

Monsters under the Bed

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Oneshot

Chapter 1 of 1

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Fenrir Greyback was running away from home. And the only place he could think of going was Hogwarts. He couldn't stay at home any more. Life in the last six months had been unbearable. Fenrir still couldn't believe it had only been six months since he had been bitten. His parents had gone mad at him. They were terrified of him now, and his father had made it quite clear it was all Fenrir's own fault.

Fenrir had sneaked into the Forbidden Forest at Hogwarts. Everyone talked about it in Hogsmeade and the boys in the village used to dare each other to spend the night there. There were rumours of werewolves in the Forest and Fenrir and his friends used to joke about it. Only, one day, the joke had turned sour and Fenrir had been bitten.

Now he was making his way back there. He desperately wanted to get to Hogwarts and see if anyone there was able to help him, but it was the week of the full moon and he knew the only safe place for him to be was the Forest. He was determined to make his way to the school eventually, but for now the most important thing was to get away from his parents before the moon rose and they locked him in the cellar for another week.

Fenrir shivered. He had a jumper on, and his coat, but, since he was only ten, he wasn't allowed to wear long trousers yet and his grey wool knee socks didn't afford much protection against the wind. And it was only going to get worse, he thought miserably as he trudged through the Forest, going deeper and deeper into its heart and glancing fearfully up at the sky every few minutes.

Eventually, Fenrir was too tired to go any further. He had walked all the way from Hogsmeade, and he reckoned he'd probably gone far enough into the Forest. If his parents were going to come after him and drag him back, they'd have done it by now. He tried to reassure himself of this as he sank, exhausted, to the ground under an oak tree.

The only thing Fenrir had taken with him from home was a blanket. The boy had learnt, from bitter experience, that it was best to strip off and cover himself with a blanket while waiting to transform. He had torn too many sets of clothes when his body changed shape, and his parents had refused to replace them. Fenrir had several blankets stashed down in the freezing cellar all of them, appropriately given his mood, black. He wrapped himself in the blanket and lay down in the shelter of the oak tree to wait.

Hagrid sneaked out of the castle under cover of darkness and made his way to the Forbidden Forest. It was difficult for someone of his height and bulk to sneak, but no one ever seemed to stop him. Probably didn't fancy the idea of challenging someone as big as him. He was going to visit the creatures in the Forest. He couldn't wait to start Care of Magical Creatures, but students didn't take that until the third year so he had almost a year left to go.

Hagrid loved the Forest, and was very proud of the fact that the centaurs were happy to talk to him, that he was the only boy the unicorns didn't seem afraid of, and that he was definitely the only boy who could wrestle trolls. He wasn't great at magic and often felt a bit stupid in class, but compared to a troll he had lightning quick wits and reactions.

But he didn't meet anyone or anything as he stumped through the dark Forest. He supposed it was too late. The centaurs, especially, lived by the stars, going to sleep at twilight and rising at dawn.

Just as he was thinking of giving up and going back to school, Hagrid saw a tiny, furry body curled up under a tree, bright yellow eyes fixed unblinkingly on him. He crossed the clearing, bending down to look at the little creature...

And it sprang at him. Snarling and spitting, the werewolf cub launched itself at Hagrid, snapping at his wrists, trying to bite him.

After a moment of shocked disbelief that his beloved Forest had turned on him, Hagrid grabbed the cub by the scruff of its neck and held it at arm's length, turning it towards him so he could look at it.

'Nah,' he said fondly, thinking how cute and cuddly the cub was really, 'yeh don' wan' ter bite me, little one. No pain'. Yeh'd never get through me skin. Don' want ter hurt yer little fangs, do yeh?'

The cub stared at Hagrid with wild hatred for a moment, then went limp in Hagrid's grip. Hagrid carefully lowered it to the ground and covered it up with a tattered blanket he found beside it. The cub squeaked, curled up again and went to sleep. Hagrid tiptoed away as quietly as one of his size could manage.

