

Werewolf 81

Chapter 81: Help the Werewolf

The two werewolves were staring at each other, before they both slowly started to move up and down, seemingly waiting for the other to make the first move. As the group of teenagers looked at the two mythological creatures, they started to notice some small differences between the two.

The most obvious one was their difference in stature. The one that had just arrived was about one head shorter than the first werewolf and while it was also muscular, it seemed to be more lean compared to the other being more buff. The colour of their fur was also different, the bigger one clearly more black while the newer one was more brownish.

“Oh God, it’s another one of those monsters!” Innu shouted as he looked around at what had saved him from certain death. He was grabbing his chest as his already fast heartbeat became even faster, making him start to worry about suffering a heart attack.

The larger of the two creatures turned to look at Innu, yet the smaller one used that opportunity to leap in, almost tackling the larger one by the waist. It pushed it a small distance away, until the larger werewolf dug its claws into the side of the other’s ribs.

The small werewolf screamed out in pain and let go, though the wounds on its side started healing at a visible speed. Alas, before the smaller one could fully recover, the larger dug its claws into the smaller one’s chest and slightly lifted him up, before he began running until it had banged the other’s body into a tree.

The brown werewolf screamed out once more in pain, and snarled at the larger one, clearly struggling. Desperate, it used the tree to kick off with its powerful back legs, kicking the larger one’s chest, making him let go.

“These two really don’t seem like normal Altered.” Kai spoke his mind. “They seem more like two wild beasts who have met each other and are fighting over their territory.”

“Who the f*ck cares what they are?! This is our chance to get out of here! If we stay here, we’ll just end up as the winner’s meal, so let’s go!” Marie stated, before she turned around and started to head away from the fight. Innu followed right behind her, the high schooler had come too close to death already and he didn’t feel lucky enough to survive a third near-death experience this evening.

Xin hesitated, but just when she was about to run off, she noticed that the one person who had been dragging them behind a lot lately was still staring at the fight.

“Tom, come on we gotta get out of here! What are you waiting for?” Xin called out, grabbing his hand.

Meanwhile, Kai had continued paying attention to the fight between the two, making up his mind whether the better choice was to run for it or help the smaller one. Unfortunately, the werewolf whose identity he presumed to know, was not only larger, but had also proven to be faster and stronger.

The smaller werewolf was getting hurt far more often than his opponent. Although all their wounds were healing, with each hit one of the two parties was proving their dominance in this fight.

Just then, the larger werewolf had picked up the other by its legs and swung it into a tree, destroying it and greatly hurting the smaller werewolf.

Hearing the cries of the werewolf was hurting Tom internally.

‘I’m sure of it, that smaller werewolf...the reason why it didn’t attack us and went straight for the others...it’s you, right Gary?’ Tom thought. ‘You heard my cry, and came to save us... and now...you’re losing out to the other Omega. This must be the one who you were talking about. I’m sorry, I’m so sorry for thinking that that was you, that you might have attacked us before.’

At that moment, Tom felt Xin grab him.

“Look, we might not be friends, but there’s no way I’m leaving my classmate here to die!” Xin insisted, starting to drag Tom behind, yet she felt him resist as he pulled back.

“We can’t go now! That smaller werewolf saved us! We have to help him! Please, if we don’t do anything he might kill him!” Tom begged.

Seeing the look on the other teenagers' faces, he could tell that all of them thought he was mad, for planning to help a monster. Even Innu, who had been saved by the smaller one's action, only thought that it had been a coincidence.

Still, though, Kai had noticed Tom's strange actions.

'He keeps calling them 'Werewolves' instead of 'Altered' as if he's certain that that's what they are.

He also thought the big werewolf to be Gary before... However, If my guess is right, that larger one should be...and now he wants us to save him...could it be that he mistook their identities?'

Of course there was no way for Kai to confirm his thoughts, and as much as this situation fascinated him, he treasured his life far more than to satisfy his curiosity. Marie stopped waiting around and broke out into actual running, Kai soon following, along with Innu, and that's when Xin started to drag Tom along with them, who couldn't help but continue to look back.

"I'm sorry!" Tom shouted.

The group had run forward for a little while further into the trees, yet they could still hear the sounds of fighting going on behind them. It was then though, that they could hear panting, and the sound of growling getting louder.

"Don't turn back, don't turn back!" Innu conditioned himself.

"It's chasing after us!" Xin shouted, forced to look back because she kept dragging Tom along, and she could see that the larger werewolf was the one behind them.

'No...it's the other werewolf... does that mean Gary lost?' Tom worried about his best friend.

When the werewolf was close enough, it leapt towards the group and its claws were reaching out towards Tom. It looked like it was about to reach him, but a few inches away from the high schooler's face, he came to an abrupt stop.

Opening one eye as he noticed that the pain he had expected never came, Tom saw that Gary had returned, just in time to save him from the other werewolf. His best friend was covered in wounds which did not seem to be healing, yet he was still putting up a fight.

Seeing that the larger werewolf was about to attack, Tom decided to pick up a rock, and went ahead to throw it at the werewolf. However, before he could throw it, someone held him by the wrist.

“Don’t stop me, Xin! If you don’t want to help him that’s fine, but I have to help him get rid of that other werewolf!” Tom shouted.

“Don’t worry, you can leave that to us.” An unrecognizable voice said.

Surprised, Tom looked around to see that instead of the new girl it was actually a large man holding his wrist. He was covered in a trench coat, and not too far away from him was another person in similar getup. The pair of them wore black masks covering their faces, hiding their identity.

Pulling off the trench coat, the man revealed a strange jagged black armour. It looked like the type one would find in a museum, showing off how their ancestors had once fought, yet this one, despite the medieval look, had several weapons strapped on.

The most noteworthy one, was a strange sword that appeared to have been elaborately crafted.

As such, the next action confused Tom, as the man took out what looked to be a baton. He pushed a button, and the weapon began to emit electricity.

“Are you...Altered hunters?” Tom asked, unsure whether this was a good thing or a bad thing for his friend.

Chapter 82: The more the merrier?

The two strange people who Tom suspected to be Altered Hunters charged forward without hesitation. The others couldn’t believe that there were people like this that actually existed.

They had all heard about the Altered Hunters' existence through the news every now and then, but the stories about them didn't really seem realistic. As an organisation that seemed to be against the very existence of Altered, how were they able to match those superhuman people?

Right now, they were able to witness it for themselves... at least they would have been able to, if it had been safe for them to stay. Altered Hunters were considered to be dangerous criminals on the same level as gangs, if not worse, which was why most of the group was still inclined to get out of there as soon as possible.

"We won't get a better chance than this, let's go!" Marie hurried them along, already running ahead, with Kai following closely behind her.

"Tom!" Xin shouted one more time at her classmate. He looked at her, and for a brief moment, it appeared as if he was going to follow her, only for him to turn around and continue watching the fight. In his mind, Gary wasn't safe, in fact his situation might have just gotten worse.

Having had enough of the other's nonsense, Xin lifted her leg up, and swung it out delivering a roundhouse kick right to Tom's head. His body fell to the ground, knocking him out cold.

