

Family Ties



Stacey Thompson-Geer

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Written by Stacey Thompson-Geer

A YA Nibble from Wild Horse Press



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Cover by KitCat Designs

Wild Horse Press
P.O. Box 341642
Bartlett, TN 38184

www.the-wild-horse-press.com

The dream was always the same, a happy family with no problems or concerns, just happiness. We have the perfect home with the white picket fence and dog running in the yard. The best part is how my Dad is there smiling at me, the perfect life for a child.

But then I have to wake up.

* * *

I opened my eyes and looked around the room. The sun was just rising and I knew I'd have to get ready. I groaned and rolled over. *I don't want to go to a new school again.* We moved around a lot over the years. It just seemed odd things kept following us when we got settled. She had hoped Wyoming would be good for us considering how many people didn't live here.

I sat up, rubbed my face and slipped on my slippers. There were still boxes stacked up in my room and down the hallway. I had to watch my step closely so I wouldn't fall on my face. My Mom was off the hallway in her room snoring loudly. I snickered and went to the bathroom to wash my face. This was not going to be my day.

* * *

"Are you sure you want to do this school thing? We could just homeschool." My Mom dug her hands into the steering wheel as we pulled up to the school. She was dressed in sweat pants and her dark hair was tied up in a ponytail.

"I'll be fine," I said reaching for the door.

She grabbed my arm before I could step out of the car. "You remember what to do if anything seems off, right?"

I hated remembering this part of my life, but knew it was a part of it. "I know. 911 to your phone and we're out of here."

She nodded and smiled as she let go of my arm. This was the part I didn't care to relive every time we moved, but with a new school was a new life, I hoped.

My feet scuffed along the white tile flooring and my hands found the straps to my old trusty backpack. It was something I did when I was nervous and today, I was completely nervous.

The bell rang and kids started scrambling around me. I kept my head down and didn't pay attention to anyone. That was what I'd learned over the years. But somehow I couldn't help but look at him.

He was walking my way in the hallway and everyone seemed to give him room. His sandy brown hair fell forward into his face, making him look all that much more tempting. He smiled and I wanted to walk up to him and start a conversation. *Yeah, that wouldn't make me look crazy. The new girl walking up to the hottest guy in school and just talking.*

I couldn't pull my eyes away from him even as he walked up beside me. He glanced at me and then opened the locker next to mine. I felt a flush of heat with this guy being so close. I managed to tear my eyes away and dig through my locker for something I didn't need.

"Hi, I'm Jamie. Your new here right?" He shut his locker as he spoke and leaned against it, holding his books to his chest.

"Yeah, I just moved." I didn't know what to tell him. The truth was enough to make anybody run away calling me crazy.

"Great. Well, I guess I'll see you around." He smiled and headed down the hall. I smiled to myself and closed my locker. Maybe this school wasn't going to be so bad.

* * *

The walk home was uneventful. I watched the cars pass me on the road. None of them had anyone I recognized inside. My mind wondered to Jamie. He was one of the only people that had really talked to me today and he was hot. I smiled at the thought. There had never been time for real boyfriends, but maybe now I could think about it. *There's no way he's going to ever want to go out with me.*

"Hope, are you alright?" My Mom broke me out of my thoughts at the door to our beat up rental. "You didn't have any problems, did you?"

"No, Mom. It was one of the best first days I've had in a while." I couldn't help but smile. Jamie's face came dancing into my head.

She watched me cautiously as I made my way past her and up the stairs. "I'll have to go to the library tonight." I stopped near the top of the steps. "The English class is a little further along than my old one."

"I'll make a late dinner so you can get there and back before." She smiled and I cocked my head at her. She hadn't smiled since my Dad had been killed, so it was nice to see. "Do you want me to drive you?"

"No, I like to walk. I'll be careful." I finished climbing the stairs and dropped my books on the floor by my bed. I only needed a notebook and my English books to do what I needed, so it wouldn't take me long.

I opened my closet door and dug into a box on the floor. There at the bottom was a small wrapped up hunting knife. It had been a long time since I'd carried it, but something told me I should take it with me. My hands ran over the old blade, my father's essence still seemed to be with it. I shoved it into my pocket and picked up my books.

