

WRAITH  
by  
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Thoughts about Wraith

chapter 1 Old friends and a funeral

His eyes slowly opened to the darkness. It took him a while for his vision to adjust to the gloom. He found himself lying face down in the tunnel. How did he get there? He tried to recall, but his memory was fuzzy, and his head hurt badly. It was the kind of headache one would get after being hit by a baseball bat. He felt around his head with his hand, searching for signs of damage.

His fingers felt a wet concave depression at the top of his head. "What the hell?" His voice was a little guttural. He instinctively put his hand

to his throat, where he felt a wet hole underneath his chin. He suddenly realized where he was. He was within the trap. The holes in his head came from the spike, which had recessed back into the floor.

How could he have been that stupid to forget about the trap? He should've known better. After all, he knew how the device worked and was cautious about its harmful mechanisms. How did this happen? He thought. He remembered strangers were in the tunnels, and they were coming towards them. Maria went to investigate, and later, he heard her screams of pain. He decided to hide behind some boxes that led to another tunnel.

The strangers came in and destroyed the blood supply and killed off nine people who were still receiving transfusions. They took David with them, the same man where the blood originated. Even though he had just received his dose and woken up not long before Maria had left, he had to try to stop them. When Hellann finds out what these intruders had done, and he hadn't made any effort to stop them, there would be hell to pay.

His memory was coming back stronger. He did not want to disappoint Hellann. He had seen her wrath, and it was not pretty. She was very ruthless in her punishments. He remembered how easy it was to change

into a werewolf. He felt the feral power of the beast, and his senses were becoming heightened beyond anything he had experienced before. He'd felt invincible.

He'd charged into the tunnel, determined to slaughter the intruders.

Instead, one of them purposely triggered the trap, and there he lay. He wondered how long he been down. Had the intruders left, he got up on his wobbly legs and started his way to the tunnel. He was careful to step over the trigger switch on the floorboard.

He made his way into the Castle and searched everywhere but found no one. He parted a large drape and looked outside. It was all dark except for a small fire, with a man sitting near it. He saw Hellann and his vampire/werewolf family. He was about to go outside and join them but stopped himself when he saw the hundreds of colorful orbs. They were everywhere. What were they? He wondered.

He got his answer when they changed into kachinas. He did not know what kind of beings were out there. He did not want to find out the hard way after he saw the kachinas auras touching his family and turning them into ash. He was awestruck when he saw the man who was near the fire take Hellann's spiritual body away. He witnessed her physical body turning to ash. He was thankful he was not discovered, and he

tried to blend in with the shadows. There was not a soul anymore outside. The only thing that was still alive was a small fire that threw off many shadows. Even though he saw no one outside the Castle, he wasn't going to leave by the front door. He didn't want to become ash. He went back into the depths of the Castle and entered the tunnel system next to the room where he had started. He went to the secret door that was behind some boxes. He opened that door and entered. It led to another tunnel that went down to the bottom of the mountain. The passageway was never on any blueprints because Hellann used the slave labor of illegal immigrants to construct it for her.

At the end of the tunnel, he entered another house that Hellann owned. He was relieved that nothing was there to confront him. He was in no condition to fight anyone. He was still healing from the spike to the head. He was going to head home and lie low. He wasn't going to murder anyone for a while. He needed to see what he could do with this new power. There had to be more to it than changing into a werewolf. If there were more, he would find out. He would get his revenge on these intruders. Then the killing spree would begin.

14 years later

"Michael, I need you to hurry up, or we will be late," Julie called out to her son from the kitchen. "Okay, mom, I am almost done," Michael

said from the living room as sounds from his videogame was heard.

"Son, you need to find a place to pause your game because we have to get going," David said as he was tying his necktie in the living room."

Okay, okay", Michael said as he saved his game, turned off his controller and T.V. He got off the couch and followed his dad to the garage, where his mother was waiting.

"It's about time you showed up," Julie said. She looked at how her son dressed. Julie noticed his necktie appeared to be loose. "Let me straight that up," Julie said as she fussed over her son's tie. "Not so tight," Michael complained. Once Julie was satisfied, how her son looked. She stood back and commented, "now that is a handsome young man."

"Aw, mom, can we go now?" Michael said as he entered the back door of the S.U.V.

