

The Breach

by Maeve ter Hofstede

Hound sat in the back of the armored vehicle as it raced down the roads. They had to be fast, a team of field officers had just confirmed that people were trying to summon something, in a small town just outside the city. Apparently this was seen as dangerous enough to need not only a containment team but this one. People attempting to summon things from the void was more common than it honestly should be, people heard “other dimension” and went wild. Luckily most attempts were wildly unsuccessful and only needed a couple of field officers to clean up but apparently this one was different.

She shared the back of the vehicle they nicknamed “the carriage” with 4 of her team mates, the other 2 sitting at the front driving it.

Next to her sat Clove, the woman was similar in age to her, having pale skin and the red eyes common amongst people like her. She wore similar gear to Hound most of them did, a tactical vest to hold different weapons, ammunition or other important items, a duty belt carrying a side arm, badge and some other items and functional trousers, while the uniform normally came with a helmet almost all of the members had refused it for different reasons. Clove was reading an older looking tomb, probably something about magic.

Across from them 2 of the other members shared a bench; Golem and Kelpie, the first of the two was a hulking mass made by some mad doctor who wanted to bring the dead back, this large size was to great annoyance for the armorers, Golem was currently sitting there silently staring out into nothing.

The other one was Kelpie, a merman with a deep blue scaly skin which was easy to see as he staunchly refused to wear a shirt under his vest.

After several minutes of driving they heard Sarge his gruff voice over the intercom “we are about 5 minutes out, everyone start getting ready”, Sarge was the only human member of their team, he was an older man whose main job was to make sure they did nothing too stupid and so people had a human face to talk to.

After that command they all started to suit up and load their weapons, it was generally not the best move to drive around with loaded guns as they had painfully discovered. Hound grabbed her rifle and started loading the rounds in, around her she could hear the rest of them prepare their weapons in a similar way.

Her werewolf senses were the reason she was on this team and while being very powerful they could also be inconvenient from time to time, like now when she could hear every detail of Kelpie sharpening his knives, something he often did while nervous.

After a generous 5 minutes she felt the car come to a halt, followed by the sound of the front doors opening, she opened the back of the car and the 4 of them got out in

a grim silence. Everyone was always uneasy before a mission because they were not called in for nothing, them being there already said a certain amount about the nature of the problem.

Outside the car they were greeted by Sarge and Spirit, the final member of the squad, the soul of a woman that had stayed behind after her death, using a fake body provided by the agency. "Alright listen up" sarge said as a field officer ran over to him and handed him a note pad, "there have been a large number of sightings of people bearing a strange mark around the town".

He turned the paper around showing the squad a simple icon of what looked like a large squid. "These are members of a group we have been keeping an eye on for some time now, they claim to have been seeing visions of something in the void calling to them and are attempting to free it. I don't know if there is any truth to these claims but what I do know is that they are attempting to open a tear into the void and are in possession of several powerful artifacts giving them the possibility to do so. We need to find them, capture or neutralise all the members, capture the artifacts and prevent them from opening that hole, the last thing we need is a repeat of the German rift".

They all nodded as he told them about how the village was largely abandoned meaning that civilian casualties were unlikely but the proximity to the city did mean that if they didn't stop them in time it could be catastrophic. They were split up in 2 teams to search the town for members and the site of the ritual, one team containing Spirit, Golem and Sarge himself, the other one being: Clove, Kelpie and hound. All of them had a flare on them in case they got separated or in trouble.

They quickly fanned out, Hound and her team taking the western half of the village while the other one took the east half. Hound led in front, she was by far the best tracker of the group. Not soon after they had entered the village she smelled it: that unmistakable smell of blood and gunpowder, a smell she could recognise anywhere, quickly letting her teammates know with a hand signal. They both understood and readied themselves for a fight, Kelpie drew two of his knives while Clove readied a handgun, all of their weapons were magical in nature which they needed to be in order to deal with some of the threats they dealt with.

They quietly sneak through the streets following Hound, following the scent of the blood, hoping that it's not an ambush or a corpse. That second worry turned out to be correct as the sent led them to a home where they found the presumed owners all slaughtered in their home, all four members sitting around the table all with their throat slit and with no evidence that the culprits tried to clean the scene. They quickly left the building that falls under the normal police plus having a vampire around a large pool of blood is not the best idea. They went on with patrolling the village, finding 2 more similar scenes, until Hound hears soft voices from a nearby house, it's a larger one next to a canal, they stay at a distance and try to scope it out.

Following the reconnaissance done by Clove in her bat form, it is a store house held by the cult, while there were not any signs of it being the ritual site it did hold a large amount of fire arms, munitions and other weapons, so still worth dealing with.

Following the recon they made their move,

Kelpie slipped into the canal and disappeared under the water using an underground entrance to get in, meanwhile Hound and Clove snuck up to the back door. Hound holds her hand up counting down from three, on one kicking the door with full force, the door explodes inwards, it was clearly old because the kick caused it to splinter everywhere. They quickly sprint in using the door splintering everywhere to catch the people inside off guard, they were all wearing a similar type of robe in classic cult fashion.

The room they entered was clearly some sort of storage room, in said room are three people all wearing the same type of robe. Using the people's shock to her advantage, Hound quickly aims her rifle and fires a shot, dropping the first member, cocking her rifle and firing a second shot, using that shot to drop the second of the three. The final member quickly dives behind a set of boxes to hide, however before they can peek out to return fire, they get shot by Clove, who used their magic to quickly get behind them and get the drop on them. The two of them go upstairs, knowing Kelpie has the bottom floors covered. Using Hounds smell to know which rooms have people in it and if there were any quickly dealing with them, they were never meant for non lethal action, if you send in the 99 it generally means you got people you need dead. The whole thing only took a couple of minutes, at this point they were getting efficient with things like this, sometimes she could hear screams or stuff breaking from downstairs, clear evidence of Kelpie going to work.

