

72 cases of the Blackhearts Detective Agency

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Chapter 1

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's no place like home. I feel a pang of hunger in my stomach. I'd fill my fridge if I could. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job. And I need it fast. I'm throwing darts at the lord barrister's picture when the phone rings. It's Nellie. She is in a hurry. I furrow my brow. It doesn't seem good. She will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for the power plant.

I arrive at the power plant. Sigh. I step inside. Heavy metal machines though still, show signs of the relentless march of industry. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The monster won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a windowsill. I examine the situation. I can see large claw marks covering the power plant and blackish ichor is pooled on the floor. The scene suggests a not-too-bright the demon. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the brute.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This is my last chance. I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I haven't even finished the first layer of the circle when the thing appears. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I start to second guess my plan. The it smashes the wall, making sparks fly from the exposed wiring. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the monstrosity fast behind me. I'm in deep trouble.

I weave and scramble, knocking over the floor. My jaw clenches. At least I'm not sleeping the big sleep yet. Okay, got to get it together. What do I do now? I look around. Maybe it will just go away on its own? One can only hope. No, that won't work. Okay, I need to breathe. It hits me like a ton of bricks. I have to first weaken the monstrosity with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has got to work. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The it shows itself and I start to second guess a full-on assault. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? The thing punches me right through a plaster wall. I'm tossed inside a small room. I tumble across the floor and crumble into a heap.

I find myself trapped in a small room. I raise an eyebrow. At least I'm not six feet under yet. Okay, I need to think. I consider the situation. What now? My options seem hopeless. All of my options at this point just seem bleak. I really need to focus. Okay, I think I got it. I might be able to overload the it if I can connect it to the power grid.

I grab a loose live wire hanging from the wall by the safe part. Time to kick some demon ass. I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. The wire sizzles as a tell-tale sign of the brute drawing near. It's bigger than I thought. I start to second guess my plan. I dodge the monster's gigantic jaws and duck under it. I block its attack with the live wire and electricity courses through the brute! It screeches and pulses as the energy overloads it, exploding it in a burst of static electricity.

The power plant is opened for business soon after. Well, it wasn't as bad as it could have been. But

that was way too close. In any case, Nellie now owes me one. I'll make she make me dinner. It's the least she can do. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I know how to do. Oh well. Life goes on. I hail a cab and disappear into the sunrise.

Chapter 2

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. No place like home. I feel a pang of hunger in my stomach. I'd fill my fridge if I could. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job. And I need it fast. I'm throwing darts at the lord barrister's picture when the phone rings. It's Samuel. He is in a hurry. My grip tightens. Already it seems like a tough case. He will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for Devitt general store.

I walk up to Devitt general store. I inspect the lock. Basic model. A few minutes work. I'm in. I can almost hear the cash register ringing, as full of itself as it is money. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The swarm won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on the floor. I look around. Faint whispers emanate from dark corners and hundreds of tiny holes dot the general store. This must be the work of a swarm demon. The problem is containing the whole swarm. I don't think nobody will sing my praises if I only get rid of half the swarm. I might be able to overload the it if I can connect it to the power grid.

I grab a loose live wire hanging from the wall by the safe part. I pray that this will work I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. I hear it too late. A loud laughter comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? The thing crawls all over the wiring, making sparks fly. The electric shocks short the lights and the room is plunged into darkness. I can't see anything in this darkness.

I stumble in the dark. Sigh. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to think. How do I deal with this? I examine the situation. Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? Could work. If I get lucky. I really need to stop and think. Okay, I think I got it. I could drain the power from the it if I can ground it.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has got to work. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I hear it too late. A loud laughter comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. I try and drain the wraith, but find the grounding is all wrong. The swarm is not even phased. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the swarm fast behind me. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a windowsill. My grip tightens. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to stop and think. How do I deal with this? I look around. Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? Oh this is just hopeless. Right. I need to concentrate. The realization hits me like a rampaging rhino. I should be able to bind the wraith to this vessel.

I fish out a suitable receptacle from my pockets. I pray that this will work I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the demon. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the monstrosity appears. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. Can anything even hold something that powerful? I slide under a wave of demonic critters and it crashes into the floor. I show it the vessel and it is mesmerized by the item! I utter words of power and it is bound screeching into the vessel.

Devitt general store is opened for business soon after. Well, at least I'm not resting in peace. But that was way too close. I get no money out of this. However, Samuel now owes me one. Both my stomach and the larder are still empty though. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it pays the bills. Except when it doesn't. Oh well. Life goes on. I disappear into the city.

Chapter 3

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's no place like home. I feel the familiar craving for painkillers. My stash is empty and I desperately need some more. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job. Fast. I look back at the telegram from Josephine. My gut sinks. Already it seems like a tough case. She really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to the mill.

I walk to Sheills mill. I tremble. I step inside. Heavy metal machines though still, show signs of the relentless march of industry. I snap out of it. Time for work. The creature won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a control panel. I examine my surroundings. Curious symbols mar the mill and small rusted flakes cover the floor. Obviously the creature is more cunning than average. I should be able to outsmart it, though. After all, demons don't actually possess the capacity for real thought. I should be able to bind the creature to this vessel.

I steady my breath. I need this to work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the monstrosity. I hear it too late. A loud screeching howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. Can anything even hold something that powerful? The tricky devil sees the vessel, pounces at me in a blind rage. I wrestle with the monstrosity and crash into a side room. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I find myself trapped in a small room. My fists clench. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to concentrate. What do I do now? I look around. Maybe it will just go away on its own? One can only hope. No, that won't work. Okay, I need to focus. Right. I have a plan. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the tricky devil.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This is my last chance. I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I hear it too late. A loud howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. How am I going to finish the circle like this? The monster cracks my circle in half, erasing all hope of using it to destroy it. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the monster fast behind me. I run and swerve as I desperately think of some way to evade the it behind me.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a control panel. My gut sinks. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to concentrate. I consider the situation. How do I deal with this? Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? Could work. If I get lucky. Okay, I need to get it together. Okay, I think I got it. I have to first weaken the thing with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I raise my fists. This has got to work. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The demon shows itself and I start to second guess a full-on assault. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? I fake out the demon and step back it. I smash it between the eyes! It reels in pain. I pummel it again and again until it can't hold itself together any more and disintegrates.

The mill is opened for business soon after. Well, at least I'm not croaked. But that was way too close. I get no monetary compensation. At least there's one less the tricky devil haunting the world. I feel the familiar crawl of deprivation. My stash is till empty. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it pays the bills. Except when it doesn't. Oh well. Life goes on. I fade into the fog.

Chapter 4

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's no place like home. I feel a pain in my foot. I think it's infected. I should get it checked out. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. And I need it fast. I'm throwing darts at the lord barrister's picture when the phone rings. It's Catherine. I freeze. It sounds bad. She will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for Marshall general store.

I stop outside the general store. I freeze. I go in. I can almost hear the cash register ringing, as full of itself as it is money. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The brute won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a safe. I look around. Small rusted flakes cover the floor and I can see large claw marks covering the general store. It seems to be a violent but not too clever. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. I have to weaken the place that anchors the thing to our world.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has to work. I prepare myself for unmooring the monster from its anchor points. I hear it too late. A loud howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. It's bigger than I thought. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? The it flings me through the door before I have a chance to finish unmooring it. I'm tossed inside a small room. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I find myself locked into a side room. I freeze. At least I'm still alive. Okay, got to get it together. What now? I examine my surroundings. Maybe it will just go away on its own? One can only hope. Could work. If I get lucky. Just think. Right. I have a plan. I have to first weaken the demon with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I take the electric brand from my pocket. I pray that this will work I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. I hear it too late. A loud screech comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? I hit the creature with all my might but my attack just whiffs through the illusionary copy. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the creature fast behind me. I run and swerve as I desperately think of some way to evade the monster behind me.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a windowsill. My jaw clenches. At least I'm still alive and kicking. Okay, I need to think. I examine the situation. What now? Maybe I could bind it? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Okay, I need to think. Right. I might be able to overload the brute if I can connect it to the power grid.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has got to work. I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. I hear it too late. A loud screech comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. I didn't consider it would be this strong. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? I dodge the brute's gigantic fist and sidestep it. I block its attack with the live wire and electricity courses through the monster! It screeches and pulses as the energy overloads it, exploding it in a burst of static electricity.

The situation at Marshall general store should be under control now. Well, at least I'm not resting in peace. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. In any case, Catherine now owes me one. Maybe she can help me get my foot checked. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I know how to do. Oh well. Life goes on. I disappear into the city.

Chapter 5

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. No place like home. I feel a pang of hunger in my stomach. I'd fill my fridge if I could. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. A letter arrives from Katherine. I feel a cold sweat coming on. Already it seems like a tough case. I don't savour the idea of visiting Hopkin nightclub again.

I arrive at the nightclub. I bite my lip. I go in. The place smells of dried alcohol, vomit and blood. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The monstrosity won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a billiard table. I look around. Faint whispers emanate from dark corners and I can see large claw marks covering the nightclub. The scene suggests a not-too-bright the demon. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. I have to first weaken the thing with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I raise my fists. I need this to work. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The thing shows itself and I start to second guess a full-on assault. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I start to second guess my plan. The wraith punches me right through a plaster wall. I fly through the air and land on my stomach, busting it. I'm in deep trouble.

I check my stomach. It's bad. My jaw clenches. At least I'm still breathing. Okay, got to work this out. What now? I examine the situation. Maybe I could bind it? Could work. If I get lucky. Just breathe. Okay, I think I got it. I might be able to overload the thing if I can connect it to the power grid.

I steady my breath. This is my last chance. I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. The wire sizzles as a tell-tale sign of the monstrosity drawing near. I didn't consider it would be this strong. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? The brute smashes the wall, making sparks fly from the exposed wiring. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the wraith fast behind me. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a stool. I reel. At least I'm still alive. Okay, got to concentrate. What do I do now? I consider the situation. Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? I don't think I can do this. Just focus. It hits me like the end of a bad weekend. I could drain the power from the brute if I can ground it.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has to work. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I haven't even tested the grounding as the wraith pounces on me. It's bigger than I thought. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. I dodge the monster's gigantic tentacle and sidestep it. I jab the grounding wire into its eyes. It screeches unbearably and shrinks in size as its power is drained until it disappears with a fizzle.

Hopkin nightclub quickly gets up on its feet. Now I can tend to my injuries. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. At least Katherine pays me the appropriate fee. Now I can fill my larder again. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it pays the bills.

Except when it doesn't. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I hail a cab and fade into the city.

Chapter 6

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. No place like home. Unpaid heating bills are starting to overflow my desk. I wonder how long it will take before they cut me off entirely. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job, desperately. I'm throwing darts at the lord barrister's picture when the phone rings. It's Sadie. She is in a hurry. I hesitate. It doesn't seem good. I don't savour the idea of visiting the metro station again.

I stop outside the metro station. I feel my body tense. I step inside. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted metro station always gives me the creeps. I snap out of it. Time for work. The tricky devil won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a windowsill. I consider the situation. Small rusted flakes cover the floor and curious symbols mar the metro station. Obviously the demon is more cunning than average. I should be able to outsmart it, though. After all, demons don't actually possess the capacity for real thought. I might be able to overload the monstrosity if I can connect it to the power grid.

I grab a loose live wire hanging from the wall by the safe part. I pray that this will work. I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. The wire sizzles as a tell-tale sign of the monster drawing near. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I start to second guess my plan. The monstrosity disappears into the shadows. I hear it snickering. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the tricky devil fast behind me. I run and swerve as I desperately think of some way to evade the monster behind me.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a windowsill. I feel a cold sweat coming on. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to work this out. How do I deal with this? I examine my surroundings. Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. I really need to think. The realization hits me like a belligerent badger. I should be able to bind the demon to this vessel.

I reach for my bag for my tools. I need this to work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the demon. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the tricky devil appears. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. Can anything even hold something that powerful? The thing disappears into the shadows. I hear it snickering. The monstrosity appears from the shadows, cracking my head and leaving me seeing stars. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

My head spins as I try to regain control. Sigh. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to stop and think. I examine the situation. What now? Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? How am I supposed to do this? I really need to get it together. It hits me like a steel stallion. I could drain the power from the creature if I can ground it.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This is my last chance. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I haven't even tested the grounding as the demon pounces on me. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I start to second guess my plan. I fake out the tricky devil and step back it. I jab the grounding wire into its eyes. It screeches unbearably and shrinks in size as its power is drained until it disappears with a fizzle.

The metro station quickly gets up on its feet. Well, at least I'm still kicking. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. In any case, Sadie compensates me for my troubles. I can't pay the

bills with good intentions though. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I know how to do. Oh well. Life goes on. I fade into the rain.

Chapter 7

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's no place like home. I feel a pain in my back. I think it's infected. I should get it checked out. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job, desperately. I'm throwing darts at the lord captain's picture when the phone rings. It's Lawrence. He sounds hopeless. I grit my teeth. It doesn't seem good. He will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for Baldwin library.

I walk up to the library. I bite my lip. I go in. Tens of thousands of words stare at me from the bookshelves, bound in crumbling leather. I snap out of it. Time for work. The monstrosity won't catch itself. I set my bag up on the floor. I examine the situation. I can see large claw marks covering the library and blackish ichor is pooled on the floor. It seems to be a violent but not too clever. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the demon.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has to work. I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I hear it too late. A loud laughter comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. It's bigger than I thought. How am I going to finish the circle like this? The unfinished circle breaks as the demon jumps at me and scrapes the floor with its claws. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the monster fast behind me. I run and swerve as I desperately think of some way to evade the brute behind me.

I run like a madman, scrambling over the floor. I raise an eyebrow. At least I'm not snuffed out yet. Okay, I need to stop and think. I look around. What can I do with this? My options seem hopeless. All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Just think. Okay, I think I got it. I have to weaken the place that anchors the thing to our world.

I locate the anchor points. I pray that this will work I prepare myself for unmooring the monstrosity from its anchor points. I hear it too late. A loud screech comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. I didn't consider it would be this strong. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? The abomination flings me through the door before I have a chance to finish unmooring it. I'm tossed inside a small room. I'm in deep trouble.

I find myself trapped in a small room. I reel. At least I'm still alive. Okay, I need to stop and think. I consider the situation. What can I do with this? Maybe I could bind it? Could work. If I get lucky. I really need to stop and think. Right. I have a plan. I have to first weaken the it with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I take the electric brand from my pocket. This has got to work. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. I hear it too late. A loud howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? I dodge the monstrosity's gigantic claws and step back it. I smash it between the eyes! It reels in pain. I pummel it again and again until it can't hold itself together any more and disintegrates.

The library is opened for business soon after. Well, it wasn't as bad as it could have been. But that didn't at all go according to plan. In any case, Lawrence now owes me one. My back still hurts though. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I'm

even remotely good at. Oh well. Life goes on. I step into the sunrise.

Chapter 8

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's home. I feel a pang of hunger in my stomach. I'd fill my fridge if I could. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job, desperately. Eva steps in the door and lays out her problems. Sigh. Already it seems like a tough case. I don't savour the idea of visiting the bar again.

I take a cab to Owens bar. I crack the lock quietly and step through. The place smells of dried alcohol, vomit and blood. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The it won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a counter. I look around. I can see large claw marks covering the bar and a faint smell of formaldehyde lingers in the place. The scene suggests a not-too-bright the demon. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. I have to weaken the place that anchors the brute to our world.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This is my last chance. I prepare myself for unmooring the abomination from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the brute attacks. I didn't consider it would be this strong. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? I try and destroy an anchor, only to discover that it is merely an illusion. The illusions fade and I notice my pockets are empty. I double-check my pockets. Yep. All empty.

Facing a demon with no gear. Great. I feel a cold sweat coming on. At least I'm not liquidated yet. Okay, got to work this out. What now? I examine my surroundings. Maybe I could bind it? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Okay, I need to stop and think. Okay, I think I got it. I have to first weaken the abomination with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I raise my fists. This is my last chance. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The thing shows itself and I start to second guess a full-on assault. It's bigger than I thought. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? The it punches me right through a plaster wall. I fly through the air and land on my foot, busting it. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I check my foot. It doesn't look too good. My jaw clenches. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to concentrate. What now? I examine the situation. Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? Could work. If I get lucky. I really need to concentrate. Right. I have a plan. I could drain the power from the abomination if I can ground it.

I connect a piece of wire to a piece of plumbing. That should be grounded properly now. This has got to work. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I hear it too late. A loud laughter comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. It's bigger than I thought. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. I dodge the thing's gigantic beak and strafe around it. I jab the grounding wire into its eyes. It screeches unbearably and shrinks in size as its power is drained until it disappears with a fizzle.

The situation at Owens bar should be under control now. Well, at least I'm still alive and kicking. But that was way too close. At least Eva pays me the appropriate fee. Now I can fill my larder again. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it pays the bills. Except when it doesn't. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I step into the night.

Chapter 9

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's no place like home. The sink could use a little work. It will be bad if I can't get it fixed soon. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job. Fast. The silence is broken by the ringing of the telephone. It's Benjamin. He sounds urgent. My fists clench. I feel like this one is going to be a hard one. I don't savour the idea of visiting the garden again.

I arrive at Ramos garden. I inspect the lock. Basic model. A few minutes work. I'm in. A sad crop of trees surround me, whispering of the dark things they've seen. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The monster won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a statue. I look around. Hundreds of tiny holes dot the garden and tiny arcs of electricity dance on all metallic surfaces. It's obvious we're dealing with a demonic swarm. The problem is containing the whole swarm. I don't think nobody will sing my praises if I only get rid of half the swarm. I have to weaken the place that anchors the demon to our world.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has to work. I prepare myself for unmooring the wraith from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the demon attacks. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? The it carries me through the door before I have a chance to finish unmooring it. I fly through the air and land on my chest, busting it. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I check my chest. It's bad. I furrow my brow. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to think. What can I do with this? I examine my surroundings. Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? Oh this is just hopeless. Right. I need to work this out. It hits me like a crazed cultist. I have to first weaken the swarm with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has to work. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The thing shows itself and I start to second guess a full-on assault. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. I start to second guess my plan. The monster crawls all over the wiring, making sparks fly. I get a shock from the stray electricity that leaves my head reeling. I'm in deep trouble.

My head spins as I try to regain control. I reel. At least I'm still alive. Okay, got to focus. What do I do now? I examine the situation. Maybe I could bind it? I don't think I can do this. Right. I need to stop and think. It hits me like a mad melody. I could drain the power from the swarm if I can ground it.

I connect a piece of wire to a piece of plumbing. That should be grounded properly now. I need this to work. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I hear it too late. A loud howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. I start to second guess my plan. I strafe around a wave of demonic critters and it crashes into the ground. I jab the grounding wire into its eyes. It screeches unbearably and shrinks in size as its power is drained until it disappears with a fizzle.

