Most men would have seized the occasion to have some free kill. But not Fenrir. Killing dragons. Or letting them live. Same difference. They didn’t really matter. Nothing ever really mattered.

However, Fenrir knew his presence here was not due to the choice of a young shifter for the accomplishment of his first great deed. Nothing mattered, but everything had a reason. He knew that high instances were trying to test him. And this was a game he wasn’t willing to play.

Of course, he wouldn’t do anything against their will. But he didn’t have to do more. Besides, just walking there was enough to make these puny reptiles run away. Nothing could force him to kill, or to do anything by the way. As long as they didn’t get an excuse… they couldn’t blame him. That was as simple. Follow the rules, and nothing more.

He didn’t expect any fun from this stroll. But anywhere out of the cities was always a preferred place, despite what he openly pretended. People were predictable in that. If they didn’t like you, they’ll probably give you the tasks they assume you hate.

However, it seemed that this time, there would be something worthy of the sight…

From what he saw with his left eye, he was about to look behind. And indeed, soon after, a clinging sound caught his attention as an object was thrown on the ground alone. A sword? What was this stupid kid doing? Was he trying to prove something by killing a dragon bare handed? From there, Fenrir couldn’t see anything. He was probably hidden by the huge rocks.

More off-putting, even his left eye didn’t show him emerging victorious and proud of his kill. He waited, patiently. What took him so long? It wasn’t like these reptiles offered much of a fight.

The hooded man lifted the chin with interest when his future sight showed a vision of Gellen rolling on the ground, leaving a trail of blood on his way. Although he knew his left eye never missed, Fenrir had hard time believing in that. And yet, only seconds after, his regular sight displayed the same scene, completed with the sounds.

Maybe his visit wouldn’t be so boring, all things considered. It was told to be almost impossible to get hurt on this ground. For the record, it hadn’t even happened once in two hundred years! And the guy who set that record was a clumsy idiot who tripped over his own clothes to hit his head against a rock! What could have done such thing? A renegade dragon? Could such thing even exist?

Maybe the answer would show up soon. His left eye showed a focus on the rocks where the shifter had been thrown from. And moving slowly, like it followed something, but the core of the sight was empty! Following his vision, Fenrir looked at the same spot as, this time, a human being emerged. Why?

He did look strange, and he had no scars on his exposed skin! Most creepy of all, he smiled like a dement. It even gave Fenrir some chills in the back when the figure looked at him, his mad smile spreading.

“Oh boy…. That must be Christmas…” the man laughed darkly, pointing a finger at him. “Stay there, big guy, I’m all yours once I’m done with your rude friend here.”

Friend? Gellen was no friend. He didn’t even remotely like him. But just out of curiosity, Fenrir began to wonder what this man was about to do. Why… Why his left eye… couldn’t see him? It was somehow exciting to not know.

“My nose! You broke my fucking nose, asshole!” the shifter screamed in pain and rage, holding his face with blood still flowing between his fingers.

“That’s what happens when you don’t listen to your superior, kid. But if it’s of any comfort, your face was already ugly anyway.” The mad man taunted the young shifter.

His reaction was so predictable. Shifters tended to think that any mistake could be fixed easily, resulting on arrogant and impulsive behaviors. As long as they didn’t realize that their abilities weren’t all powerful, they acted like they were masters of everything that breathed. Breaking their confidence was always so satisfying. And Gellen was kind of above the average in terms of dislikeable personality.

“I’m sick of everyone looking down on me!” the shifter grabbed the sword on the ground and got on his legs, screaming his anger. So noisy… So ineffective…

He rose his blade as to threaten the mad man, but Gellen might as well have tried to scare his own shadow. The opponent was not impressed, not for a second. The rage and impulsiveness of the young even seemed to amuse this scary figure.

“You should have listened to the other’s warning. I’m here to deliver the lesson that comes with it. Learn to recognize a danger when you see one, and do the wise thing.” The other mocked the kid.

And Gellen threw his attack without thinking. Lowering his blade, he looked so confident in that he would manage to slice his opponent. But the mad man stepped forward and stopped the hands of the shifter mid-air, blocking the strike. A squeeze was enough to make the shifter drop the weapon.

“This… wasn’t wise.” The unknown man grabbed the hands, dropping his weight backward.

Fenrir never saw such a move. The man attracted Gellen in his fall, and caught by the inertia, ended up rolling backward to end over the body of the shifter. With knees on the shoulders of his victim, the mad man threw a violent punch on the cheekbone of the imprudent, resulting in a loud groan of pain.

