

Chapter 1
Full Moon

6th September · 10.30pm

Gran's meant to be looking after me as Mum's working nights this week. As usual, it's the other way round and I'm looking after her!

I popped my head into the living room about half past seven, just to check on her. And there she was, my dear old gran, sitting at the table surrounded by her cotton reels, spools and sewing stuff. Her main hobby is collecting bobbins, though I'm not sure why as she doesn't use them.

"Oh Jess, please be a dear, I need your help," she said, in her soft and gentle voice. She made me stick my hands out in front of me, and then she started winding wool round them, humming as she went.

She's lovely, my gran. When she types a search into the Internet, she writes 'please' at the end, as if she's asking a person, e.g. 'knitting pattern, please'. So I don't mind when she asks me a favour.

"Are you sure you're okay?" I asked her.

She patted the plaster on the back of her hand, where a cat had bitten her an hour earlier. Or so she said.

"I'll be fine, dear," she replied, but in the strangest voice I've ever heard – a kind of growl. I think it surprised even her, as she touched her lips and her cheeks reddened. "Terribly sorry, my dinner must be repeating on me."

"Are you absolutely sure you're all right?" I said, because *I* wasn't sure at all. She had hairs growing out of her nostrils. Big, wiry hairs, which seemed to be
growing longer by the minute.

"Quite all right, dear," she said. "Though I must confess, I've felt a little strange since the cat nipped me. I think I might have a little nap on the sofa.

I left her and went back upstairs to my room. Then, about half an hour later, I heard a load of banging. I ran downstairs to see what was the matter.

As I opened the living room door, my blood ran cold. Standing there was what looked like a wolf. It had reared up onto its hind legs and was leering at itself in the mirror. Its eyes glowed red and its mouth drooled between yellowed fangs.

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It was at that moment that I realised this seven-foot giant was no ordinary wolf. This was a werewolf! Then it raised its paw almost as if to pat down its own hair, and for a second there was something familiar about it.

Actually, there was something VERY familiar about it, because it was wearing Gran's clothes: her dress, her blouse and her slippers, which had split between the creature's gigantic hind paws. They were now nothing more than a pair of ankle warmers. Also, the creature was tangled in Gran's knitting.

But as for Gran herself, she was nowhere to be seen. What could have happened to her? Had the wolf eaten her? Or had she run away? My heart began to pound.

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I imagine wolves as wary creatures whose ears prick up at the slightest noise, but this wolf didn't seem aware of anything much. It didn't even notice me at first. It was more interested in going into the kitchen and sniffing around the fridge. Then it tried jumping onto the worktop. It took several goes, and at one point it panted a bit and touched its back. It was clearly an out-of-shape werewolf. Finally, it managed to jump. The worktop cracked and splintered under its weight but the animal didn't seem to mind. It nudged the lid off a pot with its nose. Its eyes gleamed as it tucked into the dinner's leftovers: chicken tikka masala.

Sweat pouring off me, I ducked behind the sofa nearest the kitchen. Fascinated despite my terror, I grabbed Mum's tablet with shaking hands. I didn't know the passcode but I could still use the camera. I started filming as the werewolf snaffled the last of the reddish cream-covered chicken.

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Suddenly the thing turned and ogled me, its nose twitching furiously. I froze. It licked its lips, its eyes gleamed again, and then it lunged, like a giant panther pouncing on its prey... until it landed on the floor, at which point it whimpered and touched its back again.

The creature limped towards me. I slammed the door shut just in the nick of time, and it crashed into the other side. Something about that told me it wasn't a very intelligent animal.

Still, with its drooling jaws and all that, this creature was dangerous and I was frightened. So I retreated upstairs and used my bed to barricade myself in my room.

For a while, I wondered what to do. Should I phone Mum at work? Phone the police? Then I remembered that the phone was downstairs in the kitchen, so I couldn't actually phone anyone. I thought about dashing out of the front door and making a run for it, but I was too scared to leave my room in case the thing had got free and was lurking in the hall. I could have opened my bedroom window and screamed for help, but what if the creature had escaped from the house and was waiting patiently underneath the windowsill? Perhaps, I thought, if I just stayed quiet and remained in my room, everything would be OK.

So that's what I've done. I've sat on my bed, which is up against the door, writing in my diary.

7th September · 12.30am

I must have dozed off a bit. There isn't a sound from downstairs.

05.30am

Still nothing. I edged my curtains open with one finger and peeked out. All I could see was the light of the full moon beaming down on rooftops. Maybe the creature had gone. Maybe I'd dreamt the whole thing. I quietly un-barricaded the door, then cracked it open a bit.

I tiptoed down the stairs. The living room door was still closed. I listened, then nosed inside.

There was no sign of the wolf, or of Gran. But, in the kitchen, the back door to the garden was flung wide open.

I stepped out into the darkness. Our garden backs onto a railway embankment, which rises up to a parapet. There, sitting on the top and in silhouette against the white moon, sat the wolf.

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It raised its head, as if basking in the moon's glow, and howled. It was a howl unlike any other I'd ever heard, low-pitched, ear-splitting, terrifying. It shook me to my very soul. I raised Mum's tablet and started filming again.

And then, it turned its head towards me. I could see its glowing eyes quite clearly, and its dripping jaws. There was a look of mild recognition, followed by one of slightly embarrassed apology, before it licked its chops and dived off the parapet, landing with a whimper.

I dashed into the kitchen, desperately trying to form a plan. This thing might be a bit slow, but it was still dangerous, so I didn't want it to attack anyone else, not least Mum, who was due home from work soon. I remembered it had been sniffing around the fridge. I flung open the fridge door and plucked out an open pack of mince.

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I stepped outside again, just as the wolf was limping across the garden toward me, and tossed the mince into the old coal shed, a sturdy stone outhouse beside the kitchen.

"Here, doggie!" Then I ducked back into the kitchen and slammed the door.

I peeked through the security glass, watching as the creature dived inside the coal shed after the meat. Then I sprang out and pulled the bunker door shut, locking the wolf inside.

Breathless and bouncing with nerves, I barricaded the kitchen door with anything I could find: chairs, stools, the table, Mum's hockey stick, even a sewing machine. Meanwhile, the wolf crashed around inside the shed.

At last, I had the phone in front of me. I picked it up, but who should I call? Before I could decide, there came a loud hammering from the front door.