

## Werewolf 591

### Chapter 591 Fight Me

Taking a step back, Gary was a little startled at the sudden request. In the first place he never expected to see Xin, and when he did see her, he often fumbled his words or found it hard to speak.

So, to hear this, he was really fumbling now.

"I... fight.. me... me.. fight.. you." Gary said, struggling to get his words out.

"Yes." Xin replied. "Gary, I've seen how strong you are. How strong you have become and how you beat the others. At the moment, everyone says that I'm rank 1 in this place, but is that really the case?

"How can I say I'm rank 1, when I haven't gone against you?"

Rankings were never something Gary cared about since coming into the AFA. Because in his head, his dreams were too small in the first place. Just getting into the AFA was a dream, getting this far, and being a part of the AFC.

He didn't have any goals, when it came to the AFC or AFA, but it wasn't the same for Xin.

'Is facing Xin a good idea?' Gary thought. 'I have to admit, I am interested in how strong she is, but if she lost... what would it mean to her?'

Gary knew he had improved by leaps and bounds since fighting the Scatterbugs. Even if the two were to fight before, Gary perhaps might have lost but only by a little, now though he felt like it was almost unfair.

On top of that, due to the night sky still being out he had the advantage of his class. Although he could limit himself while fighting Xin, she was skillful enough to know that he was holding back. For Gary to put up a fight, he would be unable to hold back.

Because of all of these reasons, he eventually came up with an answer.

"I'm sorry Xin... but I don't think I can."

It was clear that this wasn't the answer she was expecting and from the look in her eyes, and her tensed up body, it was almost as if she was angry.

"Why? Is it because you like me?" Xin replied. "Do you really think that I'm going to be thankful to you, for being a gentleman and not fighting me? You know I'm not that type of person."

"It's not that." Gary replied, he was trying to think of a way to explain himself, without revealing his secret, he looked to the ground unable to look Xin in the eye, and realising this, she herself realised that maybe she had jumped the gun.

"I'm sorry... I was a little annoyed at you and let my anger come out." Xin explained. "You see, Gary you're amazing, I still remember you when I met you at school. You're so strong and you keep growing stronger."

"You know, for me I have a big reason for being here, for joining the AFC, but for you. I somewhat felt like you were only here because of me. At first I thought it was sweet, but then It started to make me feel strange."

"You managed to get here, just on those feelings alone. Is that how you are so strong? Then, does that mean that my own resolve is weaker, or is it just the fact that you're so much more talented than me?"

"I'm sure this might even be something that you can't answer yourself, so I wanted to learn through fighting against you. I thought I might get my answer that way. You should know that before the assessment of the academy students, the debut students will have their first match."

"After that, we will be shipped to clubs, or professional teams, to work on climbing the AFC, which also means, I won't be here anymore, that's why I wanted to fight you, just before I left." Xin explained.

There was a lot in what Xin said, and although some of it was partly true, not all of it was. Gary did come to the academy because of Xin but there were other reasons, and as for why he got stronger, it was because he was carrying a lot of weight.

The weight of the Howlers gang, the weight of his friends, and the weight of his family. There was a lot riding on Gary's strength, and even now it was why he needed to continue to grow stronger.

"Xin, I'm not good at explaining things so I want you to do something." Gary held up his hand, as if he was going for a high five and placed it in the air. "I want you to transform and use all your strength and do whatever you can to move my hand from its position."

Xin didn't understand the point of this, but she decided to go along with it anyway, she placed her hand against his, and the two of them were now touching. She first just tried to push using her strength but there was no movement at all from Gary.

Then, using her whole body weight she pushed it in, but again there was nothing.

'What is this, my strength is not weak... so why can't I move his arm?' Xin thought.

Holding it in place, she decided to take things a bit more seriously, there was a little spark in her eye, before she shifted her feet, moving it in a motion, twisted her hip and pushed in one go as hard as she could against Gary's hand.

It was with such force that on a normal person it would have sent them flying across the field, but with Gary nothing had happened and his hand was still left there in place.

"I know this is nothing compared to a real fight and you're more skillful than me. I have no idea what your Altered form is, and there's never a sure win in any fight, but with this strength I have, right now I don't even know how to control it properly."

Hearing Gary, Xin started to think about the fight she had seen him in, how out of control he was at the time.

"The last person I would want to hurt, is you." Gary explained.

Xin couldn't help but smile as she heard this.

"Well I guess, that just means I have to get so strong that you don't worry about that." Xin smiled.

The two of them continued to talk after that, about school life, the troubles they both had and a little about their family, but they left the matter of fighting each other behind.

It was nice, for the two of them, to just enjoy speaking to each other like so. When they split ways, Gary continued his lessons, but he wasn't as chatty with the others as he usually would be, he was quite diligent at studying and it was the first time the others had seen him like this.

Then came the end of the day, as Gary was ready to head back to his dorm room, Izzy had stopped him before doing so. She stood in the hallway, twiddling with her fingers while looking at the floor.

"Is something wrong, is it the bite mark?" Gary asked worriedly.

"No, no it's not that." Izzy replied even though the bite mark was bothering her, but that wasn't the reason why she was here. "I'm sorry, but I wanted to ask you this all day, but I couldn't find the right time and I have to now.

"It's my parents, they want to meet you."

#### Chapter 592 Gary, Not The Leader

Meetings with adults for Gary hadn't exactly gone well so far, and that would include the one he had with Harry, Numba's father, originally. Although Gary was now meant to be this great figure, it was hard for him to get over the age hurdle, so when speaking to others, unless it was in an aggressive way, he tended to shy away a little.

"Wait." Gary held out his hand while placing his fingers on the top of his nose and squeezing the skin together. "Why do your parents want to meet me, what did I do? What have I done, is this a good thing or a bad thing?"

It was only natural for him to have a load of questions and Izzy somewhat expected this reaction as well.

"I'm so sorry." Izzy shyly replied. "I really didn't want to do this, and I tried to explain, but unlike Numba and Ian, my parents can just be a bit difficult at times."

Letting out a big sigh she was ready to explain.

"You see, after everything happened, Ian and I, we both decided to go ahead and talk about the official alliance between our families. Honestly, I didn't think it would take much convincing. After all, the Howlers have been in the limelight for a while. Everyone knows that they now own Notsburg.

"Us, being from a tier-3 joining up with a power that can rival a tier-2, along with my recommendation seems like a no brainer, but..." Izzy paused for a second as she went to grab the wound that was on her shoulder.

