

Vampire!Severus 4: Werewolf

by MHaydn

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Theo sighed. It was his fate to write the dull, connective narrative that got the story back on track.

"Eight by eight. Four squares of it," came the shout from someone on a ladder.

Hermione was carrying lemonade to the awning where, in its shade, the Malfoys were now cutting four squares of glass for window repair. They were adept at it, and the townspeople were grateful they had volunteered to help repair the damage done by the bounty hunters. Hermione, however, was preoccupied by the other help the Malfoys had offered: loans of one hundred dollars each to six establishments to be paid back at six dollars a month for two years, which had been eagerly accepted. Even though she had only six years of schooling, she had absorbed it all, especially the practical arithmetic, and she was calculating the interest rate.

"You clean up nice," Hermione told Draco.

Draco shook his head, now free of molasses and hay. He hadn't expected a sense of humor from a farmer's daughter, but perhaps they had nothing else to do all day on the prairie.

"Not as polished as that cannon you carry. Where do you hide it, anyway?"

"Were not such good friends, yet," said Hermione.

"Oh, marvelous," Theo heard Cho say.

Theo had been too preoccupied to notice that Cho was reading over his shoulder.

Cho put her hands on his shoulders. He wouldn't mind, would he? After all, they were fellow writers, and she was merely acknowledging comradeship. Would he think she was offering encouragement in his endeavors if her breasts brushed against him? Where did that thought come from? She recalled that he was a person of quiet achievement with no need to brag. What made her think he cared what she thought? To hide her confusion, she babbled out, "It opens up all kinds of possibilities. I know the editor and I can exploit them."

Theo was fuming that Cho and the editor were going to exploit his introduction, but his rage was blocked when he thought about the tragic loss of her lover followed by her poor treatment by a so-called boyfriend. He also was thinking Cho's hands on him were marvelous. Why couldn't she brush one of her cute breasts against him? Where did that thought come from? He recalled that she was a high achiever who was even more admirable because she went about it with quiet competence. What made him think she cared about what he thought? To hide his confusion, he babbled out, "I'm certain you and the editor will do a great job. I just remembered I promised to meet Biff for coffee."

Theo left the room believing he had extricated himself with dignity for himself and with kindness to all.

The editor watched a crestfallen Cho watch Theo leave. The editor could sympathize. Biff, of the quick mind and noble visage, hadn't invited her either. Well, she was a professional and wouldn't let the actions of two callous prats influence her making a contribution to the story line.

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one person to dissolve the emotional bonds which connected her to another, and to assume among the otherwise happy people of this world, the lonely and desolate status to which the whims of chance have condemned her, a decent respect for the feelings of others compels her to conceal the despair she holds and proceed with her craft thus better endowed to abolish the torment mankind suffers from a long train of abuses and throw off the tyranny of depression felt from unwarranted injuries by offering solace in accordance with the rectitude of her intentions and providing uplifting sagas of the lonely, by the lonely, and for the lonely.

The editor dried her eyes.

Some time later, a caffeinated Biff and Theo were absorbing the editor's effort.

"Yes," said Biff. "Let's get this uplifting saga on the road."

Lucius and Draco were enjoying the local brew at The Ram and The Puma when the farmer's daughter made her entrance, looking as full of accusations as a district attorney with an eye on running for governor.

"I've been thinking," said Hermione.

"That's what we've been thinking," said Lucius.

"What?"

"Did you think we wouldn't notice your cogitating?" asked Draco. "The first thing you worked out was the interest rate, right? And you wondered if it was commensurate with the risk of the loans."

Hermione nodded. She had worked up a good head of steam, but indignation didn't seem appropriate in the face of such frank acknowledgement.

"Tell us what more you worked out," encouraged Lucius.

Hermione basked in their recognition. She had never had her mental efforts taken seriously before. Hamlet-on-Prairie-Edge hadn't much use for it. She should be full of righteous anger. This wasn't going the way she had imagined it would. She was deflating as fast as a cheap balloon on a cold night.

"One year from now, more than half of the money will be paid back, and you can loan it out again," she said.

"Very good," said Draco.

Hermione wondered why he sounded as if he were purring.

"And I've been trying to compute how much you have to have loaned out and what interest rate you need in order to maintain your lifestyle," said Hermione.

Draco and Lucius were giving her appreciative looks. "A head for business," they said.