The sun was setting off in the distance as I walked. The library wasn't far and I really didn't want to study, but my mother had made

a big deal out of my studies. She thought the smarter I was, the easier this normal life would be for me.

The library was quiet and very few people were there. I smirked at the bareness of the building, but figured I could get more done with all the quiet I had. There were so many books on the shelves, I almost wanted to just grab a ton of them and read; forgetting about everything just seemed appealing to me.

“Hi, it’s Hope, right?” I heard behind me. My breath caught as I figured out who it was, Jamie.

“Yeah. How did you know my name?” I turned as I choked out my words.

“Everyone’s talking about you,” He said smiling. I must have looked horrified. “Don’t worry it’s not anything bad.” He looked down to my books before he spoke. “Are you having trouble with English?”

I swallowed hard before I spoke. “Not really. I just need to catch up on my reading.” I smiled even though I was fighting the weird nervous feeling in my stomach. I pulled my gaze away from his bright green eyes and started towards a small table. My foot caught on a tear in the rug and I started sailing towards the floor. *This is going to hurt and make me look so stupid.* I thought before closing my eyes and bracing myself for a hard fall. The thing was I didn’t hit the ground. I opened my eyes to Jamie holding me up and watching me. I was so close I could hear his heart beating and feel him breathing.

“Are you alright? That looked like it could have hurt,” He almost whispered. I stood there with his arms around me afraid to move.

“Yeah, thanks for helping me.” I pulled away clearing my throat with embarrassment. “I think I should go.”

“I’ll walk you home.” He grabbed his bag from the floor as he spoke. Before I could say anything, he had hold of my arm and was

toting me out of the building.

The sun had gone down by now and the streets were slick with light rain. Jamie was walking beside me without worry and I kept pulling on my fingers, a nervous reaction I seemed to have around him.

"I just live a couple houses down from you. I watched you and your Mom move in." He hesitated as though he wanted to tell me something important, but couldn't.

"That doesn't make me uneasy at all," I said sarcastically. He smiled and pulled his hair from his face. I felt a breeze come up suddenly and stopped. Something just wasn't right.

Not here. I can't do this here. I held my breath as the ground cracked and shook. The sound was almost overwhelming until the demon stood in front of us.

"It's been a long time, Hope." It smiled as though it knew it was not supposed to be here. "How's your Dad? Oh wait, he's dead. I should know that."

"Considering you killed him," I snapped catching Jamie eyeing me from the corner of my vision. "What do you want?"

"To talk." He cocked his head at Jamie. "First let's get rid of your friend." He flicked his hand at Jamie sending him flying backward out of sight. "That's better. Now we can talk." I searched in my pocket for the knife my father had given me before his last trip. "Come on, do you really think something like that is going to stop me?"

"It's worth a try." I held it tight to me, ready for a fight. He rolled his eyes and slinked towards me. I watched him carefully, his red hair stuck tightly to his face. He didn't lose his smile even when he was two feet from me.

"I can't have you going around following in your Dad's footsteps. We don't need any more demon hunters chasing us down." He crossed his arms and put a finger to his chin. "That

means we got two choices. You can tell me about your Dad and all his friends or I can just kill you now and be done with it.”

“Go to hell.” I held the knife tight, hoping some miracle would save me. I didn’t want to die, but I was tired of running. Then something happened I never expected.

* * *

I felt my body hit the ground hard as something pushed me out of the way. When I could get my eyes to adjust, I saw what had knocked me down.

It was a werewolf.

I picked myself up and watched the creature as it tore at the demon that was just standing in front of me. The knife still in my hand, I eyed it until it turned to face me. The front leg was bleeding from the demon’s grip. The wolf had brilliant green eyes that watched me. I held up the knife as a warning.

The wolf stood there for a minute until the air seemed to get sucked away. I tried not to close my eyes, but I couldn’t help it. I felt the hair stand up on my arms and then fall. My eyes fluttered open to Jamie standing where the wolf had been. He was reaching for his clothes and I turned my back to him.