A week later, Fenrir woke to bright sunlight. He had transformed back and forth seven times during the last week, of course, but in the daytimes he always felt weak and ill, and all he really wanted to do was sleep. Now he squinted up through the tree he was lying under, feeling better, but disorientated and woozy. It always took a little while to recover from a transformation. As his senses reoriented themselves, he remembered, with a rising sense of panic, where he was. Waking up in his cellar at home was always bad, but waking up naked, cold and hungry in the Forbidden Forest was infinitely worse.

Throwing aside the blanket, he struggled hurriedly back into his clothes the only set he had cursing himself for not having thought to bring any more. He also wished he had brought his catapult. Even clothed he felt horribly vulnerable and alone.

Of course, he didn't need to worry about werewolves any more, he thought bitterly. But there were rumours of trolls, the centaurs could apparently turn nasty if you upset them, and even the unicorns were too scared of boys to help him if he got into trouble.

A rumbling emptiness in his stomach forced him out of his self-pity. "Breakfast," he thought. "I'm in a forest; there's got to be stuff to eat here berries, nuts, stuff like that." He got up and started walking determinedly towards the nearest bushes, trying to ignore the little voice in his head that whispered, "You can't survive forever on that. Why not just go home? They'll be having eggs and bacon and sausages and..."

'No!' Fenrir yelled out loud. 'I'm not going home!' His voice echoed in the clearing: GOING HOME!... HOME!... HOME! It made him jump, his heart thundering, the blood pounding in his ears.

But when he caught his breath, the thundering and pounding didn't stop. In fact it got louder, more insistent. Whatever was making the noise was getting closer and closer...

Fenrir screamed and threw himself under the bush as a huge troll came lumbering into the clearing. The ground shook as the troll made its way over to the bush, its piggy little eyes fixed on Fenrir. It drew nearer and nearer, grunting and swinging its club.

Fenrir was unable to move, paralysed by terror. He cowered, whimpering, curled up into as small a ball as he could manage. He could feel the troll looming over him; he could smell its stink. Then, just as he was sure he was about to be crushed or battered to death, he heard a great roar.

'Oi! Get away from him!'

A great, shaggy, hairy *something* hurtled out of the trees and cannoned into the troll, knocking it to the ground. There was a sickening thud as the troll's head hit the forest floor. It didn't move.

Peering out from between his fingers, Fenrir recognised the huge boy he had attacked last week. He felt himself being lifted off his feet as the boy picked him up and straightened his clothes. Despite his size, the giant was young, maybe only a couple of years older than Fenrir himself.

'Are yeh alright?' the huge boy asked in a surprisingly gentle voice.

'Yeah,' gasped Fenrir, 'I think so.'

'What's yer name?'

'Fenrir Greyback.'

'Pleased ter meet yeh, Fenrir. I'm Rubeus Hagrid.' Hagrid regarded the child quizzically. The boy was tall, but very skinny with a mop of dark blond hair and a shy smile, which, Hagrid thought, was rather spoilt by unusually pointed canines. 'What're yeh doin' here?' he asked.

'Run away from home,' the child muttered, kicking at the leaves.

'Why?'

'My parents lock me in the cellar.' Fenrir raised his head defiantly; he had to crane his neck right back to look at the giant boy.

'Gulpin' gargoyles!' exclaimed Hagrid, outraged. 'Why d'they do tha?'

Fenrir was unable to maintain his defiance. He dropped his gaze to his scuffed sandals. 'Because I'm a werewolf.'

'Yeh *are*? The light of recognition dawned in Hagrid's face. 'I've seen yeh before, haven' I?'

'Yeah,' mumbled Fenrir, feeling hot with shame at the memory. 'Last week. I tried to bite you.'

'Oh,' said Hagrid delightedly. 'That was *yeh*, was it?'

Fenrir looked up again, surprised by the boy's tone. Hagrid didn't seem scared on the contrary, his eyes were sympathetic and interested.

'Well,' he said firmly. 'Yeh can't stay here.'

'Don't send me home!' Fenrir pleaded, his eyes wide and frightened.

