

Der Werwolf:

The Annals of Veight

— Birth of a Demon City —

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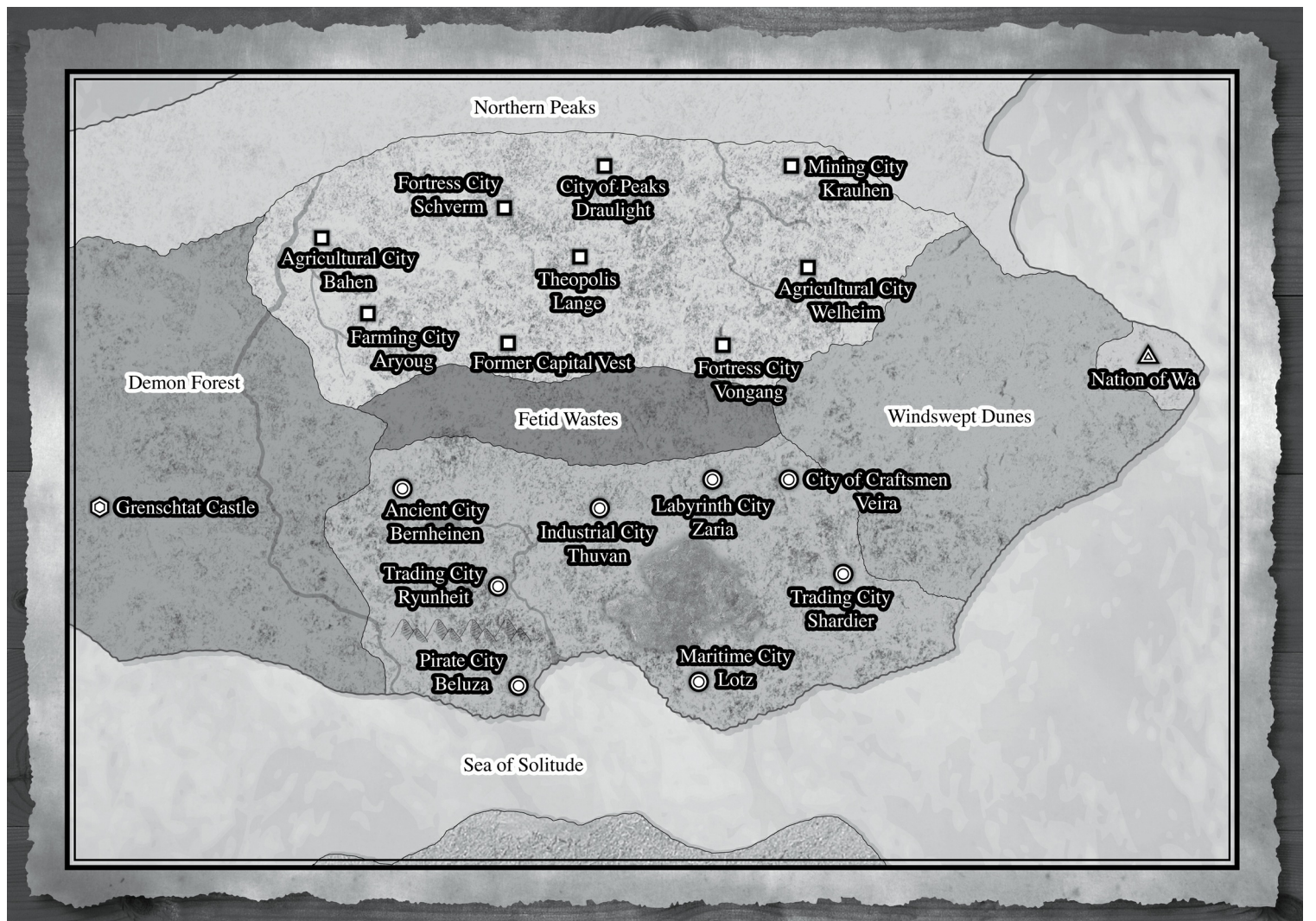


Table of Contents

[Cover](#)

[Color Illustrations](#)

[Map](#)

[Chapter 1](#)

[Extra Story: Veight's Younger Days](#)

[Afterword](#)

[Bonus Short Story](#)

[About J-Novel Club](#)

[Copyright](#)

Chapter 1

I don't remember much about my past life, but I'm also not that interested in learning about it. My name is Veight. I know it's hard to pronounce, but I still wish people would at least try to say it right. And right now, I serve the Demon Lord.

"Commander Veight, our troops have successfully infiltrated the city."

"Understood. There's no need to wait for my orders. Once the advance party gives the signal, charge."

"Yes, sir."

Werewolf. A word that refers to a half-human, half-wolf demon. In my human form, I look pretty much like I used to in my old life; an unassuming, plain guy. But transformed, I truly do look like a monster. I imagine most people find my jet-black wolf form to be terrifying, but personally, I think it looks cool. If anything, I'd say I hit the reincarnation jackpot.

At present, I serve as a commander of the Demon Lord's forces. Vice-Commander of the Demon Lord's third regiment. That's my current title. It sounds impressive, but regiments aren't very big, and there's other vice-commanders aside from me.

Right now, my command consists of 56 werewolves, and 200 canine combat engineers my commander loaned to me for this operation. Our target is a remote trading city. Its name was Ryunheit, and it had a modest population of 3000, along with a walled perimeter.

From within my position inside the forest, I looked down at the city we would soon attack. As I waited, a messenger ran up to me to deliver a report.

"The enemy possesses roughly 200 men. They're currently spread out throughout the city on patrol."

“You’re certain of this?”

The young boy with a face of a beagle gave me a confused look.

“That’s the report I was given from the werewolf team that infiltrated the city, sir. I wouldn’t know how accurate it is...”

“Yeah, I suppose not.”

Our mission this time was not to annihilate the city, but to occupy it. I strode forward and gave orders to my messenger squad.

“Tell all canine squads to advance. Stick to the plan.”

“Yes, sir.”

They ran off to their respective squads, while I turned toward the city and began walking forward.

Ryunheit was a city that specialized in trade, so its front gates were larger than most to accommodate caravans. That being said, it wasn’t a very impressive gate. The walls, too, were not very high. In fact, they were made mostly of hardened mud, with the occasional stone or wooden bulwark. It was a wall meant to deter beasts and bandits, not withstand a siege.

Do they really feel safe with just that? A few guards watched over the main gate as a steady stream of traders and pilgrims trickled through. Most were let inside the city without question. *Guess they’ll let me in without a fuss, too.* At the moment, I looked like an ordinary young man with black hair. Contrary to my expectations, however, the guard lowered his spear as I approached the gate. He wore a simple helmet and breastplate, and didn’t seem particularly strong.

“You there, halt. I don’t recognize you.”

I came to a stop and pulled a bird-shaped whistle out of the sack on my back.

“I came here to deliver an order of toy whistles to one of my clients, the Betun Traders.”

“I see.”

The guard took the whistle and blew lightly into it. Out came a shrill tone, like whistles anywhere would.

“Fun to play with, right?”

“I...guess?” The guard awkwardly returned my smile and passed the whistle back to me.

“Alright, you can pass.”

“My thanks.”

Just then, a disturbance occurred further down the road.

“Monsters are coming!”

“Heeeeelp!”

A group of merchants were running for the gates, all of their wares held in their hands.

The guards sprang into motion, running forward to surround the merchants.

“What kind of monsters!?”

“C-Canines! Monsters with dog faces! They’re armed to the teeth!” one of the traders stammered, pale-faced.

“There’s hundreds of them!”

“Hurry up and get rid of them for us!”

The guards exchanged glances and got to work.

“Ring the bell! Three times!”

“Someone inform HQ! Send messengers to the other gates as well!”

“Close the gates! Everyone, inside!”

Panic engulfed the people. Travelers dithered back and forth while citizens scooped up their children and ran for safety. On the other hand, the soldiers worked as a cohesive unit. It was obvious they were well-trained. Not only that, they had excellent morale.

Meanwhile, I squeezed my way into the city along with the fleeing crowd. Once I was inside I found a relatively secluded corner, pulled out one of my

whistles, and blew it with all my might. This one made no sound—no sound that could be picked up by human ears, at any rate. Us werewolves heard the dog whistle loud and clear.

It was time to begin the next step of our plan. In order to not appear suspicious, I headed to the city's center along with the rest of the citizens. That was also where the viceroy's mansion happened to be.

Before long, the inside of the city was engulfed in chaos as well. "The monsters are here!"

"There's werewolves, too!"

It seemed my werewolf unit that had infiltrated the city earlier had gotten to work. The streets were in turmoil, but the city garrison was busy with the enemies outside and could do nothing to help. Even if they could, they didn't have enough information to act. Conflicting reports of canines outside the gates and werewolves inside had left the army confused and disoriented.

"There's canines inside, too!"

"Don't worry, the army's pushing them back!"

"O-Oh, alright then."

Their forces truly were in complete disarray. *Still, I wish they'd be able to tell the difference between cute-looking canines and fearsome werewolves. We're nothing like dogs!*

Everything appeared to be going according to plan, and none of the complications I'd been worried about cropped up. Which meant it was time for me to join the fray. I took a deep breath, and unleashed my inner beast, beginning my transformation.

"UWOOOOOH!"

I don't think I'll ever get tired of how awesome that feels. I felt power surge through me. It brought along a rush of euphoria that left me feeling like a giddy little kid.