The garden quickly gets up on its feet. Well, it wasn't as bad as it could have been. But that didn't at all go according to plan. At least Benjamin pays me the appropriate fee. At least the money should help fix the sink. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I know how to do. Oh well. Life goes on. I step into the night.

Chapter 10

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's home. My bookies are breathing down my neck about those debts though. I've just gotten my last warning, too. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. Fast. I dig up the telegram from Annie. I reel. It doesn't seem good. I don't savour the idea of visiting the park again.

I arrive at Wickes park. I crack the lock quietly and step through. A sad crop of trees surround me, whispering of the dark things they've seen. I snap out of it. Time for work. The tricky devil won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a statue. I consider the situation. A faint smell of formaldehyde lingers in the place and the park stands in suspiciously good condition. The abomination must be more subtle than your average demon. I should be able to outsmart it, though. After all, demons don't actually possess the capacity for real thought. I might be able to overload the abomination if I can connect it to the power grid.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has got to work. I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. I hear it too late. A loud screech comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. I start to second guess my plan. I zap the abomination, but it only slows it down for a second before the power fails and sparks fly from the wires as a fuse busts broken. The thing cracks the ground underneath me and I'm plunged into the darkness below. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I grope around in the dark. I hesitate. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to stop and think. What now? I look around. Maybe it will just go away on its own? One can only hope. How am I supposed to do this? Right. I need to get it together. Right. I have a plan. I have to weaken the place that anchors the it to our world.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has to work. I prepare myself for unmooring the abomination from its anchor points. I hear it too late. A loud screech comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I start to second guess my plan. The monster creates multiple illusionary copies of itself, leaving me wondering which is the original. The illusions fade and I notice my pockets are empty. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I find myself without my gear. I hesitate. At least I'm still sharp. Okay, got to focus. What can I do with this? I look around. Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Just think. Right. I have a plan. I have to first weaken the it with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I steady my breath. I need this to work. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. I hear it too late. A loud screeching howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? I fake out the abomination and step back it. I smash it between the eyes! It reels in pain. I pummel it again and again until it can't hold itself together any more and disintegrates.

The park quickly gets up on its feet. Well, at least I'm still sharp. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. At least Annie pays me the appropriate fee. I hope my bookies take credit. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it has to be done. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I disappear into the night.

Chapter 11

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's home. I feel a pang of hunger in my stomach. I'd fill my fridge if I could. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. And I need it fast. I'm throwing darts at the lord barrister's picture when the phone rings. It's Claude. He is in a hurry. I furrow my brow. I feel like this one is going to be a hard one. He really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to Adams hardware store.

I arrive at the hardware store. I frown. I go in. I can almost hear the cash register ringing, as full of itself as it is money. I snap out of it. Time for work. The thing won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a counter. I look around. A faint smell of formaldehyde lingers in the place and I can see large claw marks covering the hardware store. The scene suggests a not-too-bright the brute. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the brute.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has got to work. I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I hear it too late. A loud laughter comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. I didn't consider it would be this strong. How am I going to finish the circle like this? The it punches me right through a plaster wall. I'm tossed inside a small room. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I find myself locked into a side room. Sigh. At least I'm not room temperature yet. Okay, got to work this out. What can I do with this? I examine the situation. Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Okay, I need to breathe. Right. I have a plan. I could drain the power from the brute if I can ground it.

I steady my breath. Time to kick some demon ass. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I haven't even tested the grounding as the it pounces on me. It's bigger than I thought. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. The abomination punches me right through a plaster wall. I'm tossed inside a small room. I tumble across the floor and crumble into a heap.

I find myself locked into a side room. I furrow my brow. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to stop and think. How do I deal with this? I examine my surroundings. Maybe I could bind it? No, that won't work. I really need to get it together. Right. I have a plan. I have to first weaken the thing with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This is my last chance. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The brute shows itself and I start to second guess a full-on assault. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I start to second guess my plan. I dodge the brute's gigantic claws and step back it. I smash it between the eyes! It reels in pain. I pummel it again and again until it can't hold itself together any more and disintegrates.

The hardware store is opened for business soon after. Well, it wasn't as bad as it could have been. But that was way too close. I get no monetary compensation. At least there's one less the it haunting the world. Both my stomach and the larder are still empty though. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I know how to do. Oh well. Life goes on. I disappear into the sunrise.

Chapter 12

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. No place like home. My loan shark are breathing down my neck about those debts though. I've just gotten my last warning, too. Problem is, a detective's pay is not

exactly luxurious. I need a job, desperately. Will steps in the door and tells me his problems. My fists clench. It doesn't seem good. He really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to the train station.

I walk up to Wakefield train station. I tremble. I go in. The station seems so empty. Only a few homeless people shuffle slowly around the vicinity, lending the place a destitute atmosphere. I snap out of it. Time for work. The thing won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a windowsill. I examine my surroundings. Curious symbols mar the train station and tiny arcs of electricity dance on all metallic surfaces. Obviously the wraith is more cunning than average. I should be able to outsmart it, though. After all, demons don't actually possess the capacity for real thought. I could drain the power from the it if I can ground it.

I connect a piece of wire to a piece of plumbing. That should be grounded properly now. I need this to work. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I haven't even tested the grounding as the thing pounces on me. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I start to second guess my plan. The it disappears into the shadows when it sees the drain I'm holding. The tricky devil pounces and then retreats, leaving me confused until I notice my equipment is gone. I'm in deep trouble.

Facing a demon with no gear. Great. I furrow my brow. At least I'm still alive. Okay, got to concentrate. How do I deal with this? I look around. My options seem hopeless. I don't think I can do this. I really need to concentrate. Right. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the it.

I clear some space for the circle. Time to kick some demon ass. I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I haven't even finished the first layer of the circle when the monstrosity appears. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I start to second guess my plan. The tricky devil disappears into the shadows. I hear it snickering. The demon appears from the shadows, cracking my head and leaving me seeing stars. I'm in deep trouble.

I'm rolling on the floor, holding my head between my hands. My grip tightens. At least I'm not liquidated yet. Okay, I need to concentrate. I consider the situation. What now? Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? Oh this is just hopeless. Okay, I need to concentrate. It hits me like a moody Monday. I should be able to bind the monstrosity to this vessel.

I fashion a makeshift receptacle from scrap. This has to work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the tricky devil. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the tricky devil appears. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. Can anything even hold something that powerful? I fake out the thing and jump over it. I show it the vessel and it is mesmerized by the item! I utter words of power and it is bound screeching into the vessel.

The situation at Wakefield train station should be under control now. Well, it wasn't as bad as it could have been. But that didn't at all go according to plan. I get no monetary compensation. At least there's one less the monster haunting the world. I'm still neck deep in debt though. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose someone has to do it. Might as well be me. Oh well. Life goes on. I hail a cab and disappear into the city.

Chapter 13

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's home. The roof could use a little work. It

will be bad if I can't get it fixed soon. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. Fast. I dig up the letter from Hazel. I tremble. Already it seems like a tough case. I don't savour the idea of visiting Sinnett mill again.

I stop outside Sinnett mill. I bite my lip. I go in. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted mill always gives me the creeps. I snap out of it. Time for work. The wraith won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a control panel. I look around. Tiny arcs of electricity dance on all metallic surfaces and the mill is totally trashed. The scene suggests a not-too-bright the monstrosity. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. I could drain the power from the thing if I can ground it.

I connect a piece of wire to a piece of plumbing. That should be grounded properly now. Time to kick some demon ass. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I haven't even tested the grounding as the monstrosity pounces on me. It's bigger than I thought. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. The monster smashes the wall, making sparks fly from the exposed wiring. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the demon fast behind me. I'm in deep trouble.

I run like a madman, scrambling over the floor. I raise an eyebrow. At least I'm not croaked yet. Okay, got to breathe. How do I deal with this? I examine my surroundings. Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? I don't think I can do this. Just breathe. Right. I have a plan. I have to weaken the place that anchors the monster to our world.

I steady my breath. I need this to work. I prepare myself for unmooring the brute from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the thing attacks. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I start to second guess my plan. The monster punches me right through a plaster wall. I'm tossed inside a small room. I'm in deep trouble.

I find myself locked into a side room. I bite my lip. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to concentrate. I examine my surroundings. What can I do with this? Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? Oh this is just hopeless. Just stop and think. Right. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the brute.

I clear some space for the circle. I need this to work. I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I haven't even finished the first layer of the circle when the monstrosity appears. I didn't consider it would be this strong. How am I going to finish the circle like this? I dodge the thing's gigantic fist and strafe around it. I complete the circle and it's trapped within! I quickly perform the rite while it's contained and send it screeching back to hell.

The mill is opened for business soon after. Well, at least I'm still breathing. But that didn't at all go according to plan. In any case, Hazel compensates me for my troubles. At least the money should help fix the roof. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it has to be done. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I disappear into the city.

Chapter 14

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. No place like home. The window could use a little work. It will be bad if I can't get it fixed soon. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job. The phone rings. It's Richard. He sounds hopeless. My fists clench. It doesn't seem good. He really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to Wakefield police station.

I walk up to the police station. My gut sinks. I step inside. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted police station always gives me the creeps. I snap out of it. Time for work. The monstrosity won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a paper shredder. I look around. The air smells of traces of copper or iron and curious symbols mar the police station. The it must be more subtle than your average demon. I should be able to outsmart it, though. After all, demons don't actually possess the capacity for real thought. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the thing.

I steady my breath. I need this to work. I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I haven't even finished the first layer of the circle when the creature appears. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I start to second guess my plan. The monster cracks my circle in half, erasing all hope of using it to destroy it. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the tricky devil fast behind me. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a desk. I furrow my brow. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to concentrate. What do I do now? I look around. Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? I don't think I can do this. Right. I need to focus. Right. I should be able to bind the tricky devil to this vessel.

I fashion a makeshift receptacle from scrap. Time to kick some demon ass. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the creature. I hear it too late. A loud screeching howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. Can anything even hold something that powerful? The demon creates multiple illusionary copies of itself, leaving me wondering which is the original. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the demon fast behind me. I'm in deep trouble.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a paper shredder. I furrow my brow. At least I'm still alive and kicking. Okay, I need to work this out. I look around. What can I do with this? Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? How am I supposed to do this? Okay, I need to breathe. Right. I have to first weaken the creature with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I reach for my bag for my tools. I need this to work. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The monster shows itself and I start to second guess a full-on assault. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? I fake out the creature and sidestep it. I smash it between the eyes! It reels in pain. I pummel it again and again until it can't hold itself together any more and disintegrates.

Wakefield police station quickly gets up on its feet. Well, it wasn't as bad as it could have been. But that was way too close. I get no monetary compensation. My only reward is the gratitude of Richard. Well, I still need to get that window fixed. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it has to be done. Oh well. Life goes on. I hail a cab and step into the night.

Chapter 15

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. No place like home. I feel a pang of hunger in my stomach. I'd fill my fridge if I could. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job. And I need it fast. Herbert comes to my office and tells me his problems. I frown. Already it seems like a tough case. He really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to the graveyard.

I take a cab to the graveyard. My fists clench. I step inside. A sad crop of trees surround me,

whispering of the dark things they've seen. I snap out of it. Time for work. The swarm won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a windowsill. I consider the situation. Hundreds of tiny holes dot the graveyard and blackish ichor is pooled on the floor. It's obvious we're dealing with a demonic swarm. The problem is containing the whole swarm. I don't think nobody will sing my praises if I only get rid of half the swarm. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the monstrosity.

I clear some space for the circle. I pray that this will work I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I hear it too late. A loud screech comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. How am I going to finish the circle like this? The demon crawls all over the wiring, making sparks fly. I get a shock from the stray electricity that leaves my head reeling. I fall down on the floor and reel in pain.

My head spins as I try to regain control. I freeze. At least I'm not dead yet. Okay, got to get it together. What can I do with this? I examine my surroundings. Maybe I could bind it? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Right. I need to work this out. The realization hits me like a freight train. I should be able to bind the thing to this vessel.

I fish out a suitable receptacle from my pockets. This has got to work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the it. I hear it too late. A loud screeching howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. Can anything even hold something that powerful? The whirling swarm completely overruns me and I get swept along the tide of demon matter. I'm tossed inside a small room. I tumble across the floor and crumble into a heap.

I find myself trapped in a small room. I grit my teeth. At least I'm still breathing. Okay, I need to think. I look around. What can I do with this? Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? I don't think I can do this. Just concentrate. It hits me like a hurling hammer. I have to weaken the place that anchors the abomination to our world.

I reach for my bag for my tools. I need this to work. I prepare myself for unmooring the swarm from its anchor points. I hear it too late. A loud screech comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. I start to second guess my plan. I jump over a wave of demonic critters and it crashes into the floor. I grab the last anchor point with my bare hands. I finally remove the last anchor binding it to our world and send it screeching back to the collective unconscious.

The situation at Cole graveyard should be under control now. Well, it wasn't as bad as it could have been. But that was way too close. I get no monetary compensation. At least there's one less the thing haunting the world. Both my stomach and the larder are still empty though. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I know how to do. Oh well. Life goes on. I disappear into the fog.

Chapter 16

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's home. The roof could use a little work. It will be bad if I can't get it fixed soon. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job. Fast. I'm throwing darts at the lord captain's picture when the phone rings. It's Harold. He sounds urgent. I furrow my brow. It doesn't seem good. He really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to the morgue.

I walk to Gedge morgue. I crack the lock quietly and step through. The air is heavy with the sweat and dust of a thousand wasted man-hours. I snap out of it. Time for work. The wraith won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a slab. I look around. Tiny arcs of electricity dance on all metallic surfaces and hundreds of tiny holes dot the morgue. This must be the work of a swarm demon. The problem is containing the whole swarm. I don't think nobody will sing my praises if I only get rid of half the swarm. I should be able to bind the it to this vessel.

I fish out a suitable receptacle from my pockets. This is my last chance. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the swarm. I hear it too late. A loud screeching howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. Can anything even hold something that powerful? The whirling swarm completely overruns me and I get swept along the tide of demon matter. I fly through the air and land on my hand, busting it. My hand hurts like the dickens. I check my injury.

I check my hand. It's bad. I feel a cold sweat coming on. At least I'm still alive. Okay, I need to focus. I examine my surroundings. What now? Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? I don't think I can do this. Right. I need to stop and think. Right. I might be able to overload the demon if I can connect it to the power grid.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has to work. I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. The wire sizzles as a tell-tale sign of the thing drawing near. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? The monster crawls all over the wiring, making sparks fly. I get a shock from the stray electricity that leaves my head reeling. I'm in deep trouble.

My head spins as I try to regain control. My fists clench. At least I'm not out of business yet. Okay, I need to focus. I consider the situation. How do I deal with this? Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. I really need to get it together. Right. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the monstrosity.

I reach for my bag for my tools. Time to kick some demon ass. I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I haven't even finished the first layer of the circle when the swarm appears. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. I start to second guess my plan. I sidestep a wave of demonic critters and it crashes into the floor. I complete the circle and it's trapped within! I quickly perform the rite while it's contained and send it screeching back to hell.

The situation at Gedge morgue should be under control now. Well, at least I'm still alive and kicking. But that didn't at all go according to plan. It doesn't pay. At least there's one less the thing haunting the world. Well, I still need to get that roof fixed. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I know how to do. Oh well. Life goes on. I hail a cab and step into the rain.

Chapter 17

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's home. My poker buddies are breathing down my neck about those debts though. I've just gotten my last warning, too. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job. I'm throwing darts at the lord captain's picture when the phone rings. It's Michael. He is in a hurry. I bite my lip. It doesn't seem good. He really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to Wraith morgue.

I walk up to Wraith morgue. My fists clench. I go in. The air is heavy with the sweat and dust of a thousand wasted man-hours. I snap out of it. Time for work. The swarm won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a desk. I examine the situation. Faint whispers emanate from dark corners and thousands of tiny tracks criss-cross across all imaginable surfaces of the morgue. This must be the work of a swarm demon. The problem is containing the whole swarm. I don't think nobody will sing my praises if I only get rid of half the swarm. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the monster.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has to work. I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I hear it too late. A loud screeching howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. How am I going to finish the circle like this? The whirling swarm completely overruns me and I get swept along the tide of demon matter. I fly through the air and land on my hand, busting it. My hand hurts like the dickens. I check my injury.

I check my hand. It's bad. I tremble. At least I'm still kicking. Okay, got to get it together. What now? I look around. Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? I don't think I can do this. I really need to work this out. It hits me like a freight train. I should be able to bind the it to this vessel.

I fish out a suitable receptacle from my pockets. I pray that this will work I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the wraith. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the monstrosity appears. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. I start to second guess my plan. The swarm covers all light sources in the room, leaving it in darkness. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the it fast behind me. I run and swerve as I desperately think of some way to evade the demon behind me.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a paper shredder. I bite my lip. At least I'm still alive and kicking. Okay, I need to concentrate. I consider the situation. What do I do now? Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? Could work. If I get lucky. I really need to focus. The realization hits me like a freight train. I have to weaken the place that anchors the thing to our world.

I locate the anchor points. This has got to work. I prepare myself for unmooring the wraith from its anchor points. I hear it too late. A loud screeching howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? I sidestep a wave of demonic critters and it crashes into the floor. I grab the last anchor point with my bare hands. I finally remove the last anchor binding it to our world and send it screeching back to the collective unconscious.

The morgue quickly gets up on its feet. Well, at least I'm not feeding the worms. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. I get no monetary compensation. My only reward is the gratitude of Michael. I'm still neck deep in debt though. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose someone has to do it. Might as well be me. Oh well. Life goes on. I fade into the sunrise.

Chapter 18

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's home. I feel a pang of hunger in my stomach. I'd fill my fridge if I could. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job. The silence is broken by the ringing of the telephone. It's Clyde. He sounds hopeless. I feel my

body tense. I feel like this one is going to be a hard one. I don't savour the idea of visiting Hayward courthouse again.

I walk to the courthouse. I raise an eyebrow. I go in. The air is heavy with the sweat and dust of a thousand wasted man-hours. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The tricky devil won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a paper shredder. I look around. Faint whispers emanate from dark corners and curious symbols mar the courthouse. The demon must be more subtle than your average demon. I should be able to outsmart it, though. After all, demons don't actually possess the capacity for real thought. I might be able to overload the wraith if I can connect it to the power grid.

I grab a loose live wire hanging from the wall by the safe part. This has to work. I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. The wire sizzles as a tell-tale sign of the monstrosity drawing near. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? The demon creates multiple illusionary copies of itself, leaving me wondering which is the original. The illusions fade and I notice my pockets are empty. I double-check my pockets. Yep. All empty.