Fenrir had to admit… that he found this so satisfying… to see someone do what he didn’t dare to do. It was even a shame his left eye couldn’t allow him to see this twice. This mysterious intruder was like invisible to his future vision… Would it be a power he hadn’t heard of?

“You know what kid? I’m sure you weren’t told enough that you’re nothing exceptionnal. To me, you’re simply nothing.”

It was provocation. No, humiliation. The mad man clearly tried to hurt the ego of his victim, helpless under his weight. Probably the most brutal way Fenrir ever saw anyone break a shifter’s illusions. A first big defeat could sometimes make them question themselves, so they could improve. But Gellen, like the majority, rejected this feeling. Struggling hard but in vain, he rapidly came back to his last weapon, his words.

But insults and threats wouldn’t be of any help this time.

“Get off me, you crazy shit! I’m going to…Mph!” the shifter was muted when the man, displaying an insane smile, grabbed his mouth with a single hand to force him to silence.

It was hard to determine it from what he could see, but from the face of the shifter, there was no doubt some pressure was maintained too.

“Language, kid. I know the other warned you about it. Me? I am the one who does something about it.”

There was an audible, sinister crack. Even the few dragons brave enough to watch the scene at distance had a reaction of sheer horror. There was a scream mixed with gurgles of blood. With a dark laugh and a satisfied attitude, the mad man finally got off the agonizing shifter.

He had… broken the jaw of the daring young, bare handed. Although it was immensely difficult to watch, and despite a shared horror for such fate, Fenrir felt a strange feeling invading him. It was… so satisfying to see this stupid shifter reap what he had sown.

“Now let’s get back to you, big guy…” The figure said, speaking directly to Fenrir.

No time wasted in celebrating or bragging about his victory, as it seemed. The mad man looked insane, and visibly hoped to apply the same kind of horror to him next.

But what was to be expected with a shifter finally happened, saving Fenrir from the trouble to reply, let alone fighting.

The world seemed to wave around them for a brief moment. And the second after, the mad man was standing right where he was before the initial attack. However, he did seem confused with it. Had he never seen a shifter making use of his power? Only a kid would have been fooled by this trick, but it might just give Gellen a chance!

Taking the advantage of his opponent’s confusion, the shifter, also standing back where he was a moment ago, armed his strike. A different approach to avoid the defensive move of the insane man. Clever. And Fenrir would give him the best chances with a push to impale his opponent, like his movements suggested. His left eye was already seeing him with arms tensed forward. He still couldn’t see the figure of this mad man through this vision, but it probably meant that he didn’t manage to block the attack this time.

However, to Fenrir’s surprise, it didn’t happen like expected. The moves of the shifter were the same, but even in his confusion, the man instinctively stepped aside, just enough so the blade would slide between his arm and body. Gellen was in the same position as in the vision, but the other still had him at his mercy.

It was at this moment that the future sight showed another hard time for the young imprudent.

“Nice. You nearly got me with that trick. How does it work?”

There was no other answer than a furious groan from Gellen, who obviously tried with all his strength to pull away. A hard punch on the tensed elbow, and the groans turned into another scream of pain as a crack was heard. The unknown warrior grabbed the handle of the sword and, lifting his foot at nearly chest level, threw a violent kick that sent the shifter a few meters away.

Gellen almost inspired pity, with his arm hanging dead on his side. If Fenrir hadn’t witnessed by himself how the shifter deserved his treatment, it would have been the moment he would have stepped in. But Gellen didn’t matter anyway. He got what he asked for: no intervention from his supervisor. His left eye didn’t show it yet, but Fenrir didn’t have to see the future to know what was about to happen.

Impulsive, prone to anger, Gellen had provoked a dangerous guy for the last time. He had sealed his own fate. And while Fenrir thought nothing ever could interest him again, he began to feel impatient… He wanted to see that happen.

“Your jaw was rebuilt, but not your nose… This tells a lot.” The mad man laughed sadistically, approaching his victim with slow steps and a swing of his newly acquired sword. “Besides… I guess you can’t do this at will. Or else, you would have done it sooner… And you probably would do it again right now, am I right?”

The way he spoke and gestured told a lot too. One could have thought this man didn’t take this seriously, that it was like a show to him. A scene he played. Unless he just took a freakish pleasure in tormenting the shifter. He was scary. He was insane. And someone insane was unpredictable.

The coughs of the shifter slowly turned into a distorted laughter as well. Some shifters were even less intelligent than the average… Gellen clearly was one of those who wouldn’t have learnt when to stop anyway.

