

*She Wolf of London***Possession Is 9/10 Of The Law***by AND*

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**T**he blue light of the leap dissipated, stranding Sam Beckett in a dim, damp room. In his right hand was an old-fashioned ring of keys. In his left hand was a manacle.

In the manacle was a female arm.

Stunned, Sam's gaze travelled up the arm to the face of a young woman who leaned, sweating and panting, against the cold stone wall.

"Hurry, Ian!" she urged him. "Lock me up! Quickly!"

"Oh, boy," moaned Sam. He had leaped into some very bizarre situations since his time-travel experiment had glitched and condemned him to bounce in and out of other people's bodies, but this went right off the weirdness scale. The woman before him was dressed in little more than her underwear, and was chained to the wall at wrist and ankle. Sam had no idea what the person he'd leaped into had been planning, but he was certain that he wouldn't let it happen!

"Ian?" the woman asked as Sam freed her wrist. Her voice rose in horror as he moved to unlock her other arm. "What are you doing? Stop it!"

"No," Sam told her stubbornly. "I'm letting you go."

"Are you crazy? The moon's rising! The full moon!" Her shriek rose to a scream as she convulsed against the remaining restraints.

Worried, Sam hurried to unlock the leg manacles. She needed medical attention! But as he bent down she recovered and clubbed him on the back of the neck. The blow wasn't very strong but it was unexpected, and Sam dropped the keys. Instantly she grabbed them and began awkwardly chaining herself back up.

"You can't let me loose!" she gasped. "I am about to turn into a werewolf!" She resecured one wrist, but fumbled as she clumsily tried to manipulate the other lock one-handedly.

Sam snatched the keys back. "There are no such things as werewolves!" he said with authority, bending warily to unlock her ankles. He kept his eyes on her free hand, waiting for another punch, and therefore never saw the kick coming. He was knocked back against something that rattled; glancing over his shoulder he saw iron bars before he looked back at his adversary. Once again he had dropped the keys, and they both scrambled for them. She won.

"You *know* there are such things!" she shouted at him, She relocked an arm up, just in time to cling to the chain for support as another convulsion hit. Concerned, Sam reached for her, but she pushed him away. "Ian, if you're not going to help, then leave me alone. Go away! Please!"

Sam grabbed again for the keys, then stopped before he used them. Something about her face, as she turned to plead with him made him pause. Perhaps it was just the odd lighting here, but her eyes suddenly looked ... yellow. And didn't she have more tangled auburn hair than she did a moment ago?

She threw back her head and screamed, then looked at him one last time. "Go!" she howled, literally. Her voice trailed off into a wolf-like bay, and Sam watched in uncomprehending shock as the lines of her face shifted and rearranged themselves. Suddenly a six-foot wolf snarled in his face and Sam, not even thinking about his actions, bolted backward.

The iron bars he'd bounced off earlier were a cage door; Sam paused in his flight just long enough to slam it shut as the thing in the cell snarled and lunged at him. The creature was brought short by the remaining chains and it howled in frustration. Sam broke and ran.

There was a doorway behind him; Sam bolted through it like an Olympic sprinter. He got a dim impression of a room full of tools and dusty boxes that he blindly avoided at top speed, before he was stopped by a triple-locked metal door. Sam tugged on the center deadbolt, but he couldn't even rattle the heavy door in its frame. He searched his pockets with shaking hands for the keyring, but he must have dropped it in his flight; it was nowhere to be found, and he didn't dare go back into the other room to search for it. He slid helplessly down the door and sat on the ground, waiting for the thing in the cage to break free and kill him.

"Sam!" The voice, coming unexpectedly out of the dark beside him, almost gave him a cardiac arrest. But this voice was familiar, as was the face of the man who casually stepped through the metal door.

As Sam travelled through time his sole contact with home and sanity was his best friend, Al. Physically, Al stayed in the future, at the project H.Q. But using their advanced technology, Al could appear to Sam as a hologram and give him advice from the project controlling computer Ziggy. Not that anything could be said to be controlling Project Quantum Leap anymore, unless it was capricious fate or divine whim, for Sam found himself dumped into situation after situation where his only escape was to find and correct mistakes made in the past.

"Hey, Sam, get this," the stocky, overdressed hologram chortled. "The guy back in the Waiting Room says we gotta get him back before his girlfriend turns into a werewolf! Ain't that a kick in the butt?"

"Ngh," Sam grunted, too wrung out to react.

Al frowned and looked closer. "Are you okay?"

"Umm ..." A furious snarl from the next room interrupted Sam's attempt to think of a reply.

"What the heck is that?" Al shouted.

"Would you believe it's the girlfriend? She's your type, Al, a real animal."

Al gave him a don't-yank-my-chain look, then stuck his face through the wall for a peek. Ferocious baying greeted him. Al almost broke the record for the standing broad jump, backward. "Sam, there's some kind of monster in there! Get out of here! *Get out of here!*"

"I can't! I lost the keys to the door!" Sam shouted back. "Quick, tell me what I'm here to do, and maybe I can do it and leap out of here."

"Good idea," Al pulled out his pocket link to Ziggy. "Okay, it's October 4, 1990. Your name is Ian Matheson, and you're a mythology professor at a small university just outside London, England. You live in the boarding house that your parents run, along with your aunt and your nephew. The

only boarder is a student at your university named Randi Wallace. She's a myth ..." Al stopped, frowned at the link, and shook it vigorously, "... ology major in her first year of grad studies."

Sam closed his eyes. "You may have been right the first time. Al, when I first leaped in here, there was a woman in that cage."

Al was horrified. "And you left her there with that thing?"

"No, she turned into 'that thing' right in front of me."

Al squinted suspiciously at Sam. "Did you hit your head on anything? How many fingers am I holding up?"

