

Teen Wolf Fan Fiction

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Sunlight and Shadows

Disclaimers: Teen Wolf is not mine. The recognizable characters from the movie are not mine. I'm only borrowing them, and I promise to put them back when I'm done. Part of the dialogue is from the movie scene where Scott is walking Boof home. I always wondered what would have happened if he'd told her at the end of this scene.

No infringement is intended.

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Scott and Boof walked side by side down the tree-lined sidewalk. It was a beautiful day. The bright sunlight was a sharp contrast to his new nightmarish reality. He wondered what Boof would say if he told her. With his luck, she'd probably freak out and never want to talk to him again. Or had his dad already told her about his secret?

"So," he said nervously, "you guys were chatting. Harold Howard and his famous chats." Scott took a deep breath. "What'd he say?"

She replied, "He mentioned that you were quitting basketball to work on the school play."

Relieved that his dad hadn't told her about being a werewolf, he responded, "Yeah."

"I can see why," Boof continued. "She's very pretty, Scott. But she has a boyfriend," she pointed out. "A very large boyfriend."

Scott could see her point. What chance did he have competing with Mick now, anyway? Besides he was afraid that he'd accidentally hurt Pamela. The Uncle Ben speech his dad had given worried him. What kind of great power did he have, exactly? Sure, he was curious, but he was also scared to death that he'd turn into a werewolf and accidentally hurt someone.

"Look, it doesn't matter anyway, cause the way things are going now, I'd be better off if I just stayed away from everyone," he said.

"Even me?" she persisted.

"I couldn't get away from you if I tried," he replied.

"Do you remember?" she asked, recalling the time they'd tried to run away together.

"How old were we? Six?"

"Five," she responded.

He laughed, also remembering the childhood incident. "I wanted to run away from home, but you wouldn't let me go alone."

"I was afraid you'd get lost," she answered.

"Yeah, but I didn't get lost. We just kept walking around the block," Scott replied and Boof chimed in, "because our parents wouldn't let us cross the street."

"I was afraid they were going to kill us when we got home."

"I know, but when we did, no one even knew we were gone. Did you ever tell anybody?"

"Nope," he replied.

"Me, neither." On an impulse, she grabbed his jacket and pulled him closer. "Scott, if you ever need someone to talk to, or if something is bothering you, I'll understand."

He hesitated, wondering whether she'd hate him if she knew he was different.

"Scott, what is it?" she asked, seeing that he was nervous. "You can tell me anything. You know that."

"Anything, huh?"

"Yeah. So what is it?"

He shook his head. "You wouldn't believe me."

"Try me," she insisted.

"No."

"Come on, try me. Scott, you know I can keep a secret."

He swallowed a lump in his throat. "That's not what I'm worried about, Boof."

"What are you worried about, then?" she asked.

"I'm afraid you'll hate me."

"Why?"

"Because I'm different. Look, I just found out. I didn't know about it until last night." He took a deep breath and glanced around to make sure no one else was within earshot. "I'm a werewolf," he admitted.

She stared at him in stunned amazement. "You're joking, right? Did Stiles talk you into this?"

"No, he didn't, I swear. I'm telling you the truth, Boof. You wanted to know what was bothering me. Now you know."

Recalling that her black T-shirt had been shredded by his fingernails after they'd been locked in the closet at the party, she realized that he was probably being honest. "You're really a..."

"Werewolf," he supplied. "Yeah. Boof, you gotta promise not to tell anyone. I already told Stiles, so it's okay to talk to him about me. My dad knows, but he's a werewolf too."

"Your dad is a werewolf?" she asked in disbelief.

"Yeah."

She shook her head, unable to reconcile the image of mild-mannered Harold Howard as a furry werewolf. But then, it was pretty difficult to imagine Scott as one. "Next you'll tell me your mom was a werewolf."

"Nope. She was perfectly normal. Look, Boof, please don't tell anyone about this. I'm begging you. Please."

He was so nervous, she thought. Suddenly, she noticed the hair growing on his hands. It was thick and dark brown. In addition, his fingernails were turning into sharp claws. No wonder her T-shirt had been shredded. She gasped. "Scott, your hands!"

He glanced down and panicked, seeing that a car had just turned onto the street and was heading in their general direction. It was orange, so it might be Stiles' Nova, but it was so far down the street that he couldn't tell. "Oh, no. Not here. Not now. What am I gonna do?"

"Duck behind those bushes," Boof suggested.

The car was Stiles' orange Nova. He had loud rock music blaring and pulled over to the side of the road, seeing their feet behind the bush. "Scott? Boof? You guys want a lift to the game?"

"Not now, Stiles," Scott replied in the somewhat gruff voice that belonged to the wolf.

"Is everything all right, or are things getting kind of... hairy?"

Boof rolled her eyes.

Scott couldn't help but laugh. "That's one way to put it."

"Okay. Keep cool, TW. Don't do anything I wouldn't do. I'll see you guys later." Stiles drove off.

"TW?" Boof asked.

"It stands for Teen Wolf," Scott replied as he turned back to normal.

"Figures." She stood up, then grabbed his hand. "Up you go, furball."

"Boof, do I even remotely look like a furball? Well, except for the fur part, of course."

"You're right, fur face has a much better ring to it," she said, affectionately ruffling his hair. She gave him a kiss. "I will see you at the game, won't I?"

"Yeah," he replied, returning the kiss. "I'll be there." It was a relief to have told Boof. He knew that she would keep his secret.

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The End

Shattered Reality

Disclaimers: None of the recognizable characters from Teen Wolf are mine. Richard Stilinsky is kind of mine, since I don't recall them giving Stiles' dad a name or personality in the movie and it's been way too long since I've seen the cartoon. Teen Wolf was created by Joseph Loeb III and Matthew Weisman.

This is also an X-Men crossover. The X-Men mutants are owned by Marvel, not me. I'm just borrowing the characters. Feedback is welcome. I like constructive advice, but no flames please.

* * * * *

Rupert Stilinsky, otherwise known as Stiles to his friends, grimaced as his dad took another swig of whiskey. His old man drank way too much, but there was nothing he could do about it. As soon as his dad sobered up, he'd drive over to the liquor store.

Stiles had a summer job as a salesman at the used car lot, but he didn't earn much more than the minimum wage. It paid for food and a few bills. That was it. His mom, who had left years ago after his father abused her, sent them money. But it was never really enough.

Richard Stilinsky looked at his son with unfocused brown eyes. "Wha' the hell're you doin' here, boy? You should be in school," he slurred.

"Dad, it's the middle of June. Besides, I won't be here long. You know I have a summer job over at Stan's Used Cars in the afternoons." Scott was picking him up since he'd totaled the Wolfmobile, the van he'd had custom-painted after his best friend revealed that he was a werewolf.

Scott gained newfound popularity when everyone found out -- mostly thanks to Stiles' efforts. He'd known Scott since they'd gone to kindergarten together, and genuinely wanted to help him. But did anyone appreciate his hard work? No. He sighed. The van had been a work of art. Too bad it was now sitting in a junkyard.

"Scott's giving me a lift," he added.

"That crazy kid? What're you doin' hanging around with him? The kid's a freak, you know. So's his old man. I...went to high school with 'im, y'know."

Stiles knew that. His dad had once been friends with Harold Howard. They'd been inseparable, pretty much like Scott and him. Something drastic must have happened to change that. Whatever it was, his dad had never said.

He figured that Mr. Howard might've confided in his dad when he'd learned that he was a werewolf and that his old man hadn't taken it very well. His father must've been sworn to secrecy, because until a few weeks ago, he had never heard of real werewolves. Sure, there were always urban legends, but until recently there was never any proof.

"They aren't freaks," Stiles replied, trying to stay calm. "They're people, Dad. I'm sorry you haven't figured that out yet."

Getting mad at his old man when he was drunk wouldn't do any good. He'd learned that the hard way. When he was only nine, he'd made the mistake of yelling at his father who had spilled beer all over a homework assignment that he'd just finished. As a result, his father had taken off his belt and beaten him. His mother had called the Howards and Stiles spent the night at Scott's house. That was before Scott's mother had died. She'd baked cookies. He and Scott had red Kool-Aid and watched cartoon videos until it was time to go to bed.

Stiles hated his childhood and his father for what he'd done to their family, but at the same time, he missed the normalcy of it all. Things had gotten pretty crazy lately. At least reporters were no longer camping in town. Scott's transformation caused a media frenzy. The world was stunned to learn that werewolves were real.

As a result, a few other werewolves were coming out of the closet and doing interviews on late night TV shows to make sure the world knew that they were real people and not B-movie monsters. They had families, careers, and lives just like everyone else. They just got furry once in a while.

Richard laughed, spewing whiskey all over the place. He wiped his mouth with the sleeve of his blue and black plaid flannel shirt. "Of course, they're freaks, son. You've seem 'em all hairy and shit. Hey, I hear Harvard wants to give your pal a scholarship just so they can study him."

"Yeah, right, dad." The doorbell rang. Glancing out the window, he could see Scott. "I'm leaving now. I'll see you later."

As Stiles opened the door, Scott's nostrils flared at the strong scent of alcohol. He'd known his friend to drink on occasion (technically underage), but there wasn't any whiskey on his breath. It smelled like someone had opened a bottle of whiskey and poured it all out. "Is everything okay?"

"Fine," Stiles snapped.

"Okay," Scott slowly replied. He started walking towards the van from his dad's hardware store. It was white with "Howard's Hardware" painted in large red letters.

Stiles caught up with him. "Sorry. Anything new?"

"Not much. Boof and I went to a movie last night."

"Yeah? Which one?"

"Back to the Future."

They climbed into the van. Scott started it and began to back out. Just as he was about to back into the street, Stiles' dad opened the front door. He was obviously pissed off and he carried an empty whiskey bottle.

"Hold it right there, you freak," Richard bellowed.

"Shit," Stiles muttered. "Just ignore him and keep going."

Scott was about to floor it, but his friend's dad kept approaching.

"This is private property, and you're trespassing."

Suddenly realizing what was about to happen, Stiles shouted, "No, Dad!"

"You worthless son of mine. I told you that boy was a freak, but would you listen?" Gripping the bottle, Richard pulled back his arm, about to throw it. "I don't ever want to see you again! Either of you!"

Both teenagers ducked as the man hurled the bottle. It smashed into the windshield and glass flew everywhere. Stiles watched in horror as reality shattered around him. His ears began to ring, much to his annoyance. Then he felt a sharp pain in his forehead and the ringing in his ears got louder.

Suddenly one of the windows in his house broke. His dad whirled around, thinking it was one of the kids across the street, who happened to be playing baseball. But the pitcher still clutched the ball in his hand. However, Richard was too drunk to notice.

"Damn kids! I told you not to throw baseballs around here. Go home!"

The kids looked at each other. They dropped their stuff and ran inside, not wanting to make the drunken man any angrier.

