

was out the door and escaping into the coolness of the fog.

I was nearly a mile from the cabin before I realized that no one was following me. How could they in the pea soup fog. I couldn't even find my own way.

I sunk down against a tree, feeling icy cold inside and searing hot on my skin. And mixed with all these feelings was the knowledge that I had been beaten.

“No, you beat yourself,” a voice inside me cried. “If you had stood your ground and fought like a man, you would be crouched over a fine meal at this very moment. A meal of tender young, teenage flesh.

My stomach growled in protest of my not bringing it the child.

“Shut up,” I told it as I thought about the situation. Suddenly I smiled. Within my heart grew a firm resolve. It didn't matter that I hadn't been lucky this time. Next time I would win. Next time I would make that man pay for the pain he had caused me. And I knew that there would be a next time.

In 29 days there would be another full moon. And as both they and I knew...they didn't have anywhere else to go.

THE WEREWOLF OF WALTHER POINT

A Story For Brave Souls



Written by:

Caitlind L. Alexander

Illustrated by:

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Editor: Jennifer Robinson

LearningIsland.org

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was a fireplace poker, and the end glowed red hot from where it had been resting in the flames of the fire.

It slammed across my shoulder, giving me the bruises I had spared myself earlier. The heat from the end of the poker seared my flesh, sending a sickening smell reeling around the room.

Instead of withdrawing, he held the flame tight against me. A second later my luxurious hair burst into flames. I clutched at my shoulder, screaming in pain, just as the screams of the women above me joined in.

Without heed to the noise, the father instantly swung the poker in an arch, slamming it against my back. I reeled with the pain and my legs buckled under me. For the first time ever, I think I was scared. Really scared.

Suddenly my hunger didn't matter. All I could think about was getting out of that cabin. I rolled to put the fire out, all the while dodging the swings of the searing poker. As soon as the flames died, I raced for the door and yanked on the handle. It refused to open.

Suddenly I remembered I had come through the window. The door was still barred. I fumbled for the lock as I heard the poker swing through the air again. Instinct took over and I dropped to the ground and rolled. I wasn't fast enough, though, and my other shoulder was punished for my slowness.

Quickly I jumped to my feet and tore at the bar. It came loose with one swipe of my paw and before I could remember savagely scraping away the handle, I

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The fog rolled in, wrapping itself around my shoulders like a stale, wet, gray cloak. It gathered deeper and deeper, like an old friend happy to see me after a long absence. And it hid me.

It hid my presence from the watchful eyes in the cabin before me.

That was fine with me. I needed the concealment more than I needed the sight. In fact, I didn't need to see the cabin at all. I could smell it. And I could smell most strongly the one thing I wanted more than anything else in the world right now. The thing that made my stomach ache with hunger.

The child!

Sweet, young, tender flesh about fifteen years old. A werewolf's favorite meal.

I listened as my heart beat faster and my mouth salivated. I could hear them in the cabin. There were

three of them. The mother, the father, and their precious little teenage girl.

They were talking. Even now I could hear the words float to me on the winds that wiggled softly through the mist.

“We've nowhere else to go,” the father said forlornly. “If Tom hadn't agreed to lend us this cabin for the summer and give me a chance to get back on my feet, we'd be living on the streets right now, and probably be dead. The streets of New York are no place to try and raise a child.”

“It's all right,” his wife consoled. “You know I've always enjoyed camping. And this will give us time to be together as a family while your leg heals.”

“...while your leg heals.” The words went over and over in my head. The man was injured. There would be no threat to this.

My heart had a hard time deciding whether it was happy or sad. Sometimes the thrill of the hunt made the chase that much more exciting. And the final meal that much more tasty.

And you had to admit, things were getting pretty slim around here. It wasn't easy being a werewolf, especially when people knew there was something around to fear. They hadn't put all the signs together yet. When they did, I knew I would have to move on. You can't live in a place where they start locking people up when the full moon comes around just to try and figure out which one of you it is.

Slowly I climbed into the cabin, keeping my eyes on the man before me. I could hear his breathing, strained and loud. It echoed in my ears like the waves of the ocean, an ocean that would soon be silent.

