at either side of the hall. Behind the large door, there were several staff members dressed in the same dark purple clothing as the ones outside. Their faces were visible as they stood straight and proud like guards.

This wasn't the typical entrance or type of group that Kai was expecting. The Dark Guild was a well-known gang. Although gangs operated differently and did different businesses all of the guards were gang members, but this was almost like a well-tuned army.

Guiding the guests in the front was a woman who was dressed in a skirt, a white shirt and a purple waistcoat. Next to her was a man with a purple sleeveless waist and a top hat. They didn't say much other than for the guests to follow them for the time being.

The hall they were being led through was littered with giant paintings that depicted scenes of old armoured knights, kings with crowns as well as fantastic beasts like dragons. At times the hosts would explain some of the paintings as they explained the history of the Dark guild.

However, the further they went the more modern the decor became. Rather than paintings, photos started to fill the walls, depicting items that had been sold in prior auctions. Apart from weapons like swords, axes, bows or shields which looked to have been created with unnatural materials, there were also fantastical creatures next to syringes.

When a guest had asked about who these items were exactly sold to, the hosts just smiled as they carried on.

'The Dark Guild seems to have quite a history.' Kai thought as they silently followed the group. 'All I could find out was that their gang has been around for quite a long time, but for some reason they have stayed out of the way of others, mainly focusing on their auction house.'

'Strangely, I haven't found even a single report about anyone daring to attack them. I'm still not sure whether this means that somebody might have tried and that information got buried by them, or something is actively stopping others from even trying it.'

'I doubt that an unspoken rule not to attack them would keep everyone in check. They must have either made a deal to have the others guarantee their safety... or they have the means to protect themselves.'

Although it was rare for Tier-1 gangs to face each other due to the potential fall-out of such a confrontation in terms of damage and problems it would cause as an aftermath, it was normal for small disputes to occur. After all, the larger a gang was, the harder it was to control each and every member.

On top of that, there were plenty of people with big egos who had a high amount of pride. Those that just had to prove themselves or thought that their gang was better than others. They just couldn't help themselves but get into a fight. So at some point and time, every group had some type of report come out about them causing a bit of trouble, the sole exception to this appeared to be the Dark Guild.

Not even an attempt to see if they were truly as strong as people thought they were. Or at least not one that had been reported.

'It makes me wonder, how strong are these guards that are filled in this hallway? If we want to rise to the top, there is a lot of work we need to do.' Kai analysed silently.

Suddenly, the two guide members stopped and turned around.

“All those from a Tier-1 city, please follow me upstairs to the gallery seating. There is a bar and we’ve prepared refreshments for your convenience.” The lady’s soprano voice filled the hall as she lifted her hand toward the staircases that were on either side.

“As for the rest of our guests, please follow me to your seats.” The man added in a deep baritone as he started opening the doors on their level. Inside there was also a bar area, allowing the guests to order as they wished provided they were willing to pay for it.

“I guess there’s always someone higher up than you,” Innu noted with a big sigh, but it wasn't because of the split of people, there was another reason. “Goodbye, pretty ladies.”

“Oh... I thought you only had eyes for one.” Austin commented. “Maybe I should come with you next time you pay Kevin and...what was her name again, a visit.”

“Will you get out of the way?!” A man’s loud voice disrupted the previously sombre atmosphere. The commotion was coming from upstairs. A group of three men, all with shaved heads that looked like they had been slightly waxed, were stopped at the top of the staircase, blocked by the purple guards from taking another step forward.

“Why are you stopping us?” The man asked at the front, gritting his teeth.

“Because you have disrespected the rules.” The one in the middle answered in a neutral tone. “You’ve been informed that the upstairs is only for guests from Tier-1 cities. You’re not one of those. Please head back down and make place for those who deserve to be here.”

“And how would you even know that?” One of the gang members pointed at the guard.

Watching the situation, it wasn’t hard to figure out what was going on. Unless the Dark Guild’s staff had decided to single them out, the trio must be pretending to belong to a Tier-1 city. With how many gangs and organizations each one of them could hold, there was no way to prove who was and who wasn't from a Tier-1, unless they asked those forms that said city, or some questions of proof.



Judging by their behaviour, Kai assumed that the trio was trying to sneak in. He himself had entertained the idea, yet the risk would far outweigh the potential benefit, so the Werewolf had refrained from acting upon it.

“Sir, we’ll ask you once more to leave on your own.” The Dark Guild member repeated, raising his hand, and placing it by his chest. “Please, enter the appropriate way, or we will have to escort you out of the place.”

‘Maybe we will see just how strong this Dark Guild is?’ Kai thought.

#### Chapter 454 Dark Guild (Part 2)

The bald man was filled with rage, but even more so, when he glanced at the people staring at him from below, he felt embarrassed. They had garnered too much attention to simply step down now.

As a Tier-3 that had recently risen to the top, they felt like they were now in a place of respect. Getting to be seated with the King would allow him to progress further and he would be a person that he felt was deserved. Rising to the top, in their town the group felt like they needed to ride on this momentum and continue to push themselves further.

