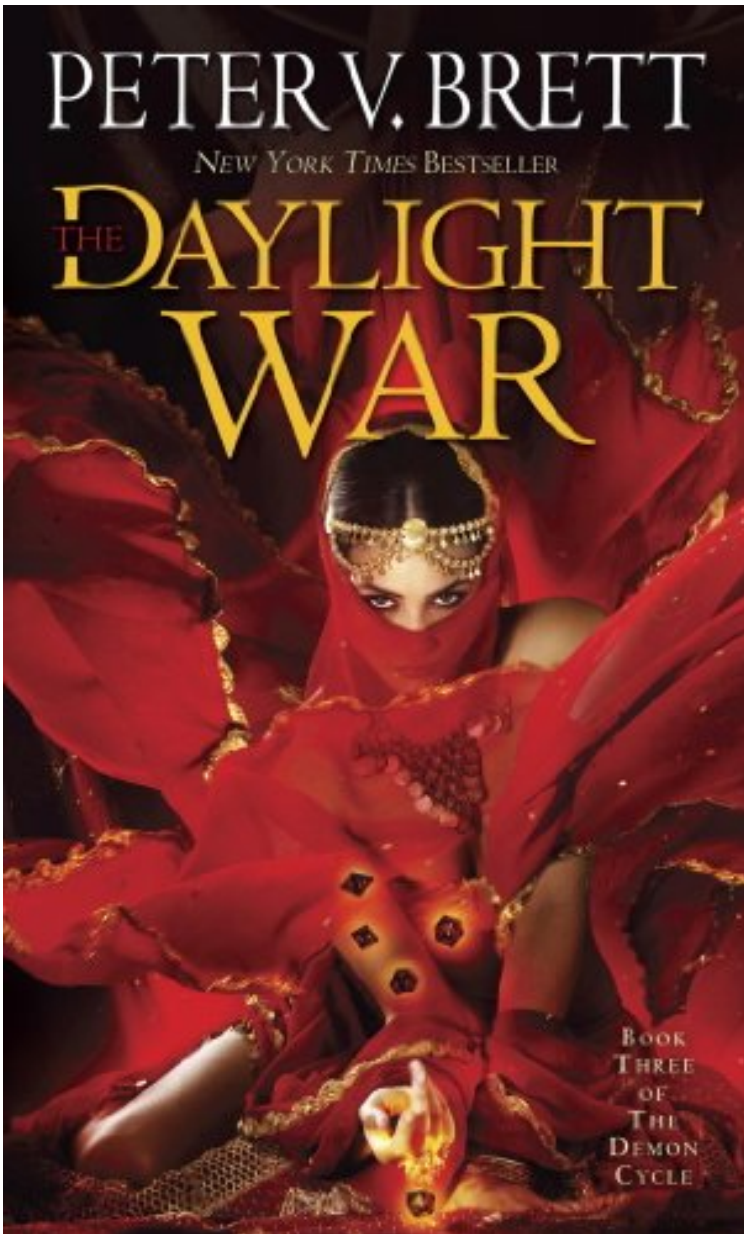


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The Daylight War: Book Three of The Demon Cycle



Par Peter V. Brett
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurNEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLERWith The Warded Man and The Desert Spear, Peter V. Brett surged to the front rank of contemporary fantasy, standing alongside giants in the field such as George R. R. Martin, Robert Jordan, and Terry Brooks. The Daylight War, the eagerly anticipated third volume in Bretts internationally bestselling Demon Cycle, continues the epic tale of humanitys last stand

against an army of demons that rise each night to prey on mankind. On the night of the new moon, the demons rise in force, seeking the deaths of two men, both of whom have the potential to become the fabled Deliverer, the man prophesied to reunite the scattered remnants of humanity in a final push to destroy the demon corelings once and for all. Arlen Bales was once an ordinary man, but now he has become something more the Warded Man, tattooed with eldritch wards so powerful they make him a match for any demon.

