



# *Served Cold*

Kathy Wood  
Retold Fairy Tales

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He was so hungry. When was the last time he ate? Three days ago? Four? Surely not longer than that. He wondered how long he could keep on like this. How long did it take to starve to death? However long it was it wasn't long enough. Or maybe it was too long. He was having a hard time keeping his thoughts straight. They oscillated back and forth from wishing to fight death and wishing to embrace it. Not that it mattered. Wishes didn't come true. Not for him.

He shifted his weight, trying to ease the pressure of the ground against his hip. The grass underneath him did nothing to soften the hard ground, but he couldn't find it in him to seek out a better spot. He could hear a small creek babbling in the distance but he ignored it. Water had long ago ceased to ease the hunger in his stomach. The land's richness that surrounded him belied the emptiness that he felt inside. Yesterday, when the pangs got exceptionally bad he had tried to eat the vegetation, as he had seen others do, but he couldn't get it down. They must be built differently than he was.

He let his thoughts drift back to the only topic other than food that could occupy his mind. Back to before the invasion. Luna had been alive then, of course. Before the invasion food had been plentiful. He could still remember the first day they had come; men on horseback, men with torches. They had no respect for the land. They came in, armed with axes. They felled the trees, frightened the game; pushed him out of the land that had been home to his family for generations.

He should have killed them all when they had first come, but Luna had begged caution. Now they were too many. He wondered if she had found the happily ever after she had always talked about. Maybe she had been the lucky one.

A sound of singing jerked his awareness back to the present. The happy tune mocked his misery. With far more energy than he'd had for anything in quite a while he rolled to his feet and silently crept towards the sound. Peering out through the trees he found the source of the song. It was one of the invaders, but alone. Arrogantly alone. He allowed himself a wolfish grin. Before the sun set tonight it would be more than that little girl's cloak that was stained red.

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