It was at that moment that Sin, who had been the first to enter upstairs, went out to take a look at the commotion. When he saw the three men, he just sneered.

“You think you have finally made it, huh? That is because you are able to be in a place like this, where you can do what you want. Let’s make this clear, people like you can be replaced at any moment. Look around, there are plenty of those that are at your level, but your place is down there.”

Clicking his fingers, a small flame appeared right above his hand, yet he held no lighter or anything of the sort. It burnt upright and strong.

“Would you mind not doing that in here?” The woman in the purple skirt stepped out behind the King. “Mr Mutav, as much as we treasure you as a valuable guest, you should be aware that our Dark Guild does not differentiate between troublemakers. Should you choose to start anything here, I’m afraid, we’ll also have to remove you from our premises.”

It was an interesting development. After all, the guide had just threatened to remove a King. What's more, Sin was known for not taking orders from others, so everyone was wondering what would happen next? Could the Dark Guild really make true on their threat?

The bald headed men even looked to be nervous looking at Sin, but they weren't backing down. In a way, the fact that they saw him and still chose to act this way made him want to burn them even more.

"Fine." Sin shrugged and put out the flame before he turned around and walked back in. "Just make sure they know their place."

Hearing this, the bald headed man tried to push past the guards, and at that moment, yet the moment he took the first step, the raised palm rushed out. A loud bang was heard and it looked almost as if a shockwave had come out of the bald man's back.

All the guests turned around, worried that a gun had been used, but that would have been impossible, for this time and age. The bald headed man fell back, and started to roll down the stairs, banging his head bit by bit until he eventually stopped midway.

"Slappy!" One of the other men shouted, as they chased after him. "Are you alive?"

"You have a minute to take him away before we do the same to you." The woman noted before announcing. "Dear guests, please ignore this little incident and enjoy yourselves at the event!"

'What was that? One hit without any transformation?' Kai wondered. 'Surely, everyone who is here has to be an Altered, but the guard didn't even look as if he was serious. Just what kind of Altered is he? Are the rest the same?'

'I guess it would only make sense for the Dark Guild to keep the best Altered solutions for themselves, and they need strong people, in order to protect all of this.'

After this little demonstration, Kai was sure no one else would try anything, so it seemed like it was pretty safe inside the place. He also overheard others commenting about how 'every year there was always one new group that caused trouble'.

Heading inside the main venue hall, it was similar to a large theatre. There was the seating area above that was reserved for the Kings, and then there were the rest of the seats down below.

As they entered, each group was handed one paddle with a number on it, and the number their group had received was '23'. If they wished to bid, they just would have to race the panel.

"Oh man, I'm so excited. We're really going to see cool weapons and stuff, right?!" Innu exclaimed in excitement. "I mean, maybe we don't just have to get an Altered solution, maybe we can get some cool weapons as well.

"The ones we have were good but it was still difficult using it on you guys last time, and didn't Olivia say she got her whip from here."

"We'll see about that." Kai replied. "Our first priority will be the solution. Even among the Altered solutions, there are variants. The cheapest are the common ones, the type that most people can get any way. Then there are those that are proven to be strong since it's either the same or from a similar type like the AFC fighter.

"Finally, there is the mystery type that are quite expensive but a gamble. Those are the never before seen type, meaning they can either be super strong or a total bust. I would prefer to go for one that we know is strong and suits one of you, but depending on how much competition there will be, we'll have to even afford one, much less two." Kai explained.

"How much is our budget?" Marie asked.

"Five million, and that will leave us with pretty little for the next few months."

Hearing that number, everyone's eyes next to Kai lit up.

Chapter 455 5 million

Everyone had been comfortably sitting in their seats when they heard Kai mention the budget that their group had, but the moment he revealed the number, all of them nearly jumped up in shock. Five million was an unimaginable amount for any of them.

Instantly, they were all thinking about what they could do with this kind of cash. There were even dollar signs in their eyes. Coming from a Tier-3 town, they could practically go anywhere, select any apartment and car they fancied, and still have enough left over to live a happy life... and yet for some reason, their blonde leader had mentioned it as if he was talking about fifty bucks.

“I know what you're thinking, but it shows that you guys have no idea how much it actually costs to run an organisation as big as ours. While we get paid protection money from various businesses, we have dozens of people on our payroll, not to mention that each property we own has its own costs associated with it.

“This money we're using will be gone. We won't be able to upgrade our businesses or reinvest it into the Food High Street or other areas that have been run down. To give you an example, think about the apartment blocks where Gary lived and his whole neighbourhood. This money would be enough to renovate the entire building, but think about how many of those there are in all of Slough.

“What's more, to get this type of liquid fund, I had to sell off a couple of Underdog buildings. Due to the rush, and certainly because of the mayor's interference, we got less money than they would be worth, but I had to do it because we can't handle their costs at the moment.

“Besides, in a place like this, this kind of money might be pocket change to those sitting up top. Don't forget, everybody who has come here to bid is the a leader of a town, city, or a large corporation. Worst case, we'll go home with nothing from this auction.”