Of course, the people around me weren't nearly as excited about my transformation.

“Eeeek!”

“Kyaaaaaaaaa!”

“It’s a monster!”

Excuse me? I’m no monster. I’m a demon. People often mistake us for monsters, but werewolves possess intelligence and culture, we’re a proper race. I mean, come on. Humans are mammals just like horses and wolves, but no one goes around screaming “Oh my god, it’s a mammal!” when they see a person. So yeah, we technically fall under the ‘monster’ category, but I’d prefer it if people called us demons. As I’m sure you can tell, this is a pet peeve of mine.

“S-Sir! There’s a wolf monster here!”

I said I was a demon, not a monster!

I smiled tiredly as I watched people flee before me. Since I had a wolf’s head at the moment, I don’t doubt everyone saw it as a feral grin, not an exhausted smile.

“Don’t worry, I don’t plan on eating any of you.” *It’s no good, no one’s listening.* It seemed I’d caused a bigger panic than I’d intended. People bowled over entire market stalls in their haste to escape.

In the span of a few seconds, the street had become empty. Everyone had fled into nearby buildings, or narrow back alleys. Thanks to my superior sense of hearing and smell, I was easily able to tell where they were hiding. *I know I look scary, but the fact that people are this terrified of me still kind of hurts. I used to be human too, you know. Besides, I thought my transformation was kinda cool, like the ones superheroes have in movies... Ah well.*

I heaved a weary sigh and kicked off the cobblestoned ground. My leap propelled me a good three stories into the air. From this height, I was able to get a good view of the whole city. As planned, my werewolf squad had the viceroy’s manor surrounded. The few guards protecting the manor had already been mauled beyond recognition.

“I told them to avoid killing as much as possible... Oh well.” Once a werewolf got going, it was hard for them to hold back. I ran across a series of rooftops and jumped down in front of the manor. Unfortunately, that was the same time

a squad of reinforcements happened to show up as well.

“Protect the viceroy!”

“Chaaarge!”

The five soldiers drew their weapons and charged. I sent the first of them flying with a back kick, then turned around and started attacking in earnest. I shattered one soldier’s sword with my bare arms, then jabbed his breastplate with my knuckles. I couldn’t use my claws, or I’d kill him.

“Gaah!”

Crap, did I overdo it again? Holding back’s harder than I thought. I dispatched the other three with low kicks, too afraid to use my arms against them. As it was, even my weak kicks shattered the soldiers’ legs, but at least that was something I could fix with magic later. In the blink of an eye, all five of the soldiers were lying defeated on the ground.

“I’ll heal you later, so just sleep there for now,” I said as I jumped up to the manor’s second-story window.

Compared to the glass in my old world, the glass here was far more crude. Not only was the window’s thickness uneven, it was filled with translucent bubbles that made it difficult to see through. Still, a pane of glass like this would have cost about a month’s income for a rich noble here. I smashed it without hesitation and strode into the viceroy’s manor.

The room I’d broken into was the viceroy’s own office. I’d examined the building’s blueprints before, and as I’d expected, the viceroy was here.

“Who are you!?”

I found myself being glared at by a woman in her early twenties. She was wearing a male official’s uniform, however, and a saber hung from her waist. She cut a rather gallant and dashing figure in the uniform; it was clear she was used to wearing men’s clothes. My guess was she normally wore them to work. *Though I guess now’s not the time to be thinking about that.*

A quick glance around the room told me there were no guards. Neither my nose nor my ears picked up traces of anyone else in the room. And my

werewolves had the outside of the manor surrounded. I bowed politely to the viceroy, doing my best not to antagonize her.

“I am Veight, Vice-Commander of the Demon Lord’s third regiment. You would be Viceroy Airia, correct?”

“None other.”

Pale-faced, Airia nevertheless put up a brave front as she nodded. Unfortunately, she couldn’t hide the trembling in her voice. She may not have had the fortitude of an emperor, but she would still make a fine general. A better one than me, that’s for sure. Out of respect for her courage, I tried to be as non-threatening as possible.

“My forces have captured your city. Further resistance would be meaningless. I advise you to surrender.”

“I will not!” Airia clenched her fists as she shouted. Why was it that people in power inevitably all had problems listening to other people?

“Ryunheit is an important lynchpin of our alliance! I will not allow it to fall into demon hands!”

Looks like I’m going to have to get a little violent, or we won’t get anywhere.

“Then die,” I snarled, baring my fangs.

As expected, the viceroy shrunk back in fear. Her trembling was understandable. She was up against a werewolf after all. Our claws could rend plate armor, and our legs could carry us faster than a galloping horse. A tiny girl such as herself had no chance against me. I took a step forward and put even more pressure on her.

“I will at least give you the honor of a noble death, befitting of your station. Draw your sword.”

Airia brought a trembling hand to her waist, but because of her fear she couldn’t even get a good grip on the weapon. She clearly wasn’t used to fighting.

“I-I am the V-Viceroy of Ryunheit... Marquis...”

In her confusion, she’d started declaring her name. Normally, in duels in this

world, you did that *after* drawing your weapon, not before.

I grinned and roared at her. Though it wasn't a very loud roar, the remaining windows vibrated from the force. Airia let out a yelp and fell backwards, her saber dropping from her limp fingers.

"Hiii—"

It was a pretty comedic reaction from my perspective, but I could see why she was so terrified. Had I still been human, I'd have pissed my pants facing a werewolf.

I snapped my jaws shut and sat down on the lavish rug in front of her. There was no need to intimidate her any further.

"That puny saber won't even be able to put a scratch on me. And even if you could somehow beat me, it's too late to save your city. Surrender."



Airia once more picked up her blade, but this time pointed it at herself. Pale, lips trembling, she said, “Th-Then I’ll...”

“Wait, hold up!”

I hurriedly snatch the saber out of her hands. *What is she, crazy!?* In my haste, I’d grabbed the sword by the blade. It wasn’t sharp enough to cut through my tough hide, but it still hurt. About as much as gripping a plastic ruler really tightly by the edges would.

“What point is there in killing yourself!? Think about this rationally!”

“Rationally?” Airia looked up at me with a dumbfounded expression on her face. It seemed she was too shocked to think straight. I sighed and looked her in the eyes.

“Look, our army’s already taken the city. We’ve tried our best not to kill any of the citizens, but I understand why you’re scared. With me so far?”

“Y-Yes... I understand.” Airia nodded over and over, like a terrified child. I nodded back and continued my explanation.

“We do plan on ruling this city from now on, but we have no intentions of killing you, or turning you into our slaves.”

“What?”

Is that really so surprising? Unable to comprehend what she’d just heard, Airia followed up with a question.

“Th-Then, what on earth did you come here for?”

I guess the humans have some misconceptions as to what we actually do. Ah well, I suppose I should explain.

“We don’t want a slaughter. To be honest, we’d prefer you all to keep going on about your lives normally. And for that, we’ll need a human leader. See where I’m going with this?”

“Umm... You want me to continue being the viceroy?”

“That’s right.”

Thank god she’s an understanding person.

“We need your help to keep friction in the city to a minimum, so please just surrender and cooperate with the demon army. If there’s any demands the humans have as well, we’re willing to listen, so long as they’re not unreasonable.”

I waited patiently for Airia’s response. Though she still appeared to have a few misgivings, the light had returned to her eyes. She sure did come to her decision quickly.

“If I found you’ve lied to me in any way, I’ll rally the citizens to fight back with everything we have. Are you still sure you want to make that offer?”

“That’s fine by me. The Demon Lord personally gave me full authority over administration of this city.”

I nodded my consent, and Airia got to her feet. She held out her hand, and I obediently returned her saber back to her. She held it reverently for a few seconds before respectfully offering it back to me.

“I, Airia Lutt Aindorf, Viceroy of Rynheit, formally surrender to the Demon Lord’s army. I humbly request that you have mercy on my men.”

“I hereby accept your surrender.”

With that, the battle was officially over.

Events progressed rapidly after that. Airia collected her terrified servants and began giving out orders.

“Get me the messengers. Tell all units they are to cease hostilities immediately. We have surrendered to the demon army.”

Crap, that reminds me. I need to let my men know it’s over too.

“I’m gonna start howling, but don’t be scared. I’m just contacting my men.”

Airia’s servants had looked like they were about to faint just from seeing me, so I was trying to be as considerate as possible. I turned to the window and howled as loudly as I could.

“AWOOOOOOO!”

Anything made of glass in the room shivered, and the servants all screamed and fell on their backs. A few of them wet themselves. *Oops. I guess that was my fault.* Still, with that, my orders reached every corner of the city. Coded within my roar was the message.

“Commander has been defeated. Gather.”

Seconds later, a series of howled replies reached my ears.

“On our way.”

“Roger.”

“No injured in our squad.”

The howls faded away after everyone finished their reports. The fighting, which had been going overwhelmingly in our favor, came to an end. *I just hope those guys didn't kill too many people.*

Soon enough, all of the werewolves gathered at the plaza in front of the viceroy's manor. Each and every one of the men and women under my command looked quite intimidating. And though they were under my command, they technically weren't my subordinates.

“It's been a while since I last went on a rampage. Were battles always this tiring? My poor hips ache.” A gray-haired werewolf walked up to me and grinned. It was Vod, the old geezer who lived in my neighborhood. In his human form, he looked like a kindly old man with white hair.

