

# WEREWOLF

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# Chapter 1

The distance between night and day was thumbnail thin as dusk set upon the deep woods where Jack and Dan were hunting for deer. Jack was looking upwards at the tall trees. The sun was barely shining through the fall-withered leaves which still hung onto the dense branches for the last few weeks of their lives. He started to shiver some as the cold night air began to engulf them. He gazed down and saw that Dan was twirling his shotgun around his legs and body.

This caused Jack great concern for his brother's safety, so he ran to Dan and snatched the gun away. "Stop doing that, dirtwad!"

Dan looked back at him and answered, "Stop what?"

"Twirling your gun like that."

Dan jerked back the gun out of Jack's hands and answered, "Jack, you really are a yellow belly aren't you!"

Jack caught up with Dan and answered, "No, I just don't want it to go off. Like in your face, or like it misses you altogether and the noise scares away the deer. That's all!"

Jack sojourned on for a short while before halting again and cast his gaze upwards with his hands planted firmly upon his hips, scrutinizing the early evening ambience.

Dan called out to him, catching up in a dozen sprints over rocks and underbrush. "Jack what you are doing? The deer are this way!"

Jack hesitated, distracted by the unfamiliarity of where they currently were, spun himself slowly three-sixty, then in reverse, increasingly disoriented.

Jack finally looked at Dan and answered, "Where do you suppose we are, I mean, at this point?"

Dan rolled his eyes and answered, "We're in the woods, dirtwad back at you!"

Jack approached Dan and answered, "I know we're in the woods, but *where* in the woods? And don't call me dirtwad."

"But...."

"Come on, we should find our way home now, I just don't like this."

This made Dan quite upset and he began to increase his pace. "No way in hecker hell! Not without my dinner! Are you crazy?"

"Look bro," Jack told him. "First, it's heck or hell, and why use an anti-swear word and a swear word in the same sentence? It's counter-productive. You're trying not to swear but then you do. I want some good venison too, but the sun is down for the count in a few more ticks and the air is almost as cold as Aunt Gilda's eyes when she looks at you when she thinks you five-fingered her dentures. I do believe we're lost. Besides I'm sure mom has dinner on the table right now, because, dirtwad, you know whenever we do this, every time, we don't *never* get no deer *anyway*...."

Dan was discouraged and, rather than answering, he hung his head low and proceeded to walk away.

He lingered for a moment, then answered, "Jack, who are you kidding? We both know what mom's doing. She's at the bar. So we don't *never* get *dinner* on the table right now either, bro. Now me, personally, I am sick and tired of tasting air. I want *food*, Jack, and I want *deer*! They always sound so tasty on the *Shoot & Eat* channel."

Despitefully, Dan insisted, "Food!"

Jack was a little disappointed by Dan's answer, so he fought back at Dan by saying, "Look, Dan. You never know....mom may surprise us tonight."

But before Jack could finish his statement, there suddenly came a loud howling from somewhere not far behind him, spooking him senseless and sending him fleeing back to Dan.

"Dan! Dan....did you hear that?"

"Hear what?"

Then came the howling sound once again.

Jack reached for Dan and grabbed a hold of his arm, pulled him close. "Ah man.....what *is* that?"

He looked over at Dan who was trying not to seem affected by the howling. But as they hurried onward, Dan frequently paused in his steps with each time the high-pitched sound of what seemed to be a hungry animal stalking its next dinner echoed after them through the trees.

Jack exclaimed in a trembling voice, "Dan, you can't tell me you didn't hear that! I think we need to get home like.....well, right now would be a good time...."

Dan continued in his ill attempt to remain calm and collected, and as Jack pressed ahead of him he grabbed his arm and yanked him back. "Jack, listen to me. It is just a stray dog! Now come on! I want my dinner!"

The howling came again, this time much closer and directly ahead of them. Jack was doing a three-sixty scan of their surroundings in mounting fear.

And Jack whispered more to himself than to Dan, "It's in front of us now! And there are no deer!"

He saw that Dan had made it several yards further ahead of him the next moment, and he hurried to him, calling after him.

Dan halted and spun around, waited for Jack to catch up. "The *deer*, Dan! Where are all the deer? These woods are usually packed with deer, but there are no deer tonight!"

As soon as Jack finished his sentence, the howling came again. Jack sprung in front of his brother as though to protect him, from what he still couldn't see.

Dan broke free and stepped away, turning to him with a sudden realization. "*I know!* The deer.....they're all *hiding!* That's what it is..."

Jack stood in disbelief and answered, "What are you talking about? They're not hiding, they're *just not here.*"

Dan ignored him, gazed around. "That's right.....they *are* hiding, because they *know....*" He abruptly took up his shotgun, cocked it in the air and shot off a round, and exclaimed at the top of his lungs in a voice seemingly louder than even the howling itself, "*I am one bad mother!!!!*"

Suddenly and seemingly from everywhere at once, a wolf larger than any Jack had ever seen leapt from behind the large evergreen where he'd been stalking them. The wolf immediately fixated upon Dan and lunged for him, who stood stunned and frozen and defenseless despite his gun.

Fear gripped Jack so much that he lost all feelings in his legs and fell limp to the ground, helpless as he watched his younger brother fly backwards under the wolf's weight. Miraculously, Jack found new life in his legs and pulled himself to his feet, finding that all his feet wanted was to run in the opposite direction.

Jack forced an about-face when he heard Dan calling out to him for help. He ran back to the site where he'd abandoned his brother and the wolf. He trembled as he noticed leaves on the trees and underbrush dripped with his brother's blood.

Dan was still alive, and when he saw that Jack had returned to help him, he called out for him to shoot the wolf in the most agonized plea ever to fall from his lips.

Jack thought to be brave but all he could do was cover his ears and try to block out his brother's cries, and allow his feet to freeze again. Fear overwhelmed and confused him.

Dan called out to him again, reaching a desperate hand out for help, "Please...please Jack, kill it."

"Kill it?" Jack remembered his gun, and with that realization came the strength to stand up straight. He raised his shotgun and put it to his eye for a clean shot to the head of the giant wolf. It was difficult to line the gun up to his eye because his hands were shaking so bad, but as he managed and was about to pull the trigger, the site of the wolf staring suddenly straight at him frightened him so instantly that....

....he....

....dropped the gun.

When the wolf saw this, he returned his attentions to Dan.

When Dan saw this, he screamed.

The wolf opened its jaws wide, exposing large teeth dripping so much blood they appeared as soaked as sponges that had been sitting in a sudsy bucket for several hours and then taken out and squeezed over a dirty car. It sickened Jack when it occurred to him that the blood was that of his brother. The wolf bit down into Dan for possibly a third or fourth bite, this time snapping his neck and ripping his throat right off his body.

Dan's final scream overwhelmed Jack closed his eyes and held his hands to his ears once again. Jack knew he was next, and all he could do was retreat into the dark shadows of his mind to find a place to hide and await death.

He remained there, slouched into a fetal position upon the forest floor. And he waited.

And waited.....