Suddenly I decided he wasn't worth the lack of challenge. I actually believe I would have felt a little guilty tearing apart a man who didn't have the power to resist me.

Leaving him, I turned my attention to the two people cowering over my head. It would be a simple matter to pull the table into position, reach up and pluck my dinner from above like pulling apples from a tree.

As I grasped the end of the table, though, I sensed a change in the room. I turned quickly to find that nothing had changed. Then I glanced closer at the father's eyes. He saw me. And he saw what I was doing.

My blood beat faster, wondering if he would find the power to make his limbs obey and come toward my hideous form. That was something I would have to take a chance on. For as I soon found out, the table was made of heavy oak. I wouldn't be able to budge it without turning my back to him.

I decided to risk it.

Just as I threw my weight against the table, I heard a movement behind me. My paw swiped backward, sure I would catch him in the face. I didn't.

He was still five feet away and I suddenly saw what had kept his arms by his side for so long. In his hands

I glanced upward and saw the mother perched precariously on the rafters above the room. Her child was pressed tightly against her chest. Their rim of their eyes glared white with fright. Even though the window was closed, I could smell the fear emanating from inside the small, single room.

My eyes dropped back to the father who hadn't moved. This was too easy, but my hunger was burning inside like the flame in the fireplace. And it hurt.

I spied a small log pile stacked a few feet away. Brazenly walking past the window, I picked up a log. I turned and stood again, allowing myself to be seen from inside. Perhaps this would induce the father to fight.

But for some reason he remained motionless. He stared at the window, his gaze trying to pierce through the glass and into my soul, but it didn't work. I only stared back.

Suddenly I raised the log and smashed the window. The sound of the glass shattering across the floor was followed by a shrill scream from the rafters above. Still the father refused to raise his arms.

I raked the log around the edge of the window pane, clearing away the remnants of the glass. With what I hoped was a show of contempt, I flung the log into the center of the room. No one moved.

Well, even if they weren't moving, I was going to. I was hungry. Besides the father was probably too scared to ever move again.

But these people were strangers here in town. And if they disappeared, no one would miss them.

“And now that the car is gone, we can't even live out of that,” the father added. That's when I knew my meal was eminent. There was no way they could escape fate. And fate was on my side.

As the fog moved in closer and closer I moved with it. Perhaps I should let them see me, let them know I was coming somehow. At least give them a chance to fight. Yes. That's what I would do.

But what if they had a gun? I had felt the searing pain of a red hot piece of metal pass through my body. It wasn't a feeling I chose to repeat. Luckily that time it hadn't hit anything vital and I licked at it until the blood stopped.

Somehow the primal hunting instincts took over and from deep within my throat came a low growl. I shuffled the leaves by my side and then growled again. This time a bit louder. Then I stopped to listen.

“There's something out there,” the woman's voice cried. “Did you hear it?”

“It's probably just a dog,” the husband answered, but I could tell from the tone of his voice that he wasn't sure.

“We need a gun. Why didn't we buy a gun?” the wife shrieked. It would be good to silence that shrill voice.

“It's too late now,” the husband's voice answered. “Quickly, climb up into the rafters, both of you.”

There was the sound of shuffling from inside the cabin as the wife followed her husband's orders. A few grunts and groans later and I knew she was settled. Were they actually foolish enough to think I couldn't make my way up to the rafters to join them... to devour them?

“But then again,” I reminded myself. “They are only foolish humans. In their mind I am nothing more than a stupid bear to be reckoned with.”

“Aren't you coming up?” the wife shrieked. Her voice scraped across my nerves like coarse sandpaper. “You'll be killed down there.”

So, the husband was going to fight. There would be some excitement in this after all. I slurped the drool back into my mouth and cautiously edged forward. A moment later I reached the cabin.

Working stealthily, I edged my eyes above the height of the window. The light had been doused, but I could still see the outline of the husband standing next to the fireplace. His hands seemed to rest at his side. His back was pressed firmly against the wall, while his head twisted around several times, checking both the front and back entrance to the cabin.

He didn't see me.

I knew the doors would be barred, though that alone couldn't stop my entrance. After thinking briefly about it, I decided I wasn't of a mind to give myself a shoulder full of bruises trying to break the door down. Right now I was hungry.