

## Werewolf 71

### Chapter 71: A Main Quest

Six guys from Eton High had suddenly surrounded Gary and Innu and it was clear that they hadn't come for a simple talk. However, Gary had instantly noticed that something was different about this attack compared to the last one. These guys were nowhere near as bulky and as it turned out, they were far worse in a fight.

'They don't seem to belong to the Rugby club. Were they just regular students at Eton High? Did I mess them up so badly that they're now scared of me? No, otherwise they wouldn't have attacked me a second time and only sent out these guys.' Gary wondered as he looked at the students rolling about in pain on the ground.

After the fight, Gary had realised something, how much he had improved. Innu's training had paid off, and his improvement in stats although minimal really showed during this fight, he was practically untouchable to anyone who had never fought before.

"Hey, what was that all about? Why the hell did you get in my way, only to punch those guys out yourself? Were your three too easy?" Innu complained. "Look I know you've been improving and you might want to show off, but there was no need to do that. If this was a game, then what you would have just done was similar to kill stealing..."

"My bad, I was just trying to look out for you. I was worried that if you exert yourself it would be bad for your injury. I mean we have that tag team match coming up soon, can't allow my partner to get anymore hurt on my watch, right?" Gary apologised with a smile rubbing the back of his head. "Besides, if this was a game, shouldn't you let me kill the last guys from my Penta?"

'If only you knew.' Gary thought to himself, as he had gotten in Innu's way exactly to 'kill steal' his opponents. His system only rewarded him Exp for those he himself knocked out. As this was a rare opportunity, he had to make the most of it, even if it meant that Innu might feel patronised.

With his increased Strength and Charging Heart it was far easier than last time. He hadn't received any Quest for it, yet the six students had still awarded him with 120 Exp. Combined with the Daily Quest he had been doing each day before practice, it was enough for him to finally get the Level Up he had worked towards.

[Congratulations, you have now reached: Level 5]

[A stat point has been granted]

[95/628 exp]

'Hmmm, I had kind of been hoping to get another skill that might help me in my fight against Billy. Oh well, good thing I at least got Claw Drain recently. System, mind explaining why I got 20 Exp for these guys while I got 25 Exp for their friends? Is it because they're weak, or because my Level increased?'

As usual, Gary got no response. His Werewolf System truly was a fickle mistress. However after a few steps he did receive a new message.

[New main quest received]

[You have grown as a werewolf and you're still not dead yet. That's a surprise!]

[Continue to grow and reach level 10, where a new class awaits]

[Objective: reach Level 10]

[Reward: Select a Class]

'A class, now this is really starting to feel like a game. What even is a werewolf class, that doesn't even make sense. I already had so much trouble wrapping my head around the Alpha thing.'

It was something that Gary would just have to worry about when he reached that level, that was if he could survive the night of the full moon. He knew he had no chance of levelling up five levels by then. So, he decided to focus on what he could do.

He needed to figure out where exactly he would be putting this stat point. Knowing that Billy was out there possibly waiting for him to attack, it didn't seem wise to save it up. Now that he knew for a fact that each of his three base stats could be increased through training and hunting targets, he decided to place the point into Energy or Health.

'I guess Energy is more versatile. 10 more Health won't really help me, but this way I can use it for Charging Heart or Claw Drain. Being able to replenish my Health seems better than having a bigger pool and who knows how many more skills I will get in the future. If only I knew if Billy also has skills like me...'

[Your Energy has now increased to a maximum of 120]

There was another reason why Gary had chosen Energy. The closer it got to the full moon, the faster his points were going down, even if he turned off the Marks.

"Hey, who ordered you to attack us?! Spill it!" Innu yelled at one of the students as he grabbed him by the collar. The injured guy was still barely conscious, unable to reply.

"Let's just leave them be. I don't think they're going to say anything and if we stay here we might attract the wrong kind of attention." Gary suggested as he was in a good mood after feeling himself grow a little bit stronger.

"You don't understand, I know these guys because I used to be with them! I know everyone who could put up a fight, but these ones are just mere scrubs. They wouldn't attack us without a reason. I need to know if Eton High got a new leader after I transferred!" Innu kept shaking the guy, but not getting any answer, he took to another. Still no reaction. He gave Gary an annoyed look, to which the high schooler just shrugged.

Later that night, Gary went to sleep as he did every night but when he woke up he was greeted with the message he had been putting off for a long time.

[Your bloodlust grows even further]

[1 day until the next full moon]

## Chapter 72: Replacement

Eton High had clubs just like every other school. There were a couple of students who had entered the Rugby club and had changed everything in the school. Although it was Sunday, they had a 'special training' to get ready for tomorrow's match against Westbridge.

Out on the field there were two boys who stood in front of everyone rather than a teacher. They were tall, and had a small frame with both hands in their pockets. One had long red hair that was tied up in a ponytail and by his side was another teenager who looked almost identical to him. The only difference was that this one had short hair.

The long haired one gave his team instructions like a coach would until some students came running to the field. It was obvious that none of them were part of the Rugby club.

"Sren, Leng we dealt with those guys just as you asked, only Group 4 and 7 had problems." One of the students reported.

"That's good enough." Sren, the short-haired brother replied with a yawn. "Since the rest of the groups completed this task it will be an easy win for us. Tomorrow's going to be a cake walk, as usual."

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Waking up the next day, Gary had read the dreaded message, the one that he had been putting off for the longest time.

[The full moon is nearly upon you. Every fiber of your being is waiting in anticipation!]

[Current bonus: All Stats +3]

[Your bloodlust grows even further]

[1 day until the next full moon]

'Damn it, I was hoping I actually wouldn't get stronger. The more power I borrow from the moon the quicker my Energy goes down.'

Gary's expulsion was finally over and he had prepared the apology letter for Steven and his family. Coincidentally, it was also the day of their big match. This was the reason why he had woken up extra early.

Gary started to feel the effect of his bloodlust, but fortunately catching a few rats was enough to satisfy his urge and hunger for the next few hours. He estimated that it should be enough to get him by until lunch, though he would most likely go out again instead of eating in.

In school, Gary and Tom were among the first ones who had arrived and Tom couldn't help but be worried about his friend.

"I know I can't stop you from playing, but I at least want you to promise to meet up with me afterwards, ok? We need to sort out your personal problem. If we can't stop you from turning, at least we should try and hold you somewhere where you won't be able to hurt anybody." Tom shared his plan. "I've done a lot of research and there are quite a few people that you might end up going for."

"The most likely candidates are me as your best friend, your family members as well as just the first person you might see, so we need to try and stop all of that."

Gary was pretty sure that there was a good chance that he would go for someone else entirely. Since he hadn't bothered to try and get rid of the Mark from Gil, he was the only hunting target left. Ever since he had seen what he had done to the old man the other day, Gary was coming more and more around to the idea that if anyone was to die, he wouldn't feel too horrible if it was scum like him.

In a way, he wouldn't be doing it himself either. It was his Werewolf self, so he wouldn't even feel like he was the one that killed him.

"Last chance to change your mind. Are you sure you should be playing today, especially with the full moon around the corner?" Tom asked, not hoping for much.

“I keep telling you, I’m fine, man. Have you seen me attack anyone?”

