



These fangs feel lovely, if nothing else . . . p. 17.



Oh, that's gal fang is really stinky? . . . p. 25.



Not the thing for a quiet night at home . . . p. 28.

MONSTER PARADE

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You can't tell about werewolves... they look just like ordinary people... except when the moon is full... Take the case of George and Valerie now... a nice young couple... in love... sitting on a bench in the park... around midnight... under a full moon... Did I say midnight... under a full moon? Oh my, this I must see...

By LAWRENCE BLOCK

"IN EXACTLY 30 minutes," George said, "I shall turn into a werewolf."

It was 11:30. The moon was full in the sky, and looked even fuller due to the near absence of stars. It was an excellent night not to be sitting on a bench in Forest Park.

George and Valerie were sitting on a bench in Forest Park.

"You probably don't believe in werewolves," George went on. "Probably write it off as superstition. Well, you'll see."

Valerie's face looked even paler than usual in the moonlight. She was a thin, quiet girl, contrasting sharply with George, who was loud, jolly, and invariably over-dressed.

"It's not superstition," said George, making sly, sidelong circles in the air with his pudgy hand. "It's a matter of pure fact. See?"

"Don't tease."

"I'm not teasing. See that moon?"

Valerie nodded.

"Well, it's full. And at 12 o'clock when there's a full moon, I turn into a werewolf. My teeth become large, I'm covered with fur, my nails turn to claws-in short, I resemble a wolf in every respect."

Valerie shuddered.

For several minutes George remained silent. Forest Park was comparatively quiet; the birds slept, the crickets shut up momentarily, and if any juvenile delinquents were busily mauling innocent bystanders, they were doing their job stealthily.

"It's getting near the winking (Continued on page 51)

'I'll Love You to Death'

(Continued from page 131)

hour," George said. "Don't you believe me?"

"I'm not sure."

"But! Aren't you frightened?"

"No," said Valeria, hotly. "No, I'm not frightened, George."

George threw back his head and chuckled wildly. "Not frightened, huh? You ought to be, kiddie."

"Why?"

"Why? Baby, don't you know what a werewolf does?"

"I know," said Valeria.

"Well, that's why you ought to be frightened. When I turn into a werewolf, I get vicious. Bloodthirsty, you know. Anybody near me gets killed. And you're near me, Valeria. You're sitting right next to me."

"But you said you loved me," Valeria complained. "George, you told me you loved me with all your heart and soul."

"I do."

"Then why would you want to kill me?"

"Can't help it," George said. He shook his head from side to side doggedly. "Can't help it, honey. That's just the way we werewolves operate. When the blood-lunger comes on, there's no opposing it. A guy's got to let himself go, and that's all there is to it."

Valeria took in a deep breath, held it for several seconds, and then released it very slowly. "George," she said, "don't you love me?"

"Of course I do."

"Then . . ."

"Valeria, I can't help it. Can I help the way I am? Can I?"

Valeria didn't answer.

"I can't," said George, answering his own question. "I'm a werewolf, and you're a normal. A tiny normal, I'll bet. But you won't love me altogether, dear. You'll be a werewolf, too."

Valeria double-blinked and gaped simultaneously.

"It's not so bad," he said, soothingly. "We'll make a swell pair, kiddie. We'll hunt together, you and me. We'll be the best team of werewolves since . . ."

Suddenly, somewhere, a double-blink peaked once.

"Fifteen minutes," George said.

"Fifteen minutes, Valeria."

And once again they were silent. A cricket chirped suddenly, shattering the quiet, and just as abruptly the insect stopped chirping.

A few minutes later, a frog croaked once, then stopped.

"I'll try not to hurt you," George said.

"That's nice."

"Really, I'll try. But it's our nature, Valeria. We werewolves are basically mean, see. We like to rip our prey into small pieces, or at least do a lot of damage. But I'll go easy on you."

"Because you love me?"

George nodded. "Because I love you." He slipped one hand over her shoulder and drew her to him tenderly, running his fingers through her silky hair. Her cheek rested on his shoulder.

"Won't be long now," he said.

"Mmmmm."

He glanced at his watch. "Just five minutes, Valeria. Just five minutes more."

"Mmmmm."

Automatically, he withdrew his arm from her and tucked his hands on his lap. "Val," he demanded, "don't you believe me?"

"I don't know," she said, sitting up and staring at him. "I don't know what to believe."

"It's the truth," he said. "Boy, look at that full moon! Just wait, Val. Just watch me."

She waited. And she watched.

"Four minutes."

Then, "Three minutes."

"Two minutes."

"One minute."

She sat rigidly on the bench, her eyes boring into his. Her breaths came shorter and deeper than before, her whole body throbbing with each intake of air.

Suddenly, he lowered the seconds: "Thirty . . . forty . . . thirty . . . twenty . . . ten, nine, eight, seven . . ."

The clock struck twelve.

Nothing happened. Then George laughed like a hyena.

"Frodoed you!" he roared. "Scared as . . ."

Before he could finish, his tongue went into his throat.

"We"