“It was probably good for you to get some exercise, old man. When you get to our age, you gotta keep fighting or you'll go senile.” Mary, the old lady who ran the nearby grocery store grinned at Vod. She was a kind woman who always threw in a few freebies when I shopped at her place.

“Oh? We're done already?”

“Holding back tired me out more than if we'd just been allowed to cut loose...”

The werewolves I'd led for this operation were all my friends and neighbors. Which was why they acted so friendly with me. Werewolves always hunted in packs. Those who lived in the same town were all part of one pack. Whenever

they had to fight, they'd fight together like this.

That being said, werewolves were also demons. And there was only one thing demons respected: strength. Werewolves were no exception. Those who doubted my power and ability to lead started voicing their complaints.

“Hey Veight, how come we're being so soft on these humans?” A large werewolf with a striking crimson mane looked up at me. He was Nibert Garney, the younger of the Garney brothers. His elder brother, Garbert, strode forward and voiced his discontent as well. “Did you forget how many of our ancestors were hunted down by human scum like these? We should slaughter the lot of them.”

I had been friends with both of them since childhood, and I knew they were stronger than me. In general, werewolves with red manes were stronger than others. So much so that they were given exaggerated nicknames like ‘hunters of the blood moon’ and so on. That being said, they were definitely tough. And because they had such confidence in their skills, they were unhappy with the fact that they were taking orders from me.

Ah well. As someone who used to be human, having to solve everything with violence is just a pain. But that's the only thing that'll get through to these two.

I leapt out of the second-story window and landed in front of the Garney brothers.

“Got a problem with my orders?”

The two of them exchanged glances. They probably thought they could take me if they attacked together. As expected, they puffed out their chests and attempted to intimidate me.

“That's right, I don't like your half-assed attitude. I should be the leader of this pack!”

Both brothers were a head taller than me, and they certainly looked imposing. It was obvious they wanted a fight. The other werewolves could tell as well, and they backed away to make space. No one else wanted to challenge me, it seemed.

I glared at the two brothers and said firmly, “I'm the one in charge here. If you

don't like my orders, beat me down and take my position by force."

"You sure you wanna say that?"

The Garney brothers grinned. Among the werewolves here, they were the strongest. Not only did they have burly bodies, they had trained constantly. One of the two always took the championship at the annual wrestling contest we held every harvest festival.

In a fair fight, I wouldn't even be able to beat one of them, let alone both. Even when we were kids, I'd never been able to beat either of them no matter what I did. But right now, I was a vice-commander of the Demon Lord's army. For one, very good reason. I smiled.

"Let's see if you're still saying that after you hear this."

I unleashed a howl completely different from the ones before. Shockwaves of sound blew through the streets, shaking trees and buildings. This time, all of the windows in the viceroy's manor shattered.

"Ugh!"

"Uwaah!?"

The Garney brothers staggered backwards. The other werewolves crouched on the spot, rooted there by fear. A werewolf's roar had the power to instill fear into the hearts of men and beasts. Its effect was weakened on those who had a strong will to fight, and it was entirely ineffective against demons of the same class or higher. Naturally, this meant it was useless against other werewolves.

However, my roar was laced with mana—enhanced by the power of magic. For I wasn't a warrior, but a mage. Vice-Commander of the Demon Lord's third regiment, Veight the Werewolf Mage. That was who I was.

The spell I'd used in this particular instance was called 'Soul Shaker.' By manipulating the mana around me, I was able to turn my roar into something that could affect other demons as well. The spell's primary effect was actually to seal away the magic of any humans in the vicinity for a short period of time, while simultaneously improving the power of my allies' spells. It just also happened to possess the secondary effect of striking terror into the hearts of anyone who opposed me, regardless of how brave or determined they might

be. Trying to break free from my spell with willpower was akin to resisting anesthetics with resolve.

Naturally, the Garney brothers were unable to do a thing.

“Uwaah...”

“B-Bro—”

In their current state, I could kill the two of them with ease. I slowly walked up to the pair of them, and lightly tapped their stomachs with my fists. Seeing the two of them tremble, I grinned.

“Trust me now?”

I disabled my magic, and the brothers both sucked in deep breaths. Though they’d regained the ability to move, they no longer possessed the will to fight. Their ears drooped, just like beaten dogs. Finally, the older of the Garney brothers opened his mouth. His fur, which was usually bristling with vitality, seemed oddly colorless. It was proof he’d submitted.

“Y-Yeah... I won’t disobey you anymore... You’re...the boss.”

“That’s right.” I turned to the other werewolves with a smile. “Our third regiment has captured the trading city of Rynheit! From now on, violence in the city is expressly forbidden, except in cases of self-defense!”

The werewolves lowered their heads in assent. I then began explaining our plan from here on out.

“Our objective is to transform this city into a forward base for the demon army’s future operations in the area. In other words, harming the citizens or the city’s infrastructure runs counter to our goals, understand?”

“No, I don’t get it, actually,” the younger of the Garney brothers replied. He wasn’t looking for a fight anymore; he genuinely just didn’t understand. While the Garney brothers were tough, they were also dumb as bricks. They always had been. I decided to simplify my explanation enough so even idiots like them could understand.

“Okay, look. This city is like a tasty deer meant for the Demon Lord’s army. So you fools better not make a mess of it and rip it to shreds before they get here.

Anyone steps out of line, and I kill them.”

“Ahh, I get it now.”

This time the Garney brothers nodded their understanding. I wasn't sure if they'd really understood or not, but I'd have to settle with this for now.

The older brother folded his arms and muttered, “You think we'll be able to live together with the humans, though? Seems to me they're all ready to kill us in our sleep.”

He did have a point. The animosity coming from the inhabitants was palpable.

“Figuring out how to make things work is my job. In fact, I'm the only one capable of doing it, so you guys better listen to my orders.”

“Y-You got it, boss.”

At my glare, the two brothers nodded hurriedly. After confirming their obedience, I turned back to the other werewolves and continued my speech.

“Anyway, as far as meals go, you will be well-fed as long as you are here. If you want to hunt, you're welcome to hunt as much as you like in the nearby forest. The only thing you're forbidden from doing is attacking humans. Are we clear?”

To be honest, it was kind of tough giving orders to my friends and neighbors. Which was probably why my speech had gotten a little awkward at the end. Still, it seemed everyone was willing to cooperate.

“Hohoho, no problem, kid. I'm fine with following your orders.”

“Besides, it'll be good to get a rest before the next battle.”

Since the elders had shown their support, the younger werewolves followed suit.

“Man, I'm starving! Hey Veight, when do we get to eat?”

“And where are we staying, anyway? You're not gonna tell us to camp out, are you?”

“Oh shut up, you brats! I'll get all that sorted out too, so stop bugging me!”

The werewolf squad had been understaffed, so we'd padded our numbers out

with everyone from the elderly to kids barely old enough to fight. The only people still in our village were the very elderly, a few sick people, and kids too young to be useful on the battlefield. Oh, and their parents.

We may have looked like a fearsome crew, and we definitely were pretty ferocious in a fight, but it's not like our unit was made up of veteran fighters or anything. The two kids who'd badgered me earlier were barely in their teens. This was a city of 3000, while my werewolves numbered a mere 56. Even if I included the 200 canine corps waiting outside the city, I didn't have the manpower to fight back in the event of a revolt.

Are we really going to be alright? Even I wasn't sure I'd be able to maintain control.

I may have captured Ryunheit in under an hour, but keeping it was going to take a lot more work. The biggest issue was the number of casualties. I hadn't expected it to be so high. There hadn't been any werewolf casualties, but the number of slain Ryunheit soldiers was staggering. Everyone had done their best to hold back, but even so, 70 men had died in the attack, with over a hundred more gravely injured. If we'd fought at full strength, it's possible we would have wiped out Ryunheit's entire garrison.

I used my shoddy healing magic skills to heal as many of the soldiers as I could. My magic could only do as much as a hospital in my old world would have been able to, but considering the medical development of this world, that in itself was really fortunate. At a hospital here, there was a high chance you'd die from infection or poor quality medicine, so the soldiers had it well off by comparison.

I went to the last injured soldier and put my hand over his broken bones. I'd only dabbled in healing magic in order to properly learn strengthening magic, but I knew enough to deal with simple wounds like these. Shocked, the soldier looked from my hand to my face as he felt the pain recede. *That should do it.*

"Any other injured?"

I transformed back into my human form and swept my robe back. I'd maintained my wolf form while healing in case any of the soldiers tried to attack

me, but it appeared that had been a needless worry.

Mages were the elites of this world. They were far more important than even doctors or lawyers were back in my old world. Even in a decently large city such as this one, there probably wasn't anyone able to match my magical skills. In general, demons tended to make better magicians than humans. Which meant that, to these soldiers, even my crappy healing magic must have seemed remarkable. Though their wounds had been healed, the soldiers still appeared tense, so I decided to reassure them a little.

"Few have the courage to stand and fight when face-to-face with a werewolf. Even fewer have come out of a tussle with one alive. We may have been holding back, but that doesn't change the fact that you are hardened warriors, worthy of respect."

I doubted they were happy to be praised after hearing we'd held back, but I needed to emphasize the difference in strength between us. This was just the best way I could think of doing it without also hurting their pride. *Dealing with people sure is difficult.*

"Your Viceroy, Airia, has promised to hold a service for the seventy men who fell in battle. They may have been my enemy, but they were truly brave soldiers."