"What did you do that for?!" Innu shouted in confusion, not having expected the girl to be this ruthless. Xin went to pick Tom off the ground, and dragged him over to Innu.

"I don't know what's wrong with him. First he calls one of those beasts Gary, then he wants us to help one of those beasts and now it seemed like he wanted to stay behind. He can hate me later if he wants to, right now the important thing is to get to safety. Anyway, you said you were strong, right? Help me carry him, he isn't that heavy."

Innu wanted to decline, especially since there were literally monsters chasing them, but in the end, he felt like he couldn't say no to Xin. Fortunately, from the looks of things, the Altered Hunters seemed to be doing a good job facing the werewolves.

As Tom was placed on Innu's back, a loud growl could be heard from behind, and to their surprise, both of the werewolves seemed to be ignoring each other, as well as the Altered Hunters, and were now staring at Innu.

“Why me again?!” The high schooler cried out in despair as he ran as fast as he could with his classmate on his back. The werewolves leapt in the air, yet the Altered Hunters were ready for them.

“I’ll take on the bigger one, you can handle the small one, right?” The larger hunter asked his companion who nodded. The two of them intercepted the beasts without any signs of fear, using their specially made batons. Each one hit the underside of the werewolves, electrifying them on the spot, causing them both to plummet down.

As soon as they landed, they both went to swipe at their respective attacker, yet the Altered Hunters proved to be skilled enough to avoid the fast claws. Slowly as they continued to avoid the hits the two werewolves and Altered Hunters were getting further and further apart from each other, though by this time the teenagers had managed to run quite a distance away.

The large hunter was only slightly shorter than the black creature that he was facing. With the armour and weapons on him, it looked as if he would be able to put up a good fight.

“Are you sure you want to stay in your full form? You’re just making it easier for me to fight you this way.” The hunter taunted the beast. The next second, the werewolf got on all fours and leapt towards the hunter. With his electrified baton, he hit the side of the werewolf’s ribs, yet the other seemed to have expected it. Its sheer size, weight and momentum allowed the large creature to push through despite the damage it sustained.

The black furred werewolf opened its large mouth wide and clamped down on the hunter, who shoved his forearm into the beast’s mouth. When the werewolf closed its powerful jaws it was stupefied, surprised that its teeth were unable to break through whatever armour they were wearing.

“This is no ordinary armour!” The man shouted, and realising that the baton did little against his foe, he placed it away, pulling out the sword by his side. He swung it fast, and the werewolf was barely able to get away, but not before the weapon lightly scratched the outside of his chest.

Blood had been drawn and the creature could smell burnt flesh. Looking at the sword, he realised that it was far from being ordinary, the edge lit up in a scorching red.

“I saw flesh between your teeth and you have the stench of blood on you.” The hunter said. “You Altered make me sick!”

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Not too far away from where they were, the smaller hunter was facing off against the brown werewolf. Not only was it smaller than its fellow beast, but it seemed slower and less powerful which was why he had been tasked with facing this one. Nevertheless, his training had taught him never to underestimate his enemy. One moment of carelessness could spell his demise.

The small hunter pulled out a second electrified baron, and held them in both hands. He looked at the werewolf and was carefully watching him. It had gotten on all fours, and pushed off its powerful legs, taking a swipe at the young hunter.

He leaned back, and narrowly avoided the blow, being faster than what he had imagined, making him nearly lose his balance. Still, he caught himself with his arms, arching his back, and went to kick the beast who had now jumped over him.

Seconds before his foot made contact with the beast, a small blade could be seen sticking out from the top of his toes, which had pierced the brown werewolf straight in the stomach. The creature howled in pain, and when it landed it rolled about on the ground. Blood was dripping from the werewolf. Unlike the other one, this one's wounds seemed to be healing at a far slower rate.

It was then, when the hunter saw the back of the Werewolf, he could see that a tint of its hair on its head was slightly green. He was unsure how he had missed such a striking detail.

'Reminds me of someone.' The hunter thought, but as soon as the werewolf turned around and showed its giant teeth, he knew there was no time to think about unnecessary things.

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The group had finally made it out of the forest and on to the main street. They all wanted to collapse right then and there, exhausted as the adrenaline that had helped them get this far had nearly been exhausted.

"We're finally safe." Marie fell to her knees on the pavement, yet two shadows soon cast over her.

“We received a report that an Altered had appeared in Copen Park. Are you the ones who made the report?” When Marie looked up, she could see two figures displaying their golden badges with the symbol of a white rose.

Chapter 83: A bird?

As expected, after the Altered Hunter had brought out his sword with the heated edge, the larger Werewolf became far more cautious. It leapt up onto one of the large trees and climbed it midway, continuously growling at the hunter, as if trying to intimidate him. However, what it was really trying to do was wait for its wound to heal. It seemed to take longer than other injuries. Even when the Werewolf stopped bleeding there was still a burn mark that remained on its chest.

‘This Altered’s healing speed is faster than anything I have encountered before.’ The Altered Hunter noticed. ‘Its fighting style resembles that of a wild beast, making him very unpredictable. Still, it’s far weaker and has less tricks up its sleeve than other Altered I had to face.’

From the belt around his waist that was filled with items the Altered Hunter pulled out a small dagger, throwing it out at the Werewolf. The creature quickly dodged the attack, jumping to another tree, digging its claws in to keep it from falling. The Altered Hunter then pulled on something and the small weapon returned from the tree, a green liquid could be seen on its tip.

‘Should have known this Altered is incredibly agile as well. It seems to be learning as it fights. I only have three more poison daggers. If I can just hit it cleanly once, I should be able to bring it in, without getting hurt. It might be able to tell us if it has any comrades.’ The second the Altered Hunter thought this, he could see the Werewolf doing something strange.

It started to jump from tree to tree, although the movements weren’t too fast, with the moon being the only source of light, the beast’s dark fur made it hard for the Altered Hunter’s eyes to keep track of it. The forest proved to give the Werewolf a serious advantage in this fight, giving it plenty of trees to use. Springing from one tree to the other the Altered Hunter eventually lost track of it, unsure where it would attack from next, leaving him with only thing to do.

Wait.

The Altered Hunter held onto its sword tightly and before he knew it, it had pounced on him just like before. He swung his sword, aiming to inflict the beast with a devastating blow, but instead of flesh, he felt like he had hit solid metal. The Altered Hunter's arms were shaking from the great impact. When looking up, he saw that his sword connected with the Werewolf's claws, yet they had extended to the point that they were as long as its hands.

'Just what are those nails made of?!' Similar to the baton, the Altered Hunter's current weapon had a button that would make it sear. However, as if the Werewolf had predicted this move, it had suddenly pulled back one hand to take a large swipe, hitting the Altered Hunter in the chest, and sending him flying a few meters through the air. He remained uninjured thanks to his strong armour, but he had to acknowledge that this fight was going to be way harder than he had initially anticipated.

'If I had known it would be this tough, I would have notified the others... or at least brought a better weapon along. Who would have thought that the Altered in Slough would be so abnormal.' Unfortunately, it was too late for regrets.