'Course I won'. Yeh can't go back there. C'mon. I'll take yeh up to the school.' Hagrid looked back at the boy's white, scared face. 'Don' worry. I'll look after yeh.'

At Hagrid's suggestion, Fenrir wrapped his blanket around himself as they sneaked into the school grounds. At a distance it would pass for a cloak like the one Hagrid

wore. Fenrir was tall for his age, and hoped that, from a distance he might look like a student from Hagrid's year.

A persistent drizzle had set up and very few people were around. The only person who showed them any interest was a tall, black-haired boy of about fifteen, sitting with a group of friends by the lake. They all seemed to be listening raptly to him he was by no means the oldest, but he seemed to have a natural air of authority about him and his eyes, when they met Fenrir's, were uncomfortably astute.

Fenrir hunched inside his blanket and tried to make himself invisible.

As Hagrid and his young companion passed the lake, Tom Riddle followed their progress. There was something shifty about Hagrid's posture, his walk, his manner. And the child trotting along behind him definitely wasn't a student. He didn't even look old enough to be here. So what in Merlin's name was Hagrid up to?

With a wave of his hand, Riddle dismissed his followers, a quelling glance forbidding them to accompany him, and, at a distance, he followed Hagrid and the child into the castle.

'C'mon. Gotta get yeh up to me dorm. Get under me cloak.' Slowly, Hagrid made his way up to Gryffindor Tower, so intent on hiding Fenrir that he didn't notice Tom Riddle silently tailing him.

'Whippersnapper,' Hagrid said brightly to the Fat Lady, and she swung forward. It was difficult enough for Hagrid to get through the portrait hole without hiding a ten-year-old child under his cloak. Because he always had trouble, however, no one gave him a second look as he struggled in, still concealing Fenrir.

Tom Riddle slipped up to the Headmaster's office, silent and stealthy as a panther.

'There yeh are.' Hagrid waved his arms proudly, showing off his bedroom. 'Got me own room, see, 'cos I need more space than mos' people. Yeh'll be safe in here; no one comes in unless I say so.'

Fenrir's stomach growled again and he blushed. Hagrid laughed. 'Missed breakfast, I'm afraid, but I'll try an' sneak down to the kitchens an' get yeh somethin'. The house-elves're good about giving me extra food. Portions aren' quite big enough fer me, yeh see.'

A huge yawn escaped Fenrir and Hagrid's beetle-black eyes creased into a smile. 'Why don' yeh try an' 'ave a sleep? I'll wake yeh up when I've got yeh some food.'

Fenrir nodded gratefully. After a week of sleeping in the Forbidden Forest, Hagrid's huge bed looked irresistible.

But suddenly, the common room below went suspiciously quiet. Then there was the sound of feet ascending the stairs to the boys' dormitories.

'Someone's comin',' Hagrid hissed. 'Quick! Into the wardrobe!'

Fenrir shot across the room and wrenched open the wardrobe door. 'I can't!' he squeaked. 'It's full of robes!'

Hagrid stared round the room desperately. 'Under the bed, then. Quick!'

Fenrir scrambled under Hagrid's bed. It was dusty, and he had to clamp his hand over his nose and mouth to stop himself sneezing and giving the game away. From his hiding place he could see a pair of shiny black shoes crossing the threshold.

'Morning, Rubeus,' said Tom Riddle, sharply.

Hagrid drew in his breath. *'What yer doin' up here, Tom?'*

Riddle stepped closer.

'It's all over,' he said. 'I've had to turn you in, Rubeus.'

'What d'yeh...'

Hagrid broke off, staring at the doorway in horror, as Headmaster Dippet, and Professor Dumbledore, Head of Gryffindor house, entered the dormitory.

'Mr Riddle has just informed us you have a visitor, Hagrid,' said Dippet.

'He won' do no one no harm, Headmaster!' Hagrid cried, and immediately looked furious with himself.

'Perhaps we had better meet him before we jump to conclusions,' suggested Dumbledore quietly.

