

never defeat me!" So saying, the vampire cast the vial to the ground, completing the spell. A great rift opened, seemingly a tear in the air, and a nauseating tentacle shot forth, grasping the vampire and squeezing him in twain, to his great surprise. Though this development was a great joy, it failed quickly within my breast as the creature pulled itself further from the rift, its beak snapping in taste of flesh untainted with the curse of vampirism - my flesh.

Behind me, a new voice, yet not unfamiliar, sought to reassure me. "Do not be afraid, Master Hemald. I shall dispose of it. This is my calling." I dared not look, dared not take my eyes from the horror that protruded, writhing from that wound in the nature of reality, but I saw soon enough. A figure - still recognizably my hound Seamus, yet now larger than I and upright, leapt at the monstrosity. A battle ensued, and I am shamed to say that I did not help Seamus. I cowered like a small child as Seamus tore wound after wound into the putrid flesh of that ... thing, finally shoving it back through the rift, which closed behind them both.

I spoke of these things to my master, who revealed his long suspicion that Seamus had been - for he was surely dead - a were-human, rare opposite to the beast that is a were-wolf. Possessed of the mind of an animal, they each have a time and a calling; when and if it is reached, the were-human takes on a different aspect to help restore the unity of the universe.

"No one knows where they came from, Hemald," my master said, "we are simply thankful that they exist. Of course, you are lucky there were no other servants of the vampire there - Seamus could not have protected you against them!" And though I was rebuked, I was sore glad as well.