The first thing the Altered Hunter had done upon landing was to roll to the side, ready for the creature to follow up his attack, but when he looked up, he saw that the beast's attention was no longer on him. Its head was looking slightly upward and it clenched its large teeth.

A few seconds later, the Werewolf could be seen jumping from tree to tree going higher and higher until it reached the very top of the largest tree in the area. It jumped off, leaping through the air, shining its claws at what was above them... yet it completely missed the mark, as its intended targets flew to the side, making him fall down.

Up in the sky were two people, a man and a woman, each one flapping large feathered wings on their back to stay airborne.

"Oh great, it's them." The Altered Hunter mumbled under his breath.

"It looks like someone managed to arrive before us." Frank spoke to his colleague.

"Indeed, but I'm more interested in the Altered. It doesn't look like your usual type. Very aggressive... though apparently lacking in the brains department. We need to bring it in for questioning. I have a feeling that it's linked with the recent killings, including those at the construction site." Sadie replied.

The two of them dove down at great speed, and when landing between the two parties, the leaves were chucked up in the air around them. Frank was facing towards the Altered Hunter, whereas Sadie was in front of the Werewolf now.

“You are always interested in the more dangerous looking ones.” Frank commented.

“White Rose, why do you always have to get in our way?” The Altered Hunter asked in a bitter tone.

“Because not all Altered are bad, yet you Altered Hunters seem to ignore that fact.” Frank answered.
“This time you might have had a valid reason, but we know that’s not always the case. I’m afraid we will be bringing you in as well. It’s a shame, you would make great members of White Rose, if only you could go of your stupid dogma.”

The White Rose agent flapped his wings once more and dashed towards the Altered Hunter who swung his sword. Frank tilted his body to the side so it would hit his powerful wings instead. Then with another flap he pushed the Altered Hunter to the ground. The force of the attack was enough to break a normal person’s arm, yet the Altered Hunters weren’t regular people.

The White Rose agent threw out his fist, one could see that his arm had transformed into a strange talon mid way grabbing the sword. Frank started to flap his wings, gripping the sword tightly. No matter how hard the Altered Hunter pulled, he was unable to get his weapon free and soon found himself in the air.

However, this wasn’t the first time the Altered Hunter had to fight against White Rose. He had many more tricks up its sleeve, and pulled one of the daggers that was coated in a green liquid.

Meanwhile, the female White Rose agent was in the middle of battle with the suspected Altered killer, and she was having an easier time than she imagined. From her wings, she had pulled out several of her feathers, and threw them at the Werewolf.

Idiotically, the Werewolf didn’t try to avoid them, and just ran straight towards Sadie. When the feathers hit, the creature soon discovered that they were far more dangerous than he had believed. The feathers were as hard as iron arrows, piercing into the Werewolf’s body, pushing it back slightly.

The Werewolf quickly pulled them out of its body, allowing them to heal, and out of frustration tried to throw the feather back towards Sadie, but they had flipped to the ground just like a normal feather.

“This seems like it will be a very easy job.” Sadie sneered.

Chapter 84: Turning back

When Tom opened his eyes, he found himself looking at a bright white light.

“What happened? Where are we?” Tom asked, looking around to see Kai. “Where is Gary?”

“Who knows?” Innu shrugged his shoulders. “We followed you hoping to find him, but instead we nearly lost our lives. Do you have any idea how often I nearly died today?!”

On further inspection, Tom realised that he and his schoolmates were in what looked like a police station. He could see several criminals coming in and out, and people in uniform busy with work, despite the late hour.

Sitting next to him was Innu, Marie, and Xin. Innu looked quite pissed as he recalled his experience, but he seemed to know that blaming Tom wouldn't do anything. Marie was still recovering from her shock and someone seemed to have given her some hot chocolate to calm her nerves. Xin seemed nervous as she looked down and fiddled with her hands, making sure not to make eye contact with anyone.

A little while later, Kai came out from one of the offices.

“Good news, everyone. We're free to go home, and the police are even nice enough to give us a lift since it's so late. Probably also to avoid us meeting with whatever was in the park.”

“Wait, so we don't all have to give reports on what happened?” Xin asked, looking relieved.

“I said I would handle it, didn't I? Unless you feel it's your civil duty to tell them another version of the same thing I just did, let's get going. I don't know about you, but I could use some rest. If we wake up and still remember what happened today, then we will know it wasn't a crazy dream.” Kai answered.

The others were thankful they could finally go home, Tom was still worried, but he knew it would be suicide to enter the forest on his own. He didn't even know if Gary and the other Omega wolf would still be out there.

'Gary please be safe.'

"By the way, why was I asleep?" Tom asked. "And why does my head hurt?"

The others just looked at Xin, with a grin on their faces, letting her be the one to explain it.

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In the forest, a distance away from the four adults, another fight was taking place. The young Altered Hunter had no idea what was going on, on his partner's side, yet he lacked the time to worry about him, for he needed to concentrate on the opponent in front of him.

Once again, the brown Werewolf swiped at the young Altered Hunter's head. He rolled to the side causing the blow to miss and hit the tree instead. Large deep claw marks were left behind, shredding a huge chunk of the tree.

'It has great strength. If that thing hits me in the head I'm done for.' Still, the young Altered Hunter remained level headed, at every opportunity that presented itself he would hit the Werewolf with his electrified batons, stunning it for a while as the electric power went to work.

'Just how many hits can this Altered take? That much electricity should have been enough to even knock an elephant out by now. Does it have some special kind of resistance or is it just healing this fast?' The young Altered Hunter wondered.

'Whatever the case, I can tell that its movements are slowing down with each hit. If I keep hitting it with the electric batons, then I can change to the sword and finish it off. You will become my first ever Altered kill, allowing me to get on my way to my first star!'

Nearly all of the Werewolf's strikes were missing the Altered Hunter by the skin of his teeth, yet once in a while he managed to get one in. Unfortunately for the creature, his attacks weren't strong enough to pierce through the special Altered Hunter armour.

Nevertheless, each hit served as a grim reminder of the powerful strength of his foe. The Altered Hunter had no clue how long they had been fighting for, it felt like a long time, and that was when he started to notice something.

'It... is getting smaller!' The Altered Hunter realised. Dodging another hit, he used both electrified batons at the same time to shock its back. The beast let out another scream, only this time, rather than a beast's growl, what came out resembled a normal human voice in agony.

'I'm right! As the Altered's getting weaker, it must be reverting back!'

Seeing how the Werewolf was slowing down, and reverting even, the Altered Hunter believed this to be his chance. He was also worried that his partner had yet to appear. Either he was having a much harder time or something unexpected had happened.

The movements of the brown Werewolf were sluggish and slow by now, making it easier for the Altered Hunter to avoid its swing. Using both of the batons, he consecutively started to hit the beast, on its arms, on its chest, and legs all over.

In front of the Altered Hunters' very eyes, the Werewolf began to shrink to the point that the two of them were on the same eye level. The patch of green fur from the top of its head had also started to spread out until, finally, one could see human skin underneath.

'I thought this might have been a real monster for a second, but now I know that there really is a human underneath this abomination. I can do this!' The Altered Hunter steeled his resolve, charging in and swinging out its baton towards the Werewolf's face.

