

Lycanthrope Legionnaire
July 12th, 2013 (Originally written December 14th, 2007)

Revenge

Foreword:

From time to time people wrong one another in grievous ways, intentionally or not. Some victims form grudges, craft vendettas, or undertake pacts to exact revenge on the person who wronged them. Some victims forgive and follow the ideals of "live and let live", writing off the conflict and forgetting it. Revenge and forgiveness are polar opposites, but somehow they're the two ways people handle conflict day in and day out. An exception to this idea of opposites does exist; there are some who combine the two ends of the spectrum into webs of vengeance, trickery, false acceptance, and possible terror. These underhanded few, contrary to any apologetic words or gestures presented to the one who harmed them, hold their grudges and carry the weight of that conflict with them every day they go without their retribution. These web-spinners of deceit are quick to create a facade of forgiveness for the slight against them, putting their target off guard until they can strike back at them. They play their cards and bide their time waiting to strike. They do this because they want to enjoy the pleasure that comes with the execution of a long planned revenge. After all, what sort of enjoyment could come from a vengeance not served calculatingly cold?

Day 1, Friday:

The familiar ring of the cash register, an exchange of money, and a quick kiss on the cheek signaled the end of Brian's work day. He blushed and waved goodbye to his girlfriend as she waved back while walking out the front door of the store. With a haste most usually reserved for matters of life or death the young man stripped himself of his work apron and grabbed his register's drawer, ready to count its load. Invigorated by his girlfriend's visit and chat he quickly made his way to the back room and made sure all the purchases from the day were accounted for, making small talk with a few of the other cashiers that occupied the corners of the tiny room containing the store's safe. His work week now officially over, Brian arched his back, stretching and cracking his joints as a sort of impromptu way to kick off his weekend and Christmas break.

"This is going to be a great vacation." he quietly said to himself.

The lanky 22 year old, with his bowl-cut, brown hair and a skip in his step made his way through the frigid Winter air towards his car while taking in the sights around him. Christmas time was gracing his town once more, filling the town with familiar faces of high school classmates who flocked back home from college to visit their families. He stopped a few feet short of his car to talk with an old classmate that came up to shake his hand and wish him a merry Christmas. As they spoke he continued to spot and recognize faces from his past every so often. Brian gave his acquaintance a goodbye handshake, turned around to finish his journey towards his car, and spotted two incredibly familiar faces across the street as he went to unlock his door. Standing in conversation across the street were faces he knew all too well. One was a close friend, the other a previously close friend whom he'd parted ways with early into his senior year of high school.

The first friend, an Asian fellow named Alex, caught sight of Brian and shouted to him from across the street, waving and beckoning him to cross the street. He wished Alex hadn't spotted him, but it was too late now. He had to go say hi and chat with him or

risk looking like a jerk and possibly insulting him. Brian waited patiently for the crosswalk sign to change as the two across the street continued talking. Alex chatted with the second fellow while the other man kept a nonchalant, but piercing, stare fixed on Brian. He felt a slight knot form in his stomach as he tried his best to not lock eyes with the short-haired, blonde man. From the other side of the road the man stared him down with a steely gaze that befitted his grey eyes. The crosswalk changed colors and he started to stroll what felt like a thousand yards towards the two men across the street.

His mind flashed back to the early months of senior year as he made his way towards his new destination. It played back parts of the incident that had ended his friendship with the blonde man senior year. The memories made his stomach knot even more as he continued his trek across Main Street but Brian put a smile on his face and opened his arms wide in greetings to the two men waiting a few feet from him. This was as best a show he could put on under the scrutiny of those cold grey eyes and that wry smirk that pierced the blonde man's lips.

He gave his friend Alex a quick hug and pat on the back before turning towards the one person he'd preferred his friend hadn't make him come in contact with. The blonde man pulled one of his concealed hands from his jacket's pocket and extended it towards Brian.

"Nice to see you again, long time no see."

"Good to see you too Taylon."

Brian's stomach knotted even more as the bad blood he'd created between them so long ago came creeping back into his mind. He reached out and forcibly made himself shake hands with the man. The three previous classmates talked about this year of College so far and plans for the vacation. Alex mentioned a cruise-ship trip to the Bahamas, Taylon glazed over how he had recently transferred out of his school in Kentucky. For twenty or so minutes the three men fluidly chatted the time away until after a good while they broke the conversation and parted ways.