"Two. Plus your usual cigar between them. Al, I swear, I'm not kidding and I didn't hit my head. I leaped in just as this Ian Matheson had chained up some young woman. She looked about the right age for a grad student. When I tried to unlock her she freaked out, and then she turned into ... that. I lost my head and ran out here, but I can't get past the door without the keys and I dropped them. If I'm here to make sure that Matheson isn't mauled by a wild dog, then I'm too late."

Al punched frantically at his computer link. "Hang on, Ziggy's trying to get a fix ... here it is." He grimaced. "The good news is, you don't get mauled. Ziggy says there's a 98% chance that you're here to save Randi."

A howl came from the other room and both men flinched. "If that's Randi, then I think she can take care of herself," Sam said quietly.

"No, she can't," Al contradicted. "The bad news is that four days from now she commits suicide. The Mathesons find her in her bed, overdosed on sleeping pills."

"Could it have been an accident?"

Al hit more keys. "No way. She'd swallowed about three dozen pills and washed them down with a bottle of Ian's brandy."

"Why?"

The werewolf snarled.

"You mean beside the obvious reason?" Al asked, taking a long drag on his cigar. "Ziggy doesn't have that data yet."

It was a long, slow night. Sam wanted Al to go back and find out more from the real Ian Matheson, who was stranded in the Waiting Room, but Al refused to leave him alone in the basement with the monster. Once he offered to go look for the keys, but the werewolf tried to attack and Al didn't stick around to see if it could harm a hologram.

Toward dawn the creature became less restless, and the other room grew quiet. Finally, as the sun's first light filtered through the dingy window set high in the wall, a soft voice called "Ian? Are you there?"

The two men stared at each other for a moment. Then Al stood up, gesturing for Sam to wait, and walked through the wall to the next room. There was a pause, then he yelled joyfully, "Hey Sam! There's a girl in here, and she's *nude!*" His head popped back through the wall. "And she's got great ..."

"Go back to the project and talk to the guy in the Waiting Room," Sam ordered tiredly, cutting Al off in mid-letch.

"You're no fun," Al complained, punching the buttons that would open his door to Project. It *shoooped* open, and Al stepped through to the future as Sam stepped through the door to the other room.

Neither one noticed the shadow that fell briefly against the basement window, then was gone.

Once again a young woman waited in the cell. She looked exhausted and dirty, but she smiled weakly at Sam. "Well, so much for 'that time of the month'."

"Are you all right?" Sam asked tentatively.

She nodded, then shrugged. "All right for a werewolf, I guess." She smiled again briefly, and he realized that under the dirt and sweat she was really rather pretty. Her face was shield-shaped, with a delicately pointed chin, and her eyes were large and dark in the morning light. But there were tears in those eyes and she sniffed as she demanded "What the hell got into you last night? I could have hurt you , I could have killed you!"

"I guess I lost my head for a moment," Sam replied, opting for the truth. He found the keyring glinting in the morning light and unlocked the cell door.

"You scared me," she said in a muffled voice, presenting her cuffed wrists to him. "I thought I'd change while you were still in the cage. I though I'd hurt you when I was ... Oh, Ian, you're the only reason I can bear this curse. You make me feel like we'll really find a cure someday. If something happened to you I'd kill myself, I would."

"Don't talk like that!" Sam snapped, louder than he meant. "Nothing is worth suicide!"

Randi winced. "You're not the one who has to be locked up every month!" Sam opened his mouth to reply, but she held up a hand. "Look, it's been a hard night, and let's not argue about this. I'm okay, you're okay, nothing horrible happened to either of us, end of discussion." She reached past Sam and picked up a bathrobe that had been neatly folded and left on the floor by the cage. "Besides, if we don't get up there pronto, we'll miss breakfast and we'll both be late for class."

Sam followed her tamely out of the basement and up to an upper landing, where they met two other members of the Matheson family , a sandy-haired, pudgy boy of 12 or 13 and a heavily made-up matron , coming down.

"Did you have a good ... experiment last night?" asked the boy with a revoltingly knowing leer.

"Julian," Randi said sternly, "we have been doing experiments with poltergeist activity, and it is hard work."

"So that's what you young people are calling it nowadays," sniffed the older woman archly.

"Funny how those poltergeists always manage to get your clothes off," Julian added. He ducked Randi's grab in his direction and scampered down the stairs.

"Such a fuss," the elderly woman said. "You'd think that you two were hiding some dark horrible secret, not getting up to a little normal hanky-panky." She shook her head and continued on down serenely.

Sam felt himself blushing to the roots of his hair.

Randi just smiled and shook her head. "Look, you go change and get breakfast. I'm going to take a quick shower if Aunt Elsa and Julian have left me enough hot water."

Sam found "his" room without much trouble and took a look at "himself" in the mirror. Ian was in his late thirties, with angular features, thick brown hair, and slate blue eyes. He was a slender man of medium height, and seemed to be in pretty good physical shape. Sam's curiosity about his latest appearance appeased, he found a change of clothes and followed the sound of muted uproar to the dining room.

Elsa and Julian were already seated at the table. Elsa was arguing with a balding, stocky older man who was serving kippers from the head of the table. A chubby woman at the other end was serving up tea and a running commentary to Julian about the importance of eating all his porridge. A small parakeet occasionally shrieked, adding to the noise level. Sam sat down and was promptly handed fish and tea.

He was still picking bones out of the kipper when Randi arrived, this time clad in a leather miniskirt and man's shirt, and bestowed a sunny smile on all at the table. Long earrings swung from her earlobes, severe glasses covered her eyes, and her hair was tied neatly back. She looked like a perfectly normal student with a certain New Wave fashion flare, and not at all like someone who had been a raging beast not two hours before. The smile picked up a little extra voltage when she aimed it at Sam, but all she said was a general "Good morning!" as she dropped into her seat.

"How can you call it a good morning when it starts with a whole fish?" a familiar voice asked rhetorically. Al waded through the table (avoiding the kippers) coming to stand beside Sam. "How are you doing?"

"I'm fine, thanks," Randi said, smiling at Sam, who blinked at her.

"Excuse me?" he finally blurted.