If anything, I'd say they were more unlucky than brave, seeing as they died even though we held back. 'Course, no one would be happy to hear that. Better to make them into heroes. I bowed to the remaining soldiers and left the barracks.

Man, that was awkward...

There was a mountain of things I still needed to do. First, after agonizing over whether or not to let the canine corps in, I ended up compromising by letting them camp right outside the castle gate.

Canines were weak. In a fair fight, they'd lose even to the average farmer. If I let them into the city and the people decided to revolt, it'd be impossible to protect them. I didn't have enough werewolves to guard them all. It was smarter just to leave them outside for now. And since I was leaving them near

the walls anyway, I ordered them to thoroughly investigate said walls. Canines were primarily silversmiths, and they were far more skilled craftsmen than werewolves. If there was anything strange about this city's walls, they'd discover it straight away.

Canines were light eaters, and they had brought their own supplies with them, so I didn't need to worry about feeding them for now. Feeding the werewolves, on the other hand, was going to be quite an ordeal. Most werewolves ate more than an Olympic athlete, including myself. Fortunately there weren't too many of us, so I was able to convince the viceroy to pay for our meals. As long as you kept them fed, you could keep werewolves docile.

For safety reasons, I split my squad into two groups and had them lodge in separate places. My squad was to stay in the viceroy's manor, while another would stay with the canines to protect them. The problem was, I didn't know who to appoint as leader of the other squad.

Both of the Garney brothers were out of the question. I needed to keep them under constant supervision, or who knew what kind of trouble they'd cause. They were idiots, after all. Ideally I'd ask one of the elders to do it, but once a werewolf returned to their human forms, they had the stamina of a normal human their age. The fighting this afternoon had been fierce, and I wanted to let them rest.

As I was deliberating, a woman slightly older than me walked over. She was another of my neighbors, Fahn. She also happened to be my first love. Back when we were five, I'd asked her to marry me. To which she'd said yes, with a smile.

"Veight, would it be alright if I take charge of the second squad?"

"That's fine by me, Fahn-onee... I mean Fahn."

Whoops, I almost used the nickname I'd called her by when we were kids.
Fahn snickered in response and nodded.

"We just have to guard the canine unit and keep watch over the gates, right? I've become pretty good friends with those guys, so just leave it to me."

Come to think of it, she *was* a big fan of dogs. When we'd been marching

she'd spent most of her time cuddling with the canines. Plus, she was dependable, and someone I could trust. Not only that, in terms of pure strength, she was stronger than me. I'd need magic to beat her.

She always won the girls' wrestling tournament back in our village, and she'd be able to give even the Garney brothers a run for their money. In fact, she was the only person who intimidated them. Seeing as she wasn't lacking in qualifications, I wasted no time in appointing her the commander of the second squad.

"Alright, you've been promoted to Vice-Captain. Here's a list of the members I was thinking of assigning to your squad. If you want to swap any of them out I don't mind."

"Let's see here... Yep, this'll be just fine. Just leave the rest to me."

Fahn winked, causing my heart to skip a beat. I kept my excitement off my face, and said in a commander-like tone, "I'll be counting on you, Fahn."

"You got it, Sir Vice-Commander."

She bowed to me with a smile, took the list from my hands, and walked off. *I wonder what she'd say if I asked her to marry me now?*

"This is more exhausting than I thought..." I sighed as I looked out at the city, dyed orange by the dying light of the setting sun. I was sitting in one of the viceroy's guest rooms, which I'd appropriated for myself. Should citizens decide to revolt, I didn't have the manpower to settle things peacefully. The only way to maintain my hold on the town would be to kill anyone who resisted. *I really hope nothing happens.*

Just then, I heard a knock at my door.

"Enter."

Ryunheit's Viceroy, Airia, walked into the room. As promised, I hadn't stripped her of her title. Not only was she a competent leader, she had the trust of her people. It would have been a waste to replace her. Now the only problem was whether or not she'd cooperate with us as promised. At this point, I still couldn't be sure. One word from her would be all it took to incite the citizens to

revolt. It was possible she'd try and gather her elite guards to try and assassinate me too.

Of course, nothing she might try would actually pose a threat, but it would still mean I'd failed to occupy Ryunheit peacefully. Airia watched me curiously and said, "Is something wrong, Sir Veight?"

"Ah, no, it's nothing. Anyway, what did you need, Lady Airia?"

Since we were both leaders of our respective camps, it was imperative that we treated each other with courtesy. Airia looked down apologetically and said, "I have managed to suppress any discontent in the city. At present, I don't think the citizens will attempt to revolt, or escape."

"I see, that's good to know. I'll probably have to restrict the freedom of the residents for a little bit while things settle down, but I aim to have this city running normally as fast as possible."

For some reason, my words made Airia look even more apologetic.

"That shouldn't be a problem. However..." Airia trailed off. She seemed to be picking her words very carefully. Whatever it was she wanted to say, she was having a hard time saying it.

"Is there something you need from me? If it's within my power to grant, I don't mind hearing out your request."

"Oh no, that's not it... The thing is, Sir Veight..."

Her expression grew even more troubled. This was a good opportunity to show off how tolerant I could be to my conquered subjects.

"Don't worry, I promise not to resort to violence, no matter what it is you have to report."

After seeing my serious expression, Airia finally decided to talk.

"The truth is, there is one complication with regards to the soldiers stationed here."

"There is?"

I thought they'd surrendered quietly, but I guess that wasn't the case.

According to Airia, the problem was that the city's garrison didn't actually belong to her. The soldiers stationed in Ryunheit were actually under the direct command of the Meraldia Commonwealth, which Ryunheit was a part of. In other words, only the Meraldian senate could give orders to the men.

Before the city-states in the region had coalesced into a single nation, they had often fought with each other. For this reason, when Meraldia had been formed, it had been decided that only the senate had authority over the troops stationed in each city. Without the senate's permission, no large-scale orders could be given. The Meraldia Commonwealth was comprised of seventeen city-states of varying sizes. It lay due east of the Great Forest that the demons had made their home, so conflicts between them and the demons were common. In fact, at the start of the current war, the Demon Lord's army had had its hands full dealing with the subjugation army Meraldia had dispatched.

Regardless, I could understand that Airia was dealing with a rather complicated situation. Just to make sure, I confirmed I had the facts straight.

"So what you're saying is, even if they have agreed to surrender, you don't have the authority to force them to cooperate with us?"

"Precisely. All I can do is implore that they acquiesce."

As far as I could tell, Airia wasn't lying. It turned out, humans gave off a peculiar odor when they lied. One that a werewolf's sensitive nose could easily pick out.

"That's definitely a problem."

I folded my arms and lapsed into thought. *There's only 200 soldiers left, but I need them to maintain public order. If the city's garrison refuses to cooperate with us, then I'll have to ask my werewolves to patrol the streets instead. But there's not nearly enough of them, and they're not suited to this kind of work. Plus, if my men are busy keeping the peace, I'll only have my canine unit to fight the army Meraldia's undoubtedly gonna send to recapture the city. There's no way I'll be able to win with just them.*

"Hmm..."

A normal demon would have attempted to threaten the soldiers, or kill half of

them to make an example out of anyone who resisted, but that wasn't my style. Rule through fear inevitably invited revolt. And maintaining just the right amount of fear so that people obeyed you, but not enough that they felt compelled to fight back, was far too much effort. The risk of pushing your populace over the edge was always present, too. Besides, as a former human, I wanted to avoid killing humans outside of the battlefield.

Seeing my troubled expression, Airia timidly asked, "You're not going to make an example out of the soldiers?"

"Do you want me to?" I said with a wry smile, and Airia firmly shook her head.

"No, not at all. I simply thought you would turn to force to resolve this issue."

"Forcibly imposing your will on others works for demons, but not for humans."

I could understand the soldiers' concerns. If they chose to side with us, they would be tried as traitors if Meraldia successfully retook the city. After thinking about it for a while, I decided it would be better to give up on obtaining the soldiers' cooperation.

"I can see why it would be a difficult choice for them. In that case, as long as they're willing to disarm, I won't ask for anything more. Please let them know that."

"Understood...and thank you for being merciful."

Airia breathed a sigh of relief upon learning that I wouldn't do anything horrific to the soldiers. Her business concluded, she turned to leave. When she reached the door, she hesitated for a few seconds, before ultimately turning back to face me.

"Umm..."

"What seems to be the matter?"

At my urging, Airia gathered her resolve and opened her mouth. "If all you want is to maintain order, you could ask the merchants guild to patrol the streets instead."

"The guild?"

“The various branch offices of the guild have always helped patrol the city and maintain the fire brigades. Too much crime would negatively impact business, so they have an incentive to keep the city safe.”

I see, so they're basically like a neighborhood watch. I'd lived in a large city in my previous life, and I had been raised in a werewolf community in my current, so such a possibility hadn't even occurred to me.

Airia continued without waiting for my reply, “This city's guild falls within my jurisdiction. They might not make for as effective patrols as armed guards would, but it wouldn't hurt to ask I imagine.”

I mulled her suggestion over. Her proposal was certainly beneficial for me, but it didn't serve her interests in any way. In fact, it would make her indebted to the merchants guild. I needed to know why she was doing this before accepting.

“Why would you go so far to help me?”

Her response wasn't one I was expecting.

“Because I'm grateful to you, Sir Veight.”

“You...are?”

The last thing I had expected was for her to be thanking her conquerors. Airia's expression softened and she continued, “During the battle, you and your men didn't attack anyone other than the soldiers. Even though with your strength, you could have easily started slaughtering the citizens.”

