

The Hunter's Big Game

For days the Hunter had marched through the accursed mountains and its snow, his steps weary from the trouble and toil of his mysterious sickness that had manifested so swiftly only a week ago. First, appearing as sandstone scales on his forearm, now covering the entirety of his right arm all the way to his elbow, rendering the entire thing useless. From time to time he feared that his petrified arm would crumble to naught but dust, frequently glancing to make sure that his trepidations laid unrealized. Treading carefully as to not trip and cause enough impact for the arm to simply fall off from himself, he dreaded that such a curse befall upon him and a major benefactor of his livelihood.

Although, hope was not lost. The Hunter had frantically torn open every shamans' tents and pried through every clerics' chambers to obtain the information he now had. An ancient man took pity upon the Hunter's fate and granted him the faintest of rumors: the magic forest. Of course, incredulous disbelief was the first emotion to strike the Hunter's face, as all who lived in the mountainous terrains knew of no such forest, lush and brimming with supernatural life. Soon after, it was the desperation and the realization that he had no other choice that led the Hunter out into the snow.

Thinking back on the matter made the Hunter curse under his quickened breath, "Damn that Occultist and his fatuous beliefs"

It was only towards the end of his day that his restlessness was distilled. As he was forced to hunt for game while totally foregoing the use of his right arm, he found that going through the motion of his daily life, laying down traps for birds and marking for tracks of bunny rabbits, calmed him. As finally, his machinations came to life and he heard the clink of metal against flesh, crimson blood painting the white snow as the edges of the Hunter's frozen mouth twitched in satisfaction. Still nursing his stoic arm, he inched out of his hiding spot to secure his catch, only to find bewilderment in his findings. It was a bunny rabbit, yes, but it was unlike he'd ever seen before. Its fur was the same color as oaken bark in the midst of summer, accompanied by the shimmering of one who was not used to such cold. It was here that the Hunter heard more rustling - something running away, something big. The Hunter did not hesitate to follow. Even as all of his training and experience taught him to run away from such a sound, the Hunter grasped at the sound, moving as fast as he can through thickets of densely placed trees. Pain shot up through the entirety of his body as he cut his way through the harsh branches, as he had continued to deteriorate throughout his travel, his arm was not the only thing that was hindering his well-being.

Finally, the Hunter broke through to the other side to meet the sound. His eyes, blinded by the sudden light, he perceived a completely different palette of sensations.

Warmth warding away his frost-ridden skin, the smell of pine and birch filling his nose, the sound of a lush river only a mile away. This all would have amazed him if not for the giant figure that rustled forth from the silhouettes of the barrows defining the horizon. Two large horns that branched upwards into the sky like the roots of Yggdrasil, its titanic, ancient amber eyes staring down at the Hunter as if bemused at being found in a game of Hide-n-Seek. The Hunter had found the magic forest, and with it, the biggest game he had ever stumbled upon.