“You… don’t understand, I get it now…” the shifter spat blood, unable to move. Or maybe had he understood that there was no use of getting back up, not against such enemy. “In fact, you don’t even know what a shifter is. So you don’t know what powerful forces you’re dealing with. What you already did, will be enough to get you in big troubles. Face it. You may be strong, but if you wish to save these scaly bags from the backfire, you have no choice but to let me live. This not a threat. This is reality. You’ve done enough, and you should stop there.”

It could have been a smart move. But Gellen didn’t seem to realize that the flaw of his gamble was in the statement. If this man actually didn’t know about the power of the humans, he couldn’t be genuinely afraid. No man ever measured the consequences before they witnessed them. The was a lesson Fenrir had learnt the worst way possible.

However, it seemed enough to make him stop and look at the defeated shifter whose broken arms would never manipulate a sword as effectively again. Like he actually gave it a thought.

“You see, there’s your mistake. You think I care. But daddy Killian… doesn’t care. Consequences, backfires, authorities…. meh… The other will face them, not me. I can have all the fun I want. I’m fully free to dedicate to my passion. People like you…”

The figure stepped closer, and put a knee down to face the shifter closely. A way to better let him see the horror coming for him. Finally showing signs of fear, better late than never, Gellen tried to back off but the mad man planted the sword into his thigh, holding him in place in the most painful way.

“The important. The powerful. The untouchable. All those who do the most horrible things just because they can, and because they think there will be no consequences for them. How good it is to be the one showing you that you’re only human in the end. Do you feel this chill on your neck? Do you hear the sound of your blood pumping at your temples? This is fear. This is being helpless. This is being hopeless. This is being little and defenseless, at the mercy of a more powerful on who doesn’t see any importance in your life. Does this sound familiar? Did you think your importance got you immune to those sensations?”

“Th-They will come after you! If you kill me they will come for you! But if you let me live…”

“Then I’ll lose the effect of surprise.” The unknown man cut off the illusions of the shifter, and grabbed the collar of his hood. The blade was removed from the thigh, and pointed upward from under his jaw. “I’m no fool or suicidal. The longer your people ignore my existence, the more I’ll thrive. That’s why you won’t make it. That’s why today, you die, as miserably as you intended to kill. Simply because I want… no… witness.”

With a strong push, the sword impaled the skull from under, the blood covered blade tip surfacing on top of the head. Fenrir couldn’t see it from there, but he guessed the light fading instantly in the eyes of the shifter. The muscles went loose, and there even was some gross sounds indicating the effective death. A shifter died, not in the arena covered with glory, but miserably and almost unwitnessed. And it was… satisfying to watch.

So satisfying in fact, that Fenrir realized he had completely disregarded the visions of his left eye. For the first time in years, something caught his interest so much that he actually lived in the present again.

In an almost ceremonious gesture, the mad man removed the blade with a metallic sound, and wiped the blood on the dead man’s clothes.

“No trick this time? I thought so… There’s nothing more annoying than those who don’t know when they must stay dead.” The man spat, a bit more despiteful. But when he turned his face toward the only other human here, his smile grew back on his face. “What about you, big guy? Are you someone important too?”

A hardly covered threat. Even the dragons around had understood the meaning of that question, and all the looks converged on Fenrir. They had all seen what happened to the last man who claimed to be someone, and they were all waiting for the answer. But the big hooded man hesitated. Ironically, for the opposite reasons anyone else would have had. Most would have felt important and would have lied to survive.

Did he feel important? Not a second. Like everything else, he didn’t matter. The island had existed long before him, and would still exists ages after his death. Until the day it will end. How could a speck of dust feel important in a big house? If he was to answer honestly, Fenrir wouldn’t have hesitated.

But strangely, he didn’t want to reply honestly. This mad man had killed the shifter he was supposed to accompany. He had no choice but to confront him as well. High instances wouldn’t let this slip. But there was even more. Fenrir wanted this man to attack. An irresistible desire. He didn’t fight like others.

“Actually, just for you, just this time, I’ll be the most important man on this island.” The big hooded man replied as a provocation.

“And you got humor too! I’m really lucky today, finally someone who gets the fun of it.” The mad man laughed, arming his sword straight against his shoulder. “Please try to last more than a few seconds, it’s so rare to find opponents with your spirit!”

Fenrir’s left eye could see vague contours now. It wouldn’t have been enough to fight safely, but the man made a mistake. The weapon he took was fully visible, on the other hand. And this was enough. All he would have to do would be following the movements he saw.

Try to last more than a few seconds? According to his left eye, his seconds were those counted down here. From the moment he began to run toward him.

