

Change

Short Story

By: Garrett L. Reed

“All aboard” said the conductor. This was my train, I’ve been sitting at this rundown train station for about an hour waiting for my train. It was delayed due to some bad weather. I’m heading to my friend’s place out west to hang for the summer. I’ve just got done with high school and thought I’ll hang with a long time friend out west before college started. As I roam the train cars, I finally come to one in the very back with no one on it. *Yes. I thought. Finally a train car all to myself.* As I get relaxed in my seat, which was a red fabric booth, I take in my surrounding. I see other booths like mine, really worn out red shag carpet, and real filthy windows between the booths.

Suddenly a guy comes in dressed in a brown shirt, jacket, cargo shorts, and boots, something that *Indiana Jones* would wear. *Oh no.* I thought. *Why did he have to pick this car? WHY!?* He had sunglasses on, even though it’s gloomy outside. He had blonde hair and a slightly shaved face. He stood almost six feet tall and slender.

When I got done looking at him something caught my eye. It looked like a... tooth. A tooth? Why does this guy have a tooth? But before my thoughts can go any farther, he starts walking toward me. *Please don’t sit by me! Please don’t sit by me! Please!* And of course he sits across from me. So I can avoid having a conversation with him, I scoot close to the filthy window and looked out it. I see land, land, and more land. Just land, few fields, bunches of trees here and there, that’s it. I think I’m getting closer to my destination.

My destination is my friend’s house in Cherokee Falls, Montana. A small, quiet town with a couple hundred people. But my friend, Conrad’s, house is in the forest a few miles out of town. So we can be loud and crazy all we want. But my thoughts were

interrupted when I noticed this mysterious stranger asking me a question, “What’s your name?” he said.

“Garrett” I replied then turning my attention back to the window and the landscape outside.

Eventually I get tired the landscape outside my window and take out my i-Pod to look for a song. When I got to *Werewolves of London*, I pushed play. About half way through the song I glance over at the stranger sitting across from me and see him looking at my feet. So I look down at my feet and see that my book, *The Wolfman*, dropped out of my bag and open to the page I left off at.

To get his attention away from my feet I ask, “What’s your name?”

“Carson Wolfgang, what’s yours again?”

“Garrett Reed, what are you doing on this train?”

“I’m going to see some family in Cherokee Falls. What about you?”

“I am also headed to Cherokee Falls to my friend’s place.

“Nice, maybe we’ll see each other in town another time.”

“Sure, what’s in your hand, it looks like a tooth”

“It is, it’s a wolf tooth”

“Why do you have a wolf tooth?”

“I like wolves and I found this years ago.”

“Oh, I like wolves too.” We didn’t say anymore than that, so now how to get my book back into my bag and do it conspicuously. I could scoot my foot over and push it back into the bag. But before I could try, I hear the train’s whistle go off and noticed Carson holding his ears, but why?

After the whistle stopped, he gets up and runs out of the train car. I run after him and find the conductor and ask him if he had seen him. I describe Carson to him and he said “I seen someone running through the cars but I couldn’t see any details. He was running too fast.”

“Ok, thanks” So I decide that Carson was probably gone in the maze of train cars, so I went back to my train car to finish the rest of the trip in peace. When I got back to my car and to my seat I notice that Carson left the tooth on the table. I was about to pick it up when it started to glow slightly then faded. I found it strange but still picked it up. When I did I felt a sharp pain as if a needle was going into my finger and dropped the tooth. It was as if the tooth bit me. I decide to try to pick it up again and keep it until I see Carson again, since we’re going to the same place. So I carefully pick it up again and put it in my bag.

“We’re going to pull into Cherokee Falls station in 10 minutes!” announced the engineer. *Finally!* I thought, *Time to relax and hang with Conrad, but first I’ve got to find Carson to give him the wolf tooth back. Maybe Conrad will know who Carson is.* So I grabbed my bags and got ready to get off the train.