The others fell silent, as they realised how naive their thoughts had been. Altered DNA was something everyone would be fighting for. Unlike other luxury items, it was something that they could all use, as without it their high style lifestyle would be short-lived.

“Doesn't that mean that if we end up not buying any of the times, we get to keep it all to ourselves?” Innu asked.

Immediately, Marie who was sitting next to him slapped him on the back of the head. The sound was quite loud it had caused the others in the room to look over, making Marie a little embarrassed. "Did you not just hear a word he said? There are plenty of uses for that money in Slough, and we all know the Mayor isn't going to do anything for the city."

"That's true." Innu rubbed the back of his head. "Say, why don't we get someone we know to run for mayor in the next election? Won't that solve a lot of our problems? Surely we could use our gang's influence to help them get votes. What about Olivia, she is the oldest among us and already known by others?"

Kai placed his hand to stroke his chin, considering that idea. The Lady Boss might not be the

most optimal choice given her gang connection, but the idea certainly held some merit.

While their own group was discussing things, the Werewolf had made use of his super hearing to listen in on the conversations between those around them. It had allowed him to learn that a large percentage of guests on the bottom floor consisted of new gangs, mostly coming from low tier towns.

Crime was more rampant in these areas. Everyone was fighting for the few scraps that were there, which meant they were quite dangerous, but it also meant the leaders and those at the top changed constantly, unlike the Tier-2 and Tier-1 cities.

The Howlers were also a relatively new group, and they were merely treated with a bit more respect due to having appeared on the news rather recently. Additionally, their current appearance with the masks made them quite mysterious.

On the Howlers' left sat an all-female gang that called themselves the Amazons. They were an established gang that was well known and even quite popular in their hometown. On the other hand, the No Land Gang was the polar opposite of those ladies.

To the right of Kai, sat gang members who shared neon green dyed hair, all of them with several missing teeth, and torn clothing. Were this any other place, they could have easily been mistaken for a group of hobos, but this was just the style of this Tier-4 gang.

“Hmmm, isn’t your boss with you? I remember his mask was different from the rest of youse!” The man sitting in the seat next to the Werewolf asked. The teenager had purposely been sitting on the very edge, not just to stay with his friends, but also to be as far away as possible from the other gang’s stench.

“There’s no need for him to come personally. This is just an auction, not a fight, so let’s just enjoy the event for ourselves, shall we?” Kai answered as he tried to keep down his disgust.

The man smiled, showing off his silver teeth, and began to slap the armchair of his seat over and over. “You’re right. Oiii, let’s get this started!” He shouted, and the other members of his gang shouted along with him.

As if on cue, a spotlight appeared on stage, and underneath was none other than the man in the top hat, who had been leading the main group this entire time.

Chapter 456 Everyone is here

“Thank you all for coming today. We’re especially happy to see so many new faces around, but of course, we’re also elated to see the old ones return. Allow me to inform and remind you all that it’s in your own interest to stay respectful and follow the rules of our auction.

“For the first timers among you, be aware that any bid you make will be binding. Should your group be unable to pay the full sum, we’ll have our own ways to get our money.” The man stated with a mischievous smile without elaborating.

It was a pretty brazen thing to do to start off an auction with a threat directed to everyone in the room, especially in a place filled with leading figures who all had massive egos, yet not a single one said anything.

“With that out of the way, I won’t bore you any longer. Let’s give you all what you are here for and introduce our first items.” The man said and pointed to the side.

The headlight pointed to a staff member who rolled the first item in, a large crater box. Upon opening the box, there were a load of illegal melee weapons inside. Immediately, multiple gangs started to raise

their paddles, bidding for them one by one. Even the No Land Gang showed off their interest, though not a single Tier-2 or Tier-1 gang paid it any attention.

Once the bid was over, the crate of weapons was rolled away, before another one was rolled in, though this time it contained ranged weapons with ammunition. The man on stage would explain what they did, while showing off their power a little bit. Firing a bolt, it hit a target and began to electrify it greatly.

After seeing a few ordinary Anti-Altered weapons, what surprised Kai was the next set of items. Because only a screen projector was brought out. On the screen, it showed images of land and the name of the city.

'Oh...they're selling land and buildings from their cities to others. I didn't know this was a thing. Hmm, it's quite a good strategy for expanding. It will allow one to enter another city, without causing trouble and if a higher gang buys it, then it's also a sign of cooperation.' Kai thought.

The building and land was being sold for a crazy amount, though, with the Tier-1 and 2 cities being the ones fighting over it. Although it was a quick way to make money, for a gang that wanted to rise like the Howlers it wasn't a good idea to invite others in, at least not if they wanted to purchase it back.

They would either have to pay more for it, or force them somehow to take it back.

"You seem to be lacking funds, young one." The man next to Kai commented. "Your group has yet to bid on a single item. If you plan to keep your position and protect yourself, these items are valuable to have, you know.

"In a way, even this auction house is a battlefield. There will be those that are taking note of what others have bought and it is a way to show off your power."