“You haven’t exactly been to school, so who knows what you’ve been up to.” Tom argued. “There are plenty of annoying people in school that you might attack and it might be worse when you’re out there on the rugby field. Fine... I’ll stop nagging.” Tom could see the look on Gary’s face, he wasn’t going to give up.

At lunch, the Rugby team was given permission to skip the whole afternoon lessons to go through some plans for this evening’s match. The whole school was also invited to watch, mostly due to Mr Root promising Headmistress Young results.

When the Rugby club went out on the field there was something quite noticeable straight away. Gary could smell it as soon as he arrived.

‘I’ve smelt this before...’

It was only when he saw the conditions of the others that he realised that everyone was injured in some way.

Mr Root was pacing backwards and forwards biting his fingernails.

“How could this happen? You’re telling me that they’ve actually gone so far as to attack all of you?!”

Some students had gotten lucky, running away and making a break for it while their friends had taken a beating, others seemed to have been let off easily. They had still been injured but not to the point that they required medical attention. Still, it would take them a week or so to heal naturally.

“Hey, do you think what happened to us, happened to all of them as well?” Innu asked.

Mr Root, then let out a big sigh shaking his head.

“Goddamnit, letting you out on the field will do nothing but add insult to injury. There’s just one choice left. Benchwarmers, I’ll need you all to fill in the positions of the regulars! Get ready everyone because we will be playing tonight!”

Tom was pointing at himself, because it took him a moment to process what this meant.

“I’m going to get killed.” Tom gulped.

“Don’t worry.” Gary placed his hand on his shoulder. “I’ll protect you.”

Although they were meant to be words of comfort, it just made Tom worry even more.

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This evening, everyone had gotten into their uniform. It would be an interesting match to say the least. However, one student in particular felt a growing migraine come up.

[9 hours left until the next full moon]

### Chapter 73: The Big Day

Kai was walking up the stairs, looking at the black face of his golden rim watch. He could see that he still had a few hours until the match. All Westbridge students had been invited to watch their school’s Rugby team compete against Eton High’s and for certain reasons the high schooler wanted to make it back before it would start.

The reason why Kai had to worry about time was because at this very moment, even though it was a school day, he was at a different school. What’s more, he had just opened the door leading to the rooftop, where he found a lone figure.

“I was told you would be here.” Kai spoke up. “A smoker, eh? If you treasure your body you should drop it. In a couple of years, you’ll start to feel the difference. It’s up to you, the gangs sure as hell will enjoy squeezing the money off of you.”

The student took another puff from his cigarette, before throwing it on the floor stepping on it. He then turned around, looking directly at Kai while making sure his hair was still kept up in the perfect shape.

“People from other schools usually only come here because they want a fight.” Austin stated. “However, the last person I hit saved my arse, so I’ve decided to take it easy from now on. Since you haven’t outright attacked me or challenged me in a flashy manner, I’ll take it, you want something else from me?”

Hearing this Kai smiled and threw out a business card. It cut through the air easily, and Austin was able to catch it.

“A green little birdy told me about your fight against a certain school invader. Apparently, you actually managed to hurt that oversized pig monster, which means you’re strong.” Kai said. “Let me ask you something. What do you plan to do once you graduate?”

“You might feel on top of the world right now, being in charge of all these kids, but that will change once you get out. I looked into you and judging from your current grades they’re barely enough to let you pass, meaning you’ll struggle to find a good job, and your so-called ‘friends’ that might stick with you these days, well, they’ll have no reason to stay by your side.”

“Your fighting skills are good... for the average teenager. If you plan to join a gang, you will quickly find out that out there on the streets, where people fight every single day, best case scenario your skills might allow you to be a team leader. You might not be at the bottom of the barrel, but you’ll be far from the top.”

“However, if you want a better future, come to the place on that card in a couple of days. If nothing else, I can at least guarantee that you will end up seeing something very interesting.”

Austin looked at the card and could see an address written on it. When he looked up he could see Kai was already about to leave.

“That’s it? You’ve come here to give me a lecture and a salesman pitch?!” Austin shouted.



“Yup, but the lecture was on the house. Now if you’ll excuse me, I got a game to watch.” Kai replied without turning around, shutting the door behind him.

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It was about time for the match to start.

All the players that would be fielded today were currently in the locker room, yet Blake, Gary and Gil were the only regulars. The rest were those who had usually done nothing but warmed the bench. All of the benchwarmers were nervous since this was a last minute change due to unforeseen circumstances.

“My bones are too fragile for this crap! If any of those guys tackle me, I’m going to be killed.” Tom whined, his legs actually shaking. “Sh\*t, I was just in the hospital. If I go there again, my parents will probably make me drop out and start homeschooling me!”

“Just pass the ball to me every time you get it, alright? You can let me handle all that stuff.” Gary tried to encourage his best friend.

Mr Root looked at the players at his disposal and couldn’t stop shaking his head. Today would possibly be his last day as Westbdrige’s coach. Knowing this he placed his hands on the shoulders of his most promising players.

“Blake, Gary, I’ll be counting on the both of you. Get out there and win this for our school! If you manage to do that, I’ll treat you to an all-you-can-eat buffet!” Mr Root promised earnestly.

“You mean it, Coach? You’ll pay for all of us?” A large but unathletic student asked with large eyes, suddenly having found some motivation to give it his best.

‘I actually meant just these two, but I guess that would be seen as favoritism. ... Oh what the hell. These kids need some encouragement and if it saves my job, it’s a cheap price to pay!’

“Sure!” Mr Root answered after a slight moment of hesitation, giving them all a thumbs up.

“NOW GET OUT THERE, AND SCORE SOME POINTS TO EARN YOUR MEAL!” Mr Root reverted to his usual tone.

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Outside, the stands were filling up. It was a home match for Westbridge so Eton High was the one coming to their school. Their buses had arrived and the supporters as well as the members started to come out and walked towards the field and stands.

Nearly all of the supporters were students and the Westbridge students noticed that they all looked a bit rough around the edges. Glances from the other side caused the students to quickly look away.

“Kill them! Make sure you break their legs!” Innu screamed from the stands, standing up at the very back. Everyone turned around, yet for some reason, Innu’s words gave them confidence to shout and cheer for their team.

“Hey, do you mind if I sit here?” A voice asked him suddenly. When Innu turned to look at the person, he noticed that a beauty had approached him, someone he recognised from his class.

“You’re... Xin, right? You sure you wouldn’t rather sit with the girls from our class?” He asked, getting all red faced. Xin looked at the girls, who were surrounding and praising Tiffany.

“I’ve actually only transferred here myself, so I’m still a bit of a loner. If it’s a problem or you’re reserving that seat for someone else, I can just look for another.”

Innu quickly shook his head and patted the seat next to him, clearing off the dust and then gestured for the girl to take the seat.

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Not far off in the stands, some of the parents had also come to watch the match. Today the seats were emptier than usual, after all most of the regulars weren’t going to be playing today. Nevertheless, several mothers had turned up because there was a rumour that a certain someone would arrive.

As it turned out, that rumour was true. A tall muscular handsome man who looked to be in his early thirties had appeared. He had a clean shaved beard and short hair giving him the appearance of a top class actor.