David looked at his wristwatch and noted the time. "I certainly hope there's no traffic today because we will be cutting it close on time," he announced. "Calm down. It's Saturday, we will get there in plenty of time," Julie said. "Is everyone buckled up?" David asked. Michael and Julie answered, "yes." David checked his mirrors and a rearview camera. He pressed the garage door remote. After it opened, he slowly

backed out of the garage and onto the Street. Once the garage door was closed, David started driving towards their destination.

"I don't understand why we have to go to this funeral?" Michael questioned. "We are doing this as a family to show our respect for Dr. Newman's memory," Julie said. "But he won't be there. So, what's the point?" Michael argued. "The point is this, Michael. We go to funerals to comfort the grieving family members and show respect to our friend," David explained. "I don't know why they don't get; the doctor's spirit won't be there at the funeral home or the cemetery? Only his body will be there and nothing else," Michael questioned.

"You must be talking to Francine again," Julie said. Then she tried a different explanation for her son. "Honey, the people who are going to this funeral believe, the spirit is still within the body. That is why we have a viewing at the Funeral homes," Julie explained. "Okay, that part makes sense to me, but why do we have to go to the cemetery?"

Francine told me, "spirits don't hang out there. Only buried bodies and ashes are in the cemetery". "It's not like the doctors' soul is going to hitch a ride from the other side of town, just to watch his body get buried," Michael said.

"Michael, it's all about tradition and closure." "The funeral gives griever's closure, knowing that their loved ones will no longer be with them," David explained. "Don't they know that sometimes spirits still hang around them?" Michael asked. "Sorry, son, they don't," David said. "I hope one day, you'll stop talking to Francine and find a nice girl at your school," Julie said. "But mom, she's the only one who understands who I am. And the other girls think I am a little weird", Michael said in his defense. "Nobody would think that about you, honey," Julie said. "You haven't been to my school," Michael said. "Any suggestions for lunch?" David asked, trying to change the subject. "Pizza sounds good," Michael said. "Julie?" David asked. "Pizza is okay," Julie answered. "Okay pizza, it is," David said. Twenty minutes later, David pulled into the funeral home parking lot, which is almost full of cars.

"Do you want me to sign the guest book for us?" Julie asked while holding the pen. "Sure, your penmanship is much better than mine," David said as he looked over the crowded gathering room. There were some people David recognized. He saw the widow approaching them. "Hello Julie, I am glad that you and your family have come today,"

Mrs. Newman said as she became teary-eyed. "Are you going to be okay?" Julie asked. "Yes, but I will miss him," Mrs. Newman said.

"Would you like Michael and me to sit down with you?" Julie offered.

"Yes, please, but after we find my daughter. I need her to greet the guest for me," Mrs. Newman said. "Do you mind if I say hi to Willie?"

"I see him standing next to Sarge," David said. "Okay, I'll save you a seat in the viewing room," Julie said.

Michael and Julie followed Mrs. Newman as they went searching for her daughter. "There's Rose," Mrs. Newman said as she pointed out her daughter. Michael was thankful that Rose was about the same age as his mother. Michael was afraid that his mom would try to set him up if the daughter was in his age group. Mrs. Newman introduced Michael and Julie. She asked her daughter to greet the guest while she took a break. Her daughter hugged her mother and said, "I've got this, mom."

David approach Willie and Sarge from behind; they were looking at pictures that were on the funeral board. "Boy, Newman looks very young in that uniform," Sarge said. "All of us looked like that when we were youngsters," Willie said. "Yes, we did," Sarge agreed. "Hey, you guys, I'm glad to see you," David said as he greeted his friends. "Good to see you too, given the circumstances," Sarge said. "Nice to see you

too." "Where's the wife and your boy?" Willie asked. "They are in the viewing room with Mrs. Newman," David said. "So sad, you never know when it's your time," Willie said. "Yes, it is sad," David said.

"Hey, look!" "Stanton and Crystal are here," Sarge said. Sarge weaved through the crowd so he could approach the couple, who were signing the guestbook. "I'm glad to see both of you." "It's been a long time since we talked," Sarge said. "Yeah, it's been a couple of years now," Ryan Stanton said. "How are you and Crystal doing?" Sarge asked.

"We are doing good, especially since this man finally got around to marry me," Crystal said as she hugged Stanton's arm. "I'm sorry I missed the wedding." "I didn't find the invitation until I was back in the country," Sarge said. "No worries, Crystal has plenty of pictures to show you," Stanton said. "Brat," Crystal said after elbowing him.

"Where did you go on your trip?" Stanton asked. "Machu Picchu," Sarge answered.