"It seems that she doesn't like the fact that I was hurt helping out the Howlers. I tried to convince her on the phone, but she wasn't convinced. So she said she wants me to bring the boy that got me so obsessed with this idea."

Once again saying the last line, Izzy pulled away, her face turning a shade redder.

Hearing everything, it was clear that Izzy perhaps had told her parents some of what happened, but not everything, because there was an important detail that was said. The fact was her parents wanted to meet Gary, not the leader of the Howlers.

If they had asked to meet up with the Howlers to discuss the alliance, well Gary was just going to send Kai in his place, or ask Kai to do all the talking of the finer details like he had been doing so far.

The problem was, her parents wanted to meet him.

"Wait... so why do they want to meet me?" Gary asked.

"Well, because I told them that we had made an alliance beforehand, and the reason we got involved was because we were chasing after you and trying to help Numba. I didn't tell them anything about you being the leader of the Howlers, I thought you wanted to keep that a secret.

"You really don't have to see them, they just insist a little."

Gary really didn't know what to do, what were Izzy's parents even expecting of him, what did they want to see? But when looking at Izzy herself, and hearing the tone of her voice, it felt almost as if he didn't go on this journey that she would be put in a difficult situation.

'She did end up saving Marie, and she did help when the academy wanted a blood sample, compared to that, what she was asking now was very small.'

"I'll meet with your parents." Gary smiled. "It's only right after everything you did, and you are even hurt because of me, so I should at least go see them, right?"

A large smile appeared on Izzy's face and she soon bowed down a couple of times to thank him.

"I can't promise that it won't be awkward but I'll try to make it as easy as possible." Izzy said. "And don't worry, we won't have to take many days out of the academy, maybe just one, I know we've already taken a lot of days away."

"Anyway, I'll go right to my parents and they will arrange something. I'll tell you the details as soon as I know something."

With that the two parted ways to their rooms with Gary feeling a little strange.

'I know I'm not going into battle, but why does it feel that way?' Gary thought.

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Izzy's mother had just received news from her dear daughter, and almost immediately she had called for a group of people to come in and enter her office. They were all lined up in front of her.

She looked down at her notepad that was filled with notes, and then looked up at all those lined up dead straight.

"My daughter fails to realise her own feelings. I know her well, and based on her words and her tone of voice, it seems like she has fallen for this Gary Dem." Her fist slammed against the desk when mentioning the name.

"Izzy is bright and strong, and in most situations I would trust her in a lot of things, but when it comes to love life she has no experience. I mean, the girl doesn't even know she has feelings herself.

"Which is why, tomorrow, I want you to do whatever you can to find out the true nature of this Gary Dem. Find out everything about him from head to toe, and find out whether he is good enough for my daughter.

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The response was quick, extremely quick. The next day Gary was putting on his normal AFA academy uniform and in the middle of doing so he had received a text, saying that the meeting would be that day.

'I have a bad feeling about this.' Gary thought.

#### Chapter 593 A Strong Family

It was fairly easy for students to get a day off at the academy, and due to Gary's position it was easier for him. It wasn't as if he was a failing student. With that, he was following the instructions he had been given by Izzy.

Heading outside of the academy, there was the driveway and here she was waiting, unlike himself she wasn't in her AFC uniform and appeared to be dressed up a bit, at least the most dressed up he had ever seen Izzy before.

She was wearing black shorts with fishnet stockings, and a relatively short open black top that showed her midriff and belly button. The clothing showed off her hard working body in a different light that Gary had never seen before.

"Now I feel a bit underdressed." Gary commented.

"It's okay." Izzy smiled. "It's just when I see my parents I always feel a bit more comfortable in something like this. They will understand."

It was hitting Gary a little bit that he was going to see Izzy's parents, it was a strange development because he wasn't going as someone from the Howlers, but more so someone from the AFA who knew their daughter but happened to be in the Howlers.

The two waited for a bit, and it felt strange. Usually the two would be able to speak if they were on their own but it would always be related to stuff in the AFA, now without Ian, it for some reason just felt awkward to say anything.

Just as Gary was about to open his mouth to at least say something, he could hear the sound of tires screeching. Someone was coming toward them and they were driving relatively roughly, and it looked like he was right, as he could see what looked like a van drive around the corner and stop right in front of them.

"Oh, no." Izzy mumbled to herself as she saw the van. It wasn't just a regular van, as on the side there was a large picture of someone cooking with a wok and chucking food in the air. It was one of the many food vans that her family owned.

The problem wasn't with the van itself though, it was with who was in it. The van came to a screeching halt in front of the two, and immediately the door slid open as well as the driver's door.

"So... I am here to pick up a Gary... is that correct?" The voice was coming from the driver, a muscular man with a sleeveless shirt on and a bandana who also had a big grin on his face when saying those words.

It wasn't just him though, as a row of people came out from the van standing tall, and each of them were looking at them and in particular staring at Gary. All of them had a bandana on their head, and sleeveless shirts like they were part of some gang, but they were just cooks.

There were a total of five including the driver, four males and one female, who also didn't look like a cook but more like a fighter, based on toned muscles on the body.

"Gary... these are all of my cousins, everyone, meet Gary... and please don't embarrass me." Izzy said.

After introductions were done, with a nice firm handshake from them all, and a look up and down from them, they entered the van and were on their way. Both Gary and Izzy were sitting in the back of the van and Izzy couldn't stop shaking her head.

She couldn't believe her parents, because they hadn't just sent one of her cousins, but had sent them all, and it was quite obvious what they were trying to do.

"So Gary, it's a big day, meeting one of your classmates' parents, don't you think you should have dressed up a bit. What's wrong, don't you own a nice suit?" One of the men asked.

"That isn't his fault, you guys suddenly wanted to meet as soon as possible, and besides I told him to look casual." Izzy replied before Gary could answer.

Another cousin of Izzy, named Shanesea, was seated just in front of him. She turned her head looking at Gary up and down, and reached out to grab his bicep, she was stroking his arm almost.

"I kind of like what you're wearing, it shows off his body." Shanesea said with a wink. "Tell me something, Gary, how experienced are you?"

"Experienced?" Gary replied gulping, and his heart rate was rising a bit.

"Come on, you know what I'm talking about, are you still a virgin?"

"Shanesea!" Izzy screamed red faced and she couldn't be more embarrassed by her family right now.

"Oh come on, you guys are practically adults, is it really so strange?" Shanesea said. "I mean, isn't he a member of a gang, surely he has done worse things than that."

When Shanesea put it like that, it did make Gary think. He had killed people, but he had yet to do the deed. As a young adult his priorities were certainly in the wrong place than they usually would be.