Kai already knew this so he didn't engage the conversation with the No Land leader. Due to the way Gary had asked the gang to make money, their source of revenue, despite being the top gang of their town, was far less than what the Underdogs or even the Grey Elephants would have brought along.

They didn't extort the people, down to the breadline so they could gain higher profits, nor did they delve into extremely illegal things like Olivia had been doing. They still made a lot of money. But didn't have as much as the surrounding gangs.

'If only the guy knew how many Anti-Altered weapons we still have left over from the Underdogs. Even better, we have three Werewolves, who might be even stronger than your average Altered.' Kai smiled to himself.

"You think what I said was entertaining, was it?" The man asked, having misunderstood his gesture. "Let me help a fellow newcomer out. If you take off that mask, and show that pretty face of yours, then I will be happy to lend you some money so you can have a bit of fun with the grown-ups."

Although Kai hadn't been laughing at the person originally, he was doing so now as he turned his head towards him.

"You seem very interested in what lies underneath my mask," Kai stated as he leaned towards the gang leader. "However, are you sure you can actually afford to pay the price? because it will cost you your entire city."

The moment he said those words, Kai's eyes started to glow blue, narrowing slightly, making him resemble a predator looking at his prey. The gang leader felt shivers run through his entire body and shifted his attention to the auction once more.

The next item that had been brought out was another weapon, this time a sword although it looked different to the one in the first batch. It was one of the olden style weapons, looking as if it had been carved out of an animal, quite similar to those that they had seen in paintings.

'These weapons...are they similar to what Damion's axes or Olivia's whip? I'm guessing these are what those more experienced Altered Hunters use as well.' Kai thought.

Just as the auction started, people started to raise their paddles one after another. It was the most popular item that had been shown today and it made Kai believe his hunch was right.

That's when he felt a nudge from Innu. "Hey, are you seeing what I'm seeing?"



The black skinned teenager was pointing downward to the lower seats. One of the guests holding their paddle up, had a recognisable face.

“That’s... Blake Hunt.” Kai said in surprise, not having expected to see him here.

#### Chapter 457 Auction Start! (Part 1)

As his upperclassman, Kai had never really interacted with Blake Hunt. The former had only known the latter due to being Westbridge’s rugby ace, making him famous in their school. Only later did he find out the younger teenager’s double life as an Altered Hunter, and that was mostly from Gary.

During Slough’s big gang war, involving the Underdogs, the Grey Elephants and the Howlers, Blake Hunt had come out to help. One could argue that he had merely acted as an Altered Hunter, who wanted to get rid of the Infected Altered, but it was undeniable that his intervention had helped out their entire town.

‘Have the Altered Hunters sent him on his own? No, I doubt that. He would make too easy of a target if that were the case. I should assume that either the ones next to him are Altered Hunters, or they’re somewhere else hidden in the room. Have they come here to buy Anti-Altered weapons... or are they here for another reason?’ Kai wondered.

They were in a room with many Altered. The more Kai thought about it, the more perfect the location seemed for a large-scale attack. The only thing was, that wasn’t how the Altered Hunters operated. They attacked isolated Altered in small groups to avoid the risk of anyone else interfering.

Besides, the unknown number of Altered would also pose a giant risk to them, as there was no guarantee the Altered Hunters could take out everyone involved, and if they failed, the retaliation was bound to be very bloody.

“Sold!” The auctioneer announced before he slammed a mallet down on the stand that was placed in the centre. “For 1.2 million.”

“Sh\*t, if a single weapon costs a fourth of what we have, do we even stand a chance to get an Altered solution at all?!” Innu was left flabbergasted at the kind of money being thrown around.

The others were also beginning to doubt the likelihood of winning anything. The further this auction went on, the more expensive the items seemed to become. Before those various pieces of land and buildings had come out, things had been relatively tame. At least with the batches of weapons, it had seemed less shocking, since they could justify the high prices due to the quantity of sold goods, but now...

A couple more weapons followed, and one of the adults next to Blake Hunt had actually managed to win the bid for two weapons. Unfortunately, he was unable to purchase a third one, as the trident he was interested in, had also attracted the attention from a patron above, and perhaps due to their earlier acquisitions, they had ended up conceding the following bidding war.

‘Considering that the Altered Hunters are regarded as a terrorist group, it’s a bit surprising to see how much money they appear to have. I’m not even sure if they gave up because they lack the funds, or simply because they wish to avoid standing out.

‘Either they have very rich members among them or someone must be backing them? Perhaps a private company? Hmmm, it actually also be one of the Tier-1 gangs or even a King. I suppose there could be a symbiotic relationship between them. They would make the perfect pawns to take out a rival gang’s Altered.’ Kai realised, though he was also aware that most of it was wild speculation on his part.

It was hard to do research on such an elusive target. Just like Blake, their members were leading quite a normal life during the day, so it was near impossible to find out who was a member and who wasn’t. Up until this point, Kai had also focused mainly on other gangs or organisations who they might have to fight at some point, but now that they were delving into Altered territory, they were bound to become enemies with the Altered Hunters at some point. Assuming, they weren’t already on. After all, only Blake knew that about Werewolves not being Wolf Altered.