I find myself without my gear. I raise an eyebrow. At least I'm still kicking. Okay, got to think. How do I deal with this? I look around. Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? Oh this is just hopeless. Right. I need to focus. The realization hits me like a freight train. I have to weaken the place that anchors the wraith to our world.

I locate the anchor points. This has got to work. I prepare myself for unmooring the wraith from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the tricky devil attacks. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? The monster disappears into the shadows. I hear it snickering. The wraith pounces and then retreats, leaving me confused until I notice my equipment is gone. I double-check my pockets. Yep. All empty.

Facing a demon with no gear. Great. I feel my body tense. At least I'm not room temperature yet. Okay, got to work this out. What can I do with this? I examine my surroundings. Maybe I could bind it? Could work. If I get lucky. Right. I need to focus. It hits me like a freight train. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the it.

I steady my breath. This has got to work. I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I haven't even finished the first layer of the circle when the thing appears. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I start to second guess my plan. I fake out the wraith and slide under it. I complete the circle and it's trapped within! I quickly perform the rite while it's contained and send it screeching back to hell.

The courthouse is opened for business soon after. Well, at least I'm still sharp. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. At least Clyde pays me the appropriate fee. Now I can fill my larder again. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I'm even remotely good at. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I hail a cab and step into the night.

Chapter 19

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. No place like home. My loan shark are breathing down my neck about those debts though. I've just gotten my last warning, too. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. Fast. Lee steps in the door and lays out his problems. I tremble.

Already it seems like a tough case. I don't savour the idea of visiting the police station again.

I walk to Ellis police station. I frown. I go in. Here the coroners of justice dissect and diagnose the corpse of law. I snap out of it. Time for work. The demon won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a paper shredder. I consider the situation. Small rusted flakes cover the floor and curious symbols mar the police station. Obviously the it is more cunning than average. I should be able to outsmart it, though. After all, demons don't actually possess the capacity for real thought. I should be able to bind the demon to this vessel.

I fashion a makeshift receptacle from scrap. This is my last chance. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the monster. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the tricky devil appears. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I start to second guess my plan. The monstrosity creates multiple illusionary copies of itself, leaving me wondering which is the original. The illusions fade and I notice my pockets are empty. I'm in deep trouble.

Facing a demon with no gear. Great. Sigh. At least I'm not sleeping the big sleep yet. Okay, got to breathe. What now? I look around. Maybe I could overload it with electricity? I don't think I can do this. I really need to think. Right. I have a plan. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the thing.

I steady my breath. This has got to work. I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I hear it too late. A loud laughter comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I start to second guess my plan. The demon creates multiple illusionary copies of itself, leaving me wondering which is the original. I run wildly through the illusions, the creature hot on my tail. I run and swerve as I desperately think of some way to evade the monstrosity behind me.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a windowsill. I bite my lip. At least I'm not worm food yet. Okay, I need to focus. I consider the situation. What now? Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? I don't think I can do this. Just breathe. Right. I have to weaken the place that anchors the it to our world.

I locate the anchor points. This is my last chance. I prepare myself for unmooring the tricky devil from its anchor points. I hear it too late. A loud howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. I start to second guess my plan. I fake out the tricky devil and duck under it. I grab the last anchor point with my bare hands. I finally remove the last anchor binding it to our world and send it screeching back to the collective unconscious.

The police station quickly gets up on its feet. Well, at least I'm not sleeping the big sleep. But that didn't at all go according to plan. At least Lee pays me the appropriate fee. I hope my loan shark take credit. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it pays the bills. Except when it doesn't. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I step into the fog.

Chapter 20

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. No place like home. I feel the familiar craving for opium. My stash is empty and I desperately need some more. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. Nora comes to my office and explains her problems. I furrow my brow. It sounds bad. She will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for Wakefield speakeasy.

I take a cab to the speakeasy. I inspect the lock. Basic model. A few minutes work. I'm in. The place smells of dried alcohol, vomit and blood. I snap out of it. Time for work. The thing won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on the floor. I consider the situation. I can see large claw marks covering the speakeasy and faint whispers emanate from dark corners. The scene suggests a not-too-bright the it. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the wraith.

I clear some space for the circle. I need this to work. I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I haven't even finished the first layer of the circle when the demon appears. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I start to second guess my plan. The brute's hind muscles flex as it charges straight at me. The demon maims my foot with its stinger. My foot hurts like the dickens. I check my injury.

I check my foot. It doesn't look too good. I raise an eyebrow. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to stop and think. I examine my surroundings. How do I deal with this? Maybe I could overload it with electricity? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. I really need to concentrate. The realization hits me like a freight train. I have to first weaken the monstrosity with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I raise my fists. This has got to work. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The monstrosity shows itself and I start to second guess a full-on assault. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I start to second guess my plan. I hit the brute with all my might. It only makes it angrier. The it cracks the floor underneath me and I'm plunged into the darkness below. I'm in deep trouble.

I grope around in the dark. I reel. At least I'm not dead yet. Okay, I need to think. I look around. What can I do with this? Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? Oh this is just hopeless. Just concentrate. Right. I have to weaken the place that anchors the wraith to our world.

I steady my breath. Time to kick some demon ass. I prepare myself for unmooring the brute from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the wraith attacks. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I start to second guess my plan. I dodge the brute's gigantic talons and duck under it. I grab the last anchor point with my bare hands. I finally remove the last anchor binding it to our world and send it screeching back to the collective unconscious.

The situation at Wakefield speakeasy should be under control now. Well, at least I'm not resting in peace. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. In any case, Nora now owes me one. I'll have she refill my stash. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose someone has to do it. Might as well be me. Oh well. Life goes on. I hail a cab and disappear into the fog.

Chapter 21

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's home. The sink could use a little work. It will be bad if I can't get it fixed soon. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job, desperately. The phone rings. It's Julia. I reel. It sounds bad. She really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to the crypt.

I take a cab to Seymour crypt. My grip tightens. I step inside. The stench of death floats in the air like a persistent miasma. I snap out of it. Time for work. The demon won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a sarcophagus. I examine the situation. The crypt is totally trashed and small

rusted flakes cover the floor. The scene suggests a not-too-bright the monster. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. I have to weaken the place that anchors the monstrosity to our world.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This is my last chance. I prepare myself for unmooring the creature from its anchor points. I hear it too late. A loud laughter comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. It's bigger than I thought. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? The creature flings me through the door before I have a chance to finish unmooring it. I fly through the air and land on my stomach, busting it. I'm in deep trouble.

I check my stomach. It doesn't look too good. I reel. At least I'm still kicking. Okay, got to stop and think. What do I do now? I examine my surroundings. Maybe it will just go away on its own? One can only hope. All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Right. I need to think. Right. I have a plan. I should be able to bind the monster to this vessel.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has got to work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the creature. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the brute appears. I didn't consider it would be this strong. Can anything even hold something that powerful? The brute sees the vessel, pounces at me in a blind rage. I wrestle with the it and crash into a side room I tumble across the floor and crumble into a heap.

I find myself trapped in a small room. Sigh. At least I'm not feeding the worms yet. Okay, got to concentrate. What now? I examine the situation. Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? Oh this is just hopeless. Okay, I need to breathe. Right. I have to first weaken the monstrosity with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I steady my breath. I pray that this will work I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. I hear it too late. A loud screeching howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? I dodge the brute's gigantic talons and sidestep it. I smash it between the eyes! It reels in pain. I pummel it again and again until it can't hold itself together any more and disintegrates.

The crypt is opened for business soon after. Well, at least I'm not cashed in. But that was way too close. I get no monetary compensation. My only reward is the gratitude of Julia. Well, I still need to get that sink fixed. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose someone has to do it. Might as well be me. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I disappear into the rain.

Chapter 22

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. No place like home. I feel a pain in my arm. I think it's infected. I should get it checked out. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job, desperately. I look back at the telegram from Howard. Sigh. I feel like this one is going to be a hard one. He really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to the crypt.

I arrive at Brewer crypt. I crack the lock quietly and step through. The stench of death floats in the air like a persistent miasma. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The wraith won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a windowsill. I examine the situation. Tiny arcs of electricity dance on all metallic surfaces and hundreds of tiny holes dot the crypt. This must be the work of a swarm demon. The problem is containing the whole swarm. I don't think nobody will sing my praises if I only get rid of half the swarm. I have to first weaken the monster with an electric assault before I

can properly banish it.

I raise my fists. This has got to work. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The thing shows itself and I start to second guess a full-on assault. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. I start to second guess my plan. The wraith covers all light sources in the room, leaving it in darkness. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the swarm fast behind me. I'm in deep trouble.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a coffin. I raise an eyebrow. At least I'm still alive and kicking. Okay, I need to focus. I examine the situation. What do I do now? My options seem hopeless. All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Right. I need to concentrate. It hits me like a freight train. I might be able to overload the thing if I can connect it to the power grid.

I grab a loose live wire hanging from the wall by the safe part. This has to work. I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. I hear it too late. A loud screech comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? The thing covers all light sources in the room, leaving it in darkness. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the it fast behind me. I run and swerve as I desperately think of some way to evade the it behind me.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a coffin. I furrow my brow. At least I'm not resting in peace yet. Okay, I need to focus. I look around. What can I do with this? Maybe I could bind it? Oh this is just hopeless. Right. I need to stop and think. The realization hits me like a ton of bricks. I have to weaken the place that anchors the swarm to our world.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has to work. I prepare myself for unmooring the monster from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the wraith attacks. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. I start to second guess my plan. I step back a wave of demonic critters and it crashes into the floor. I grab the last anchor point with my bare hands. I finally remove the last anchor binding it to our world and send it screeching back to the collective unconscious.

Brewer crypt is opened for business soon after. Well, it wasn't as bad as it could have been. But that didn't at all go according to plan. I get no monetary compensation. My only reward is the gratitude of Howard. My arm still hurts though. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it pays the bills. Except when it doesn't. Oh well. Life goes on. I fade into the fog.

Chapter 23

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's no place like home. I feel a pang of hunger in my stomach. I'd fill my fridge if I could. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. Maude comes to my office and explains her problems. Sigh. Already it seems like a tough case. She really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to the factory.

I walk to the factory. My gut sinks. I step inside. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted factory always gives me the creeps. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The thing won't catch itself. I set my bag up on the floor. I look around. The factory stands in suspiciously good condition and a faint smell of formaldehyde lingers in the place. Obviously the abomination is more cunning than average. I should be able to outsmart it, though. After all, demons don't actually possess the capacity for real thought. I could drain the power from the abomination if I can ground it.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has to work. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I haven't even tested the grounding as the demon pounces on me. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. I try and drain the it, but find the grounding is all wrong. The tricky devil is not even phased. The thing cracks the floor underneath me and I'm plunged into the darkness below. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I stumble in the dark. My fists clench. At least I'm not feeding the worms yet. Okay, I need to concentrate. I look around. What now? Maybe it will just go away on its own? One can only hope. How am I supposed to do this? Right. I need to focus. Right. I might be able to overload the abomination if I can connect it to the power grid.

I reach for my bag for my tools. I pray that this will work I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. The wire sizzles as a tell-tale sign of the thing drawing near. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? The abomination disappears into the shadows. I hear it snickering. The it appears from the shadows, cracking my head and leaving me seeing stars. I'm in deep trouble.

I'm rolling on the floor, holding my head between my hands. My gut sinks. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to breathe. I examine the situation. How do I deal with this? Maybe I could bind it? Oh this is just hopeless. Right. I need to breathe. Right. I have a plan. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the abomination.

I clear some space for the circle. This has got to work. I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I haven't even finished the first layer of the circle when the thing appears. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. I start to second guess my plan. I fake out the tricky devil and step back it. I complete the circle and it's trapped within! I quickly perform the rite while it's contained and send it screeching back to hell.

Simmons factory quickly gets up on its feet. Well, it wasn't as bad as it could have been. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. It doesn't pay. At least there's one less the tricky devil haunting the world. Both my stomach and the larder are still empty though. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I'm even remotely good at. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I step into the city.

Chapter 24

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's no place like home. My loan shark are breathing down my neck about those debts though. I've just gotten my last warning, too. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job. Fast. A telegram arrives from Ernest. My fists clench. It doesn't seem good. He will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for the graveyard.

I arrive at Wickes graveyard. My grip tightens. I step inside. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted graveyard always gives me the creeps. I snap out of it. Time for work. The demon won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a windowsill. I examine the situation. Blackish ichor is pooled on the floor and I can see large claw marks covering the graveyard. The scene suggests a not-too-bright the brute. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. I have to first weaken the it with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I reach for my bag for my tools. I need this to work. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault.

I hear it too late. A loud screech comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I start to second guess my plan. The abomination punches me right through a plaster wall. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the thing fast behind me. I run and swerve as I desperately think of some way to evade the monster behind me.

I weave and scramble, knocking over the floor. I reel. At least I'm still alive and kicking. Okay, I need to stop and think. I examine my surroundings. What do I do now? Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? I don't think I can do this. Just focus. The realization hits me like a freight train. I should be able to bind the monstrosity to this vessel.

I fashion a makeshift receptacle from scrap. This has got to work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the abomination. I hear it too late. A loud howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I start to second guess my plan. The thing smashes the wall, making sparks fly from the exposed wiring. I get a shock from the stray electricity that leaves my head reeling. I'm in deep trouble.

I'm rolling on the floor, holding my head between my hands. I raise an eyebrow. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to work this out. I consider the situation. What do I do now? Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. I really need to breathe. It hits me like a freight train. I might be able to overload the it if I can connect it to the power grid.

I reach for my bag for my tools. I need this to work. I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. The wire sizzles as a tell-tale sign of the monster drawing near. It's bigger than I thought. I start to second guess my plan. I dodge the it's gigantic stinger and jump over it. I block its attack with the live wire and electricity courses through the demon! It screeches and pulses as the energy overloads it, exploding it in a burst of static electricity.

Wickes graveyard quickly gets up on its feet. Well, at least I'm still kicking. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. In any case, Ernest now owes me one. This should negate my debt nicely. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I'm even remotely good at. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I fade into the city.

Chapter 25

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's home. I feel a pain in my chest. I think it's infected. I should get it checked out. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. And I need it fast. A letter arrives from Lucy. I feel my body tense. It sounds bad. She will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for the factory.

I take a cab to the factory. I hesitate. I go in. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted factory always gives me the creeps. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The abomination won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a workbench. I examine the situation. A faint smell of formaldehyde lingers in the place and curious symbols mar the factory. Obviously the demon is more cunning than average. I should be able to outsmart it, though. After all, demons don't actually possess the capacity for real thought. I have to first weaken the abomination with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has to work. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. I hear it too late. A loud screeching howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. A mad

electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? I hit the monstrosity with all my might but my attack just whiffs through the illusionary copy. I run wildly through the illusions, the tricky devil hot on my tail. I'm in deep trouble.

I run like a madman, scrambling over the floor. I grit my teeth. At least I'm not sleeping the big sleep yet. Okay, I need to focus. I examine the situation. What now? Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? How am I supposed to do this? Right. I need to breathe. Right. I have a plan. I could drain the power from the demon if I can ground it.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This is my last chance. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I hear it too late. A loud howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. The abomination disappears into the shadows when it sees the drain I'm holding. The abomination pounces and then retreats, leaving me confused until I notice my equipment is gone. I'm in deep trouble.

I find myself without my gear. My gut sinks. At least I'm not resting in peace yet. Okay, got to get it together. How do I deal with this? I examine the situation. Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? No, that won't work. I really need to work this out. Right. I have to weaken the place that anchors the tricky devil to our world.

I locate the anchor points. This is my last chance. I prepare myself for unmooring the monstrosity from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the monstrosity attacks. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? I fake out the it and jump over it. I grab the last anchor point with my bare hands. I finally remove the last anchor binding it to our world and send it screeching back to the collective unconscious.

Mast factory quickly gets up on its feet. Well, at least I'm not out of business. But that didn't at all go according to plan. In any case, Lucy now owes me one. My chest still hurts though. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose someone has to do it. Might as well be me. Oh well. Life goes on. I fade into the sunrise.

Chapter 26

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's no place like home. The plumbing could use a little work. It will be bad if I can't get it fixed soon. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. Fast. The phone rings. It's Charlie. He is in a hurry. My fists clench. It sounds bad. He really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to the factory.

I walk to Godwin factory. I crack the lock quietly and step through. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted factory always gives me the creeps. I snap out of it. Time for work. The demon won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a workbench. I examine the situation. Curious symbols mar the factory and a faint smell of formaldehyde lingers in the place. Obviously the tricky devil is more cunning than average. I should be able to outsmart it, though. After all, demons don't actually possess the capacity for real thought. I might be able to overload the monster if I can connect it to the power grid.

I grab a loose live wire hanging from the wall by the safe part. This has to work. I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. The wire sizzles as a tell-tale sign of the abomination drawing near. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. Is this even enough to

overload something that powerful? The abomination disappears into the shadows. I hear it snickering. The tricky devil pounces and then retreats, leaving me confused until I notice my equipment is gone. I'm in deep trouble.

I find myself without my gear. I bite my lip. At least I'm still alive and kicking. Okay, I need to breathe. I look around. What now? Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Just concentrate. Right. I have to weaken the place that anchors the monstrosity to our world.

I steady my breath. Time to kick some demon ass. I prepare myself for unmooring the tricky devil from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the abomination attacks. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? I try and destroy an anchor, only to discover that it is merely an illusion. The illusions fade and I notice my pockets are empty. I double-check my pockets. Yep. All empty.

Facing a demon with no gear. Great. My jaw clenches. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to concentrate. What now? I examine the situation. Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? Oh this is just hopeless. I really need to concentrate. Right. I could drain the power from the demon if I can ground it.

I steady my breath. I pray that this will work I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I haven't even tested the grounding as the thing pounces on me. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. I fake out the thing and slide under it. I jab the grounding wire into its eyes. It screeches unbearably and shrinks in size as its power is drained until it disappears with a fizzle.

The situation at Godwin factory should be under control now. Well, at least I'm not croaked. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. I get no monetary compensation. At least there's one less the monster haunting the world. Well, I still need to get that plumbing fixed. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose someone has to do it. Might as well be me. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I fade into the night.

Chapter 27

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's home. I feel a pain in my foot. I think it's infected. I should get it checked out. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job, desperately. Martha steps in the door and lays out her problems. I tremble. It doesn't seem good. She will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for Halbard law firm.

I walk to Halbard law firm. I raise an eyebrow. I go in. Here the coroners of justice dissect and diagnose the corpse of law. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The monstrosity won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a safe. I examine the situation. Small rusted flakes cover the floor and the law firm stands in suspiciously good condition. The monster must be more subtle than your average demon. I should be able to outsmart it, though. After all, demons don't actually possess the capacity for real thought. I could drain the power from the creature if I can ground it.