Brian crossed the street back towards the parking lot, glancing over his shoulder every couple seconds as Alex and Taylon walked East down Main Street, eventually disappearing behind the profile of the Sunoco gas station. He made it to his car, finally out of the arctic-like wind, and relaxed into his seat. He couldn't relax, his stomach still felt a little tight, but not nearly as extreme as when he had shaken hands with the blonde classmate from his past. His thoughts drifted quickly back to the events of five years ago and the drama he had created then.

Brian sat in his car as it warmed up, he tried his best to lock his brain off from memories of years past. Unsuccessful, he found himself thinking more and more of what he'd done, mulling over it all in his head despite its protest and want not to. Overwhelmed, his memories flooded his conscious mind and started flashing by over and over.

Brian was back in high school, standing in the school's halls as ethereal renditions of his classmates walked past him paying him no notice just like they had in real life. Friends and people close to him stood out from the ghosts, solid and corporeal like they were taking part in the dream with him. The people who were solid memories came and went through the school, his friend Alex gave him a high five and continued on to English class, George said, "Hi" quickly and curtly as he ran off to gym, his friend Cody waved as she walked by him, and finally his friend Taylon rounded a corner down at the end of the hallway. He was radiant almost, not glowing in earnest, but he definitely stood out from the other solid apparitions. The blonde boy strolled down the halls towards Brian, obviously making his way straight towards him.

Back in his car Brian found his heart fluttering as he dreamed and recalled those days again while his friend Taylon drew closer in his mind. The golden-haired boy stopped in front of him, greeted him, and hugged him tight. Brian's heart skipped a beat as memories of his time with his past and first-time boyfriend graced his mind. Everything seemed surreal and grand as he leaned in closer to clumsily kiss his friend,

everyone else in the halls seemed to fade into a mist, and even the other solid recreations of his friends drifted from his mind as the focus grew on Taylon. He hugged back tightly at the ghost and smiled in his car as the two greeted each other in the dream as they had for weeks in a row five years ago. Before he could dwell on the encounter further Brian followed his thoughts down their weird path of correlation to when Taylon had come to him in need, a few months prior to the kiss in the hallway he just relived. The realm of recollection changed to his living room and in the corner in the armchair sat Taylon in a defeated posture with his face in his hands.

Five years later, sitting in his car, Brian still remembered what came next, word for word. The boy in the corner bawled and sobbed as he told Brian of how his love whom he'd not heard from in a month had been killed weeks before. Tears streamed down the boy's face and Brian scooted over to comfort him, hugging him close and telling him everything would be all right. He never thought himself capable of it, but he felt affection and care for a man, the one he held in an embrace. Brian comforted his friend and slowly brought him away from the dark precipice his words bubbled up from. Hours passed as he comforted and calmed his friend before finally kissing him and starting the path towards their relationship.

Again Brian's mind changed the memory and he suddenly found himself sprawled on his bed but this time the dream was devoid of his lover. His playback from memory relived the day moment for moment and he immediately remembered this particular memory completely, the day everything started going downhill. His dream-self thought over the night it had just woken up from and found itself bored with the man it had spent the night with. He looked to the empty pillow to his right and shoved it off the bed as he dismissed Taylon as a mistake that needed casting aside.

Brian cringed and writhed slightly in his car while muttering angrily to himself, "You idiot... What were you thinking? You're such a moron."

His self-loathing did no good in stemming the tide of the memories. He was back in school, though this time ignoring Taylon at any opportunity. He hadn't told the blonde boy why he wasn't talking to him, he just simply ignored his pleas and gave him the cold shoulder whenever he was around. Even now, sitting in his car, Brian still couldn't remember why he'd decided on that particular plan of just pretending Taylon didn't exist as the way to dump his lover.

Days turned to weeks in the memory and Brian remembered Taylon's confusion turn to depression and helplessness as he found himself isolated and shunned for no reason. Past-Brian continued to stonewall the boy he'd dismissed from his life, ignoring any calls or messages wishing to talk, and keeping his shoulder freezer temperature. Days kept going by in the memory until eight weeks into his routine of ignoring Taylon, Brian found himself on the defensive. He sat at lunch in his home's kitchen cutting a sandwich in half. Brian remembered the cracking sounds from the porch's glass door and then Taylon storming into the house and standing at the opposite end of the table. No longer just another solid memory in the sea of faces and ghosts, Taylon stood at the end of the table with an aura of contempt around him that manifested in the dream as a spiraling black mist rising up from his body. Again Brian's stomach knotted and he tensed in the seat of his car, this was the day it had all hit the fan.