Of course, this person wasn't oblivious to the stares and gave his fans a friendly wave back to them.

"He is so dreamy!" Tiffany squealed a little bit.

"It looks like Blake gets his good looks from his dad." One of her drones added.

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Finally, it was time for the teams to face each other. The ones walking at the front were Blake and Gil as they were the most senior members. The captain of the Rugby club walked confidently, yet his partner seemed to be somewhat lost.

Facing them was the team from Eton High, led by the twins Sren and Leng. As they saw who they would be facing, everyone on their side broke out in laughter.

Although most of the Westbridge team looked scared, there were two members who were more determined than ever. Getting into the centre of the field, the group started to practice a little, and soon the game would start.

"Gary." Tom whispered to his best friend. "Don't try... too hard, ok."

Gary, looked back, and gave a thumbs up, he looked into the crowd and could suddenly see Xin and Innu sitting next to each other and the next moment he could feel something burn inside of him.

'Sorry, Tom...I might have to try a little hard.' Gary thought to himself.

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What Gary didn't know was that not too far away looking at the field from behind some trees, was a single large teenage boy.

'We don't have long... I'll be waiting for you...' Billy thought, licking his lips.

#### Chapter 74: The rugby match (1)

Before the match was about to start, Gary wanted to check on a couple of things. For one his growing headache that just wouldn't go away. He tried his best to hide it, as he didn't want Tom to notice, else his best friend would just nag him even more, only worsening his headache.

[7 hours until the next full moon]

This was the reason for his headache, and this wasn't even the first notification either. Around five hours ago a message had popped up informing him that there were 12 hours until the next full moon and it had repeated every hour since. Just like the previous ones he mentally closed it, before he went to check on his Energy bar.

[100/120 Energy]

The reason why his Energy levels were still so high was due to him having enjoyed a big lunch. He had eaten a lot, and was even stealing food from the others. At the same time, while walking around school, there was always some type of creature he could find not too far away.

He hated to admit it, but he was getting used to this scavenger lifestyle. Nevertheless, without really doing anything and even after toggling off his Marks, 20 Energy points had been consumed.

'It looks like after this game, I'll have to go hunting again before trying to sort out this Werewolf crap.'

Gary let out a big sigh as he got into his newly assigned position. Today, he was placed on the right wing, while Blake would be on the left wing. Even though he wasn't left handed, the stat player could play well in any position.

'I should probably refrain from using Charging Heart for now. Let's see how I do with just my basic stats.'

Initially, one of the benchwarmers had been selected to start the match by kicking the ball. However, he dropped the ball and it hit the ground as he swung his leg and missed the ball. To avoid further embarrassment, Mr Root requested Blake to be the kicker. It was a good strong kick that made it to the other side, signalling the start of the game.

In rugby, the players naturally ran as a line together, this was the same as the other team. To score a point, one would have to run up to the long white try line to score. The main rules were that you could only throw back the ball, you could use your feet and hands on the ball, but other than that, players were free to tackle each other as they wished.

Gary immediately ran towards the player who caught the ball. The Eton High players were confident in their strength, especially when they saw a scrawny boy come towards them. Even if they got tackled, they intended to pass the ball to the next person before falling.

However, Gary got close and immediately dived down hitting the ball carrier's legs. The surprised student fell down like a sack of potatoes. Part of it was due to the unexpectedness of the unconventional method used, but the other half was because of the strength that he felt from Gary.

When the student fell he dropped the ball, yet a short-haired red haired boy picked it up almost instantly. Sren ran forward, yet Gary quickly recovered and went in for another tackle. As he dived, the new ball carrier quickly spun and thereby evaded the attack.

"Too slow." Sren sneered running forward. Using his agility and his teammates, he was able to avoid most of the Westbridge team. Blake was their last defense.

Another player ran across trading paths with Sren. It only took a split second and the redhead continued to run forward. Blake successfully tackled him to the ground, but that's when he could see that he no longer had the ball.

"You might be a good player but you seem to be lacking in the brains department." Sren taunted the other.

The referee blew into his whistle signalling that Eton High had scored the first point of the match. As for the one that had scored, it was none other than Leng.

“Damn it!” Gary cursed kicking the ground. He was mostly upset that he had let the other person get away. During the last two weeks rugby had become more than a mere hobby for Gary. Thanks to the system his performance had improved immensely, allowing him to play earnestly. He knew that he was basically cheating, but it just felt good to be recognised for once. Of course, being allowed to work off his frustration was a nice bonus.

The game restarted with Eton High kicking off. Alas, now that Westbridge was in possession of the ball things only got worse. The passes were bad as it instantly became obvious that the fielded players lacked any actual practice.

Gary was having his own problems as if he saw that Gil was open, the only other decent player on their team he refused to pass to him.

It didn't help that they were all scared of getting hit by the other team. They all got rid of the ball so fast that one might mistake them playing 'hot potato' over rugby. Tom was in the unfortunate situation that he got passed the ball, yet Gary had been too far away from him. Having hesitated for too long, the high schooler ended up getting hit before he could pass.

Eton High ended up scoring a total of four times, before Blake managed to finally score one single point, something he had Gary and Gil to thank for. Unlike in professional rugby, the highschool didn't use multiple points per touchdown, and just counted them as one for simplicity.

“Arghh!” Gary yelled. “I can't catch those two redheads. They're too fast and nimble. They get away every time, even with my current speed!”

'I should be okay if I use it until the end of the game, right? I know the half time still hasn't been called.' Gary tried to convince himself, unwilling to let his first rugby match end in a complete catastrophe. It would be one thing if the other team was simply better than theirs, but it just didn't sit well with him that they were sorely losing because of Eton High's dirty tactics. To be honest, Gary wasn't sure if they could win even if they had all of their regulars, that was what was more annoying Eton high were good, so why the need to resort to dirty tactics.

[Skill activated Charging Heart]

[All stats have temporarily been doubled]

[-10 Energy points]

[Dexterity 10 (+3)]

#### Chapter 75: The rugby match (2)

Gary had already been doing well in the game without having to use charging heart. This was mostly due to the power of the moon; otherwise, he would have still fallen slightly behind the athletic students, but now with Charging heart active and the power of the moon Gary was at his strongest.

Since Blake had luckily managed to score a point, it was time for Westbridge to kick off the ball again.

“Coach Root, let me do it.” Gary raised his hand asking for permission.

With how things were going, Mr Root didn't really care. It was obvious that Eton High would put more people on Blake now, leaving virtually no chance for a comeback. Blake or Gil didn't voice any objection so the teacher just allowed the high schooler to do as he wished.

Getting ready, Gary dropped the ball, and booted it as hard as he could. He had powered all of his frustration into kicking the ball and didn't hold back. The ball went high in the air, and further than any of Blake's kicks and down so far, it had gone so far some people even thought it was going to hit the try line. In the end, it was a few meters short.

Sren had run all the way to the back but even with his speed he was unable to get back in time to catch it.

“Did you see that kick? I don't even think I've seen that in professional Rugby games.” One of the parents commented.

“Well, it’s a smaller pitch, but that was definitely an impressive kick.” Another added.

What some of the players at Eton high noticed and same with Blake was the kick Gary had done, had no signs of proper technique, the ball shouldn’t have gone that far. Meaning he had done it all with raw power.