She grimaced. "Sorry. I thought you said something." She shifted her glance away from him in embarrassment, and ended up looking straight at Al. Al jumped away the moment he noticed, and seemed to take courage in the fact that she didn't turn her head to track him. He leaned forward and waved a hand in front of her face. She blinked, but that was her only reaction.

"Is something wrong?" Sam asked, hoping to bring her attention back to the people who were really in the room. Most people couldn't see or hear his holographic companion, but, on the other hand, animals were usually sensitive to his presence ...

Randi gave her head a tiny shake and smiled at Sam. "Nah. I thought I heard something, but I guess not." She looked puzzled for a second more. "Do you smell cigar smoke?"

"That does it, I'm outta here," Al announced. "I'll come back when you get rid of Miss Mutual-of-Omaha's-Wild-Kingdom there. This leap's too strange for me." With a stab at the handlink the hologram disappeared.

**R**andi had been to a student party the night before the full moon, and took the walk to the university as an opportunity to catch "Ian" up on all the news. Sam listened to her excited chatter with only half an ear, glad that her enthusiasm prevented her from noticing that he was following her blindly. Fortunately for him, she headed for his office first.

The office had the same antique feel as the rest of the university; like a medieval monastery adapted for use by academics. The office was lined with books upon books in heavy wooden

shelves and lighted with an ancient stained glass window. Sam rummaged among the untidy heaps of papers, notes, and texts on the desk, hoping to find a class schedule or lecture outline.

"Lose your notes for today's lecture?"

"What?" Sam was distracted from her question by the sight of a piece of notepaper rolled into a battered manual typewriter on the desk. He'd almost passed it by, but then the words registered, and he pulled it out for a closer look.

"Randi, come here and take a look at this. Did you type this?"

"Me? On that outdated monstrosity? C'mon, I even had a laptop with me on the moors. I'd never get mugged by a werewolf without the latest technology. No, I ..."

Sam never did find out what she was going to say. She stopped short as she stared at the odd message.

"Peekaboo.  
I'll be you."

"Weird," was her only comment. Then a bell rang and she jumped. "Hurry, grab your robes and get to class, we're late!"

"Robes?" The rustle of a professor passing the open door in full academic regalia answered that question. Sam glanced frantically around for Ian's cap and gown, finally spotting the gown thrown carelessly into a corner. It took a moment to fight his way into the garment, for Sam hadn't worn regalia since MIT. He grabbed a piece of paper out of a book luridly titled *Satan's Sex Slaves* and brandished it with a flourish.

"Time for a pop quiz," he told her, waving the printed list of questions in her direction.

She scowled and grabbed the list out of his hands. "Ian, we haven't gone over half this stuff! You weren't going to give these lectures until next week!"

"I was? I mean, of course I was. This isn't the quiz," Sam fumbled, trying to sound authoritative. "It's the list of study questions. Now where was that ..." Leaving the noun unspecified, Sam glanced wildly back at the desk for inspiration. None presented itself. With a shrug, Sam stuffed the list of questions into a pocket of the gown and followed Randi out the door. Luck was with him, though, as the pocket already contained a typed lecture.

**S**omehow Sam managed to muddle through the next hour. Mythology wasn't his strong suit.

He'd always been a practical man, and none of his scientific degrees prepared him to answer questions on the ethnobiocentricity of the Mephisto fallacy. He dodged having to answer for himself by abruptly asking other students if they knew the information, and relied on his knowledge of human nature to warn him when they were guessing. Apparently Dr. Matheson taught by alternately lecturing and grilling his students, as no one seemed surprised by Sam's approach.

Sam, on the other hand, was pleasantly surprised by Randi. No question stumped her; she was obviously intelligent and she really knew her subject. Regrettably, Sam realized, that made it twice as hard for him to impersonate someone she knew very well, someone she expected to know more than she did. When the bell rang again and she was swept away with the others, he heaved a sigh of relief.

Then he headed back to Ian's office. Once there, he pulled off the robe and reached for the bookshelves. Surely in all those mythological texts there was some information about werewolves!

**T**he material was there, all right, but it took hours for Sam to even find the proper books. Ian used no filing system Sam could figure out, if there was a system at all, and the books themselves were piled at least two deep on each shelf. In the end, eleven books were stacked on the messy desk, and Sam settled down to read until Randi knocked on the office door to ask if he was coming back to the boardinghouse for dinner.

Dinner was served in the same chaos as breakfast, only this time the menu was scrambled eggs, baked beans, and french fries (which Sam remembered in the nick of time to call "chips"). Aunt Elsa and Mr. Matheson buried themselves behind their respective papers; the lurid, sensational *Sun* for Elsa and the staid, respectable *London Times* for Ian's father. Mrs. Matheson chattered about her morning to the front page of the *Times*, and Julian was trying to get somebody, anybody, to listen to a story he had heard at school.

The sound of the telephone cut through the din. For a moment it seemed to Sam that they would all ignore it, but then Mr. Matheson answered it, barking "Matheson B&B, here!" into the receiver. He listened for a second, then gasped "Oh, my God!"

The rest of the family was shocked into silence. They all stared at Mr. Matheson, who was now gripping the receiver so tightly that his knuckles were turning white.

"How long ago?" he asked the phone. There was a buzzing of voices from the other end, their explanation going on for quite a while. Finally Ian's father said softly, "Thank you for telling us. Yes, of course we'll be sure to alert the authorities if he tries to contact us." He set the receiver down with a shaking hand and turned to face his frozen family.

"Nigel's escaped," he said in a stunned voice.

"Dad?" Julian squeaked. "But he's in ja, in America! Why did they call you?"

"The American police say that he escaped sometime yesterday, and that a man matching his description was seen at an airport yesterday morning, their time. They think he may try to come back to England."

Mrs. Matheson stared at her husband with wide eyes and open mouth. "But he was going to be locked up for the rest of ..."

