A Werewolf Ate My Homework

Emily Snape



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Chapter 1

10 am, Sunday 30th October
(2 days till full Moon)



Okay, I know in the past I might have sometimes, er … exaggerated the truth. But this time I'm not lying.

My soon-to-be stepbrother is a WEREWOLF.

All right, fine, that sounds crazy. Even to me. And sure, I can't blame my mum for doubting me … after I wasn't completely honest with her last night…

She had been SO mad at me for forgetting my football boots at training (again). So I told her I was chased out of the changing room by a zombie. But you have to agree, coach Abs does



have spookily clammy skin and sort of dead-looking eyes.



And then there was that time the other week when my tennis ball smashed the kitchen window. Well, it *wasn't technically* mine. I'd been sort of unofficially borrowing it from my neighbour… Long term. But maybe I shouldn't have insisted so forcefully that a vampire bat must have broken through the glass. Or that Mum should STOP yelling and be grateful that I didn't get my neck **BITTEN** by an undead creature of the night.

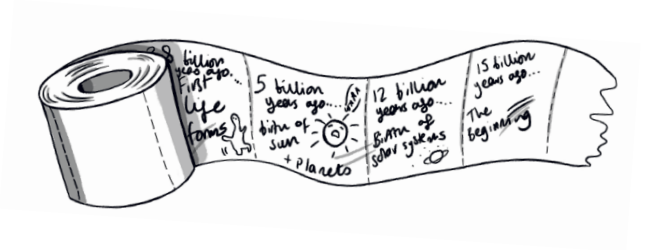


But this time, I am not making it up.

It had felt like I'd been waiting at least FIVE THOUSAND years to use the bathroom, but Luca (that's the soon-to-be stepbrother I was telling you about)

was STILL in there. And I just wanted to understand what he could possibly be doing.

- **Was he writing a history of the universe on toilet roll?**



- **Or making a model of a Minecraft mob out of toothpaste?**

He might have slipped on a bar of soap and be lying unconscious in a pool of blood for all I knew. So, being a caring sort of person, I decided to peek through the keyhole to check.

(FINE. There was also the teeny tiny fact I'd swapped his toothpaste with my cat's meat-flavoured tube and I wanted – no, needed – to catch his expression when he

shoved his toothbrush into his mouth and tasted it.)

As silently as a stealth assassin, I lowered my head and peered through the hole.



And that's when my heart literally stopped beating. And not because of the smell. (Trust me, I can handle a stink.) Or because a floater the size of a walrus was poking out of the top of the toilet. (Luca's done that before.)

At first my eyes had trouble explaining to my brain what I was seeing.

Luca was hunched over, facing the bathroom mirror. But in the glass reflection, a straight-out-of-a-horror-movie monster was staring back out.

- Grey fur covered its head and neck.
- It had glinting yellow eyes.
- When it opened its mouth, I could see sharp canine teeth that looked like they could rip off a human head as easily as a tin opener attacks a can of tuna.



- It was holding Luca's red and white stripy toothbrush.



I half-scrambled, half-tumbled to the living room, tripping over my muddy trainers in the hallway.



'MUM! MUM!' I screeched, flying forward and knocking a cup of coff-tea (don't ask –

my mum has VERY weird ideas about what tastes good) out of her hands.

'What's happened? Has the WIFI connection gone down again?' she asked anxiously, seeing my traumatised expression.

'There's… The… Luca … is … a … werewolf…' I stammered, pointing a shaky finger back towards the bathroom.

Did she …



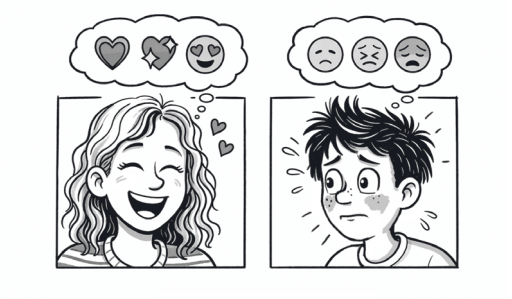
a) scream in terror?

b) run out of the flat?

c) faint in shock?

No. Instead, she carefully mopped up her drink with a tissue, pulled me onto the sofa and sighed a really long sigh. (You know, like air leaking painfully slowly out of an inflatable rubber ring.)