Arlen denies he is the Deliverer at every turn, but the more he tries to be one with the common folk, the more fervently they believe. Many would follow him, but Arlen's path threatens to lead to a dark place he alone can travel to, and from which there may be no returning. The only one with hope of keeping Arlen in the world of men, or joining him in his descent into the world of demons, is Renna Tanner, a fierce young woman in danger of losing herself to the power of demon magic. Ahmann Jardir has forged the warlike desert tribes of Krasia into a demon-killing army and proclaimed himself SharDama Ka, the Deliverer. He carries ancient weapons a spear and a crown that give credence to his claim, and already vast swaths of the green lands bow to his control. But Jardir did not come to power on his own. His rise was engineered by his

First Wife, Inevera, a cunning and powerful priestess whose formidable demon bone magic gives her the ability to glimpse the future. Inevera's motives and past are shrouded in mystery, and even Jardir does not entirely trust her. Once Arlen and Jardir were as close as brothers. Now they are the bitterest of rivals. As humanity's enemies rise, the only two men capable of defeating them are divided against each other by the

most deadly demons of all those lurking in the human heart. Look for Peter V. Brett's complete Demon Cycle: THE Warded Man | THE Desert Spear | THE Daylight War | THE Skull Throne | THE Core (Coming soon!) Praise for The Daylight War [Peter V. Brett is] at the top of his game. I give this my highest recommendation. Tor.com [Brett] confirms his place among epic fantasy's pantheon of greats amid the likes of George R. R. Martin, Steven Erikson, and Robert Jordan. Fantasy Book Critic Brett's prose and flow remain virtually flawless, providing for a smooth read during which you don't feel guilty for skipping two meals so you can lie on the couch and keep reading. Fixed on Fantasy The best book yet in The Demon Cycle. If you are looking for a great series, look no further. Roqoo Depot After the phenomenal success of both The Warded Man and The Desert Spear, I was tentative about The Daylight War; surely it couldn't get much better? Well, I was wrong. . . . This will be a strong contender for one of the best books of the year,

even this early on. Jet Black Ink Brett has his hooks in me and I want more of The Demon

Cycle. BestFantasyBooks.com Excerpt 9780345503824 | excerpt TurtleDove / THE DAYLIGHT WAR Chapter

1 Arlen.: 333 AR Summer :: 30 Dawns Before New Moon Renna kissed Arlen again. A gentle breeze swept across the thin sheen of sweat on their bodies, cooling them as they panted on the hot night. Been wonderin' if you were tattooed under that cloth nappy, she said, nestling in next to him and putting her head on his bare

chest, listening to his heart. Arlen laughed and put his arm around her. It's called a bido. And even my obsession has limits. Renna lifted her head, putting her lips to his ear. Maybe you just need a Warder you trust. It's a wife's duty to take good care of what's in her husband's bido. I could paint you with blackstem . . . Arlen swallowed, and she could see his skin flush. The wards would distort even as you drew them. Renna

laughed, wrapping him in her arms and dropping her head back to his chest. Wonder sometimes if I'm cracked, she said. How's that? Arlen asked. Like I'm still sitting in Selia Barrens spinning room, staring off into space. Everything since has been like a dream. Wonder if my mind just took me to a sunny place and left me there. You've a poor imagination if this is your sunny place, Arlen said. Why? Renna asked. I'm rid of Harl and that corespawned farm, stronger than I ever imagined, and dancing in the naked night. She swept a hand around her. Everything's awash in color and glow. She looked at him. And I'm with Arlen Bales. How

could my sunny place be anywhere else? Renna bit her lip as the words rushed to them. Words she had thought to herself many times, but never dared say aloud. Part of her hesitation was fear of Arlen's reaction, but much of it was her own doubt. All the Tanner sisters had been willing to run to the bed of the first decent