"Speaking of your gang, I've heard a lot of things about the Howlers!" Maz shouted as he was busy driving the car. "Although your gang has done a lot of impressive things, what about yourself?"

"How can you promise to protect Izzy, are you even in a position to promise that, and does your gang even pay you well for your current position? What if you have a family, it's expensive to have a family, what will you do to fund that?"

Gary kept silent, because the truth was, he was the leader of the gang they were talking about, although they didn't know that. Because of this, he had more money than he could handle for the rest of his life, but it was hard to explain his position to these guys, and Izzy knew that as well.

"The Howlers support Gary a lot, that's why he's in the AFA to begin with." Izzy answered for him once again.

The interrogating questions continued while they were on their journey, but it soon came to an end, as the van was put to a sudden stop when Maz slammed on the brakes.

"What's going on?" Shanesea asked.

"It... looks like we got trouble." Maz grunted, as through his window shield there was a barrier of cars and cones that had been made, heading into the city, and there were a number of unfriendly looking people standing on the outside.

Chapter 594 Because Of You

594 Because of you

"All of you inside the vehicle step out now!" A voice shouted from outside.

Looking through the window Gary could see a man with a baseball bat. He was slapping it into the palm of his hand and behind him at the border there were a number of people. Naturally Gary started to count how many of them there were, and it looked to be around ten in total.

'If it's just ten of them, then I can deal with them, but the problem is, why are they even here in the first place?' Gary thought.

"Everyone, let's just listen to what they have to say, this isn't our territory. We didn't expect this to happen." Maz said, as he pushed a button to open the side of the van door to let the others out.

Izzy had told Gary some of the details. In order to set up the appointment quickly and not to cause too much trouble for Gary, Izzy and her parents were to meet him in a nearby town. The town was a nearby tier-3 town and chosen for safety reasons.

If someone caught wind that a member of the Howlers was entering a tier-2 city that wasn't owned by them, then she feared it would ruffle a few feathers.

Since Maz was the oldest of the group, he went ahead first, and stopped to confront the man that stood in their way.

"I'm sorry, it's been a while since we were last in this town. Has something happened?" Maz asked.

The man with the baseball bat looked behind them before answering.

"The town is now under the care of the Rhino Horns!" The man pointed to himself. "To enter the town safely, we require an entrance fee, for five of you... that would be 1000."

It appeared as if the man had made the number up on the spot. There wouldn't be many people that would just carry a 1000 around on them, even if there were five of them, but the van that they were travelling in wasn't exactly run down.

Izzy's family invested a lot in their food business and upgraded their vans whenever they could. On top of that, there was a till inside that contained quite a bit of cash.

“This wasn’t the case before sis, what happened?” One of the men asked. They were too far away to be heard by the others up front, and whispered just in case.

“This is somewhat of a guess, but an educated guess.” Shanesea said, looking at Gary. “Although this town wasn’t owned by a gang in the past. They were kept in check by the Scatterbugs and were on their payroll.

“I heard that there were actually a lot of tier 3 town gangs that worked for the Scatterbugs. Since they're no longer a thing, the gangs have gone back to their more traditional way of making money.”

Gary understood what Shanesea was saying, that somehow this was indirectly his fault. The Howlers were the one that took out the Scatterbugs and although they kept most of the businesses running in Notsburg they didn’t continue on with the small or dark parts of their business.

That wasn’t Gary’s way, but he was unaware of what ripple effect it had.

‘I remember Kai saying that the Scatterbugs had also asked us to do some of their dirty work. Since Slough has been less impacted by the local troublemakers these days, I forgot that most cities and towns were actually like this.’

“1000... that seems a bit exorbitant.” Maz said with a nervous smile. “I’m happy to pay you an entrance fee, but can’t you come up with something more reasonable.”

There and then, out of nowhere, the man swung his fist, and hit Maz right across the face. It was a clean hit, and it buckled Maz’s legs a bit, but he didn’t fall to the ground. One could see that the attacker was a bit startled by this, as a strong surprise attack would knock one over, but Maz, although a cook, was a wall of muscle.

“The price is the price, and that's final, the man said. You either give it to us, or we will forcefully take it from you.” The baseball bat man said, and the others from the back were starting to move up to back them up.

Maz was a little worried, because Izzy's parents should be in the city by now, and was wondering if they were dealing with the same thing. He didn't know what to do.

"Why are you so slow at answering? That's it, check the van and see what cash you have on board!" The man ordered, and the men started to move.

"Hey, you touch that van and you're dead!" Shanesea shouted.

"Yeah, what do you think you're doing, do you want to mess with our family!" One of the younger men shouted.

"Your family!" The baseball bat man laughed back. "A bunch of cooks, what are you going to do, stink our city out?"

The man with the baseball bat moved past Maz to join the others to search the van, when doing this Maz couldn't help himself as he grabbed the man on the shoulder to stop him.

Once again though, he shrugged his shoulders to move Maz off and kicked him straight in the stomach.

'Crap... do I get involved?' Izzy thought. 'Although Maz looks scary, and works out a lot, he's a friendly giant. He's never been in a fight in his life.'

Lifting the baseball bat up in the air, the man was too filled with adrenaline and swung it down. Izzy was too late to act and wouldn't get there in time.

Looking in front of him though, Maz soon saw a figure standing in the way, and the bat held in his hand.

From one side of the street, over to the other Gary had gotten there at great speed and there was a slight mark on the ground from where he was.

"I didn't want to get involved." Gary sighed.

Chapter 595 The Best Choice

The bat was easily stopped, and was held in Gary's hand, he could feel that the attacker was trying to pull away yet was unable to. The situation had changed in a matter of seconds as those approaching the food van soon turned back to look at what was happening, and started to walk forward.

'Gary... you're getting involved because of my family.' Izzy thought. 'I'm so sorry for this happening, it should have been me, I should have been the one to protect my family... but..'

"What are you trying to do?" The man asked, still acting tough. Even if the boy was strong, he had numbers on his side and the person in front of him just looked like a kid. "Do you really want to get involved, you know what will happen right? We won't just stop at you, we will track who this truck belongs to and go after everyone you care about for messing with us.

"So it's better to just take a beating and get out of here! The man shouted.

Moving his other hand, Gary reached into his pocket, he then pushed on the bat slightly, moving the man away, letting go of the bat, and pulled something out.

"Here, this should be enough right, this is what you asked for, so will you let us go in?" Gary asked.