“I suppose that's true.”

I could have, but there really wouldn't have been any point to it. Nor was it really a reason to be thanking me. However, it seemed Airia thought differently. She bowed her head and said, “I hope you will continue showing such mercy to the people of my city. If cooperating with you will help ensure that, then I will offer up everything I can.”

So if it's to protect her city, she's willing to negotiate with the demon army, huh? Even if Rynheit did get retaken by Meraldia's forces, they wouldn't be able to try the citizens as traitors, since they had been acting under the viceroy's orders. It seemed this cross-dressing woman was no mere coward, nor

a simple pushover. She let herself get flustered a little too easily, but she was otherwise a hardened realist who was well-suited to her post. Now that I knew where she was coming from, there was no reason to not to accept her aid.

“Thank you. I promise to repay this debt someday. So I would like you to use your authority to mobilize the merchants guild.”

“Understood.”

Airia smiled in relief. It was a rather beautiful smile.

Thanks to Airia’s assistance, I was able to solve all of my most pressing issues and get a good night’s sleep. I did post a watch, just in case, but the city remained quiet through the night. By the next morning, life in Ryunheit had already returned to a relative degree of normalcy.

“Last night, we caught some thieves who were hoping to go unnoticed during the confusion of the occupation.”

One of my werewolves came to report that to me first thing this morning. He was looking at me with something akin to hero worship. My standoff with the Garney brothers yesterday must have left an impression.

“What should we do about them, sir? Execute them as a warning to others?”

Had he been in his wolf form, I don’t doubt that his tail would be wagging back and forth right now. He looked just like a puppy begging its master to play with him. However, execution was a little extreme. I shook my head.

“We’re soldiers, not police.”

“Po-lice?”

He tilted his head in confusion, so I explained it in simpler terms.

“Basically, let the humans in charge of keeping order handle it. They’ll be punished according to the laws of the city. Speaking of which, what do Ryunheit’s laws say the punishment for stealing is?”

I turned to the human secretary sitting next to me, and she hastened to reply.

“In the case of theft or property damage, reimbursement equal to the value

of the stolen or destroyed goods must be paid. In the event that reimbursement cannot be made, the criminal is sentenced to forced labor until they have repaid twice the value of the lost goods.”

“There you go. Send them to work in the fields until they’ve paid off their debts.”

“Why farm work?”

“Because we’ve got two hundred fifty-six new permanent residents here, and they need to be fed.”

Naturally, I was referring to us. I could get by requisitioning supplies from the citizens, but if I kept doing it for too long they’d begin to resent us. Nothing nurtures a grudge like an empty stomach. As the day progressed, plenty of other people showed up with minor issues that needed resolving.

“The merchants who ended up trapped here because of the fighting are requesting that we let them leave the city so they can resume their journeys.”

“According to the canine unit, the sewer system that runs beneath the castle walls is in dire need of repair.”

“The Garney brothers are asking for more food.”

I was stuck taking care of one problem after another.

“Tell them that no one is allowed out of the city at present. As for their goods, buy all of their stock at a premium and tell them to stay at an inn for now,” I replied at once.

The problem is, how am I going to pay for all that... I guess I have no choice but to ask Airia. I just keep putting myself further in her debt.

“It’ll be dangerous if we leave the sewage system alone, so tell the canine unit to start repairs immediately. Make sure you post guards around the area as well, it’s possible enemies might try and sneak in through there.”

Unfortunately, the 200 strong canine unit wasn’t large enough to handle this project on their own. Since they worked in shifts, only 60 of them were active at any point in time. Finding manpower to assist them wouldn’t be easy though.

“And as for the Garney brothers, give them more work and tell them to buy

extra food with the money they earn. If they wanna eat, they better make themselves useful.”

It was almost noon, and I hadn’t even had breakfast yet. Now was probably a good time to take a break and get some food. I rose to my feet and stretched my limbs.

“Phew...”

“Good work.” A cute, childish voice answered me. Surprised, I turned around to see a young girl sporting a pointed hat and a cape. I instantly dropped to one knee and bowed.

“I am gladdened by your return, Commander Gomoviroa.”

“How many times must I tell you, call me Gomo.”

Commander of the Demon Lord’s third regiment, Gomoviroa the Great Sage, puffed out her cheeks unhappily. She looked just like a child. However, this child-like girl was the strongest mage in the Demon Lord’s army, and though she was human, she was one of the Demon Lord’s closest aides. She also happened to be my magic teacher.

“I could never. At least allow me to call you Master.”

“Why must you insist on being so stubborn?” Gomoviroa sighed, but in the next second her annoyance vanished and she smiled. “No matter. You did well, capturing Ryunheit as swiftly as you did.”

“It was all thanks to you, Master. By the way...”

If my master had arrived, that would mean her personal squad of elites should be here as well. I was banking on them to help with managing the city. Gomoviroa’s smile grew wider as I trailed off.

“I see my Bone Spears are in high demand. Fear not, I have sent my two thousand men to rendezvous with the canine squad.”

“One step ahead as always, I see.”

My master’s specialty was necromancy. The skeleton warriors she raised were all skilled warriors who moved with precision. If we had her 2,000 Bone Spears, we would be able to hold out against human armies several times larger. Not

only that, since they were undead they didn't require food or rest. My master heaved another sigh.

"I certainly hope you aren't thinking something like 'Undead soldiers don't need food, so I won't have to worry about upkeep if I have them.'"

"Uhh, well..."

"Have you no consideration for the amount of effort it takes to create them? Each and every one of my soldiers is crafted with love and care."

"Says the woman who makes hundreds every day."

"Did you say something?"

"Oh no, not at all."

While my master was an accomplished mage, she wasn't a very skilled strategist. So it wasn't surprising that she didn't understand my hardships.

"If food is your concern, could you not just requisition supplies from the citizenry? Even humans do it to each other."

"I'd rather not, if I could help it. I don't want the people to resent us."

"You are certainly asking for a lot, wanting the people you conquered not to resent you," she said with a chuckle. Though my master was human, her thought processes were just like a demon's. If she felt like it, she could obliterate the viceroy's manor with a snap of her fingers. In fact, she could turn the entire city to ash in less than a day without a second thought. It was hard to say whether she was really even human anymore.

That being said, she still remembered what it was like to be human, and she was part of the more moderate faction within the Demon Lord's camp.

"Though I suppose it was because of your considerate personality that I took you on as my disciple in the first place. I would never teach my secrets to one who thirsts for blood."

"Glad to hear it."

I still clearly remember the conversation we had the first day I met her.

“You wish to become a magician? Why would a werewolf turn to magic?”

“I’m...not really that strong. But I want to be!”

“For what purpose?”

“I want to protect everyone in the village. Also... I kinda want the other kids to respect me more.”

“You’re one honest kid... Very well, I suppose we can at least find out whether or not you have the aptitude to use magic.”

“Really!? Thank you so much!”

“But know that if you lack the talent, you will have no choice but to... Are you even listening to me?”

Gomoviroa smiled wryly at me; she must have been thinking back to the same conversation.

“I knew it was theoretically possible for werewolves to possess the necessary talent, but I never thought you would come so far. A shame you have no affinity for necromancy whatsoever.”

“Well, I *am* a werewolf.”

I was most skilled in body strengthening magic, mostly because I could only use magic that affected living creatures directly. If I were to explain it in RPG terms, I was basically a support buffer class. And though I’d originally taken it up as just a hobby, I’d become somewhat proficient in healing magic as well. Thanks to my magical abilities, I’d become one of the strongest werewolves around. And since werewolves were one of the stronger demon races, in terms of overall rankings, I was pretty high up there. My career had ended up stalling at mere vice-commander, though...

“By the way, Master, what are you doing here? I thought you were staying in the castle?”

When I’d talked to her at the Demon Lord’s castle, she had said she would remain there. The second and third regiments had planned on invading multiple cities simultaneously, and so the commanders had planned to remain behind

with the reserves and dispatch them as the situation developed.

Still smiling, Gomoviroa said, "I stayed behind to support the army most in need of assistance. It seems to me that would be yours, would it not? All of my other disciples were provided with ample soldiers, so they have no need of my help."

"I-I guess that's true."

So we really did spread our forces too thin. Still, under my command we'd managed to capture our assigned city. I puffed my chest out proudly.

"Though, I did manage to capture my city with the smallest squad out of everyone. With zero casualties, too. Pretty impressive, wouldn't you say?"

"I will admit you did well in utilizing your werewolves' unique traits to their maximum, but I also have no doubt you spent the night cowering in fear of a revolt."

"How did you know?"

"I know your personality in and out, boy."

With a smile, she floated into the air and alighted on my shoulder.

"Is there anyone you can delegate leadership to?"

"Ah, yes. I've already put Fahn in charge of the unit at the castle gates, so that's one burden off my shoulders. Did you meet her on your way in?"

"Ah, that girl you fancy."

"How do you know that?"

"I know your tastes in and out, too." She grinned mischievously. "Teasing aside, I would like to borrow you for a moment. We need to report to the Demon Lord."

"You want me to go too?"

I found it strange that the Demon Lord would want to listen to a report from a mere vice-commander. Normally, it was the commander's job to send reports to him. However, Gomoviroa shook her head and said, "The Demon Lord expressed that he wished to hear the particulars from the general who led the

operation. Stop asking questions and follow me.”