They met up outside after it was all done, they were all largely uninjured but covered in blood, continuing on with their mission with a grim sort of efficiency going back to looking around the city, not finding anything noteworthy. After about an hour they see a flare in the distance, they don't even need to say anything, all falling into a sprint. Clove turning into a bat and Hound going on all fours quickly making their way over to the signal. Hound can hear Kelpie behind them yell out: "oh come on" as he struggles to keep up with them.

The signal came from near the village church because of course the cult uses the church for their rituals. Outside of that church they see the other members of the team, looking worse for wear. Sarge holding a bloodied hand to his side, Golem sowing one of their legs back on and Spirit missing an arm and having several chunks taken out of her body. Kelpie quickly sprinted over and started healing Sarge as he told them what they found.

"We found the church about an hour in and saw some people, plus Golem could tell that there was void energy coming from it, so we sent spirit in to investigate. She found that there was a decently large group of cultists inside so we decided to attack. That went smoothly for the first part until one of the cultists pulled out a dagger of

some sorts and stabbed themselves with it. Causing them to transform into a large monster of sorts, who proceeded to rip Golem's arm off, the rest of them used that opening to open fire on me and Spirit. We just barely got out ourselves, but they need to be stopped.”

After taking a minute for Kelpie to finish up getting Sarge in a bit better shape, the rest of them used that time to prepare themselves for what was going to come next, attacking the church. Next they started planning their assault, with a situation like this they could not simply go in guns blazing.

The plan was relatively simple, Clove would use her magic to get up high and try and weaken the creature's magic. Meanwhile Golem and Kelpie would go head to head with the magical creature, the two of them being by far the strongest physically so having the best chance there. While they dealt with the creature Spirit, Sarge and Hound would deal with the cultists, hopefully keeping them from attacking the rest of the team.

They set up outside of the front door of the church, hound her tail nervously swaying while she waited, something that happened often when she got nervous. Then came the signal, a loud bang coming from inside accompanied with loud screams. All of them rushed inside, Golem sprinting for a large creature in the back with Kelpie hot on their heels. Hound was taken aback by the size of the creature, it mostly looked human just if all the muscles had swollen up to quadruple the size, its cultist robes looking more like a large hat.

She quickly shook off the shock and raised her rifle, opening fire on the other cultists, close by Sarge and spirit did the same. The chaos of the large gunfight made it hard for her to keep track of the 2 fighting the monster. Bullet's whipping around her head, the air filled with the smell of the dead and gunpowder.

But she knew that they relied on her so she kept fighting, getting into a zone, listening for enemies peaking out from behind her cover, firing once or twice and ducking behind it again. Most of it had become routine to her at this point, the recoil of the rifle every time she fired, the feel of the magazine tube running low, the familiar click of the rifle when she chambered a new round.

She lost track of time, just peek out, shoot and duck back in cover, repeat. When she finally got a good look at the fight going on in the back of the church she lost all her momentum. The giant monster was wildly flailing its arms around breaking chunks of rock and spraying them around. Both kelpie and Golem had taken considerable damage and clearly looked like they were struggling. Without thinking twice Hound ducked out from behind her cover and started sprinting towards them. While she sprinted she used her powers to transform into her full werewolf form.

The process was uncomfortable to say the least but it was worth it. She could feel her limbs growing her face protruding into a snout and hair covering her body. As she transformed she started picking up speed, letting herself fall on all fours as she kept running. The monster had not noticed her, too busy flailing around in a blind rage, she used this to her advantage to leap up and sink her teeth into its throat.

It released a loud scream of pain, trying to shake her off. It clearly struggled with controlling its body, but that didn't stop it from flinging her away. She came to a screeching halt next to Golem and Kelpie, the 3 of them shared a look, that was enough for her to know what to do.

All of them sprinted at it Hound and golem both going for one arm each. Grabbing them and trying their best to keep it from swinging at Kelpie who was running directly at it. Leaping up to reach its neck, pulling out one of his longer knives and ramming it into the neck wound Hound her teeth had made. His knife reached far further than her teeth had which was clear by the large spray of blood it released. It started making a loud gurgling noise as Kelpie proceeded to continue ramming his knife into its throat.

Finally Hound could feel the arm she was holding back start to pull less and less, until it had no more strength behind it. The large creature started to topple over, Kelpie quickly jumped off it to prevent getting crushed. Which turned out to be a smart move as it landed with a loud thud breaking the stone flooring below it.

She looked around and saw that the rest of the team had dealt with the cultists, most of them dead, a couple sitting on the floor in surrender. Sarge used stray pieces of rope to use as handcuffs, they rarely brought their own.

After taking a minute to recover and secure all the cultists they started looking around, finding the stolen artifacts rather quickly. Only 2 of the 5 were completely destroyed which was pretty good numbers for them.

Sarge walked outside and shot up a signal flare letting the recovery team know they could move in. All of them sat around in a grim silence, later they would celebrate the mission but not yet.

About twenty minutes later a large group of officers walked in, some of them carrying Special boxes to contain the artifacts in. Sarge took charge and pointed them to the artifacts and the captured cultists. The field captain gave him a nod and Sarge started walking out of the church beckoning the rest of them to follow. They silently walked to the carriage all climbing inside and sitting down as the engine roared to life and they drove away from the small town.