man they met, but had any of them ever been in love? Renna had thought she loved Arlen when they were children, but she only knew him from afar, and understood now that much of what she cherished had been her imagination of what he was like in close, rather than the boy himself. Renna had convinced herself that she loved Cobie Fisher this past spring, but she saw the lie of that now. Cobie hadn't been a bad sort, but if any other man had come to Harl's farm, Renna knew she would likely have seduced him, too. Anything to get away, because anywhere was better than that farm, and any man in creation was better than her da. But Renna was done lying. And done biting her tongue. Love you, Arlen Bales, she said. Her courage fled as the words left her lips and she held her breath, but there was no hesitation as Arlen tightened his arms around her. Love you, Renna Tanner. She exhaled, and all the fear and doubt left her. Charged as she was with

magic, Renna found no sleep as they lay, but she would not have wished for any. Warm and safe, she wondered almost idly how she and Arlen could have been fighting a demon prince and its servants on this very spot a few hours before. It seemed a different world. A different life. For a short time, they had escaped. But as the sweat dried and the glow of passion faded, the real world began to creep back into focus, terrible and frightening. They were surrounded by the bodies of dead corelings, black ichor splattered all over the clearing. One, the shape-shifting demon, still wore her form, its head neatly severed and leaking ichor. Not far off, Twilight Dancer still lay with his legs in splints after nearly being killed by a mimic demon. Going to need to heal Dancer again before he can walk, Arlen said. Even then, it might be another night or two before he's at full strength. Renna looked around the clearing. Don't like the idea of staying here another night. Me neither, Arlen said. Corelings will be drawn here tomorrow like worms to a rain puddle. I have a safehold nearby with a cart big enough to carry Dancer. I can fetch it and be back not long past sunrise. Still have to wait for nightfall, Renna said. Arlen tilted his head at her. Why? Horse weighs more'n your das house, Renna said. How we gonna get him in the cart without night strength? Wholl pull the thing, for that matter? Arlen looked at her, and even through the wards tattooed all over his face, his expression told all. Stop that, she snapped. What? Arlen asked. Deciding whether or not to lie to me, Renna said. Were promised now, and there oughtn't be lies tween man and wife. Arlen looked at her in surprise, then shook his head. Want gonna lie, exactly. Just tryin to decide if its time to talk about it. Is if you value your skin, Renna said. Arlen squinted at her, but she met his eyes and after a moment he shrugged. Don't lose all my strength in the day, he said. Even under the noon sun I reckon I could pick up a milk cow and throw it farther than you can skip a brook stone. What makes you so special? Renna asked. Arlen gave her that look again, and she scowled, shaking a fist at him only half mockingly. Arlen laughed. Tell you all once we get to my safehold. Honest word. Renna smirked. Kiss on it, and its a deal. While she waited, Renna took out the warding kit Arlen had given her, placing a clean cloth on the ground and laying the tools out in a neat row. She took out her brook stone necklace and her knife, and slowly, carefully, lovingly, began to clean them. The necklace was a promise gift from Cobie Fisher, a stout cord strung through dozens of smooth, polished stones. It was so long Renna needed to loop it twice, and it still fell below her breasts. The knife had belonged to her father, Harl Tanner. Hed always kept it at his belt, sharp as a razor. Hed used it to murder Cobie when she ran away to be with him, and she in turn had used it to kill him. If that hadn't happened, Renna and Cobie would have been man and wife when Arlen came back to Tibbets Brook. The necklace was a symbol of her failure to be true to Arlen, a promise gift from another man. The knife was a reminder of a man who had kept her in a private Core her entire life. But Renna could bring herself to part with neither. For better or worse, they were the only things in the world that were truly hers, the only parts of her day life that had come into the night. She had warded them both, the necklace with defensive wards, and the knife with offensive. The necklace could serve as a ward circle in need, but proved an even more effective garrote. And the knife . . . The knife had punched through the chest of a coreling prince. Even now, its magic shone brightly to her warded eyes. Not just the ward the entire blade had a dull glow to it. It drew blood on her finger at the barest touch. She knew the power would burn away with the sun, but at the moment, the weapon seemed invincible. Even in the day, it would be stronger. Magic always left things better than it found them. Likewise, the barest brush of the polishing cloth brought the necklace back to a shine, the cord even tougher than when it was made. Renna stood guard over Twilight Dancer until dawn. The morning sun struck the scattered bodies of the corelings, setting them ablaze. It was a sight she never tired of, though it came at a heavy price. Even as the demons burned, the blackstem wards on her skin began to tingle as their magic faded. The knife grew hot in its sheath, burning her leg. She had to lean against a tree for support, feeling like a Jongleurs puppet with the strings cut, weak and half blind. The disorientation passed quickly, and Renna took a deep breath. With a few hours rest, she would feel fitter than the best day of her life, but even that was but a pale shadow of how she felt in the night. How did Arlen retain his power in the sunlight? Was it that his wards were permanent tattoos rather than blackstem stains? If so, she would take a needle and ink to her skin that very day. The demon corpses burned hot and fast, in seconds leaving only scorched ground and ash. Renna stamped out the last few scrub fires before they had a chance to grow, and then finally gave in to her exhaustion, curling next to Twilight Dancer and falling asleep. Renna was still next to Twilight Dancer when she awoke, but rather than the moss bed she had gone to sleep on, she was now lying on a rough blanket in the back of a trundling cart. She popped her head up and saw Arlen out front wearing the yoke. He pulled them along at an impressive pace. The sight washed the last vestige of sleep from her, and Renna vaulted easily into the drivers seat, grabbing the reins and giving them a loud crack. Arlen jumped straight up in surprise, and