‘Gary...I’m thankful that you’re on our team, but the improvement you have had, what happened to you?’ Blake thought.

The game went on and Blake surprisingly managed to snatch the ball off of one of their players, but just as Mr Root feared, after that the team had him surrounded. They knew there was no need to focus on the other players, and they were blocking his path from passing to Gil. Gary, seeing this had suddenly appeared out of nowhere.

‘You can do it, right? Then go show them what you got!’ Blake chucked the ball right through the gap towards Gary, and after catching the ball like a rocket, he was off.

Gary just ran straight. He knew better than to try and use any fancy footwork that he wasn’t used to, to evade the opposition. One of the Eton High players went for the tackle, but the ball carrier just continued running even when his legs were touched. Gary was like a train on tracks, not stopping in the least. Once he got past the first two it was smooth sailing until he reached the try line to score a point.

“I did it! I scored a point!” Gary yelled out in triumph. He then looked over the stands and enjoyed the feeling of being cheered on, especially since the one person he was looking out for gave him a standing ovation.

“Did you see that?” Leng asked his brother. “Since when did Westbridge have someone like him? Was he holding back on us the entire time?”

“Of course I saw that.” Sren answered in frustration. It was one thing to lose a point to the star player, but this was something completely unexpected and he didn’t like that. “No idea what’s gotten into that guy. According to our intel, he was supposed to be a benchwarmer, just like the rest of them. Now it seems like he’s their star player. Let’s just put more people on him!”



The game continued, but that wasn't the only point Gary ended up scoring. With his sheer power he was able to force his way through nearly each time. At some point some of the players on Blake were also put on him. Using that opportunity, he would pass the ball, allowing the real star player to score.

When the referee called for a break, the score was 7 - 4 for the home team. They had managed to nearly double the other's points, but there was still a problem. Despite his boost, he was unable to catch up to either of the twins. What's more, his Energy had decreased sharply, which would make it risky to use Charging Heart again.

During the break, Tom approached Gary. "I'm guessing your sudden boost in performance is due to the moon. Do you feel any different? Any sudden... urges?" Tom asked carefully.

Gary smiled back as he went back into position. "Just a healthy desire to win this match!"

Both teams went into position. Gary noticed the twins had an evil smile on their faces. In those few minutes, they had devised a strategy for how to deal with the 'annoying green head'.

After the kick, Gary was in possession of the ball, yet five people had him surrounded. It was the required number of people to stop him without making it too easy for Blake to score. Already used to this, Gary had no choice but to pass the ball to the closest person, Tom.

They had done this a few times already and his best friend would usually just pass it onto the next person, but as soon as the ball left Gary's finger tips, two redheaded students could be seen running through.

Before he had any chance to react, they both crushed Tom banging into him from either side, he fell to the ground in seconds, but that wasn't the end of it. Turning around, both of them with their studded metal boots stepped on Tom's hand. It had gone right through his palm causing him to bleed.

"Why the f\*ck is it always me?!" Tom screamed in pain.

In almost an instant, Gary leapt from where he was, landing right on top of Sren, pinning him to the ground.

“I’ll kill you!”

## Chapter 76: Visions

Moments before the incident, up in the stands, Xin noticed something strange in the stand opposite theirs. One of the Eton High students had a hand-held camera in his hand, and was filming the entire match. Next to him was another student with a laptop who seemed completely focused on it and nothing else around him.

“Doesn’t that look a bit strange? They’ve been filming since the start of the match.” Xin mentioned, as something was giving her the feeling that things weren’t as they seemed.

“Is it?” Innu just shrugged it off. His attention was on the game, ever since Gary started to just bulldoze his way through the field. There was a certain excitement from everyone watching, each time he got the ball.

“Don’t a lot of sports teams film their matches? It’s not like anyone else will film such an amateur match. It makes it easy to replay important moments and learn from them so they can improve.” Innu added as he looked up.

“...Although now that I say it, that doesn’t sound like them. Come to think of it, if they were that diligent about getting better then they should have had no need to attack all the regulars.

“They attacked you guys?!” Xin yelled out, surprised. “No wonder I barely recognize any of the members.”

If it had only been the camera guy then she wouldn’t have thought much of it, but it was the fact that the student next to them also had the computer when they should have been focusing on the game.

It was then, though, that a loud shout from a familiar voice was heard grabbing her attention completely.

“I’ll kill you!” Gary shouted, having pinned down one of the Eton High players, and it was one of the twins, Sren.

It was seemingly out of nowhere, and so fast that both teams didn't know how to act. Looking at Sren, Gary had already pulled back his fist and threw it out. Moving his head to the side just in time, the high schooler ended up hitting nothing but the ground beneath. Making it hard for anyone looking to know just how hard the punch was.

The first one to act from Eton High was Sren's brother Leng, but as the two of them met eyes, Sren just shook his head, and his brother backed down. While also looking back at the stands making sure everything was okay.

"You slimy little snake!" Gary cursed, as he pulled back his fist again, ready to aim at the other's chest. However, by this time his fellow players from Westbridge had arrived and were trying to stop him from doing something stupid and grabbed onto his arms.

"Stop it Gary! He wants you to hit him! If you attack him they'll kick you off the pitch!" One of the students tried to reason with him as he held onto Gary's outstretched arm.

Alas, he wasn't listening and looked at Sren who gave him a satisfied smirk, making him want to punch him even more.

Four people were pulling Gary back, and yet it looked as if it still wasn't enough for them to pull him off, until a certain person came and pushed him off the other from the front. Sren didn't thank him and just tsked as he went away.

Gary could see Blake above him.

"What the hell are you doing? That guy hurt Tom! If you get in my w-!"

"Stop!" Tom shouted, holding his hand. "I'm okay. They only pierced my skin a little, it just hurt a lot, that's all."

Although this might have been the case, that wasn't why Gary was angry, he could tell that what they had done was intentional.

They had hurt his friend again after Gary had talked about Tom being safe next to him.

With this thought in his head, Gary continued to charge forward and the players were there trying to hold him back again, but with Gary's strength, he was just skidding them across the grass.

Still, Blake stood firmly in his way. Seeing this, his father stood up from the crowd.

"He must be worried about his son!" One of the mothers said.

"That boy is so vicious, where is his mother?" Another asked.

In the stand not too far away, Kai was also watching the match with Marie.

"Is this what you expected?" Marie asked.

Kai smiled looking at the site.

"No, it's even better. He is exactly who we need. I've never seen someone get so angry over a friend being hurt like that...he's perfect."

"GARY!" Tom shouted, getting in between Blake and him. "I'm fine!"

Tom held up his hand showing that his wound wasn't a big deal, he could even still play. Seeing this, Gary finally seemed to somewhat settle down.

However, the referee looked to be in a troublesome spot, wondering just what to do. Mr Root, seeing this, quickly went to his side, and placed his hands together as if he was begging.

“Now come on, there’s no need to do anything. These are just hot headed teens. Of course they’re going to get aggressive in a fight like this. Besides, in the end, only our player was the one that actually got hurt.” Mr Root argued.

The referee glanced at the teacher, he understood why he was being this way. From watching the match, Westbridge’s team were mostly made of amateurs and the one that had gotten involved in a scuffle was one of their star players.