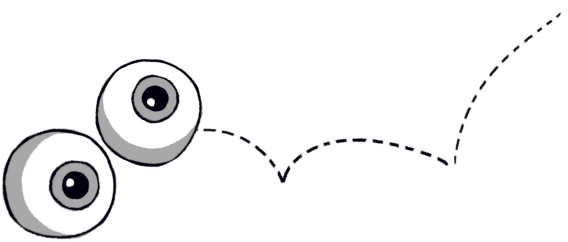


Then she said, 'Oh, Pookie Pants.'

(My mum has called me Pookie Pants since I was the size of a pair of pookie pants. Whatever pookie pants actually are. Please just wipe that horrendous nickname from your memory.)

'There have been so many changes around here,' Mum continued, giving me a squeeze. 'I know living with Hugh and Luca is a lot to adjust to. But I need you to be more open to letting them into our little family. Eventually, you'll love them both, like I do. I just know it.'

My eyes nearly fell out of my head.



This was nothing to do with Hugh and Luca moving in. This was serious. Life or death.

We had a human-munching MUTANT in our home!

'Mum, you have to believe me!' I cried. But she just shook her head sadly.

It didn't help my case that I haven't been exactly enthusiastic about Hugh and Luca's invasion (I mean, them moving into our flat).



But I never asked for Mum to get engaged to Hugh.

(His full name is Hugh Druff and she's honestly planning to change her surname to his when they get married next week. Her first name is Danielle, but everyone calls her Dan. So, guess what? She'll soon become DAN DRUFF. Surely that alone should put her off?)

And I definitely did not put 'NEW BROTHER' on my Christmas wish-list.

I was perfectly happy



living with Mum and our fluff ball of a cat, Clawdia. (Claw-dia, get it? That was my idea!) I didn't want ANYTHING to change. (Well, I wouldn't have minded an upgrade to my gaming console. But apart from that.)

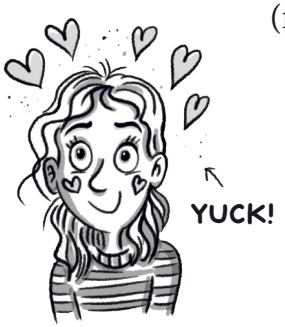


And the worst thing about the invasion by Hugh and Luca is that it was:

all
my
fault.

Hugh's a fire officer and, unfortunately, he was on duty the day I accidentally set fire to the bath. (Trust me, it is possible.)

He came hurtling into our lives (following a 999 call) and swept Mum off her feet. Literally. He had to carry her out of the bathroom window.



And they never looked back. At first, Mum claimed they were just good friends.

But whenever she talked about Hugh, her voice would go all gooey (like melted marshmallows) and little pink hearts seemed to hover above her head. So, I wasn't exactly surprised when they started dating.

I tried my best to sabotage their romantic nights in with stink balloons and fake spiders, but nothing worked. They fell in love. And then, things got even worse. I was forced to meet Hugh's twelve-year-old son,

Luca-Puker. (I'm twelve too, but Luca's a month older than me, OF COURSE. This fact alone makes him believe he's superior to me in EVERYTHING.)

The first time Luca and I met, Mum and Hugh had organised a totally cringy outing to an ice rink (as an ice-breaker. I guess they thought that was funny). My mouth dropped open the moment I saw Luca walking towards us. He didn't look like anyone I'd ever seen before.

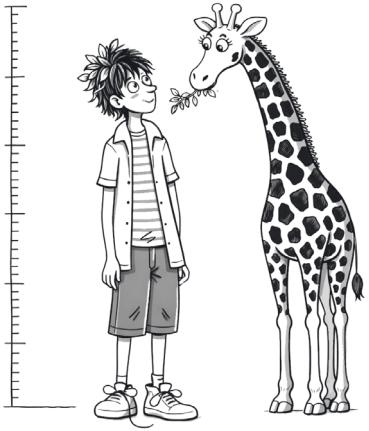


Mum had totally forgotten to mention that Luca …

a) has scraggly hair that reaches his chin like a character straight out of a horror movie,

b) wears his clothes so baggy they defy gravity just by staying up,

c) looks about eighteen, not twelve. He's approximately the same size as an adult giraffe,



d) has a 'W' shaped scar on his left cheek, and when you ask him about it, he goes all misty eyed and mysterious,

e) OR that Luca is some sort of arctic athlete.