"Sssshhhh!" hissed Aunt Elsa, nodding at Julian, who was staring at his plate and mechanically mashing the last of his fries into oblivion.

"Ian, who's Nigel?" Randi whispered in Sam's ear.

"He's your brother," Al unexpectedly muttered into the other ear.

Sam stifled his startled jump and obediently repeated "He's my brother, and he ..." He trailed off and raised a meaningful eyebrow at Al.

"He's trouble, that's what he is. Sam, we have to talk," the hologram warned.

Mrs. Matheson leaned over and patted Sam's hand. "I'm afraid that Nigel was a disappointment to the family," she told Randi. "Not a nice boy like Ian at all."

Randi frowned. "Is Nigel your evil twin, Ian? You've never mentioned his name before."

"Yes," Sam said, looking to Al for confirmation.

Al nodded. "A pretty good way of putting it. Ian and Nigel were identical twins, but while Ian is a model citizen, aside from his habit of locking pretty girls up in the basement every month, this Nigel nozzle has a rap sheet as long as my arm."

"He didn't do it, you know," Julian quietly announced to his plate, still crushing the last flattened remains of his meal. "He may not have been a very nice guy, but he didn't ..."

"Of course not, dear," Mrs. Matheson hastened to assure him. "None of us thinks he could have."

"Some of us do," Aunt Elsa scoffed automatically. Julian turned white and Elsa hastened to add "not that he did, of course, just that he mi ... Of course, I don't think he actually," She had to raise her voice in hopes that Julian might hear as he rushed out of the room. Everyone remaining glared at her.

Everyone except Randi. "Just what was Nigel arrested for, anyway?"

"Murder one," Al said grimly into the silence after the slam of the front door.

Randi gulped.

"You don't want to know," Sam told her. He folded his napkin and threw it down. "I'd better go see where Julian got to."

"I'll come with you," Randi volunteered instantly, jumping up.

"Ummm," Sam stalled, looking at Al. How could he explain that what he really needed to do was talk to his contact from the future? Not even a werewolf would believe that.

"Better stick with her until we know more about this leap," Al advised. He checked the handlink. "Ziggy says the kid's gone to the local church. He's got a friend there."

"Is there some problem?" Randi asked.

"No! Of course not. I was, uh, just trying to figure out where Julian might have gone to. The church, I think."

"That'll be the day," scoffed Mr. Matheson. "When that little delinquent gets religion ..."

"Now, dear," his wife corrected, "he does seem quite taken with the minister's daughter."

"Such a pretty little thing," Elsa said approvingly.

"That's enough out of you!" Mr. Matheson snapped. "Wouldn't have to go find him if you'd kept your cake-hole shut, would they now?"

Randi, Sam, (and Al) fled the room as, behind them, the battle began in earnest.

"Uh, oh, Sam, it's getting dark out," Al warned as they stepped outside.

Sam looked warily at the sky. "Er, Randi, maybe I'd better go alone."

"Why?" She followed his gaze upwards. "Gonna be a nice night. I used to like moonlit nights." She sighed.

"Are you going to be all right?"

"Is the moon full?"

"Not anymore."

"Then I'll be fine."

**J**ulian was recovered from the Rectory, Randi remained human (and unsuicidal) and the rest of the night passed without incident. Things seemed to be calming down, at least until Sam headed for the university next morning.

"Hullo again, Ian," a professor cheerfully greeted him as he passed in the hall on the way to his office. "Forget something, have you?"

"No," Sam stammered, trying not to make it sound like a question. "Why?"

"Well, I just saw you leaving your office, so I figured you must be going back for something." "I forgot my, uh ... my robes. Can't teach without your robes, can you?" Sam smiled disarmingly and gestured at the other teacher's attire, his mind racing.

The other professor frowned. "Thought you were carrying 'em before. Ah, well, m'eyes aren't what they used to be. About time I asked the National Health for a pair of glasses."

"Er, right," Sam said, beating a hasty retreat. The moment he was out of sight, the retreat became open flight, and he ran the rest of the way.

If the office had looked messy before, now it looked like a candidate for disaster relief. The bookshelves had been emptied, and their contents scattered all over. Papers were tossed everywhere, and the books *Satan's Sex Slaves* and *The Face of Fear* had been literally ripped to pieces. Sam scraped the torn pages and broken covers into the wastebasket, only then noticing to his surprise that the author for both books was Ian Matheson.

"Give somebody a bad grade yesterday?" Al asked as he appeared, surveying the damage and puffing his cigar.

"No." Sam started to put the room to rights as best he could. "Please tell me you have more information on Nigel."

"You don't think he did this, do you? If he got out of America at all, he probably headed for the first tiny place with no extradition law."

"What did he do that had Julian so upset?"

"Nigel married an American to keep from being deported as an undesirable alien. They had Julian. Two years ago she disappeared. Circumstantial evidence led to Nigel being arrested for her murder."

"And the Mathesons adopted Julian? What about her parents?"

"Both dead. In fact, her father had just died and left her a small fortune just a few months before she disappeared. The money was never found."

Sam sighed heavily. "Poor kid. But I still think Nigel's here. Look, a Professor just saw 'me' twice. And there was a threatening note in the typewriter yesterday."

"What note? Show me!"

"I can't. It's gone." Sam wasn't surprised that the note was gone; why should the culprit come back and leave incriminating evidence behind? But other things were missing as well. Ian's robe was nowhere to be found, nor were the books Sam had pulled aside the day before.

"Al, he took the books on lycanthropy."

"Lyco-what?"

"Werewolves!" Sam translated. "Nigel took the books I was reading on werewolves! He knows about Randi!"

"Now wait a minute, Sam. I don't know what happened the other night, but I do know that there are no such things as werewolves!" Al sounded more like he wanted to be reassured than like he was stating a fact.

Sam didn't have time to be reassuring. "Apparently there are. You saw what happened; you just don't want to accept it."

"Don't say that!" Al shouted. "You know this kind of stuff gives me the creeps!"