“And with that, we’re out of weapons. Let’s move on to the next category of items.” The host declared as he wiped the sweat from his head. The bidding had been quite intense on the last item, and he knew there was more to come. “The first Altered solution of the night.”

Rolled out from the back came a tray table with a solution. It was further protected in a glass container, displayed on a red cloth.

“Thanks to recent developments from labs around the world, nearly everyone can become an Altered with but a simple injection. This item will let you become a cat-type Altered, granting you fast reflexes, better night vision, power climbing abilities among other perks. All who watch the AFC fights should be aware of the prowess of feline Altered. The bidding starts at 500,000!”

The people at the front cheered a bit, and nearly the entire room put up their paddle, each one trying to be the first to shout out the starting bid.

“700,000!” A man shouted as he lifted up his panel.

“750,000!” Another shouted.

“800,000.” The gang leader next to Kai shouted. He had a large smirk on his face, and looked at the masked teenager, seemingly challenging him to participate.

“Hey, should we go for this one?” Marie asked. “I think I might be suited to be a Cat Altered, and the bids are quite low at the moment.”

While discussing the bids were continually going up, if Kai were to make a prediction, then this solution would sell between 1.5 million and 2.0 million in total. So far nobody from upstairs had made a bid, else the others would have backed out.

However, there was a good reason why they refrained from doing so. As much as the auctioneer had hyped it, it didn't change the fact that this was a rather simple Altered solution. Sure it increased one's strength greatly, and depending on the person, one could utilise it better than others, but a cat just wasn't the same as a lion.

It just didn't have an impressive enough track record to warrant the current bids, and perhaps the crowd had merely fallen for the silver tongue of the Dark Guild's representative.

‘The auction house is truly clever, not telling us how many there will be. This way, we're being pressured into spending more for fear it might be the last item, eventually.’

“Sold!” The host announced, pointing towards the No Land gang. “For 1.1 million.”

#### Chapter 458: Auction Start! (part 2)

“You’re going to be an Altered, Boss Kit!” One of his members cheered. “We’ll be able to make the others submit to us and take over a Tier-3 town!”

Overhearing their group, Kai learned that the leader was apparently called Kit, and their strategy was very typical for a low level gang. Rather than improve their own town, they planned to use all the money they had gained to improve themselves and to invade another nearby town. No wonder, they were spending their money without worry. This was also the reason why it was nigh impossible for lower tier towns to rise a tier.

‘Hmm, but the item sold for a lot less than I thought. Either the other guests are smarter than I gave them credit for, or the bidding was mostly done by newcomers like them. The others must be aware that better stuff is coming soon.’

Keeping it interesting, the next item to roll out was not one, but three solutions at once, this time allowing the ones to ingest it to become rat type Altered. This, however, did not seem to stop the people from bidding. After 3 million got passed, some voices from above called out some bids, eventually ending at 4 million.

After a while, a single solution was rolled out, but the screen behind it was showing what type of beast the solution was to come from.

“As you can see in the video, this Altered DNA has great power. This solution is already showing great results in the AFC. He might be a rookie at the moment, but he has been rising through the ranks, so its potential is guaranteed.”

The video showed a man transforming into somewhat of a bull. It gave great strength, and horns growing out the top of one’s head. It also boosted a high amount of endurance, as it showed another Altered from the AFC hit him without causing any notable damage.

'This... this is the one that we should bet on.' Kai decided. It should suit Austin perfectly. He was already large and a natural powerhouse when it came to strength.

"The bidding starts at 1 million!"

Paddles were raised, and almost instantly the price had been boosted up to 1.5 million.

For the first time Kai raised his paddle. There was no need for him to say anything, as the minimum bid would always be 10% of the starting one, meaning just by showing his interest, his bid became 100.000 more than the previous top bidder.

"1.6 million to those in the masks!"

"2 million!" Kit shouted, raising his paddle, and glanced towards them. "So this is what you were waiting for, huh? Well, let's see who has the deeper pockets."

The masked teenager just raised his paddle, not reacting to the clear provocation.

"2.5 million!" Kit shouted with a loud smile, not even caring that he had just outbid someone from the top floor.

"3 million!" The same person bid. He wasn't one of the Kings, but the leader of a Tier-2 gang, wouldn't give up that easily, not without putting up a fight. This sign that someone important was really interested in the solution made those on the bottom back off, but not Kai.

"3.5 million!" The Werewolf stated loudly.

'Damn this guy. This is far higher than I wanted to go, and this is for just one solution. I was really hoping that we could buy another one, or other items... but who knows when we might get another chance.'

“4 million.” Kit outbid him without hesitation, and this raise even silenced the Tier-2 gang leader. Sure, this was a rare Altered DNA, but not a super rare one. He could continue, but at this point it was likely that his peers would make fun of him for overpaying. As such, he simply remained silent.

‘Is he really that keen on winning one over me?’ Kai wondered as the auctioneer was about to accept the bid. Swallowing down his reluctance, he raised his paddle, yet Kit did the same, making the new bid 4.2 million. The masked teenager let out a regretful sigh, yet stayed the paddle.