I steady my breath. I need this to work. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I hear it too late. A loud laughter comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. I try and drain the tricky devil, but find the grounding is all wrong. The monster is not even phased. I

decide to retreat and take off running, with the tricky devil fast behind me. I run and swerve as I desperately think of some way to evade the demon behind me.

I weave and scramble, knocking over the floor. My fists clench. At least I'm not liquidated yet. Okay, I need to think. I consider the situation. What now? Maybe I could bind it? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Just work this out. Right. I have to first weaken the tricky devil with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I take the electric brand from my pocket. I pray that this will work I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The demon shows itself and I start to second guess a full-on assault. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I start to second guess my plan. The tricky devil creates multiple illusionary copies of itself, leaving me wondering which is the original. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the thing fast behind me. I run and swerve as I desperately think of some way to evade the creature behind me.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a windowsill. I furrow my brow. At least I'm not cashed in yet. Okay, I need to focus. I consider the situation. What can I do with this? Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? No, that won't work. Just think. The realization hits me like a freight train. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the tricky devil.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This is my last chance. I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I hear it too late. A loud laughter comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I start to second guess my plan. I fake out the demon and strafe around it. I complete the circle and it's trapped within! I quickly perform the rite while it's contained and send it screeching back to hell.

Halbard law firm is opened for business soon after. Well, at least I'm still breathing. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. In any case, Martha now owes me one. Maybe she can help me get my foot checked. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it has to be done. Oh well. Life goes on. I hail a cab and step into the night.

Chapter 28

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's no place like home. I feel a pain in my foot. I think it's infected. I should get it checked out. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. And I need it fast. I look back at the letter from Louis. I reel. It doesn't seem good. He really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to Ellis law firm.

I arrive at the law firm. I bite my lip. I go in. The air is heavy with the sweat and dust of a thousand wasted man-hours. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The it won't catch itself. I set my bag up on the floor. I examine the situation. Blackish ichor is pooled on the floor and the law firm stands in suspiciously good condition. Obviously the monster is more cunning than average. I should be able to outsmart it, though. After all, demons don't actually possess the capacity for real thought. I have to first weaken the monster with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I take the electric brand from my pocket. This is my last chance. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The abomination shows itself and I start to second guess a full-on assault. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? The tricky devil disappears into the shadows. I hear it snickering. The thing pounces and then retreats, leaving me confused until I notice my equipment is gone. I double-check my pockets. Yep. All

empty.

I find myself without my gear. Sigh. At least I'm still sharp. Okay, I need to focus. I look around. What now? My options seem hopeless. How am I supposed to do this? Right. I need to concentrate. It hits me like a ton of bricks. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the abomination.

I clear some space for the circle. I need this to work. I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I hear it too late. A loud laughter comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. How am I going to finish the circle like this? The unfinished circle breaks as the demon jumps at me and scrapes the floor with its claws. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the monster fast behind me. I'm in deep trouble.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a windowsill. I feel my body tense. At least I'm not cashed in yet. Okay, got to breathe. What now? I examine my surroundings. Maybe I could bind it? Oh this is just hopeless. Okay, I need to work this out. It hits me like a freight train. I could drain the power from the tricky devil if I can ground it.

I connect a piece of wire to a piece of plumbing. That should be grounded properly now. This has got to work. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I haven't even tested the grounding as the abomination pounces on me. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. I fake out the tricky devil and step back it. I jab the grounding wire into its eyes. It screeches unbearably and shrinks in size as its power is drained until it disappears with a fizzle.

Ellis law firm is opened for business soon after. Well, at least I'm still alive. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. I get no money out of this. At least there's one less the tricky devil haunting the world. My foot still hurts though. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it pays the bills. Except when it doesn't. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I hail a cab and disappear into the city.

Chapter 29

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's home. I feel a pang of hunger in my stomach. I'd fill my fridge if I could. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job, desperately. A letter arrives from Rose. I tremble. It sounds bad. She really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to Alexander morgue.

I walk to Alexander morgue. My fists clench. I step inside. The air is heavy with the sweat and dust of a thousand wasted man-hours. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The monstrosity won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a coffin. I examine the situation. Blackish ichor is pooled on the floor and thousands of tiny tracks criss-cross across all imaginable surfaces of the morgue. This must be the work of a swarm demon. The problem is containing the whole swarm. I don't think nobody will sing my praises if I only get rid of half the swarm. I could drain the power from the monster if I can ground it.

I connect a piece of wire to a piece of plumbing. That should be grounded properly now. This is my last chance. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I hear it too late. A loud laughter comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. I try and drain the swarm, but find the

grounding is all wrong. The it is not even phased. The swarm cracks the floor underneath me and I'm plunged into the darkness below. I can't see anything in this darkness.

I stumble in the dark. I raise an eyebrow. At least I'm still alive. Okay, I need to think. I examine the situation. What can I do with this? Maybe I could bind it? I don't think I can do this. Right. I need to think. Right. I should be able to bind the abomination to this vessel.

I fashion a makeshift receptacle from scrap. I need this to work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the abomination. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the swarm appears. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. Can anything even hold something that powerful? The abomination covers all light sources in the room, leaving it in darkness. I decide to retreat and take off running, with it fast behind me. I run and swerve as I desperately think of some way to evade the abomination behind me.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a windowsill. My gut sinks. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to stop and think. I consider the situation. What do I do now? My options seem hopeless. No, that won't work. Just concentrate. Okay, I think I got it. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the it.

I reach for my bag for my tools. Time to kick some demon ass. I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I hear it too late. A loud screeching howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. How am I going to finish the circle like this? I jump over a wave of demonic critters and it crashes into the floor. I complete the circle and it's trapped within! I quickly perform the rite while it's contained and send it screeching back to hell.

The situation at the morgue should be under control now. Well, at least I'm not sleeping the big sleep. But that didn't at all go according to plan. It doesn't pay. At least there's one less the swarm haunting the world. Both my stomach and the larder are still empty though. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it pays the bills. Except when it doesn't. Oh well. Life goes on. I disappear into the sunrise.

Chapter 30

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. No place like home. Wind howls through the broken window. It will be bad if I can't get it fixed soon. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job, desperately. Ray comes to my office and lays out his problems. My gut sinks. It sounds bad. He will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for the park.

I arrive at Stanbury park. I inspect the lock. Basic model. A few minutes work. I'm in. A sad crop of trees surround me, whispering of the dark things they've seen. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The thing won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a statue. I examine my surroundings. Curious symbols mar the park and tiny arcs of electricity dance on all metallic surfaces. Obviously the tricky devil is more cunning than average. I should be able to outsmart it, though. After all, demons don't actually possess the capacity for real thought. I might be able to overload the tricky devil if I can connect it to the power grid.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has to work. I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. The wire sizzles as a tell-tale sign of the it drawing near. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? The tricky devil creates multiple illusionary copies of itself, leaving me wondering which is the original. I run wildly

through the illusions, the it hot on my tail. I'm in deep trouble.

I run like a madman, scrambling over the ground. I raise an eyebrow. At least I'm still kicking. Okay, I need to work this out. I look around. What can I do with this? Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? No, that won't work. Right. I need to think. Right. I have a plan. I have to weaken the place that anchors the monstrosity to our world.

I locate the anchor points. I need this to work. I prepare myself for unmooring the thing from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the demon attacks. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? The tricky devil flings me through the door before I have a chance to finish unmooring it. I fly through the air and land on my foot, busting it. My foot hurts like the dickens. I check my injury.

I check my foot. It doesn't look too good. I tremble. At least I'm still alive and kicking. Okay, got to think. How do I deal with this? I examine the situation. My options seem hopeless. I don't think I can do this. Okay, I need to get it together. Okay, I think I got it. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the demon.

I steady my breath. This is my last chance. I haven't even finished the first layer of the circle when the tricky devil appears. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. How am I going to finish the circle like this? I fake out the monstrosity and step back it. I complete the circle and it's trapped within! I quickly perform the rite while it's contained and send it screeching back to hell.

The park is opened for business soon after. Well, it wasn't as bad as it could have been. But that didn't at all go according to plan. In any case, Ray now owes me one. Well, I still need to get that window fixed. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I know how to do. Oh well. Life goes on. I fade into the rain.

Chapter 31

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. No place like home. I feel a pang of hunger in my stomach. I'd fill my fridge if I could. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. I dig up the telegram from Herman. My grip tightens. It doesn't seem good. I don't savour the idea of visiting the park again.

I take a cab to the park. I inspect the lock. Basic model. A few minutes work. I'm in. A sad crop of trees surround me, whispering of the dark things they've seen. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The abomination won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a statue. I consider the situation. Curious symbols mar the park and blackish ichor is pooled on the ground. Obviously the demon is more cunning than average. I should be able to outsmart it, though. After all, demons don't actually possess the capacity for real thought. I have to first weaken the tricky devil with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I reach for my bag for my tools. I need this to work. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. I hear it too late. A loud laughter comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? The tricky devil disappears into the shadows. I hear it snickering. The monster appears from the shadows, cracking my head and leaving me seeing stars. I fall down on the ground and reel in pain.

My head spins as I try to regain control. I feel a cold sweat coming on. Well, it could be worse.

Okay, got to work this out. How do I deal with this? I examine my surroundings. My options seem hopeless. How am I supposed to do this? Okay, I need to stop and think. Right. I have a plan. I have to weaken the place that anchors the tricky devil to our world.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has got to work. I prepare myself for unmooring the tricky devil from its anchor points. I hear it too late. A loud screech comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? The monstrosity disappears into the shadows. I hear it snickering. The tricky devil appears from the shadows, cracking my head and leaving me seeing stars. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I'm rolling on the floor, holding my head between my hands. I hesitate. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to breathe. What do I do now? I consider the situation. Maybe I could overload it with electricity? Oh this is just hopeless. Okay, I need to stop and think. Okay, I think I got it. I should be able to bind the thing to this vessel.

I fashion a makeshift receptacle from scrap. This has to work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the monstrosity. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the abomination appears. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. Can anything even hold something that powerful? I fake out the thing and sidestep it. I show it the vessel and it is mesmerized by the item! I utter words of power and it is bound screeching into the vessel.

The park is opened for business soon after. Well, at least I'm still kicking. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. At least Herman pays me the appropriate fee. Now I can fill my larder again. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it pays the bills. Except when it doesn't. Oh well. Life goes on. I fade into the rain.

Chapter 32

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. No place like home. I feel a pang of hunger in my stomach. I'd fill my fridge if I could. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job, desperately. I dig up the note from Myrtle. I bite my lip. I feel like this one is going to be a hard one. She really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to Hawk law firm.

I stop outside the law firm. My gut sinks. I go in. The air is heavy with the sweat and dust of a thousand wasted man-hours. I snap out of it. Time for work. The creature won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a desk. I examine the situation. Small rusted flakes cover the floor and the law firm stands in suspiciously good condition. Obviously the monster is more cunning than average. I should be able to outsmart it, though. After all, demons don't actually possess the capacity for real thought. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the tricky devil.

I clear some space for the circle. I need this to work. I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I haven't even finished the first layer of the circle when the monstrosity appears. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. How am I going to finish the circle like this? The creature disappears into the shadows. I hear it snickering. The tricky devil appears from the shadows, cracking my head and leaving me seeing stars. I'm in deep trouble.

I'm rolling on the floor, holding my head between my hands. I raise an eyebrow. At least I'm still alive. Okay, I need to think. I look around. What now? Maybe I could bind it? Could work. If I get lucky. Right. I need to think. Okay, I think I got it. I could drain the power from the creature if I can

ground it.

I steady my breath. This is my last chance. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I haven't even tested the grounding as the monster pounces on me. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. I try and drain the monstrosity, but find the grounding is all wrong. The thing is not even phased. The creature cracks the floor underneath me and I'm plunged into the darkness below. I can't see anything in this darkness.

I grope around in the dark. My jaw clenches. At least I'm not dead yet. Okay, got to focus. How do I deal with this? I consider the situation. Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? Oh this is just hopeless. Right. I need to work this out. Right. I should be able to bind the tricky devil to this vessel.

I fish out a suitable receptacle from my pockets. I pray that this will work I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the it. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the tricky devil appears. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I start to second guess my plan. I fake out the creature and jump over it. I show it the vessel and it is mesmerized by the item! I utter words of power and it is bound screeching into the vessel.

The situation at the law firm should be under control now. Well, at least I'm not out of business. But that was way too close. It doesn't pay. At least there's one less the tricky devil haunting the world. Both my stomach and the larder are still empty though. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I'm even remotely good at. Oh well. Life goes on. I step into the sunrise.

Chapter 33

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's no place like home. I feel a pang of hunger in my stomach. I'd fill my fridge if I could. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. The silence is broken by the ringing of the telephone. It's Floyd. He sounds urgent. I furrow my brow. I feel like this one is going to be a hard one. I don't savour the idea of visiting Kidd hardware store again.

I walk to the hardware store. I bite my lip. I go in. I can almost hear the cash register ringing, as full of itself as it is money. I snap out of it. Time for work. The creature won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a counter. I look around. The air smells of traces of copper or iron and the hardware store is totally trashed. The scene suggests a not-too-bright the monster. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. I have to first weaken the thing with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has got to work. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The monstrosity shows itself and I start to second guess a full-on assault. It's bigger than I thought. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? The creature punches me right through a plaster wall. I'm tossed inside a small room. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I find myself locked into a side room. I furrow my brow. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to think. What do I do now? I examine my surroundings. Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? I don't think I can do this. Right. I need to think. Right. I might be able to overload the monster if I can connect it to the power grid.

I grab a loose live wire hanging from the wall by the safe part. I pray that this will work I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. The wire sizzles as a tell-tale sign of the demon drawing near. I didn't consider it would be this strong. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? The monstrosity punches me right through a plaster wall. I'm tossed inside a small room. I'm in deep trouble.

I find myself locked into a side room. I feel my body tense. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to stop and think. How do I deal with this? I look around. Maybe I could bind it? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. I really need to work this out. Okay, I think I got it. I have to weaken the place that anchors the brute to our world.

I locate the anchor points. This has to work. I prepare myself for unmooring the thing from its anchor points. I hear it too late. A loud screech comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. It's bigger than I thought. I start to second guess my plan. I dodge the monster's gigantic nails and sidestep it. I grab the last anchor point with my bare hands. I finally remove the last anchor binding it to our world and send it screeching back to the collective unconscious.

The situation at the hardware store should be under control now. Well, at least I'm still sharp. But that didn't at all go according to plan. At least Floyd pays me the appropriate fee. Now I can fill my larder again. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it pays the bills. Except when it doesn't. Oh well. Life goes on. I step into the sunrise.

Chapter 34

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. No place like home. Wind howls through the broken window. It will be bad if I can't get it fixed soon. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job. I look back at the note from Mabel. I feel a cold sweat coming on. It sounds bad. She really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to the park.

I stop outside Hopkin park. I furrow my brow. I cross the fence. A sad crop of trees surround me, whispering of the dark things they've seen. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The wraith won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a statue. I look around. Faint whispers emanate from dark corners and I can see large claw marks covering the park. It seems to be a violent but not too clever. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. I could drain the power from the wraith if I can ground it.

I steady my breath. I need this to work. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I haven't even tested the grounding as the demon pounces on me. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I start to second guess my plan. The brute's hind muscles flex as it charges straight at me. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the demon fast behind me. I run and swerve as I desperately think of some way to evade the brute behind me.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a statue. My jaw clenches. At least I'm still sharp. Okay, got to stop and think. What can I do with this? I look around. Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? Oh this is just hopeless. Okay, I need to work this out. It hits me like a ton of bricks. I should be able to bind the thing to this vessel.

I fashion a makeshift receptacle from scrap. This has to work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the monstrosity. I hear it too late. A loud screeching howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. It's bigger than I thought. Can anything even hold something that powerful? The brute

crushes the only viable receptacle with its jaws. The demon cracks the ground underneath me and I'm plunged into the darkness below. I can't see anything in this darkness.

I stumble in the dark. I feel my body tense. At least I'm not liquidated yet. Okay, I need to get it together. I examine my surroundings. How do I deal with this? Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? Could work. If I get lucky. Right. I need to get it together. The realization hits me like a freight train. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the it.

I clear some space for the circle. This is my last chance. I haven't even finished the first layer of the circle when the brute appears. I didn't consider it would be this strong. How am I going to finish the circle like this? I dodge the monster's gigantic stinger and sidestep it. I complete the circle and it's trapped within! I quickly perform the rite while it's contained and send it screeching back to hell.

Hopkin park is opened for business soon after. Well, at least I'm not croaked. But that didn't at all go according to plan. It doesn't pay. My only reward is the gratitude of Mabel. Well, I still need to get that window fixed. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it has to be done. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I step into the city.

Chapter 35

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's home. Unpaid bank bills are starting to overflow my desk. I wonder how long it will take before they cut me off entirely. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job. I dig up the note from Francis. I grit my teeth. It sounds bad. He will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for Cole law firm.

I take a cab to Cole law firm. I inspect the lock. Basic model. A few minutes work. I'm in. Here the coroners of justice dissect and diagnose the corpse of law. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The swarm won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a desk. I examine my surroundings. Blackish ichor is pooled on the floor and hundreds of tiny holes dot the law firm. This must be the work of a swarm demon. The problem is containing the whole swarm. I don't think nobody will sing my praises if I only get rid of half the swarm. I have to first weaken the abomination with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I take the electric brand from my pocket. I need this to work. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The monster shows itself and I start to second guess a full-on assault. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. I start to second guess my plan. The swarm crawls all over the wiring, making sparks fly. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the monster fast behind me. I run and swerve as I desperately think of some way to evade the demon behind me.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a windowsill. I feel a cold sweat coming on. At least I'm still sharp. Okay, got to focus. How do I deal with this? I examine the situation. Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? How am I supposed to do this? Just work this out. Okay, I think I got it. I should be able to bind the it to this vessel.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This is my last chance. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the monstrosity. I hear it too late. A loud screeching howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. Can anything even hold something that powerful? The whirling swarm completely overruns me and I get swept along the tide of demon matter. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the swarm fast behind me. This hasn't gone at all

according to plan.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a windowsill. I frown. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to get it together. What can I do with this? I examine my surroundings. My options seem hopeless. How am I supposed to do this? Right. I need to focus. Okay, I think I got it. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the abomination.

I reach for my bag for my tools. I pray that this will work I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I hear it too late. A loud screeching howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. How am I going to finish the circle like this? I strafe around a wave of demonic critters and it crashes into the floor. I complete the circle and it's trapped within! I quickly perform the rite while it's contained and send it screeching back to hell.

The law firm quickly gets up on its feet. Well, it wasn't as bad as it could have been. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. I get no monetary compensation. However, Francis now owes me one. Maybe I can get he to help me with the bank bills. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I know how to do. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I fade into the fog.