If he was taken out of the game, then there would be no hope for Westbridge. He also was aware of Eton High’s reputation, so he was sure their attack wasn’t a coincidence.

It was only because of this, that the ref at the end of the day, decided to keep the game going on with no consequences on either side.

Before the match was to resume, Gary went to look at Tom’s hand.

“You seem to be getting hurt a lot these days. Are you sure you’re okay and it’s not just the adrenaline?” Gary asked

Tom lifted his hand up again, showing his best friend the wound.

“Look it’s only a flesh wound, it just ripped the skin a little it will be fine-“

Strangely, Gary grabbed onto Tom’s hand and looked at it closely. At first Tom thought it was out of concern and he just wanted a closer look, but then he noticed that the other’s eyes seemed almost obsessed with it.

“G-gary? Oi, Gary!” Tom shouted, yet the other was still holding onto his hand.

At that moment, Gary was having visions... visions of biting down on Tom’s hand. He soon let go and almost fell back to the ground as he backed up.

"I...I-I got to get out of this game, Tom...I have to leave now..." Gary mumbled, and that's when Tom noticed that there was a significant change to Gary.

His eyes, they no longer looked like that of a human, and instead had gone slightly yellow changing shape.

"Are you...changing? Right here, right now?!" Tom helplessly looked around for a way for the other to disappear.

#### Chapter 77: Wolf's howl

The look in Tom's eyes said it all. Gary saw the way he had been staring at him. No matter what had happened so far, his best friend had never pulled a face quite like this before.

'Stop it! Stop it! Why are you looking at me like that!' Gary thought.

At the moment, Tom wanted to reach out to Gary but his body froze up. He didn't know what to do as it was the first time he had actually seen his best friend slightly change. Sure the other had told him what he was, but seeing it happen appeared to have awoken a primal instinct in him that made him want to run away.

Tom had seen many Altered change into their beast form, but Gary's case was clearly different. Shaking his head, he managed to get a grip on himself and started to look around to see if anyone else had noticed. It was at that moment, that Gary himself covered up, putting his head into his shirt.

'Come on, Gary, calm down! Calm down!!! What's going on, system? I should still have time! The last notification was about the full moon being 6 hours away, so why am I changing now?' Gary asked himself in a panic, still covering his head.

"Gary, it's going to be okay!"

He could hear Tom's voice, but he refused to look at him, afraid of what might happen. "If you need to get out of here, then don't let us stop you. It's just a stupid high school rugby game anyway. Heck, it's the first one this season. Look, I want you to head over to the Copen side of town, to a storage warehouse called Yellow Stack."

“There is a storage unit in my family’s name. My parents use it to store some items from the experiments they run, but I managed to find out their passcode to it. Just in case, I placed a few things inside that should hopefully help with your... situation. If you feel like you can’t control it, lock the door to stop you from going out. We’ll get through this together... okay?”

Gary had carefully listened to Tom’s entire speech. At the same time he had done his best to breathe in and out deeply, further helping him calm his heart down. His Charging Heart skill had finished. Eventually his heart rate lowered below 150 BPM, and slowly he came out from his shirt.

“Gary, your...”

From the look on Tom’s face Gary could tell that his appearance had gone back to default.

“Thank you, Tom. I-I f-feel better now. I-I believe I know what was causing the problem. I should be able to stay.” Gary said hesitantly before quickly adding. “Just for a short while! I mean Mr Root practically begged the ref to let me stay, so I don’t want to upset everyone now.”

‘It had to be Charging Heart. Yeah, that must have been it. With how close it’s to the full moon, my elevated heart rate must be messing with me. Tom’s wound might have just triggered it. I swear, after this game, I’ll head straight to that storage unit!’ Gary tried to convince himself as he inched back to his position.

The game was about to resume, though Tom wasn’t sure if Gary had made the right decision since he had no idea how the other felt. He just knew that getting close to his best friend wasn’t advisable right now, not because he was scared of him, but because he was afraid that his wound might be the cause of the other’s change.

As the game resumed, the two teams continued as normal. Eton had possession of the ball, and Leng was holding onto it tightly. He then looked over his shoulder for a second to see where his brother was, yet in that brief moment, the ball was snatched from his hands, by none other than Blake.

He quickly ran past all the others, proving why he was the team captain and team ace. Sren, who was further back, went in for the tackle, but with a jump, Blake narrowly avoided it and went on to score the

try. Everyone from Westbridge unanimously started to cheer the star player's name. The girls' screams were especially deafening.

'If you're going to stop me from getting the ball from my own teammates, then I'll just have to steal it from you guys instead.'

As the game continued, Gary had become far more passive than in the first half, not that it stopped his team from passing him the ball, after all that's what had gotten them the points so far. However, it quickly became noticeable that Gary's speed had dropped and something had changed in him ever since the fight.

"You're slow, even slower than at the start." Leng alone tackled Gary to the ground. Meanwhile, Sren picked up the loose ball and continued to run forward, but once again Blake was ready, as if he had predicted Gary's fall.

He stopped their advance, and it was time for another turnaround. Alas, he alone could only do so much. Fortunately, they had managed to get a good lead in the first half. The game came to an end with a score of 9:9, making it a draw.

"We drew! We freaking did it!" Mr Root cheered. "I get to keep my job and I don't even need to treat anyone to dinner!"

Of course it was all thanks to Blake and the team started to lift him into the air, throwing him celebrating their draw as if they had won. Although Gary had done a lot for the team, it had been limited to the first half.

It was strange, because the way Sren and Leng were acting, it was as if they had lost.

"What is wrong with you all?!" Sren shouted in anger, punching one of his own teammates, causing them to fall to the ground. The spectators could see this, but now that the game was over they could do nothing about it. Neither Eton High's teachers nor the other did anything about it, seemingly used to this sort of behaviour.



“We knew that Blake was a good player. We knew if we played against them with him it would be risky.” Leng argued the outcome. “What we didn’t expect was for him to be good as well.”

As for who Leng was referring to, it was naturally Gary. The outlier looked to be staring into space with his head full of his own thoughts. His headache was becoming worse, and there was a slight dull ring that had appeared as well.

The high schooler felt as if all the noises were drowned out from the outside.

“That stupid git cost us a sh\*tton of money!” Sren cursed. He picked up the nearby rugby ball and threw it directly towards Gary. Those in the crowd watching gasped but could do nothing as it hit its designated target.

It was a clean hit, connecting to his head from the side, making Gary fall to the ground.

“Arghh my head!” Gary yelled out, his hands on the grass and closed his hands together grabbing the mud.

“Is he seriously hurt or something, rugby balls aren’t that hard?” Innu asked with worry, looking at his gang leader. He was furious and was ready to give the twin a taste of his own medicine, but he knew it was impossible to get to him. Not with his entire team behind him.

“Arghh!” Gary shouted almost, but managed to hold it in so it sounded like a few grunts. The parents couldn’t hear because the students were still celebrating their draw, and Tom didn’t want to get close, afraid that the smell of blood would just worsen the situation even further.

“No, he’s acting really strange. I don’t think the rugby ball caused that. He looks to be in incredible pain and... it looks like he’s sweating.” Xin pointed out. It was hard to see from her position.