One baton hit its large snout, and its face flung to the side. The large teeth started to revert, and the same happened to the snout. The Altered Hunter didn't stop there, his other baton hit it from the other side as well, making the snout shrink even more.

'Third time's the charm!' The Altered Hunter thought, swinging both batons towards the head again, landing a successful hit against his target. He was starting to see a human face underneath it all, but at that moment, the Werewolf let out a final desperate attack, his claw slicing the mask off of the Altered Hunter.

With that the creature fell to the ground completely exhausted, fully reverting to its human form.

'Sh*t, he broke my mask! ... Well, it won't matter. He's going to die anyway, so who cares if he sees my face now.' The Altered Hunter tried to calm himself down, making a mental note to bring a replacement mask on his next hunt.

It had been a tough fight, and in a way the young Altered Hunter had been lucky that his target had already been injured and hurt from fighting the other Werewolf before. If that wasn't the case, the Altered Hunter wasn't sure if the outcome of their duel would have been the same.

Placing the baton's away, he pulled out a short sword holding it in one hand. He carefully used the weapon to turn the human body over, wishing to imprint the face of his first kill into his mind.

'... G-Gary?!'

Chapter 85: Friend Or Enemy?

The young Altered Hunter almost fell over backwards as he recognised the Werewolf's face. The beast had reverted into human form, revealing a teenage boy's naked body filled with visible scratch and claw marks, injuries sustained from his against the other Werewolf.

'What do I do now?' The young Altered Hunter was in a panic. He had never expected to actually know the Altered he had been ready to kill. Just to check whether his mind was playing tricks on him, making him mistake the other's identity just because of the green hair, he went to turn over his body one more time.

Due to the darkness, the Altered Hunter got closer to get a better view of the other's face. However, just then the boy on the ground abruptly opened his eyes, his vision hazy and his body in pain. Everything felt weak and tired, but he suddenly found a familiar face in front of him.

“B-Blake!” Gary blurted out, still finding it hard to move. Touching his face, the Altered Hunter remembered that the other had destroyed his mask, the one item that was supposed to hide his identity.

‘He saw who I am! He knows I’m an Altered Hunter! I can’t let him go now! He’s an Altered in the first place so... I just need to get rid of him.’

Blake looked down to the short sword in his hand, yet he couldn’t find the strength to grip his hand around it. He had been ready to kill the Altered, but now he hesitated. It didn’t help that Gary was no longer attacking him, looking defenseless and confused.

‘I... I can’t... He’s my classmate. I have no idea how he became such an abomination, but I know that he helped me. He even took a hit for me from those Eton High thugs.’

“My head hurts like hell!” Gary said groggily, as he lifted up his body. Feeling a little chilly Gary soon noticed that he had no clothes on whatsoever, and he was slowly starting to realise that he was in the middle of an unfamiliar forest as well.

“Why am I here? What the hell happened? And why am I naked!” Gary bombarded the hesitating Blake with a barrage of questions, as he picked up the largest leaf he could see to hide his nether regions.

“Huh? You mean, you don’t remember? You don’t remember how you got here or what just happened?” Blake almost shouted, swinging his short sword about. Looking at the illegal weapon in his hand, Gary finally noticed the strange clothing his classmate wore, as well as the batons on his waist.

‘He looks pretty much like a younger version of that other guy... wait... no... how can that be?!’

It was then that Gary was starting to put the pieces together. The last thing he remembered before he woke up was the system notifying him about his transformation starting and then experiencing a type of torture that he never wanted to relive again. He could guess that his Werewolf self had headed for the woods...

“Wait, Blake, I don’t care who you are! What about Tom, is he okay? Did I hurt him? Did I hurt anybody else?” Gary asked, grabbing the other by the shoulder, letting the leaf fall down.

Blake could tell that the other was genuinely concerned but he didn't understand what was happening to Gary. As an Altered, the other should have been in full control of his actions, even if this might have been his first full body transformation. It didn't make sense for him not to remember anything.

'That's right, Tom was with those other guys... I have no clue where he is now, but I still need to decide what I need to do. Gary knows who I am and what I am, but he doesn't seem to care... but I can really believe his word and let him go.' The Altered Hunter hesitated.

"Tom and your other friends are just fine." Blake answered. "At least they were when I last saw them."

Gary let out a sigh of relief, although he wasn't sure who 'those other guys' were. However, he had one sure-fire way to check where Tom was. At the moment, he was unable to see any of his Markings, so he needed to make sure and immediately opened up the system screen.

[10/120 Energy]

[You are unable to sustain your Werewolf form]

[While your Energy is extremely low, emergency/passive healing function is unavailable!]

[20/100 HP]

His stats were at the lowest Gary had ever seen them before, but he found it interesting that the reason for him reverting to a human seemed to have been him running out of Energy. If that was the case, then he might have just found a way to avoid turning during the next full moon. Of course, he would have to find a different way to deal with his bloodlust and it would mean his fighting capabilities would be severely limited.

[Mark 2/5]

‘Two out of five, that means...Tom and Gil are both still alive! I didn’t kill anyone! But why the hell am I here then? And how did I run into Blake?’ Now that Gary realised that his best friend was at least still alive, and he had managed to get through a turning, he looked towards Blake.

“Hey...come on Blake. I know we’re not the closest of people, but you have to understand... I’m not an Altered or at least not a regular one, so can you please let me go if I promise not to tell anyone? I mean we’re teammates, right? You remember, me and you did good together on the field today...”

The naked teenager was slowly stepping back at this point, trying to figure out where to run or even what direction to run. It was then, Blake put the short sword away as well and lifted up both hands.

“Gary...I’m not going to hurt you... I owe you for helping me out. It’s just my family-”

A loud howl interrupted him, and they both looked into the direction of where it had come from.

Blake couldn’t explain anymore, for he knew this wasn’t neither the time nor place for the two of them to talk.

“Gary, I don’t have time to explain, but you have to get out of here!”

The high schooler was inclined to agree but he didn’t know where to go. Heck, he still wasn’t sure where exactly he was. Looking around, Blake realised the other’s problem.

“It doesn’t matter, just run away from the noise! If the others find you, they won’t let you live!” Blake pointed in the opposite direction of where the wolf cry had come from.

Gary started running, picking up the leaf.

“Hey!” Gary said, turning around. “I won’t forget this, Blake. Your secret’s safe with me!”

Squeezing his hand tightly, Blake held his head down in disappointment. Not only had he failed in killing an Altered, he had even gone so far as to actively help it escape, missing his chance of getting closer to obtaining his first star, and becoming an official hunter.

If this ever got out...

Chapter 86: Escape

The fight in the forest was continuing between Frank and the Altered hunter. It seemed both of them had underestimated their opponent. After the black furred wolf had been hit by the strange feathers, it didn't make it easy for Sadie to use them again.

The beast was now making sure to take cover by running between the trees making it hard for her to hit him. Still, once in a while an attack would land, but it didn't seem to matter much because the Werewolf would just pull the feathers out, its body healing the damage.

'That thing's healing speed is seriously annoying! Argh, why did we have to be near a forest?! Even if I fly up I can't use my full strength attacks!' Sadie was frustrated with the situation, and soon felt the Werewolf pounce on top of her. The White Rose agent covered her body wrapping herself in wings.

