

## HARRY'S SECRET

Harry Clearwater, father to Seth and Leah and close friend to Charlie, did not die of natural causes—a heart attack—as the coroner said. Well, no, that's not entirely true. He did die of a heart attack, but there was nothing natural about it.

It began the day when Bella ran into Laurent in our meadow. That was during our six months of mutual misery, when I almost killed us both while trying to “save Bella's soul.” But as she said to Aro about me when we were in Italy...I knew nothing about her soul. Not really.

Bella had gone to the meadow trying to find some way to reconnect with her memories of me. She'd intended to go there with Jacob, but Jacob had abandoned her too when he was conscripted into Sam's wolf pack. So Bella was wandering around in the woods, lost, when she happened upon the meadow, and then happened upon Laurent—the Vampire Laurent, friend of Victoria, former member of James' coven.

It was just another ho-hum day when Bella almost lost her life because I was not there to protect her, one of many, apparently. As it turned out, Jacob was there to save the day...again. Never mind that Bella didn't know it was him inside the heavy, red-brown fur and behind the piercing brown eyes. Though that part of the forest was not strictly within their territory, with the Cullens gone, the wolves had expanded their patrols to neighboring land. Therefore, they were nearby, and when Bella became in imminent danger of death-by-bloodsucker, the cavalry appeared. As Bella ran for her life, not entirely sure what she was running from, the wolves dispatched the Vampire Laurent...much to his surprise...and then disappeared into the woods from whence they came.

Bella hurried through the woods toward her truck as fast as she could go, which was quite slow, to be honest, as she got flustered and

turned around several times and tripped over her feet several more times. But when Bella finally got back to her father's house, Harry Clearwater was there visiting with Charlie in the kitchen.



Bella had run into the house distraught and terrified, not just by Laurent, but also by the sudden appearance of five, horse-sized wolves in the woods. These must be the "bears" that outdoorsmen at Newton's sporting goods store had been talking about, the ones whom everybody believed were

killing hikers. Of course, Charlie had commanded Bella to stay out of the woods, but in her pain of losing Jacob and myself at the same time, she couldn't help herself.

With Bella's eye-witness report, Chief of Police Charlie Swan began to deputize local citizens to begin tracking and eliminating the killer wolves (nee bears). Harry was in an exceedingly awkward position, though. As an elder of the Quileute tribe, he knew what was going on in the woods, and it wasn't the wolves who were attacking humans. The wolves were there to kill the vampires who were attacking the hikers.

Under pressure to participate in the community effort, Harry joined the expeditions, but served mostly as an informant for the werewolves, so they could be elsewhere on those days the posse was hunting in the forest.

Harry wasn't an old man by any means, somewhere in his 50s, but he had had some trouble with his heart. He was another casualty of "assimilation fever," caught by Native Americans who

*switch from their hereditary diet (mostly salmon in his case—ironically, the fish that's good for the heart) to the more mainstream American diet of burgers, fries, and Coca-Cola.*

*Though Harry carried the werewolf gene, it never “kicked in” for him or Billy Black or Joshua Uley, nor for their fathers, because the Cullens had left the area and relocated elsewhere for three generations. Only now were we back in the land of the Quileute tribe, reactivating the gene...though we didn't know that until Bella told us.*

*Several months later after someone reported another wolf sighting, Harry played his usual role among the posse—leading the group in the wrong direction and covering up any wolf tracks he came across. Unfortunately, he could not communicate through the pack mind as the current generation did. He was limited to informing the wheelchair-bound Billy Black what was going on so that Billy could warn the pack to get out of the area where the hunters would be. Which they did...get out, I mean.*

*That strategy became a big problem, though, when Victoria made a foray into the territory, possibly looking for Laurent who hadn't returned from his trip to Forks. When she arrived, she was surprised to find no impediments to tracking my love, Bella. The Cullens were no longer protecting their human “pet.” She didn't know that we had abandoned Forks and left no forwarding address.*

*So as Victoria trailed the posse, wondering what they were hunting for (could they be chasing Laurent?), she was spotted high in the trees by an overweight native man huffing and puffing his way through the woods. Allowing humans to see us when we're not behaving as humans is strictly forbidden. Even Victoria, the nomad, knew that. Usually, it was simple for her to dart away quickly and leave the human wondering whether she had been something real flitting about in the trees, or just the product of an overactive*

imagination. When they didn't see her again, humans always assumed they had imagined her supernatural, red-haired self.

But not Harry. Victoria was surprised that Harry seemed to know immediately that she was real and perhaps even what she was. Not only did his eyes find her repeatedly after she made a few swift movements, but he scanned upward for her—into the trees—rather than on the ground like other humans.

No doubt Victoria targeted Harry for her supper then, since he was surprisingly cognizant of her presence, and because...well...why not? Harry would have known what was coming and perhaps even tried to get away, since he knew the wolf pack would not be in the area to protect him.

Knowing Victoria, she probably hid as best she could and attacked Harry when he lost sight of her. She was unable to get her teeth fully into his neck, though, before being interrupted by more hunters coming along the path. Instead of carrying Harry off or staying to feast and making her presence obvious, she chose to run away, as was her habit.

When Mike Samson and Del Mayfield came upon him, Harry was barely conscious, holding his chest and gasping for breath. I saw it in the pack mind later...much later...that his last words were reportedly "Get away!" The two hunters thought he was delirious, telling them to get away when he clearly needed emergency care. They didn't realize that Harry was afraid for **their** lives. They stayed, though, got on their cell phones and called everybody they could think of. By the time the local ambulance found the logging road where they'd parked and four or five men had carried Harry out of the woods, he was already gone.

Harry's autopsy showed that his coronary artery was 75% blocked, but the tribal elders took the autopsy results of "heart attack, natural causes" with a grain of salt because of another small detail

on the report. Harry had been found with two recent scratch marks on the side of his neck. He had other scratches on his body, as one commonly gets when walking through dense woods, so the coroner made no comment about those two in particular.

Sam guessed what had happened. The red-haired vampire had been hanging around lately looking for something and making forays onto the reservation and in the general area. They'd tried to catch her, but she was a genius at getting away at the very last second. Victoria's visits became more frequent after Harry died, so Sam put two-and-two together and realized that Harry had died of fright at a real vampire sighting. If Del and Mike had come along just a few minutes later, Harry would be a vampire now. Or maybe not...there seems to be some belief in the tribe that vampire venom is deadly poison to Quileutes with the wolf gene. We have not tested that theory, of course.

Victoria—I'm so glad she's dead. And I'm proud to be the one to say I killed her (with help from Seth). Come to think of it, I'll bet Bella doesn't even know how Harry really died. Right after that, Bella ran off to Italy to find the wayward me.

## Edward



### Harry Clearwater's Fish Fry

3 1/2 cups corn meal	1 tablespoon black pepper
1/2 cup flour	1 tablespoon onion powder
2 1/2 tablespoons paprika	1 tablespoon cayenne pepper
2 tablespoons salt	1 tablespoon dried leaf oregano
2 tablespoons garlic powder	1 tablespoon dried thyme

Combine all ingredients thoroughly and store in an airtight jar or container.

To use: Soak 2 pounds of fish of your choice in 2 cups buttermilk. Remove the fish from the buttermilk, removing any excess. Dredge each fish in the cornmeal mixture, coating each side completely. Lay the fish in the hot oil and fry until golden brown, about 7 minutes. Remove from the oil and drain on a paper-lined plate.