While I was clinging onto the ice-rink's ledge for dear life, Luca was doing loop-the-loop-triple backflips. Surely humans aren't designed to glide around on frozen water? That's not part of our evolutionary history, is it? And despite it being FREEZING, Luca was dressed for the beach in Bermuda, in shorts and a T-shirt.

So, I guess my instincts were right, even then. I knew something was up.

It all makes sense, now I know Luca isn't all human.

We ended up having to hastily leave the rink after I accidentally collided with an elderly man, which sent him flying into a couple holding hands … who then skidded backwards into a teenager, mid-selfie and pirouette.



It was like watching one of those domino videos on TikTok. If the dominos were, in fact, horrified humans.

After that, there were about six gruelling months of forced, mega-awkward outings with Luca and Hugh, which included:

- the bowling alley (Luca was obsessed with the balls. It was weird. He kept chasing them down the lanes before they reached the pins at the end. SO embarrassing)

- the cinema (to watch baby films. Luca-Puker doesn't like scary films... Although perhaps that was an act to cover up his true nature)

- the trampoline park. (It won't surprise you to hear that Luca can do split-leg sideways somersaults – or whatever he called them.)



Then, to my HORROR, during a disastrous outing to a boating lake (I didn't mean to drop the entire picnic over the side of the rowing boat, or accidentally knock Luca

into the water with my oar … after which Luca shook himself dry like a puppy), Mum and Hugh announced they were GETTING MARRIED. And, even worse, we were all going to live together as one 'happy family'.



'AAAAGGGGHHHHHHHHHHH!'

My single bed got thrown out and a bunk bed arrived the next day. And so did Luca and Hugh with about four thousand suitcases of junk and a claim to MY MUM and MY HOME.

My bedroom now looks like the site of a giant meteor landing (formed of Luca's

mouldy socks and old comics) and I have NOWHERE that is just for me anymore.

I really tried to get Hugh and Luca to change their minds about living with us.

- I told Hugh the flat was haunted. He said he didn't care.
- I made Luca an extra-hot-chilli-burn-the-roof-of-your-mouth chocolate ice lolly. He didn't even try it. Not one lick. He sniffed it then claimed he's allergic to chocolate.



- I even pretended I had a deadly infectious disease called Tigeritus. I went to the HUGE effort of painting stripes all over my body (which totally ruined my favourite T-shirt) but they STILL didn't leave. They LAUGHED. They thought I was joking.

They've been here now for FOUR whole weeks:

- watching my TV,
- eating MY cereal,
- ... and stroking MY cat.

Actually, come to think of it, I've caught Hugh tickling Clawdia's tummy, but whenever Luca even comes into the same room as her, she leaps up like she's been injected in the bum and scuttles straight out of her cat flap.



That's a bit freaky, isn't it?

Why can't Clawdia stand Luca?

She might just have good taste… But more likely, she's using her incredible feline sense of smell and she can TELL he's part wolf!

It hit me like a piano falling through the ceiling. If Mum didn't believe me about Luca, I was going to have to collect proof. She couldn't ignore hard facts. She's a scientist.

MY SOON-TO-BE STEPBROTHER IS A WEREWOLF EVIDENCE LIST

1. Clawdia is terrified of Luca. She must be able to smell his wolf breath.

2. Luca is freakishly good at ice skating and does not feel the cold. Ice doesn't melt when it lands on wolves' fur. (I know this because my headteacher has a framed poster of an Arctic wolf covered in snow on the wall behind his desk. I've spent a lot of time in that office.)

3. Chocolate allergy. I know that dogs can't eat chocolate because my mum's friend, Judy, once brought her puppy round



and she gobbled up my ENTIRE advent calendar (the puppy, not Judy). I mean all of it. Even the little card doors and the foil. Judy started freaking out – when it really should have been me; it was MY calendar and it was only the third of December. Anyway, maybe wolves and dogs share that problem. They are all the same species, I think.