“Sold for 4.2 million!”

“Hahah, is this the best you fools can do? What type of gang are you running? At first I thought you were buying nothing because you were holding back for something, but it turns out you’re just a bunch of beggars.”

Kai was dying to argue about the stupidity about overpaying for the solution, but he understood that it would just be a waste of time. It would merely make him look like a sore loser. Still, just like many, he expected that despite all the mysteriousness, the Dark Guild would follow the typical auction scheme, of saving the best item for the end of the auction.

With this just being the first rare one, there were surely more and even better solutions to come. The only issue with that was that if they were too good, the gang wouldn’t be able to afford it. In other words, if they wanted to go home with something, they would have to strike soon.

“Okay folks, to keep things interesting, the next item will be a mystery solution. The Dark Guild can guarantee that this type of Altered DNA has never appeared before. However, everything else is up to chance. It might turn you into a slightly stronger human, or incredibly strong. This is the risk that you’ll have to take with this item.” The host claimed as he started the bid.

“2 million!” Kai said straight away, doubling the starting bid from the get-go. Given the description, he hoped that not too many people would be interested in it and this move might make it seem even less interesting.

“You know, you really shouldn’t have threatened me earlier.” Kit sneered. “If you had apologised earlier, I might have even forgiven you, but now I’m going to buy every little thing that you guys want!”

“3 million!”

Those who had been slightly interested in the mystery solution were now put off. The real show was now the bidding war between those two gangs who clearly had it out for each other.

“I’m warning you, you better back off.” Kai looked straight at him, and his eyes were glowing blue, even fiercer than before. “If you’re that keen on crossing us, I’ll personally pay your sh’thole of a town a visit, and make sure not a single member of your gang will have any limbs left!”

When speaking and opening his mouth, Kai didn’t realise it that the anger had gotten to him, making sharp fangs grow from his mouth, while his nails had turned into claws.

“FIVE MILLION!” Kai shouted at the top of his lungs, turning into a powerful howl.

Seeing this from above, Sin smiled at the sideshow. “Those guys are idiots. Only desperate people would bet on a mystery solution, especially the first one, but I have to admit, that shout was quite intimidating.”

Kai looked toward Kit, his body language telling the gang leader that he would pounce on him the moment he would open his mouth, so he never did.

“Sold for FIVE million to the fellow in the fox mask!”

Chapter 459 Who gets what?

When the Howlers heard Kai bid their entire budget on the solution, they could feel their hearts stop for a moment. Even after the gavel was struck down, they didn’t really feel like celebrating. As the one responsible for their finances, they could only hope that there had been a good reason for their de-facto leader’s behaviour.

Kai would be lying if he said that his emotions hadn’t influenced his action in any way, but it hadn’t been fully without any logic. Admittedly, it had been a calculated risk, and if someone had bid higher than them, the Howlers would have been unable to do anything about it. At that point, they might as well

have packed their bags, as it would have been the same as admitting their entire budget was capped at 5 million.

The Werewolf had bet on the fact that the others would be holding out their bids due to the Dark Guild bringing out more and better items each time. With this being the first mystery solution, it was clear that there would be more to come. Had this been the final bid, though, then those that wanted to buy something and to use the money they had brought with them, would just use it anyway, even at the risk over paying for the item itself.

Part of the risk was that he had to trust the Dark Guild that this was truly a never before used mystery solution. In that case, even they should be unable to find out what type of Altered one would become if they used it, thus it would make no difference if they purchased the first or the last one, as it would remain a gamble.

“Kai, did we really have to blow our whole budget on that one Altered solution? We have no idea whether it’s good or not. Worst case, we can always get turned.” Mai whispered to him as the auction continued.

It was something all of them had considered. After all, Gary had turned Kai and Olivia, so why not them. Of course, after living through the night of the full moon their enthusiasm of becoming Werewolves had greatly decreased, but it was nevertheless an option on the table.

“It’s far more complicated than that. What happened to us on that day is just the tip of the iceberg.” Kai shook his head, able to talk with her about it since she was already aware about the existence of Werewolves, thus not going against the last Pack rule. “Trust me when I say, none of you will want to experience what it feels like. If it hadn’t been for the circumstances, Gary wouldn’t have turned me, either.

“According to him there is always the chance of something going wrong, and even if that chance is incredibly low, we don’t need to take that chance if it means risking your lives, especially not when there are other ways to increase our strength!”

Of course, there were other reasons for their refusal of turning the rest of the Howlers. It was safe to assume that those in Tier-1 cities, at least the core members that belonged to the top gangs, were all Altered. Admittedly, the Werewolves’ bodies seemed strong and comparable to a good Altered, but every gang could use some variety.



Different Altered forms meant a diverse portfolio of strength. What one Altered could do, another couldn't. They backed each other up, creating a horrifying team, and the Howlers needed to do the same.

What's more, if all their members were Werewolves, it could invite a different set of trouble.