The former friend and lover exploded at him, showering him in insults and accusations. Brian dropped his sandwich and knife on his plate and stood up defiantly, yelling back. Taylon fumed and marched towards him, closing the distance. Face to face with each other the dream became as real as possible. All semblances of the black mist faded from his former friend's body, the world came into full color, the misty and see-through dream profiles of the family dogs turned corporeal like Taylon and himself, and he felt like he was once again standing in that room in person, being yelled at. The two of them paced and yelled back and forth for almost a half hour until his accuser's temper finally got the best of him. Taylon lashed out with his arms and hoisted Brian up against the wall while his face contorted in primeval anger. Brian gazed back angrily at his

attacker as he raised his arm, ready to throw a punch at his face. Taylon growled and gripped his collar tighter as he shouted profanities and threats at the dangling boy. Tense seconds went by as they stood, and hung, locked in conflict. However, just as quickly as the conflict and Taylon's anger had escalated, it calmed. The blonde boy reached up to quickly shield and hide his mouth, muttering to himself as he dropped Brian to the ground. He started to walk away from Brian as he clambered to stand back up, stopping in front of Brian's mother's dish cabinet. His tormented ex turned around with his eyes full of tears and stared at him accusingly, not breaking sight for a second. He spit on the carpet right at Brian's feet and venomously said through sobs.

"You're going to die for what you've done."

The words shocked Brian with their level of anger and ultimate violence. As the declaration soaked into Brian's shocked mind Taylon gave the cabinet a tremendous punch, knocking it over and dashing its fragile contents against the inside of it in the process. A chorus of smashing and cracking porcelain followed Taylon as he stormed out of the house.

Brian opened his eyes and panted as his stomach almost turned inside out from the tenseness that had formed in it during his trip down memory lane. He held his hand on his cramping torso, feeling his heart pulse beneath his palm. "Such horrible memories" he thought to himself as he stared up at the roof of his car. Without getting as in-depth as before Brian recalled how he had talked to Taylon a week after the incident and the two mutually apologized for their actions and decided to just be neutral acquaintances from then on. He sighed loudly as part of him missed the days of being with his friend, especially the days when that friend was also his lover. He quickly pushed the thoughts out of his head, replacing them with the promise his girlfriend had given him during their chat at work, a night of "fun" come Sunday; he couldn't wait. He revved his car's engine to life with his renewed vigor and pulled out of the parking lot, finally driving back home.

Ten minutes and many bad songs on the radio later his car's wheels climbed over the familiar hump at the bottom of his driveway and made their way up the steep incline of asphalt. Brian parked his car and took a look at his watch. "6:30 huh? A little late but I'm sure Mom won't mind." he said out loud. He made his way inside through the garage and up the stairs into the kitchen. A quick kiss, hug, and reprimanding for being late for dinner were typical greetings from his mother most nights he came home from work. He walked over to his father at the head of the table and gave him a quick pat on the back before sitting down in the seat to the left of him waiting for dinner. As typical nuclear family dinners go, this was one of them. Brian and his parents exchanged stories about their day; his mother spoke of an annoying driver that cut her off in traffic, his father told a tale of how it took three hours to unjam a copying machine, and Brian talked about all the faces he'd recognized that day. Mentioning Taylon heated up the conversation as talk of all the conflict between him and Brian senior year resurfaced in his parents' memory. They never had forgiven Taylon for the things he had said and done back then, banning him from their home for the destruction of their best dishes among other things. They knew all too well about the conflict that had arisen three years ago and they had only forgone calling the police at Alex's extreme protest to that option. He convinced them that the issue had been solved and action by the law would only agitate and ruin lives. Though they were blissfully unaware of the exact details they knew enough, however little, to have opinions. His family finished up dinner and Brian excused himself from the table so he could head upstairs. He sat down in his corner of the office to play some games and chat with his girlfriend as snow started to fall outside.

The hours dwindled by as Brian continued to relax and entertain himself with multiplayer on his Wii and talking on and off with his girlfriend. It's said that time flies when you're having fun, and Brian was having an absurd amount beating up other gamers online and chatting with his girlfriend. The two lovers were teasing each other about their upcoming rendezvous in two days, a surefire way to make anyone lose track of the world around them. What felt like 9 P.M. soon felt like 11 P.M. and in fact actually turned out

to be 2 A.M. by the time Brian decided to head to bed. He stretched his arms and legs and kicked himself back from his desk in his wheeled chair. He gave his neck and stomach a scratch and spun his chair around, ready to head to sleep. He couldn't stand, however, his body was locked, frozen in fright. Outside, barely a foot away from the window and sitting perched on top of the roof of an outcropping of his first floor was some jet-black monster. The creature's body sat poised on his house in what looked like the pose of a dog sitting down on all fours. The hair on the back of Brian's neck stood up straighter than they ever had and his limbs shouted for him to run but they didn't listen. He sat there gripping his chair's arms white-knuckled, and breathing sharply as he watched the profile of the creature stand up into what resembled a bipedal form. The monster let a massive, pearlescent grin part its snout showing off the neatly arranged rows of fangs that shone in the light given off by the moon. It stood still, seeming like it wanted him to see it. Brian's limbs started to quiver, readying to move, and then the creature was gone. It leapt from its perch down onto the ground and took off running towards the woods, disappearing into the night.