"I thought you didn't believe in the supernatural."

"What's the point in getting the creeps if you don't believe?"

Sam thought about that for a second, then let it pass. "Have Ziggy get all the data available on Nigel. I tell you, Nigel is up to something and it has to do with Ian."

Al shook his head over the handlink. "Not according to Ziggy."

"Well, Ziggy's been wrong before."

The budding argument was cut short by a tentative knock on the door. At Sam's invitation the door swung wide, revealing Randi.

"Nice miniskirt," Al breathed. "Oooh, bend over and pick up something, would you?"

Randi wasn't quite so appreciative as she sniffed the air. "There's that cigar smell again. Have you taken up smoking, Ian?"

Al sighed and punched at the link, making the door *shoop* into existence behind him. "Just when I start to get to like her, she reminds me she ain't for real. I'll go get what I can on Nigel."

"I volunteered to come see why you weren't in class," Randi started, then she got a good look at the mess in the office. "What happened? Ian, are you all right?" She lunged into Sam's arms, much to Al's amusement.

"Nice teacher-student relationship going there, I'd say," Al leered, then shut the waiting room door before Sam could reply.

"I'm all right," he told Randi. "I promise." He squeezed once in consolation, then let go. "Go tell the others that class has been cancelled. Then call the police, I mean, the bobbies, and I'll try to straighten things up a bit and see what's missing."

Randi nodded and left, and Sam returned to cleaning the room up as best he could.

Half-way through his task Sam heard the waiting room door *shoop* into existence again. Al stepped through and looked cautiously around him.

"She's getting the police," Sam said, then turned back to put the last book away. "Anything new? What did Ziggy have to say about Nigel?"

"That's what I came to tell you, Sam. They find Nigel on Hampstead Heath tonight."

"Good. Does he go back to jail?"

"Not good, and no, he doesn't. He goes to the morgue. They found his body, Sam. He'd been mauled to death."

The time traveller and the hologram stared at each other for a moment, then said in unison, "Randi."

"But the full moon is over!" Sam protested. "She was fine last night!"

"Tell that to Nigel!" Al yelled back. "She turns him into meatloaf! It must be why she kills herself, Sam. Ian told me that she's never killed a human being while she was a wolf. He's still insisting I tell him how he got sucked into an alternate dimension, but he told me all about her. She's terrified that she'll become a murderer."

"And now she does." Sam thought about the chilling message waiting in Ian's twice-violated office. "I bet she does it in defense of Ian. Somebody's up to something, and I'm sure it's Nigel."

"Who cares why she does it?" Al shouted. "You just have to make sure she doesn't do it, or you're stuck here in the Twilight Zone!"

Before Sam could think of a reply to that Randi had returned, with the police and a University Dean. Al took a look at Randi and raised the link as if he was considering reopening the door, but he changed his mind as the bobby started asking questions. Instead, he kept in the background and fed Sam answers to tell the policeman. Randi stood by the door and stayed completely quiet, not drawing attention to herself and obviously hoping to stay and lend what support she could. But the Dean waved her off to the rest of her classes. She looked at Sam, who nodded his assent. Better that she not witness him stumbling over a list of the contents of his own office!

The statement seemed to go on forever, and both Sam and Al had to guess at what items should be listed as missing. Afterward, Sam was preoccupied as he walked wearily back to the Matheson boarding home, trying to think his way through the current problem. According to the books, Randi should only turn into a wolf the night of the full moon, one night a month. But according to Al, tonight she would change again, this time killing Nigel. Still lost in thought, he walked into the house and almost collided with Ian's mother.

"Oh, you're home again?" she greeted him with a broad smile. "I'll have your robe ready in a couple of ticks. Such a tear you got in it this morning!"

That got Sam's attention. "This morning?"

She bustled by unconcernedly. "Yes, just before tea. You came home with your robe and your pants all ripped up from that spill you took on the pavement. And I said I'd stitch it up while you changed and you said not to bother right away because you'd just come home to change. You remember, dear." And off she went upstairs, humming to herself.

"And then you found that you'd left your billfold behind in your office and had to borrow a couple quid from me to get back," grumbled Ian's father, passing through the hall. "Don't know what's gotten into you today, Ian. Acting like an idiot, you are."

"I didn't ..." Sam began.

"Who else? You think Nigel would come back just to take your robes?"

"Frankly, yes."

"You've been working too hard, that's what you have," Mr. Matheson shouted from the next room, where he'd begun to feed the bird. "What would he want with your robes? Besides, he probably never made it out of the States. I can't believe he'd come back here."

"But ..." Sam gave up. If Ian and Nigel's parents couldn't tell the difference between the twins, how could he convince them otherwise, especially since he himself was impersonating Ian. And he could hardly bring his suspicions up to Randi, either, for the same reason. There seemed to be nothing he could do except wait for Nigel to make his move and try to be ready for it. With that in mind, he went down to check the dungeon. If, for some unforeseen reason, Randi did transform tonight, the cage and chains could be all that made the difference between a murder/suicide and his chances of leaping out.

All seemed normal, as normal as a middle-class basement dungeon cell could be called. Frustrated, Sam climbed the stairs back up, arriving in the living room just in time to hear the end of a conversation between Randi and Elsa, both of whom had just arrived back for dinner.

"Don't worry, Randi," the elderly woman was assuring the student. "I'll see to it that Ian knocks you up in time."

"*What?*" Sam screeched. "Randi, I hope you don't think ... I mean, I couldn't just..."

"Can't what?" snapped Elsa. "It's too hard to lift your hand and knock on her door to wake her up? How do you expect her to get up in time to join us for an outing on Saturday? Randi, if he's going to back out I hope you'll still come, what are you laughing at, dear?"

"Nothing, really," Randi finally managed to gurgle. "I didn't think you knew that Americanism, Ian."

Sam retreated, feeling the blood rushing to his face. Somehow this family could, in all innocence, make him more embarrassed than Al could with his raciest remembrances. But Randi followed him.