The bids continued, and the Dark Guild kept everyone on their toes by mixing known Altered solutions with mystery ones, keeping everyone guessing how much of each they might have. Just like Kai had predicted, it didn't take long for the final bids to cross the 5 million mark. It wasn't the exact Altered Solution they wanted but it was something, and it could even turn out better than what they originally wished to get.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, with this item, today's auction has come to an end." The host stated. "We thank you for your patronage and we shall inform you about the next auction through our website. We further ask those who have successfully purchased at least one item today to remain in the auction house so we can finish the formalities."

The doors opened and everyone began to exit. Many groups left with disappointed looks on their faces, with some even muttering that it would have been better for them to go to a smaller auction in the future, where there would be fewer people with high amounts of money.

In total, 53 sets of items had been sold today, and yet, only around 16 groups stayed behind, two of them containing Kings, though Sin wasn't one of them. In a place like this, certain groups were just more dominant with their financial situation. If Kai had tried to remain conservative with their money, then they would have ended up with nothing.

"Please come to the stage where we shall send you the details to send the money into our accounts. Once we verified that your payment has gone through, your items will be delivered to you in person." The host explained, now surrounded by the other staff members to refrain anyone from trying something stupid.

Kai, with the others, stood up, and so did the No Land Gang, as they were walking down the staircase towards the stage. This was a chance for him to check out the Kings that had paid for a few items.

Walking down, there was a mountain of a man whose former muscles were now hidden behind his large belly. He was dressed in a red robe, and the crown on top of his head was the only item that made one associate him the term 'King'.

This man called himself 'King Henry', though most assumed it was a fake name. Nevertheless, he was one of the few Kings that showed themselves in public. Some even theorised that it was due to Henry's dress code, coupled with his actions in his prime days, that had led to him taking over one of the Tier-1 cities, that had coined the term 'Kings' in the first place.

As for the other one, Kai had no idea who she was. The woman was wearing a small black leather jacket, had long legs in tight fighting trousers and dark boots. Strangely, she had a majestic aura as she strutted forwards in her purple lipstick, her casual gait treating everyone as if they were beneath her.

There was no one else with her, which was the strangest thing. The only reason why Kai suspected her to be a King, was the way even King Henry seemed to treat her as equal. Was she just that confident with everyone around to be on her own?

It was hard to say, although one might be confident in the Dark Guild's presence. It wasn't the same and if this person was a leader, or even if they weren't, they could be dealt with easily without anyone even knowing.

When reaching the stage, the two largest groups were the Howlers and the No Land Gang, who had brought along more than just one or two bodyguards like the rest. That's also where they made eye contact with Blake Hunt, who looked to have two others around him as well. Although both of them seemed quite a bit older than Blake himself.

"Please use your phones to scan the QR code we've prepared for you. It will forward you to a site with the total amount you owe us. Once confirmed, one of the staff will deliver your item."

Everyone did as asked, and honestly it was hard for Kai to sign away this amount of money, but in the end he had made the choice. Pressing his hand up against his ear, the host nodded with a smile on his face, and members of the Dark Guild appeared from behind the curtain with the items. Some of them had to get their items in via crates since there were so many.

However, the Howlers didn't care about the others so much, instead they were focused on what was in front of them. The mystery solution was in a small, shiny, metal container.

As soon as they had the solution, the group exited the auction house with no problems.

Kai had warned them not to stay too long as he had a bit feeling that either the No Land Group or the Altered Hunters might be looking for a fight.

“Tyler, go grab the car, and let's get out of here.”

In the end, they left the auction house, and later the city with no trouble, and all of them couldn't stop staring at the syringe with the strange liquid inside.

“At least we got one solution out of it... but who should be the one to use it?” Innu asked. “After all, we have no way of finding out what's inside, and it's not like we can try again if it turns out to be garbage.”

#### Chapter 460 The one star hunter

It wasn't too long ago that Blake had become a one-star Hunter, thus officially joining the Altered Hunters. Of course, now that he was officially recognised as one of their members, there were certain responsibilities on his shoulders.

No longer was he able to just travel and piggyback with his father doing hunts in the local area. In the first place, Ozacas Hunt was away more often, being called by the organisation for important tasks involving the mysterious black liquid.

This was one of the responsibilities of being an Altered Hunter, to always answer when they call you, and it was why Blake was where he was now.

Of course, hunters could choose where they wished to live, and they could also act as they saw fit, as long as they followed certain guidelines that were given out, but the guidelines weren't the set law.

However, now as a one-star Hunter, Blake could be called out for tasks that were planned by the leader and the other five-star Hunters, and that's why he was currently in the Dark Guild's auction house in Morfran City.

Currently standing on stage waiting for the items they had bought, was himself, another one-star Hunter and a three-star Hunter. This was the first time he was working with these people. They had only been told about the great task that they would have to accomplish today.

The other one-star Hunter was a university student that was a little older than Blake. He was taller than him, at a height of around 6 foot 4, with black hair and always a serious look on his face even now. The young adult had introduced himself as Kane, and unlike him, his promotion wasn't as recent, making him his senior, despite sharing the same number of stars.