Brian's heart was beating a mile a minute and his lungs were fighting to keep him from passing out as he shakily stood up from his chair, weak-kneed with a mix of fear and adrenaline. Warily he approached the window the monster had sat outside; he crept forward with his body ready to spring backwards from the window should the monster decide to make a reappearance. He looked outside on the roof of the first floor outcropping to find there was a big spot devoid of snow. Around the empty semi-circular blotch was a foot and a half of snow neatly piled up around the edges, the total accumulation of the storm so far? His mind was suddenly abuzz with activity and logic. What was that thing, where did it come from, what did it want? He felt his whole body cramp and his stomach tighten as he realized the snow devoid spot outside, now with a light dusting of snow across it, meant that the creature had been sitting there watching him since the storm started.

He fell back into his chair and turned back to his computer. He hovered his mouse over the bottom of his screen, waiting for his taskbar to pop up, and pulled up his weather application as soon as he could. He looked over his shoulder frantically ever couple seconds to make sure the creature hadn't come back. Quickly Brian found out that the storm had reportedly started at eight last night, he swallowed hard as he looked to his clock displaying "2 A.M." Unnerved even more by this finding he realized that "thing" had been sitting there, watching him silently for not just a while, but many hours on end. Terrified and worried Brian quickly shut down his computer and ran to the next room down the hall, his bedroom. He ran through his door, locking it behind him, and started verifying that all the windows were locked and the shades were drawn before finally sitting down on his bed thinking. His thoughts were going everywhere and nowhere, some were even conflicting. "Surely that's some figment of my imagination, monsters aren't real", he thought. Despite his want to rationalize he knew what he saw, and he knew he was afraid of it. He walked over to his dresser and took the pocket knife from atop it, examining it in his hands before sliding it into his pillowcase and climbing into bed. Unsure of what to do Brian just lay there thinking for hours until he finally decided that he would investigate outside come morning. Until then he would stay in bed and stay awake, there was no way he was going anywhere near outside until daylight graced all that existed near his home. He lay in his bed toiling endlessly in thought until finally his body succumb to the physical and mental anguish it was under and he unintentionally drifted off to sleep at exactly 6:52 a.m.

Day 2, Saturday:

Brian shot up in his bed, eyes wide, hand reaching for his knife as his mother's yelling up to him from the kitchen pierced his dreams.

"Brian! Wake up! It's one thirty, you've been sleeping all day, come get some lunch at least."

Groggily he remembered his stored weapon and groped around carefully for his knife under his pillow as he calmed down. Unable to find it he lifted up his pillow and looked around for it, even in between the crack between his bed and the wall. Unable to find the tiny knife he stopped and thought to himself, "What if it was all a dream?" Questioning his own state of mind and certainty on the matter Brian walked to the office just down the hall from his bedroom and approached the window where he remembered the creature had been sitting just outside of. He looked over the roof, and at the ground to both sides of it. No footprints, no sign of the empty blotch in the middle of the roof. "Maybe the snow covered it, or maybe I did dream it after all," he said to himself quietly as he walked back to his bedroom to get a change of clothes.

After filling up on a sandwich, milk, and a handful of Oreos for lunch Brian decided to just hang out for the afternoon and watch some television. Unable to decide on one channel he watched a mixture of G4TV, The History Channel, The Discovery Channel, and Cartoon Network to fill his afternoon. Hours continued to pass by without much notice for the lazy man. Afternoon started to turn to night and television in turn changed into videogames for entertainment. Just like the night before Brian continued to play and trounce other gamers online. He played and chatted with his girlfriend as outside the snow began to fall once more. As the evening wound down his mind replayed the "dream" from last night and he turned around to the window behind him and found it empty, no creature filled its pane. He thought of telling his girlfriend about the events, she might have some insight. But then again, he thought to himself, she might also find

him slightly crazy if he told her this dream and how he felt that it was real. Every so often he would turn around to make sure the window was empty, and every time it was. Brian decided against telling her as he said his goodbyes before signing off for the night. He looked at the clock, "1 A.M." it displayed. Giving a quick stretch of his whole body Brian got up and started to get ready for bed. He walked down the hallway to the bathroom, passing his parents' door which they had most likely gone to sleep behind hours ago during his gaming binge. Brian started his routine by relieving himself quickly, then washing his hands right after, and finishing up by brushing his teeth. After completing his prep he walked back down the hall to his bedroom cracking his knuckles and back idly as he headed towards bed. Closing his door gently behind him to minimize noise he walked over to his bed and crawled into it pulling his sheets up and over his body.