The two claws were surprisingly able to grip onto them tightly, and she could feel slight pain, scrunching up her face. Her wings were harder than normal steel, and it had been a while since she had felt pain like this. The woman started to flap them, hoping that the beast would let go, but it had already dug its claws into her brown wing, blood dripping from it.

"Frank, a little help would be nice!" Sadie shouted. She didn't feel like she was in trouble, but she knew that with her partner's help it would be far easier to deal with this strange Altered.

"I'm not having it so easy myself, ya know!" Frank shouted back. He had already chosen to place his wings back into his body. During the fight he had been hit by the seared sword a few times, and he still felt the pain. The weapon was a high class one.

Right now, Frank was using his hands, which looked like talons. Some of his fingers almost looked like they were glued together with a single large thick nail at the end. He and the large Altered Hunter exchanged several clashes, as Frank moved out of the way, yet he was the one forced to block more

than he had the chance to attack, but at least his claws were able to take the heat coming from the weapon.

“You’re quite skilled!” Frank praised the other with a smile. “What are you, a three-star hunter? That’s how you guys rank yourselves, right? What is someone like you doing in a place like Slough?”

However, the other didn’t bother to waste time talking. He merely struck the White Rose agent with the sword, knocking one of the clawed hands away and barged into the Altered, his shoulder pushing him down slightly. He was then ready to attack with his sword again, before he had no choice but to jump back.

Three feathers could be seen on the ground, where he had been only a second ago.

“You were meant to be helping me, not the other way round!” Sadie complained, her legs now transformed as well, giving her the look of a bird type Altered. Underneath her clawed leg, the black Werewolf was struggling to get out. Both of its arms were locked in place by her feet.

“You Altered can’t even see the foolishness that has been brought on due to your existence. We both know that this beast isn’t the exception but the rule! Can you imagine the future if this spreads? The Altered Hunter shouted. “If it wasn’t for us then those kids would have died today!”

The next second, Sadie felt a large pain coming from her foot, as she realised that the Werewolf had chosen to use his jaws to take a large bite. It had twisted its head, showing it was far more flexible than she had imagined, and with its large snout and powerful jaws, its teeth had pierced her foot.

On reflex, she had opened it up, allowing the beast to get free at the moment. It let out a howl, before deciding to run off into a different direction in the woods. It was at a great speed, and had nearly gone out of their line of sight.

“Look at your incompetence! Because of your meddling, you let it get away and now it will just continue to rampage!” The Altered Hunter shouted, at the same time, turning away from Frank, he ran in the opposite direction of the Werewolf

“Who do we go after?” Frank asked.

“Get the damn wolfman!” Sadie shouted. “At least the Altered Hunter won’t harm the public, that thing was like a wild beast!”

-

Eventually, running the way that Blake had pointed to, Gary found himself on the open road. He decided to run alongside it, hoping to find his way somewhere, but he was too embarrassed to let anyone see him as he was. As such, he chose not to run in the middle of the road and closer to the edge of the forest.

While doing so, he couldn’t get the crazy thoughts and events from today so far out of his head.

‘What do I do now? I only have 10 Energy, and with the full moon out, it won’t last me long?’ Gary asked himself, as if hoping his ever silent Werewolf System would choose now to provide some guidance. Of course he wasn’t surprised when it didn’t. ‘I don’t even know what time it is. How long until the full moon is over? Do I have to wait until the sun is up, or until a full day has passed?’

‘That howl from earlier earlier must have been Billy. He’s probably going through the same thing as me, but if he meets me now and I’m in this state, he’ll finish me off in seconds. At the same time, if I eat something... if I recover my Energy will I automatically turn back into a Werewolf?’

‘Can I even risk it? Blake didn’t seem to be the only one out there. There’s a chance, I won’t remember anything and it will happen again...’

Gary continued along the road, and he was thinking more and more about what happened, and eventually he was getting snippets of his memory, of him fighting against a black furred Werewolf, and how he hadn’t exactly done well.

It was then that a little squirrel appeared at the edge of the forest. His stomach growled in response.

'One squirrel surely won't hurt... Maybe getting some Energy back will allow me to think more clearly...' Gary tried to convince himself, as the saliva dripped down his mouth. He started chasing after the critter, even as he ran out onto the road.

Seconds later and a bright light could be seen from the corner of his eye. Gary turned around to see how far it was and could see it was soon upon him. He was ready to jump into the forest, but his legs weren't working as he wanted, still too weak.

Luckily, inches before it reached him, the car had come to a screeching halt.

"Do you have a death wish, kid?!" An annoyed voice came from inside the vehicle, slamming the car door open. Someone had gotten out, but the light was shining too bright for him to make out who it was.

"What the- Why are you naked?! What's with all those scratches? Just what the hell happened to you?" The person asked, the anger in his voice replaced with worry.

Chapter 87: Kind stranger?

Seeing the stranger leave his car, the first thing on Gary's mind was to turn and run away.

'No, get away from me! It's dangerous to stay near me! If I'm next to anyone, there's a chance that I could... that I could...' The teenage boy's mind was spinning, as he took a careful step back, heading towards the forest.

"Hey, stop! Where do you think you're going, kid? You can't stay out like that!" The stranger shouted and was quickly by Gary's side. It was at that moment, that his Energy bar dropped even lower.

[8/120 Energy]

The high schooler almost fell to the ground out of exhaustion, yet the stranger managed to catch him, easily carrying him to his car, where he placed him down in the back seat. Gary's eyes were closed and he had fallen into a light slumber.

The stranger continued to drive his car along the street, looking around frantically through the forest for something. Eventually, just when he had been about to head into the forest himself, his phone vibrated and he read the text he had just received.

“Argh, so you’re telling me I came all the way out here for no reason? No, no, I should just be happy that she’s safe. ‘Don’t tell Dad’? Does she really believe she can hide that fact from him?” The stranger muttered to himself, letting out a big sigh.

His monologue seemed to awaken Gary a little bit. Opening his eyes, he found himself in the car with that stranger. He wasn’t sure what to think about that. What were the chances that the guy had rescued him from the kindness of his heart?

Unfortunately, there was little he could do about it. He still suffered from the same problems as before. Top of the list was the immense pain that originated from his stomach. It felt like someone was reaching in pulling his insides.

However, for some reason, it didn’t feel as bad as the last time he was low on Energy. Gary theorised that it might just be because he now had experienced that painful transformation. Compared to that, this seemed like a walk in the park.

“You’re in luck, streaker kid, my plans just fell through. So now I can deal with you.” The man addressed him, apparently aware that he was conscious again. “What happened to you? Why do you have no clothes on? And what are you doing so late?”

Gary was trying to get a look at his ‘saviour’ but with the other’s face looking at the road ahead it was hard to make out anything but his eyes from the rear view mirror. Still, he did notice a few things. For one, the car they were in seemed to be an expensive nice one. The quality of the seats, the space, and the brand on the wheel indicated that it was expensive, probably even an import.

