

## Kindred Spirits By Scribblesinink

The full moon hung low in the sky. It cast everything in an eerie white light until the world seemed devoid of color, making it a strange monochrome landscape that John drove through, wheels bouncing over the overgrown track.

In the distance, a barn loomed up, a boxy shape dark against the night sky. It was the place he'd been looking for and John pulled over. He sat for a moment before he glanced over at Dean in the seat next to him.

"You and Sammy stay in the car. And keep the doors locked."

"Yes sir." Dean nodded earnestly.

"No matter what happens, okay?"

"Yes sir."

John turned further in his seat and gazed down at his youngest son for a moment. Sammy was sprawled in the backseat. Rocked to sleep by the bouncing car, he never noticed when John leaned over to pull the blanket that covered him a little higher.

Assured his sons were as comfortable and safe as they could be under the circumstances, he reached for the shotgun lying on the floor and got out of the car, dragging the weapon after him. He gestured for Dean to pass him the handgun from the glove box and checked that a silver bullet was already in the chamber. Once he'd satisfied himself the gun was ready in case he needed it, John shoved it through his belt at his back, where it rested uncomfortably against his spine.

"And Dean?" He ducked down for a last look into the car, meeting his son's eyes. They gleamed in the moonlight.

"Look after Sammy. I know, Dad."

John offered Dean an encouraging nod before he shut the door, the familiar creak of the hinges loud in the still night. He waited until Dean had locked all four doors behind him before he set off at an easy trot along the track, heading for the barn.

As he ran, he kept his footfalls light and his head low. Werewolves were cunning creatures, and he needed to keep his wits about him. He risked a glance at the moon. He'd

already wasted several nights trying to figure out where the beast holed up, and he had two nights to get it, or he'd have to wait another four weeks for the moon to come full cycle again.

But John felt hopeful. He was reasonably certain that the abandoned barn was where the werewolf had made its lair, and though he was probably arriving too late to keep it from setting out on its nightly hunt, he'd make damn sure he got it when it returned.

Nobody in this county would die from a werewolf attack ever again, if John Winchester had something to say about it.

Closing in on the barn, he slowed down and, coming up on the wall, crouched in the shadows, ears straining to pick up any sounds. Hearing nothing, he scooted along the wall until he reached the doorway. The doors had slid apart a foot or two, and he slipped through the crack. He blinked at the darkness, so much deeper than the moonlit night outside, and waited without moving until his eyes had adjusted.

Then he set off again, slowly inching his way forward, shotgun cocked and ready. The place stank, a fetid smell of rot and feces overlaid with a coppery scent that could only be blood. Yeah, he'd come to the right place: any doubt he might still have had faded before the stink.

A sudden soft noise a little ahead made John freeze, balancing on one foot. So slow that it seemed he wasn't moving, he set down his other foot. The noise came again, a soft scuff against the ground. John swiveled his head to determine where it came from, and decided: *outside*.

Had to be the werewolf.

Quickly, but careful to make no noise himself, he hurried over to the far wall, sneaking along until he reached the back door that stood partly open. The hinges groaned a little as something pulled the doors open wider. John stepped away from the wall and lifted the gun...

"What the hell...?"

He let out an involuntary shout of surprise as light suddenly stabbed his eyes, blinding him, and he threw up one arm to protect his vision. It was sheer instinct honed sharp in the Vietnamese jungle more than any conscious thought that stopped him from pulling the trigger in a reflex—because in the brief instant between the door opening and the light blinding him, he'd seen the shape of a man outlined against the sky, not that of a werewolf.

"Holy crap...!"

The next moment, the beam left his face. John blinked at the afterglow, his eyes watering. Looking directly at the other man, he couldn't make out a thing, hidden as the man was in the spots seared onto John's retinas. But he found that if he turned his head a little and peered out of the corner of his eye, he could make out a man roughly his age, with a three-day scruff and a faded baseball cap pulled down over his eyes.

"Who the fuck are *you*?" they said in unison, and John thought that would've been funny if he hadn't nearly shot the other man just now. His heart was still pounding from the adrenaline.

He also realized that, beside the flashlight now pointing at the floor between their feet, the stranger was carrying a handgun, cocked and ready, safety thumbed off. "What are you doin' here?" John added.

"Huntin'," came the curt reply. The man nodded at the shotgun in John's hands. "As are— Watch out!"

Before John could respond, something big slammed into him from behind, knocking him down. He tumbled to his knees, dropping the shotgun from suddenly limp hands. It went off as it hit the floor, and the shot ricocheted around the barn. The wolf snarled and saliva splattered John's face while sudden agony set his back on fire. Another gun went off, the *boom* so close on the heels of the first that it was deafening in the enclosed space. But despite the ringing in his ears, John still heard the werewolf's howl as the stranger's bullet struck home.

oOo

*Crap!*

Bobby caught sight of the werewolf slinking around in the dark of the barn just a second too late to stop it from attacking. It screamed in pain when the silver bullet found its mark, but he'd been too rushed to make it a kill shot, and the beast leaped off into the dark night.