"How was it?" "I've always wanted to go," Crystal said. "The climb was a real bitch. Um, I am sorry, Crystal". "I meant to say, the climb was difficult for this old man," Sarge said." That's okay; you must have forgotten that I work at the police department." "And those officers do not use their verbal filters either," Crystal said." How were the ruins?"

Crystal asked. "Amazing is the only word that can give it justice," Sarge said. "It is hard to believe that people so long ago built something that big way up there in the mountains," Sarge said. "And the view was out of this world." "I was truly above the clouds," Sarge added. "I am glad you had a good time," Stanton said. "I did, and now I can mark that off my bucket list," Sarge said.

"David and Willie are here," Sarge said. "They are over there, by the photo board," Sarge said as he pointed towards their location. "I see them," Crystal said. "Let's go say hi," she added. The couple followed Sarge to where their friends were standing. Willie and David greeted them.

"I heard on T.V. that you broke the pool builder murder case," Willie said. "Yes, I did, it took some good detective work and my gut to solve it," Stanton said. "There is a messy torrid story behind those murders."

"I would like to tell you more, but the trial is still ongoing," Stanton said. "I understand," Willie said. "Everyone, please into the viewing room and take a seat." "The services are about to start," the funeral director announced.

Everyone filed into the chapel viewing room and took a seat. There were numerous floral arrangements around the casket. The smell of the

flowers was quite overpowering. David recognized the flower arrangement that he and Julie picked out and sent earlier. Next to the coffin, was a large photograph of a younger, smiling Dr. Newman. Family members were seated in the front rows, while the friends of the deceased filled the other chairs. Julie saw David and motioned him to come. She had saved his seat next to her and their son. After everyone was seated, the Rabbi recited prayers in Hebrew for Dr. Newman's family. Afterward, Dr. Newman's family and friends gave personal eulogies about Dr. Newman and his life. David spoke about how Dr. Newman saved his life and that he will miss their numerous talks. After everyone had a chance to speak, military pallbearers lifted the casket and carried it to the hearse, where they loaded the coffin in the back of the vehicle.

All the guests walked to the cars and followed the hearse to the cemetery. There were over 30 cars in the progression. When the vehicle parked at the cemetery, the pallbearers carried the flag-draped casket to the gravesite. They placed it gently on the lowering device. Two soldiers removed the flag and neatly folded it. Afterward, a soldier presented the flag to Mrs. Newman. The Rabbi recited more prayers, and then a soldier played taps as the casket went into the gravesite.

A hidden uninvited guest was also observing the funeral. He was unable to stand on holy ground. He had to hover over it, even though he was in another plane of existence. "This one died of natural causes, and he was too late to take his soul," the guest thought. He had to be patient and take the others later in time. He couldn't do it now, because there was too many of them on this holy site. He would have to wait, but not for very much longer.

After the services were over, Mrs. Newman thanked everyone for coming. Afterward, she was helped back to the limo by her daughter. David and his family walked back to their car and climbed into the vehicle. "I can't believe he is gone." "He was so helpful to our family," Julie said. "Yes, he was, and I will miss our talks we had over the years," David said. "I still don't understand why he refused to use the Neurogen on himself?" "He knew his heart was giving out, and still, he didn't use the life-saving drug," David said. "But remember David, when you questioned him about it." "He told you he had a long and productive life, and he was very concerned about becoming immortal." "He didn't want to outlive his wife," Julie said.

"Unfortunately, our family has to face the possibility of becoming immortals," David said. "We don't know if that is even a possibility."

"But if it means spending hundreds of years with you and Michael. It does sound appealing," Julie said. "That is if we survive Michael's teen years," Julie added. "Very funny, mom," Michael said. "I don't know about the rest of you, but I am hungry," David said. "Me too," Michael agreed. "I don't how the two of you can think about food after attending a funeral?" Julie questioned. "Because we are boys, and we are always hungry," David said. "Figures," Julie said.

Ten minutes later, David pulled into the pizza restaurant parking lot.

"We are here," David announced. Once the car was parked, Julie turned in her passenger seat and nudged Michael, who was sitting in the back.

Michael looked up from his phone after pausing his game. "What?"

Michael asked. "We are at the pizza place," Julie said. "Okay," Michael replied, and then he followed his parents into the restaurant.

Once inside, David commented on how the place seemed packed with people. "This place appears busy; I'll order while both of you find a table." "Tell me what you want," David said. "I want the Hawaiian pizza," Julie said. "Pepperoni and mushrooms for me." "And dad, can you get me some game tokens?" Michael asked and then smiled.