The man almost fell over but caught his footing, when he regained his balance, he could now clearly see what was in Gary's hand, a bunch of green notes, and there weren't just a few of them either.

Immediately, the man snatched it out of Gary's hand and started to count all of the notes, and soon a smile appeared on his face.

"You should have just done this from the beginning, of course you can go through! Men clear the path!" The man shouted.

The others were surprised by Gary's actions. It was so sudden, and being part of the AFA, they thought he was going to fight, especially as a gang member, but he had done what they least expected, and he complied with their request.

Maz got up off the floor, and soon the rest got in the van, and drove off without saying anything. They continued on the road for a while until eventually Shanesea was the first one to speak up.

"I can't believe you just did that. You complied with their request and handed them a load of money. How much did you even give them 2000!" She complained. "I thought you were some gang member, I thought you were going to kick their arse... man, you're much more of a loser than I thought."

Honestly, Izzy was a bit surprised as well. The situation was getting too much for her, that even she would have fought back, and she had seen Gary act before.

"Gary... why did you give them the money?" She eventually asked, still too curious.

"It's because he must be some rich snob!" Another one of the cousins in the van interrupted.

A stare from Izzy that could kill had almost silenced him right away though.

"Trust me I care about money more than anyone. I know how much it can change a situation, and my heart hurts inside knowing I gave away that much."

Gary wasn't lying either, the amount of things he would have done in the past for that amount of money, it was hard for him to remember every time he thought about it, but he had his reasons.

"I believe if we can get out of the situation where nobody gets hurt, that is the best solution." Gary answered.

Once again, Gary's words, the words like that coming out of a gang member's mouth, was unexpected.

"Do you really think so?" Shanesea asked. "The reason why they do things like that is to extort people. Now that you have given them money, they know those methods work, so they will try and try again."

"It's because of people like you who give in to gang members demands that the general public just accept the fact that all these gangs run the towns and cities. You might have saved us, but the next set of people that come along, they won't be so fortunate."

The van was filled in silence once more, as the van continued to its destination. Things in the town didn't seem so bad, there were a few gang members around the street, but they didn't bother those in the van and they had eventually reached their destination, a Hot Pot type restaurant.

It was an authentic place with a wooden sign on the outside. It didn't look like a chain and had that feeling that it was family run.

"We will head inside first, just wait until we call you in." Maz said.

This left Gary and Izzy waiting outside of the restaurant.

"Are you nervous?" Izzy asked.

Gary didn't answer straight away, it was almost as if he had something on his mind, but he did eventually answer.

"I was at first, when we were back at the academy, but when coming to this town, I seem to have calmed down a little." Gary answered. "I don't know what it is, but this town, it reminds me a lot of my place, where I was from before all of the changes."

Izzy was happy to hear that Gary at least wasn't nervous but was wondering what he was thinking, ever since he met those gangsters at the outskirts of the city, he seemed to be deep in thought.

"Well, my parents, they can be stubborn at times, but they are nice people. Don't worry so much, you have done enough by just coming here, I will do all the convincing!" Izzy pumped her fist.

Just then, the door opened and Maz had come back outside.

"They are ready to see you now."

#### Chapter 596 Can You Protect?

The two of them followed Maz into the restaurant and as somewhat expected, it was completely empty. According to Izzy, the restaurant wasn't owned by her family, so the most likely case was that they had booked the whole thing out.

There was no staff, no other customers, only tables, but at one table there were two people sitting down. In an instant, Gary could recognize them as Izzy's parents. Maz continued to walk towards them and eventually stopped.

"Gary, please introduce yourself, this is Mrs. and Mr. Shamone, from the Shamone group." Maz said with a hand gesture.

Gary bowed to both of them, he never really cared for respecting elders and such. He thought it was quite a silly rule. Was he meant to respect someone like Damion just because he was older? In a lot of cases, it was the older generation that allowed for the situation to get to what it had become. Which was why he didn't usually just bow his head in front of those older than him.

However, in this situation, he was just a young person from a gang, while the other was the head of an entire restaurant group.

"It's a pleasure to meet both of you, as Maz stated I am Gary Dem, from the Howlers of Slough."

Lifting his head, Izzy sat down and tugged on Gary's shirt showing that he could sit down as well. The strange thing was, not even for a second did they glance at Izzy, and instead were just staring at Gary.

'This is a bit awkward.' Gary thought. 'The reason why the others went in before me, it was probably to tell them what they thought of me. I can tell Izzy's cousins don't have a good opinion of me... still, either way it was a good thing I listened to Kai.'

Remembering back, Gary being the boy he was growing up, he never would have carried that amount around in his pocket. Kai had suggested it to him, stating he never knew when he would be in a situation where he might need the cash.

Sure, he had his trusty card on him, but it wasn't as if criminals went around carrying a card reader and in the end it had helped them.

"I will start first." Mrs. Shamone stated. "Frist, thank you for coming to see us on such short notice. I am aware that both of you will be busy with things in the AFA, and from what Izzy has told us you are quite the talented student."

Izzy was fidgeting next to Gary and hearing those words she was tilting her head away from him.

"However, Izzy is our only daughter. We didn't give her an Altered solution because we wanted her to become a fighter, but for her to better her own life, and to run the business for a very long time without getting harmed.

"Yet, she then goes ahead and tells us that she had formed an alliance, with a gang at that, and not just any gang. You Howlers have been wild, obtaining a tier 2 city, and have been growing at a fast rate.

"I am worried you see, worried that your gang will continue to get attention from the eyes of others. You will be involved in more things, and in the end it will put my daughter in harms way even more. She has already been injured due to the last expedition you did, which is why I wish to break the alliance that my daughter has formed with you."

Turning her head, Izzy slammed her hand on the table.

"That was out of my own choice, I already told you that!" Izzy complained. "Gary didn't ask me to come. I decided to help out Numba and Gary. In the first place, it's because of him that I have been able to get so far in the AFA."

"A deal and agreement isn't made lightly." Izzy's father said. "Which is why we have decided to do the right thing, and have asked for you to break the agreement on your end. Our daughter is young and doesn't know what she is agreeing to."

"Are you listening to me!" Izzy shouted, as she felt like she was being completely ignored, and was invisible.

Gary thought about what the two were saying for a while. It was true Izzy was hurt, but he tried to imagine how she felt in her situation rather than her parents, after all he could relate more to her than the others.

He remembered the times when they came together to help him, it was a good feeling to have.

"Do you have the power to protect Izzy?" Gary asked.

The two were a bit taken back by the question.

"We are not a gang." Mrs. Shamone answered. "But we do have influence in our city."