Renna laughed. Giddyap! Arlen gave her a sour look, and Renna laughed again. She leapt down from the cart and kept pace with him. The road was poorly kept and overgrown in places, but not so much as to hinder them. Sweetwells just up ahead, Arlen said. Sweetwell? Renna asked. Swhat they named the town, Arlen said.

On account of how good the well water tasted. Thought we were avoiding towns, Renna said. None but ghosts in this one, Arlen said, and Renna could hear the pain in the words. Sweetwell was taken by the night a couple years ago. You knew the place before it was taken? she asked. Arlen nodded. Used to come here sometimes, back when I was a Messenger. Town had ten families. Sixty-seven hardworkin folk, they loved to say. They had some queer ways about them, but they were always glad to see the Messenger, and they made the harshest poteen you ever drank. You ent had my das, Renna grunted. Worked same as drink or lamp oil. Sweetwells was so strong, the Duke of Angiers had it outlawed, Arlen said. Struck the town from the maps and ordered the Messengers Guild not to visit there anymore. But you still did, Renna said. Corespawned right we did, Arlen said. Whos he think he is, cutting a town off like that? Besides, a Messenger could make six months pay with one poteen run to Sweetwell. And I liked the Wellers. They had their whole town warded, the place abustle day and night. You could hear them singing a mile away. What happened? Renna asked. Arlen shrugged. Started working farther south, and stopped visiting for a few years. Wasnt until after I started warding my flesh that I came back this way. Id spent months in the wild at that point. Got so lonely I used to talk out loud to Dancer, carrying the conversation for the both of us. I was cracking, and I knew it. Renna thought of all the times shed talked to the animals on her fathers farm the same way. How many heartfelt talks had she had with Mrs. Scratch, or Hoofy? Even with Harl around, she knew from lonely. Realized I was near Sweetwell one day, Arlen said, and decided to wrap my hands and face in cloth and tell em some tampweed tale about how I was burned by firespit. Anything to talk to a person and have them talk back. But when I got to the town, it was quiet for the first time. They passed a stand of trees, and the village came into view, ten sturdy thatch-roofed houses and a Holy House in a neat circle around a central boardwalk with a great well at its eye. There were wardposts along the outer perimeter, and each house had two stories, the top for living and the bottom a work space/shopfront. There was a smithy, a tavern, a stable, a baker, a weaver, and others less easily identified. Renna felt unnerved as they crossed the boardwalk to the stable. Everything was so well preserved. There was no sign that demons had come, and it seemed that at any moment, people would come pouring out of the buildings. She could see their ghosts in her minds eye as they went about their lives. Boardwalk was full of bones and blood and demonshit when I got in close, Arlen said. Still stank, as if it had only been a few days. Days! If only Id come sooner, I could have . . . Renna touched his arm, saying nothing. One of the wardposts looked like it cracked and blew over in the wind, Arlen went on. Wood demons mustve found the gap and fell on the folk at evening supper. A few fled into the night, but I tracked them and found only remains. Renna could picture it vividly, the Wellers all gathered around the wooden tables on the boardwalk, sharing a communal meal, completely unprepared when the corelings struck. She could hear the screams and see the dying. Dizzied by it all, she dropped to her knees as her stomach churned. Arlen put his hand on her shoulder a moment later, and Renna realized