He was about to go after it, but a suppressed groan stopped him. The man on the ground was trying to push himself up, and not doing a very good job of it. Bobby threw a last glance of longing in the direction that the werewolf had disappeared in before he knelt beside the wounded hunter.

"Stay still," he grumbled as the man attempted again to gain his feet. In the glare of his flashlight, Bobby saw that the werewolf's claws had ripped the man's jacket and something dark and wet gleamed beneath it.

*Double crap!*

"What's your name?" he said in an attempt to distract the injured man while prodding at the wounds. His fingers came away sticky and red, and blood was seeping through the jacket.

"John." He spoke through teeth clenched together against the pain. "John Winchester."

"Bobby Singer," Bobby introduced himself, leaning back on his haunches and trying to come to a decision. "You need a doctor." Unfortunately, the closest town, with the nearest phone, was at least two miles away, and that werewolf was somewhere out there. Bobby didn't like to leave John bleeding and defenseless with the beast still prowling.

"No," John growled. "No doctors. No hospital."

"But—" Bobby began. John grabbed his wrist.

"Help me up. Got a car... First aid kit."

"Buddy, you're gonna need much more than a few band-aids," Bobby objected, but John shook his head and struggled to push himself up. Bobby sighed at the other man's stubbornness, but he understood the general dislike hunters had for hospitals. Hell, he felt that way himself: hospitals were where you went if you were dead or dying. And John wasn't quite there yet. At the least, if he took John back to his car, he wouldn't be leaving him in the barn for the werewolf to come back and finish.

Postponing further argument about what sort of help John needed until he'd taken a proper look at the man's injuries, Bobby helped him clamber awkwardly to his feet.

John's car turned out to be a sleek, black Impala that to Bobby's eye appeared well-maintained, if a little muddy. It was parked perhaps half a mile down the track. By the time they reached it, both men were breathing heavily. Bobby carried more than supported John's weight, and damn, if the man wasn't tall and heavy.

As they came up to the car, Bobby near-stopped dead in his tracks. A pale oval shimmered behind the window, which was fogged up from the inside. "There's someone—" he began in a hiss, when the door opened and a small boy tumbled out.

"Dad?" The kid came running over, green eyes wide and worried in a freckled face. He couldn't have been more than six or seven, Bobby thought, and was missing a front tooth, the permanent one not quite grown in. He barely gave Bobby half a glance before slipping beneath John's free arm and trying to prop him up straight.

"You bring your son on a hunt?" Bobby couldn't help but blurt, and John shot him a look Bobby couldn't quite decipher before he scrunched up his face in pain.

John took a few deep breaths before he managed, "I'll be all right, Dean. Just help... Mr. Singer here... patch me up."

The boy—Dean—gave Bobby a suspicious once-over before he answered, "Yes sir," and ran off to root through the trunk of the Impala. A moment later he reappeared with a white plastic box so large that he could barely carry it. Bobby helped John half-sit, half-lean against the car's front fender and turned to take the box.

The kit turned out to be so well-stocked with supplies that Bobby suspected John must've raided a hospital or a pharmacy somewhere along the way. It held everything he might need: antiseptic tinctures, needles and threads for stitching, bandages, antibiotics. He picked up a bottle half-full with pills: it was a painkiller, a prescription drug with a blank label and he gave a wry shake of the head. Yes, definitely contraband.

Bobby laid his gun next to John on the hood, within easy reach. John pulled another handgun from beneath his belt and put it beside Bobby's. The two men exchanged a look. Bobby didn't think they were in immediate danger—the wolf was probably off somewhere licking its own wounds—but *yeah*, better be safe than sorry.

"Gimme some light, son," Bobby told the boy, offering him the use of his flashlight, but Dean shook his head, showing him he had one of his own. Dean scrambled around the hood so he could better direct the beam at his father's back, and Bobby helped John peel off his tattered jacket and shirt.

The werewolf had clawed deep furrows into John's flesh. But it didn't look as bad as Bobby had first feared: the blood was trickling from the wound, not flowing steadily as he had expected, and was already starting to clot in places.

He rummaged through the first aid kit, searching for gauze and iodine. A few moments later, he'd washed out the wounds and was applying an antiseptic. John clamped his jaws shut, and Bobby's respect grew a little. He knew from experience how much the disinfectant burned in open wounds.

"Dean. Flask." John's words were barely audible but the boy understood him nevertheless.