"A tier-3 city, where your only influence is money?" Gary replied. "Then I would say you have no influence at all. If the Howlers gang wanted to, we could come in and take over your city by force, and then wouldn't you have to comply with us?"

The two were getting annoyed at Gary's words. Although he was speaking about his gang, the way he was speaking about the situation was too light.

"I'm not saying the Howlers would do such a thing, but my point is, at any point and time that could happen. An internal fight, a war, one of the kings, or one of the other gangs and even Altered Hunters.

"We live in a world where at any point and time this could happen, and it makes me wonder how far your good relations with the current gang of your city would take you.

"My alliance is with Izzy, I will do everything in my power to help if she needs the help. If she wishes for me to extend that to her family then I will do so, but the decision is up to her. I think she knows that I would never do something or ask her for something that would intentionally put her in harm's way.

"The fact is, this alliance is made between us two, two people who have their own lives, and it is something that you can't break. What? You want to stop me, stop me from protecting your daughter, then go ahead and try."

The room was stunned into silence, all of Izzy's cousins were on the side, watching. How could such a simple student say such powerful words, what gave him this confidence to talk to them like so.

'Where was this Gary at the border?' Shanesea thought.

"I guess there is nothing left for us to talk about." Mrs. Shamone said.

After those words, Gary stood up from his seat and bowed toward the two of them.

"Wait, Gary where are you going?" Izzy asked.

"You should spend the rest of the day with your family. I'm sure you miss them and they miss you. You never know what might happen, so treasure this time." Gary smiled, thinking about his own mother and started to walk off leaving the restaurant.

"What do you think?" Izzy's mother asked.

"I think our daughter certainly has her eye on an impressive boy." Her father said.

Izzy was now the one left confused, she thought her father and mother would be filled with anger but instead they had large smiles on their faces, but she was left wondering, looking out the door, why did Gary leave just like that, why did he sound as if he was in pain with that last sentence?

— —

After leaving the restaurant, Gary felt like there was something he needed to see, with his speed he didn't waste any time as he headed in a certain direction, and soon he was back, back at the border.

"Do you think we were joking!" the man shouted, as he swung his baseball bat and started to hit the car over and over making large dents on it.

There was a group of four people, it looked to be a family trying to make their way back into their town.

"But... we have lived here all our life, and have never had to pay a fee. If we pay you, we won't even have enough money to pay our bills!" The man pleaded on his knees grabbing the attacker.

His family were watching on the side with two young children.

"Get off me!" The man shouted, lifting the baseball bat in the air.

Swinging it down, the baseball bat snapped in half, and a fist was seen coming right through it, hitting him solidly in the face, sending him in the air and landing on the cold hard ground.

The other gang members were looking at what happened and could just see a young man standing there.

"I want you to take me to your leader, and tell them the Howlers are going to take over this town from now on." Gary said, strong and proud. "Oh, and where the hell is my money."

#### Chapter 597 A Growing Leader

Late at night, Izzy had returned to the academy, but unlike she had expected, it was on her own. In the middle of the conversation with her parents, Gary had wandered off. She had done as he asked and spent time with her family.

They didn't do a lot of exploring though, since it wasn't exactly a safe town nor was it one where they had much influence. Instead, they talked about what had happened and they had a lot of questions regarding Gary, including some personal questions as well.

When she eventually left her family, she wrote a message to Gary asking if he was still in the town, or if he had left yet, but there was no reply. In the end, she decided that the best thing for her to do was just to return to the academy.

It was hard for her to sleep that night, because she kept thinking about one of the questions her parents asked her.

"Izzy, it seems you might be more interested in this person than just as a friend." Her mother asked. "If it's him... I guess he would be acceptable."

Izzy tried opening her mouth and tried to reply back at the time, but her lack of an answer made her parents see right through her.

She was so embarrassed by the thought that she grabbed her pillow and shoved her face into it as she let out a large scream. Soon she took the pillow off and started to think.

'I mean, it's not like I don't like Gary, but I can tell he doesn't see me that way.' Izzy thought, and images of others started to appear in her head. Xin for one, and as for the other, there was the person that was already part of the Howlers, Marie.

'There are so many around him, and the way they look at him... I can tell they feel a certain way. Honestly, I'm not sure I want to throw myself in the middle of all of that. For now, I just want to be a part of what he creates.'

— — —

The next day had arrived, with Izzy eventually falling asleep, she quickly went to look at her phone, but there was still no message from Gary. It was now starting to worry her a little. What if he got lost, maybe his parents actually didn't agree and attempted to kidnap him.

Her thoughts were going wild, but she soon remembered what type of person Gary was. It was highly unlikely that he had been kidnapped. Either way, she would have to focus on herself and continue going to her AFA lessons as she had been doing.

Her family said they would update her on the status of the relationship between them and the Howlers. When getting to class, she had made her way over to Ian and Numba, who both couldn't help but notice that the two of them weren't at the academy yesterday.

"So what did you do, did you finally confess to him!" Ian asked.

"Not you too." Izzy sulked. "No, I just needed to discuss with him and my parents about the relationship between our two families. Numba is already a big part of the Howlers and due to your family working in a similar field it was quite easy to convince them but mine... they were worried about me."

Just as they sat down in their seats for the lesson, they soon saw that Gary had entered as well. He walked up to sit with the others as if nothing had happened.

"Gary... you're here, when did you get here, when did you arrive, why didn't you reply to my message?" Izzy asked.

"Look at this." Ian nudged Numba's arm. "They're having a lovers' quarrel the first thing in the morning."

Izzy and Gary both decided to ignore the comments, even though they could hear them loud and clear.

"I saw your messages this morning, but I already arrived at the academy so I thought it would be nicer to see you in the morning." Gary answered.

It was a good enough answer, but Izzy was still worried.

"What... what did you do, after the conversation with my parents, I mean. You just left, did you stay in the city?"

"Nothing much." Gary answered, opening up his notebook. "I just explored the place a little."

— —

Izzy's parents along with her cousins had also arrived back at the city. In the morning they had decided to get to work, and were ready to contact the Howlers and try to form a stronger relationship with them.

According to Izzy, through Gary they had already expressed their interest to help them out, but they weren't so sure they could trust the words of Gary so much. After all, he was just a teenager, even if he was an Altered. He could simply just be trying to say he had a lot of influence in the gang to impress her.

"Maz if you could please set up a meeting with the Howlers when you can, that would be great, if they are too busy we can simply set up a call as well." She ordered.

Maz nodded in agreement.