As the train pulls into the station I see Conrad, waiting for me. He stands a little over 6 feet, blonde, blue eyes, a smile to make your day even if you’re having a bad one, and buff, not like a body builder just more muscular than your average young adult. Conrad was dressed in jean shorts, white muscle shirt, and flip-flops.

The train finally pulls to a stop I get off and Conrad greets me with a big bear hug. When he finally lets go of me he says “How are you man? I haven’t seen you for a while.”

“I’m Good, you?”

“Oh I’ve been fine. You know the usual, hanging around and working out.”

“Same ol’ Conrad.”

“You know it!”

“Hey Conrad I have a question.”

“Yeah.”

“Do you know a guy named, Carson Wolfgang? I met him on the train then he left suddenly and left this...” I pulled out the wolf tooth out of my bag and showed him.

“Cool tooth but sorry man I don’t know him. Maybe someone in town will know him.”

“He said he was here to see some family, so someone has to know him right?”

“Yeah sure, but lets get home first. You must be tired after that train ride.”

“Yeah I guess, lets go.” So we set out to Conrad’s place, about 30 minutes out of town. We left the train station and got on the road to Conrad’s place.

After that 30 minute ride we pulled into Conrad’s driveway. As we did I got to see his place for the first time, it was pretty much a mansion in the woods. It was a two story brick mansion. The bricks were a little weathered. Lots of windows, almost every inch of wall on the outside had glass on it. “Nice place man! How did you get it, if I may ask?”

“Surprisingly my mom and dad got it for me at a cheap price.”

“Sweet.” We parked in front of the front door and got my bags out the car and into the house. As we walked in I see how the house looks inside and might I say it looks bigger inside then out! We walked into a huge room, which I believe is the Great Hall. It

was almost like a huge family room. In one half of the room was furniture in a U-shape around a coffee table and a Persian rug under the table. Where the opening of the U is there's French glass doors leading to the outside onto the porch. Looking to the right is a doorway leading to what looks like the dining room. In the other half which has the front door that we just walked through, was pretty much an open space just a bigger Persian rug that took most of that part of the room. On the opposite sides of the door were coat hangers and some shoes under them. On the left side between the two halves were stairs leading upstairs. "Wow!" Was the only thing I could get out of my mouth.

"Would you like a tour?" Conrad said.

"Sure."

"Let's go upstairs first to drop your bags off."

"Ok, show me the way." So I grabbed my bags and Conrad was already to the steps so I went upstairs after Conrad. Before going up the steps I saw two doors, one on both sides of the stairs. I wondered what's in there, but I figured that Conrad would show me in a bit. When I got up to the top, Conrad was waiting for me. "Jeez! How the heck did you get up here so fast?"

"Walking maybe?"

"Ok, whatever. So which room is mine? I see 5 rooms up here."

"The one on the far right side is mine, the Master Bedroom. This one here beside us is a surprise in a bit. So you can take the one between mine and the surprise room or one of the other two on the left side. I will say the three rooms are pretty much the same just arranged differently."

“Ok. I’ll take the first one on the left.” So I grab my bags and walked to the room I chose. I opened the door and dropped my bags when I turned to my right to turn the lights on and saw a taxidermy wolf right there. “Oh my Gosh!” I said and suddenly Conrad was behind me and asks “What’s wrong?”

“Nothing, just that taxidermy wolf scared me. I wasn’t expecting it”

“Oh yeah! Sorry that I didn’t warn you, I forgot the wolf was in this room. Do you still want this room?”

“Yeah! I love wolves, it’s just that the wolf caught me off guard!”

“Ok, want to set your bags on the bed and start the tour?”

“Sure.” So I grabbed up my bags and put them on the bed and left after Conrad. When I got out of my room I see Conrad at the surprise room. “So are you going to show this surprise room now!?”

“Yes, yes I am. Are you ready?”

“Yes, the suspense is killing me!”

“Forewarning, you might be shocked.”

“Ok, open the door.”

