



Introduction

IT'S all Matt's fault.

Seriously. This novella probably wouldn't exist had not my friend and longtime beta-reader, Matt Bergin, demanded it.

He had been reading an early draft of *The Great Bazaar*, and in it, I have Arlen reference one of his past misadventures where he encounters a snow demon without having the proper wards to protect himself.

"When did Arlen meet a snow demon?" Matt asked. "Did I miss that story?"

"There's no story," I said. "I just like reminding people that Arlen had a ton of adventures back when he was young and working for the Messenger's Guild."

“Well, you’ve gotta write it, now,” Matt said.

“Why?” I asked. I kind of liked the cryptic reference.

“Dude,” Matt said. “You’re passing up a chance to write about snow demons?”

It was a compelling argument, but I was swamped and couldn’t get to it. I put the idea aside for over a year, but that whole time, I kept thinking about damned snow demons, and knew I would soon have poor Arlen’s teeth chattering.

In the short break I allowed myself between finishing *The Desert Spear* and formally starting *The Daylight War*, I wrote this story, *Brayan’s Gold*, the second stand-alone tale set in the world of the Demon Cycle.

I really enjoy this format, as it gives me a chance to tell short adventure stories that don’t fit into the larger novels, offering newcomers an introduction to the series and some of its characters, longtime readers a broader look at the world, and impatient fans a coreling fix in the long wait between novel publications. Subterranean Press has been amazing in helping share these tales in beautiful limited edition books that feel as personal to me as the stories themselves.

This volume is extra special, because in addition to the story, it has a cover illustration and interior art by the incredibly talented Lauren K. Cannon (www.navate.com), who has been designing wards and doing paintings for my website ever since I first sold *The Warded Man* back

— INTRODUCTION —

in 2007. Lauren has done an amazing job of bringing my characters and symbol magic to life, and it was a pleasure to work with her again on this project.

So if you are a newcomer or an old friend, welcome. I hope you enjoy *Brayan's Gold*.

And if you don't...blame Matt.

Peter V. Brett

August, 2010

www.petervbrett.com



324AR

HOLD still,” Cob grunted as he adjusted the armor.

“Ent easy when a steel plate’s cutting into your thigh,” Arlen said.

It was a cool morning, dawn still an hour away, but Arlen was already sweating profusely in the new armor—solid plates of hammered steel linked at the joints by rivets and fine interlocking rings. Beneath, he wore a quilted jacket and pants to keep the plates from digging into his skin, but it was scant protection when Cob tightened the rings.

“All the more reason to make sure I get this right, Cob said. “The better the fit, the less likely that will happen when