"Ow," Scott yelped as one of the shards dug into his arm. He glanced up and saw in the rear view mirror that his eyes had turned red. That was not a good sign. He backed out quickly and shifted gears, then pulled over at a stop sign that was about a block away.

"Stiles, are you okay? Stiles?"

Sitting up, the dark-haired teenager brushed glass fragments off his shirt. He watched them sparkle in the sunlight for a few moments. They had a surreal glow to them. It was golden in color, but it looked like more than just sunlight. The strange glow shimmered and then vanished. Weird, he thought, wondering if he had a piece of glass lodged in his brain or something. He ran his hand through his hair but felt nothing out of the ordinary.

"Yeah. I think so."

Scott nodded. "Good. My leg's killing me."

Stiles glanced down and noticed a piece of glass sticking through his friend's jeans. It also had a strange golden shimmer. "Yeah, I can see why. Put the van in park. You've got some broken glass there."

"Where?"

"Just behind your knee."

Scott parked the vehicle and then felt carefully for the glass. Stiles was right. He pulled it out, wincing as he did so. The glass wasn't glowing anymore. "That hurts like hell. Look, I'm going to drive us over to my place so we can get patched up. My dad should be home for lunch. He'll probably be able to give you a ride to work."

Stiles nodded. "Sounds like a plan."

His head was beginning to throb. Just great, he thought, another migraine. He'd been getting them over the past few days, for no apparent reason other than the stress of dealing with his dad. They were as far away from fun as it could get. Maybe later he'd talk Scott into driving while he surfed, just for a little stress relief.

As Scott pulled into the driveway, his dad went outside. Harold's jaw dropped as he saw the damage to the vehicle. "Scott? Stiles? Are you all right?"

"We're okay, Dad," he replied.

Harold ran to help them. "What happened?"

"My dad threw a bottle into the windshield," Stiles explained. "He was drunk. I'm sorry, Mr. H. If I had any idea he was going to do that..."

"It's okay, Stiles. It's not your fault."

Scott, who had finally had all the pain he could stand, wolfed out. "Great," he muttered.

"Don't sweat it," his father advised. "Let's go inside."

Finally, they sat around the kitchen table. Stiles grimaced as his migraine worsened.

"Are you okay?" Harold asked.

"I have a headache the size of the Empire State Building, but otherwise I'm fine."

"Want some aspirin?"

"Yeah, that would be great. Ouch." The teenager winced as a lightning bolt of pain shot through his head.

As Harold got up from the table, he noticed that the mirror in the hallway shimmered with a faint golden glow. He glanced around, thinking that he'd left a light on somewhere. "That's odd."

"What, Dad?"

"The mirror."

Scott craned his neck and sure enough, he also saw the weird light. "Where is that coming from?"

"Beats me," Harold replied. Then he noticed the sharp, coppery scent of blood and whirled around. The teenager's nose had begun to bleed. He was frantically holding it with his hand, futilely trying to stop the flow of blood. "Stiles!"

"Got a Kleenex?" he asked, shouting over the ringing in his ears.

Scott handed him one. Then the mirror in the hallway shattered. "Holy shit," he exclaimed.

"Scott! Watch your mouth."

"Sorry, Dad. But you gotta admit, that's weird."

Finally, Stiles' nose stopped bleeding. He looked at his friend. "What just happened? I couldn't hear a thing. My ears were ringing the whole time."

"The mirror in the hallway broke. No one touched it. Somebody's got seven years of bad luck on their hands, but who?"

Harold sniffed the air tentatively. Stiles' scent had just changed, and there was something that hadn't been there before, something very different. He gave the teenager a concerned look. "I'd say it's you."

He gaped. "No way."

"Well, it wasn't me, and it wasn't Scott. Telekinesis is not a werewolf ability."

Stiles' jaw dropped further. "Tele...what?"

"Telekinesis is the ability to move or affect objects with the mind," Howard defined.

"Like Carrie from the Stephen King novel," Scott supplied.

"Great," Stiles replied, his tone dripping with sarcasm. "So now I'm a freak. Will someone please shoot me?" he asked, glancing around.

"No one's going to shoot you, Stiles. But you've got to get a grip on this thing," Harold said.

The teenager slumped in his chair and looked at the table, realizing that he could never go home again. If his dad found out he was a freak, there was no telling what he would do. Suddenly, on the table, a white plate with Harold's unfinished tuna sandwich began to glow faintly yellow.

Scott noticed it. "Uh, Stiles," he nervously began.

"What?" he snapped. Then he winced as the plate skittered to the very edge of the table, precariously balanced. Staring at it, he muttered, "Oh, no."

Harold reached over and caught the plate before it could crash onto the floor. "Maybe you'd better stay here for a few days."

"Mr. H., you don't have to do that."

"Yes, I do. If you're worried about how your father will react, you don't have to go home right away. Just be sure to call him and tell him where you are."

"My dad won't care. He'll be too drunk. Besides, he technically kicked me out."

"He did?"

"Yeah. He said he never wanted to see me again. That means I can't go home even if I wanted to."

"I'm sure he didn't mean it," Harold replied.

"Oh, he meant it, all right. And once he finds out I'm a freak, he'll hate me even more. I could call my mom, but she's living in California now. She won't want to come all the way to Iowa. My aunt and uncle might take me in, but I really don't want to move to Wisconsin. I'd miss everyone here."

"Scott, what do you think?"

He blinked in surprise and sat up straight. "Hey, I don't mind. Stiles can even share my room."

"I was thinking about the guest room, actually."

He shrugged. "Sounds good to me."

Truly moved by their generosity, Stiles couldn't help but be amazed. What had he done to deserve this? He'd done nothing, and they still wanted to help him. "I can't believe you're doing this for me. Thanks."

"No problem." Harold grinned. "If you want to use the phone to call your boss..."

"Oh, no, I totally forgot." He groaned. "I can't go to work now. What if something happened and everyone saw? What if someone got hurt because of me?"

"You'll have to learn how to deal with your powers, just like Scott and I had to learn how to use ours."

"Yeah." Scott chuckled. "Just be glad you don't have to worry about getting furry or howling at the full moon."

"I am, believe me," he replied. "I'd better call in sick, or my boss will kill me for being this late."

"The phone's over there," Harold said, pointing.

"Right. Thanks." Stiles picked it up and dialed the auto dealership's number. The excuse sounded lame even to his ears, but he managed to do a pretty good job of faking it. He ended with a promise to be at work tomorrow if he was feeling better. Feeling somewhat guilty, he looked back at Scott and his dad.

"Are you up for a little one-on-one?" Scott asked. "I won't use the wolf."

"Maybe you should. I might actually be able to win."

"Yeah, right." But he wondered if his friend was right. There was no telling what Stiles could do now.

* * * * *

Daisy, the Howards' white terrier, barked as Scott dribbled the basketball. This was an easy shot. He'd done it at least a hundred times before. He tossed the ball and watched it fly towards the hoop attached to the roof. Suddenly, the ball took on a golden shimmer and went veering off to the right. It landed in the bushes.

Annoyed, Scott glared at his friend. "Stiles!"

"Just wanted to see if I could do it," he replied.

Scott went to retrieve the ball, but it rolled out of the bushes with no effort on his part. He glanced back to see his friend grinning. It was hard to stay mad at Stiles, especially when he understood perfectly well how his friend felt. "Let's see how accurate your aim is." He tossed the ball and Stiles caught it.

A friendly female voice startled them both. "Hey, guys, what's up?"

Scott turned around to see Boof standing there. How long had she been there, he wondered? "Uh, just shooting some hoops."

"Hmm. Stiles, don't you have a summer job?"

"Not today," he replied.

"I noticed that something happened to the van. Are you guys okay?"

"Yeah," Scott answered. He saw guilt flicker across Stiles' face for a split second, then it was replaced by his friend's usual nonchalance.

"So what happened?" Boof asked.

"My dad was drunk and threw a bottle at us. The jerk also kicked me out. Life sucks sometimes, but what are you gonna do?" Stiles responded.

"My dad's letting him stay with us," Scott added.

"I see. Well, I'd love to talk, but I'm working at the day care center this afternoon. Sorry to hear about your dad, Stiles."

He shrugged in response. When she left, he turned around so that he faced the house and tossed the ball into the air. It shimmered faintly yellow and then gravitated towards the basket, dropping through the hoop.

"Not bad," Scott said.

Stiles made another shot as his friend leapt into the air to grab the ball. But it levitated higher, just out of reach, and finally made it into the basket. This went on for about a dozen shots until Scott announced, "Okay. No more Mr. nice wolf."

Stiles grinned. He hadn't even broken a sweat yet. "Bring it on."

"You got it." He wolfed out, complete with fur, fangs, claws, and pointy ears.

Dribbling the ball, Stiles glanced at the hoop. This was an easy shot, provided that the werewolf didn't block him. Scott jumped as his friend let go of the ball. It went flying. Scott reached for it, snatching it out of mid-air. The werewolf grinned as he landed.

"This ball is mine," he said.

"Not for long," Stiles replied.

"We'll see about that."

Suddenly, the wrenching sound of a car crash was heard across the street. A woman screamed. Scott dropped the ball and ran to the driveway, morphing back into his normal self. Stiles followed him. A shiny silver corvette had been completely smashed up by a tow truck. The driver of the corvette, a lady with long red hair, was unconscious. She was slumped over the steering wheel with a deep gash in her forehead. Scott was even more amazed to find out who the driver of the tow truck was.

Scott glared at him. "Mick?"

The tall, athletic, dark-haired young man turned from the scene and looked at him with a mixture of hatred, disgust, and anger. "She pulled in front of me. I couldn't stop. Damn it, this is not my fault! I'm tired of you freaks screwing up my life. If your old man hadn't called the shop, this wouldn't have happened. I was the only one who wasn't at lunch, so I had to go."

Mick angrily kicked his own vehicle's tire, imagining it was the werewolf's face. Why couldn't the freaks just go back where they came from and leave him alone? The Howards weren't the first werewolves he'd known. He'd lied about Scott's mother just to hurt him, but another werewolf had been responsible for screwing up his life. Not a member of the Howard clan, though.

When he was 18, Mick had broken into a house during a full moon. Little did he know that the homeowner was a werewolf. He remembered defending himself, but the werewolf was stronger than he'd expected and knocked him out cold. The next thing he knew, he was in a jail cell. He really hated freaks.

Scott glanced at the injured woman and then at his high school nemesis. "Did you try to get her out?"

Mick glared at him, wondering if he was going to play hero. That would be like him. "Yeah, but the door was locked. So was the door on the other side."

"Okay. Stand back."

Scott wolfed out and proceeded to pry the door open. He winced at the sound of screeching metal. That car was never going to be the same again. He changed back to normal so as not to frighten the woman.