She had come prepared for a confrontation, not for having her insides turn as warm and creamy as her grandmother's vanilla pudding.

"Too tame by half," said Cho, picking up her pen.

"Our families are hoping we can buy some cheap land before the railroad arrives, and then sell it at a premium," said Parvati.

"But we came by way of Vancouver and Seattle, and we were introduced to high culture," said Pansy.

"We consider it our duty to bring civilization to this small town," said Parvati.

"We want to open a coffee and doughnut shop," said Pansy.

Parvati looked at the Dark Stranger. "We *are* looking for a partner."

Pansy smiled at him. "Think of all the cream and sugar we'll have for your berries."

He took in the sight and scent of the two, fought for control, and managed to say, "But I'm a Creature of the Night."

"I have trouble getting moving in the mornings, too," said Parvati.

"I'm saying that I'm a blood-sucking parasite."

"An investment banker?" asked Pansy. "You're in cahoots with the Malfoys?"

"Nothing that dire," said the Dark Stranger, but while he was reconsidering whether or not to reveal his secret, two ranchers burst into the pub.

"There's a beast out there killing our cows," said one. "It's some kind of monster that attacks at night."

"We need to form a gang to go get it," said the second. "You townspeople might think you're safe, but mark my words, it's coming to get you too."

"Perhaps I can be of assistance," said the Dark Stranger. "In which direction is your ranch?"

"You aiming to tackle it alone, mister?" asked the first rancher.

"We may as well let him try," said the second rancher. "One city slicker, more or less, is no loss to the world."

The Dark Stranger managed to grab Pansy's and Parvati's hands before they pulled whatever they were reaching for out from under their skirts.

There are more dangerous things than monsters in the night, he thought.

Thus it was that the Dark Stranger headed out into the dark and strange night.

He was standing on a boulder his instincts told him was the right spot when he said, "Hey, Wolfy. Show yourself, you redneck peckerwood."

A menacing shape appeared, followed by intent sniffing of the air.

"I always heard your kind had impeccable manners," said the werewolf. "What are you, an inferior reject?"

"My apologies. I'm new at this, and I've never met a werewolf."

"I know why you're here," said the werewolf. "The ranchers are all riled up because of a few cows, but what else can I do? What do you do?"

"I trap bunny wabbits," said the Dark Stranger.

"That's okay for you, but what would the other werewolves say if they found out."

"They'll never hear it from me," said the Dark Stanger, "and by the way, do you have to tear the animal to pieces? That upsets the ranchers more than losing the occasional livestock."

"I'd rather not. Usually, I'm a dainty eater, but something happens, and I regain my senses in the middle of a dismembered beast. Yuck, what a mess. But you probably have never felt the influence of primal urges, and you don't know what it's like."

The Dark Stranger thought about making two ladies content, wallowing in their love reek until they were as brainlessly happy as a glazed doughnut whereupon he would lick off their civilized icing veneer, creating a wild choux eager for all the cream and sugar he wanted to give her.

"Wow, that's powerful imagery," said the werewolf.

"I reckon you have some ability in telepathy," said the Dark Stranger.

"It helps track my prey," said the werewolf. "I'm more attuned to the primitive thoughts of herbivores, but yours came through loud and clear. Don't get me wrong. I admired the literary metaphors. Say, don't you think both of them might be a bit much for one bloke?"

The Dark Stranger snarled.

"Stay calm, old chap. It was just a friendly offer," said the werewolf. "Are those two starting a bakery? Would they like some help?"

To the dark Stranger's surprise, he snarled again.

"Okay, I believe that you, too, have to contend with primitive urges," said the werewolf.

The werewolf sniffed the air. "You've recently been close to them, and they're both virgins."

They are? thought the Dark Stranger. *I didn't know that.*

After some meditation on the matter, the werewolf said, "I suppose if you can control your dark urges, I could make some effort to control mine."

"How do we seal this deal?" asked the Dark Stranger.

"My pack goes to the top of a hill and pees on a sacred oak tree by the light of the full moon," said the werewolf. "That's followed by a long howl. What does your kind do?"

"Most of them exchange the beating hearts of their latest victims, but your way sounds more civilized."

Cho leaned back in her chair with the glazed-eye look of one still lost in story time.

"You outdid yourself, my dear," said the editor.