The two of them weren’t the only ones that had noticed this. Kai and Marie had both been keeping an eye on Gary as well. The action of the sore loser was way out of line, but Gary’s reaction was also unnatural.

“Gary, get out of here!” Tom shouted from what he deemed to be a safe distance. “You have to go home early, don’t you? Your mum and sister are waiting for you.”

This was a lie. As far as his family knew, he would be staying at Tom’s tonight after the match. So they wouldn’t get suspicious when they returned, but he was just hoping his words would get through.

\*Ahh-wooo!!!\*

“Was that a...wolf howl?” Those from the crowd wondered. It sounded so clear and clean, it was a sound they had only heard in movies, and they could tell it had come from the direction of the woods that were near the fields.

“A wolf? Here in our backwood’s town? That’s crazy.” Innu nervously laughed it off, but glanced in the direction of the nearby woods.

When they turned around to look back on the field though, Gary was no longer there.

#### Chapter 78: The full moon

It was only for a split second that Tom had taken his eyes off of Gary to look into the direction that strange howl had come from. He looked everywhere on the field for his best friend, even asking some of the nearby players but none of them had seen him disappear. Their focus had been on Blake and then on the wolf howl.

‘That definitely sounded like a wolf... Don’t tell me that was the other werewolf? Was that howl meant to be some sort of challenge? ...please be safe, Gary!’

He wasn’t the only one who was confused about the sudden disappearance of a certain high schooler, though. Innu and Xin both had seen him get hit by the rugby ball, as well as the frantic Tom searching for him. They both decided to head down from the stands and ask him what had happened.

Surprisingly, two more people were heading towards Tom from another stand.

“Tom, you’re Gary’s friend, right? We saw him get hit by that scumbag, but now he’s gone. Is he ok?” Xin was the first to speak. Hearing that the girl’s question was along the lines of what Kai himself had wanted to ask Tom, he decided to just listen. Innu, noticing that Kai had come down, felt a little awkward since he didn’t know how to behave around him.

“You’re also looking for Gary? Hang on a moment, what do you care anyway? I haven’t heard you asking about him even once during his expulsion, but now you’re worried? You don’t even know him that well, and you’re just the new guy, and you two... holy sh\*t, aren’t you Kai Hemper, that rich kid from the year above?!” Tom realised as he looked at those surrounding figures.

“The one and only.” Kai let out a laugh at Tom’s hilarious expression. “Would you kindly tell us where that green head is. We’ve become... ‘acquaintances’ and I have something for him.”

Tom had a bad feeling about that. He had no clue at this moment how Gary had come to know all of these different people, or why they had suddenly cared for him. For as long as Tom could remember it had just been the two of them against the world.

‘I can’t tell them about Gary, at least not today. No one can know about what he’s going through right now. Otherwise they might think he’s the one that killed all of those...’

“I don’t know where Gary is, it’s late he probably went home!” Tom shouted as he started to run away from the others before turning around for a moment. “Don’t go out after midnight tonight, especially you, Xin, just stay at home!”

The other four looked at each other, and they all had the same expression. It was clear that Tom did know something and was trying to hide it, even though they didn’t know why...

“Well, should we follow him?” Marie asked the obvious.

“Depends, does anyone have a better plan on how to find Greeny?” Kai asked, but none of them spoke up. Innu quickly moved over to Kai and Marie to join them, but noticed that someone else was following them.

“Hey, It’s pretty late and you know how this town is. I mean I’m happy to protect you and all but I’m sure your parents are worried about you.” Innu tried to gently tell Xin to go away without being too patronising, yet still appearing strong.

“Don’t worry, I can handle myself.” Xin replied, as she looked into the crowd of parents, and there was a man in a suit standing up. As long as he traveled with her things would be fine. Kai didn’t voice any objections, just shrugged and with that the four of them decided to follow Tom’s trail to see where he would go next, hoping that it would lead them to Gary.

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At the moment, Gary himself was covered in sweat as he sprinted towards the direction Tom had told him. He wasn’t sweating because he was tired, he could feel his heart pounding in his chest. He was running through streets, staying in crowded areas.

‘That howl, I’m sure that had to be from Billy! Has he somehow already transformed? If that’s the case... he must be after me. Anyone who comes close to me will be in danger, and it’s the same for those close to me.’

‘For now... with all these people around I don’t think he’ll attack me... I hope.’ Gary gulped as he recalled how Billy had attacked Innu during the day in school, so who knew what they were planning to do. An hour had passed, yet Gary had neither encountered Billy, nor felt his presence. However, he had finally made it to Yellow Stack.

‘Five hours, five more hours. He isn’t around, is he?’ Gary wondered as he started to sniff the air. He could only smell industry and faded scents. Turning the Marks on, he needed a moment to find them, as they were quite faint.

Tom had picked a perfect hiding place for him. This area didn’t seem to have many living places. Just factories with workers who would have already gone home. Unfortunately Gary was still in his rugby uniform which didn’t have a hood, so he opted to enter from the roof instead of the front entrance, in case anyone was there or the cameras.

Fortunately, Gary had had a lot of practice sneaking in recently and with his current stats it was quite easy for him to do. There were plenty of ledges and pipes, where he could pull himself up with his own body weight. Something that would have been impossible for the past him.

One of the windows had been left open in the large storage warehouse from the top, and going through them he found himself on some type of metal railing. He looked to see if there was anyone inside, and even sniffed the air, but it didn't seem to be the case.

'I guess the storage units themselves are quite secure so there's no need for a nightguard.'

Gary looked at his phone, the regular one. Tom had sent him a text, telling him it was storage unit 23, and that the passcode was his best friend's birthday. Going down, Gary eventually walked past all of them, until he could finally see a large yellow painted '23' on the outside.

'I can't believe I'm going to spend the night, or maybe even the whole day in there.' Gary thought to himself. He walked up to the container and on the side of it, there was a little digital keypad. Inputting the code, the door slowly started to lift open and white lights from the ceiling were turned on.

'Whoa, what the hell is this place?! This looks more like an abandoned lab than a storage unit.' Gary thought as he stepped inside. He could see strange machines he didn't even know what they did, but they looked incredibly expensive.

There were also books upon books piled up in the room, from what he could see the majority seemed to be some scientific theories and discoveries. He carefully passed it, until he saw that the very back looked different. It was the only place that had been cleared out. There was a table, and on the table there was a set of chains and a bag.

Gary made sure to close the door behind him, and locked it.

'Wait, what even happens if I transform? Will I be in control? If not, won't my werewolf self know the code on how to get out? ... maybe, I'll become a primal beast, who can't think straight? System, mind giving me a sneak peek or something?'

Gary looked inside the plastic bag and he couldn't help but laugh, because at one point, he would have loved to receive such a thing, especially in February, but now it looked very unappealing. After all, it was practically poison to him right now.

Taking the bag off the floor, Gary then could see a chain on the table. A thick heavy chain, and the table could be raised and had holes in it. They also had cuffs that once shut could only be open by keys.

'So I guess he wants me to strap myself in this thing, right? Should I do that now? ... but I still have a few hours.'

Gary wasn't sure how much leeway he had. As such he already started to familiarise himself with the process of chaining himself.