"Yes ma'am, about the Howlers group... We have been keeping an eye on them since we might soon go into business with them, and it seems an interesting development has occurred.

"You see, remember the town, the town of Mikton Green that we were in yesterday?"

Izzy's mother was interested and took off her glasses as she was paying attention to Maz's words.

"Well you see, it seems that as of today, Mikton Green is under control of the Howlers as well. The gang members that were there have agreed to comply."

Mrs. Shamone blinked a few times while she digested what she had just heard.

"The Howlers, why would they bother with a town that isn't even close to their current territories? There is nothing special there, and there is no advantage for them to control such a town."

"I agree." Maz said.

There was only one thing that they both could think of. The fact was that Gary, who was part of the Howlers, was in the same town and they knew what had occurred there, but even so...

Just because a member of the Howlers was there, why would they do such a thing, and even more so, how did the whole town get taken in a single day. It seemed impossible that this would be related to Gary Dem, but at the same time, they had no inkling of another reason.

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Sitting at his desk, Kai was looking through several pieces of paper.

"Gary, do you just love to give me more paperwork?" Kai complained, but he soon leaned back in his chair and smiled. "Still, I can't believe it. All on his own, he took down a tier-3 town gang and their leader.

"That guy, day by day, he's acting more like a gang leader. It's good for us, especially with where we want to head, all the way to the top."

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Back in class, the lesson had finally ended, and Gary remembered something as he approached Izzy, he soon took out his wallet, and handed her over a bunch of notes. Both Numba and Ian's eyeballs nearly popped out of their heads.

"Gary... what is this for, why are you giving me money?" Izzy asked.

"I almost forgot." Gary replied. "Your parents, it seems like they paid that stupid fee to get into the city as well. I met up with them and spoke to them. They decided to give the money back in the end, so, that belongs to them, you don't have to worry about it so much."

The money was already in Izzy's hand, but she was finding Gary's explanation hard to believe.

'He just spoke to them? I don't think they were the type of people just to give money back just from speaking to them.'

It seemed like a kind gesture, so Izzy couldn't really say much and the rest of the day just continued like normal. The week at the academy went by relatively fast, with Gary focusing on lessons and enjoying his time with the others, while the Howlers continued doing what they were doing.

Innu and Marie hadn't been seen around the Wolf's pool club a lot, but at the same time Kai wasn't there much either. He was paying a visit to each of the families that wished to make an alliance.

There was more to the alliance than just helping watch each other's backs, as Kai wanted to do something with the money to help them, and help their own cities by investing in them. He was spending money that would help them out in the future and in ways he was doing it with people who he could trust.

Then it finally came for Gary, his last special lesson at the academy, before he would take his assessment to become a debut student. It was the last chance for him to fight a beast, and gain stat points, and he wondered what NIRV had in store for him this time.

#### Chapter 598 Some Entertainment

The Howlers had been non-stop busy after taking over Notsburg. Or more accurately, Kai had been busy working alongside Harry mostly, because in terms of why they were so busy it was due to the investments they were running.

To put it simply, Notsburg was a money maker, an incredibly large money maker, and due to them not having a leader who cared about extravagant yachts, bribing of other gangs, buying super cars, or jewels, they had a lot of money on their hands.

At the same time Kai didn't want to just waste this money. He didn't want to spend it on things that wouldn't give them a good return. Because after all, although their wealth was large, when it got to this point, it was more about power and influence.

Who cared how much money one had, if one of the Kings at any point and time could just come and forcefully take it away from you? At one point, Kai was considering using all the money they could to buy Altered solutions.

There were a few problems with that, there were only a number of Altered solutions out there and they would be competing against others and who would he use it on? It was a good reward to have for creating loyal Howler members.

However, he needed to be careful, making their own gang stronger in this way, if they were betrayed, could fall pretty harshly on them. In some ways it was one of the reasons why they were able to take over Notsburg easier, due to Midwaks betrayal.

While in the middle of thinking about what to do, with a large amount of the cash, a certain call had come through to his phone.

Speak of the devil. Kai answered the phone. What do you want Midwak?

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Midwak had made the main casino where the Scatterbugs gang mostly would be his own home. There werent many changes apart from a lot of the tacky shiny jewelery being sold off.

After all, Midwak had lived with the gang for a while and he had somewhat gotten used to it, so he wanted to keep it this way. At the moment though, one of the private rooms was a bloody mess.

Broken noses here and there, blood all over the cards and chips in the room, and on the table. Meanwhile, Midwak was holding up a long haired man by his head, who had his front two teeth shattered.

I just thought I should let you know something. Midwak said on the phone. A gang called Ashes just came In. They were making quite a big fuss.

If Kai had done his research correctly, Ashes was a gang from another Tier-2 city. They didnt have a high profile like the Scatterbugs, but a tier-2 was a tier-2 at the end of the day.

I thought something like this was going to happen. The surrounding cities will want to test out the new owners. It's a good thing we have Midwak to deal with it all, and he should be strong enough to scare most away.

Since they came here, I'm guessing they might be coming to Slough as well. I cant kill these guys without your permission, so what do you want me to do? Midwak asked.

Just send them back, if they sent some people to test us it might not necessarily be a bad thing. Kai ordered. What I'm more surprised about is, why did you exactly give me a call? Do you care about our gang?

Midwak was heard laughing on the phone so loud that Kai had to pull away.

Are you an idiot, this is my gang, I can't have it crumble to pieces! Otherwise there will be nothing for me to use! The phone call ended there without Kai being able to say anything else.

A few days had passed, and the Ashes gang had contacted Harry, of the Cardenez group for a meeting. They had no clue how to get to the Howlers but the Cardenez group was quite public, this information was passed on, and eventually a meeting was set up, in one of the factories that Harry owned.

In the corner of the factory, there was an office for Harry where he overlooked things, and now Kai, along with Austin had attended with their masks, and Harry was also present.

Kai would have brought more people with him, in case this was all a trap, but they were in friendly territory, not enemy territory, and the others seemed quite busy these days, so he decided not to bother them.

Hi to you all, my name is Ash and I am the leader of the Ashes. I think you can guess why our group has such a name. The young man chuckled.

The man was in a striped suit, and had two guards by his side. He looked young, but nothing compared to Kai and the others, perhaps in his lower twenties. His hair was neatly done up and swayed to the side, and he had the face of an actor or model.

I first want to explain that I have no intentions of fighting you. Ash explained. We didn't get involved with the Scatterbugs and we certainly don't want to get involved with you who defeated them.