Brian lay in bed daydreaming about his fun to be had tomorrow with his girlfriend, fantasizing about the events and the spoils that came with them, content to no end. His train of thought was interrupted momentarily though as he heard heavy footfalls going down the stairs to the first floor of his house. Grumbling to himself about his father's late-night needs of alcohol he rolled over and tried to restart his fantasies about his girlfriend. Eventually successful in his endeavors he was squarely back on a thirty minute long track to imagining his girlfriend posing for him. Her hands were placed so tantalizing close to the fastenings of her bra that it made Brian spread a stupid grin across his face. He lay in bed just on the verge of seeing her naked form before, so close to his prize, he was derailed and robbed again suddenly by the sound of shattering glass, a group of dull thuds like someone falling, and a finitely short, sharp exclamation of his mother's voice . Brian was snapped to consciousness, shot up in bed, and was immediately angered by this new occurrence. "Did dad drop ANOTHER bottle, for Pete's sake?" He sat forward and swung his legs off the bed and smacked his pillow off the bed in anger as well. What he heard next made Brian pause for a second before cocking his head looking in the direction of his pillow. A metal "clang" had emanated from his pillow when it hit the floor so he reached down and picked it up by the

pillowcase's closed end. Upon liberating the pillow from the floor his knife slipped easily out of the pillowcase coming to rest with a metallic clatter on his floor. He froze and looked at the knife, unsure of what to make of it and the fact that it was actually there on the floor, as if evidence that the encounter the other night and his reactions in it were real. Suddenly a loud "SNAP" pierced Brian's ears and he was unsure of what to make of the alien noise. It didn't sound like anything breaking he had ever heard before. "It could be dad breaking something downstairs." he thought. He quickly dismissed this, believing the sound had come from the same floor level as him. "But what if dad hurt himself" he thought? He placed the tiny knife in his pajama's pocket and grabbed the flashlight from atop his dresser, pressing the button on the head and illuminating the path in front of him.

The cautious son took a few steps down the hall towards the staircase and his parents' bedroom, intending to rescue his father from another drunken injury or mess. He almost took his first step down the stairs until another loud "SNAP" stopped him. He turned his head towards the noise, it had come from his parents' bedroom; the same bedroom he now crept cautiously towards, listening intently. After silently approaching the door of his parents' room Brian gently opened the portal ever so slightly. Cold air rushed to greet him through the door as it opened, he shivered in response. He guided the beam of the flashlight from the ground in front of him, over some curiously broken glass and to the shattered window in the room that looked over another first-floor outcropping. "A burglary!" Brian immediately tensed up and panned his flashlight towards the bed, tracking the beam up and onto its blankets. The beam of light crept over his mother, she was lying in bed peacefully, confusing Brian as to how she was still asleep. What was happening and making that noise, and who broke this damn window. Slowly and carefully as not to wake her he guided the flashlight further over her frame and up to her face. He then stood locked in place, his hands started to tremble, and his stomach now felt impossibly sick.

There in bed lay his mother with her one remaining arm grasping her throat, or rather, gripping where it had been. She lay murdered, mouth filled with blood, face

locked in horror and agony, left arm nowhere to be seen, and her throat torn from her body in quite the grotesque fashion. Blood had pooled under her on the upper half of the bed trickling off the right side to drip down and spread across the carpet. The boy began muttering under his breath to any ears that would listen, pleading for this to be a dream or some cruel joke, for his mother to be somewhere alive and safe. He soon found his quiet praying interrupted by yet another "SNAP," though at this range the snapping sound was far more fleshy and soul-chilling than before. The flashlight's beam shot towards the direction of the sound and stopped, illuminating the far corner of the room to Brian's sight. He tensed up tighter, froze just as he had the other night, and locked his vision on the corner unable to speak or scream. The actor in the gruesome spotlight was illuminated plain as day sitting on its haunches. A bloody radius and ulna lay broken in halves at its feat as it crouched and gorged itself on what remained of his mother's arm. Brought into light, it looked up and straight at Brian with a bloody version of the same toothy grin that he'd been given last night. The creature let out a guttural belch that reeked of the metal scent of fresh blood and continued to gnaw on its meal.