Then, there was the person himself, from the side he could make out defined tricep muscles sticking out from a short sleeve shirt. He wasn’t exactly a large person, seemingly a few inches over Gary, but there was hardly any fat showing on his arm.

‘He’s even more ripped than that coach at the gym. Who is this guy?’ Gary wondered.

“Come on, streaker boy, I need an answer. Right now, I’m still feeling generous, but if you don’t want to spill the beans, I’ll have to just drop you off at the police station.” The stranger rushed him in an annoyed tone. Gary wasn’t sure if he was the reason for his apparent bad mood, or if it had to do with the plans that had fallen through.

“No please, not the police!” The teenager immediately pleaded. He knew that they had his blood in the record now. If he was taken in, they might be able to link him to all the other cases, something he needed to avoid at all costs, but what would he say?

“This is just... I... I’m being bullied at school. They called me out here today before they took all my clothes. I-I can’t fight back...they have connections.” Gary lied, trying to cry to add to his story, though nothing but sobs came out.

He considered this to be quite the feasible story. Of course, that didn’t explain all the scratches all over his body. Gary just hoped that this sob story was enough for the stranger to not bother with those inconsistencies, and ask him anything else. Fortunately for the teenager, the stranger did indeed feel bad to pry into things any further.

“... my condolences. I guess you’re lucky that I found you then. So where exactly did you intend to go before I picked you up? Shall I drop you off at your house?” He asked Gary.

With the way the high schooler was now, home was the last place he wanted to be. He honestly wanted nothing more but to be left alone until this torture was over, but he couldn’t just ask the stranger to drop him off at the storage warehouse. Come to think of it, he dreaded the thought of what he had done, to get out there in the first place...

‘If I stay with him, there is a chance that I might attack him as well.’ Gary worried.

“No answer again, huh. Home trouble on top of school trouble? Look, I’ll do you a favour just this once. I’m staying at a hotel at the moment, and the room is way bigger than what a normal person needs. There are plenty of extra beds. I’ll let you stay there for the night if you want. Then in the morning you can leave and do as you like, no questions asked, alright?” The stranger offered.

“Yes, sir!” Gary immediately agreed, a huge smile on his face. Perhaps there would be a way for him to leave once he was in the room or the stranger had gone to sleep. It was late after all.

“Sir? Do I really look that old to you?” The stranger complained.

‘Damn it, why can’t I help but be nice to people like him. Is it because it reminds me of my own situation.’ The stranger scratched his head.

—

A short while later, the car stopped before a very nice looking hotel that was located at the far end of Copen. It was one of the Slough’s posher areas, but the good thing was that it wasn’t too far away from the Yellow Stack.

Now that they were out of the car, Gary had a better look at the guy in front of him, who was all of a sudden taking off his shirt, revealing his hard abs and everything underneath. The next second he threw the shirt to the kid.

“Cover yourself with that and stay behind me for now.” The stranger ordered as they walked in the hotel. Gary did as he was told. Fortunately, the other was slightly larger than him, allowing him to stretch his shirt to hide certain exposed parts of his body.

Now that he got a closer look at his samaritan, he was wondering where he had seen this person before. The guy had a familiar face but Gary just couldn’t quite pinpoint where he had seen him before.

“Welcome back, Mr. Tiger. Would you like us to help with anything in your room?” A female voice greeted him with respect.

‘Holy sh*t, that’s it!!! He’s Jayden Tiger! What is one of the top Altered in our country! What is he doing in a sh*thole like Slough?!’ Gary, being the Altered fighter fanatic that he was, instantly recognised him after hearing the last name.

Any other day of the week, he might be fanboying over the chance to not only meet but stay with one of his idols, but now he was only worried.

He was running from one tough situation to the next.

Chapter 88: Surviving the night

Gary had to stop himself from hyperventilating due to excitement. His inner fanboy needed to be contained, yet he couldn't waste any more Energy than he already had. Still, there was one silver lining to meeting Jayden.

If Gary was to suddenly turn, he was convinced that the Altered superstar could suppress him in a fight. Unfortunately, he didn't know what would happen after that point, so the high schooler made up his mind to never find out.

The receptionist was baffled at the disheveled sight of Gary, but didn't say anything as the teenager followed the VVIP to the elevator. Jayden hadn't lied about his room being more than one person realistically needed, however he had failed to mention one very important detail.

He was staying in the PENTHOUSE AT THE TOP FLOOR!

The room alone was around five times the size of the apartment where Gary lived with his mother and sister. Through the glass windows one would be able to see the entire town of Slough. This is exactly the type of life Gary had dreamt about when wishing to become an Altered one day.

Alas, he couldn't really enjoy it right now.

Leaving behind a still baffled teenager, Jayden had gone to one of the connecting rooms and returned with a new shirt on. The Altered superstar then threw over a pair of briefs, socks, trousers, as well as a jacket.

"This should let you go around town tomorrow without alarming the police. If you go down the hall, the showers are to the right. There's a toothbrush and everything in each room.

'It's late and I have an early start tomorrow. Just keep the clothes, there's no need to return them. Leave whenever you wish, though don't be surprised if I'm already gone by the time you wake up.' Jayden told him. "Feel free to take a bite out of whatever's in the fridge."

Turning around, the Altered superstar was ready to close the door to his room, but stopped a few seconds later and opened it again.

“Look, I know times are tough in the world at the moment, but if you don’t do something about it, then you might be stuck in this situation forever. The biggest influence on your life is you. Don’t wait for something to happen, change and make it happen.” Jayden made a fist and swung it out.

Gary understood the message that the other wanted him to stand up to his ‘bullies’. The high schooler smiled and nodded, thinking to himself that right now his problem wasn’t fighting off bullies, it was trying to stop himself from killing and eating them.

With the door closed, this was Gary’s best chance to leave. Quickly putting on the provided clothes, he turned around and was about to head out, yet he suddenly stopped, considering his current situation.

Right now, he was at a place where there was nobody else around. The only person that actually WAS around, should be strong enough to contain him. And in case Billy actually tried to attack him again, that person could actually protect him from the other Werewolf.

His family still believed that he was at Tom’s. The only thing worrying him was that he was unable to contact his best friend. After having saved the other’s contact info on his phone, he had never bothered memorising it. Unfortunately, his phone had been left at the storage warehouse.

Not to mention, right now he was still a threat to him.

There was an ornate clock above the TV that told Gary that it was 3 AM. The sun would surely rise in about a couple more hours, so he decided to just wait it out. Sitting on the large sofa, the high schooler waited around, and eventually his system notified him.

[4/120 Energy]

‘What happens when my energy hits 0, will I even be able to move?’ Before Gary knew it, he found himself walking towards the fridge. Opening it, he was surprised to find it filled with all types of protein.

Steaks, chicken, lamb among other animal meat and from the looks of it, all high-quality products. Saliva immediately started to dribble out from his mouth. He was sure that just half a pound of any of that stuff would cost more than the rent for their small apartment.

‘This is what you would expect from a top class Altered.’ Gary reached out ready to grab the food, yet stopped inches away.