Then there was Josh, the three-star Hunter in his mid-twenties. Unlike the serious Kane, he seemed to be far more amiable, always having a smile on his face, and coupled with his light brown hair that was split down the middle he had the appearance of a charming gentleman.

As for the reason why these people were selected for the auction, it was due to them being relatively new members of the Altered Hunter Association. Although all Altered Hunters were required to wear masks during their nightly outing, it was impossible to guarantee that they would stay on during fights.

The more senior members knew for a fact their faces had been passed around to the higher tier gangs. This made it impossible for them to attend the auction, though they didn't want to cause trouble during it in the first place. So, who better than to send a few harmless looking young members to buy a few new weapons.

So far they had achieved their task, the first part had gone smooth, but while standing on stage, Blake's hands were starting to sweat a little.

'This is my first time going on a group outing. I have to do well. No doubt my father will hear about this outing as well.' Blake thought.

Focused on the task ahead, he was only now really looking at the people around them. With the crowd clearing out, he saw the familiar black and gold uniform of the people who were on the stage with them.

'That's the same colours that Gary would always wear and his gang.'

Looking at the mask on their faces, Blake couldn't help but gulp. He and the fox masked leader made eye contact with each other. It lasted for just a moment, but the young Altered Hunter was sure that they knew each other.

'Why...why did you guys have to come here? Why now of all times? Is Gary with you?' Blake wondered. 'Without him, you guys might will be in a lot of trouble and I can't help you.'

Seeing them, it made Blake think back to the meeting before entering Morfran.

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Back in Slough, Blake had been called upon, and he was to wait in his home at his father's dojo. He was pacing back and forth after he had prepared a table along with a few chairs out.

The reason for him being nervous was because he was meant to be meeting quite a few people from the Altered Hunter Association today, and they had chosen his place as the meeting area.

Blake had been given a few details and the reason why they were all meeting up in Slough was because it was on the way to their actual destination, Morfran City. Eventually, the speaker in the dojo sounded off, indicating that someone was at the door.

Walking through his relatively large front garden, Blake checked the camera on the door, and could see five people present. Immediately he opened the door, and bowed down to them all.

"It is my pleasure to meet all of you, seniors. I will do my best to make your stay here as comfortable as possible." Blake greeted them.

"You can raise your head, for starters." John the three-star Hunter replied with a friendly smile. "There's no need for all that formality. We're all friends here, so you can relax a bit."

Blake was happy to see that there were those close to his age. In fact, everyone looked quite young on the team that would be sent out. While leading the group out to the dojo they all started to introduce themselves.

Aside from Kane and Josh who was the leader of the group, there were three two-star Hunters. It was a little strange as Josh looked younger than one of the two-star Hunters.

But it reminded Blake that not everything was about age, it was skill and talent, and the stars just indicated that Josh had the talent to kill a number of different Altered. After the introductions were done, each of them sat down and Josh's smiley face had gone to quite a serious tone.

"Now, all of you have been briefed on the task, we are to head to Morfran City and buy supplies for the Altered Hunter Association. They have given me a budget and a set of requirements so you guys can let me deal with that.

"The only thing you need to keep in mind, is to avoid trouble. The best thing to do that is by staying at my side and to stay silent."

This was part of the task that Blake already knew, but he was no idiot. If that was the only thing they were attempting to do, then there would be no need for six Altered Hunters to be sent on this task.

"The association wants to test the waters a bit. Due to how big this event will be, they're sure that quite a few new gangs will be turning up. We'll be ignoring the established gangs and will be keeping an eye on the up-and-comers. They'll be the ones to improve their strength the most by buying supplies, and of course Altered solutions.

"Our main goal is to do our best to get rid of these new gangs by eliminating at least their leaders and if possible the entire gang. However, there is a good chance that we might be unable to do so with our current strength.

In the case it proves to be too much of a hassle to take them out, Plan B will be to focus on stealing their Altered Solutions, so we can at least cripple their growth. After we've achieved that goal, we'll flee and meet at the predetermined location later."

Looking towards Kane, Blake wanted to see if the other one-star Hunter was nervous about the situation. Judging on what Josh had said, there was a chance they could be going up against more than one Altered Hunter together.

On top of that, they would be in Morfan City.

“We will only target those that buy Altered solutions from the event. We also will only target the new groups since for a lot of you, this will be a first experience. If there are no groups that I think we are capable of taking out, then we will not proceed with the task, understand?”

Everyone gave a nod, and after that, Josh pulled out a few thick pieces of paper. It was information on the new gangs that were rising, and handed it out to each of them so they could be updated on the situation.

“Now there is a chance that some of these gangs will not even appear at the auction itself. Or perhaps they’ll be unable to buy the Altered solution, but I want you to go over the proposed plan of what we are to do, and keep up to date with all the possibilities.”

Everyone was silent as they worked through the thick book, looking at all the information.

‘The No Land Gang are a Tier-4 gang, there is a star stating that this is most likely one of our targets... it looks like there is another star on another gang.’ Blake noticed.

Looking at the name, and the descriptions that were given. It stated at the top, that one of their targets was a gang who called themselves the Howlers.