Struck mute with horror and fear Brian slowly started backing up to the doorway as fast as his numb legs would shuffle. Not one to ruin its fun so quickly, the monster gave the human plenty of time to act by continuing to strip clean the female's humerus it had snapped in half moments ago. A slow and agonizing series of seconds went by as the humerus' halves were stripped of flesh and then casually discarded onto the bed with a wave of the hulking creature's arms. The beast licked its lips clean of the snack and started to stand up. Brian continued to back away from the sight, drawing closer to the door with each second until he bumped into his parent's dresser and fumbled the flashlight to the floor. A spine-chilling, deep toned, and evil laughter spread out from the now dark corner where the beast stood, its haunting laugh more than enough to finally convince Brian's legs into full action. He bolted from the doorway and ran down the hallway throwing his head around quickly to see the beast taking huge strides as it ran down the hall after him, hot on his trail. He ran to his bedroom and sidestepped into the

entrance, grabbing hold of the door and slamming it shut just as sight of the creature's clawed hands and snout came into view. He flipped the simple lock on his doorknob into position quickly before jumping back from the door waiting for the animal's next move.

Feeling somewhat safer inside his own domain Brian readied his knife and backed away from the door further while he looked around frantically for a phone. Slowly building in speed, the sounds of claws scratching at the outside of his door filled the room. The idea and mental image of the monster clawing, digging into the wood to try and get at him made Brian cringe with each consecutive attempt made. As suddenly as the couple of seconds of scratching came they stopped and left an eerie silence filling the room. A quiet and tense air spread across the room; it made the hair on Brian's neck stand up once more. As he took another precautionary step back from the door a thunderous punch hammered the door and blew its top hinge off the wall, forcing it to dangle limply from the top of the door. The sudden physical violence startled Brian and made him jump in fright. He backed away even more and readied his knife in his shaky hands as he kept looking around trying to find some sudden magic way to escape this prison he'd locked himself in.

The beast's guttural and bass-dominated voice filled his room. It called out to him tauntingly, slowly dragging out his name. "Briaaaaan."

Brian's mind was frantic, it was panicking as this monster clearly wouldn't be held at bay much longer. The spine-tingling horror that this thing knew his name practically made him piss himself. Another deafening punch against the wood dislodged the middle hinge of the door from the wall, leaving it hanging limply from the door just like the topmost one. A third thundering blow and the door was kicked down with a loud "smash." The monster closely followed the door's fall and slowly ducked its head and made its way into the bedroom, blocking the doorway. With the only light source being the lamp on Brian's nightstand the dimly lit bedroom seemed so much smaller with the giant black figure filling its doorway. Still unable to derive the creature's complete

features Brian did however make out some features in the dim light. An angled canine-like head stood nestled atop its broad shoulders and its arms were flexed out, bringing the canine's array of long monstrous claws into sight.

Downstairs the three loud smashing noises from above woke Brian's father from his alcohol induced stupor. Slowly and groggily he rose to his feet from the couch and headed towards the stairs intending to reprimand whoever was responsible for the racket. He paused at the bottom of the stairs as he faintly heard his son mumbling and pleading out loud from his bedroom. Quietly his father tried in vain to listen in on the conversation his son was having as he crept up the stairs without making a sound, an astounding feat on the old staircase.

Without responding at all, and still grinning that fang-filled grin, the monster moved closer to Brian as he pleaded with it to go away. Taking one giant step after another it stalked closer towards the boy cowering in the back corner, tiny knife held defiantly towards the monster.

"What the hell is going on up here?" Brian's father bellowed as he rounded the corner to see the broken doorway.

The 45 year old man soon found his vision filled with some huge black creature that turned around to face him as he finished voicing his disapproval of its handiwork. The hulking figure let out a deep and loud growl as it hunched down lower facing the father. He barely had time to react vocally. "What the hell..." was all he got out as the monster growled louder and then lunged at him with claws angled towards his body and its fang-filled snout wide with a bestial snarl. Brian's father instinctually raised his arms to block the attack heading towards him, pretty much the only defense the man had. Long fangs sunk into the man's left arm and claws pierced his torso as the beast connected its mass with his own. He let out cries of agony as his body was pierced all over by the monster's sharp weapons, blood welled up and poured from the deep wounds as the man yelled out his pain-filled screams. In fluid motion the monster pulled its head back,

releasing the man's arm, and then shot it back forwards, biting around and into the man's neck. The father's screams became gurgles as blood filled his throat and the monster's claws dug into and tore his body open like paper with a Herculean strength that belied the monster's massive size, Pinned up against the wall the man was helpless, he flailed his legs as the creature assaulted and mauled him in a bloody frenzy. The beast thrashed its neck, and victim, sideways with powerful muscles; tearing the father's neck open and throwing him down to the rug. Still pinning and slaughtering the man the animal continued its attack. Brian's survival instincts wasted no time and he bolted from the corner of his room and ran past the one sided fight in the hallway, not even stealing a glance back at his father's hapless and sanguine demise.

