

Welcome to Harmony

Growing Up Supernatural



Book One

Dan O'Mahony

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Chapter 1

The Change had started. My senses were jacked. I smelled and heard things no normal twelve-year-old kid could, like my parents' breathing as they slept, even though their room was at the other end of the house. The pressure built inside my stomach. I groaned and leaned against a wall. I had to get out now before it was too late.

I crept down the stairs and through the living room. Thanks to my new super senses, I made my way through the dark without bumping into anything or making a sound.

Outside, the forest called to me. Its scents were so strong they made me dizzy. The hairs on my arms stood up. My skin tingled under my t-shirt and shorts.

I dashed across the backyard, leapt over the brick wall, then sprinted across the field. All sorts of brambles stuck to the soles of my feet, but I barely even noticed.

The forest welcomed me with open arms. Every nerve in my body lit up. There were so many smells and sounds. But I couldn't stop. I needed to stay focused. There'd be time to explore later. Right then, I needed to get farther away from the house.

The brush around me rustled. I stopped short. All around me, golden eyes shone in the dark. Coyotes. I could tell by their scent. A pack of them surrounded me and were closing in, expecting an easy meal.

Sorry, fellas. Not tonight.

I lurched forward and let out a growl that shouldn't have come from a twelve-year-old kid's

throat. It was monstrous and inhuman. The coyotes whimpered and ran away. The stink of their fear trailed behind them.

I charged deeper into the forest. Suddenly, every muscle in my body spasmed, forcing me to collapse. Dang, I had really wanted to make sure I was farther away when this happened, but it was too late.

I opened my mouth to scream. Instead, out came a canine whine. The Change was always excruciating. I wished I could pass out and be spared it, but I had no such luck.

Tears streamed down my cheeks as my bones cracked and lengthened. My muscles swelled and thickened. My skin darkened and sprouted a coat of sleek, brown fur.

I watched my feet grow into large hind paws and my fingernails turn into claws. My ears became pointed and shifted towards the top of my head, and my nose and mouth stretched into a canine muzzle filled with sharp fangs.

The Change was finally complete. I rose from the ground, no longer a boy but a creature of legend. A monster. A werewolf.

I flexed my clawed hands, sniffed the air, then dropped to all fours and ran. The power of this body — the speed and quicksilver grace — always amazed me.

Adrenaline rushed through me as I wove around the trees and leapt over boulders and logs. There were moments when it seemed like I was more than running. It was like I was gliding on invisible currents.

My senses became even stronger. I not only heard sounds but felt their vibrations. Smells were so strong I could taste them. Nature whispered her every secret to me. I could tell there was going to be an earthquake a few miles to the South, and from the shift of moisture in the air I knew it would rain the next morning.

I steered towards a rocky outcrop and raced to its peak. Back in L.A., whenever I Changed, I'd

run through my neighborhood to the reservoir. That was pretty cool at the time, but it didn't compare to this, to running in a real forest.

This forest was amazing. There was so much life all around me, not just the animals but the trees, plants, flowers — everything! The forest itself was alive. It was an ancient being that nurtured every living thing within its reach. And I'd become a part of that.

A feeling of pure joy surged through me. I had no choice except to throw back my head and howl into the night.

I spent the next few hours exploring. In this form, I had an internal clock that told me when the sun would rise. The part of me that was still human worried about getting home before Mom and Dad discovered I was gone.

As the sky turned predawn gray, that familiar pressure built up inside me again. The Change back had begun. It hurt even more than Changing into a werewolf, probably because my human self was weaker.

Bones cracked and shifted. Muscles shrank. Fur retreated beneath my skin. My muzzle shortened, returning to a human nose and mouth. Fangs withdrew into my gums, claws into my fingertips.

When it was over, every inch of me was sore. Even my hair. I laid in the grass for a while, unable to move. Finally, I forced myself up and raced home as fast as my aching body could carry me. I opened the French doors just enough to slip through and shut them quietly.

So far, so good. The house was quiet. I was going to make it. I started up the stairs, but before I reached the top Mom and Dad stepped into view. Dad frowned, his arms crossed. Mom looked like she was trying not to cry.

I stood there for a moment then sighed and sort of slumped. What else could I do? Just looking at me, they could tell I'd been out. My t-shirt and shorts were filthy, and I was covered with sweat and dirt.

“Dillon, how could you?” said Mom. “After what happened in L.A.?”

I bowed my head. Only Mom could make me feel this guilty.

“Are you checking up on me now while I sleep?” I asked.

“Apparently, it was a good thing we did,” said Dad. “You promised us, Dillon. You said the next time you felt the Change coming, you would tell us.”

“I know.” I stared at the floor. “I’m sorry. I just couldn’t stand the idea of being locked up in the basement all night.”

“You think we want to do that?” asked Dad. He and Mom hurried down the stairs. “It’s for your own good. You could get hurt or you could hurt someone. Like in L.A.”

“Why do you always have to bring that up? I didn’t actually hurt anyone!”

“But you came close,” said Mom. “And all those people saw you, Dillon.”

“I still think they’d never have found out it was me.”

“We can’t run that risk,” said Dad almost yelling. “That’s why we moved out here in the first place. And you promised you would cooperate.”

“I’m sorry. I wanted to come get you and Mom – it’s just — the smells of the forest, they were so strong – I couldn’t help it.”

“Well, you’re just going to have to try harder then,” said Dad.

I fumed. My right hand clenched into a fist. I kept it at my side. Try harder. That was easy for him to say. Dad stepped beside me. He’d calmed down a bit.

“Look, son, I know this is difficult – ” he started.

“You have no idea what this is like,” I said, raising my voice, cutting him off.

Dad backed away startled. He glanced at Mom.

“You’re right, Dillon,” she said. “We have no clue what you’re going through.” Her voice cracked. “But we’re trying, son. We’re doing the best we can to help you deal with this.” She sniffed

and dabbed at her eyes.

Jeez, I hated it when she cried. It was so unfair.

Dad rested a hand on my shoulder. He looked really tired. He and Mom had probably been up all night since they discovered I was gone.

“Why don’t you go clean up?” he said. “We’ll talk about this later.”

I slipped past Mom and Dad without saying a word. I had to admit I felt sorry for them. I still remembered the day they told me I was adopted, how they tried to have their own child for years but couldn't. I was supposed to be their “little miracle.”

Too bad I was a burden from the start. Always acting up in class, being too aggressive with the other kids. I got diagnosed with ADHD and Oppositional Defiance Disorder and was put on a ton of meds. Mom and Dad thought all their problems were solved.

Then I started to Change.

I knew Mom and Dad were trying to deal with this the best they could. I mean, it wasn't like there were books they could read or a support group to join. The three of us were learning about “my condition,” as they liked to call it, as we went along.

For starters, we found out movies and TV had it all wrong. I had no problem with silver, and my Changes happened whenever, not just during the full moon. Then there was the big one. I wasn't bitten or scratched by another werewolf.

As far as we could tell, I was born one.

(TO BE CONTINUED in *Welcome to Harmony*. On sale now on my website.)