4. Luca shakes himself dry instead of using a towel. (Example: boating incident.)

5. Luca chases balls. Just like Judy's puppy.

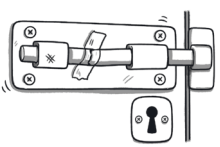
Chapter 2

10:30 am, Sunday 30th October
(2 days till full Moon)

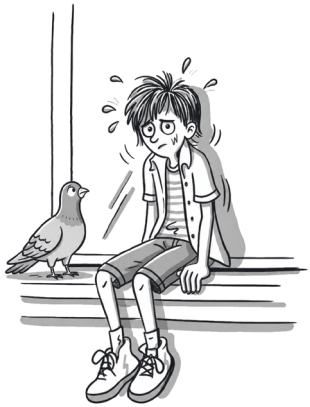


Of course the most obvious and unignorable proof would have been to simply SHOW Mum the werewolf in the bathroom.

But Mum refused to come with me (even when I tried to drag her) so I told a little white lie that I could hear Luca calling for help. I reminded her that the bathroom has a dodgy lock and he had been in there FOREVER.



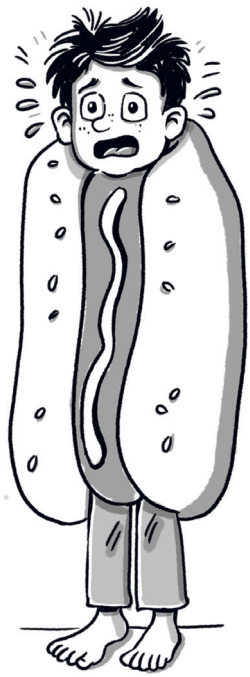
She said she couldn't hear anything, but I pointed out that if we didn't come to his rescue he might try to climb out of the window, and what would Hugh say when he came home from work



and found Luca perched on the windowsill like a pigeon?

She raised her eyebrows sceptically, but when I started suggesting he might get SO desperate he'd probably consider climbing down the toilet and through the pipes to escape, she reluctantly followed me to the bathroom.

As we edged closer to the door, my stomach tied itself into an ultra-tight knot (the kind of knot you give up trying to pull loose and just yank your trainer off, laces still tied).



What was I doing?

If werewolf movies were correct, there was a very high chance Luca might wrestle us into a giant hot dog bun, smother us in mustard and eat us.

'Er… Mum, maybe this isn't such a good idea,' I hissed.

Mum scowled and said, 'Shush.' Then she gently called out, 'Luca, sweetheart… Are you okay in there?'

I clenched my fists, ready to protect my mum, my heart beating like a gorilla having a fight with a drum kit.

The bathroom door slowly opened.

My jaw dropped to the floor.

Luca shuffled out, looking like an extremely embarrassed, EXTREMELY HUMAN, boy. The look of anger he gave me could melt a six-foot snowman in 0.3 seconds.



'Oh, I'm so sorry for disturbing you,' Mum said hastily, but Luca didn't say a word and bolted into our (which should be MY) bedroom, blushing as red as a lobster who'd accidentally used hot sauce instead of suncream.

Turning to me, Mum hissed, 'Were you just making it up about Luca being trapped? What has got into you? I'm sorry, but enough is enough. No more lies. One minute you're claiming Luca is a polar bear—'



'Not a polar bear – a werewolf. I saw him, I mean, IT, with my own eyes!' I cried.

'I don't want to hear another word. You HAVE to start being respectful to Luca. He. Is. Going. To. Be. Your. Stepbrother.' She raised her eyebrows so high they almost hit the ceiling.

'But … M-M-Mum, you can't expect me to share a room with a werewolf!' I stuttered.

Mum made a sound like a constipated dolphin, went into the kitchen and slammed the door shut.

I called after her that Luca had obviously just changed back into human form – that's exactly what werewolves do – hadn't she seen ANY horror films? But she didn't respond.

This was SERIOUS. Worse than when I accidentally used Mum's passport to make paper aeroplanes the day before our holiday to Spain. Or when I melted her car keys in a science experiment that went wrong.



I was going to have to collect more proof. But what did I know about werewolves?

MY SOON-TO-BE STEPBROTHER IS A WEREWOLF EVIDENCE LIST (CONTINUED)

6. Luca can change back into human form. (Okay, that one isn't super persuasive unless you've seen the werewolf bit first.)