Mind panicking, Brian ran down the stairs of his house and barged out through his front door as soon as he had the locks turned open. He ran hundreds of feet through the snow straight towards his neighbor's house. His lungs started to burn and tunnel vision focused him on his target as his heart rate climbed faster and higher. He dared a glance back and saw the creature's frame leaping out from the front door of his house. He turned back to face his neighbor's house and pushed himself to run faster, crying out with unintelligible, panicked noises. The man's wheezing was loud and anguishing as he ran through almost two feet of snow in just pajamas and a t-shirt, slowed to a crawl by the thick winter wonderland now turned into a winter nightmare. The creature however seemed to be at home in the snow as it howled out loudly and, running on all fours, easily traversed the mounds and snow drifts that had impeded Brian's progress so far.

Brian knew that any chance of making it to the neighbor's house was slim to none in these conditions as he glanced backwards to see the creature gaining on him, his sanctuary next door seemed even more impossible to reach by the second. His brain's synapses fired on a whim making him dart to the right and turn towards his driveway and garage. Brian decided that the somewhat plowed state of his driveway was a much easier path to safety and security than the lawn and woods he'd have to navigate to his neighbor's house. His body crashed against the garage door as his momentum proved a

bit too much to stop gracefully. He fumbled at the outside access panel, hands shaking from fear and the sheer cold.

Just coming around the side of the house, the monster watched as the human scrambled to open a flap on the outside of the garage; it grinned and slowed the chase to a walking pace as the human frantically punched in a few numbers on the keypad to jostle the garage door to life. Brian pounded on the door wanting it to go faster as he watched the creature stroll casually towards him. He scrambled under the door as soon as enough room was available, clambering across the garage floor until he had room enough to stand and make a break for the door that connected the garage to the storage room. He dared to glance back, the monster wasn't there. "I'm going to make it!" he thought.

He shielded his eyes as he ran through his garage, the sudden change from the blackness of night to the well-lit garage playing havoc with his eyes. His escape wasn't guaranteed in the store room but at least his safety was because the steel door was the only entrance to the store room. Unless this thing had welders for hands he could lock himself behind the thick metal door, the monster out, then use the phone in the room to call for help, and wait until the monster left or he was rescued. He reached greedily for the doorknob, a quick turn of the wrist yielded no results so he turned harder on the knob, still nothing. Panicking now he wrenched his arms with all his strength to force the knob to turn, pleading quietly with the pitiless doorknob to let him in.

Outside, the creature continued its casual gait towards the garage, taking pleasure in watching the human scramble like a rat to escape under the garage door. It stopped and waited outside the garage door patiently as it continued to open. It waited for it to fully open before it stepped inside with a confident, victorious, and dominant air about it. Against the opposite wall Brian hung from a doorknob sobbing and heaving, clearly exhausted from its, what the monster deemed sub-par, efforts to escape. It reached out with a massive black digit to press the nearest button, closing the garage door behind it and sealing it in with its prey.

Alone now with one another the creature waited for Brian to turn around, crossing its arms impatiently. Finally giving up on the doorknob the boy slumped to his knees and turned around slowly to look up at the eight foot tall behemoth that had chased him to his wits' end and murdered his family. Now clearly illuminated from all angles and not blending in with the shadows and darkness that seemed to be its ally, the creature was jet-black and clearly wolf-like in nature. Standing at eight feet tall and with a muscular build the wolf epitomized the apex of predator. Driven by fear and the primordial curiosity that existed in all species Brian questioned the creature.

"What are you? What do you want? Why did you do this?! Why won't you just go the fuck away?!" he demanded. The wolf creature didn't answer and slowly walked towards the sobbing human. Brian was terrified by this thing and he desperately needed some way to escape but his brain kept coming up empty. He studied over the wolf as it drew closer, paying close and morbid attention to its claws, and the fangs that filled its maw and triumphant smile. "Why was it doing this? What had he done to deserve this?" he thought. The boy continued to look over the beast, he noticed the wagging tail attached to the, now obviously, content creature's backside. He kept scanning over it quickly, finally stopping to lock sight with its piercing, grey eyes. A creeping realization spread across his mind when he locked pupils with the beast.