"Did they find out who trashed your office? What did your parents think? Did you tell them?"

"They haven't found whoever it was, and no, I didn't. They have enough to worry about with Julian being so upset."

Randi shivered. "Do you think it has anything to do with Nigel's escape? Could the note have been from him?"

"I don't know. Why would he come here? If he got out of America at all, why come back here where he's also wanted?"

"Or unwanted, as the case may be. I bet it is him, Ian. Be careful!"

"I'm being as careful as I can be," Sam told her honestly.

Dinner that night was a strained affair, with Randi and Sam preoccupied with the Nigel problem and Julian buried in his own misery. Aunt Elsa and Mr. Matheson took the tension out on each other, fighting with more than their usual vigor. In an attempt to lighten the mood, Sam

complimented Mrs. Matheson on the taste of the squash, only to be met with blank incomprehension. "Squash?" she quavered. "But we aren't drinking squash. It's sparkling fruit juice."

"Sorry, I, uh, don't know what I was thinking," Sam stumbled uncomfortably, hastily stuffing another mouthful of what he thought was squash into his mouth in lieu of coming up with a reply. Wasn't it Shaw who'd written that America and England were divided by a single language?

"Well, he obviously likes the corquettes," Elsa comforted her sister-in-law. "Is it a new recipe?" The two women distracted each other with cooking hints, while Mr. Matheson and Julian ignored the byplay completely. But Randi looked long and thoughtfully at Sam eating his corquettes across the table, her silent stare reminding him uncomfortably of a predator assessing its prey.

As soon as decently possible, Sam fled to the basement to try to gather his nerves and hope that AI would show up with more information. Randi was upstairs in her room, doing homework, and he hoped that she'd be all right for a little while without his supervision.

*Shoop.* AI appeared, a spot of lurid paisley brightness in the dark dungeon. "Any progress?"

"Some progress. I'm convincing them I'm crazy!" Sam complained. "It's a perfectly quiet night, my 'brother' is nowhere to be seen, and Randi's starting to get suspicious about me."

AI glanced at the handlink. "According to Ziggy, nothing's changed. Nigel dies tonight in about three hours, and Randi kills herself tomorrow. You gotta do something, Sam."

"What can I do about her? Lock her up down here to keep her out of the way?"

"It's a start."

"I tried to convince her Nigel hadn't made it out of America, but she isn't convinced. Now what? She seems happy enough, what would make her kill herself?" Sam started pacing, frustrated.

"She turns Nigel into kibbles'n'bits. I'd say that's a pretty good contender."

"Wait. She told me that she'd kill herself if anything happened to Ian. What if something did happen to him? We've seen how easily the twins can switch off. Just because I've taken Ian's place doesn't mean he's safe, does it? Maybe it's Ian that gets killed ..."

Behind him the door creaked, swinging through AI, who screamed, "*Sam! Look out!*"

Sam whirled around, bringing him face-first into the chair that was descending on his head.

Darkness, and Sam, fell.

**C**old. He was cold, and his wrists hurt. His head rang with the noise all around him. Slowly the sounds solidified into one voice, AI's, alternately shouting and pleading.

"Sam! Sam, wake up! Stop that! No, don't, Sam, hurry up! She's gonna ... no, don't lock that! No, no, no! You're making a big mistake ... Sam, wake up, please! She's going ... no, honey, don't do that, you don't know what you're doing ... *Sam!*"

Sam shook his head and looked up, trying to focus. The cage, he was inside the cage!

Al stood in front of the door, alternately ordering and begging Randi to stop. He jumped in front of her, waving his arms, but she just walked through him. If he yelled very loudly she'd put her head to one side, as if listening, but then she'd shrug and go on.

Randi grabbed the door to the cage. "No, don't, you can't," Al implored, trying to pull her hands away. Being a holograph, he couldn't touch her, but she shivered at the contact. Desperately he leaned over and shouted directly into her ear, "*Bad Dog!*"

The bars slid right through him as the door slammed shut. Sam groaned.

"So much for you, Nigel Matheson!" she hissed in triumph. "I thought you were acting stranger than normal lately." She leaned close to the bars, her eyes glittering with rage. "Now tell me, what have you done with Ian?"

"I haven't done anything with Ian!" Sam protested, yanking on the chains. "I *am* Ian!"

"Don't give me that, Nigel!" she snapped. "Ian wouldn't forget his class schedule! Ian wouldn't sneak smokes on cigars! Ian wouldn't know American slang if it bit him, but you've talked like a 'Yank' for days! So I started watching you ... and now I heard you talking to yourself! It was practically a confession! You planned to trade places with him, then kill him! And kill me and make it look like suicide! That's what that note we found was all about, wasn't it?"

"It probably was, but I didn't write it! I'm not Nigel!" Sam shouted. "I'm Ian!"

"All right," she drawled sarcastically. "If you're the real Ian, you can tell me what you called me when I first came to class."

Al frantically keyed the question into his link, then shrugged helplessly at Sam.

"Miss Wallace?" Sam guessed.

"Wrong!" Randi pulled the key from the lock with a vicious twist. "Ian called me a poltergeist because I dropped my books. You're staying right there while I call the cops. And don't bother trying to get loose." Her smile was feral. "You can't get out of that. Trust me, I know."

"You can't let her go!" Al warned. "According to Ziggy she still kills Nigel, the real Nigel, I think, and then herself. If you don't get free, it's a 100% chance they both die!"

"Wait, please, wait!" Sam called desperately as Randi turned to leave.

He was still trying to figure out a way to convince her to let him go when the blue light of the leap gathered around him. *No, no, I haven't done it, please, don't ...* Sam prayed.

The cell turned blue and went away.

**T**he leap was short this time, stranding Sam gasping in a dark place, blinking frantically to adjust his eyes. Everything was either brown or grey, excepting one thing covered with a particularly brilliant paisley.

"Sam?" Al's voice asked tentatively.