Mick stared at him in disbelief. Despite the fact he'd told the werewolf that he wasn't afraid of him, in reality, he was. Mick realized just how close he'd come during the school dance to seriously being hurt. Scott didn't even know his own strength. He could have lifted the car if he'd wanted to. Mick's scratches had healed, but the injury to his pride was still an open wound. To make matters worse, the freak had become even more popular since the basketball championship game. Why did all the geeks and dorks have to get super powers? It just wasn't right.

"Hey," Scott said softly. "Hey, lady, wake up." He gently leaned her against the car seat and shook her. "Can you hear me?"

Her eyelids fluttered open. "What...happened?"

"You had a car accident. But I think you're gonna be okay now. Uh...sorry about the door, but you were in pretty bad shape."

She glanced to her side. Her eyes widened as she saw that the door had effectively been destroyed. "You did that?"

He nodded.

"How?"

"He's a freak," Mick interjected.

"A mutant?" she asked, whispering so only he could hear her.

Scott shook his head. "No, I'm a werewolf."

"So you get furry?"

"Yeah, sometimes. Hey, stay with me here." Scott glanced back. "Someone call 911!"

Stiles ran back into the house.

"Look, lady..."

"Jean," she told him. "My name is Jean."

"Uh, okay. Stay calm. My friend is getting an ambulance," Scott said.

"No," she said.

"No?"

She shook her head. "I can't take the chance they'll find out."

"Find what out?"

"I..." she took a deep breath. "That I'm not normal."

Scott stared at her in amazement. "You're a werewolf too?"

"No. Not that. Please don't call the ambulance. Please."

"Okay, don't move. Mick, make sure she doesn't move."

He nodded as Scott brushed past him and ran into the house. Seeing Stiles holding the phone, he exclaimed, "Don't call them!" About to dial the final digit, Stiles hesitated.

"Jean said not to call an ambulance," Scott continued.

"Why not?"

"She doesn't want them to find out something, but what exactly, I don't know."

"Do you think she's a werewolf?"

"I asked her and she said no. Besides, if she was, she'd have wolfed out from the pain."

Stiles nodded. "We could bring her here."

"Okay. Come with me."

They went outside to find the redhead still in the car.

Mick sighed. "What are you going to do now?"

"She said no ambulance, so we're bringing her inside. You wanna help or not?"

"I think I can stand," Jean said.

She took Mick's hand since he was the closest to her and stood on wobbly legs, feeling the blood rush from her head. "Thanks."

"Anything for a lovely lady," he said.

"Uh, Mick, aren't you and Pamela still dating?" Scott asked.

"Not since the basketball game, freak. It's all your fault. If you hadn't won. . ."

"Look, maybe she just wasn't meant for you. Okay?"

"No. It's not okay. Why do you freaks have to mess up my life? First you put me in jail, then you steal my girlfriend, and now this. I'll be lucky if I don't lose my job over this."

Scott protested, "I didn't have anything to do with putting you in jail. That was your own stupid mistake, not mine." But why had Mick lumped him in with that? Unless... "Did my father have something to do with that?"

"No. But another of your freakish kind did. Why can't you people leave me alone?"

Inwardly, Jean winced. It was apparent that these two had a history, and even more apparent that Mick knew about Scott. It was a blessing that mutants weren't common knowledge like werewolves seemed to be. Her head buzzed slightly as another telepath brushed across her mind, and clumsily at that.

Stiles blinked in surprise as Mick's anger washed over him, but the feeling wasn't his own. Then came an unexpected sensation, the feeling of another mind touching his. Inadvertently, his jaw dropped.

Jean looked at the stunned teenager standing just behind his arguing friends. Clearly, he was the mutant. As surprised as he was, she doubted he knew about his abilities. He needed training, and soon.

"You're upsetting the lady, Mick," Scott said.

"It's all right," Jean said. "Could I go inside and use your phone? I have a friend who can give me a lift."

"All right."

Noticing that her legs were shaky, Scott offered her his arm. Stiles followed. Mick glowered darkly at them, then went inside to call his boss.

* * * * *

Meanwhile, at Howard's Hardware store, Harold was busy taking care of his customers when a middle-aged blonde woman walked in. She wore jeans and a light blue denim shirt. He looked up as he handed the customer in line a receipt. Then his eyes widened in surprised recognition. She had been a good friend of his in high school. "Betty? Betty Anderson?"

She smiled. "Harold Howard. Long time, no see."

He walked around the counter and they exchanged a friendly hug.

"This is a nice surprise. What are you doing in town?"

"Visiting my folks. When I saw the store, I couldn't resist stopping by."

He grinned. "Well, I'm glad. It's great to see you. How's Jim doing?" Jim was Betty's husband, another high school friend of his. They'd lost touch over the years when the Andersons had moved away to find work. Betty was a nurse, and Jim was a computer operator, both jobs that had little demand in a small Midwestern town. The nearest hospital was in Des Moines, and the bank and the police station were the only companies in town that even had computers.

She looked sad. "He passed away last winter from lung cancer."

"I'm very sorry to hear that."

"It was probably a blessing. He was so ill for such a long time. How are you and Scott doing?"

"Oh, we're fine."

Harold braced himself for the inevitable question and wondered how she was going to react when he told her the truth. Nobody was too shocked when he'd admitted that like his son, he was also a werewolf. Oddly enough, the citizens of Beacontown were mostly accepting. But not everyone was. Lately, Harold was getting the cold shoulder lately from a few people whom he'd thought were his friends. Being different wasn't always easy.

She nodded. "That's good. Harold, what's this I hear about your son being a werewolf?"

He took a deep breath and thought, here goes. "It's true."

She gasped. "You're kidding."

He shook his head. "I wish."

Betty gazed at him with sparkling blue eyes. There was no fear as he'd expected, just curiosity. "And you're..."

Harold nodded. "I'm a werewolf too, Betty -- have been since I was 16."

"And you didn't tell anyone?"

"Mary knew. Thorn found out one night, but he never told anyone. Nobody would have believed him back then, and I certainly wasn't going to give him proof."

Suddenly the phone rang. "Howard's Hardware, how can I help you?"

"Dad, there's a lady here. Mick ran into her car in front of the house. He was driving the tow truck. He's fine. She's hurt, but she doesn't want to go to the hospital. Her car is totaled, though," Scott explained.

"Okay. Make sure she doesn't go anywhere. There's an ice pack in the freezer if she needs it. I'll be home as soon as I can." Harold glanced around and saw one of his employees stocking a shelf, a middle-aged man with gray hair and glasses, wearing a red flannel shirt and jeans. "Hey, Ben?"

"Yeah?"

"As soon as you're finished with that, I need you to cover the cash register for me. Something came up."

Ben put the last box on the shelf and turned around. "Sure thing." He grinned at the woman. "Well, hello there. Anything I can help you with, Ma'am?"

She smiled. "I was just stopping in to say hello. Harold, I'll be in town all week if you want to catch up." She scribbled a phone number on the back of a receipt someone had left on the counter, and gave it to him.

"I'd love to." He pocketed the paper and left the store, hoping that the emergency at home wasn't as bad as it sounded.

* * * * *

At the Howard house, Jean felt lightheaded as she walked unsteadily. She grabbed onto a nearby chair for support when her knees buckled.

"Maybe you should rest on the couch for a while," Scott suggested.

"That's not a bad idea," she agreed. "Will you help me?"

"Sure."

Stiles, who had just sat down on the couch, stood up and offered a hand. Jean smiled as she took it. "Thank you."

Suddenly, memories of an abusive and drunken father flooded her mind, followed by feelings of pain and humiliation. Neither the memories nor emotions were her own. A more recent memory came to the surface. This time, it was complete and utter shock at seeing Scott turn into a werewolf for the first time.

And something else was there, too -- jealousy. Why couldn't she get super powers? At least she could find a way to use them to make money and pay the bills on time for once, and maybe buy some real food. That is, if she could keep her dad from finding out and spending the money on booze. But then Jean realized those weren't her memories. They were the dark-haired boy's. He stared at her, looking absolutely stunned.

Confused, Scott looked at both of them. "What? Stiles, what is it?"

"I'm not sure how to explain it," he admitted finally. "Do you remember how you felt when you turned into the wolf for the first time?"

"I was totally freaked out. I had no idea what was happening to me."

Stiles nodded in understanding. "Yeah, that's about how I feel."

"The only reason you feel that way is because you don't know what you are," Jean told him.

"Okay, lady. You seem to know an awful lot more than I do. What am I?"

"A mutant," she replied.

If her face hadn't been completely straight, and if he hadn't seen the mirror break or the plate nearly levitate off the table earlier, Stiles wouldn't have believed her. But something was happening to him that he couldn't explain, and he wanted answers. "What do you mean?"

Suddenly the front door opened. It was Mick, Harold, and Mick's boss. They were all arguing. Scott rolled his eyes and Stiles sighed.

"Look, I'm telling you, she pulled out in front of me. It was not my fault," Mick protested.

"You should have been watching more closely," Mick's boss replied. "And how the hell did you do that to the car door?"

"That wasn't me. I told you, Scott decided to play hero."

"Yeah, right. He might be good at basketball now, but he's not Superman."

"I'm telling you, he ripped the door off to get her out. I saw him do it! It's possible. Why don't you tell him, Mr. Howard? Or are you afraid everyone will think you're a freak, just like your son?" Mick sneered, waiting for his reaction.

"That was uncalled for," Harold replied, obviously trying to keep his temper in check. "Besides, why do you have such a problem with me?"

"Mick, one more remark like that and you're fired," Mick's boss added. The name tag he wore read Sam. "I'm going to have a hard enough time keeping you with this accident on your record. My manager is going to be breathing down my neck. I'm sorry, Harold. He's never been this rude to any of our customers before."

"You mean, you never noticed he was a bigot until now?" Scott walked into the room with his arms crossed and leaned against the wall.

"Scott," his father protested. "You're not making things any easier."

"No, your son's right, Mr. Howard. I will freely admit that I have no tolerance for freaks," Mick answered with a smirk. "If that makes me a bigot, then I guess I am."

Harold's jaw dropped.

Sam glared at his employee, wondering why he hadn't seen the young man's impertinence earlier. "That does it. You're fired. Give me your keys."

"Fine." Mick tossed him the keys to the tow truck and the office. "I don't care. I'll find another way to get money. I don't need this job."

"You snot-nosed punk. I hope you learn respect one day," Harold said.

Scott looked at him. "Fat chance of that happening, Dad. After all, you need a brain to learn things, and Mick doesn't have one."

In the living room, Stiles laughed, having overheard. As Mick stomped outside, Sam shook his head in disbelief. "I...I'm sorry, Harold. He had no right to be so rude. How could I have been so stupid to hire him in the first place? The only reason I did was because of Jeff and Maggie, you know. I went to high school with them. I can't believe their son turned out to be such a jerk."

He nodded. He'd known Mick's parents, too. They were good people. "It's not your fault, Sam. I can't help being what I am, and neither can Scott."