But you need to understand, empires fall because they are spread out too thin. I needed to test your capabilities and see if you still had a hand in Notsburg, still strong enough to protect it and that was certainly the case.

This was one of the guesses Kai had for Notsburg being attacked.

You see, I wish to have a partnership with you. Our gang runs a large entertainment company called AJ productions. We are scouting talented actors, singers, and more all across the entertainment sector.

Our business is doing well, but there are two things that are troubling us. First the matter of funding for rapid growth. As our stars get bigger, there are those that wish to poach them with better deals, this also links with our other problem.

If our stars are in contracts of sorts, then they tend to resort to other ways to deal with them. Because of this reason, and your great strength, I have come to you to make a deal of sorts. Of course, I know what I am asking is a big ask in many regards, which is why we are willing to offer part of the company to make it worth your while.

It was an unexpected proposal, Kai thought that maybe the gang would face a war with another tier-2 first before things like this came along, but perhaps it was due to him underestimating the Scatterbugs reputation.

The other gangs were too afraid to go to war with them.

I will have Harry check the financial situation of the company, and come up with an offer that he thinks is suitable and fair, only if he thinks it is a good investment for us. Kai explained. But we do have a problem.

If on the surface the Howlers are known to have invested in a large chunk of your company, then it could cause problems. There will be those that think we are teaming up, trying to grow stronger to take out those above us.

If the Kings got word of this, they could very well start a war. Maybe that's one of the things that you're worried about in the first place, and is one of the reasons why you want to make this deal, but I have a way, where it won't cause us problems.

We have a person we use for situations like this, on paper the one that will own part of your company will be Gary Dem. Kai smiled.

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Of course, at that point and time, Gary had no idea that his name was being spread throughout the cities. That he was becoming an influential figure, a tycoon with practically an unlimited amount of money to spend.

Soon companies would be coming to him, just to ask him to get his name on their product, because they would believe he had golden fingers, everything he touched would make money.

Meanwhile, the real Gary was in a very different situation altogether. He had gathered with all the others that were getting ready for the special lesson. The two teams put on their red and blue outfits, but there was one missing and Gary noticed that his was the one that was missing.

Did you forget to clean my suit or something? Gary asked.

Crowley looked a bit nervous as he looked at his student.

That's not it, young one, for you they have suggested that you take this special lesson alone this time. While the red and blue team will be together.

A... Alone? Gary said.

Chapter 599 Danger Danger!

When the special lessons were first introduced to everyone in the room, there was an explanation for how things were set up. That they were put into teams of three for their own safety. That if they wished to defeat some of the beasts they would need to work together, and the fact that at times all six of them would be put in the same room together, if the beast they were going up against was a strong one.

Which was why, it was safe to say that Gary as well as all the others were deeply confused.

'Are they telling me to go on my own, because the beast I will go up against is weak?;' Gary thought, but quickly shook his head at that silly thought. 'After what I did last time, that wouldn't make any sense. I practically took out the beast on my own last time. So why would they put me on my own this time... unless they have discovered something or they want to find out something... is this a trap?'

NIRV didn't exactly seem to care for the students' lives as much as the teachers, so a trap of sorts set up for them, Gary wouldn't put it past them.

At the same time, there was one student who was part of the special lessons that was disappointed at hearing this.

'They're letting him fight on his own?' Apollo thought. 'It has to be because of his strong performance from last time. They let him fight a beast on his own, and for me... they have asked me to team up not just with my regular partners but the others as well.'

There was a mix of emotions coming from Apollo, that he needed to work harder, but at the same time there was anger. He knew there was perhaps a gap between them now, but thought that NIRV was treating him lightly it was as if they thought the gap between both of them was this big.

"There must be a lot of confusing thoughts going through your head." Crowley said, his eyes looked slightly watery as if he was worried, which didn't give Gary any confidence. "I have to admit, this is a first, for the special lessons."

Whenever Crowley would stop rhyming it usually meant what he was saying was important.

"NIRV has been monitoring you from day one, and as they witness you grow and defeat beasts more and more, they become confident in predicting what level of beasts you can beat.

"After all, this is a plus for NIRV as much as it is for you guys. So I warn you all, this time, the five of you, will be fighting a strong beast, and you won't have Gary by your side. As for you Gary..." Crowley paused for a second.

"I usually wouldn't give you my opinion as a teacher, but I believe they want to push you as far as they can. Usually we wouldn't allow a single student to take a test on their own. These special lessons are dangerous on their own as it is, but the principal has agreed, even with the professors and my rejection.

"However, at the end of the day, this is up to you. You don't have to do this, but if you do, NIRV has promised you another reward, bigger than the one that you asked for before. I also want to inform you, that if you do decide to go ahead with the lesson, that I will be very close and try to protect you, in case anything goes wrong."

It was quite a bit to think about. In the first place, Gary felt like the man called James, who was behind this whole project, didn't like him from day one. Asking for the remains of the beast's bodies already put him on the suspicious list.

If he really went up against a strong beast there was a chance he would have to transform and if that was to happen, there was a chance NIRV would get closer to the truth.

'This was going to be my last time though.' Gary thought. 'My last time taking the special lessons. The others will continue while they are here, but for me, I don't know if I'll ever get a chance to fight against a beast again.

'And as for the reward, if they really are saying I can request what I want, what if I request a beast crystal. If I eat that, with the beast body, won't I gain a lot of stats, and I plan to leave the academy after having my debut fight anyway.'

Turning back wasn't something Gary did often and since he was already here, and already had convinced himself beforehand that this would be the last lesson, he had to accept.

"I will take the lesson on my own, but only if they accept my request, of allowing me to take the beast crystal." Gary asked.

Judging by Crowley's expression it wasn't the answer he wanted from Gary's mouth but he understood and soon turned it into a smile.

"I will inform them of this."

Crowley went over through a side door while the students waited in silence, all of them seemed to be thinking about their own things. Sty was still separate from the group, but his eyes were a little less dark compared to before.

"NIRV has agreed to your request." Crowley answers. "You are to remain here though, while the others take their assessment first."

With that said and done, the other five had entered the room as the doors opened and Gary was left on the other side. He was waiting patiently and with his enhanced hearing he could somewhat hear what was going on the other side.

There was a lot of shouting from all of them, as they asked for each other's help, the use of skills. There were screams of pain as well, some of them from Numba which caused Gary to worry a little.

When he heard Numba speaking again though, he was relieved, and after what seemed to be a long fight, it looked like the lesson was over at least for these five.

Inside the room itself, most of them had broken bones, were exhausted and couldn't even keep up their altered transformation anymore.