“After you.” Conrad said then moving out of the way for me to get to the door. So I cracked the door open enough to get my hand in to get the light switch on. After I did I opened the door and like Conrad said I was shocked! Once the door was open all the way I could see clearly why he said I might be shocked. There were games, games, and more games. There was a 60 inch TV on the left side of the room then all the game systems imaginable. He had a Nintendo Wii, Xbox 360, Kinect for Xbox, PS, PS2, PS3, and more but that was just a few of the systems but also he had too many games to name. My jaw

dropped to the floor. I never saw so many games and game systems in one place in my life. “Wow, this is AMAZING Conrad! Now don’t tell me that your parents got this stuff at a cheap price!”

“No they didn’t, they paid full price on everything in here from the systems to the games to the TV.”

“Again, WOW!”

“I know. Want to continue the tour?”

“Sure, let’s get going.” So I followed Conrad out of the “Surprise Room”, which now could be called the “Game Room”, down the steps and to the right. Conrad was by a door one of the doors that I seen earlier, looking at the stairs it would be the left door. When I caught up with him again he was waiting for me. “Now again, you might be shocked.” Conrad said

“Ok, open the door.” And he did and when the door opened up all the way. What I seen in there did shock me. It was a mini movie theater! What you seen when you open the door was 4 rows of theater seats, 5 seats in each row. Walk in and turn right would be the mini movie screen. Turn left after walking in would be the stairs to the projector room to play the movies. “WOW man! How in the heck did you get all this stuff!?”

“Well my parents are actually really rich. When we were in school I didn’t want to tell anyone because they’d crowd around me. My parents asked me if I wanted to go to public school or private school, I chose public school.”

“Well nice man, glad you chose public school or we probably wouldn’t be friends right now, right?”

“Yeah I guess so. So you want to see the other half of the house!?! It shouldn’t shock you as much as the game room or the mini movie theater!”

“Promise?”

“I promise.” Conrad said then raised his right hand and said “Scouts Honor.”

“Ok let’s go.” So off we go to see the rest of the house. Next up was the Great Hall. “This is the Great Hall.” Conrad said.

“Nice! I have a question though. Should there be a television around the furniture?”

“Maybe in your home but here Garrett the televisions are in the Game Room and the Mini Movie Theater. They both have cable hook ups, just need to plug them in when I want to.”

“Nice, continue?”

“Sure let’s go! Next would be the dining room then kitchen then we’ll move outside.” And we moved on to the dining room. We went through the doorway to the right of the U-shaped furniture. The dining room was huge also. There was a big table in the middle of the room, there were 8 chairs around the table at the moment but more could be added if needed. “Little surprised?” Conrad said.

“Just a little, it’s like a mansion here and we’re three-fourths the way done!”

“Want to see the kitchen real quick?”

“Sure.” So we went to the kitchen through a restaurant style swinging door, the ones that don’t have a handle and open both ways when going through them. After we entered the kitchen through the swinging door you could see the kitchen in full. It was like a restaurant kitchen. It was a big kitchen, stainless stain appliances and counters,

clean and gleaming. “Starting a restaurant or something there Conrad? You have a huge table plus a huge restaurant style kitchen. No chefs?”

“I have a few chefs, but I thought that they could take a week off and it will be just you and me, no one to bother us.”

“Sounds fine with me I guess.”

“Want to see the outside?”

“Sure let’s go!” We went through the swinging door again then through the doorway into the Great Hall then through the French glass doors to the outside onto the porch. Once we got outside you could see all of his yard. It was about 30 yards out and about 60 yards long of actual yard with two gardens on both sides. The left garden looked like it’s for growing home grown vegetable crops. The right one had a fence around it and looked like it had flowers in it. Then there were the woods beyond the yard that was trees, trees, and more trees. “Conrad, you have a big yard!”

“Thanks.”

“How many acres do you have here?”

“I don’t know for sure. It goes quite far into the woods. From the beginning of the driveway to somewhere in the woods were a few posts with markers on them to show the boundaries. I do have a few neighbors because their land comes up to mine.”

“Well sweet. But what’s up with the two gardens?”