"I know. But you shouldn't have to take that crap. Kids just don't know how good they have it nowadays. Uh, no offense, Scott."

He shrugged. "None taken."

Harold looked at his son. "Scott, how's our guest doing?"

"She's resting on the couch."

So they went into the living room. Harold could see that Jean, the pretty young redhead, was in her 20's. There was a large gash on her forehead, but it had stopped bleeding. She had a few bruises on her arms as well. "I'm Harold Howard, Scott's father. How are you feeling? Do you want to see a doctor?"

She smiled. "I am a doctor, actually. I can tell I've got a few bumps and bruises, but they'll heal."

"That's good. Can you tell us what happened?"

"I was driving and suddenly, a tow truck run a stop sign at a cross street. Then I tried to swerve out of his way, but obviously, he hit me. The next thing I knew, your son and his friend were trying to wake me up. I still can't believe what happened to the car door. Your son is very heroic, Mr. Howard."

Scott turned red. "It was nothing."

"I'm glad you're all right, Dr. . ." Harold started.

"Grey. Jean Grey. And you can call me Jean." She looked at Sam. "Your employee was very careless, not to mention rude."

"He's not my employee anymore, Dr. Grey. I'm very sorry about what happened. We will, of course, pick up all of the expenses."

"What about the car door?" Scott asked.

"The insurance company will have to decide, but if it was up to me, they'd pay for it. Don't worry about it, Scott. You didn't do anything wrong."

She reached into her pocket for her wallet. "Here. Can I have paper and something to write with?"

"Sure," Harold said. "Scott, why don't you get it?"

After that was taken care of, Sam left with an apology and even towed both Jean's corvette and the van away for free. Mick would have to pay for his service.

Jean looked at Stiles. "Now then, I believe you still have some questions."

"Yeah. What's a mutant?"

Harold raised an eyebrow. "Like in science fiction?"

"Mutants are very real, Mr. Howard," Jean answered. "Just like werewolves."

"Okay. You've got me there," he admitted. "But mutants? I suppose next you'll tell me UFOs are real, too."

"And vampires," Scott added.

She chuckled. "I can see you find this hard to believe. Very well. Allow me to demonstrate."

Concentrating, Jean made the remote control levitate two inches off the table. Scott looked at his friend.

"Hey, I'm not doing it," Stiles answered.

"Are you sure?"

"Look. It's not glowing."

The remote gently landed on the table. "You're telekinetic as well?" Jean asked Stiles.

"Um ..yeah. I think so. Except I can make stuff glow in the dark. Watch." He did his best to focus on the remote. When it hovered this time, it had a yellowish glow.

"How long have you had these abilities?"

"I just got them today."

"You're a quick learner. I'd like to give you my card. I teach at a private school in New York. It's for those who are gifted. We have regular classes, as well as training in mutant abilities. I hope you'll consider."

He glanced at the business card. A private school? And how was he supposed to afford that? Maybe if he won the lottery.

"We have scholarships as well," Jean replied.

Did she just read my mind, he wondered? "Thanks, but next year is my senior year of high school, and I'd like to stay here. Besides, I'd miss my friends."

She nodded. "I understand. If you change my mind, feel free to call me. Scott?"

"Yeah?"

"I realize you aren't a mutant, but you're also gifted. If you'd like to come to New York, there would be a place for you, as well as Stiles."

Scott thought about it. "What about Lewis and Boof? They're perfectly normal. Would there be a place for them, too?" From Jean's expression, he could tell the answer was probably not. "Sorry, but my friends are here."

"All right. If you change your mind, call me. Speaking of calling, Mr. Howard, would it be all right to use your telephone? I'll reimburse you for the call, of course. I have someone waiting to meet me in Des Moines. Maybe he can make the drive tonight."

"Sure. Don't worry about it. The phone's in the kitchen."

Jean stood up. Her knees were a lot less shaky now. She smiled, then went to the phone. "Hello, Scott. Yes, it's me. You're never going to believe where I am. Beacontown, Iowa. Some guy ran into my car with a tow truck and totaled it. I need a ride. Yes, I'm fine. You'll never believe who I met, either." She gave him the Howards' address. "When can you be here? Uh huh. Great. I can't wait to see you. I love you, too. Bye."

Then she went back into the living room. "My friend will be here in a couple of hours."

"Great. That means you can stay for dinner." Harold grinned.

"Oh, no, I wouldn't want to impose on you any further."

"Nonsense. It's no hassle."

* * * * *

Meanwhile, Mick was speeding along the highway with burning thoughts of anger and hatred. The song "Highway to Hell" was blaring on his car stereo as loud as it would go. One way or another, he was going to have his revenge. Suddenly an out-of-control tanker truck came barreling along. He yelled as his vehicle collided with it. Not wearing his seatbelt, he went flying through the window.

Burning flames shot into the sky as a chemical stew spilled out of the truck. In the end, the chemicals saved him. As he lay unconscious, that strange brew came in contact with his skin. Some of it splashed into his mouth. He woke feeling as though his blood boiled. Flames shot out of his fingers. Angrily, Mick blasted the truck. The flames added to the growing blaze. "I swear, those werewolf freaks will pay for doing this to me," he shouted. With that, he stalked off towards town.

* * * * *

Harold made dinner while Stiles, Jean, and Scott chatted in the living room.

"You know," Stiles told Jean, "you haven't really answered my question. What exactly is a mutant?"

She looked at him from the other end of the couch. "A mutant is someone with different DNA from that of normal humans. We have what is called an X-factor. This slight genetic mutation is what gives us our powers. A lot of powers are similar but have variations. For example, when you focus on something, you seem to infuse it with energy, which might account for the glow. I don't know why that is."

"But I'm not a mutant," Scott said.

"Probably not," she conceded. "However, your condition is most likely genetic, just like mutant DNA can be passed from parents to their offspring."

"My dad once said that his great-great-grandfather was the first werewolf in our family. We don't really know how it happened. All we know is that grandpa was a werewolf, and that dad and I are. My dad's brother isn't one, and my cousin doesn't know if he is yet. He's a couple of years younger than me."

Jean nodded. "It only affects the men in your family?"

"So far."

Professor Xavier would love to study this phenomenon, she thought wistfully.

"Who's Professor Xavier?" Stiles asked, hearing Jean's thought echo through his mind.

She responded, "A very dear friend of mine. He runs the private school I was telling you about earlier. If it wasn't for him, I'd be lost now. You're a telepath too, I see."

Scott looked amazed. "Stiles, what number am I thinking of?" he asked.

"Boof's phone number, of course."

He laughed. "You know me too well, but you're right on."

As they continued talking, they had no idea what awaited them.

* * * * *

Pamela Wells was listening to the radio in her room when her mother opened her door and told her "that boy" was here to see her, and that she had better not go out with him. He looked crazy. Pamela knew "that boy" had to be Mick. Her mother hated him and thought that Scott Howard was a better catch, whether or not he was a werewolf. At least he came from a decent, hardworking family and had a future.

Well, she was 18 and old enough to make her own decisions now. She turned off the radio and went downstairs, intending to accept the offer for a date that he was probably there to make.

When she went to the door, Mick sneered, "Hey, Pamela. You'll never believe what happened to me today. And it's all that freak's fault."

"Scott?" That was crazy...how could he have done this? Even if it were possible, which she doubted, Mick had probably provoked him into it. Her ex-boyfriend was such an idiot.

"You got that right." His sneer grew wider. "You should see what I can do."

She took a deep breath. "What can you do, Mick?"

He held up his right hand. As flames sprouted from his fingers, Mick's eyes glowed like liquid fire.

Pamela gasped. "What's happening to you?"

"I don't know, babe, but it's the best thing that ever did." He stopped sneering. "I've got super powers now, and I want revenge."

"Revenge?"

"On the Howards. God, you're even dumber than Scott. But don't worry. I'll take care of everything. Come with me. You can watch those freaks meet their doom." He laughed. It was not a cheerful laugh.

"Buzz off," she muttered, angry that he had insulted her intelligence, and even angrier that he thought she wanted to see something bad happen to good people. Scott might be a dork, but he didn't deserve Mick's wrath.

Suddenly he grabbed her arm. Pamela yelped as his fingers scalded her skin. His hand was literally red hot and her skin was burning. "Nobody says no to me now, least of all you. Come on."

"Mom," Pamela wailed as her mother watched in horror. "Help!"

Mick clamped a hand over her mouth. "Shut up, you little slut," he warned her. "If you scream one more time, I'm going to make sure you get warm and toasty." He held his hand out and flames appeared on his fingertips. As they did, the glow in his eyes intensified. "Don't think I won't do it."

Oh God, she thought worriedly. If Mick could do that, did Scott even stand a chance?

* * * * *

Howard's Hardware was closed for the evening, but the target was just too tempting to pass up. Mick's eyes blazed while he hurled a fireball at the building. The burglar alarm went off as the windows shattered. He laughed. Revenge had never felt so good.

Pamela stared in horror. What if someone had been inside? She didn't think Mick cared at the moment. He could be nice. She'd known that. She also knew he had a temper, but until they'd broken up, he'd never been mean to her. That he could turn into such a monster shocked her.

Ironically, even as a werewolf, Scott Howard was still a nice guy. True, he was a dork, but he didn't act even remotely like a monster. What had caused her ex-boyfriend's sudden change? And how had he gotten super powers? Mick obviously wasn't a werewolf, or he'd be furry now, so what on earth was he?

"Let me go," she screamed when Mick grabbed her arm. His hand was still hot. Pamela stomped on his foot, and she was wearing platform shoes, so that had to hurt unless Mick was invulnerable now. He grunted in pain and loosened his grip on her arm. She took the opportunity to pull free and run.

Suddenly, the air behind her felt extremely hot. Instinctively, Pamela dove for cover, just as a fireball whooshed past. Now she knew that she was definitely in trouble. If Mick was willing to kill, there was no telling what he'd do. The fireball hit a nearby tree and the grass nearby burst into flames. She rolled over to avoid them, scrambled to her feet, and then ran for her life as Mick hurled another fireball.

"Hey," he shouted. "Get back here!"

Not a chance, Pamela thought as she ran. The next fireball hit a parked car, which resulted in an explosion as the fire hit the gas tank. She heard Mick yelling obscenities, but ignored him. There was only one place she could go to for help now.

* * * * *

Meanwhile, at the Howard home, everyone was surprised when the doorbell rang.

"That can't be Scott," Jean mused aloud. "It's nearly a four hour drive from Des Moines."

"I'll see who it is," Scott Howard replied. He opened the door and was surprised to see Pamela Wells there. His jaw dropped. "Pamela?" Noticing she was out of breath, he asked, "Are you all right?"

"No! Mick's totally nuts. This is going to sound whacked, but he is really, really pissed off and he can throw fireballs. I saw flames coming out of his fingers. His eyes were glowing like fire or something. I swear, I'm not making this up. He's on his way here. I barely got away from him."

