

The Hunter

Standing, I survey the clearing, my eyes locking on the bulky frame of a man sitting on a tree branch. He looks peaceful and has no idea that I am even here. To my left a flock of birds take to the skies as if they can feel the immediate danger. His head snaps up and scans the treeline, catching the slightest glimpse of me but before he has time to process it, I am gone. I can hear his heartbeat pick up, and breathing become harder. He stands up, getting ready to leave but before he can snarling, I step into the light, revealing my devilish body. Eyes that were at once full of light, were now emotionless. A nose that may have once held form, now crooked and broken. Yellow fangs protruding from my cracked and chewed lip; one full and one broken. Long, dreadlocked hair framed my grotesque features.

Timidly, my prey turned around, and I could smell his fear, it was almost palpable. He looked on in fear as he saw my bones break and unbreak to become the form of something unknown, something that held power and horror, something that held the feeling of sudden demise. Realising the danger, he bolted into the thicket.

Sharp thorns and serrated branches lashed out; the victims shrieks pierced the atmosphere sending shivers down my spine at the thought of a hunt and my senses went haywire at the prospect. Uncertainty mixed with fear permeated from every cell of his ripped and torn body. The shrieks grew ever closer.

And closer.

And closer still.

So, close that I could smell his ever-increasing terror. So close that with every inhalation I could smell more and more of his dread.

My goliath like paw reached forward and claimed his shoulder. My claws pierced his flesh one by one and one by one, he shrieked in agony as they made their mark. He swung back and shot at me. I released my grip and faltered in my steps surprised that the bullet had pierced my flesh. Meaning only one thing, it was silver. When he turned around, I caught a glimpse of his true form and couldn't help the gasp that escaped my muzzle. This was no ordinary person. And at that moment we both knew that the roles had turned, and I was now the prey. Scrambling I turned around and headed into the opposite direction, running for my life. Another shot rang out and pain erupted through my right leg. I stumbled but this was nothing compared with the red-hot agony where the debilitating silver bullet was slowly drawing the life out of me. Limping away, I found shelter within an old rotted tree trunk that reeked enough to mask my scent. As I watched the man move past me, I felt relieved and let darkness wash over me.

But little did I know that the day's events had only just begun...