'Where did Tom even buy all this stuff? Probably online. Oh god, I don't even want to think how much all of it cost... Thank you, Tom. I promise, I'll pay you back in the future. ... just need to literally survive first, though...'

Gary was finally set, the only thing left to do would be to clip the chains on his legs and arms. Tom messaged him saying to text him after everything was over and he was back to his regular self. If he didn't hear from him, he would come pick him up in 24 hours and unlock it.

Gary's two phones were placed on another table on the side. The high schooler waited, until the timer was down to its last hour. Now knowing that Billy hadn't appeared he decided to click in both of the cuffs on his legs, and then finally clipped the ones on his hands. He waited, and waited, but time seemed to be moving incredibly slow. His only company was the system that was counting down to midnight.

'Alright, it doesn't look like Billy followed me, I just hope he can't sense where I am or something when I change, and I hope this will be able to hold me back.' Gary thought.

Finally, the time had come.

[A full moon has appeared]

[The power of the moon is at its strongest and empowers you]

[Transformation has begun]

## Chapter 79: Transform

As soon as Gary saw those messages appear, he started to feel a change in his body. It began with his heart beat. Someone seemed to have put the intensity all the way to the maximum setting. When he checked his status in the system he saw that the BPM was constantly rising, already having surpassed 200 BPM with no signs of stopping.

It felt like his organ was trying its best to either burst through his chest or jump out of his mouth. The increased oxygen flow inside his body led to Gary experiencing everything more vividly, from his feet all the way to the top of his head. The high schooler immediately pulled on the chains from the pain, yet they did their job perfectly, preventing him from touching his head.

Unfortunately for Gary though, the strange sensations didn't stop there. The next thing that he noticed was that his skin started to feel uncomfortable. He felt constricted, as if he had put on a shirt that was a few sizes too small. He wasn't sure if he was hallucinating or not, but he believed that he saw it start to fall off of him.

"ARGHHH!" Gary loudly screamed out in pain, his throat on the verge of ripping, but he needed to do something to release this pressure that was piling up. The veins on his arms and neck became visible. They had grown in size looking like faint tubes about to burst due to the pressure they were under. His muscles started to grow, and more skin started to fall off from his body, being replaced by dark black fur.

'Someone, please make it stop! This pain, I can't take it anymore!!!' Gary begged internally as he screamed out all his frustrations, aware that nobody was out there to hear or help him. It was getting too much for him and he was sure that he was losing his mind.

'I have to stay focused! I have to stay conscious!' The high schooler thought to himself, concentrating on the ones he tried to protect, his friends and family. Gary feared that something very bad would happen if his transformation overwhelmed him and he wasn't sure that he would be able to live with himself if he hurt any of them.

Just when he believed himself able to tolerate that amount of pain, his very bones started stretching. It was a hundred times worse than any growth spurt and it affected all of them at once. At some point they collectively cracked, before they all began to regenerate on the spot, growing longer and more durable.

Finally, his face was itching all over as if a million tiny invisible bugs were crawling on it. His mouth, jaw and nose seemed to shift around, his eyesight and vision was changing. Gary didn't even register that his ears had also elongated as his consciousness was slowly fading.

'I'm sorry...' was the last thing Gary had running through his mind.

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The four teenagers had been diligently following Tom around for a while now, ever since he had left the locker room. He had led them to an area of Slough called Cipe side. It was one of the more upmarket sides of the town. As nice as a Tier-3 place could get at least. It was obvious that a lot of the money had been put into this area, as the teenagers saw a lot of night life despite how late it was being. There were restaurants, bars and even clubs.

It was an unusual sight in Slough, making Tom's presence more than strange. So far it had looked like he had been walking around aimlessly. Kai had carefully made sure that they stayed a distance away from him, cautious that Tom wouldn't spot them, but as time went on they noticed that the one in front of him was oblivious to his own situation. He wasn't even paying attention to his surroundings, being far more concerned with his phone.

"Huh, so this is where all the big wigs of slough live? I don't even see any gangs here, that's a nice change." Innu commented.

"Of course there are gangs here." Kai sneered at the other's naivety. "Otherwise this place wouldn't be able to operate the way it is. In fact this area is one of the more important places due to how much money it generates. You not seeing anyone just means that this particular area is protected by some gang nobody dares to mess with."



They were on a pretty busy main street, and some of the adults were giving them funny looks, wondering what kids were doing here at this late hour. The only one who didn't look out of place among them was Kai. He even walked like the others.

'He's right, but who is this guy to know so much?' Xin thought.

Continuing to follow Tom, it honestly didn't feel like he was doing much, and constantly the group would check with each other to see if it was okay for them to be staying out this late. Since they were all school students, tomorrow would be a school day. Innu had no problem, he was free to do as he wished, similar to Kai and Marie.

However, for Xin, she just had to check that a certain someone was still following them.

"Well, you guys surely have nothing better to do. It's almost midnight and this is what you're doing?" Kai asked. "Well, I guess everyone has their special circumstances."

No one said anything, so they continued on their wild rabbit chase, until their target decided to eventually head out to the park. It was a shortcut that would allow someone to head to Yellow Stack and the warehouse side of Copen.

His plan was to stay here, since it should be far enough away for Gary to notice him, yet still close enough that he could get to Yellow Stack if something were to happen. Eventually they all just watched Tom sitting down staring at his phone. The group waited hiding behind trees a distance away.

They waited and waited until one of them got frustrated.

"Ah, this is getting annoying!" Marie called out, pacing over quickly. "Hey, Tom!"

Immediately, he turned his head, facepalming as he realised that he had been followed. Since Marie had revealed herself, the rest came out as well, heading towards the high schooler together.

“We all have better things to do. Just tell us where the hell Gary went. Don’t even try to bullsh\*t us that you just came here for a walk. Cipen might be considered safe and all but it’s still incredibly dangerous!” The girl demanded an answer, impatiently whipping with her foot.

As the group continued to walk towards Tom, he got off from his seat and started to panic, looking for where to run off to. When he could see they were close he had almost given up, but suddenly all of them stopped in their tracks. Standing behind them, they could see two glowing eyes from the foliage.

They could hear the nasty sound of someone heavily breathing, letting out a nasty snarling noise.

“Look out!” Kai shouted, as he sprinted to Tom, grabbing his underclassman by the wrist, pulling him forward. At that moment, two large claws swung down and a loud bang was heard. When they looked at what had happened, they could see that something had destroyed the bench Tom had been sitting on just moments ago. Now turning around, Tom could see what Kai had just saved him from. There was a figure that looked to be close to two and a half meters in height.

It had bulging muscles, claws and was covered in dark fur making it hard to see in the darkness. Its snout was large, and it’s razor sharp teeth could be seen sticking out from its mouth.

“It’s a...a...W-w-w-Werewolf!” Tom managed to stutter out, his hands shaking. At that moment, all of them froze in place, unsure what to do. Its glowing eyes had something hypnotising to them, making them feel like prey in front of a large predator.

Fortunately someone else ran in front of them all, waking them up from their stupor. It was a man in a suit who had followed behind them.

“Xin, get away!” The man yelled, turning his head. “I will deal with this Altered!”