“I thought you might notice. The one on the left is a garden for homegrown vegetable crops like tomatoes, carrots, lettuce, etc. The one on the right is a garden for *Aconitum lycoctonum* also know as *Wolfsbane*. That’s why there’s a fence around the garden so no one gets into it without the key to the door.”

“What’s *Wolfsbane*?”

“*Wolfsbane* is a poisonous plant, to humans and animals. They grow tall and have little purple flowers, and dark green leaves.”

“Well here’s the most obvious question, why do you have *Wolfsbane* growing in your backyard?”

“Well, I’ve been having problems with wild animals. So I carefully take some *Wolfsbane* out of the garden and put it where they might eat and when they eat it they will die.”

“Little sad but if your having problems I guess it’s less aggressive then shooting them.”

“That’s what I though when I started having the animal problems.” I didn’t say anything else because I smelled something coming from the kitchen and thought it was weird, so I said “Conrad I thought you didn’t have chefs working this week?”

“What do you mean?”

“I smell food cooking.” I sniffed the air and said “I smell steak, potatoes, and corn cooking”

“Oh yeah, I forgot there’s a chef coming in to make dinner for tonight then he’s leaving.”

“Ok fine with me. Should we go in and ge...” I stopped short because I suddenly heard a bang. I turned my head to where the sound sounded like it came from and it sounded like it was from town. “Did you hear that?”

“Hear what?”

“I thought a heard a bang come from town.”

“No, I didn’t here a thing.” After hearing that I think he was lying because I believe I seen his head turn as I was turning my head but I put it off. “As I was saying, should we get ready for dinner?”

“Yeah, sure! It should be done soon.” So we walked back inside but I wondered where the bathroom was so I asked “Conrad, where’s the bathroom?”

“Oh yeah sorry it’s the door on the right side of the stairs.”

“Ok thanks.” So I went to the door, opened it, washed my hands, then headed to the dining room. When I walked in I saw Conrad sitting at the far end, the head of the table. “Sit down Garrett. Anywhere you want.” So I did and I sat at the other head of the table looking down to Conrad. “So Conrad what should we do after we eat? It’s only 6p.m. and it will still be light out for a few more hours.”

“I don’t know. Maybe we should go back in town and see if we can find Carson or someone who knows him?”

“Ok that’s sounds good. I almost forgot about the wolf tooth.” After that the chef came out with two silver serving platters with silver toppers on them. Man the food smelled great! “Bon appetit” said the chef.

“Thank you Chef Ramsey.”

“Yes, thank chef. It smells delicious!”

“My pleasure sirs.” Chef Ramsey says then turns to Conrad. “I’ll see you next week Conrad.”

“Yup. Have a good vacation now.”

“I will, I will.” Then the chef went back into the kitchen and didn’t see him after that. “Shall we eat?” asked Conrad.

“Yes, I’m starving. I haven’t eaten since boarding the train!”

“Well let’s dig in!” And we did. We both pulled our toppers off at the same time and seen the delicious food. I had a well done T-bone steak with mashed potatoes and corn. A bowl of butter was also on the tray to put on the potatoes and corn. From the looks of it Conrad had the same thing but it looked like his was undercooked and bloody. Dinner smelled so good, I just concentrated on my dinner.

After about 20 minutes we both were done with our plates. All clean, no sign of surviving food in sight. “That was the best dinner I have ever had Conrad!”

“No thanks to me. Chef Ramsey was the one who cooked it!”

“It was still great either way!”

“It’s only 6:30pm. You want to go back into town and see if we can find Carson?”

“Sure, let me go get the wolf tooth first real quick then I’ll be ready.”

“Ok, meet you in the car.” I walked out of the dining room, up the stairs, to my room, grabbed the wolf tooth, walked back down the stairs, through the front door, to Conrad’s car where he was waiting for me. “Ready?” he called out of the window.

“Yup, let’s go!” So I hopped into his car and we sped our way out of the driveway. “So where should we go first?” Conrad asked.

“I really don’t know. Where do you think he might be at?”