With a sigh, Sam looked down at himself. Denim miniskirt, ankle boots, silver studded belt ... he could even feel heavy beaded earrings swinging from his earlobes.

"Oh, boy," he groaned, and looked tentatively at the cage. Ian Matheson was shaking his head to clear it, and Al stood between Sam and Ian, looking from one to the other in confusion.

"Over here," Sam muttered. Al stood there with his mouth hanging open in astonishment, but Ian looked up at the sound of his voice.

"Randi, I had the strangest experience," he started, standing up and trying to step forward. The chains brought him up short, and he stared at them in amazement. "Why have you locked me up? Randi, let me out!"

"Let me rerun the percentages," Al said, coming to his senses and pulling out the handlink. Meanwhile, Ian was going from surprise to panic in about 5 seconds flat.

"Randi, let me loose!" he shouted, rattling the manacles.

"I'm not sure I should," Sam blurted, wondering if Ian might be safer in there. The professor, however, misinterpreted him completely.

"Okay, I shouldn't have given you a demerit for tardiness last week," he pleaded earnestly.

"That's not ..." Sam began, but was interrupted.

"And I'm sorry that I said that your favorite movie would bore a lab rat to death. *Blue Lagoon* is the most wonderful movie ever made, does that make you happy?"

"Er ..."

"And I don't think that your new earrings really look like bronzed bits the butcher threw out. They're lovely, really." He rattled the bars in a frenzy. "*Now will you let me go?*"

"You can't let him go now," Al said calmly, puffing on his cigar. "This is getting too interesting."

Sam glared at him, then pointedly shifted his gaze to the handlink. Al punched a few more buttons, then shrugged. "Still the same. He dies, she dies."

Professor Matheson had quieted down; he waited for Sam to look back at him before asking quietly, "Why did you lock me up?"

"Because your twin brother is after you," Sam told him.

"Nigel? But he's in America ..."

"Not anymore. He's here."

"And locking me in my own cellar is going to keep me safe?" Ian's voice rose with incredulity until it squeaked on the last word.

Sam sighed. "No, I guess not. It seemed like a good idea at the time, though." He pulled the keyring out of Randi's pocket and unlocked his former host. "Look, Nigel's been sending you threatening notes. I think he's going to try to switch places with you ..."

"Then he's going to have to stand in line. Randi, the most amazing thing just happened to me. I think I was swept into another dimension ..."

"I think you hit your head too hard when you locked me up a couple days ago," Sam said uncomfortably. Just then the phone rang upstairs. Saved by the bell!

"Get that call!" Al ordered, looking at his link. "It's Nigell!" Obediently, Sam turned and charged back up the stairs, with an extremely puzzled Ian following behind. Al punched a button and blinked out of existence.

And blinked right back in by the phone. Sam burst out of the stairwell and grabbed the receiver out from under Mr. Matheson's hand. "Sorry," he said, trying to duplicate Randi's stunning smile. "I forgot to tell you that I was expecting a terribly important call."

Mr. Matheson huffed, but softened under the smile. "Well, that's all right, then," he muttered and wandered back into the other room, where he picked up his paper.

"Hello, Matheson boarding house," Sam cooed into the phone.

"May I speak to Ian Matheson, please?" asked a rough voice, familiar despite the attempt at disguise. Sam beckoned Ian over and held the receiver between them so they could both hear.

"Hullo?" Ian asked in an uncanny echo of the voice at the other end. "This is Professor Matheson."

"And this is your loving brother," said the caller, dropping all pretense of deception.

"Ni,!" Ian started, only to be shushed angrily into silence by the other end.

"No names! I don't need Daddy dearest overhearing, or Mum getting suspicious. Look, I'll make this simple and quick. You have something I want. I have something you want. Come meet me tonight and we'll make a trade."

"No!" Sam announced decisively.

"Are you the little girl who's been hanging out with Ian at University? Don't annoy me, girlie. I got some very interesting pictures of you the other night, and you're going to be very cooperative, unless you want to be the starring attraction in the next issue of the *Sun*."

"What sort of pictures?" Ian blurted.

"Pictures of a werewolf, brother mine. And here I thought that you didn't believe that myths were real."

"Go ahead and sell them," Sam said with more bravado than he felt. "No one will believe you. But we're not meeting you, tonight or ever!"

"Frankly, my dear, it doesn't matter if they believe those pictures or not. They'll certainly be willing to believe the early ones I got ... you know, Ian. The ones of you locking up one of your scantily-clad female students? The papers will love it, but I don't think the University board would be quite as amused."

Ian's eyes went wide with horror. "Randi," he whispered urgently, "pictures like that could ruin me , ruin both of us! Where do you want us to meet you?" he asked the phone in a louder voice.

"No!" Sam insisted, but Ian took the phone away.

"The playground at Hampstead Heath. Yes, I'll come. I can be there in an hour." The professor put the phone down, his face white. "Randi, we have to go. If he published pictures like that ..." he shuddered. "You'd be expelled, and I'd be barred. I'd never work again."

"I dunno," Al said from the corner where he'd been standing quietly. "Considering that he's the author of such masterpieces as *Satan's Sex Slaves* and *Ian Stryker: Professor of Danger*, his

reputation could probably only improve. Then again, if you don't succeed, he'll never write the Stryker one. Oh , and get this , the world will be taken over by zombies."  
"What does he want in return for the negatives?" Sam asked Ian.

Ian shuddered. "My passport, ID, and wallet." He tried an unconvincing smile. "If I tell the police I was mugged while taking a stroll on the Heath, it shouldn't be so bad. He'll get out of the country, but I should get my things back before he ruins my reputation completely."

"Ruins your ..." illumination hit Sam like a two-by-four. "Ian, don't do it! Don't you see what he's up to? If he can convince people he's you , even for a little while , then he can convince people that *you are him!*"

"Oh, my God!" Al slapped a hand to his face. "Sam, you were right; that must be why she commits suicide! She doesn't kill Nigel , *she kills Ian by accident!*"

"That has to be it!" Sam answered.