Chapter 36

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's home. I feel a pang of hunger in my stomach. I'd fill my fridge if I could. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job. And I need it fast. I look back at the telegram from Frederick. I hesitate. It doesn't seem good. I don't savour the idea of visiting Whitlock library again.

I walk up to Whitlock library. I hesitate. I go in. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted library always gives me the creeps. I snap out of it. Time for work. The wraith won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a bookshelf. I look around. Faint whispers emanate from dark corners and the library is totally trashed. The scene suggests a not-too-bright the wraith. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. I could drain the power from the monstrosity if I can ground it.

I reach for my bag for my tools. Time to kick some demon ass. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I haven't even tested the grounding as the it pounces on me. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. The brute's hind muscles flex as it charges straight at me. I wrestle with the it and crash into a side room I tumble across the floor and crumble into a heap.

I find myself trapped in a small room. I frown. At least I'm not room temperature yet. Okay, I need to focus. I look around. What now? Maybe I could bind it? Could work. If I get lucky. Okay, I need to stop and think. The realization hits me like a ton of bricks. I should be able to bind the wraith to this vessel.

I fish out a suitable receptacle from my pockets. Time to kick some demon ass. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the monstrosity. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the it appears. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I start to second guess my plan. The demon's hind muscles flex as it charges straight at me. The monstrosity maims my chest with its claws. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I check my chest. It doesn't look too good. I feel a cold sweat coming on. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to breathe. How do I deal with this? I examine my surroundings. Maybe I could overload it with electricity? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Right. I need to get it together. Right. I have a plan. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the wraith.

I reach for my bag for my tools. I need this to work. I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I haven't even finished the first layer of the circle when the wraith appears. It's bigger than I thought. How am I going to finish the circle like this? I dodge the brute's gigantic nails and strafe around it. I complete the circle and it's trapped within! I quickly perform the rite while it's contained and send it screeching back to hell.

Whitlock library quickly gets up on its feet. Well, it wasn't as bad as it could have been. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. In any case, Frederick compensates me for my troubles. Now I can fill my larder again. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I'm even remotely good at. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I hail a cab and fade into the city.

Chapter 37

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's home. Unpaid electricity bills are starting to overflow my desk. I wonder how long it will take before they cut me off entirely. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job, desperately. A note arrives from Dorothy. I feel a cold sweat coming on. It sounds bad. I don't savour the idea of visiting the bar again.

I walk up to Younger bar. I freeze. I go in. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted bar always gives me the creeps. I snap out of it. Time for work. The monster won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a counter. I examine the situation. Curious symbols mar the bar and the air smells of traces of copper or iron. Obviously the monstrosity is more cunning than average. I should be able to outsmart it, though. After all, demons don't actually possess the capacity for real thought. I have to weaken the place that anchors the it to our world.

I steady my breath. This is my last chance. I prepare myself for unmooring the demon from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the creature attacks. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? The it flings me through the door before I have a chance to finish unmooring it. I fly through the air and land on my back, busting it. I'm in deep trouble.

I check my back. It's bad. I frown. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to work this out. I consider the situation. How do I deal with this? Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? Could work. If I get lucky. Okay, I need to get it together. Right. I have a plan. I have to first weaken the creature with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I take the electric brand from my pocket. This is my last chance. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The it shows itself and I start to second guess a full-on assault. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? The monster creates multiple illusionary copies of itself, leaving me wondering which is the original. I run wildly through the illusions, the tricky devil hot on my tail. I'm in deep trouble.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a stool. I hesitate. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to think. What do I do now? I examine the situation. Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? Could

work. If I get lucky. Just think. The realization hits me like a freight train. I could drain the power from the demon if I can ground it.

I steady my breath. This has to work. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I haven't even tested the grounding as the monster pounces on me. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. I fake out the thing and jump over it. I jab the grounding wire into its eyes. It screeches unbearably and shrinks in size as its power is drained until it disappears with a fizzle.

The bar quickly gets up on its feet. Now I can tend to my injuries. But that was way too close. In any case, Dorothy compensates me for my troubles. I can't pay the bills with good intentions though. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose someone has to do it. Might as well be me. Oh well. Life goes on. I step into the rain.

Chapter 38

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. No place like home. Unpaid electricity bills are starting to overflow my desk. I wonder how long it will take before they cut me off entirely. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job, desperately. Jesse comes to my office and explains his problems. I hesitate. It sounds bad. He really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to the morgue.

I stop outside Reynolds morgue. I frown. I go in. The stench of death floats in the air like a persistent miasma. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The creature won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a paper shredder. I consider the situation. The air smells of traces of copper or iron and curious symbols mar the morgue. The tricky devil must be more subtle than your average demon. I should be able to outsmart it, though. After all, demons don't actually possess the capacity for real thought. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the it.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has got to work. I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I hear it too late. A loud laughter comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. How am I going to finish the circle like this? The creature cracks my circle in half, erasing all hope of using it to destroy it. The creature cracks the floor underneath me and I'm plunged into the darkness below. I can't see anything in this darkness.

I grope around in the dark. I tremble. At least I'm not six feet under yet. Okay, I need to get it together. I examine the situation. What now? My options seem hopeless. Could work. If I get lucky. Okay, I need to stop and think. The realization hits me like a ton of bricks. I have to first weaken the creature with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I raise my fists. I need this to work. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The demon shows itself and I start to second guess a full-on assault. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I start to second guess my plan. The it disappears into the shadows. I hear it snickering. The monstrosity pounces and then retreats, leaving me confused until I notice my equipment is gone. I'm in deep trouble.

Facing a demon with no gear. Great. I reel. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to breathe. I examine my surroundings. What do I do now? Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? How am I supposed to do this? Just work this out. Okay, I think I got it. I should be able to bind the monster to this vessel.

I steady my breath. This has to work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the monstrosity. I hear it too late. A loud howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. Can anything even hold something that powerful? I fake out the tricky devil and slide under it. I show it the vessel and it is mesmerized by the item! I utter words of power and it is bound screeching into the vessel.

Reynolds morgue quickly gets up on its feet. Well, at least I'm not feeding the worms. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. It doesn't pay. At least there's one less the monstrosity haunting the world. This should go nicely towards my electricity bills. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it has to be done. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I step into the fog.

Chapter 39

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's no place like home. My loan shark are breathing down my neck about those debts though. I've just gotten my last warning, too. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. And I need it fast. A telegram arrives from Leo. My gut sinks. I feel like this one is going to be a hard one. He really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to Halbard grocery store.

I stop outside the grocery store. Sigh. I go in. I can almost hear the cash register ringing, as full of itself as it is money. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The abomination won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a windowsill. I consider the situation. Blackish ichor is pooled on the floor and I can see large claw marks covering the grocery store. The scene suggests a not-too-bright the abomination. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. I might be able to overload the monstrosity if I can connect it to the power grid.

I reach for my bag for my tools. I pray that this will work I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. The wire sizzles as a tell-tale sign of the abomination drawing near. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I start to second guess my plan. The it smashes the wall, making sparks fly from the exposed wiring. I get a shock from the stray electricity that leaves my head reeling. I fall down on the floor and reel in pain.

I'm rolling on the floor, holding my head between my hands. My gut sinks. At least I'm still kicking. Okay, I need to breathe. I examine the situation. What now? Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. I really need to focus. Right. I have a plan. I could drain the power from the brute if I can ground it.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This is my last chance. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I hear it too late. A loud laughter comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I start to second guess my plan. The monster punches me right through a plaster wall. I'm tossed inside a small room. I tumble across the floor and crumble into a heap.

I find myself trapped in a small room. My jaw clenches. At least I'm not sleeping the big sleep yet. Okay, got to work this out. What do I do now? I consider the situation. Maybe I could bind it? Oh this is just hopeless. Just think. Right. I have to first weaken the monster with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I raise my fists. This has got to work. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The it shows itself and I start to second guess a full-on assault. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I start to second guess my plan. I dodge the it's gigantic jaws and slide under it. I smash it between the eyes! It reels in pain. I pummel it again and again until it can't hold itself together any more and disintegrates.

Halbard grocery store is opened for business soon after. Well, it wasn't as bad as it could have been. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. I get no monetary compensation. At least there's one less the monster haunting the world. I'm still neck deep in debt though. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it pays the bills. Except when it doesn't. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I disappear into the city.

Chapter 40

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's no place like home. Unpaid heating bills are starting to overflow my desk. I wonder how long it will take before they cut me off entirely. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. And I need it fast. The silence is broken by the ringing of the telephone. It's Elmer. He is in a hurry. I freeze. It sounds bad. He will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for Griggs train station.

I walk up to Griggs train station. I crack the lock quietly and step through. The station seems so empty. Only a few homeless people shuffle slowly around the vicinity, lending the place a destitute atmosphere. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The monster won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a windowsill. I examine my surroundings. Faint whispers emanate from dark corners and hundreds of tiny holes dot the train station. This must be the work of a swarm demon. The problem is containing the whole swarm. I don't think nobody will sing my praises if I only get rid of half the swarm. I could drain the power from the demon if I can ground it.

I steady my breath. I need this to work. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I haven't even tested the grounding as the thing pounces on me. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. The demon crawls all over the wiring, making sparks fly. The electric shocks short the lights and the room is plunged into darkness. I can't see anything in this darkness.

I grope around in the dark. I hesitate. At least I'm still kicking. Okay, got to work this out. What now? I look around. Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? I don't think I can do this. Right. I need to focus. The realization hits me like a ton of bricks. I should be able to bind the swarm to this vessel.

I fish out a suitable receptacle from my pockets. I pray that this will work I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the monstrosity. I hear it too late. A loud screeching howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. I start to second guess my plan. The swarm crushes the only viable receptacle with its nails. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the swarm fast behind me. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a luggage cart. I tremble. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to stop and think. What do I do now? I examine the situation. Maybe I could overload it with electricity? Oh this is just hopeless. Okay, I need to concentrate. Okay, I think I got it. I have to weaken the place that anchors the wraith to our world.

I locate the anchor points. I pray that this will work I prepare myself for unmooring the wraith from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the it attacks. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? I strafe around a wave of demonic critters and it crashes into the floor. I grab the last anchor point with my bare hands. I finally remove the last anchor binding it to our world and send it screeching back to the collective unconscious.

The situation at the train station should be under control now. Well, it wasn't as bad as it could have been. But that was way too close. In any case, Elmer now owes me one. This should go nicely towards my heating bills. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it pays the bills. Except when it doesn't. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I hail a cab and step into the night.

Chapter 41

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. No place like home. I feel a pain in my chest. I think it's infected. I should get it checked out. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job, desperately. Rosa steps in the door and tells me her problems. Sigh. It doesn't seem good. I don't savour the idea of visiting the morgue again.

I walk up to the morgue. I inspect the lock. Basic model. A few minutes work. I'm in. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted morgue always gives me the creeps. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The it won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a filing cabinet. I examine the situation. A faint smell of formaldehyde lingers in the place and thousands of tiny tracks criss-cross across all imaginable surfaces of the morgue. This must be the work of a swarm demon. The problem is containing the whole swarm. I don't think nobody will sing my praises if I only get rid of half the swarm. I might be able to overload the demon if I can connect it to the power grid.

I reach for my bag for my tools. I need this to work. I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. I hear it too late. A loud howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? The thing covers all light sources in the room, leaving it in darkness. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the monster fast behind me. I run and swerve as I desperately think of some way to evade the monstrosity behind me.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a desk. My grip tightens. At least I'm still breathing. Okay, I need to focus. I examine my surroundings. What now? Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? How am I supposed to do this? Just concentrate. The realization hits me like a freight train. I have to weaken the place that anchors the abomination to our world.

I reach for my bag for my tools. Time to kick some demon ass. I prepare myself for unmooring the abomination from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the it attacks. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? The thing covers all light sources in the room, leaving it in darkness. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the swarm fast behind me. I run and swerve as I desperately think of some way to evade the abomination behind me.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a desk. Sigh. At least I'm still kicking. Okay, got to concentrate. What do I do now? I examine my surroundings. Maybe it will just go away on its own? One can only hope. How am I supposed to do this? I really need to think. The realization hits me

like a freight train. I have to first weaken the it with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I raise my fists. This has to work. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. I hear it too late. A loud screeching howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? I duck under a wave of demonic critters and it crashes into the floor. I smash it between the eyes! It reels in pain. I pummel it again and again until it can't hold itself together any more and disintegrates.

The morgue quickly gets up on its feet. Well, at least I'm not snuffed out. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. At least Rosa pays me the appropriate fee. Maybe I'll use the money to go get my chest checked. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I'm even remotely good at. Oh well. Life goes on. I hail a cab and step into the rain.

Chapter 42

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's home. Unpaid bank bills are starting to overflow my desk. I wonder how long it will take before they cut me off entirely. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job, desperately. Eugene steps in the door and lays out his problems. I raise an eyebrow. I feel like this one is going to be a hard one. He really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to the library.

I take a cab to the library. I feel a cold sweat coming on. I go in. Tens of thousands of words stare at me from the bookshelves, bound in crumbling leather. I snap out of it. Time for work. The demon won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a bookshelf. I examine the situation. Small rusted flakes cover the floor and I can see large claw marks covering the library. It seems to be a violent but not too clever. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the creature.

I reach for my bag for my tools. I pray that this will work I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I haven't even finished the first layer of the circle when the creature appears. I didn't consider it would be this strong. How am I going to finish the circle like this? The creature smashes the wall, making sparks fly from the exposed wiring. I get a shock from the stray electricity that leaves my head reeling. I'm in deep trouble.

I'm rolling on the floor, holding my head between my hands. I feel a cold sweat coming on. At least I'm not worm food yet. Okay, I need to think. I examine my surroundings. How do I deal with this? Maybe I could overload it with electricity? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Just concentrate. Right. I have a plan. I could drain the power from the brute if I can ground it.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This is my last chance. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I hear it too late. A loud howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. The creature punches me right through a plaster wall. I fly through the air and land on my hand, busting it. I'm in deep trouble.

I check my hand. It doesn't look too good. I raise an eyebrow. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to breathe. I examine the situation. How do I deal with this? Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? I don't think I can do this. I really need to stop and think. The realization hits me like a

freight train. I have to weaken the place that anchors the demon to our world.

I reach for my bag for my tools. I need this to work. I prepare myself for unmooring the creature from its anchor points. I hear it too late. A loud howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. It's bigger than I thought. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? I dodge the brute's gigantic talons and jump over it. I grab the last anchor point with my bare hands. I finally remove the last anchor binding it to our world and send it screeching back to the collective unconscious.

West library quickly gets up on its feet. Well, at least I'm not croaked. But that didn't at all go according to plan. I get no monetary compensation. At least there's one less the demon haunting the world. This should go nicely towards my bank bills. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I'm even remotely good at. Oh well. Life goes on. I hail a cab and disappear into the sunrise.

Chapter 43

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. No place like home. The sink gurgles and clanks ominously. It will be bad if I can't get it fixed soon. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job. Fast. Susie comes to my office and lays out her problems. I tremble. It sounds bad. She really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to the metro station.

I walk up to the metro station. I bite my lip. I step inside. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted metro station always gives me the creeps. I snap out of it. Time for work. The monstrosity won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a luggage cart. I look around. Small rusted flakes cover the floor and thousands of tiny tracks criss-cross across all imaginable surfaces of the metro station. It's obvious we're dealing with a demonic swarm. The problem is containing the whole swarm. I don't think nobody will sing my praises if I only get rid of half the swarm. I have to weaken the place that anchors the swarm to our world.

I reach for my bag for my tools. Time to kick some demon ass. I prepare myself for unmooring the monstrosity from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the demon attacks. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? The it crawls all over the wiring, making sparks fly. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the it fast behind me. I'm in deep trouble.

I weave and scramble, knocking over the floor. I hesitate. At least I'm not out of business yet. Okay, got to focus. What now? I look around. Maybe I could overload it with electricity? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Okay, I need to think. Right. I might be able to overload the monstrosity if I can connect it to the power grid.

I grab a loose live wire hanging from the wall by the safe part. I pray that this will work I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. The wire sizzles as a tell-tale sign of the swarm drawing near. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? The swarm crawls all over the wiring, making sparks fly. The electric shocks short the lights and the room is plunged into darkness. I'm in deep trouble.

I stumble in the dark. I furrow my brow. At least I'm not out of business yet. Okay, got to focus. What can I do with this? I consider the situation. Maybe I could bind it? How am I supposed to do this? I really need to stop and think. The realization hits me like a ton of bricks. I could drain the

power from the creature if I can ground it.

I connect a piece of wire to a piece of plumbing. That should be grounded properly now. I need this to work. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I hear it too late. A loud howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. I strafe around a wave of demonic critters and it crashes into the floor. I jab the grounding wire into its eyes. It screeches unbearably and shrinks in size as its power is drained until it disappears with a fizzle.

Owens metro station quickly gets up on its feet. Well, at least I'm not worm food. But that didn't at all go according to plan. It doesn't pay. My only reward is the gratitude of Susie. Well, I still need to get that sink fixed. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it pays the bills. Except when it doesn't. Oh well. Life goes on. I fade into the night.

Chapter 44

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. No place like home. My poker buddies are breathing down my neck about those debts though. I've just gotten my last warning, too. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job. I dig up the letter from Paul. I grit my teeth. It doesn't seem good. He will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for Forge graveyard.

I walk to the graveyard. I hesitate. I step inside. A sad crop of trees surround me, whispering of the dark things they've seen. I snap out of it. Time for work. The creature won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a sarcophagus. I consider the situation. I can see large claw marks covering the graveyard and small rusted flakes cover the floor. The scene suggests a not-too-bright the demon. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. I could drain the power from the brute if I can ground it.

I steady my breath. This has to work. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I haven't even tested the grounding as the monstrosity pounces on me. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. The brute punches me right through a plaster wall. I'm tossed inside a small room. I tumble across the floor and crumble into a heap.

I find myself locked into a side room. I tremble. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to work this out. What do I do now? I consider the situation. Maybe I could bind it? No, that won't work. Just get it together. Right. I have a plan. I should be able to bind the monster to this vessel.

I fish out a suitable receptacle from my pockets. I need this to work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the brute. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the thing appears. I didn't consider it would be this strong. Can anything even hold something that powerful? The creature sees the vessel, pounces at me in a blind rage. The thing maims my chest with its tail. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I check my chest. It's bad. I hesitate. At least I'm still sharp. Okay, got to get it together. What can I do with this? I examine the situation. Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Right. I need to think. Right. I have a plan. I have to first weaken the demon with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I take the electric brand from my pocket. Time to kick some demon ass. I take a stance and ready

myself for an assault. The brute shows itself and I start to second guess a full-on assault. It's bigger than I thought. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? I dodge the brute's gigantic fist and jump over it. I smash it between the eyes! It reels in pain. I pummel it again and again until it can't hold itself together any more and disintegrates.