He knew now what this thing was, it was a werewolf. In his mind the fang-filled human mouth being covered in haste and panic five years ago, and the threats that had spewed forth from behind the fangs came back to him now. The day he was assaulted in his dining room played back quickly in his head, except this time the mouth that had only seemingly exemplified his ex's anger in his memoirs was now clearly recognized as being filled with fangs. His mind had just written it off back then, but those were clear signs that his past friend was more, or less, than human. He looked back up quickly from his contemplation and into the werewolf's eyes. Staring back were the same eyes he'd expected to be there, the same eyes behind a tear-filled stare that had been given to him five years ago, and the same tearless, accusing ones from Friday after work. He cringed

when he recognized that hating gaze that reminded him of his betrayal five years ago. They had the same eyes, Taylon and the werewolf, they even shared that same damnable smile.

"No..." Brian said in a hushed tone of understanding horror.

The wolf grinned wider as the expression and words of realization he'd waited for spread across the human's face and lips. Brian sobbed and pleaded as the current situation soaked in to his mind and his death became a more and more likely possibility as he remembered the original threats from the blonde man five years ago. "You will die for this." echoed over and over in his mind. Brian apologized and begged forgiveness as he fell forward onto his knees to try and save his life. The wolf looked down at him as it drew closer, the easy to read contempt, snarl, and glare of "Not good enough" expressed through its face's features.

"You said you'd forgiven me! You said your anger got the best of you! Why are you doing this, you said we were square?!"

The hulking black werewolf remained silent and reached down to slowly lift Brian up by his throat. It held him face to face with its snout to see if the human would beg for its life more, he did love when his prey begged. Instead of pleading for release Brian gagged and made a last effort to escape by ramming the knife he still held in his right hand up and into the wolf's chest. There was little to no effect on the wolf except for a finite trickle of blood from the wound. Taylon looked down at the knife lodged in his chest and tugged it free, looking it over in his hand before lazily casting it into a corner and tightening its grip on his prey. "That's all you get," the wolf taunted as it finally spoke, bass-filled, guttural voice bouncing around the echoing room.

"You broke my heart and used me. So now I'm going to return the favor in that same order," it paused to grin and appreciate its own humor, "but not in the same context."

With one last grunt and unintelligible plea as he choked for air, Brian gasped sharply. In response the wolf squeezed tight, crushing his wind-pipe and practically breaking his neck. Brian's mind had barely enough time to register his life fading as Taylon rammed his claw-tipped hand, like an arrowhead, up and into Brian's lower torso. The creature forced his arm upwards, under Brian's ribs, and with no small show of force. In a single uninterrupted motion the werewolf's claws ripped their way up through the frail, lanky torso, destroying organs and severing essential pipelines in the process. With a suddenly-halting jab, the burrowing hand pierced its claw tips into Brian, the betrayer's, heart. Taylon watched in rapt pleasure as the human's eyes rolled back in his head, his gibbering ceased, his body went limp, and he was finally dead after all these years of waiting. The wolf, victorious and quite content with how everything had played out, let the bleeding body slump off his arm and onto the floor. He lifted his bloodstained arm up in front of his face and savored the blood he licked out of his fur. Smiling wide and toothily once more the wolf licked its lips, howled loudly, then set upon gorging himself on his prey.

Epilogue, Sunday:

Taylon lay on his couch relaxing and watched the news report on the recent murders in town unfold. Law enforcement didn't know what to make of it, an animal attack was the official designation because of the grievous wounds, missing flesh, bite, and claw marks. Entertainingly enough, they couldn't make heads or tails of the situation because most of the logistics of completing the killings pointed to the fact that a human had to have done it. How could an animal have escaped from the closed garage where what remained of the mangled young body was found, let alone how it got in the house through the perceived entrance of the second story window? The werewolf's mortal disguise grinned that familiar, victorious, and wry smile of his when he heard that the investigators were stumped with his deeds. Maybe he wouldn't have to move this time like he had to after Kentucky, the thought pleased him. Taylon gave his gut a content pat in tribute to the delicious spoils of last night. The meals and deep sense of satisfaction a major boon to his mood and body. He arched his back, closed his eyes, and settled into a comfortable position on his couch thinking to himself.

While the werewolf agreed that revenge was and is a dish best served cold, he decided that his meals are always better when they're freshly killed, and warm.

The End