"You could be right," Ian agreed doubtfully. "But so long as he has those pictures, I don't have much of a choice."

"But you do, Sam! Quick, get downstairs and lock yourself up before she changes! No wolf, no manwich, no problem, you leap, and the cops get Nigel like he says!"

"But I can't let you go alone into danger," Sam said.

"Sam, you're the danger! He can handle his brother alone!"

"I can handle him alone!" The professor echoed the hologram.

"I don't think so," Sam told them both.

"Remember what happens when you get ... over-excited, Randi. If you start to change ..."

"I'm still coming with you. It's the only way I can be sure you're safe. Be sure you're ... still you."

"Then come on and get your coat," Ian said. Al just shook his head and groaned.

**T**he ride to the Heath was a silent one. Ian kept stared through the windshield as if he expected it to give him answers, Sam was racking his brains for a plan, and Al kept casting nervous glances between Sam and the rising moon, not that Sam seemed about to transform into anything. The tiny car wound its leisurely way through the suburbs, until at last Sam could see trees instead of buildings on one side of the road. Ian pulled up on the curb and stepped out, beckoning Sam to follow. Sam held back for a moment, looking at Al, who finally gestured him out.

"Don't worry," he said solemnly. "I'll be with you all the way, Sam, I promise."

The corner of Sam's mouth quirked in a smile and he jumped out to follow Ian.

The professor had already started down one of the park paths, and had almost disappeared in the gloom. Sam and Al scrambled to catch up before he vanished into the shadows completely. Suddenly ahead of them was a rustling of leaves, a startled cry, and the unmistakable thump of a body hitting the ground. Sam broke into a run. Al whipped out his link and shouted "Gooshi, center me on Ian!"

The hologram reappeared just as Sam rounded the corner. Ian lay on the ground, blood pouring from a graze over his temple. Another Ian stooped over him, clutching a rock.

"He tried to jump me from behind that bush," the standing man panted, pointing to some shrubbery beside the path. "But I knocked him out."

Sam hesitated, unsure which was which and highly suspicious. Ian couldn't have knocked Nigel out, it was too easy, and he would have leaped ...

"Come on, Randi," the standing man told him, reaching for his arm. "Let's call the bobbies and ..." he stopped, frowning, when Sam jumped back.

"You're not Ian, you're Nigel!" Sam blurted. The two men before him were dressed almost identically, but Sam had picked Ian's clothes that morning. Ian was the one on the ground, he was sure of it!

"Randi, I'm hurt. Don't you know your own professor? Look, he didn't even get my ID from me." He reached into a pocket and pulled out Ian's passport and wallet, holding them out for inspection. "Come, look."

Sam took a wary step forward. "You could have taken that out of his pocket just now."

"Come take a look for yourself and see," the man said, moving forward.

"Sam, look out!" Al shouted as Nigel threw the rock. Sam ducked at the last second and the blow only glanced along the top of his head.

"Little bitch!" Nigel snarled, and suddenly pounced, arms swinging. Again Sam ducked, but Nigel was faster, and Sam felt ribs crack under the larger man's fists. Sam twisted free and faced his opponent ...

And suddenly felt rage sweeping through him, an incredible urge to kill and rend and tear ... Sam snarled wordlessly at Nigel, cupping his hands into claws.

"Sam! *Sam!*" Al's frantic yells distracted him, reminding him of who and what he was. The time traveller shook his head, clearing the red mists from his mind and vision, just in time to see Nigel taking aim with another rock. Sam ducked, and this one missed him completely.

"Don't lose control, Sam!" Al called. "Randi lost the fight when she lost control!"

*But Randi is the werewolf*, Sam thought, circling Nigel, who jabbed at him with his fists, *and I'm not. I'm going to win this one with strategy, not force!* Nigel feinted left and lunged right, driving straight towards Sam. Sam dodged to one side, grabbed Nigel's arm as he passed, and helped him overbalance, face-first into a tree. Nigel dropped and Al cheered, bouncing up and down in his exuberance.

Sam smiled back at his delighted companion, then started patting Nigel's pockets down for Ian's ID. In one pocket he found a vicious-looking contraption made of three short blades set on a handgrip. He held them up for Al's inspection, which wiped all the good cheer off the older man's face.

"They're called tiger claws," Al said, answering the unspoken question. "I guess that Nigel wanted to make sure that a werewolf got Ian, one way or another. I wonder why he hates his brother so much."

Sam shuddered. "If he'd knocked Randi out just as she'd started to transform, then killed Ian himself, she'd automatically jump to the conclusion that she was responsible, whether she was or

not. And she couldn't tell anyone what happened without confessing to Ian's murder and exposing her curse."

"Well, it doesn't matter now," Al said, consulting his handlink. "According to Ziggy, the park police come by in about 10 minutes and pick all three of you up. Ian proves who he is by the 'identifying marks' part of his passport, Nigel goes back to jail, and Randi gets a reward for his capture."

Sam had to ask. "Does she ever get cured?"

Al punched more buttons, then shrugged. "No data. But she and Ian move to L.A. in 1991, and they get married in 1996. And get this, they coauthor a book about the fictional adventures of a modern-day werewolf. It becomes a bestseller and gets turned into a movie, which is a hit ... and now they're talking about making it into a series. They're gonna be fine."

"Good." Sam could feel the energies of the leap building inside him. "Gotta go," he told his friend.

Al smiled, lifted his handlink, and punched a few buttons. "See you soon, Sam."

The world turned blue and vanished.

**“G**oober coming at ten o'clock!" someone howled. Three men dived to the floor as the translucent green goblin plunged at them. The fourth remained standing, with a confused expression that turned to disgust as the ghost smeared slime all over his jumpsuit.

"Ray! Duck and cover, man!" one of the prone men screamed. "The proton streams aren't affecting it!"

Sam dropped with a splat. "Oh, boy ..."