Jean got up from the table. What were the chances of two mutant teenagers cropping up in the exact same small Midwestern town? "It's all right," she said. "You're safe now, Miss. Wells."

"Pamela. Please. You sound like one of my teachers." She rolled her eyes, but then stopped. "Wait a sec, how did you know my name?"

The redhead was silent as she tried to think of an excuse.

The girl's eyes narrowed suspiciously. "Did you read my mind or something? Do you have super powers like Mick? What's going on here and who are you, anyway?"

"This is Dr. Jean Grey," Scott said. "Mick hit her car with a tow truck right in front of the house earlier."

"That figures. You're a doctor, huh?" Pamela inquired.

Jean nodded. "That's right. I notice you have a burn on your arm."

"Yeah. That's from Mick. His hand was so hot that he burned me."

"Oh, you poor thing. Harold, do you have any first-aid cream or salve?"

"In the medicine cabinet. I'll get it," he answered, and got up from the table.

Just then, the sound of fire engine sirens wailing could be heard. Pamela sighed. "Mr. Howard, you should know, they're probably going to your store. Mick set it on fire."

He looked stunned. "Really?"

"Yeah. He's out of control. Someone has to stop him."

Harold nodded. "The police will handle it."

She gaped at him. "What can they do? If Mick can just burn anything he wants to, who's gonna stop him?"

"There's nothing we can do about it, unless Dr. Grey here knows something I don't. I'll get your first-aid cream." With that, he walked down the hallway.

Pamela and Scott exchanged glances. "I can't believe your dad doesn't want to do anything about Mick."

Scott shrugged. "We're werewolves, not superheroes, Pamela. There's a difference. We can get hurt just as easily as anyone else. The only difference is that we have fur and claws sometimes."

"But you're stronger than him," she persisted. "You're the only ones in this town who stand any chance against him at all."

"Pamela..." Suddenly, the doorbell rang again. Scott sighed. "I'll get it."

There stood Mick. His eyes, currently dark brown, flashed angrily. "You are going to get it, Howard, and there's nothing you or your old man can do to stop me."

In the space of a heartbeat, Scott transformed into the werewolf. Jean gasped in surprise. She'd seen mutant shape shifters before, of course, but this was still pretty amazing, especially given the fact that Scott technically wasn't a mutant.

"Wanna bet?" the werewolf growled.

"Try me," Mick suggested.

* * * * *

Suddenly Mick felt the strange presence of someone else in his head. His yellow eyes widened in shock.

* * * Flashback * * *

Mick crept through the dark hallway, heading towards the kitchen, where he knew a wallet would be on the counter because he'd visited this house in the daylight, posing as a telephone repairman. Suddenly he saw a dark shadow looming on the wall, but it was too big to be his. He whirled around and came face to face with a nightmare straight out of a Stephen King novel.

Something that was tall and furry with red eyes stood in front of him, growling ominously. It took his brain a few moments to realize that it was a werewolf, and that he was wearing boxers, but nothing else. Obviously, Mick hadn't been as quiet as he thought. Feeling his mouth go dry and a lump swelling in his throat, he slowly backed away and reached for the stolen gun in his pocket.

"I knew you weren't a telephone repairman. This evening, I noticed the phone line was cut. Get out of my house," the werewolf growled. "Or else."

It was very difficult to reconcile the image of the homeowner, a mild-mannered accountant whom he had briefly met while posing as a telephone repairman, with a werewolf. Mick only made the connection because of the voice. Nervously, he held up the gun. "Stay away from me, freak. This has silver bullets."

"You're bluffing. I'm warning you, get out of my house now."

He put his finger on the trigger. There was an audible click. "Does it look like I'm bluffing?"

Suddenly, the werewolf in front of him was no longer there. Instead, Mick felt a tap on his shoulder just as a furry fist rammed into his jaw. The gun went off accidentally, lodging a bullet in the floor. As the werewolf slammed him against the wall, he was overwhelmed with pain and lost consciousness as a result.

* * * End Flashback * * *

"That explains it," Stiles muttered. His head ached from the telepathic contact. "It was your stupid choice to break into that guy's house in the first place. You can't blame the Howards for that. It was just your bad luck that he happened to be a werewolf."

"How the hell did you get inside my head?" Mick demanded. "You're a freak, too!"

"So what? At least I'm not going around and blowing up things. You're already wanted for arson. Do you really want to be arrested for murder, too?"

An egg-sized fireball appeared in Mick's hand. His eyes blazed with fury as he took a step towards Scott, who was still wolfed out. At that moment, the smoke detector went off. Harold came out of the bathroom with the first aid cream and nearly dropped it when he saw what was going on.

Mick raised his hand as if to throw the fireball, but winced in pain as Stiles intruded into his head again. Due to his lack of concentration, the fireball vanished. Then he opened his eyes and lunged at Stiles, who stumbled backward as his fist connected with the freak's jaw. Stiles groaned as he hit the wall. Then Scott punched him, sending him sprawling out the door and onto the doorstep. The audible sound of ribs cracking made Jean wince. That had to hurt.

Meanwhile, Boof ran over. She'd watching from her bedroom window. Just then, a red '84 Firebird pulled up and came to a stop. A red-haired man wearing futuristic-looking sunglasses stepped out.

"Scott," Jean exclaimed. "I am so glad to see you!"

"Jean, what's going on?" He was shocked to see the teenaged Scott, whom he pegged as a furry mutant, and a young man sprawled on the driveway face-down.

She was just about to reply when Mick scrambled to his feet, looking more enraged than ever. His yellow eyes burned with hatred as he glared at the werewolf. He stretched his arm out, and aimed a softball-sized fireball at the house. "You're dead, Howard."

Before the blazing ball of flames could impact anything, Cyclops lifted his sunglasses and aimed a ruby-red energy beam at it. The fireball exploded in mid-air, but no one was harmed. Scott, Harold, and Stiles all gasped in amazement. Pamela screamed.

"I'd think twice about doing that if I were you," Cyclops advised the young man with yellow eyes. "In fact, I'd be thinking about surrendering if I were you. You're obviously outnumbered, and I'm betting that Jean and I have a lot more experience with our mutant abilities than you do."

"Go to hell, freak," Mick rasped as approaching sirens wailed. His eyes turned back to their normal brown color, but they still burned with anger like smoldering coals.

Cyclops grabbed him by the shoulders. "Don't even think about running away, kid. I'll find you."

"I called the cops," Boof said, looking at Scott. "You wanna tell me what's going on? How did Mick get super powers all of a sudden? And what's with laser-beam guy?"

Scott turned back to normal. "I don't know," he replied, sounding weary.

"Laser-beam guy?" Cyclops repeated incredulously. Jean couldn't help but smile as Boof shrugged. "The name's Scott Summers, actually," he informed her as a police car pulled up in front of his Firebird. It was followed by another cop car, which ended up parked across the street.

"Mick McAllister," the first officer said, approaching him with handcuffs. "You're under arrest for arson and kidnapping."

The young man remained sullen and silent while he was read his Miranda Rights and the handcuffs were slapped on his wrists. He shot Scott Howard a glare as he was shoved into the police car.

"Harold, I'm sorry to hear about what happened to your store," said the other officer, a middle-aged man with light brown hair named Jimmy Anderson, who was a long-time friend. "You will have to come down to the station later and fill out some paperwork. Why was Mick here?"

"He tried to burn down the house, Jimmy. We were still in it at the time."

"You mean, he attempted to murder you?"

"Yeah."

"Do you have any idea why?"

Harold nodded. "Apparently, he can't stand anyone who's different from him, especially werewolves."

Jimmy looked shocked. He hadn't really thought of his old pal as being all that different. Once everyone had learned about Scott being a werewolf, it didn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that Harold was probably a werewolf too. After he'd finally admitted it, most people accepted it and treated him normally. So why did bigotry have to rear its ugly head?

"People fear what they don't understand," Jean said softly. "It's an unfortunate part of human nature."

The cop blinked in surprise and looked at her. "I've never been able to understand bigots, and I hope I never will."

She nodded.

"Hey, Anderson, are you coming?" his partner shouted.

"Yeah. Harold, I'll see you around. Take care."

"Thanks, Jimmy."

Jean Grey and Scott Summers exchanged glances as the police cars drove away. "You're really werewolves?" Scott asked. "Are you sure you're not mutants?"

Harold nodded. "My son and I really are werewolves, I assure you. It runs in the family."

"Okay. I believe you. I've seen stranger things. Jean, shall we go?"

She glanced at Stiles, who had just walked out of the house. He was rubbing the back of his head. "Are you all right?" she asked.

"Just a few bumps and bruises and a headache. I'll live."

She nodded, hoping that the teenager would be able to handle his mutant powers. "Take care."

"You too."

After exchanging goodbyes, Cyclops and Jean pulled away in the red Firebird. Pamela looked at Scott. "I'd better go home. My mother's probably worried sick by now. Mick had no right to do that to you or your dad. I swear, he's gone totally psycho."

Scott nodded. "Yeah. Be careful, okay?"

She glanced at Stiles, wondering exactly what he'd done to Mick. "Are you really..."

"A mutant? Yeah." He sighed. "Look, I just found out. I had no idea before today. This is all pretty new to me, too."

She nodded. "I won't tell anyone if you don't want me to."

He nodded. "It'll probably get out sooner or later, but I'd definitely take later."

"Okay. Thanks, Stiles, for doing whatever it was that you did. Bye." Then Pamela left.

Boof put her hand on Scott's shoulder. "I'm glad you and your dad are okay."

"Me too," he said, grinning.

They shared a brief kiss, and then Boof went home.

* * * * *

The End

Twisted Reality

Disclaimers: The recognizable characters from Teen Wolf are not mine. I gave Lewis a last name cause he didn't have one in the movie. Boof's dad is mine -- they never showed either of her parents in the movie, as far as I know.

This is a sequel to Shattered Reality.

* * * * *

It was Saturday, he could sleep in, and at the moment, that was all Lewis Johnson cared about. The 15-year old rolled over and closed his eyes, happy that he didn't have to drag himself out of bed and into the shower. With his luck, the water would be cold. Suddenly his alarm clock went off. He mentally kicked himself in the rear for having turned it on out of habit. As he reached over to turn it off, he felt nothing except air.

Lewis opened his eyes, thinking he'd just missed it, but then he saw that the alarm clock wasn't there, and neither was half of his nightstand. It looked like someone or something had taken a big bite out of it and left the rest. Gaping at it, he told himself, "It's gotta be a dream." But after several tries of closing his eyes and opening them, and pinching himself (which he definitely felt), he came to the grudging conclusion that it might not be a dream.