My first instinct was to kill him, but he had just saved my life. I pulled the knife to my chest and tried to catch my breath.

“Are you all right?” He called over my shoulder.

“You do know what I am, right?” I answered without turning around.

“Yeah, I knew it the first time I saw you.” He stopped for a second. “You’re a demon hunter.”

“I’m not, not really, but my Dad was.” I turned slowly to face Jamie. “They just figure I’m good at finding out where they all are.”

“I’m sorry about your Dad.” He stood there shirtless talking to

me. I didn't know what to do. Part of me knew he was not a natural being, but the other part really liked what it saw. "You're not going to tell anyone are you?"

"You've killed people." I keep my gaze focused on his eyes. He broke it and looked to the wet concrete.

"A long time ago. I'm not the kind of werewolf your Dad hunted. I'm kind of a mutation." He didn't look at me, but I waited. "I was born this way, not made."

He risked a glance my way. I just watched him. "I'll keep your secret, for now."

"And I'll keep yours, for now. But we have to figure out how to keep this guy away from you." He turned back to where the demon had been laying, but was now gone.

"I can't tell my Mom. She'll just take me back to Georgia." I didn't want to go back to the south. There were just too many demon hunters down there and the last thing I wanted was to be stuck back in the middle of it. "Does anyone else know about this?"

"Just my Mom. My Dad was a changed werewolf. He couldn't control it." He seemed so sad and, for a Moment, my heart broke for him.

"But you can?" I wanted to be sure letting him go wouldn't bite me in the ass later.

"Till the full moon. Then it gets... tricky." He pulled his shirt over his head and I turned away. He grabbed my arm and pulled me back to face him. "I'm glad you know you decided not to take me out."

"Who said I decided anything," I said with a half-smile. "Now I have to get home. I'll see you tomorrow at school."

* * *

The next day at school was crazy hard. I had all this work to

catch up on while I thought about the werewolf that was rummaging around in the locker next to mine. I wondered why I'd let him off the hook and still was drawn to him.

"What are you thinking about?" he asked, noticing I was watching him.

"You and I don't know why," I admitted slamming my locker door.

"Why don't you come by my house after school? I'll explain everything and then if you still want to kill me, I won't fight you." He smirked as he spoke. "Course that doesn't help with your little problem."

"I can handle a demon," I snapped.

"Not without help. Just come by my house after school." He handed me a piece of paper. "The address is on there and we can talk about your problem."

I snatched the paper from his hand and made a face. "Fine, but I doubt you can tell me anything I don't already know."

"You might be surprised." He brushed past me to his next class. What could he possibly tell me that I didn't already know? Sure, I hadn't learned as much as my Dad in all his years, but I knew how to handle myself for the most part. One thing I knew for sure was that my Mom was not going to know any of what was going on unless she had to. She'd already lost her husband; she wasn't going to lose her daughter too.

I pulled out the paper Jamie had given me earlier and looked at the address. It wasn't far from my own home and was easy to find after school. I wondered if he would be waiting for me there or if I would end up crashing in before he even got there.

"I'm glad you came by. Come on in." Jamie was sitting on his porch waiting for me. "My Mom is still at work so we have the place to ourselves." He opened the door for me and followed me into the living room.

The house was an old style place with hardwood floors and old draped windows. There was an antique couch against the far wall and a wood table in front of it.

“You can sit here.” He waved at the couch and I sat down as he asked.

“What is this werewolf thing all about for you?” I asked taking a breath. I ran my hand over my pocket so I would know where my father’s knife was hiding. I didn’t know if I should trust him or not, but I really wanted too.

He sat down beside me and faced me. I was stuck on his eyes. They were so beautiful and I wondered if every werewolf had these eyes or if it was just him.

“My Dad was a werewolf, the traditional kind that can’t control when it happens or what happens when they shift. Him and my Mom fell in love and got married. I don’t know if my Mom knew what he was until later, but she loved him.” He rubbed his hands together. “I don’t tell a lot of people about this thing, but you’re different.”

“Why because I know you’re real?”

“No, because you fight what’s inside you too.” He got a little closer as he spoke. “You have a strength you deny, but you could be great.”

