

No stone had shifted, no leaf had fallen, but something had changed. There was a voice on the wind, beckoning yet distant still. It was from this whisper that Kida understood, taking the first step into a world so familiar, yet so different. The young one stepped into the mist, trusting the feeling in his gut, telling him, assuring him, that it would be alright. Briefly, his sight would be taken from him, as all he could see was the greyness of the fog, all he could hear, the rustling of branches above his head. It was only after another ten steps that he reached the other side of the dividing line, separator of realms within realms, that a new stage was shown. The fog continued to hang low, the grass had turned stale, and the sky remained grey. The sun was blocked out, replaced by a thin bright light, casting shadows down upon the clearing, in the midst of which a great gateway stood. Though it appeared to lead to nowhere, its hardwood doors suspending in nothing, hinged to only the ridged stone, it was the centrepiece of the scene.

Stand in front of it, was what Kida did, his gaze tightly locked upon the heavy padlock hanging from the door's handles. Of silver and moonlight, the lock shone bright, casting its spell like a trance. So, the young one approached, hand stretched out afront. He reached out, took the lock in his palms, and wiped the ancient dust from the mechanism. It was in that ghostly mirror, that a visage lied. Scattered and tainted, a reflection showed. Two vibrant blue eyes, staring back from beyond the void, without around them a distant reflection of his face,

the outlines so vague. Perhaps for a moment it would have frightened him, but he was never startled, his feet firmly on the ground, so entranced with the lock that anything else hardly mattered.

He shifted the lock upon his fingers, watching as the vision angled but always remained, those piercing eyes staying interlocked with his own. A shuddering breath left his lungs as he felt the lock starting to shake. At first, it was but a tremble, that soon changed into a tremor. The ground beneath him started to vibrate. Still in that trance, he took a step back as the lock lifted from his hand, now hovering above the ground. The rattling mechanism soon started to tug upon the gate, the wood splintering around the hook from which the lock was suspended.

The shaking grew more violent, more confronting by the second, as Kida somehow could not bring himself to break eye contact. Then, a crack appeared in the metal. First, one, then, two, then, like a rock thrown upon thin ice. The cracks expanded and branched, engulfing the lock until the shaking stopped, and the shards unhinged. A shockwave ensued, pushing Kida back against a tree, his shoulders against the bark as he watched the shards twist and turn, a mighty constellation of metal fangs. The sphere-like construction started to spin around the gate, until they suddenly fell back to the ground. Lifeless, they lied upon the grim grass, when the gate busted open, splinters of wood razing past Kida's body, just barely missing him as the doors swung to the side. The hinges

were mauled by the sheer force, and the doors were flung to the side.

A ripple passed through the now open gate, like looking upon the surface of a lake after shattering that ice. From those ripples a figure appeared, dark and obscure. A wolf-like shape, with a mighty black coat, black as the night sky with the starlight dancing within. Its eyes were an unforgivingly pale, like the surface of the full moon, staring Kida down. The beast approached, its paws leaving no prints upon the dirt over which it passed. The being stood tall, almost as tall as Kida himself, as it came to a stop in front of the boy. A low growl echoed among the trees as its eyes remained unyielding. Then it opened its maw and revealed its glistening fangs, exposing them to the pale light in the mist. Kida entered a moment of total instinct. His mind started to run, and his heart started to race, as the famed spell fell from his lips once again.

Kesh Trall Nöll

His words made the leaves rustle and the ground tremble, as the mist kicked up along with the dust from the forest floor. The spectre's maw snapped closed upon hearing the spell of ancient ire, the saying that could shatter stars and part oceans, in a world that was no mortal's home. The being turned its head, reversing its step before redirecting towards the gate entirely. It leapt through, creating those same ripples within the opening. Kida stepped forward; his shoulders released from the bark.

His step was careful yet determined as he approached the gate, his arm outstretched once more as his fingertips touched the surface. A cold, shrill feeling went through him as he allowed his hand to pass through. When he pulled it back and witnessed no wrongdoing, he took one last deep breath, before daring the leap of faith. With one strong jump, he threw himself through the gate.

Then all went white.