Then he was hit by a wave of nausea, which he suspected was the granddaddy of all hangovers. Not that Lewis drank alcohol. He wasn't that stupid. However, from Stiles' tales about getting drunk, he figured that this had to be what a hangover felt like. He retched and saw the vomit disappear into thin air -- literally. Desperately wanting it to be a bad dream, he rolled over in bed, closed his eyes, and pulled the covers over his head. Then the phone rang.

"Please let this be a dream, please let this be a dream," Lewis whispered fervently to no one in particular.

The telephone was on his nightstand, which meant that it was invisible. Now, both the telephone and the alarm clock threatened to drive him crazy -- assuming that he was still sane. Then it occurred to him that if he reached for the phone, he might be able to pull it out of the invisible area. So he did, and was shocked when his hand vanished as well. But Lewis felt the phone, so he pulled it toward himself and was rewarded with both his hand and the phone becoming visible again.

"Hello?" he gasped.

"Hey, Lewis, what's up?" It was Stiles.

"Funny you should ask. I'm having the weirdest dream ever. At least, I think it's a dream."

"That's funny, because I'm wide awake. You'll never believe what happened to me yesterday. I'm over at Scott's. My old man kicked me out."

"That sucks."

"Tell me about it," Stiles answered. "Hey, you don't sound too good."

"No, I uh...think I have the flu or something," he lied.

"Bummer. Oh, uh, I was calling to ask if you could help us clean up the hardware store. Mick torched it yesterday. He's gone completely nuts. He came over making all sorts of death threats. He almost burned down the house."

"You're kidding."

"No. It made the 10:00 news. Look, we really could use your help, but if you're sick..."

"Don't worry about me. I'll be there," Lewis promised.

"Great. See ya." Stiles hung up.

Figuring that the same thing applied to his alarm clock, Lewis reached into the strange invisible space and pulled it out. Then the top half of his nightstand became visible again. His jaw dropped as he flipped the switch on his clock radio, meaning to turn it off, but accidentally triggering the radio.

"Last night's bizarre arson attacks have put the small town of Beacontown on edge. Howard's Hardware, owned by Harold Howard, was set ablaze. Mr. Howard is the father of Beacontown high school's star basketball player Scott Howard, who made headlines two months ago when he turned into a teenage werewolf. Some of the other buildings around the hardware store also sustained some fire damage. At least one car and one other building were damaged during the arsonist's rampage.

"In addition, the arsonist kidnapped an 18-year old named Pamela Wells. She has returned home safely. One suspect is in police custody, but his name has not been released. In other local news, several wolves escaped from a zoo in Des Moines yesterday. Zookeepers made it clear that they do not want the animals shot at. Locals are being asked to call the police or animal control if they spot the wolves."

Lewis groaned. He still felt nauseous. Hopefully, whatever bizarreness had started the day wouldn't continue. He fumbled for the radio's off switch and found it. Then he put on a T-shirt and jeans and went downstairs.

"Morning, Mom," he greeted her. She was frying eggs in the kitchen. The smell of fresh coffee filled the air. "I'm going over to Scott's. It might be a while. There was a fire at the hardware store last night. Mick went totally nuts. They need all the help they can get."

"Mick McAllister set that fire? I heard about it on the late news, but they didn't say who it was."

"Well, I just talked to Stiles. He was over at Scott's place yesterday when Mick showed up. I don't know exactly what happened, but it sounds like he really flipped out. Stiles said they were lucky he didn't set the house on fire."

His mother, a plump middle-aged lady with light brown hair, sighed. "Mick's a rotten apple if I ever saw one. I don't know how he got that way. His parents are good people. Did you know he spent time in jail for theft?"

"Yeah. Look, Mom, I gotta run. I'll see ya later."

Lewis was finally out the door. From his place, it was a short walk to the hardware store, only about ten minutes or so, which wasn't bad. He couldn't believe it when he saw the damage that had been done. The windows had been shattered, but were now temporarily covered with clear plastic stuff. But that wasn't the worst of it.

The outside wall was completely black, the door had been completely destroyed, and through the plastic sheets he could see the inside of the store was also scorched. Police tape had been stretched across the door. The front desk had taken most of the damage. It was possible to see the cash register amidst the rubble. Some of the display racks holding the tools had also collapsed. It was a mess, that was for sure. At least no one had been inside at the time.

"Hey, Lewis," Scott greeted him. Then he gaped at the mess. "I can't believe that jerk did this for no reason. That bastard!"

His eyes briefly flickered red. He kicked a nearby garbage can hard enough to dent it and forced the wolf back into the shadows of his mind, knowing that his friend was really uncomfortable with it.

Stiles and Harold were coming around the corner. Stiles stopped in mid-stride when he saw the scene. Harold's jaw dropped when he saw the damage that had been done. "It looks like a war zone."

Lewis nodded. It did, at that.

"You're never going to believe what happened," Stiles said.

"What?" the younger boy asked.

"You're going to tell him?" Scott asked in disbelief.

"We can trust Lewis. I think we can tell him," Stiles replied.

"Tell me what?" Lewis asked.

"Lewis, we have to swear you to secrecy," Scott said. "You gotta promise not to tell anyone about this. Not even your parents."

"Okay. I won't tell anyone," he said.

Well, it wasn't like he didn't have a secret to keep from his parents to begin with. If his mom knew about his weird morning, she'd probably freak out.

"Wait a minute," Stiles said, picking up on his thoughts. "What weird morning? Did something happen to you?"

He gaped at his friend in shock. "How did you know?"

"Something really weird happened to me yesterday. I found out I can do some things."

"Are you a werewolf?"

"No. Just watch." Stiles set a quarter on the ground. It began to shimmer with a faint yellow glow, then levitated several inches up. "Hold your hand out," he said.

Lewis' mouth hung open in amazement. Then he held out his hand, and the quarter levitated onto his palm. "Wow," he breathed. "That is so cool."

"Yeah, and everyone else in their right mind would freak out if they knew. So don't tell anyone. Mick has super powers now, too. He can make fireballs. We all saw him do it."

Harold nodded. "He has a lot of power and absolutely no sense of responsibility whatsoever. That's a very dangerous combination."

"So, Lewis, are you going to tell us about your weird day?" Scott asked.

He hesitated. "I promised to keep your secret. I really don't want anyone to know about this, either."

"Hey, don't worry. We can keep secrets, can't we, Stiles?"

"Sure."

Lewis glanced at Harold. Could he be trusted not to tell his parents? It wasn't like he hadn't kept secrets before. Heck, he must be pretty good at it if no one had known about werewolves until now. "Mr. Howard, are you going to tell my parents?"

"As long as you don't place yourself or anyone else in danger, you don't need to worry about me telling your parents. Besides, I'm an expert at keeping secrets. I was a teenage werewolf once, remember?"

The kid managed a grin. "Okay, Mr. Howard." He proceeded to tell them about waking up that morning and finding out that his alarm clock and telephone had disappeared.

Scott and Stiles exchanged glances. "He's gotta be a mutant," Scott remarked.

"Yeah. I think you're right."

Confused, Lewis looked at them. "What?"

"We had a couple of unexpected guests yesterday too," Harold said. He told him all about Jean Grey and Scott Summers, and what Jean had told them about mutants.

"So you think that I'm a mutant?"

Stiles nodded. "I'd say there's a fairly good chance."

"But I don't even know how I did any of it."

"That doesn't matter."

Lewis grimaced. "I guess I should be glad my power doesn't have anything to do with starting fires. I just wish I knew what it was, exactly."

"Don't worry," Harold told him. "You'll figure it out soon enough." He glanced at the wrecked store. It would probably take more than one day to clean up the mess, but the work would go faster with the kids helping.

* * * * *

Lisa Marconi, known as Boof to the teenage population of Beacontown, woke up with a strange tingling feeling in the back of her head, which she attributed to pins and needles. She glanced at her clock and couldn't believe that it was already 9:05 am. She didn't usually sleep that late on Saturdays. She put one of Stiles' leftover Teen Wolf shirts, a light blue one that read "Have you hugged a werewolf today?" After putting on a pair of jeans, she went downstairs.

Her father, a tall, skinny man in his early forties with glasses and an accountant by profession, was reading the newspaper. The headline read "Bizarre Arsons In Beacontown." Her mom was nowhere in sight. She worked nights and was probably still sleeping.

"Morning, Dad," Boof greeted him.

He glanced up. "Oh, hi, Lisa."

She rolled her eyes. Her parents were the only ones who used her real name. Even most of her teachers called her "Boof."

Her dad smiled. "I can't understand why you like that crazy nickname. How'd you get it, anyway? You've had it for so long, I've forgotten."

"Scott gave it to me when we were about two. He couldn't say my name at the time, so for some reason, he just called me Boof, and it stuck."

Her dad nodded. That explained it. She'd had a crush on Scott Howard from day one. He was a good kid, even if he'd gone a little nuts with the werewolf thing for a while. Jim Marconi couldn't really blame him for going overboard. Other kids would've done far worse.

Lisa had told him that Mick had punched Scott at the spring dance and nearly broken his nose. In return, Mick had gotten a few scratches for his trouble. He had been lucky, but now Jim wondered if it wouldn't have been better if Scott had punched him instead. Maybe a broken rib or two would've taught him a lesson he badly needed, judging by what he'd done last night. Setting those fires had been incredibly stupid.

"I still can't believe what the McAllister kid did last night." Jim shook his head. "Did you see his eyes glowing yellow? And the guy with the laser beams shooting out of his sunglasses? Unreal."

"He did stop Mick from setting the house next door on fire," Boof replied.

"I know. I watched from the window. Lisa, I'm glad everyone's all right, but I wish you would've stayed home."

"And abandon my friends? Are you kidding?"

"You could have been seriously hurt."

She supposed it was the fatherly thing to do. She was his only child, and sometimes he was very overprotective of her. In fact, she suspected that the reason her father encouraged her friendship with Scott was because he knew that Scott could protect her from just about anything. But she didn't need anyone's protection. "Dad, I'm fine. I can take care of myself. I'm 16 now. I'm not a little girl anymore."

"I know," he replied with a smile. "But you're my only daughter, and I don't want anything to happen to you."

"That's sweet, Dad, but nothing's gonna happen to me. Listen, I'm going over to the hardware store to help clean up."

"Okay. If I get some of my work done early this morning, I might join you."

Boof nodded and headed out the door. The beautiful day was a sharp contrast to last night's surreal events. She wondered how many people knew exactly what happened. As she walked down the street, Boof couldn't help but notice that the grass looked a bit greener, the sky looked bluer, and the flowers were brighter. It was a bit odd, but not too weird, so she didn't think much of it.

By the time she arrived at the hardware store, the tingling sensation in the back of her head had vanished. Harold, Scott, Stiles, and Lewis were cleaning up. She couldn't believe how much damage Mick had done to the store.

"Hi, guys," she said. "I came to help."

"Hey, Boof." Scott managed a grin when he saw her T-shirt. "So, have you?"

"What?" she asked, momentarily confused.