The situation at the graveyard should be under control now. Now I can tend to my injuries. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. In any case, Paul now owes me one. I'm still neck deep in debt though. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I'm even remotely good at. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I hail a cab and fade into the city.

Chapter 45

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's no place like home. My poker buddies are breathing down my neck about those debts though. I've just gotten my last warning, too. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. Fast. I look back at the note from Jack. I freeze. It doesn't seem good. I don't savour the idea of visiting the graveyard again.

I walk to Urwin graveyard. I freeze. I go in. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted graveyard always gives me the creeps. I snap out of it. Time for work. The it won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a windowsill. I consider the situation. I can see large claw marks covering the graveyard and blackish ichor is pooled on the floor. It seems to be a violent but not too clever. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. I might be able to overload the brute if I can connect it to the power grid.

I steady my breath. This has to work. I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. I hear it too late. A loud laughter comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. It's bigger than I thought. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? The brute roars and my wire starts throwing sparks around the room. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the thing fast behind me. I'm in deep trouble.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a sarcophagus. I freeze. At least I'm still alive. Okay, got to think. What do I do now? I look around. My options seem hopeless. No, that won't work. Okay, I need to concentrate. Okay, I think I got it. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the thing.

I clear some space for the circle. Time to kick some demon ass. I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I haven't even finished the first layer of the circle when the thing appears. It's bigger than I thought. How am I going to finish the circle like this? The monster cracks my circle in half, erasing all hope of using it to destroy it. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the it fast behind me. I run and swerve as I desperately think of some way to evade the monstrosity behind me.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a statue. I feel my body tense. At least I'm not resting in peace yet. Okay, I need to stop and think. I examine the situation. How do I deal with this? Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Okay, I need to work this out. Okay, I think I got it. I have to first weaken the brute with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I raise my fists. I need this to work. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. I hear it too late. A loud howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. I didn't consider it would be this

strong. I start to second guess my plan. I dodge the monstrosity's gigantic tentacle and strafe around it. I smash it between the eyes! It reels in pain. I pummel it again and again until it can't hold itself together any more and disintegrates.

Urwin graveyard is opened for business soon after. Well, at least I'm still kicking. But that was way too close. At least Jack pays me the appropriate fee. I hope my poker buddies take credit. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it pays the bills. Except when it doesn't. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I disappear into the city.

Chapter 46

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's no place like home. I feel the familiar craving for laudanum. My stash is empty and I desperately need some more. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job, desperately. Albert comes to my office and lays out his problems. I feel a cold sweat coming on. It sounds bad. He really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to the speakeasy.

I stop outside the speakeasy. Sigh. I go in. The place smells of dried alcohol, vomit and blood. I snap out of it. Time for work. The creature won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a counter. I examine the situation. I can see large claw marks covering the speakeasy and the air smells of traces of copper or iron. It seems to be a violent but not too clever. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the demon.

I clear some space for the circle. Time to kick some demon ass. I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I hear it too late. A loud howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. It's bigger than I thought. How am I going to finish the circle like this? The unfinished circle breaks as the demon jumps at me and scrapes the floor with its claws. I wrestle with the creature and crash into a side room. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I find myself trapped in a small room. I raise an eyebrow. At least I'm not cashed in yet. Okay, got to focus. What do I do now? I look around. Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? No, that won't work. I really need to stop and think. Right. I might be able to overload the brute if I can connect it to the power grid.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has to work. I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. The wire sizzles as a tell-tale sign of the brute drawing near. It's bigger than I thought. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? The thing smashes the wall, making sparks fly from the exposed wiring. I get a shock from the stray electricity that leaves my head reeling. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I'm rolling on the floor, holding my head between my hands. I bite my lip. At least I'm still kicking. Okay, got to breathe. How do I deal with this? I examine my surroundings. My options seem hopeless. No, that won't work. I really need to work this out. Okay, I think I got it. I have to weaken the place that anchors the monster to our world.

I reach for my bag for my tools. Time to kick some demon ass. I prepare myself for unmooring the monster from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the monster attacks. It's bigger than I thought. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? I dodge the it's gigantic talons and sidestep it. I grab the last anchor point with my bare hands. I finally remove the last anchor binding it to our world and send it screeching back to the collective unconscious.

West speakeasy quickly gets up on its feet. Well, it wasn't as bad as it could have been. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. I get no money out of this. At least there's one less the creature haunting the world. I feel the familiar crawl of deprivation. My stash is till empty. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I'm even remotely good at. Oh well. Life goes on. I hail a cab and step into the sunrise.

Chapter 47

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's no place like home. I feel the familiar craving for painkillers. My stash is empty and I desperately need some more. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job. Fast. I'm throwing darts at the lord barrister's picture when the phone rings. It's Fred. He sounds urgent. I feel a cold sweat coming on. It doesn't seem good. He really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to Hawk graveyard.

I take a cab to the graveyard. My grip tightens. I step inside. A sad crop of trees surround me, whispering of the dark things they've seen. I snap out of it. Time for work. The monster won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a tombstone. I look around. Curious symbols mar the graveyard and tiny arcs of electricity dance on all metallic surfaces. Obviously the thing is more cunning than average. I should be able to outsmart it, though. After all, demons don't actually possess the capacity for real thought. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the monstrosity.

I steady my breath. I pray that this will work I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I hear it too late. A loud screech comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. I start to second guess my plan. The unfinished circle breaks as the demon jumps at me and scrapes the floor with its claws. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the it fast behind me. I run and swerve as I desperately think of some way to evade the tricky devil behind me.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a tombstone. I frown. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to work this out. I examine my surroundings. How do I deal with this? Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Okay, I need to breathe. Okay, I think I got it. I could drain the power from the tricky devil if I can ground it.

I connect a piece of wire to a piece of plumbing. That should be grounded properly now. I need this to work. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I haven't even tested the grounding as the tricky devil pounces on me. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. I start to second guess my plan. The it disappears into the shadows. I hear it snickering. The wraith appears from the shadows, cracking my head and leaving me seeing stars. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

My head spins as I try to regain control. I freeze. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to think. I look around. What can I do with this? Maybe it will just go away on its own? One can only hope. Oh this is just hopeless. Okay, I need to think. Right. I have a plan. I have to weaken the place that anchors the thing to our world.

I locate the anchor points. Time to kick some demon ass. I prepare myself for unmooring the wraith from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the thing attacks. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? I fake out the wraith and duck under it. I grab the last anchor point with my bare hands. I finally

remove the last anchor binding it to our world and send it screeching back to the collective unconscious.

The situation at the graveyard should be under control now. Well, at least I'm still kicking. But that didn't at all go according to plan. I get no monetary compensation. At least there's one less the wraith haunting the world. I feel the familiar crawl of deprivation. My stash is till empty. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I know how to do. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I disappear into the rain.

Chapter 48

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's no place like home. I feel the familiar craving for laudanum. My stash is empty and I desperately need some more. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. A letter arrives from Vera. I tremble. It sounds bad. I don't savour the idea of visiting Hayes archive again.

I walk to the archive. I feel a cold sweat coming on. I go in. The air is heavy with the sweat and dust of a thousand wasted man-hours. I snap out of it. Time for work. The demon won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a filing cabinet. I examine the situation. Small rusted flakes cover the floor and the archive stands in suspiciously good condition. Obviously the creature is more cunning than average. I should be able to outsmart it, though. After all, demons don't actually possess the capacity for real thought. I have to first weaken the tricky devil with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I take the electric brand from my pocket. This is my last chance. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The tricky devil shows itself and I start to second guess a full-on assault. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? The tricky devil creates multiple illusionary copies of itself, leaving me wondering which is the original. I run wildly through the illusions, the thing hot on my tail. I'm in deep trouble.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a windowsill. I raise an eyebrow. At least I'm not sleeping the big sleep yet. Okay, got to stop and think. How do I deal with this? I examine the situation. Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? No, that won't work. Right. I need to concentrate. The realization hits me like a ton of bricks. I should be able to bind the monstrosity to this vessel.

I fish out a suitable receptacle from my pockets. This has to work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the monstrosity. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the monster appears. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. Can anything even hold something that powerful? The monster creates multiple illusionary copies of itself, leaving me wondering which is the original. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the demon fast behind me. I'm in deep trouble.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a windowsill. I hesitate. At least I'm still alive and kicking. Okay, got to think. How do I deal with this? I examine the situation. Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? I don't think I can do this. Okay, I need to stop and think. Right. I could drain the power from the demon if I can ground it.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has to work. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I hear it too late. A loud laughter comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. I fake out the creature and jump over it. I jab the grounding wire into its eyes. It screeches unbearably

and shrinks in size as its power is drained until it disappears with a fizz.

The situation at Hayes archive should be under control now. Well, at least I'm still alive and kicking. But that didn't at all go according to plan. At least Vera pays me the appropriate fee. Time to refill that stash. Oh yeah. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I'm even remotely good at. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I disappear into the sunrise.

Chapter 49

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. No place like home. I feel the familiar craving for opium. My stash is empty and I desperately need some more. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. And I need it fast. I dig up the note from Arthur. My gut sinks. It sounds bad. He will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for Hamilton balloon terminal.

I arrive at Hamilton balloon terminal. I crack the lock quietly and step through. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted balloon terminal always gives me the creeps. I snap out of it. Time for work. The it won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a bench. I look around. A faint smell of formaldehyde lingers in the place and the balloon terminal is totally trashed. It seems to be a violent but not too clever. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the monster.

I reach for my bag for my tools. I need this to work. I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I hear it too late. A loud laughter comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. It's bigger than I thought. How am I going to finish the circle like this? The unfinished circle breaks as the demon jumps at me and scrapes the floor with its claws. I wrestle with the abomination and crash into a side room. I tumble across the floor and crumble into a heap.

I find myself locked into a side room. I tremble. At least I'm not room temperature yet. Okay, got to focus. What now? I examine the situation. My options seem hopeless. Oh this is just hopeless. Right. I need to think. It hits me like a ton of bricks. I should be able to bind the abomination to this vessel.

I fish out a suitable receptacle from my pockets. I pray that this will work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the monstrosity. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the brute appears. It's bigger than I thought. I start to second guess my plan. The monstrosity smashes the wall, making sparks fly from the exposed wiring. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the demon fast behind me. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a windowsill. I reel. At least I'm still alive. Okay, I need to work this out. I examine my surroundings. What now? Maybe I could overload it with electricity? I don't think I can do this. I really need to breathe. It hits me like a ton of bricks. I might be able to overload the demon if I can connect it to the power grid.

I grab a loose live wire hanging from the wall by the safe part. This is my last chance. I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. The wire sizzles as a tell-tale sign of the monster drawing near. It's bigger than I thought. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? I dodge the demon's gigantic beak and sidestep it. I block its attack with the live wire and electricity courses through the thing! It screeches and pulses as the energy overloads it, exploding it in a burst of static electricity.

The balloon terminal quickly gets up on its feet. Well, at least I'm not out of business. But that didn't at all go according to plan. It doesn't pay. However, Arthur now owes me one. I feel the familiar crawl of deprivation. My stash is till empty. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it has to be done. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I disappear into the fog.

Chapter 50

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's no place like home. My bookies are breathing down my neck about those debts though. I've just gotten my last warning, too. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job. Fast. Andrew comes to my office and explains his problems. I feel a cold sweat coming on. I feel like this one is going to be a hard one. He really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to the park.

I walk up to Kenward park. Sigh. I cross the fence. A sad crop of trees surround me, whispering of the dark things they've seen. I snap out of it. Time for work. The demon won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a statue. I look around. The park stands in suspiciously good condition and small rusted flakes cover the ground. The it must be more subtle than your average demon. I should be able to outsmart it, though. After all, demons don't actually possess the capacity for real thought. I have to first weaken the it with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I raise my fists. This is my last chance. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. I hear it too late. A loud laughter comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? I hit the monster with all my might. It only makes it angrier. The monstrosity cracks the ground underneath me and I'm plunged into the darkness below. I can't see anything in this darkness.

I grope around in the dark. Sigh. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to get it together. I look around. What now? Maybe it will just go away on its own? One can only hope. No, that won't work. I really need to concentrate. It hits me like a freight train. I should be able to bind the creature to this vessel.

I fashion a makeshift receptacle from scrap. Time to kick some demon ass. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the creature. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the thing appears. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. Can anything even hold something that powerful? The tricky devil disappears into the shadows. I hear it snickering. The thing appears from the shadows, cracking my head and leaving me seeing stars. I fall down on the ground and reel in pain.

I'm rolling on the floor, holding my head between my hands. My fists clench. At least I'm still alive and kicking. Okay, I need to work this out. I look around. What can I do with this? My options seem hopeless. Oh this is just hopeless. I really need to get it together. Right. I might be able to overload the thing if I can connect it to the power grid.

I grab a loose live wire hanging from the wall by the safe part. I pray that this will work I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. The wire sizzles as a tell-tale sign of the it drawing near. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? I fake out the tricky devil and sidestep it. I block its attack with the live wire and electricity courses through the thing! It screeches and pulses as the energy overloads it, exploding it in a burst of static electricity.

The park is opened for business soon after. Well, at least I'm still alive and kicking. But that didn't at all go according to plan. I get no money out of this. At least there's one less the tricky devil haunting the world. I'm still neck deep in debt though. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I know how to do. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I step into the sunrise.

Chapter 51

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. No place like home. My loan shark are breathing down my neck about those debts though. I've just gotten my last warning, too. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job, desperately. I dig up the note from Edith. I hesitate. It sounds bad. She really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to Brewer grocery store.

I walk up to the grocery store. I raise an eyebrow. I go in. I can almost hear the cash register ringing, as full of itself as it is money. I snap out of it. Time for work. The thing won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a safe. I examine the situation. The air smells of traces of copper or iron and curious symbols mar the grocery store. The thing must be more subtle than your average demon. I should be able to outsmart it, though. After all, demons don't actually possess the capacity for real thought. I have to weaken the place that anchors the creature to our world.

I locate the anchor points. I need this to work. I prepare myself for unmooring the monster from its anchor points. I hear it too late. A loud screech comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? The thing flings me through the door before I have a chance to finish unmooring it. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the tricky devil fast behind me. I run and swerve as I desperately think of some way to evade the tricky devil behind me.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a counter. My grip tightens. At least I'm not room temperature yet. Okay, got to stop and think. What do I do now? I look around. Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? Oh this is just hopeless. Right. I need to breathe. It hits me like a ton of bricks. I might be able to overload the creature if I can connect it to the power grid.

I reach for my bag for my tools. Time to kick some demon ass. I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. The wire sizzles as a tell-tale sign of the tricky devil drawing near. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. I start to second guess my plan. The tricky devil roars and my wire starts throwing sparks around the room. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the tricky devil fast behind me. I'm in deep trouble.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a safe. I bite my lip. At least I'm still alive. Okay, I need to concentrate. I examine the situation. What now? Maybe I could bind it? How am I supposed to do this? Okay, I need to get it together. Right. I have a plan. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the tricky devil.

I steady my breath. This has got to work. I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I haven't even finished the first layer of the circle when the monster appears. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I start to second guess my plan. I fake out the monster and sidestep it. I complete the circle and it's trapped within! I quickly perform the rite while it's contained and send it screeching back to hell.

The grocery store quickly gets up on its feet. Well, it wasn't as bad as it could have been. But that

didn't at all go according to plan. It doesn't pay. At least there's one less the demon haunting the world. I'm still neck deep in debt though. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it pays the bills. Except when it doesn't. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I disappear into the rain.

Chapter 52

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's no place like home. Unpaid bank bills are starting to overflow my desk. I wonder how long it will take before they cut me off entirely. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. Fast. I'm throwing darts at the lord barrister's picture when the phone rings. It's Ellen. She is in a hurry. I freeze. It doesn't seem good. She will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for the college.

I arrive at Hyem college. I inspect the lock. Basic model. A few minutes work. I'm in. Tens of thousands of words stare at me from the bookshelves, bound in crumbling leather. I snap out of it. Time for work. The monster won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a windowsill. I examine my surroundings. The air smells of traces of copper or iron and I can see large claw marks covering the college. The scene suggests a not-too-bright the demon. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the monstrosity.

I clear some space for the circle. This has got to work. I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I haven't even finished the first layer of the circle when the brute appears. It's bigger than I thought. How am I going to finish the circle like this? The unfinished circle breaks as the demon jumps at me and scrapes the floor with its claws. I wrestle with the thing and crash into a side room. I tumble across the floor and crumble into a heap.

I find myself locked into a side room. I feel a cold sweat coming on. At least I'm still breathing. Okay, I need to concentrate. I examine my surroundings. What now? Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Okay, I need to concentrate. Right. I have a plan. I have to first weaken the brute with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I take the electric brand from my pocket. Time to kick some demon ass. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. I hear it too late. A loud screeching howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. It's bigger than I thought. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? The monstrosity's hind muscles flex as it charges straight at me. The brute maims my foot with its pseudopod. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I check my foot. It doesn't look too good. My fists clench. At least I'm still alive. Okay, got to think. How do I deal with this? I examine the situation. Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? I don't think I can do this. Just get it together. Right. I could drain the power from the demon if I can ground it.

I connect a piece of wire to a piece of plumbing. That should be grounded properly now. This is my last chance. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I haven't even tested the grounding as the brute pounces on me. It's bigger than I thought. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. I dodge the creature's gigantic tail and jump over it. I jab the grounding wire into its eyes. It screeches unbearably and shrinks in size as its power is drained until it disappears with a fizzle.

The situation at Hyem college should be under control now. Well, at least I'm still kicking. But that didn't at all go according to plan. I get no monetary compensation. However, Ellen now owes me one. Maybe I can get she to help me with the bank bills. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I know how to do. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I hail a cab and fade into the fog.

Chapter 53

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. No place like home. I feel a pang of hunger in my stomach. I'd fill my fridge if I could. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. Fast. Elsie steps in the door and lays out her problems. I tremble. It doesn't seem good. She really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to Griffin speakeasy.

I walk up to the speakeasy. I feel a cold sweat coming on. I go in. The place smells of dried alcohol, vomit and blood. I snap out of it. Time for work. The it won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a jukebox. I look around. The air smells of traces of copper or iron and curious symbols mar the speakeasy. The thing must be more subtle than your average demon. I should be able to outsmart it, though. After all, demons don't actually possess the capacity for real thought. I have to weaken the place that anchors the monster to our world.

I locate the anchor points. This has to work. I prepare myself for unmooring the tricky devil from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the tricky devil attacks. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? I try and destroy an anchor, only to discover that it is merely an illusion. The illusions fade and I notice my pockets are empty. I'm in deep trouble.