My master chanted a spell in a singsong voice. A second later, my vision grew blurry and the space around me warped.

* * * *

—Gomoviroa’s Memoir, Page 160—

My beloved disciples have grown up splendidly. They have risen to prominent ranks in the Demon Lord’s army, and all lead a squad of soldiers. My werewolf disciple, Veight, has made much progress as well. As far as I am aware, he is the only werewolf mage in history. That makes his growth all the more spectacular. Though I must admit, he is quite a peculiar child. One would have to be peculiar to aspire to be a mage as a werewolf, but that’s not the only thing odd about him. It’s true his talents lie in strengthening magic, but even so, his understanding of a person’s body is phenomenal.

Take, for example, detoxification. It is known that concentrating one’s magic in the right side of their stomach when attempting to expunge poisons is the most effective method. The prevailing theories as to why are either that toxins gather in that area of the body, or that somewhere near there lies an organ that assists with detoxification. When I’d first taken Veight on as my apprentice, he’d already known that. Once I’d taught him the basics of detoxification magic, he seemed to understand instantly why his right flank was the correct place to concentrate his mana. To be honest, it shocked even me.

Veight seems to have a natural sense for which parts of the body need the application of strengthening to achieve the effects he wants. As such, he knows that the best way to alleviate exhaustion is to focus mana into one’s right flank. And that to slake thirst, mana should be applied not to the throat, but one’s waist. He even knows that focusing on the back and waist muscles, rather than one’s arms or legs, is more important when it comes to close-combat fighting.

These are all things normal practitioners don’t notice until they have accumulated more experience. And yet, Veight figures out the optimal way to apply each spell the moment he learns it. It’s possible I may have picked up a hidden genius. But the reason I value Veight isn’t just his magical talent. His

perspective on life is nothing like a normal demon's. For a werewolf, he's unbelievably passive, and slow to anger. Though he is by no means physically weak, he's unsuited to the style of combat most werewolves prefer. But his wisdom and unorthodox methods are precisely what the demon army needs right now. It is for this reason that I have not yet passed down my final techniques to him. For him to reach his peak as a simple magician would be a colossal waste of his talents.

There is an ancient saying that goes "To serve muddy water in a cup of gold is the height of folly." I wish for him to grow further before bestowing upon him the secrets of magic. However, the fact that I have taught this to all my disciples but him seems to have given him the misconception that he is inferior by comparison. This misconception will need to be remedied eventually. After all, it is my hope and expectation that he will reach the pinnacle of strengthening magic.

Regardless, I have recommended Veight to the Demon Lord. My other disciples are of course all splendid as well, but he alone is special. There is no one like him within our nation.

It is my firm belief that he will accomplish great things.

* * * *

—The Demon Army's Operating Headquarters, Grenschtat Castle—

While the castle name sounded impressive, the truth was it was just a run-down border castle. It had originally been a human fortress that had been abandoned centuries ago after an internal conflict between human kingdoms. The demons had found it much later, repaired it with magic, made it nigh-impregnable, and were now using it as their forward base. The fortress was surrounded by a dense magical fog that made it both invisible and impossible to approach. Any human that touched the fog would be left paralyzed, and sensors inside the mist would inform the castle of their location. Even if the humans sent an army, they would just be annihilated before reaching the castle.

I walked through the mist, my master riding atop my shoulder. To us demons,

the fog just felt mildly pleasant. Teleportation magic was sealed within the castle, so we had no choice but to go on foot from the main gates. I was in my werewolf form to avoid causing any misunderstandings with the guards.

“Despite how creepy it looks, it’s actually kind of nice here.”

“I happen to be a human, so I’m afraid I cannot say the same—but I suppose it’s not unpleasant, at least.”

So she really has thrown away half of her humanity. The dragonkin guarding the gates recognized my face and let us pass without question. All of the guards within the castle were highly skilled dragonkin. They belonged to the first regiment, which was headed directly by the Demon Lord himself. As I strode across the castle’s courtyard, I sensed a figure approaching from beyond the mist. Whoever it was, they were massive.

“Him, huh?”

At Gomoviroia’s muttered words, I too realized who was coming. I would recognize that stench of blood anywhere.

“If it isn’ da third regimen’s commander.”

The mist parted to reveal a giant with the face of a beast. He was easily three meters tall. Twice my height. He was also an ogre. Ogres in this world didn’t look too different from how RPGs had envisioned them. He was wearing only a crude loincloth and carried a massive steel club.

This man, Dogg, happened to be a Vice-Commander of the second regiment, and the general who led the ogre corps. His name might have sounded funny, but laugh at it and you’d likely get your brains bashed out. Apparently, among ogres, the name meant ‘Mad Dog.’ Which, to be honest, just made it sound more laughable.

Without even the barest hint of respect to my master’s title, he gave her a coarse greeting before turning to me.

“Goin’ ta give your report? Took ya long enough,” he sneered.

I guess that means he already finished giving his. He couldn’t have beat us here by more than a few minutes at most, but all this lump of muscle cared

about was winning, even when it wasn't a competition. When he saw I wasn't going to take the bait, he tried to needle me some more.

"I dun care if ya took down a tradin' city or whatever, is it really worth comin' all da way back here to report about in person? I'll have ya know I took down da minin' city of Boltz."

Dogg puffed his chest out proudly and raised his club up high. *Is that really something to get that excited about?*

"Do ya get what dat means? I took down a *minin'* city. Dat means tis got ore. Tradin' cities dun got no ore. Dat means dey worthless."

Oh, that's where he's going with this. Basically, he was trying to emphasize how much better his achievement was. I doubt this halfwit understood what kind of value a trading city might offer us. In fact, most of the people in this world, whether they be human or demon, seemed unable to understand a lot of simple concepts. I knew just how important a stable flow of goods was to a nation's economy, but it would take far too long to explain that to him, so I didn't bother. Instead, I just shrugged my shoulders.

"Must be nice to have it easy."

Dogg's face flushed bright red. Apparently, ogre blood was as red as human blood.

"Are ya makin' fun of me!? I'm da strongest, smartest, ogre der is—I'm da great Dogg!"

Smartest, huh... Well, I guess most ogres have the brains of a toddler. Since he's at least as smart as a middle schooler, I guess that does make him the smartest.

"And I happen to be a werewolf mage. A genius like you should easily be able to tell which of us is stronger, right?"

"Of course! Me!"

Oh god, he's a moron. I turned back to my master for backup, but she'd floated a short distance away and was now watching impassively.

"You two vice-commanders have fun, now."

“Master...”

My master found fighting as much of a pain as I did. Sighing, I turned back to the ogre.

For demons, power was everything. The weak submitted to the strong. *I guess I'll give him a taste of what I can do.*

I glared at Dogg and said, “Stop blocking my way with your fat ass, weakling.”

“What was dat!?”

Without warning, he swung his massive club down. But I wasn't fool enough to let it hit me. To a werewolf's superior eyesight, his club looked like it was falling in slow-motion. I leapt backwards, and Dogg's club smashed into the ground in front of me, sending stone splinters flying everywhere.

“Oi, don't go breaking the Demon Lord's precious castle.”

If he really wants to fight that badly, I suppose I can indulge him.

“Rowdy kids like you need to be punished.”

Ogres tended to be physically stronger than werewolves. Considering the difference in size between them, that much was obvious. With their massive clubs, ogres could easily mow down scores of enemies with one swing. When it came to brute force, they were the best. However, there was one fatal flaw with their physiques. Due to their size, they were abysmally slow. That being said, it still took a good deal of courage and skill to take the initiative against one. Especially because dealing a serious blow to their tough hides with a single attack wasn't easy. Even if you could, that wouldn't stop their swing from crushing you. They were quite a terrifying opponent. For humans, anyway.

While I mused on the ogre-human matchup, I dodged another one of Dogg's blows. No ogre could give me trouble, vice-commander or not. Dogg's club, which wasn't even spiked, wasn't much of a threat when it was that slow. And I wasn't nice enough to give him time to get off a third swing. I leapt forward and drove a powerful kick into Dogg's chin.

“Ugwah!?”

A human's skull would have shattered from that blow, but ogres were made

of sterner stuff. I managed to crush Dogg's jaw, but that was all. He really was built like a tank. Most other foes would have thrown in the towel at this point, but Dogg hadn't risen to his position by backing down.

Fighting spirit still burning fiercely, Dogg swung his club up at me.

"Whoa."

His aim may have been poor, but if even one of his blows struck home I'd be down for the count. I hopped out of the way and prepared to land the finishing blow. *Come to think of it, Master's watching me right now. Maybe I should use a little magic.* I twisted my fingers into a magical sign and poured mana into the palms of my hands.

"Sorry about this."

My claws began emanating a dark light, and a second later they were enveloped in black flames. I'd used a spell that temporarily enhanced the sharpness of a weapon. I dug my flame-wrapped claws into Dogg's shattered jaw.

"GRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!"

After pushing my way inside his face, I grabbed a fistful of cracked and broken bone, and crushed it in my fist. Even Dogg couldn't bear that kind of pain. He dropped his club—all will to resist gone. Against a human opponent I could have ended the fight long ago, but with demons you had to beat them thoroughly or they'd never accept you. I had to prove to him beyond a shadow of doubt that I was stronger. And so, I mercilessly flipped his body around and lifted him up by his broken jaw, forcing his body into an awkward position. Had his neck not been so thick, it would have broken.