He crawled back into the car and came out a minute later with a small, silver flask that Bobby suspected held something much stronger than the holy water *he* carried around in a bottle like that. John took a large swig. "How bad?"

"Not as bad as I thought," Bobby muttered. "But you're gonna have some interesting scars." He threaded a needle and told John to turn a little further. "This is gonna hurt some more," he warned.

"Whoa," John said, stiffening. "Hold up. Dean can do that."

"What?" Bobby blinked. "Are you kiddin' me? He's but a child."

"I'm not," Dean piped up. "I can do it."

Bobby stared down at the boy, who was holding out his hand for the needle.

"He needs to learn," John added by way of explanation.

"Yeah? Well, not on my watch." The man was crazy if he expected Bobby to relinquish needle and thread to a gap-toothed kid. Give Dean another ten years and he *might* agree. As it was...? "Turn around and let me work."

John hesitated, and for a few seconds Bobby thought he was going to stand his ground. Then a grimace washed over his face. "Fuck," John muttered, eliciting a small gasp from Dean. He winced as he shifted around further to give Bobby better access.

Bobby hummed in displeasure before reaching over and pulling torn flesh together. He slid the needle in. John hissed and took another drink from the flask.

Ten minutes later, they were done. Wiping his hands on a bloody rag, Bobby straightened, and accepted the bottle John offered him with a nod of gratitude. He took a swallow and found himself proven right as the liquid burned down his gullet: the flask held some damned fine whiskey.

oOo

Bobby waited impatiently while the phone rang. The Roadhouse was a big place, and sometimes it took Ellen or Bill a while to come and pick it up. At last he heard Ellen's voice announce herself over the din of post-workday drinkers.

She sounded glad to hear his voice. Bobby asked after Bill, who was away on a job in Florida, and little Jo. "Missing her daddy," Ellen said, and the tone of her voice made it

clear she didn't really want to talk any further about her family. Bobby suspected it was concern for Bill's safety more than anything else that made her curt, so he changed the subject to the real reason for his call.

"You ever hear of a hunter named John Winchester?"

"John? Sure. Bill's worked with him a time or two. Says he's a good hunter. Learns fast. Why?"

"I ran into him last night."

"On a hunt?" There was the faint ghost of a laugh in Ellen's voice and an unspoken *I wish I'd seen that*, and Bobby rolled his eyes. She knew him too well, and apparently, she knew John too.

"Yeah. Turns out we were both chasing the same werewolf."

"Well, what are the odds!" Again she gave the impression she was silently laughing. Bobby's brow furrowed.

"Damn thing got away."

"Crap. You two okay?" No trace of her earlier humor remained in Ellen's voice.

"Mostly." Bobby shifted the phone to his other ear. It still chafed that he hadn't been fast enough to get the beast before it attacked. "Winchester got sliced up some but he'll be fine." He paused for a moment. Then he added, "Ellen... he's got two boys with him."

That had been the third major discovery of the evening: if Bobby had thought the presence of John's son Dean, or the fact that both Winchesters found it perfectly normal for Dean to work on his father's injuries was shocking, it had been the appearance of a mop-haired toddler sitting up in the backseat, blinking sleepily over the thumb in his mouth, that had made Bobby want to search surreptitiously for the hidden camera.

"His sons: Sammy and Dean." Ellen didn't sound scandalized at all.

"What sort of a man brings his sons on a hunt?" It was something that had been on Bobby's mind from the moment he'd laid eyes on the boys. "They're *children*, Ellen; they have no business being around a werewolf's lair!"

Ellen made a noise. "Bobby, he's their *father*. He leaves them with Jim Murphy in Blue Earth or with Caleb sometimes, when he thinks a job's too dangerous. But mostly, he

keeps those boys with him. Can't say I blame him."

"Huh." Bobby still wasn't convinced, but it was clear he'd find no ally in Ellen. "What of their mother?"

The pause was more weighty now, the silence stretching until Bobby was about to tell her, *never mind, none of my business*, before Ellen spoke up softly.

"She died. Happened a couple years back, in a fire. Sammy was but a baby. Way John tells it..." She paused again. "We think it was a demon did it."

Suddenly, John Winchester keeping his boys close made much more sense to Bobby.

oOo

The shots rang out almost simultaneously, both John and Bobby catching sight of the werewolf at the same time. This time, both their bullets hit their mark, and the beast slumped into the dirt without making a sound.

Bobby walked into the open, shotgun in hand, and approached the dying beast cautiously. The stink of blood was strong in the air and a puddle of the stuff was slowly forming around the body. From the corner of his eye, he saw John walking over as well.