I find myself without my gear. I raise an eyebrow. At least I'm not resting in peace yet. Okay, got to stop and think. What do I do now? I examine the situation. Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? No, that won't work. Right. I need to think. Right. I have to first weaken the tricky devil with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I steady my breath. I pray that this will work I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. I hear it too late. A loud screeching howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? The creature creates multiple illusionary copies of itself, leaving me wondering which is the original. I run wildly through the illusions, the creature hot on my tail. I'm in deep trouble.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a windowsill. I raise an eyebrow. At least I'm still sharp. Okay, I need to breathe. I consider the situation. What do I do now? Maybe I could overload it with electricity? Could work. If I get lucky. Just focus. Right. I might be able to overload the demon if I can connect it to the power grid.

I grab a loose live wire hanging from the wall by the safe part. This is my last chance. I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. I hear it too late. A loud screeching howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. I start to second guess my plan. I fake out the creature and sidestep it. I block its attack with the live wire and electricity courses through the tricky devil! It screeches and pulses as the energy overloads it, exploding it in a burst of static electricity.

The speakeasy is opened for business soon after. Well, at least I'm still sharp. But that was way too

close. I get no monetary compensation. My only reward is the gratitude of Elsie. Both my stomach and the larder are still empty though. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose someone has to do it. Might as well be me. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I disappear into the night.

Chapter 54

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's no place like home. I feel a pang of hunger in my stomach. I'd fill my fridge if I could. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job, desperately. I dig up the note from Laura. My fists clench. Already it seems like a tough case. I don't savour the idea of visiting the crypt again.

I arrive at Wallace crypt. I raise an eyebrow. I go in. The stench of death floats in the air like a persistent miasma. I snap out of it. Time for work. The monster won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a sarcophagus. I examine my surroundings. A faint smell of formaldehyde lingers in the place and thousands of tiny tracks criss-cross across all imaginable surfaces of the crypt. It's obvious we're dealing with a demonic swarm. The problem is containing the whole swarm. I don't think nobody will sing my praises if I only get rid of half the swarm. I could drain the power from the swarm if I can ground it.

I reach for my bag for my tools. I need this to work. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I haven't even tested the grounding as the demon pounces on me. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. I start to second guess my plan. I try and drain the demon, but find the grounding is all wrong. The monster is not even phased. The monstrosity cracks the floor underneath me and I'm plunged into the darkness below. I can't see anything in this darkness.

I stumble in the dark. I furrow my brow. At least I'm not snuffed out yet. Okay, got to concentrate. What can I do with this? I examine my surroundings. Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? Could work. If I get lucky. Right. I need to stop and think. It hits me like a freight train. I have to weaken the place that anchors the swarm to our world.

I reach for my bag for my tools. I pray that this will work I prepare myself for unmooring the abomination from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the swarm attacks. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. I start to second guess my plan. The whirling swarm completely overruns me and I get swept along the tide of demon matter. I fly through the air and land on my foot, busting it. My foot hurts like the dickens. I check my injury.

I check my foot. It's bad. I freeze. At least I'm not croaked yet. Okay, I need to breathe. I consider the situation. What can I do with this? My options seem hopeless. I don't think I can do this. Okay, I need to focus. The realization hits me like a freight train. I have to first weaken the abomination with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I reach for my bag for my tools. Time to kick some demon ass. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. I hear it too late. A loud laughter comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. I start to second guess my plan. I slide under a wave of demonic critters and it crashes into the floor. I smash it between the eyes! It reels in pain. I pummel it again and again until it can't hold itself together any more and disintegrates.

Wallace crypt is opened for business soon after. Well, at least I'm still kicking. But that was way too close. In any case, Laura compensates me for my troubles. Now I can fill my larder again.

Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose someone has to do it. Might as well be me. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I hail a cab and disappear into the sunrise.

Chapter 55

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. No place like home. I feel a pain in my back. I think it's infected. I should get it checked out. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job. Fast. The silence is broken by the ringing of the telephone. It's Gertrude. She sounds urgent. My grip tightens. I feel like this one is going to be a hard one. I don't savour the idea of visiting Beechworth morgue again.

I walk to Beechworth morgue. Sigh. I step inside. The stench of death floats in the air like a persistent miasma. I snap out of it. Time for work. The thing won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a windowsill. I examine the situation. The morgue is totally trashed and faint whispers emanate from dark corners. The scene suggests a not-too-bright the it. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. I might be able to overload the it if I can connect it to the power grid.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This is my last chance. I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. I hear it too late. A loud screech comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I start to second guess my plan. The monstrosity punches me right through a plaster wall. I'm tossed inside a small room. I'm in deep trouble.

I find myself locked into a side room. I hesitate. At least I'm still alive and kicking. Okay, got to think. How do I deal with this? I look around. Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? How am I supposed to do this? Just think. Right. I have a plan. I could drain the power from the brute if I can ground it.

I connect a piece of wire to a piece of plumbing. That should be grounded properly now. I need this to work. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I haven't even tested the grounding as the thing pounces on me. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I start to second guess my plan. The brute's hind muscles flex as it charges straight at me. I wrestle with the brute and crash into a side room. I tumble across the floor and crumble into a heap.

I find myself trapped in a small room. I grit my teeth. At least I'm not feeding the worms yet. Okay, got to breathe. How do I deal with this? I examine my surroundings. Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Just think. Right. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the it.

I clear some space for the circle. Time to kick some demon ass. I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I hear it too late. A loud howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. I didn't consider it would be this strong. How am I going to finish the circle like this? I dodge the demon's gigantic talons and slide under it. I complete the circle and it's trapped within! I quickly perform the rite while it's contained and send it screeching back to hell.

The situation at the morgue should be under control now. Well, it wasn't as bad as it could have been. But that didn't at all go according to plan. At least Gertrude pays me the appropriate fee. Maybe I'll use the money to go get my back checked. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I know how to do. Oh well. Life goes on. I hail a cab and fade into the sunrise.

Chapter 56

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's no place like home. Wind howls through the broken roof. It will be bad if I can't get it fixed soon. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. Fast. Esther steps in the door and lays out her problems. I feel a cold sweat coming on. Already it seems like a tough case. She really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to Strong archive.

I arrive at the archive. I crack the lock quietly and step through. Tens of thousands of words stare at me from the bookshelves, bound in crumbling leather. I snap out of it. Time for work. The monstrosity won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a paper shredder. I examine my surroundings. The archive is totally trashed and faint whispers emanate from dark corners. The scene suggests a not-too-bright the thing. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. I have to first weaken the brute with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I reach for my bag for my tools. Time to kick some demon ass. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. I hear it too late. A loud screech comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. It's bigger than I thought. I start to second guess my plan. I hit the wraith with all my might. It only makes it angrier. The demon cracks the floor underneath me and I'm plunged into the darkness below. I can't see anything in this darkness.

I stumble in the dark. I frown. At least I'm still alive and kicking. Okay, got to focus. What do I do now? I examine the situation. Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? How am I supposed to do this? I really need to work this out. The realization hits me like a ton of bricks. I have to weaken the place that anchors the demon to our world.

I locate the anchor points. This has to work. I prepare myself for unmooring the wraith from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the brute attacks. It's bigger than I thought. I start to second guess my plan. The it flings me through the door before I have a chance to finish unmooring it. I'm tossed inside a small room. I tumble across the floor and crumble into a heap.

I find myself locked into a side room. My fists clench. At least I'm still alive. Okay, I need to focus. I examine the situation. What now? Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? Oh this is just hopeless. Right. I need to breathe. The realization hits me like a ton of bricks. I might be able to overload the thing if I can connect it to the power grid.

I grab a loose live wire hanging from the wall by the safe part. This is my last chance. I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. The wire sizzles as a tell-tale sign of the monster drawing near. I didn't consider it would be this strong. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? I dodge the thing's gigantic tail and sidestep it. I block its attack with the live wire and electricity courses through the demon! It screeches and pulses as the energy overloads it, exploding it in a burst of static electricity.

The archive is opened for business soon after. Well, at least I'm not feeding the worms. But that didn't at all go according to plan. I get no monetary compensation. My only reward is the gratitude of Esther. Well, I still need to get that roof fixed. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose someone has to do it. Might as well be me. Oh well. Life goes on. I fade into the night.

Chapter 57

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's no place like home. Unpaid bank bills are starting to overflow my desk. I wonder how long it will take before they cut me off entirely. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job, desperately. Lydia enters my office and explains her problems. I feel a cold sweat coming on. It sounds bad. She really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to the law firm.

I stop outside Chattoway law firm. I tremble. I step inside. The air is heavy with the sweat and dust of a thousand wasted man-hours. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The monstrosity won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a windowsill. I look around. Tiny arcs of electricity dance on all metallic surfaces and curious symbols mar the law firm. The tricky devil must be more subtle than your average demon. I should be able to outsmart it, though. After all, demons don't actually possess the capacity for real thought. I have to first weaken the monstrosity with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I raise my fists. Time to kick some demon ass. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The tricky devil shows itself and I start to second guess a full-on assault. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? The wraith disappears into the shadows. I hear it snickering. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the thing fast behind me. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a filing cabinet. My gut sinks. At least I'm still alive. Okay, I need to concentrate. I consider the situation. What can I do with this? Maybe I could bind it? No, that won't work. Right. I need to work this out. It hits me like a freight train. I might be able to overload the demon if I can connect it to the power grid.

I grab a loose live wire hanging from the wall by the safe part. I need this to work. I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. I hear it too late. A loud laughter comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. I start to second guess my plan. I zap the tricky devil, but it only slows it down for a second before the power fails and sparks fly from the wires as a fuse busts broken. The thing cracks the floor underneath me and I'm plunged into the darkness below. I can't see anything in this darkness.

I grope around in the dark. I furrow my brow. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to concentrate. What now? I consider the situation. Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? How am I supposed to do this? Okay, I need to think. Right. I have a plan. I could drain the power from the demon if I can ground it.

I steady my breath. This is my last chance. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I haven't even tested the grounding as the monster pounces on me. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. I fake out the tricky devil and duck under it. I jab the grounding wire into its eyes. It screeches unbearably and shrinks in size as its power is drained until it disappears with a fizzle.

Chattoway law firm quickly gets up on its feet. Well, it wasn't as bad as it could have been. But that was way too close. I get no money out of this. At least there's one less the wraith haunting the world. This should go nicely towards my bank bills. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose someone has to do it. Might as well be me. Oh well. Life goes on. I hail a cab and fade into the fog.

Chapter 58

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's home. I feel the familiar craving for laudanum. My stash is empty and I desperately need some more. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. The phone rings. It's Walter. He sounds hopeless. I grit my teeth. I feel like this one is going to be a hard one. He will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for the grocery store.

I arrive at Hyem grocery store. I feel my body tense. I go in. I can almost hear the cash register ringing, as full of itself as it is money. I snap out of it. Time for work. The wraith won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a counter. I examine the situation. Hundreds of tiny holes dot the grocery store and faint whispers emanate from dark corners. This must be the work of a swarm demon. The problem is containing the whole swarm. I don't think nobody will sing my praises if I only get rid of half the swarm. I have to first weaken the wraith with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This is my last chance. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The monstrosity shows itself and I start to second guess a full-on assault. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? I hit the demon with all my might but my attack just whiffs through the illusionary copy. I run wildly through the illusions, the wraith hot on my tail. I'm in deep trouble.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a counter. I reel. At least I'm still kicking. Okay, got to get it together. What do I do now? I examine the situation. Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? How am I supposed to do this? I really need to think. Right. I have a plan. I should be able to bind the wraith to this vessel.

I fish out a suitable receptacle from my pockets. Time to kick some demon ass. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the swarm. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the wraith appears. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. Can anything even hold something that powerful? The swarm sees the vessel, pounces at me in a blind rage. I wrestle with the demon and crash into a side room. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I find myself locked into a side room. I reel. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to focus. I consider the situation. What now? Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Okay, I need to work this out. The realization hits me like a ton of bricks. I could drain the power from the monstrosity if I can ground it.

I connect a piece of wire to a piece of plumbing. That should be grounded properly now. This is my last chance. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I haven't even tested the grounding as the thing pounces on me. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. I jump over a wave of demonic critters and it crashes into the floor. I jab the grounding wire into its eyes. It screeches unbearably and shrinks in size as its power is drained until it disappears with a fizzle.

Hyem grocery store quickly gets up on its feet. Well, at least I'm not sleeping the big sleep. But that didn't at all go according to plan. I get no monetary compensation. However, Walter now owes me one. I feel the familiar crawl of deprivation. My stash is still empty. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it pays the bills. Except when it doesn't. Oh well. Just

another day in the life. I step into the rain.

Chapter 59

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's home. I feel the familiar craving for painkillers. My stash is empty and I desperately need some more. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. Fast. A telegram arrives from Clarence. I feel my body tense. It sounds bad. I don't savour the idea of visiting the power plant again.

I stop outside Devitt power plant. I raise an eyebrow. I step inside. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted power plant always gives me the creeps. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The abomination won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a control panel. I look around. A faint smell of formaldehyde lingers in the place and thousands of tiny tracks criss-cross across all imaginable surfaces of the power plant. It's obvious we're dealing with a demonic swarm. The problem is containing the whole swarm. I don't think nobody will sing my praises if I only get rid of half the swarm. I should be able to bind the monstrosity to this vessel.

I reach for my bag for my tools. Time to kick some demon ass. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the it. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the thing appears. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. Can anything even hold something that powerful? The thing sees the vessel, pounces at me in a blind rage. The swarm maims my shoulder with its jaws. My shoulder hurts like the dickens. I check my injury.

I check my shoulder. It doesn't look too good. I grit my teeth. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to breathe. I examine the situation. What now? Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? How am I supposed to do this? Right. I need to work this out. The realization hits me like a freight train. I have to first weaken the abomination with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I steady my breath. I need this to work. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The monster shows itself and I start to second guess a full-on assault. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. I start to second guess my plan. I hit the abomination with all my might. It only makes it angrier. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the swarm fast behind me. I'm in deep trouble.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a windowsill. My gut sinks. At least I'm not room temperature yet. Okay, got to stop and think. What do I do now? I consider the situation. Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? How am I supposed to do this? Right. I need to think. It hits me like a freight train. I have to weaken the place that anchors the swarm to our world.

I locate the anchor points. This has got to work. I prepare myself for unmooring the it from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the monster attacks. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? I strafe around a wave of demonic critters and it crashes into the floor. I grab the last anchor point with my bare hands. I finally remove the last anchor binding it to our world and send it screeching back to the collective unconscious.

Devitt power plant is opened for business soon after. Well, at least I'm still alive and kicking. But that didn't at all go according to plan. At least Clarence pays me the appropriate fee. Time to refill that stash. Oh yeah. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I know how to do. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I fade into the sunrise.

Chapter 60

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's no place like home. The plumbing gurgles and clanks ominously. It will be bad if I can't get it fixed soon. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. Fast. The phone rings. It's Louise. She sounds urgent. I furrow my brow. Already it seems like a tough case. I don't savour the idea of visiting Blair library again.

I take a cab to the library. I hesitate. I go in. Tens of thousands of words stare at me from the bookshelves, bound in crumbling leather. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The wraith won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a bookshelf. I look around. Tiny arcs of electricity dance on all metallic surfaces and thousands of tiny tracks criss-cross across all imaginable surfaces of the library. This must be the work of a swarm demon. The problem is containing the whole swarm. I don't think nobody will sing my praises if I only get rid of half the swarm. I might be able to overload the it if I can connect it to the power grid.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has to work. I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. I hear it too late. A loud screech comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? The whirling swarm completely overruns me and I get swept along the tide of demon matter. I fly through the air and land on my arm, busting it. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I check my arm. It doesn't look too good. I raise an eyebrow. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to concentrate. What do I do now? I look around. Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? Oh this is just hopeless. I really need to concentrate. It hits me like a freight train. I could drain the power from the swarm if I can ground it.

I reach for my bag for my tools. I need this to work. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I hear it too late. A loud howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. The wraith covers all light sources in the room, leaving it in darkness. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the swarm fast behind me. I run and swerve as I desperately think of some way to evade the demon behind me.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a bookshelf. Sigh. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to breathe. I consider the situation. How do I deal with this? Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? Could work. If I get lucky. Okay, I need to get it together. The realization hits me like a freight train. I should be able to bind the it to this vessel.

I fashion a makeshift receptacle from scrap. Time to kick some demon ass. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the demon. I hear it too late. A loud howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. Can anything even hold something that powerful? I sidestep a wave of demonic critters and it crashes into the floor. I show it the vessel and it is mesmerized by the item! I utter words of power and it is bound screeching into the vessel.

Blair library is opened for business soon after. Now I can tend to my injuries. But that didn't at all go according to plan. At least Louise pays me the appropriate fee. At least the money should help fix the plumbing. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I know how to do. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I step into the city.

Chapter 61

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's no place like home. I feel a pang of hunger in my stomach. I'd fill my fridge if I could. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. Fast. I look back at the telegram from Oscar. I furrow my brow. I feel like this one is going to be a hard one. I don't savour the idea of visiting the park again.

I stop outside Ashdown park. I crack the lock quietly and step through. A sad crop of trees surround me, whispering of the dark things they've seen. I snap out of it. Time for work. The thing won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a statue. I consider the situation. Faint whispers emanate from dark corners and the park is totally trashed. It seems to be a violent but not too clever. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. I have to weaken the place that anchors the monster to our world.

I locate the anchor points. I pray that this will work I prepare myself for unmooring the brute from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the wraith attacks. It's bigger than I thought. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? The monster flings me through the door before I have a chance to finish unmooring it. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the it fast behind me. I run and swerve as I desperately think of some way to evade the brute behind me.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a statue. I bite my lip. At least I'm still sharp. Okay, got to work this out. How do I deal with this? I look around. Maybe I could overload it with electricity? How am I supposed to do this? Right. I need to focus. It hits me like a ton of bricks. I could drain the power from the brute if I can ground it.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This is my last chance. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I haven't even tested the grounding as the wraith pounces on me. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I start to second guess my plan. The wraith smashes the wall, making sparks fly from the exposed wiring. The electric shocks short the lights and the room is plunged into darkness. I can't see anything in this darkness.

I grope around in the dark. I grit my teeth. At least I'm not sleeping the big sleep yet. Okay, got to focus. What do I do now? I look around. Maybe I could bind it? Could work. If I get lucky. Okay, I need to think. It hits me like a freight train. I might be able to overload the demon if I can connect it to the power grid.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This is my last chance. I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. I hear it too late. A loud howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. It's bigger than I thought. I start to second guess my plan. I dodge the thing's gigantic beak and sidestep it. I block its attack with the live wire and electricity courses through the demon! It screeches and pulses as the energy overloads it, exploding it in a burst of static electricity.