"Feel like surrendering now?"

Stubborn to a fault, Dogg only screamed in pain. *Looks like I've got no choice.*

"Fine, I'll just put you to sleep, then."

I slammed his head against the ground. His skull was tough enough to break boulders, but that didn't mean it didn't hurt. His eyes rolled back in his head and he fell unconscious. That last blow must have given him a concussion. The

rest of his body slumped to the ground with a thud. He wouldn't be getting back up any time soon.

If there was no one better in a contest of strength than ogres, there was no one more suited to murder than werewolves. And though this fight had been brutal, it was rather standard when it came to contests of strength between demons. It was because demons were so prone to violence that humans feared them so.

"Alright, that's enough. Mmm, that was a good match."

Her tone made it clear that she didn't care one way or another about the fight. She floated down and healed Dogg's shattered jaw with healing magic, then patted him on the shoulder.

"Your gallant display was most impressive. I see your title was not just for show."

"O-Oww... Gah...it hurts..."

Though his wounds should have been healed, Dogg was still groaning in pain. It appeared my master had used the most painful recovery spell to heal him. She'd strengthened Dogg's own natural healing powers. Doing so drained his scant mana reserves to close his wounds, but left him in excruciating pain until he was fully healed. My master definitely had a cruel streak to her.

Once she was finished, my master turned around and smacked me on the head, a displeased expression on her face.

"What kind of fight was that? I expect better from one of my disciples."

"Y-Yes, Master..."

I thought I'd won pretty handily, but apparently my master wasn't satisfied. Still floating in front of me, she muttered, "For a moment, I feared he might defeat you. Seriously, were you trying to give this old lady a heart attack?"

Oh, she was just worried. She may have had a cruel streak, but Gomoviroa was also pretty protective of her disciples.

We left Dogg to his suffering and went to meet the Demon Lord. This would

mark my second meeting with him. When we arrived at the imposing steel doors that marked the entrance to his chambers, I took a few deep breaths. The Demon Lord was the strongest demon in the realm, a true king who ruled over tens of thousands of people. If he wanted to, he could kill me with a puff of his nostrils.

“Commander of the third regiment, Gomoviroa, and my Vice-Commander, Veight. We’re here to deliver our report,” My master said in a calm voice. A second later, the massive double doors creaked open. The Demon Lord’s room was modest, but stately. Polished obsidian pillars lined the halls, each giving off an ethereal gleam. They had been gilded with the canines’ famed silver. Black was the main motif of the room, but it was highlighted with occasional silver accents.

Personally, I thought a little more silver would have been better, but it was possible he’d kept it subdued to make people want more. If the room had been filled with silver, it wouldn’t have left as lasting an impression on visitors. Also, it just wasn’t practical to have your entire room decorated in silver. The dragonkin guarding the Demon Lord’s personal chambers had black scales, and they were armed with short spears tipped in silver. They fit perfectly with the overall theme of the room.

A deep voice boomed from the back of the room.

“Enter.”

I involuntarily flinched, but it wasn’t like I’d done anything wrong. Plus, I had my reliable master at my side. *Maybe I’ll mess up my greetings a little or something, but it should be fine.* Besides, even if I died, I might end up getting reincarnated again. I calmed my nerves and tried to walk as confidently as possible. My footsteps echoed across the vast room.

Wait a second. That’s weird. My footsteps aren’t sounding when my feet actually touch the ground. If I had to guess, the positioning of the pillars caused sound waves to be reflected out of time within the room. My decision to walk boldly had brought me a valuable piece of information. I had heard that dragonkin were all pragmatists, and it seemed that really was the case. Even with art, they found a use for it.

Dragonkin were basically the lizardmen you see in RPGs. However, they loathed being likened to lizards. And in truth, they were far more intelligent than the lizardmen you saw in games. They just happened to look draconic. The main reason that they served as the Demon Lord's personal bodyguards was because the Demon Lord himself was a dragonkin. There was no special race of demons that the Demon Lord had to belong to. And the man currently holding the throne was Demon Lord Friedensrichter. As you might expect from the Demon Lord, he was no ordinary dragonkin. For one thing, he was as large as an ogre. Most dragonkin stood just shy of two meters tall, which made him massive. Furthermore, his scales weren't the usual dark brown or green that most dragonkin had. No, they were a fiery red. In fact, it often looked like he was wreathed in flames. His horns were long and intimidating, proof that he'd lived a good number of decades.

What frightened me the most about him, though, was his mana. Since I was a mage, I could see the mana swirling around him. He was overflowing with such a huge quantity of it that he expelled a little with each breath he took. It was unthinkable for one person to possess so much. Most dragonkin didn't possess anywhere close to that amount. I probably wouldn't be able to beat him even if I had my entire village and my master backing me up. That was how huge the difference in strength between us was. As a demon, I had no choice but to respect him. I squeezed out what little courage I could and addressed my lord.

“Did you hear that?”

“Does anything faze this guy?”

Monza and Garbert exchanged dumbfounded looks. On the other hand, Jerrick smiled proudly.

“I knew you could do it, Veight. You’re one crazy guy.”

Motes of gold dust rained down around us, giving the scene a somewhat surreal feel. However, neither the spores nor the wildeboar’s fur were especially mystical. Even as we watched, their glow began to fade. It appeared the spores couldn’t survive without their host. *Still, we should probably disinfect the area with alcohol and vinegar later, just in case.* Spores were terrifying things. We sat there for a while longer, until we heard the adults returning.

“Veiiiiiiiiiiiiight!”

A black-furred werewolf, my mom, was leading the pack back. From the looks of it, Fahn was right behind her.

“Veight, what the heck did you do!?”

Judging from their tones, I was about to get a big scolding later. Well, I’d had it pretty tough here myself, and, I was covered in golden spores.

“Before you get mad at me, can I at least take a bath first?” I grumbled. Monza, Jerrick, and Garbert all laughed.

Master came over later to collect the Golden Brute I’d killed.

“I see, so you were able to deduce the true identity of this monster as well.” She held up a bottle of golden spores. They’d lost their previous luster and were a dull brown. “These spores are saturated with mana. I’m certain there must be some effective way to use these for magic. It’s always exciting, finding new things to research.”

“Since they paralyze people and stop werewolves from transforming, you’d probably be able to turn them into some kind of medicine.”

“An astute observation. All poisons can be turned into medicine.” Gomoviroa

nodded in approval and pocketed the bottle. “By the way, I hear you took down this Golden Brute with the magic I taught you.”

Uh oh, am I about to get another lecture? I slouched a little and took a few steps back.

“Umm, that was an emergency situation, so I had no choice. Besides, it worked, so it’s no big deal right? I’ve already gotten enough lectures from my mom and Fahn.”

“You blithering idiot! How could you even think of challenging that beast with magic meant for training!?” Gomoviroa smacked my head over and over. Despite her nonexistent physical strength, it still hurt a little. “Recklessness and courage aren’t the same thing! I may be a necromancer, but even I cannot revive the dead! If you do something this rash again, I won’t be your teacher anymore, do you understand!?”

“I understand. I promise I won’t do it again.”

“Do you really understand? Truly?”

“I do! I promise not to use this spell for fighting ever again!”

And so, my first battle as a magician ended in my overwhelming victory.

* * * *

—Veight’s Assessment—

I, Gomoviroa, took on a disciple by the name of Veight. Recorded below are the results of his aptitude testing.

He has shown varying levels of affinity for a variety of fields, but strengthening magic appears to be where his aptitude is the strongest. By his own report, the first time he succeeded in casting a strengthening spell, he did so with spectacular results. Moreover, he has shown that he possesses the natural intuition needed to apply the magic he acquires in practical combat situations. He is, at the very least, the first person I have ever heard of who used the basic weight increasing spell in a battle.

However, since he did no prior experimentation or had any grounding in the theory behind the spell, his usage of it was extremely dangerous. While Veight has exceptional potential, his reckless personality leads me to believe that I must be careful with his training. This may lead him to believe that he lacks talent, or that I do not value his abilities. I will take his training slowly, regardless. I would much rather keep my precious disciple safe than teach him more than he is ready to use. Besides, he is far too interesting a wizard for this world to lose. His potential is limitless, and it would be a waste for him to perish before he's old enough to realize it. I give my thanks to the great wheel of fate that brought the two of us together. I earnestly pray that his path in life leads him to knowledge and truth.

✧ Postscript

Considering his innate recklessness, I have decided to keep a closer eye on him. I have no doubt he will attempt something beyond his abilities again before long...

Afterword

Hello everyone, Hyougetsu here. I'm starting to think I'm one of those overpowered isekai protagonists that masters whatever skill they have right after they get reincarnated. I started uploading this web novel onto Narou in late July, and not even a month later I got an offer for it to be published. It was honestly pretty surprising.

I'd been hoping this work would get published eventually, but even I didn't think it would get picked up so soon. When I first got the offer, I thought someone was playing a prank on me. However, I recognized the name Earth Star Novels, so I decided to humor them with a reply. And seeing as you're reading this afterword right now, clearly it wasn't a prank. But for me at least, it still doesn't feel real. I keep expecting someone to pop through my door and tell me I've been punk'd!

Leaving that aside for now, let's talk about the novel itself. I ended up not editing very much of the web version for the published version, which was a bit of a shame, but I did at least get to add in an extra chapter. I decided to make it about Veight's past since I'd gotten a lot of requests for that on Narou. What do you think guys, was it to your satisfaction?