They stood side by side, looking down while the werewolf blew out its last breath. It changed shape, turning back into its human form, and within seconds they were no longer looking down on a vicious, feral beast, but a naked middle-aged man with a bald spot and a beer gut.

"Poor bastard," John muttered.

"Nothing we could do about it," Bobby replied. "Once they're turned, there's no way to fix 'em. It's kill, or be killed."

"You sure 'bout that?" John shook out a tarp he'd brought for the purpose and placed it over the body.

"Quite sure." In all his research, Bobby had never come across any theories about how to heal werewolves. "It's not like you can do an exorcism and rip the demon out."

"You something of an expert on demons?" John asked.

Bobby gave a shrug. "I've done my homework, yeah." He walked back to the place he'd

used as a hide-out, and returned with a can of gasoline and a box of matches. "Demon got my wife, few years back."

It didn't come out nearly as off-handed as Bobby had planned it, and he knew it the moment the words left his mouth. Must be the lack of sleep, he thought. He wasn't gettin' any younger, and a couple of nights with hardly any z's must've put him off his game. And John Winchester was anything but stupid; the look he shot Bobby told him his comment had been recognized for what it was: a rather clumsy attempt at trying for information. There was something else in John's look also, though...

"You already knew that," Bobby accused.

John gave him a crooked half smile. "Yeah."

Bobby bent down and rolled the body into the tarp John had brought. "How?"

John smirked. "Asked around some. Talked to Ellen; she told me. She also told me you've been checking up on me with her."

"Huh." Bobby couldn't help the wry chuckle that escaped him. "It's not like Ellen to go blabbin' about other people's business." He grabbed a corner of the tarp and started hauling.

"No, it isn't." John gestured at the body. "Need a hand?"

Bobby shook his head. "Nah, I got it." He didn't want his handiwork on John's back to have been all for nothing by having him tear up his stitches dragging dead bodies around. Bobby was panting by the time he'd hoisted the heavy body onto the pile of wood they'd collected earlier, though, and the help would've been welcome.

"She tell you about Mary?" John asked.

Obviously, he was still pondering Ellen's uncharacteristic behavior, and truth be told, it was foremost in Bobby's mind as well. Ellen must've had a reason, he thought while pouring gasoline over the body. Perhaps—

"Your wife got possessed too?"

John shook his head. "No. Nothing like that." He looked away. "Bastard stuck her on the ceiling of Sammy's nursery. Sliced her open, then let her burn." He cleared his throat. Bobby remained silent.

"Been looking for the son of a bitch ever since."

Ah. Bobby nodded to himself. Now he was beginning to understand. Crafty woman, that Ellen Harvelle. Instead of simply sending John to South Dakota, where the dogs might've chased him off before he'd been able to get more than two words out, she was gonna let Bobby think it was *his* decision. He glanced over at the Impala, but the boys weren't in sight: much to Bobby's relief, John had left them in the motel with the doors and windows salted and clear instructions for Dean to not open up for anyone that wasn't his father.

Bobby offered John the box of matches and the other man took it without a word. A moment later, the flames roared high and the stench of burning flesh was overwhelming. Bobby backed away from the pyre, breathing shallowly.

Ellen knew he couldn't turn his back on the Winchesters now. John's boys were without a mother because of some demonic son of a bitch. And though he'd always wanted kids, in the end he'd been glad he and his wife never got around to it. Would've sucked to grow up without a mother.

They reached their cars. "It's been a pleasure working with you," Bobby said, holding out his hand. "Take care of those boys."

John accepted Bobby's hand and gave a nod.

"And if you ever swing by South Dakota," Bobby added, "make sure to drop by. I got a thing or two I can tell you about demons. Might even help you find the bastard that killed your wife."

Again, John nodded, a hint of a smile on his lips. "Will do," he said. "Thanks."

A moment later, John had climbed behind the wheel of his car and was driving back to the town and to his sons. Bobby waited until the tail lights had faded before he climbed into his Mustang and headed off in the other direction.

It wasn't until he crossed the state line into South Dakota that it finally occurred to him: it had been *Ellen* who'd set him on the werewolf's trail in the first place! And he'd eat his hat if she hadn't told John about the case as well. He gave a laugh, loud in the silence of his car. She was a *darned* crafty woman!

Bobby was certain he hadn't seen the last of John Winchester. Man like that? He wouldn't stop until he'd avenged his wife.

*Can't say as I blame 'im, Bobby thought as he turned into the scrapyard that was home.  
Not at all.*

**Disclaimer:** this story is based on the Warner Bros. Television/Wonderland Sound and Vision/Eric Kripke/Robert Singer series *Supernatural*. It was written for entertainment only; the author does not profit from it nor was any infringement of copyright intended. Please do not redistribute elsewhere without the author's consent.