“Well just a guess but maybe we should try the bar first, maybe he’s there.”

“It’s worth a try I guess. How much further is it to the bar?”

“It’s just up here a ways five minutes or so.” Within a short time we arrived at the bar, Cherokee Bar and Grill, to be exact. So we stepped out of the car and walked into the dimly lighted bar/eating area. After walking in you can see pictures of Cherokee Fall’s

past, including the bar in one of the pictures. The there was lots of taxidermy animals. As I was looking around the bar Conrad said “Garrett is that the guy you’re talking about?” Conrad was pointing to a gentleman seated in a booth in the corner of the bar.

“I believe that’s him Conrad. Nice eye!”

“Thanks, should we go over?”

“Well why else did we come here?”

“Okay, okay! Don’t chew my head off!” Conrad said jokingly. We walked over to the corner of the bar to the booth that Carson was sitting in. Only a few feet until we got to the booth we heard “Well nice to see you again, Garrett was it? And who is your friend?” We pinpointed that it was Carson that said that, but he never looked our way or even looked up. So we took Carson’s statement as an invite to join him and sat down across from him in the booth. “Yes it’s nice to see you again too Carson. This is my friend Conrad, whom I’m staying with for a bit.”

“That’s nice. So, what are you doing here?”

“Well we came to find you Carson.”

“Me? Why?”

“Because after you left the train so abruptly you left the wolf tooth on the table. I thought you might want it back, since you got it years ago.”

“Thank you. But you can keep it, it’s yours now, I know that you’ll keep it safe.”

“Well thanks. I have one question before we leave. Should I smooth it out because when I tried to pick it up the first time it felt like the tooth “bit” me.”

“No you don’t, it happens when some people touch it for the first time.”

“Oh okay! See you.”

“See you Mr. Carson.” Conrad said as we were getting up.

“See you boys. Be careful, especially around the full moon! Hahahahahaha!”

Carson said before we left.

Be careful, especially around the full moon? What does that mean? And tonight’s the full moon! “Hey Conrad, what do you think meant when Carson said, ‘Be careful, especially around the full moon?’”

“Well to tell you the true some people around town believe that werewolves exist and are around us as we speak now. But don’t worry it’s an urban legend. It’s just crazy talk.”

“Yeah of course, of course. Shall we get home then?”

“Yeah sure.” So we hopped into Conrad’s car and drove back to his place. After the 30 minute trip, we got back to his house and he parked the car in front of the door again. We hopped out and I asked “Do you want to go for a walk around your property?”

“Sure I guess. We have nothing better to do. But we got to get back before 9:30 and it 8 now. So we have an hour and a half.”

“Why?”

“Because.”

“Okay, let’s get going then.” So we walked around the left side of the house, passed the crop garden and went into the woods. “You know the way back, if we get lost right Conrad?”

“Yes but if we get too lost we do have our cell phones.”

“Ok, making sure.” We didn’t talk after that for a bit. We just took in the scenery. There were lots of trees so many different kinds that I can’t even name. But suddenly as we were hiking back I had a sudden pain in my hand. “Awww.” I said in agony.

“What’s wrong Garrett?”

“It’s my hand! It hurts like a mother!”

“Let me see your hand.” So I handed him my hand to show him and he said. “Oh, I thought so. I was hoping it wasn’t true.”

“WHAT!! What did you think wasn’t true?”

“Well it’s hard to say this but you’re a lycan.”

“A what-can?”

“A lycan, in other words, a werewolf!”

“WHAT! I thought you said it was an urban legend!?”

“Yes I said that only to calm your nerves and you wouldn’t be suspicious. I had a feeling you were a werewolf since you got here!”

“Really? How?”

“Because Garrett, I am one also! But I Changed before and I can do it willingly. But since this is your first time you can’t control it, especially under a full moon! That’s when newly bitten werewolves Change.”

“Well could you help me get through this since you changed before!?”

“Yeah sure. First you need to close your eyes and calm your mind. Second flush out all your human thoughts. Third let the wolf inside you take control until you’re done changing. After that you’ll be Changed and have control of your thoughts and motions.