Knowing the game was up, Fenrir crawled out from under the bed, struggled to his feet and tried to brush the dirt off his palms and knees. As he raised his eyes to look at the two men, he tried to regain his earlier attitude of defiance, but his lip trembled.

'Merlin's beard!' exclaimed the one Hagrid had addressed as "Headmaster".

'What is your name?' asked the younger man, in quite a kind voice.

Fenrir's mouth was so dry he could hardly speak. 'Fenrir Greyback,' he croaked.

'And where do you live, Fenrir?'

'Hogsmeade,' Fenrir replied in an even smaller voice.

'Do your parents know you are here?'

Fenrir shook his head, mutely.

'Why *are* you here, Fenrir?' Dumbledore asked calmly.

'I wanted to come to Hogwarts.'

Dumbledore regarded the child serenely. 'How old are you?'

'Ten.'

'Well then, you will be able to come here next year, won't you?'

'No,' said Fenrir, his voice barely a whisper.

'Why?' Dumbledore enquired kindly. He knelt down and looked into Fenrir's white face. 'Are you a Squib?' he asked gently.

Fenrir gazed, anguished, into the kindly blue eyes. 'No. I'm...I'm a...werewolf.'

The two adults exchanged a look.

Yep, thought Fenrir; there it was. The usual double take. The quickly suppressed look of fear. Anger flared through him like fire. What had he been thinking? Of course he was never going to be accepted here. Only the giant boy seemed to understand.

Hagrid now stepped forward. 'Yeh can't send him home, Professors. His parents're mean to him. Can't I look after him?'

Dippet stared from the skinny, scruffy child to the great, shaggy Hagrid, a look of anxious concern on his lined face. 'My dear boy,' he said to Hagrid, 'you must see it is impossible for him to stay here. What if he attacked someone?'

'Please, sir, he could live in the Forbidden Forest on...those...weeks. Couldn't he, Professor Dumbledore, sir?'

Dumbledore, still kneeling, addressed Fenrir. 'I'm sorry,' he said, truly sounding it, 'I must agree with the Headmaster. I'm afraid it is too dangerous.' He sighed, knowing that this would cast him irrevocably as the villain of the piece. 'I will have to take you home.'

Hagrid looked devastated.

The only person who had not joined the debate was the boy who had brought in the teachers. He stood, silent and watchful in the open doorway, detached from the scene, impassive. Oddly, Fenrir felt grateful to him for this. He didn't think he could have stood it if the boy Riddle, had the Headmaster called him? had crowed over his triumph, had gloated over Fenrir's exposure.

Far from feeling resentful towards Riddle, Fenrir felt strangely drawn to him. It was obvious that this boy was destined for great things, and Fenrir wanted to be in on them when they happened. If he couldn't attend Hogwarts, then Tom Riddle could help him get what he wanted out of life. And what he now wanted out of life was revenge. Fenrir had had his dream cruelly snatched away by the two men in front of him and he wanted to make them pay.

He glared at then resentfully. Wizards were all the same his parents, his friends, and now these teachers they stuck together in packs. Like wolves. No, worse than wolves; wolves didn't turn their backs on one of their own. But one day, with Tom Riddle's help, Fenrir decided, he would get his revenge on the whole of wizardkind. He'd be revenged on the whole pack of them.

Disclaimer: This was originally posted on Sycophant Hex. The world and characters belong to JK Rowling; the plot is mine. No copyright infringement is intended and I make no money from this.

Many thanks to Cat Feral on Sycophant Hex for this plot bunny: In CoS Ch17, Tom Riddle mentions '...big blundering Hagrid, in trouble every other weekend, trying to raise werewolf cubs under his bed, sneaking off to the Forbidden Forest to wrestle trolls.' What if that were not an idly snide remark, but the truth?

The lines 'Someone's coming. Quick! Into the wardrobe!' and 'Someone's coming. Quick! Under the bed!' were suggested in the plot bunny, and Hagrid's conversation with Riddle is from CoS Ch 13.

'I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you!' is Malvolio's final line in Twelfth Night. I couldn't resist using it!