‘What if I can’t control myself? No! I have to control myself.’ Gary picked up one of the raw steaks, and slowly and carefully started to take a small bite out of it. It was taking all of his willpower to stop himself from just swallowing the whole thing in an instant. He had to grit his teeth and was using his other hands to hold himself back.

[+2 Energy]

‘I can do this! If I just eat a little at a time, stopping my Energy from going too high it should be okay. When it gets low I’ll just take another bite. Yeah, I just need to hold myself back.’ Gary thought.

This way he continued battling with himself. More than once he had caught his body moving subconsciously. This was a mental type of torture that Gary had never experienced before, but after what felt like an eternity, Gary could finally see it. There, through the large glass window, he could see the sun was starting to rise, while the moon was starting to disappear.

Some time after that he received new notifications.

[You have successfully survived a full moon!]

[The blessing of the moon has passed]

[30 days until the next full moon]

‘I did it! I did it!’ Gary jumped up, and the first thing he did was head straight for the fridge.

He had held back to prevent his Energy from recovering to the point he would be able to transform against, worried that this transformation might last until the moon came up again, or worse, a few days, but judging by the system it seemed like that wasn't going to be the case.

— —

Early in the morning, Jayden's alarm woke him up at 6:30 AM. As he went out, he was surprised to see that the kid he had picked up earlier was nowhere to be seen. He had expected to find him in one of the rooms, still sleeping soundly, but it seemed as if he might have disappeared after he had gone off to sleep.

However, Jayden's conscience was appeased. He had done a good deed and could only wish the boy the best from now on. He headed to the fridge to look for a snack, though when he opened it his jaw nearly dropped.

'What the hell?! I just had it filled yesterday! Did that frigging kid eat all of it? ... no, that should be impossible. There was enough in there to last me a week. Did he steal some of it, to try and make cash or something? Argh, that doesn't matter, what am I supposed to eat now?!'

— — —

A little earlier, both White Rose agents had returned to the police station. They had done so to make a report on the case, and they wanted to confirm something. One of the feathers they had picked up still had the blood of the black Werewolf that had managed to flee.

Sadie wanted to make sure that the blood matched up with Billie. This was her hunch and the others as well. After making a report, the two of them left the room, still furious about failing to arrest that dangerous Altered. They had tried their best to find him from the air, but it was as if he had disappeared somewhere.

They were still in the police station, when another officer came up to them, delivering some good news.

“We found someone who claims to know Billy.” The young officer Roo Game reported. “Since Billy is a dropout it was hard to find anyone who knew the guy, but unexpectedly one of the suspects we brought in claimed he had seen him elsewhere!

“Apparently, the last time he saw him was at one of these underground fights. According to the guy, they happen quite often in this town.”

A smile appeared on Sadie’s face hearing this news.

“An underground fighter, huh? There should be a few people that would have seen him and know him then. Frank, looks like we’ll be going undercover!”

Walking away, Frank noticed that Sadie was limping, she had been injured in her Altered form, and thought that a wound like that would have been healed by now.

‘I hope that bite isn’t infectious.’ Frank was worried.

Chapter 89: Best friends

After replenishing his Energy by plundering the fridge, Gary decided to take some of the food along with him. With no better alternatives, he placed them in the coat pockets of his new jacket. Right now he was in a rush, and there was a reason why he had left early.

‘He won’t mind right? I mean the guy is an Altered superstar. Someone as rich as him can easily just replace all that food, and it’s not like I’ll see him ever again. Damn, if I had been in my right mind I could have asked him for a signature! I bet that would have sold for a decent sum!’

Currently, Gary was sprinting towards the Yellow Stack building, it was around 6 AM in the morning. He was hoping that he could grab his phone and check out what state he had left the room in. Perhaps it might give him an idea of what had happened after he had lost consciousness.

When he finally could see the Yellow Stack though, there were the iconic white and black cars, which made him do a complete U-turn.

'Damn the police are here! Did something happen? Sh*t, did I trigger some sort of alarm or something yesterday? What do I do now? Both of my phones were in there! And my clothes! I hope I don't get Tom in any kind of trouble.' Gary started to panic. 'Well I was naked so maybe I ripped all of my clothes off?'

In the end, the high schooler couldn't risk staying there. All he could do was head to school without them. As for his school uniform, that had been left at school in the locker. Since he left the rugby match yesterday in a hurry. He could only hope that after yesterday's match, Mr Root wouldn't mind giving him some replacements.

Running, running and running non stop, Gary ended up using the Charging Heart skill three times. Once to get Yellow Stack and two more times to reach his school. This was because of how far he was away. Fortunately, with the extra food he had taken, his Energy was almost full again.

Although the moon seemed to still be full, he had lost his additional stats, though it was a small price to pay for no longer losing his Energy as quickly.

'My stats are now lower though, and I can really feel it on my body. I need to improve it!'

Entering school, there was next to no one due to how early it was. It had taken Gary an hour running, which was quite impressive considering the distance. If anyone saw his accomplishments they would have tried to recruit him for the track team.

The first thing Gary did was change into his school uniform from his locker. Anyone could see that his current clothes were too nice for someone like him. After that, all he could do was wait. Surprisingly, the first person who looked to have entered the classroom was none other than Tom.

'Yes, he's here! The one person I could have hoped for, I don't know why he's early but thank my lucky stars he's here!' Gary thought.

He could see the Marks again, and knew they were getting closer but he wasn't going to believe his eyes until he saw them. What was even stranger was the first thing Tom did. He immediately ran up to Gary, giving him a big hug.

“You... you... YOU’RE OKAY!!! I’m so happy!!! I was so worried!!! I thought that you might have been hurt, or stuck in that form forever!!!” Tom was crying, rubbing his head into Gary’s shirt. Covering it with tears and snot.

He had no clue what had happened. If it was before, he would have pushed his best friend off, but after everything his friend had done to help him, it felt wrong of him to do that. Gary waited for Tom to finish letting his emotions out.

Still sobbing, the other placed his backpack on the table, and pulled out two phones as well as some ripped rugby clothing, handing them over to Gary.

“Wait, these are my things, how did you get them?” Gary asked, now looking at Tom he noticed that his face looked incredibly tired.

‘What exactly had happened to him?’ Gary thought.

“I went to Yellow Stack after leaving the police station. I thought that you wouldn’t be there, since you were dealing with other things, I didn’t know how I could help you, but I wanted to make sure that the person I saw was you.

“When I entered the Yellow Stack, I could see that the steel door had been ripped to shreds, the chains were completely broken, and there was something on the floor. Anyway, I cleaned most of it up, and grabbed things before calling the police myself. Saying there was a break in, so there shouldn’t be a problem there.”

“Wait what? I understand some of what you were talking about, but the other things make no sense. How did you know where I was, or what I was doing?” Gary asked.

It was then that Tom went into the frightening details of last night. How he had planned to wait nearby, how they had seen someone killed in front of their eyes, but most importantly, that Gary in his Werewolf form was the one that saved them.

'All of that happened, yet I wasn't conscious for any of it... At least it didn't sound like I attacked the other guys... but why did I save them? Well clearly that other Werewolf had to have been Billy.' Gary thought.

Thinking about things a bit more, Gary had some theories and they were all related to his system. From what it had told him, he should have been hunting those Marked by him with a Forced Bond, yet Gil didn't seem to have been there.