“I’m not going to do that to my mother. She can’t lose me too,” I said holding his gaze. He was so close I could feel his breath. It was hot and inviting. I lost all thoughts with him this close. All I could think about was him, and how much I really did want to be around him.

“You have to live your own life,” he almost whispered to me.

“I have to get rid of this demon I have on my ass,” I said pushing him back even though I didn’t want too.

“Right, the demon.” He looked down at my hand and placed his on top. “I don’t know how to kill a demon, but I might be able

to get something that will hide you from most of them. We have trouble with them too. They want to control some of the werewolf population. There was talk about a necklace that would hide the wearer from demons.” I looked at him and cocked my head. “What?”

“I’m sorry I didn’t take the time to really see you. Maybe you’re not so bad.” I smiled and waited, but he didn’t say anything. He just sat back down beside me. I didn’t know what was going to happen next, and I didn’t care.

He pulled a strand of hair from my face and looked into my eyes. We heard a car pull up and he pulled himself back from me. His Mom came rushing into the room and stopped dead when she saw me.

“What’s this about?” she asked looking from Jamie to me.

“This is Hope. She’s a friend.” He stood up and smiled at his mother, who eyed him. “I guess we’re done talking anyway.” He looked at me before he spoke. “I’ll walk you out.”

I made my way past his Mom and outside where he turned back to me. “I’ll find the necklace we talked about to hide you from the demon. Do you think you can stay out of trouble until then?” he teased.

“I can try,” I teased back. He acted as though there was more he wanted to tell me, but he just smiled and watched me walk away.

* * *

I got up for school the next day only thinking about Jamie. The fact that a demon had tried to kill me not two days before didn’t even seem to bother me now. What was happening to me? Jamie came up behind me and put his arm on my shoulder while I was walking to school. It made me jump slightly until I realized who it was and what he was doing.

I glanced up to look at him and realized I was smiling. “I thought you might like to walk to school with me.” He looked great and I knew everyone in school would be looking at us.

“You know everyone is going to wonder what in the world you’re doing?” I said slowing down. “I really can’t handle being the center of attention.” When you were a demon hunter’s kid, you learned how not to be in the spotlight.

“Trust me. You’ll be fine.” He pulled my arm, dragging me behind him. It was nice walking with him and knowing he was on my side. A freak like me. It made everything else seem so minor and that I could handle it all.

The school was busy as always, but someone caught my eye walking down the hallway. He was different and he was dangerous. He smiled at me and stopped to wave. Both Jamie and I knew what he was, the same demon from last night.

I turned away from him and put my book in my locker, hands shaking. Now I had two to deal with. Jamie grabbed my hand and pulled me to him. He was going to let the demon know he had more to deal with than a human girl.

The demon just laughed and continued down the hallway. He turned and went into my English class. This was one place Jamie couldn’t follow and I would have to deal with it on my own.

I found my seat easily and sat down for class, aware that the demon was watching me. I risked a glance and it smiled at me. Seeing an empty chair to my left it jumped at the chance to sit next to me. I glared at him and he just smiled all the more.

“Hello, Hope,” it hissed in my ear. “I’ve been looking for you for a long time.”

“You and every other one of your kind. Why don’t you just give it up?” I played with a pencil as I spoke. “I don’t know anything about what my Dad did. I’m a nobody.”

He wasn’t buying it. “Have you had others track you here?” He

cocked his head as he spoke. "I wouldn't worry about them. I'm going to be the one to take you, not them. This I guarantee."

I didn't say anything more, but pretended to listen to what the teacher was saying. There was no way a demon pretending to be a teenage boy was going to take me anywhere. I just hoped Jamie could find the necklace he had heard about. Then I'd just need to kill this jerk and his friend and get on with my life.

Jamie was waiting for me at my locker when I got out of English. He had concern written all over his face.

"What happened?" He watched the door for the demon as he spoke.

"He said the same crap all demons do, trying to scare me." I didn't look at him. "It didn't work."

"We have to find that necklace." He looked at me now as he talked. "I'll ask around tonight. I'm sure someone in the werewolf community knows about it."