"That was a tough one... and Sty." Numba said as he looked at him being taken away by the medical staff. "He nearly died."

In the assessment, the one that had been hurt most from the beast was Sty, and Numba, for some reason, felt bad for him even after everything that had happened to himself. Either way, it looked like Sty and the rest of them would live, but they all realised that without Gary they struggled tremendously.

James had come down with the rest of the staff, and clapped his hands as he congratulated the students.

"You all did splendidly, if you wish to rest up, then please feel free to." James said with a smile.

"I want to stay." Apollo replied. "I want to stay and watch Gary fight, is that allowed?"

"I want to stay as well." Numba added, even though his arm was completely bent the wrong way.

"Of course, of course we should all watch from the viewing room, I'm sure today we might all witness something special." James smiled.

After the room had been cleaned up, the door finally opened allowing Gary to now enter the room. He could smell that blood from the others even though it had been cleaned.

'Since the last special lesson took longer than I thought it would, it's already night time, so I get the skill and energy boost from my class type.' Gary thought. 'With this, it should be enough for me to defeat any beast that comes through there without having to fully transform.'

Up above, James was making sure all the systems were ready.

"Okay, proceed to start the lesson!" James shouted. "Let's go ahead, and see what is so special about your Altered self, and why someone like me can't even get my hands on your file."

The door slowly opened and the first thing that hit Gary was the scent of the beast. It was strong and pungent. Through his new nose he had smelled a number of different things before that he never experienced as a human, but this... the smell was reacting to a thought in his head.

This beast smelled violent. It didn't make sense, but all sorts of words were coming through Gary's head as he smelled the beast and when the doors finally opened his system reacted as well.

[Danger! Danger!]

[A quest has been received!]

[A dangerous beast has appeared]

[New quest received - Survive]

Gary had seen this before, and the last time he had done so, he had nearly died, what was in store for him this time?

#### Chapter 600 A Tricky Beast (Part 1)

Originally Gary had gone into what he deemed was his final special lesson confidently. He knew it would be a little bit tough, but he never imagined something on this scale. For something to trigger a warning from the system.

'A beast that will really give me as much trouble as when I faced against Midwak... is that even possible?' Gary thought.

The barrier had been lifted, allowing Gary to see the beast in full sight, but just at a glance it was hard to tell if it was fierce or not, and he had no idea about a certain fact that those from NIRV knew, the fact that this beast was classified as a humanoid one as well.

It was standing on its two muscular legs that looked like tree trunks. They were thick, solid, and muscular and it was hard to see where the toes were on the beast. The theme of its muscular body continued upward on its human-like shape, but around its chest area, it looked like the beast had an exoskeleton. Almost like a ribcage, but on the chest going toward the centre.

The exoskeleton on its body continued as parts of white bone around the darkened purple skin could be seen going out towards its forearms and reaching up towards its head to the point where one could only see its eyes peeking through.

'I can't tell how strong it is, but this thing is definitely something that will give me nightmares for the next few days.' Gary inwardly said. 'The question is should I be careful, or just try and take it out in one blow.'

If Gary hadn't received the message from the system, he certainly would have just gone in immediately. In his hesitancy, the beast was the first to make a move. It lifted its large hand that had a white skeleton structure over it making it four times bigger than a regular hand, and proceeded to cut part of the flesh from his body.

It was a strange act, why would the beast hurt itself? When the blood hit the floor though, it started to spread, it didn't look like blood at all and just a pool of darkness. Soon from that very pool of darkness, figures started to rise.

They were forming a shape similar to the beast in front of him, and part of their bodies started to take shape. Now, there were five more beasts that looked identical to the one in front of him.

In fact, if Gary hadn't been keeping an eye out, he would have no clue which one was the real one because the wound had already healed.

'Okay... so the right thing to do would have been to attack first, because now I have to face five of these things.' Gary thought. 'I better go in now, before the situation gets worse.'

Watching from the viewing deck, the ones mainly paying attention were Numba and Apollo, and they couldn't believe what they were seeing.

"There is a beast that can do something like that... it's now 6 against 1!" Numba argued.

"Yes it is." James answered. "But let's not all throw a hissy fit and panic, until he is in trouble. Who knows your friend might surprise you."

Crowley was giving him quite the side eye as he was getting ready to jump in and help out Gary at any moment. A beast with just this type of power alone, was something he had never seen before in all his time supervising the special lesson. If he was worried before, he was extremely worried now as his foot was tapping against the floor.

— —

Back in the room itself, Gary had decided to act as he ran forward as fast as he could, knowing the opponent was tough he had fully transformed his legs to give him speed and both of his hands were transformed as well, giving him the deadly claws and the werewolf-like strength that he needed.

'I don't get a complete boost in power unless I go into my full werewolf form, and being a Dark Warrior, the boost is only in energy and skills and not my own strength, but if I can't learn to take down a beast like this, when those werewolves come that are even stronger than Midwak, how am I meant to protect them?'

When Gary was within range of one of them, he decided to use his lethal pounce skill. The beast ran forward and struck, but it hit nothing but the air. He was thankful that he used lethal pounce because the strike looked no slower than he was.

Jumping off to the side, he had ended up right in front of another one, but since he was in his Dark Warrior form, lethal pounce was a level 2 skill that made him jump again, but the second time it was an attack.

His claws hit the beast right in the chest digging in, and the impact of his power and weight caused the beast to fall over. With his legs though, Gary made sure he was stuck to the beast as he continued to hit it over and over again in its chest, until eventually it just popped right in front of him.

The beast body exploded into nothing but black liquid, and there was no longer anything left for him to hit. In his confusion, another one of the beasts lifted its skeleton hand, and swung right toward Gary, who was quick enough to react with a swing of his own.

When his claws hit against the hard Skull, it stopped midair as there was a power struggle between the two.

'These guys have great strength, and I've lost track of which one is the real one, and which one is the clone.' Gary thought. 'On top of that, my sharp claws that would usually tear through anything, it looks like it can't get through the hard white parts of their body.'

There was one more problem, but Gary was dealing with it in real time, as the other beast swung toward the other side, in the awkward position he was in, he couldn't hit it away as he was still trying to push the first beast back. Lifting his forearm, the skeleton-like giant arm stabbed right through his forearm.

[-18 HP]

The third one was on him, swinging both of its claws towards the front of him. It had stabbed right through his stomach, the white part could be seen through the other end.

[Critical injury]

[-65]

'Sh\*t.' GArY thought, as he could taste blood in his mouth.