Since that didn't happen, he could only imagine that his Werewolf instincts had been trying to complete another Quest of his. Fighting the other Omega to see who would come out on top.

Lastly, there was also the Bond Mark that he had with Tom. Maybe Gary had protected Tom because of his Mark, or there was a part of him that was still in his Werewolf form somewhere, telling his Werewolf self to protect those close to him?

The last one he thought was unlikely because Gary couldn't remember a thing, it was as if someone had taken over his body.

'It might be if I place more Bond Marks on people I really care for, like my mother and Amy. However, first I'll have to deal with a far bigger problem. Billy could still be alive, and if he comes out again...'

"Anyway, thanks for helping us out Gary, now we have an entire month to solve this problem to prevent anything from going wrong next time. Just leave the whole mess about the container to me, I'll find a way to explain things to my parents somehow. Looks like it wasn't much use anyway." Tom chuckled. "By the way, I was wondering, since when did you have two phones?"

Chapter 90: A gang name

Gary didn't want to have secrets from Tom, especially after everything he had done to help him, but at the same time he didn't want to drag his best friend into an even deeper mess. It wasn't fair of him, and it was likely that it could endanger his life as well as that of his family, more so than he already had done.

"Oh this thing? My regular phone has been playing up a bit recently. You know about our financial situation, so I've used some of that money I had earned from that part time job to get myself that brick

for emergencies. You know how those old phones can never die, and the battery lasts on them forever.” Gary smiled, still feeling hurt inside.

As for Tom, he didn’t know how to feel. Gary had shared one of his biggest secrets with him, so why would he need to lie about a second phone.

“What about the police report? Did you say anything about me?” Gary asked, changing the subject.

“Actually I wanted to ask you about that. The whole thing was strange. You know that rich upperclassman Kai Hemper? He went ahead of all of us, but after he talked to them for a while, they all just let us go home. I thought he was just some rich kid, but just being rich shouldn’t get you out of a situation like that. By the way, how do you know him?”

Scratching his head, Gary felt like he couldn’t lie two times in a row, he was a bad liar in the first place, so he chose to stick to mostly the truth, without revealing anything extra.

“He was actually the one who introduced me to that part time job.”

Things were starting to add up to Tom, but he still didn’t know why Kai, who couldn’t have known Gary for too long, was so interested in him that his entire group, which seemed to include that sudden transfer Innu, had been willing to look for his best friend in the middle of the night.

A short while later and other students started to enter the classroom, unaware of the horrors Gary and Tom had lived through.

“Hey Gary, you did a great job in the first half of yesterday’s Rugby match! I never knew you were that strong.” One of his classmates congratulated him. “Oh and Tom, how are you? I can’t believe the referee didn’t punish those bastards for clearly stepping onto your hand!”

Tom and Gary recognised him as one of the more popular kids of their year, meaning he was someone who would usually never associate with either one of them.

"A shame Gary didn't punch them out. Seriously, when you jumped those Eton High students I was rooting for you, they would have deserved it. I'm still surprised you did that with their bad rep. I thought they were all going to jump you!" Another one added.

The compliments didn't seem to stop, and after the day that Gary had, it was a nice change of things. He thanked them all and just smiled back. The last ones to arrive were a teenage girl and boy, both resembling zombies. They were drained and dragging their feet along the floor.

'I guess both of them didn't get a good night's sleep then.' Gary gulped, feeling responsible.

Xin, sat down in her seat and didn't look towards anyone with her head sunken in. Gary wanted to go talk to her, apologise for getting her into the mess, but it would have felt strange and given things away.

As for Innu, when he tried to talk to him, the other didn't even let him utter a single word.

"You! I really don't want to talk to you..." Innu sat down in his chair and placed his backpack in front of him, proceeding to use it as a makeshift pillow. "Do you know what happened to us yesterday? Actually scratch that, do you know what happened to ME?! I almost got killed like five times, and it was all because we went searching for you!

"Then, I have this psycho here, shouting your name all the time, trying to talk to some possessed Altered. Bad luck! That's all I have since I started following you!"

With that Innu just lay there. The truth was that he knew it wasn't Gary's fault that this had happened, but he needed someone to blame all his frustrations on.

Lessons went on as normal, but as was to be expected, Gary couldn't focus on the classes. Billy was the main worry he had in his head. Even his Werewolf form couldn't beat the other Werewolf. Gary had no idea how to beat the other, especially since Billy had already killed and consumed humans, making him even stronger. The longer he waited, the worse his chances of dealing with him became.

'Maybe the best option would be to get him before the full moon. Then I can worry about myself as well...but it means I have to be prepared...prepared to kill him.' Gary thought.

A little while later, he felt his phone vibrate, and it was coming from his secret phone. Tom, who had been keeping an eye on Gary, took note of this. When it was finally time for lunch, his best friend asked him if they could go and grab a bite to eat together.

"Sorry, I have to make a report to Mr Root about the game. He said he wanted to talk to me about something." Gary lied again.

"... Okay, I understand. I might just stay here and catch up on some sleep." Tom replied.

Watching carefully, Tom soon saw that Innu also looked at his phone, one that looked eerily similar to the brick model his best friend had, and went off in the same direction as Gary.

'That phone and Kai, something is up with all of them. I wonder if this has something to do with how Gary was making money. Gary...I just hope you're not getting yourself in another mess.'

Tom's guess was spot on. The high schooler had headed to the roof, where Kai and Marie were both already waiting for him. A little while later Innu joined them as well.

"It looks like everyone is here for our meeting." Kai said after Innu closed the door behind him. "We had quite an eventful evening yesterday, looking out for you, Gary. I'm sure your friend already caught you up on everything that happened.

Anyway, regardless of this, tomorrow is the big day for you two, it's your first match, and it's also our first debut as a gang. The reason why I called you all here today was because I wanted for us all to come up with a name, as members."

This came as a surprise to Gary. He had seen Marie interact with Kai that one time he had followed after her, yet he had never thought that she would also be involved with this whole gang business.

"How about, the Unbreakable Iron Group? Or I know, the Black Flames!" Innu suggested while pretending to wield the power of fire. It was when the group noticed that Innu had quite the childlike side to him... and that his naming sense was horrible, yet Gary didn't have any better suggestions himself which was why he decided to keep quiet.

“After what happened yesterday, I actually felt inspired by those creatures. What do you all think about, The Howlers?” Kai suggested, looking at Gary in particular.

“I like it.” Marie said, while Innu shivered a little bit thinking about the howls he had heard from the Altered yesterday. However, he had to admit that it was a good name. A gang name should send fear into whoever heard their name, though usually their own members should be exempt.

“I think...it’s good as well.” Gary answered, really not having any better ideas.

After that, Kai reminded the two to keep out of trouble until their fight, before giving them the meeting place on the day of the match. He also advised them to stay inside as much as possible due to the recent events that happened.

Since lunch was coming to an end, Gary was heading back to his classroom, and it was when going through the hallways he stopped dead in his tracks, and so did the other person opposite him.

“...Blake...”

‘Damn it, I completely forgot about this...’