"Have you hugged a werewolf today?"

She grinned and put an arm around him. "Now I have."

"Hi, Boof. Glad you could make it," Harold said, happy to see that she had shown up. "Is that one of Stiles' T-shirts?"

She blushed. "Yeah. The only one I liked. What can I do to help?"

"Grab a sponge, dip it in the bucket, and take a wall. Be careful with the cleaning stuff."

"Okay."

After two hours of cleaning which went fairly quickly, Harold suggested they take a break. A bakery down the street had just opened up for the day. The enticing scent of freshly baked doughnuts, bread, and cinnamon rolls wafted through the door, which had been left open to get rid of the smoke smell. So they decided to go there.

It wasn't until they'd finally gotten doughnuts and seated themselves when Lewis noticed a furry animal sitting in the doorway. At first he thought it was a dog, but then he realized it was a wolf with silvery-gray fur and green eyes. Must be one of the wolves that escaped from the zoo, he thought.

I smell good food, Scott suddenly heard in his mind. He was so surprised that he nearly spilled his pop. "Stiles, if this is your idea of a joke..."

"What joke?" Stiles looked at him in confusion.

Harold blinked in surprise, also having heard the strange voice. "That wasn't you?"

Stiles shook his head. "Can someone clue me in here?"

Boof had heard the wolf too, but she wasn't about to say anything with the lady standing behind the counter there. She looked at Scott in amazement.

"Well, if it wasn't Stiles, then who...Lewis?" Scott asked.

Lewis shook his head. "I don't know what you're talking about."

The wolf raised her head, looking directly at Scott. *You would not happen to have a bite to spare, would you?*

As he realized he was hearing the wolf in his mind, the stunned teenager jerked back as if he'd been punched and nearly fell off his chair. As Lewis gaped, Stiles tried his best not to laugh. He finally picked up on the thought, but it was Scott's thought he overheard, not the wolf's.

"Dad," Scott asked when he'd regained his balance and his composure, "why didn't you tell me about this?"

"Because I didn't know," Harold answered honestly, starting at the wolf in disbelief. His face had gone pale.

"You didn't know we could talk to wolves?"

"I've never been this close to one before. Certainly not since I was a kid."

Scott sighed. "Is there anything else I need to know about, Dad?"

His dad shook his head no. Then Scott broke off a piece of his doughnut and tossed it out to the wolf.

She softly padded over and sniffed it. *That is not meat.* She sat back on her haunches and regarded him with piercing green eyes that seemed to bore down into his soul, finding the part of him that was wolf and gazing into its eyes. *You do not have any meat?*

"Uh, no. Sorry."

The wolf looked at the doughnut piece disdainfully. *This will have to do, then.* She snatched it up and ate it. Then she padded out of the bakery.

Scott stared at the retreating wolf. He hoped that she'd be able to evade capture, but she was too tame. She was probably used to people from being in the zoo. He wished he could do something to help her. Stiles looked at him as though he were crazy. He probably was, but he felt sorry for the wolf that wanted to be free.

* * * * *

Betty Anderson was running errands when she noticed the bakery was open. She needed bread. Entering the bakery, she glimpsed what looked like a wolf retreating into the shadows of an alley nearby. No, it couldn't be a wolf. Not in Beacontown. It must be a dog. Besides, didn't wolves usually stay away from humans?

The middle-aged blonde woman noticed Harold, Scott, and three other teenagers who looked vaguely familiar, but she couldn't put names to their faces.

"Hello, Harold," she said pleasantly. She couldn't help but notice that he looked a bit more pale than usual. "Are you all right?"

"Yeah, I'm fine. Betty, it's nice to see you again. Scott, this is Betty Anderson. We went to high school together. She was a good friend of your mother."

"Oh." Scott extended his hand. "Uh, hi."

She shook it. "Well, you've certainly grown. I can remember when you were four. You must be about 16 now."

"Yeah, but my birthday's next month, and there's even going to be a full moon."

She nodded. "I've heard you've been keeping your father on his toes."

"Yeah, you could say that. It wasn't entirely my idea, though." He elbowed Stiles, who was sitting next to him.

"Harold, I'm so sorry to hear about what happened to your store. I sure hope that young man gets what's coming to him. I'm just glad you're all right."

"Thanks, Betty. The store will be fixed. In fact, we've been working on getting it cleaned up today."

"That's good."

They chatted for a few more minutes, and then Betty had to get her bread and go. The rest of the day was spent cleaning the store. Lisa's father showed up in the early afternoon and helped out. So did a few of their other neighbors. It looked a lot better than when they'd first seen it that morning.

Scott couldn't help but wonder about the wolf, though. He wondered where she was and if she'd made it to freedom.

Boof hadn't had a chance to tell anyone about hearing the wolf because there had been other people around them all day long. She waited for a chance to tell Scott, but she didn't get it, and finally she had to go home with her dad. "I'll see you guys tomorrow," she promised. Reality was twisted, and it was going to take a long time to get used to it.

* * * * *

The End

Moonrunner's Song

Standard disclaimers apply. None of the recognizable characters from Teen Wolf are mine. However, Moonrunner is mine. Please don't borrow her without permission.

Prologue

Swiftly, I lope through shadows
that threaten to entangle me like vines
and strangle me with darkness.

The moon's silver light guides me
and protects me as I run
through night's cold jaws.

I open my mouth and howl --
the moon hears my song.
It is all I have to offer, but it is enough.

I bare my fangs and growl
and the shadows retreat,
slinking away into the gloom.

Moonrunner, they call me,
for I run swiftly in moonlight
and shadows are my prey.

* * * * *

Dear Diary,

The strangest things have been happening lately. It's as if something's happening to Beacontown. We used to be an average, ordinary town, but then Scotty turned into a werewolf in the middle of a basketball game. At first, I thought that was the end of it. But then Mick, Stiles, and Lewis all got super powers. They told me they were mutants.

Anyway, a few days ago, we were all helping Scott's dad clean up the store after Mick torched it. We went to the bakery and a wolf showed up from out of nowhere. Scott and his dad were totally surprised to find out they could talk to it, sort of. It's the weirdest thing, having someone or something else in your mind. I don't think I'll ever get used to it. But I heard the wolf, too.

* * * * *

Boof stopped writing in her diary and looked up, seeing her reflection in the mirror. She still looked like a tall, slender girl with short brown hair. There were no glowing red eyes, second heads sprouting out of her shoulders, or even fur. Deep down, Boof knew that she had changed. How, exactly, she didn't know, but she wasn't sure that she wanted to find out.

Stiles was having a hard time adjusting to his new abilities, and Lewis was really freaked out by his mutant power. Not to mention, he was scared to death that his parents were going to find out about it and disown him. More than anything, Boof wished that things would go back to normal again -- at least, what passed for normal in Beacontown.

She sighed. From her window, it looked like a beautiful evening. Maybe she'd go for a walk. Maybe she could talk Scott into going with her. Grabbing her keys, she told her dad that she was going out and left.

It was reasonably warm outside. The temperature had to be at least in the lower sixties. Add to that the bright stars sparkling overhead and a moderate breeze, and the night was close to perfect.

"Hey, Boof," Scott greeted her after she rung the doorbell next door.

"Hi. Wanna go for a walk with me?"

"Uh, Boof, there's a full moon tonight," he pointed out.

"Since when has that stopped you? Besides, it's not even 9:00 yet, and you're missing out on an absolutely perfect night."

He couldn't exactly argue. "All right. Uh, why don't you come in for a second while I grab my keys?"

She followed him inside. His dad was in front of the TV and watching a re-run of classic Trek, the one with the tribbles. "Hi, Boof."

"Hi, Harold."

"Nice night."

"Yeah. Very nice. I didn't know you liked Star Trek."

"Are you kidding? It used to be my favorite TV show. My younger brother always teased me about it, but I liked the idea of aliens interacting with humans and being treated like regular people. I used to wonder what would happen if everyone knew about me."

"Oh," she replied, not being able to think of anything else to say.

Scott rescued her. "Hey, I've got my keys. We might as well go."

Boof smiled. "Bye."

Harold raised his hand, which was just starting to become furry, and grinned. Scott rolled his eyes as he walked out the door.

* * * * *

Boof couldn't believe how beautiful the evening was. "Hey, check out the stars. Aren't they pretty?"

Scott looked up. Of course, the moon was what caught his attention first. He had to force himself to pull away from it and look at the stars. "Yeah."

She grinned. "Do you ever wonder if anyone else is up there?"

He shrugged. "Sometimes."

"Think there's any little green men running around?"

"Nah, but maybe there are little furry men with glowing red eyes," he replied jokingly. "And they turn into little green men whenever there's a full moon."

Boof laughed. Suddenly, she felt a presence in her mind that hadn't been there before. Scott's eyes widened suddenly. He spun around. Watching them from the shadows was a pair of piercing green eyes that slowly materialized into a furry face with silvery-gray fur, pointed ears, and a snout. It was a wolf, probably the same one they'd met in the bakery. She gazed at them curiously.

Where is the rest of your pack? inquired a voice that was slightly gravelly but unmistakably female.

It took Scott's stunned brain a few seconds to recover from the initial shock, register the question, and come up with a reply. "Um...pack?"

The older male with a scent similar to yours, and the two younger males.

"Uh, my dad's at home. So are Lewis and Stiles. Who are you?"

I am called Moonrunner, the wolf informed him. She ventured closer, padding across the pavement on silvery paws. She sniffed him, then recoiled as if he'd hit her. *You are human! But you smell like a wolf, and you can hear me. How is that possible?*

"I'm a werewolf," he admitted.

We have tales about your kind, but they were assumed to be legends, stories mothers tell their pups while they are still too young to leave the den.

"Yeah. I didn't know about it myself until recently. Uh, Boof, this is..."

"Moonrunner," the teenage girl supplied.

Scott looked at her in surprise. "You heard?"

Slowly, Boof nodded.

"Wow," Scott said. "Can you hear my thoughts at all?"

Concentrating, she cleared her mind. But the only thoughts Boof was able to pick up on were the wolf's. She shook her head.

"Huh." Suddenly, his face felt itchy. "Oh, great. I'm getting furry, aren't I?"

Boof nodded.

Moonrunner stared at the boy-becoming-wolf in amazement. She'd never seen a transformation like this at all. General impressions of shock and astonishment filled the teenagers' minds, followed by curiosity. *How?*

Scott shrugged, clearly embarrassed. "I was born like this. Not many humans are. It's very rare."

So I gathered.

Suddenly, Boof realized that she could pick up Scott's thoughts, at least while he was the wolf. "Scott..."

"What?"

"Think of a number. Any number at all."

He did, though it was really hard to concentrate with the lure of the moon overhead. Boof grinned and said the number he was thinking of.

"Yeah. Wait, you can read my mind when I'm a werewolf but not when I'm normal?"

She nodded. "That's strange, isn't it? Maybe my power is talking to animals."