There would be a fake attack from the left, then the sword would swing fast on the other side to hit a supposedly open spot. And he saw how to turn this to his advantage. A step to fake falling for it, a quick move to avoid the strike, and then his dagger would rise to offer him the same death as Gellen. Fenrir knew it was over for his opponent when his future sight showed his hand making the sign. The sign that he won, in the near future.

Whoever this insane guy was, he had killed a shifter. But he would soon figure out that a forewatcher was on another level.

It was already set. The enemy was closing the distance, sealing his fate like he sealed Gellen’s. In less than five seconds, he would be dead. The forewatcher prepared for this little moment of action.

But just as the mad man was about to throw his strike, there was an intense flash of light exploding between them. Fenrir couldn’t see his opponent anymore, and had to look away as a force pushed him back. Impossible. He hadn’t seen this coming… His visions always got real!

When he was finally able to look, Fenrir began to wonder if this surrealistic day wasn’t a weird dream… Right where the flash had detonated, between him and the mad man who looked confused all the same, a creature seemingly made of light was standing. Only the eyes didn’t seem blended in a luminous, human-shaped cloud.

This being… It was as impossible as the future sight failing. It was a legend. A tale.

“Sincerely, I missed you guys. But you’ve always annoyed me with your eagerness to fight each other.” The white shadow, if it was truly it, spoke in a strange sounding voice.

Many had heard this story as a child. A creature appearing sometimes, announcing bad or good omen depending on the tale. It was probably why it was so popular of a story. No one knew what it wanted. Everyone wanted to know what it was. And every little human had once dreamt of possessing its powers.

But one thing no tale ever taught Fenrir was what to expect from a meeting with it…

“You! I have a thing or two to ask you about!” the mad man replied, looking now more angry than amused. Fenrir couldn’t tell if he admired the courage or feared the reaction of the being of light.

“We will talk. But now isn’t the good moment” the ghost simply replied.

“You think this is a game?! You think I’m going to pick a number and wait in line?!” The mad man yelled in anger.

“That’s exactly what you’re going to do, Killian. This is not a game. This is your punishment.” The white shadow shut the debate down authoritatively. “And it’s not an unfair treatment to make you wait, after what you’ve done!”

“I want answers and I want them, right now!”

“And I said: this is over now!”

Instantaneously, the mad man brought a hand to his temple, like struck by an invisible pain. His teeth were clenched, and his groans of anger were signs he resisted what happened to him. Then within a few seconds, he collapsed on his knees, and fell heavily on the ground, unconscious. Was he dead?

The forewatcher didn’t have much time to consider this question as the ghost looked at him. It was strange. Fenrir had given up on life a long while ago, and he had never made mystery that he didn’t care about living or dying. It was not a feared subject, and he was convinced it wouldn’t raise much emotion the day he’d have to face it. So if he wasn’t scared of dying… What was exactly the cause of his fear?

Maybe the unknown. At least the mad man was becomeing clearer to his left eye… this ghost was totally absent of his future sight. And its stare, even if not threatening, inspired him dread. It was unexplainable.

“Sorry you had to witness that. He’s not such a bad guy when you get to know him. But you’ll figure it out by yourself.” The being seemed to laugh. Was there anything funny to get? It wasn’t like he hoped to see this man again; his future was quite wrapped up after what he did.

“What… do you want from me?”

“To remember.”

“To remember what?”

“How you felt today. What you saw. Remember the fear. Remember the thrill. Remember the hope.” The ghost rose a hand toward him. Fenrir didn’t dare to move. “You’ll be so much more someday… but for now, it is not time for fighting. Now is time for learning quietly.”

A strange sensation invaded him and the world around was blurry for a second, almost like a shifter using his power. But the next second, the big hooded man was standing in a clearing, facing a forest. Confused, he looked back, and saw the mountain in the distance… but also a white shape laying on the ground.

Sighing, Fenrir walked to the skull and knelt next to it, grabbing it in his hands. He turned it on every angle to see if it had been damaged and looked into its empty orbits. It was still intact.

“What has he done to you… No respect…” He sighed again, standing up and taking the dragon skull under his arm. He looked at the mountain, but felt no desire to go back there. Revenge was for those who cared. And he didn’t. Gellen wasn’t worth it anyway.

He just had to think about what to tell to the high instances about the young shifter he lost. But it wasn’t so scary. They couldn’t even kill him, so… big deal. If a nice turn of words could spare him jibber-jabbering for hours, it could worth a thought though. Not like he had anything better to do; it was a long road to Northeim.

“Sometimes, I really feel like I should leave this crazy island to all these crazy people…” he sighed.