Lastly it will be a little painful in the beginning. Now go to it, once you Change, I'll be right behind you!"

So I did what Conrad told me. First, I closed my eyes and calmed my mind. Second, I flushed out my human thoughts. Third, let the wolf inside take control. After all that I felt a sudden pain all in my body. "Awww!" I got out. The pain was terrible, I lifted me hand to see it changed. When I did it wasn't really a hand anymore. It was a hand but with claws for nails and very hairy. Then the pain kept coming, next I felt my chest getting broader and filling out. Felt my bones breaking and changing their form. It was the most painful thing that I have ever felt in my life. After what seemed like hours, was really a minute I was a werewolf or more of a Wolfman. I still had two feet, two hands, a face but a muzzle for a nose and mouth, two ears a little pointy, and lastly a lot of hairy covering every inch a skin on my body. I was still yelling in pain but the yells became more like snarls of a wolf.

Finally Changed and have control I take in my surroundings through my new found keen senses. With my keen eyes I had seen that Conrad had already Changed. Then I looked at the scenery, I see many trees with the house way in the distance. Then smell, I smelled everything that was able to produce a smell and surprisingly could categorize them. My hearing was also keen; I could here the slightest of noises'. *Hey, how are you coping Garrett?* Conrad said in my head.

Didn't know how he did that but I though back, *Fine. Sort of loving it, all the smells, sight, and hearing! But how are we talking without being able to talk?*

Well normally you can't talk to other werewolves that aren't in your pack. But since we are close friends it's like you are in the pack. We communicate telepathically.

Oh I get it. So how long have you been a werewolf or a lycan you called it?

Well I believe since birth. My dad is a lycan, my mom isn't. But I didn't turn for the first time until I was 13 years old. That's when most boys turn, when they hit puberty.

I see. So you been hiding this from me for a while?

Yeah, it's hard to tell someone and have them believe you.

I see your point. Last question, is it only boys that turn or are there girls?

Well boys and girls but born werewolves are boys and turn, like I said, at 13.

Girls can also but rarely but mostly likely they get bitten. Then there is your case where you got "bitten" by the wolf tooth, which I think now is a werewolf tooth.

Oh I get it. So what do we do now?

Well you can't Change back til morning so I guess we can roam around maybe get some fresh meat.

Is that why your steak was bloody at dinner?

Yes and no. No it wasn't fresh but yes bloody and raw because that's how you eat when in Wolfman form.

Well I guess. I'm going to have to start living with this "condition". So what do you usually go after?

Usually big game since I'm good at hunting. Tonight we can do deer so you can kill it.

So we were off to get us some fresh deer meat and lucky for us we didn't have to go too far to find a doe by herself in the open. So I pounced on her and surprisingly took her down on the first leap and took a chunk out of her and tasted the hot blood down my

throat. Then Conrad was beside me taking a bigger chunk out than mine and ate it in one bite. Soon enough we had devoured the doe and left.

The next morning I found myself somehow in my room looking at the ceiling. Not remembering anything from last night except for killing the doe. I got out of bed and noticed that I still had on the same clothes that I had on last night. So I changed then left the room and walked to the dining room and found Conrad at the table where he sat last night at the head of the far end of the table so I sat at the other head of the table. “Crazy night last night was it not?” Conrad asked.

“I guess. I don’t remember anything except killing a deer. What else did we do last night?”

“Well just killed some innocent people. The usual werewolf stuff.”

“Really!? We killed innocent people?”

“No, no. Just playing, we just roamed until morning then you Changed back and you were out like a light so I carried you back home and put you in your room.”

“Oh, thank God! From what I know it was fun. Shall we do it again tonight?”

“Sure, if you are up to it. You should be able to Change willingly now!”

“Do you think that Carson is a werewolf?”

“My guess is yes because he had the “wolf” tooth that he gave you.”

“Yeah you are probably right.”

“I usually am. But us knowing him being a werewolf is a different story.”