shed been weeping. She looked up at him guiltily. Ent nothin to be ashamed of, he said. Took it a fair bit worse myself. What did you do? Renna asked. Arlen blew out a breath. Blacked out a few weeks. Spent the days burying bones, drunk on poteen, and the nights killing every corespawn that came within ten miles of Sweetwell. Saw fresh tracks on the way in, Renna noted. Arlen grunted. Theyll be bonfires come tomorrow morning. Renna put her hand on the hilt of her knife, spitting on the boardwalk. Honest word. They moved on to the stable, and Arlen eased Twilight Dancer down to the floor. He grunted with the exertion, but managed the task easily enough. Renna shook her head, doubting she could have done the same even when charged with magic in the night. Well need some water, Arlen said. Ill fetch it, Renna said, turning toward the central well. Want to taste water so sweet they named a town after it. Arlen grabbed her arm. Water ent too sweet anymore. Found Kennit Sweetwell, the town elder, floating in the well. Rotted for moren a week before I could climb down and haul what was left of him up. Wells poison now. Pump behind the tavern still runs clean, but it ent anything to name a town over. Renna spat again, fetching a bucket and heading to the tavern. Again, her hand drifted to her knife, caressing the bone handle. Night couldnt come soon enough. When Dancer was seen to, they took time to wash and ate a cold meal in the empty tavern. Theres a rent room upstairs, Arlen said. We can get a few hours sleep before night falls. Rent room? Renna asked. When there are whole houses for the taking? Arlen shook his head. Dunt feel right to take someone elses bed after they been cored. That room was where I slept when I was a Messenger, and its good enough. Love you, Arlen Bales, she thought, but there was no need to repeat what had already been said. She

nodded and followed him up the stairs. Even the rent room was bigger than any Renna had ever slept in before, with a large feather bed. Renna sat on it, amazed at its softness. She had never slept on anything softer than a straw mattress. She lay back. This was softer than a cloud. Her eyes wandered the room as she sank farther into the feathery embrace. Arlen had clearly spent some time here. There was his signature clutter on every surface: pots of paint, brushes, etching tools, and books. A small writing desk had been made into a workbench, and there were wood shavings and sawdust all over the floor. Arlen crossed the room, folding a rug out of the way and finding a loose floorboard beneath. He pulled and an entire section of the floor came up with it, cleverly disguised with sawdust to hide the cracks. Renna sat up, and her eyes widened as she looked within. It was full of weaponsoiled, sharp, and heavily guarded. She slid off the bed, moving to him and crouching for a better look, her eyes dancing along Arlen's warding. Arlen selected a small goldwood bow and a quiver of arrows, handing it to her. Time you learned to shoot. Renna's lip curled in distaste. He was trying to protect her again. Keep her from fighting in close. Keep her safe. Don't want it. Don't want no spears, neither. Why not? Arlen asked. Renna held up her brook stone necklace in one hand, and drew her knife with the other. Don't wanna kill corelings from some hiding spot. I kill a demon, I want it to die knowin' who did it. *Revue de presse* Never has a book these physical dimensions held my attention right through. I literally couldn't put it down till I finished it in 3 days. In spite of any shortcomings that a serious critic might find (character homogeneity blah blah) and sort of predictable ending, I cannot claim to have read a better book in a while. Waiting for the part 4 with bated breath. --Vikram Oct 30, 2013