"There's more here than just you?" I was surprised there were actually werewolf communities and that we had never heard of them.

"Of course, but do you think I'm going to tell one of you about it."

"Right, I get it." I made a face but accepted it. I knew deep down there were other beings out there. Some of them we hunted, some we just didn't know about. I didn't know if I was ever going to go out and actually hunt these things, but it was good to know about them.

"Can I come by later?" he asked like a gentleman.

"Of course you can." I smiled and walked out the doors. I had to get some research done if I was going to take out these demons and keep my feet planted in this Wyoming town.

* * *

My computer was one of my favorite things. It helped with research like this and my Dad had given it to me. One of the last things he had given to me. I punched in the password for the computer and started searching for ways to kill a demon online. There was a ton of lore, but nothing that made sense or that was really a good solution for my problem.

I was ready to turn it off when I noticed something I'd not seen before. It was an icon of the family crest. I clicked on it and a password box popped up. I stared at the screen for a moment. The only thing I could think of was my name. I typed the letters in slowly and the program opened up.

It was a complete layout of my family and of me. It also had detailed files on how to kill or trap certain beings. I scanned the page until I saw what I'd been looking for, demons. There were a lot of things my family had tried over the years to kill them, but only one thing worked, the knife my father had given to me the night he had died.

I had the weapon I needed to kill them. Now I just had to find the demons that had wandered into this town before more showed up.

I hadn't heard Jamie come into the room until he cleared his throat. I turned to him and smiled. "I know how to take them out."

"Good because this necklace seems to have disappeared. If you can get them gone now, then no one will know where you are and come here to kill you." He seemed concerned. I liked that part of him, even if he was a werewolf. "So now what do we do?"

"We have to put ourselves out for them to find that way it will be easier to kill them." I put the knife in my pocket and made my way past him. He caught my arm and held me back a minute.

"You know, we may not get this done. They may kill both of us." He was concerned for me and it made my heart jump.

"I know, but I have to try."

* * *

We walked the same street we had the last time the demon had made an appearance, hoping it would show its face again. I felt safe and strong with Jamie there and knew I could do this with him by my side. Then it happened, the air shifted and the demon from school appeared in front of us. He glared at me, then at Jamie.

“What did you bring him for? Afraid of being alone?” He snarled with a snobby grin on his face.

“Not exactly. Let’s just finish this.” I pulled the knife from my pocket, watching the demon eye it.

“What are you going to do, cut me up? That’s a pretty messy job, you know.” He smirked and started making his way closer, but he stopped suddenly only a couple of feet from Jamie and I. “What’s this, a werewolf. Seems I get a two for one deal.”

He held out his arm and threw Jamie back against a tree. Then he focused on me. I thrust the knife at his chest, but he blocked it and knocked me to the ground. I punched his knee bringing him down to my level. He reached for my throat and I knocked his arm back. My hand was searching for the knife when he grabbed my hair and pulled me to my feet.

I heard my heart beating loudly in my ears as he pulled me to him. “I’m sorry it has to end like this, but you, your family are just too good at what they do.” I punched at him, but he just laughed.

I looked passed him and could see the wolf running at us. I pushed hard at the demon as it tore him to the ground. My hand found the knife and the wolf pulled back just long enough for me to stab the demon in the chest.

He grimaced and reached down to the knife, trying to pull it out. He started to melt into a black puddle in front of me bubbling and smoking as he died. I watched it for a moment before I stood

and looked for Jamie.

Not far from the puddle of ooze was Jamie laying naked on the ground. He had streaks of blood from where the demon had torn at him, but he was alive. He got up slowly and put his clothing back on before turning back to me.

“It’s dead, right?” he asked limping slightly as he walked.

“Yeah, I think it’s dead.”

* * *

School was entirely too normal the next day. Everyone was rushing past me to get to their classes. I seemed to be in a daze as I went through the day, but when Jamie put his arm around me, I knew this was where I needed to be.

I may be a demon hunter’s daughter, but I didn’t have to be one yet. I could have that normal piece of life I always wanted, but soon the demons would have to run. It wasn’t just going to be a demon hunter on their ass, but a werewolf too.