The professional bodyguard was about to pull something out of his jacket... yet he never got the chance. The mythological creature had swiped once with his mighty arms. Before any of the teenagers could blink, the head of the man who had wanted to save them separated from his shoulders, flying past them into the park.

The next second the body fell to the ground, releasing a torrent of blood.

All five of them knew that their lives were in danger... their chances to survive this were slim to none.

#### Chapter 80: Nightmare on Copen Park

There were a lot of dangers that everyone needed to look out for in a Tier-3 town like Slough. The teenagers were being cautious, yet each one of them was quite confident in their own skills, believing that no matter what they would face today, that they would be able to deal with it.

However, that was limited to their own common sense. A werewolf had naturally not been one of the things any one of them had been prepared to ever see in their life, much less tonight. As such, they had all slightly frozen in fear from the mythological beast that had appeared in front of them. Before they could really react, they witnessed how that large mass of muscle killed a man in front of their very eyes without any effort whatsoever.

Tom immediately became watery eyed, and he could feel something warm soaking his trousers. trickling down his leg.

'Did I just...wet myself...werewolves have a sensitive nose... let's hope this will make me unappetising to eat...'

However, the beast didn't attack them outright, instead it started to dig into the dead person who was on the ground, ripping the corpse to pieces with its sharp teeth.

"Everyone, we need to get out of here now!" Kai instructed and he didn't need to tell them twice. Xin noticed that Tom was still slightly frozen, so she grabbed him, dragging her classmate alongside them. Now that he was no longer looking at the beast, he continued to run with the others.

"What was that? That thing didn't look like any Altered I ever saw!" Innu asked as he ran.

"Who knows, it might be the thing responsible for all those killings on the news!" Marie theorised.

At the moment the group was following Kai. Unfortunately, the park was large with big open fields. The impromptu group leader had a bad feeling that once the beast was done with his meal, that he would

follow after them. At this late hour the chances weren't great for them to find someone else in the park that might catch the werewolf's interest.

"Let's go through the trees. It will directly take us to the main street, with a lot of people. It seems hungry so hopefully it will be distracted by all the adults that will make more of a meal than us." Kai suggested. The others agreed, if only because they had no better idea and just wanted to get as far away from that thing as possible. Only Tom had a different thought running through his head.

'That... must have been Gary! I bet he came right for me. One of those books mentioned that a werewolf would come after those that were closest to him as a human. So he either came for me...or Xin...or maybe even one of those people I don't know. This is probably the worst group to be with right now!' Tom panicked, but he didn't dare to separate.

At the same time, Xin had tried to make a call to a certain someone during their escape. Until today she had thought that her trusted bodyguard would have been able to stop any gangsters that were after their group, but when faced against an Altered, only another Altered stood a chance.

'Come on, Jayden, why aren't you picking up?! I really need your help right now!' Xin prayed sincerely, but there was no answer on the other end. She could only send him a text about her emergency, hoping that he would read it sooner rather than later.

The group entered the park's forest and began running through the trees, but that's when they noticed something up above. They could hear a being move at a fast speed, breaking down large branches as it went from one tree to another.

'Damn it! Why couldn't there be some large fat guy in the park today hoping to lose a few pounds, that would have made for a tastier target!' Kai lamented their lack of luck. His plan was sound, yet he didn't know that the werewolf was after one of their group in particular. Before they could get out of the forest, the beast had dropped down, blocking the path of the entire group.

Now they were practically in the middle of nowhere, with no one around to help them, but Marie had finally gotten through to someone on her phone.

"999, what's your emergency?" The operator asked.

“HELP, WE’RE IN CIPEN PARK AND THERE IS AN ALTERED ATTACK-!” Marie shouted, but before she could finish, someone grabbed her head from behind and pushed it down into the leaves. It was so sudden and hard that some dirt had flown into her mouth. It was Xin whose quick reflexes had saved the other girl’s life.

The werewolf had leapt at Marie with the phone, seemingly understanding that it was a bad idea to allow her to finish the call. Luckily for the group, it’s hasty action had not only missed the werewolf’s target, but it had also crashed into one of the trees behind them.

Unfortunately, they all knew better than to hope that this would be enough to keep such a creature down. The werewolf stood up, and started to look at them all, sniffing the air with its bloody snout.

“Gary!” Tom shouted with tears in his eyes. “Please...please don’t attack us! Look at us, we’re your friends! Part of you knows that, right?! Please, you have to recognise my voice!”

The others believed that Tom had lost it and was now talking nonsense. How could this beast be Gary? Was he so far gone that he was hallucinating before his death? However, that name did elicit a reaction in the werewolf and it stopped for a moment.

“Are you crazy? What part of him looks like that green head? This is a monster!” Innu shouted at Tom.

Hearing the sound of Innu’s voice, the beast turned around facing the high schooler. The teenagers weren’t sure if they were imagining it or not, but it almost looked like the beast was smiling, revealing its sharp teeth that still had parts of flesh stuck between them.

‘It’s...going after Innu?’ Kai wondered. It dropped down on all fours, before it charged at Innu. The teenager tried backing up, but found his back against a tree.

‘Oh sh\*t!’ Innu was convinced that would be the end of him, regretting having opened his mouth just now. As the beast was moving though, two rocks came flying towards it, hitting it right in its face, with one of them nearly getting its eye, causing it to close it slightly.

Innu did the only thing he could do, and decided to jump to safety as he saw the beast flinch. He successfully managed to roll on the ground underneath its side. It caused the werewolf to crash into another tree, breaking part of its lower half, and a few seconds later the tree toppled over.

“Why did you guys stay? You should have run!” Innu shouted, confused but thankful as he saw that Xin and Kai were the ones that had thrown the rocks. From the looks of it, they had gathered more and were ready to throw them again.

“Just look at you. Once that thing would be done with you, it would swallow you whole in one bite. A few seconds won’t do us much good. If that thing is going to kill us all anyway, might as well try and put up a fight!” Kai explained his actions, while Xin just nodded along.

“Fight?! Kyle, have you gone completely mad? This isn’t your average gang member! That thing killed a bodyguard in one hit! We’ll be done if its claws so much as graze us!” Marie shouted.

“Gary!!!” Tom continued to sob. The werewolf, recovering from its daze, turned around, yet once again focused on Innu.

“What the hell did I ever do to you? Do you have some sort of fetish?!” Innu was ready to cry. He had never been a dog person, but was that really a reason to kill him?

‘So it wasn’t a coincidence. This thing really seems to have a grudge with Innu...’ Kai realised. Even in a situation like this, Kai’s mind was busy trying to make the optimal decision and right now it was connecting the dots. ‘Hang on... a grudge against Innu... the news reports... sudden strength... It can’t be, is that thing actually...’

The werewolf ran forward, and the group had to prepare for the worst.

“GARY!!!” Tom shouted once more at the top of his lungs, afraid his friend was going to kill someone in front of him.

\*Ahh-wooo!!!\*

Another howl resounded and Tom felt a gust pass him, before a blur of fur came out from his side. The blurry black object leapt and slammed into the werewolf's side, sending the two figures toppling through the woods.

Soon, both of them stood up, and the group couldn't believe their eyes.

"There are... two of them!" Xin cried out in despair.