



The Duke I

Oh yes, I remember the night in question well. You see, the Governess and I had arranged an appointment for the evening to discuss the recent bout of werewolf sightings which had been reported by a number of folk who lived near the Wild Wood. Originally, it had been our intention to meet shortly after nightfall, but once I had been apprised of the situation about the undead in the outskirts of Kamiko, of course I knew it was my duty to wait patiently for Madeline in the Chateau until the threat had been resolved.

Leaving Luna to her troubled rest, the two of us met in Madeline's study. She seemed tired and ill-tempered. I understood, of course. I am not a monster, after all.

You see, Madeline and I have a dynamic reminiscent of that old mythological text, 'The King and the Rogue'. It is a famous, religious sort of document whose origin is unknown, but I like to think that when it comes to Madeline and me, we're writing something of a new chapter.

Call it 'The Queen and her Arbiter', perhaps. Forgive me: I am no dramaturge.

This occasion was most fortuitous for me. You see, I have long wanted to collect a werewolf's hide to adorn the wall of my hunting lodge. Madeline was inclined to have it captured and rehabilitated, but with one of her foundlings in the midst of Unbirthing and the other grounded for insubordination: she knew that she would have to rely on me and my... services in this matter.

A clever turn of phrase and some linguistically ambiguous verbosity later, she consented to relinquish this task into my care.

It is of little consequence that I have yet to track down the beast. Madeline has enough on her plate these days without being reminded of the nature of our agreement we struck that night. It is only a matter of time before I have collected its remains for my own purpose. Just. A matter of time.