"Okay, I'll order the personal pizzas for everyone, and I'll get game tokens for Michael," David said.

David stood in the long line, while his wife and son searched for a table. They finally found an empty table that was still dirty. Julie had Michael sit at the table while she looked for napkins to wipe down the surface. She found some and returned to clean the table. When David returned with the plastic number to set on the table, he told them, "the pizza should be ready in 15 minutes." "Did you get the tokens?" Michael asked. "Yes," David said as he handed the game tokens to his son. Michael gleefully got up and said, "thanks." Then he headed towards the arcade. Julie called out to him and said, "when the pizza comes, you'll have to stop playing." "Okay, mom," Michael said.

Once Michael was out of earshot, Julie's conversation with her husband changed to a more serious tone. "I wish Michael would give up on this relationship with Francine." "It is not a normal and healthy relationship," Julie said. "I wouldn't be too worried about it." "She is harmless," David said. "Maybe." "I just want what's best for him." "I would be happier if he found a girlfriend at his school, instead of her," Julie said. "I know what you mean, but I think this is nothing more than an unusual teen phase for him." "He will grow out of his infatuation for her when he ages, and she doesn't," David said. "This isn't some sort of normal teenager phase, David." "This girl is dead, and she's been dead

for quite a while." "He needs to find someone in the real world to talk to instead of her," Julie said. "Shh, Michael is coming back," David said. "Dad, do you have any more tokens?" Michael asked. "Nope, but here's a couple of bucks to get some more," David said as he pulled out his wallet and handed his son some money.

Once Michael was gone, the couple began talking again. "I can't believe Dr. Newman is gone," David said, trying to change the subject. "I knew his heart was bad." "But I didn't expect him to go this quickly," David said. "Yeah, me too," Julie said. "He gave us good insight on how you and Michael received your powers," David said. "It made sense that Michael received it from your genes, but me getting some psychic abilities from a baby while I was pregnant was unexpected," Julie said.

"Remember how Dr. Newman explained it to us, after the mall incident. He said while I was pregnant with Michael, he receives nourishment and oxygen from my blood." "But when his blood recirculated back to me, he gave me the gift of Neurogen that he was producing," Julie said. "That purse snatcher probably thought you were an easy mark. "A mother all alone pushing a baby stroller," David said. "It was so weird when it happened." "At first, I was in panic mode."

"My only thought was, how am I going to protect my baby from that creep?" Julie said. "Even though I have trained in kickboxing, this was real life, and I forgot my training." "I just wanted him to go away," Julie added.

"I bet you shocked the shit out of him when you shoved the man away without touching him," David said. "He did have a surprised look on his face, after being slammed into a car," Julie said. "At first, I thought it was Michael." "But he was just a baby, and how could he possibly know that we were in danger?" Julie said. "It certainly was a mystery until Dr. Newman explained his theory." He had us go through all those tests to prove if he was right or wrong. "He found out he was right," David said. "That's when he sent me to Dr. Tekien to see if I had any telekinetic abilities." "I thought he was crazy sending me there," Julie said. "But the doctor was right again." "After Dr. Tekien's thorough examination, I was blown away by the results," Julie said. "It did prepare us for the future, and that was a good thing too" David said as he glanced at his son. "Yes, especially when Michael was going through the terrible twos and threes," Julie said. "We couldn't go anywhere." He was moving things around with his mind all the time," Julie added. "I remember," David said.

I am grateful that Dr. Tekien was able to teach him how to control his impulses," Julie said. "True, we certainly do not want the public or even worse the government to know about our son," David said. She did warn us to keep everything under wraps, for Michael safety," he added. "I still can't get over the idea that you and Michael had developed some new glands which produce Neurogen, and I haven't," Julie said. "Now, with Dr. Newman's passing, we only have Dr. Tekien." "She is the only one we can trust to guide us while Michael grows up," Julie said. "I'm sure when we see her, she will be ordering the usual scans to see was going on in our brains," Julie added.

"Who gets the Hawaiian pizza?" The server asked as she stood by the table with the pizza in her hand. "That would be me," Julie said. The server placed the pizza in front of Julie. "I'll be back shortly with the rest of the orders," the server told them before leaving the table. "You better go find Michael and tell them lunch is ready," Julie said. "Okay, I see him at the arcade," David said as he got up to retrieve his son.