"Very funny."

"I'm being serious. I can hear the wolf's thoughts and yours when you're a werewolf, but not when you're normal. That has to be it."

"Okay. Try it on a bird or something."

She glanced around but didn't see any birds. "I have a better idea. Maybe I should try it on Daisy."

Another pack member of yours? Moonrunner asked.

"Daisy's my pet dog," Scott answered.

Oh, replied the wolf disdainfully. Dogs were inferior to wolves. Most of them were too eager to please their masters for a treat or a chew toy in return. Some dogs were as bad as felines!

Having picked up on the wolf's thoughts, Scott laughed. "So you don't like dogs?"

No, and I fail to see the humor in it.

"Okay. Um...what happened to your pack?"

My pack mates have all been caught by humans. I alone have evaded capture.

"Ah. Well, if you need a warm place to stay, maybe I can talk my dad into letting you sleep in the garage for the night."

The...garage? The term was unfamiliar, and the wolf did not like not understanding it.

"Um, yeah. You'll see. Come on."

Unsure of what to expect, but having no better options, Moonrunner followed the boy-who-was-wolf and the female human.

* * * * *

Scott and Boof headed to the back yard while Moonrunner waited for them. At the sight of the wolf, the dog began to bark. "It's okay," Scott said. He looked at Boof. "You tell her."

"Ummm, okay." Boof cleared her throat. "Daisy, it's all right. She's a friend."

She's a wolf! Not just a werewolf, but a wolf. The panicky thought was very loud and clear. *She'll probably steal my toys and eat my food.*

"No, she won't. Don't worry."

Scott gaped at her. "You can really hear Daisy?"

Boof nodded.

"What does she sound like?"

"A very frightened little girl." Turning to the dog, she said, "It's okay. Daisy, please listen to me. It's okay."

Daisy growled and glared at the wolf. *You'd better not steal my food!* Then she went into her doghouse.

"Daisy?" Scott asked. "Are you all right, girl?"

She pouted. *Fine, go play with your new friend. See if I care.*

Boof translated.

Scott reached over and stroked her behind the ears, being very careful with his claws. "Hey, Daisy, I'm not going to forget about you."

The white terrier wagged her tail. *Promise?*

"Of course, I promise.*

Harold was still watching TV when Scott and Boof came back, so he didn't see the wolf at first. But his nose caught the scent of something that had to be canine. At first, he thought maybe Scott had let Daisy in for some reason. Then he heard an unmistakable female voice in his mind, only she wasn't speaking to him.

I am NOT going inside!

"It's okay," Scott tried to reassure the wolf. "No one's going to hurt you."

No self-respecting wolf would be caught dead inside a house.

"Scott, what's going on?" Harold asked from the living room. "Who is that with you?"

"That's my dad. He's a werewolf, too. Look, it'll be okay. Trust me."

The wolf stared at the boy-wolf with sharp green eyes. Trust him? He was part human. How could she trust any human after they'd put her in a cage to be gawked at? How could she trust a human when they had denied her freedom? Still, he was part wolf, she reasoned. The humans considered him to be different from them. Maybe he was different enough to be trustworthy.

"Don't worry," Boof told her, tentatively reaching down and scratching her behind the ears. "Everything's going to be fine."

Moonrunner glanced at the girl. *You are so sure of that.*

Harold got up from his chair. Like his son, he was completely furry. He gaped when he saw the wolf in the doorway. "Scott, what are you doing? If I'm not mistaken, that's a wolf, not a stray dog."

"Dad, this is Moonrunner. She needs a place to sleep, and food. Can she stay here, just for one night?"

The wolf looked at the older werewolf uncertainly. *Are you the pack leader?*

"I'm his father." It was very strange talking to a wolf. He envied his son the ability to adjust to all of this weirdness. "Werewolves don't have packs. We're more human than wolf. Why are you here?"

Moonrunner hesitated before replying, *I do not wish to go back to my cage and to be stared at by humans who take their freedom for granted.* She sniffed his hand. The scent of wolf was unmistakable, but it blended with a human scent. *You are more wolf than you think. Perhaps you are trustworthy.*

Harold sighed. This was crazy. But what would he have done when he was his son's age, years ago? Probably the same thing. He could understand why the wolf didn't want to be caged. "Are you hungry? I made hamburgers for supper. There's one left over. It's in the fridge, so it's cold, but it's meat."

Meat?

"Yeah."

Slowly, Moonrunner padded inside the house and glanced around. The walls and ceiling surrounded her. It was almost like another cage, but here, she wouldn't be stared at. She waited for him to take the leftover hamburger out of the fridge and toss it to her. The cold lump of meat was very unappetizing, but she was starving. The wolf snatched the meat up and ate it.

Thank you, she thought.

"No problem. Do you want to stay for the night? It'll be warmer than sleeping outside. It's supposed to rain later on."

Moonrunner gazed at the werewolves and the human girl. Her instincts told her that they could be trusted. They weren't going to put her in a cage, at least not right away. If it looked like they were going to, she could always run away.

"Daisy's old pillow is in the basement," Harold said. "She could sleep on that."

I'd rather sleep on the floor than be surrounded by dog-scent all night, the wolf replied.

"Okay."

Boof looked at Scott. "I should get going. It's getting late."

"Okay. See you tomorrow."

She nodded and then left.

"Too bad Stiles isn't here. He'd love to meet you," Scott told the wolf.

Stiles had gone home, reluctantly, to try and work things out with his dad. So far, things had been okay. He'd managed to get his dad into a rehabilitation program. Scott didn't exactly know how, but his friend could talk most people into doing just about anything.

Stiles?

"A friend of mine."

Human, no doubt.

"Yeah."

Harold found a few old towels in the closet and spread them on the kitchen floor. "You can sleep on these if you want."

Moonrunner wagged her tail, grateful for the gesture of kindness. It was more than she'd expected, but she was beginning to learn that things weren't always what she expected.

"I'm going to bed. Good night, Scott."

"Night, Dad."

The wolf and the boy gazed at each other for a few moments. Her perceptive green eyes bore through him, finding the part of him that was wolf. *Would you like to hear one of our legends?*

"Sure."

She sat on the towels and continued to gaze at him. *Once upon a time, there was a human male who envied wolves. After watching a pack of wolves for many moon cycles, he decided it was time to introduce himself to them. Of course, the wolves did not trust the man at first. The pack leader's mate bit his ankle. The closest healer nearby was a shaman. So the man went to him.*

"What happened?" Scott asked.

The shaman asked the man what animal bit him, and he answered truthfully. Then the shaman asked him why he had been so close to a wolf. So the man told him of his deepest desire to become a wolf. Then the shaman told him there was a way, but it would require the strongest of wills. The shaman put the man who wanted to be a wolf into a sleep with his herbs and chanted all night long, praying to the spirits for the transformation to work.

"Did it work?"

When the sun rose, the shaman lifted the blanket where the man had been sleeping. In his place was a wolf, but he turned back into a man. He was amazed at his power. The shaman told him that other men would fear him. The man-wolf laughed and said they should, for he was stronger. He went to the wolf pack, and they recognized his scent, even though he was also a wolf. The pack leader's mate, whose name was Silverpaws, growled at him, saying that he was still a man and that he could not be worthy of them. Enraged, the man-wolf attacked her, but the pack leader defended his mate.

"What happened?"

Moonrunner continued, *Eventually, the man-wolf lost, for he was one and they were many. The pack was amazed to see him turn back into a human. He gazed at them and spoke, "All I ever wanted was to be one of you." Silverpaws replied, "Foolish man. You can never be one of us. You will always be human, even if you are part wolf. That is the way of things."*

Scott contemplated what she'd told him. It was no wonder wolves didn't trust humans. "Well, I know I'm not a wolf, even if I am furry."

Perhaps not, but you are part wolf and you cannot change that, just like you cannot change the fact that you are also human.

He nodded. "I guess I should get to sleep. Good night."

Good night. Moonrunner slowly wagged her tail as the boy-wolf disappeared down the dark hallway.

* * * * *

Harold was the first one up, as usual. He was careful not to trip over the wolf in the kitchen as he made coffee.

The noise and the strange scent woke her up. *What is that smell?*

"Coffee."

The wolf snorted.

"I'm going out to get the paper. Need to go out?"

I suppose it couldn't hurt.

She followed him.

Boof's dad also happened to be getting the paper at the same time. The tall thin man wearing a dark green bathrobe waved at his neighbor. "Morning, Howard."

"Hello, Marconi."

"You got a new dog or something?" He squinted, wishing that he had his glasses on.

Moonrunner growled. *I am NOT a dog!*

"Take it easy," Harold said softly. "He can't see you clearly, and besides, it's better if he thinks you're a dog." Louder, he said, "She's just a stray. I'm sure the owner will turn up soon."

"Right. Uh, see ya later."

* * * * *

Scott woke up next. He hated waking up on the morning after a full moon. He always felt like he was having a hangover, except he wasn't. He got dressed and then grabbed a can of pop from the fridge. Sugar and caffeine would help. His dad walked in a few moments later, followed by the wolf. She wagged her tail.

"Mornin', Dad, Moonrunner." He yawned.

"Morning, Scott."

The teenager looked at the wolf. "I guess you're going to leave today, huh?"

I was considering it.

"Where are you going?"

I don't know. I'll find out when I get there.

Harold spoke. "If you can stay a little longer, I'll have some bacon for you."

The wolf looked up. *Bacon?*

"Maybe you can have some of Daisy's dog food, too. I'll bet you're really hungry."

Moonrunner's stomach growled loudly in response.

"Good. I'll get some food ready."

As he cooked, Harold asked Scott, "Have you tried talking to Daisy lately?"

"Yeah. I can't hear dogs. Boof can hear her, though. She found out last night."

"She can?"

"Yep."

That was interesting, Harold thought. These kids were lucky. They were young enough to be able to adjust to it all. He wondered if he'd ever get used to the idea of mutants. In many ways, they were not that much different from werewolves. They were so much more than human, and yet many viewed them as not entirely human. How could they find their places in this strange new world?

Scott looked at Moonrunner and wondered whether the wolf would decide to stay. Her heart was wild and free.

In response, the wolf wagged her tail. *You are right that I am free. However, with freedom comes many choices. You are my friend. I would like to stay for a time, if it is not too much of an inconvenience. Be warned, though. If you even think about putting me in a cage, I will leave.*

Scott nodded and looked at his dad.

"I guess she can stay for a while," he answered.

The teenager grinned. "Cool. Thanks, Dad."

Moonrunner glanced up at Harold. *Thank you. Can I have some of that bacon?*

He grinned. "Sure."

Scott leaned down and hesitated before scratching Moonrunner behind her ears. "You don't mind, do you?"

It was a pleasant sensation, which she had only felt once before when she was a puppy at the zoo. She could definitely get used to it.

* * * * *

The End