By the way, I structured the start of the web novel the way I did because I wanted to make sure it wasn't paced too quickly. I wanted it to be the kind of thing you could read a chapter of in your spare time during lunch or something. Basically, I want to write the kind of story you can pick up pretty much whenever. I don't know about everyone else, but I always get tired reading really long paragraphs on my phone, so I made sure to keep the sentences short and snappy. It's also why I had the story start up in the middle, where Veight's already risen a good amount through the demon army's ranks. Of course, there's a lot to tell about his life before he became vice-commander as well, and I'd love it if I could keep writing these extra chapters about his past exploits.

Anyway, my biggest edits for the published novel were making the sentences and paragraphs beefier. After all, novels are the kinds of things you can read leisurely at home, and there are pictures to break things up if it gets too dense. I've got my editor-in-chief Itagaki-sama and my editor Saitou-sama to thank for helping me format everything better. I'd almost completely neglected the visual elements of a book, and their advice was extremely helpful in deciding how to structure things. I'd also like to thank my readers for giving me all that feedback on Narou. There's nothing that makes authors happier than knowing people love their work.

Incidentally, my editor Saitou-sama is super reliable and extremely patient. Every time I went to him for advice, he'd sit me down and walk me through everything. Not only that, he was able to get the book through the publishing process surprisingly fast, and he always replied to my emails right away. Though, he also sometimes sends garbled walls of text that are hard to decipher, or puts little jokes in the subject line to mess with me. He's a pretty interesting guy, so much so that I kind of want to put in a character based on him in the story. Regardless, it's all thanks to him that I was able to put out a quality publication in such a short time. Thank you so very much, Saitou-sama. I'll be relying on you for everything from here on out as well. When I think back to how much help it took to get this book published, I'm really grateful that it made it out the door at all.

Also, I'd like to thank my wonderful illustrator, Nishi(E)da-sama for his lively and impactful drawings. At first, I'd only had a very vague idea of what Veight was supposed to look like in his human form, but when I saw Nishi(E)da's rough sketches I realized that must have been how I'd wanted him to look all along. All of Nishi(E)da's other character sketches were amazing too. Me and Saitou-sama both agreed that Airia looked really cool, and that Jerrick looked really sexy. Thank you so much for bringing my book to life. I can say with confidence that his illustrations have influenced the way I'm writing my characters in the web novel, too.

Lastly, I'd like to thank my readers on Narou for supporting this series. Without you, it might have been buried forever. I look at each and every one of your comments, and treasure them all. I'll continue updating the Narou version

as well, where hopefully you can read the story in more bite-sized chunks (Though doing daily uploads now might be a bit tough.) I plan on exploring more of Veight's past and the setting at large in the published novels, so I hope fans of the web novel check out this version too! There you go, there's my shameless self-plug. Buy my books! They have Nishi(E)da-sama's awesome art in them!

May we meet again in the second volume!



Drawing non-human
characters is a lot of fun
-Nishieda

Editor's note: These aren't final designs for any of the characters

Bonus Short Story

I pointed to Firnir and shouted with conviction, “You’re a werewolf!”

“What about me is suspicious!? If anything, you’re more likely to be a werewolf, Vaito!”

Despite her protests, I could tell that she was slightly shaken. I decided to press her further and countered, “Both Monza and Sir Baltz were suspicious of you, and they both died. You’re the only one foolish enough to kill everyone who accuses you!”

Airia, Melaine, and the others in the circle all nodded in agreement. Seeing a break in the conversation, Master raised her hand.

“Sunset has arrived. All players, point to the person you wish to hang.”

Everyone unanimously pointed at Firnir. *Looks like it’s over for you.*

“Awww.”

Firnir hung her head and declared, “You’re right, I was a werewolf!”

“Alright, that’s one down!”

I pumped my fist in celebration. We were in the middle of playing a game of ‘Werewolf.’ I’d taught the game to all my friends during the Rynheit independence festivities, and now that the party was winding down we’d all gathered around to play.

I’m sure most people already know, but Werewolf is a game where everyone is given different roles, and the villagers have to guess who the werewolves among them are. Each night, the werewolf kills someone, and each day, everyone discusses amongst each other and votes on one person to hang. It’s a thrilling game of deception and deduction. Though I have to admit, it’s got a rather dark tone.

At any rate, while I had played it once or twice in my old life, this was my first time trying the game out in this world. Since we were all beginners, myself

included, I'd decided to keep the rules simple this time. The only roles we were going with were villager and werewolf. Once someone was hung, they were obligated to tell people their role, but other than that they could lie as they pleased. The villagers won once all the werewolves had been hung, and the werewolves won once they equaled or outnumbered the villagers.

I'd happened to draw the villager role in this round, and for the present, I was still alive. The night ended, and noon came once more. Master, who was refereeing the game, told everyone who the werewolves had killed in the night.

"Tonight, Kurtz was bitten to death."

Kurtz sadly got up from his seat and walked outside of the ring. There were only five of us left now: Me, Melaine, Airia, Fahn, and Jerrick.

"Now that Fir's gone, there's only one werewolf left."

Melaine opened up the discussion with a safe statement. She observed everyone's reactions, trying to glean as much information as possible. With the number of players we'd had, we'd decided on two werewolves. Meaning that with Firnir hung, only one remained.

"Between the werewolf attack and the hanging, we'll be losing two people each night. In other words, we only have two chances left to guess who the werewolf is."

Airia lapsed deep into thought after saying that. Though we fiercely debated who the remaining werewolf might be, we were unable to come up with any hard evidence for anyone, and our votes ended up all over the place. After a lot of deliberation, I voted for Fahn, mostly because she was the person I would be most scared of going up against if she was a werewolf. Jerrick had had the same idea, and he also pointed at Fahn.

"Well, looks like I'm dead. Too bad, though, guys, I was a villager."

Had she been a werewolf, we would have won right now. *Dang it...*

The next morning, Jerrick was killed by the werewolf. *Rest in peace, friend.* The only people left now were me, Airia, and Melaine. Since I knew I was a villager, either Airia or Melaine had to be the last werewolf. If I didn't pick the right person here, we'd be down to one werewolf and one villager. Meaning I'd

lose. *Now then, who's more suspicious?*

“You know, Veight's probably the last werewolf. If he was a villager, he would have been killed by now.”

“Wh-What kind of logic is that?”

“I mean, you're the best with words out of all of us here, aren't you? You'd be the first person the werewolves would want gone.”

I don't know about that.

“I really don't think that's true, but...”

At that, Melaine glared at me.

“Who do you think is responsible for convincing Rynheit to join our cause, huh?”

“...The Demon Lord?”

Melaine sighed.

“Alright, now I know you're suspicious.”

“If anything, you're the one who's suspicious here, Melaine. It seems to me like you're the werewolf and you're just bringing out all these arguments to set someone else up.”

Before I could say anything else, Airia interjected, “Without any concrete evidence, we'll just be going in circles. Instead of arguing about who seems more suspicious, why don't we decide based on everyone's past votes?”

“Yeah, that sounds like a much better idea.”

Who Firnir had and hadn't voted for would give us a lot of valuable information. Especially since it was hard data, and not speculation. Werewolves naturally didn't want to execute their own kind, so they tended to avoid voting for their comrades. Furthermore, werewolves all knew who their comrades were. They voted on who to kill using their long-distance howls. However, it would look too suspicious if they were shown covering for each other openly, so they tended to keep their support as hidden as possible. However, their votes often betrayed their true allegiances.

“There were only two werewolves this time, so I doubt either of them voted for one of their own.” Melaine nodded, and looked over the notepad she’d recorded everyone’s votes in. “Let’s see here. Everyone Firnir voted for in the first few rounds...were people she then killed.”

She was so straightforward it was kind of cute. I looked over the notepad myself and checked who Firnir had voted for in the later rounds. Knowing her, she probably wasn’t crafty enough to vote for one of her own comrades.

“It looks like in the last three rounds Firnir voted for Kurtz, Airia, and me.”

Melaine was the only one she’d never voted for. That definitely cast suspicion on Melaine, but it was far from hard evidence. Unfortunately, there wasn’t much time until sunset. Master looked over at the hourglass by her side and said, “Sunset has arrived. All players, point to the person you wish to hang.”

After another few seconds of deliberation, I pointed to Melaine. Naturally, Melaine pointed to me. And Airia...pointed to Melaine. Melaine was being hung.

“What!?”

As she stood up, Melaine shouted, “But I’m a villager!”

Wait, what!? I turned back to Airia. Since I wasn’t the werewolf, the only person it could possibly be was her. Outside, Firnir held up her werewolf placard and pumped her fist into the air.

“We did it, Airia! Our plan succeeded!”

“Plan?” I asked, and looked over at Firnir.

Firnir grinned and said, “Yeah, our plan to have everyone suspect me, so that Airia could make it all the way to the end! Aren’t you glad, humans and demons are working together just like you wanted!”

“I mean...”

I turned back to Airia again. She gave me an angelic smile and said, “I’ll be visiting your house tonight, Sir Veight.”

She totally got me.



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Der Werwolf: The Annals of Veight Volume 1

by Hyougetsu

Translated by Ningen Edited by Meiru

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Original Japanese edition published in 2015 by Earth Star Entertainment This English edition is published by arrangement with Earth Star Entertainment, Tokyo English translation © 2018 J-Novel Club LLC

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Ebook edition 1.0: September 2018