The situation at the park should be under control now. Well, at least I'm not feeding the worms. But that was way too close. At least Oscar pays me the appropriate fee. Now I can fill my larder again. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose someone has to do it. Might as well be me. Oh well. Life goes on. I hail a cab and fade into the city.

Chapter 62

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's home. I feel a pain in my arm. I think it's infected. I should get it checked out. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job, desperately. Marion enters my office and explains her problems. My gut sinks. It sounds bad. She will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for Lynch bar.

I take a cab to the bar. I inspect the lock. Basic model. A few minutes work. I'm in. The place smells of dried alcohol, vomit and blood. I snap out of it. Time for work. The abomination won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a billiard table. I consider the situation. The bar stands in suspiciously good condition and a faint smell of formaldehyde lingers in the place. The abomination must be more subtle than your average demon. I should be able to outsmart it, though. After all, demons don't actually possess the capacity for real thought. I have to first weaken the abomination with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I take the electric brand from my pocket. I pray that this will work I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. I hear it too late. A loud laughter comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? I hit the demon with all my might. It only makes it angrier. The it cracks the floor underneath me and I'm plunged into the darkness below. I can't see anything in this darkness.

I grope around in the dark. I frown. At least I'm not six feet under yet. Okay, got to think. What do I do now? I consider the situation. My options seem hopeless. All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Just work this out. The realization hits me like a ton of bricks. I could drain the power from the tricky devil if I can ground it.

I steady my breath. I need this to work. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I haven't even tested the grounding as the tricky devil pounces on me. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. I start to second guess my plan. I try and drain the it, but find the grounding is all wrong. The demon is not even phased. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the thing fast behind me. I run and swerve as I desperately think of some way to evade the thing behind me.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a billiard table. I grit my teeth. At least I'm still sharp. Okay, I need to get it together. I look around. What now? Maybe I could overload it with electricity? Could work. If I get lucky. I really need to breathe. Right. I have a plan. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the tricky devil.

I steady my breath. Time to kick some demon ass. I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I hear it too late. A loud screech comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. How am I going to finish the circle like this? I fake out the thing and slide under it. I complete the circle and it's trapped within! I quickly perform the rite while it's contained and send it screeching back to hell.

The bar is opened for business soon after. Well, at least I'm still sharp. But that was way too close. In any case, Marion now owes me one. My arm still hurts though. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose someone has to do it. Might as well be me. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I hail a cab and disappear into the night.

Chapter 63

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's home. The roof could use a little work. It will be bad if I can't get it fixed soon. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job. And I need it fast. I dig up the letter from Effie. I feel a cold sweat coming on. Already it seems like a tough case. She will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for Griffin train station.

I stop outside Griffin train station. I crack the lock quietly and step through. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted train station always gives me the creeps. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The it won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a radio tower. I consider the situation. Faint whispers emanate from dark corners and thousands of tiny tracks criss-cross across all imaginable surfaces of the train station. It's obvious we're dealing with a demonic swarm. The problem is containing the whole swarm. I don't think nobody will sing my praises if I only get rid of half the swarm. I should be able to bind the demon to this vessel.

I fashion a makeshift receptacle from scrap. Time to kick some demon ass. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the monstrosity. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the demon appears. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. Can anything even hold something that powerful? The it crushes the only viable receptacle with its talons. The swarm cracks the floor underneath me and I'm plunged into the darkness below. I can't see anything in this darkness.

I stumble in the dark. I frown. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to concentrate. What can I do with this? I look around. Maybe I could overload it with electricity? Oh this is just hopeless. Just breathe. Right. I have to first weaken the monstrosity with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I raise my fists. Time to kick some demon ass. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The wraith shows itself and I start to second guess a full-on assault. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? I hit the monster with all my might but my attack just whiffs through the illusionary copy. The illusions fade and I notice my pockets are empty. I'm in deep trouble.

I find myself without my gear. I feel my body tense. At least I'm still sharp. Okay, I need to concentrate. I consider the situation. What can I do with this? Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? Could work. If I get lucky. I really need to get it together. Right. I could drain the power from the wraith if I can ground it.

I connect a piece of wire to a piece of plumbing. That should be grounded properly now. This has to work. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I haven't even tested the grounding as the wraith pounces on me. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. I start to second guess my plan. I duck under a wave of demonic critters and it crashes into the floor. I jab the grounding wire into its eyes. It screeches unbearably and shrinks in size as its power is drained until it disappears with a fizzle.

The situation at the train station should be under control now. Well, it wasn't as bad as it could have been. But that was way too close. In any case, Effie now owes me one. Maybe I'll call in my favor to help fix the roof. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I know how to do. Oh well. Life goes on. I step into the rain.

Chapter 64

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's home. My poker buddies are breathing

down my neck about those debts though. I've just gotten my last warning, too. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job. Willie steps in the door and tells me her problems. I feel my body tense. It doesn't seem good. She really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to Blair morgue.

I stop outside the morgue. I inspect the lock. Basic model. A few minutes work. I'm in. The stench of death floats in the air like a persistent miasma. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The abomination won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a slab. I examine my surroundings. Blackish ichor is pooled on the floor and curious symbols mar the morgue. Obviously the abomination is more cunning than average. I should be able to outsmart it, though. After all, demons don't actually possess the capacity for real thought. I have to weaken the place that anchors the demon to our world.

I locate the anchor points. I pray that this will work I prepare myself for unmooring the it from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the it attacks. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? The abomination creates multiple illusionary copies of itself, leaving me wondering which is the original. The illusions fade and I notice my pockets are empty. I double-check my pockets. Yep. All empty.

Facing a demon with no gear. Great. I feel a cold sweat coming on. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to focus. I consider the situation. What now? Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? How am I supposed to do this? Right. I need to get it together. The realization hits me like a freight train. I should be able to bind the monstrosity to this vessel.

I fashion a makeshift receptacle from scrap. I pray that this will work I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the abomination. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the monster appears. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. Can anything even hold something that powerful? The tricky devil creates multiple illusionary copies of itself, leaving me wondering which is the original. The illusions fade and I notice my pockets are empty. I double-check my pockets. Yep. All empty.

Facing a demon with no gear. Great. My jaw clenches. At least I'm still sharp. Okay, I need to stop and think. I examine the situation. What can I do with this? Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? No, that won't work. I really need to think. Right. I have a plan. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the thing.

I clear some space for the circle. I pray that this will work I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I hear it too late. A loud laughter comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. How am I going to finish the circle like this? I fake out the tricky devil and sidestep it. I complete the circle and it's trapped within! I quickly perform the rite while it's contained and send it screeching back to hell.

The situation at the morgue should be under control now. Well, it wasn't as bad as it could have been. But that didn't at all go according to plan. It doesn't pay. At least there's one less the abomination haunting the world. I'm still neck deep in debt though. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I'm even remotely good at. Oh well. Life goes on. I fade into the sunrise.

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's no place like home. I feel a pang of hunger in my stomach. I'd fill my fridge if I could. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. I look back at the telegram from Ruby. I reel. It sounds bad. She will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for Kim nightclub.

I stop outside the nightclub. I furrow my brow. I step inside. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted nightclub always gives me the creeps. I snap out of it. Time for work. The monstrosity won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a jukebox. I examine the situation. A faint smell of formaldehyde lingers in the place and the nightclub is totally trashed. The scene suggests a not-too-bright the abomination. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. I have to weaken the place that anchors the brute to our world.

I locate the anchor points. This is my last chance. I prepare myself for unmooring the thing from its anchor points. I hear it too late. A loud laughter comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. It's bigger than I thought. I start to second guess my plan. The it flings me through the door before I have a chance to finish unmooring it. I fly through the air and land on my leg, busting it. I'm in deep trouble.

I check my leg. It doesn't look too good. I freeze. At least I'm still breathing. Okay, got to breathe. What now? I examine the situation. Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? Could work. If I get lucky. Right. I need to breathe. The realization hits me like a ton of bricks. I should be able to bind the abomination to this vessel.

I fish out a suitable receptacle from my pockets. This has got to work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the brute. I hear it too late. A loud screeching howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. It's bigger than I thought. Can anything even hold something that powerful? The thing punches me right through a plaster wall. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the demon fast behind me. I'm in deep trouble.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a billiard table. I feel my body tense. At least I'm not worm food yet. Okay, I need to work this out. I look around. How do I deal with this? Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Right. I need to work this out. Right. I have a plan. I might be able to overload the demon if I can connect it to the power grid.

I grab a loose live wire hanging from the wall by the safe part. Time to kick some demon ass. I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. The wire sizzles as a tell-tale sign of the demon drawing near. It's bigger than I thought. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? I dodge the monstrosity's gigantic stinger and step back it. I block its attack with the live wire and electricity courses through the it! It screeches and pulses as the energy overloads it, exploding it in a burst of static electricity.

The nightclub quickly gets up on its feet. Well, at least I'm still breathing. But that didn't at all go according to plan. I get no monetary compensation. However, Ruby now owes me one. Both my stomach and the larder are still empty though. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it pays the bills. Except when it doesn't. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I disappear into the city.

Chapter 66

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. No place like home. Unpaid electricity bills are starting to

overflow my desk. I wonder how long it will take before they cut me off entirely. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job, desperately. I'm throwing darts at the lord barrister's picture when the phone rings. It's Claudia. My grip tightens. Already it seems like a tough case. She will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for Strain balloon terminal.

I stop outside the balloon terminal. My grip tightens. I go in. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted balloon terminal always gives me the creeps. I snap out of it. Time for work. The monstrosity won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a luggage cart. I consider the situation. The balloon terminal is totally trashed and a faint smell of formaldehyde lingers in the place. The scene suggests a not-too-bright the thing. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. I should be able to bind the abomination to this vessel.

I fish out a suitable receptacle from my pockets. This has to work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the it. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the demon appears. It's bigger than I thought. I start to second guess my plan. The monster's hind muscles flex as it charges straight at me. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the monster fast behind me. I run and swerve as I desperately think of some way to evade the it behind me.

I weave and scramble, knocking over the floor. I grit my teeth. At least I'm still sharp. Okay, got to stop and think. What now? I examine the situation. Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? How am I supposed to do this? Just focus. Right. I have a plan. I might be able to overload the brute if I can connect it to the power grid.

I steady my breath. I pray that this will work I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. The wire sizzles as a tell-tale sign of the brute drawing near. It's bigger than I thought. I start to second guess my plan. The abomination smashes the wall, making sparks fly from the exposed wiring. The electric shocks short the lights and the room is plunged into darkness. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I grope around in the dark. I feel my body tense. At least I'm still alive and kicking. Okay, I need to concentrate. I consider the situation. What can I do with this? Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? How am I supposed to do this? Okay, I need to stop and think. Right. I have a plan. I have to first weaken the monster with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I raise my fists. Time to kick some demon ass. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The it shows itself and I start to second guess a full-on assault. It's bigger than I thought. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? I dodge the monstrosity's gigantic fist and slide under it. I smash it between the eyes! It reels in pain. I pummel it again and again until it can't hold itself together any more and disintegrates.

The balloon terminal quickly gets up on its feet. Well, at least I'm not dead. But that didn't at all go according to plan. In any case, Claudia now owes me one. Maybe I can get she to help me with the electricity bills. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it pays the bills. Except when it doesn't. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I hail a cab and fade into the night.

Chapter 67

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. No place like home. I feel a pang of hunger in my stomach. I'd fill my fridge if I could. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job,

desperately. I look back at the telegram from Sarah. I raise an eyebrow. I feel like this one is going to be a hard one. I don't savour the idea of visiting the general store again.

I take a cab to the general store. I hesitate. I go in. I can almost hear the cash register ringing, as full of itself as it is money. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The monster won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a windowsill. I examine my surroundings. The general store is totally trashed and faint whispers emanate from dark corners. It seems to be a violent but not too clever. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the wraith.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has to work. I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I haven't even finished the first layer of the circle when the wraith appears. I didn't consider it would be this strong. How am I going to finish the circle like this? The unfinished circle breaks as the demon jumps at me and scrapes the floor with its claws. The demon maims my leg with its jaws. My leg hurts like the dickens. I check my injury.

I check my leg. It doesn't look too good. I feel a cold sweat coming on. At least I'm not room temperature yet. Okay, I need to think. I examine my surroundings. What now? Maybe I could bind it? Oh this is just hopeless. I really need to stop and think. Right. I have a plan. I have to first weaken the thing with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has to work. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The it shows itself and I start to second guess a full-on assault. It's bigger than I thought. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? The thing's hind muscles flex as it charges straight at me. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the wraith fast behind me. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a safe. I feel a cold sweat coming on. At least I'm not liquidated yet. Okay, I need to think. I examine my surroundings. What do I do now? Maybe I could overload it with electricity? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Just focus. Right. I could drain the power from the demon if I can ground it.

I reach for my bag for my tools. Time to kick some demon ass. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. I hear it too late. A loud laughter comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. It's bigger than I thought. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. I dodge the brute's gigantic stinger and step back it. I jab the grounding wire into its eyes. It screeches unbearably and shrinks in size as its power is drained until it disappears with a fizzles.

Kim general store is opened for business soon after. Well, at least I'm still alive. But that didn't at all go according to plan. In any case, Sarah compensates me for my troubles. Now I can fill my larder again. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it has to be done. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I hail a cab and fade into the rain.

Chapter 68

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's no place like home. I feel a pain in my stomach. I think it's infected. I should get it checked out. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job. Fast. I look back at the telegram from David. I feel my body tense. It sounds bad. He really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to the morgue.

I walk to the morgue. I feel my body tense. I go in. The air is heavy with the sweat and dust of a

thousand wasted man-hours. I snap out of it. Time for work. The monstrosity won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a filing cabinet. I consider the situation. Faint whispers emanate from dark corners and hundreds of tiny holes dot the morgue. This must be the work of a swarm demon. The problem is containing the whole swarm. I don't think nobody will sing my praises if I only get rid of half the swarm. I have to first weaken the wraith with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I take the electric brand from my pocket. I pray that this will work I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The wraith shows itself and I start to second guess a full-on assault. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. I start to second guess my plan. The thing crawls all over the wiring, making sparks fly. I get a shock from the stray electricity that leaves my head reeling. I fall down on the floor and reel in pain.

I'm rolling on the floor, holding my head between my hands. I hesitate. At least I'm still sharp. Okay, got to stop and think. What do I do now? I consider the situation. Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? No, that won't work. Right. I need to breathe. Okay, I think I got it. I might be able to overload the wraith if I can connect it to the power grid.

I grab a loose live wire hanging from the wall by the safe part. I pray that this will work I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. The wire sizzles as a tell-tale sign of the monstrosity drawing near. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? The wraith roars and my wire starts throwing sparks around the room. The electric shocks short the lights and the room is plunged into darkness. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I grope around in the dark. My gut sinks. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to work this out. I examine my surroundings. How do I deal with this? Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? Could work. If I get lucky. Just breathe. Right. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the it.

I clear some space for the circle. This has got to work. I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I haven't even finished the first layer of the circle when the monster appears. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. How am I going to finish the circle like this? I step back a wave of demonic critters and it crashes into the floor. I complete the circle and it's trapped within! I quickly perform the rite while it's contained and send it screeching back to hell.

Strong morgue quickly gets up on its feet. Well, at least I'm not room temperature. But that didn't at all go according to plan. It doesn't pay. My only reward is the gratitude of David. My stomach still hurts though. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I'm even remotely good at. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I hail a cab and step into the fog.

Chapter 69

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. No place like home. I feel a pang of hunger in my stomach. I'd fill my fridge if I could. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job. And I need it fast. Carrie comes to my office and tells me her problems. I reel. I feel like this one is going to be a hard one. She really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to Lynch morgue.

I take a cab to the morgue. I reel. I go in. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted morgue always gives me the creeps. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The wraith won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a windowsill. I consider the situation. The morgue stands in suspiciously good condition and faint whispers emanate from dark corners. Obviously the tricky devil is more cunning than average. I should be able to outsmart it, though. After all, demons don't actually possess the capacity for real thought. I have to weaken the place that anchors the tricky devil to our world.

I steady my breath. This has to work. I prepare myself for unmooring the it from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the tricky devil attacks. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? The thing disappears into the shadows. I hear it snickering. The monster pounces and then retreats, leaving me confused until I notice my equipment is gone. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I find myself without my gear. My fists clench. At least I'm not croaked yet. Okay, I need to get it together. I consider the situation. What do I do now? Maybe I could bind it? Could work. If I get lucky. I really need to think. Right. I have a plan. I might be able to overload the wraith if I can connect it to the power grid.

I grab a loose live wire hanging from the wall by the safe part. Time to kick some demon ass. I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. The wire sizzles as a tell-tale sign of the wraith drawing near. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? The monster roars and my wire starts throwing sparks around the room. The electric shocks short the lights and the room is plunged into darkness. I can't see anything in this darkness.

I grope around in the dark. Sigh. At least I'm still breathing. Okay, got to stop and think. What do I do now? I examine my surroundings. Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? Could work. If I get lucky. Right. I need to focus. It hits me like a ton of bricks. I should be able to bind the wraith to this vessel.

I fashion a makeshift receptacle from scrap. This has to work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the thing. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the wraith appears. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. Can anything even hold something that powerful? I fake out the monster and jump over it. I show it the vessel and it is mesmerized by the item! I utter words of power and it is bound screeching into the vessel.

The morgue is opened for business soon after. Well, it wasn't as bad as it could have been. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. I get no monetary compensation. My only reward is the gratitude of Carrie. Both my stomach and the larder are still empty though. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I know how to do. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I hail a cab and disappear into the night.

Chapter 70

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's no place like home. Unpaid heating bills are starting to overflow my desk. I wonder how long it will take before they cut me off entirely. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. The phone rings. It's Beatrice. She sounds hopeless. My grip tightens. It sounds bad. She really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to the courthouse.

I stop outside the courthouse. I bite my lip. I go in. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted courthouse always gives me the creeps. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The brute won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on the floor. I examine my surroundings. I can see large claw marks covering the courthouse and small rusted flakes cover the floor. It seems to be a violent but not too clever. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. I have to weaken the place that anchors the monstrosity to our world.

I locate the anchor points. I pray that this will work I prepare myself for unmooring the monstrosity from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the it attacks. It's bigger than I thought. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? The it flings me through the door before I have a chance to finish unmooring it. I'm tossed inside a small room. I'm in deep trouble.

I find myself trapped in a small room. I frown. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to work this out. What do I do now? I look around. Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? No, that won't work. Right. I need to focus. The realization hits me like a freight train. I should be able to bind the monster to this vessel.

I fish out a suitable receptacle from my pockets. I pray that this will work I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the brute. I hear it too late. A loud screech comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. It's bigger than I thought. Can anything even hold something that powerful? The it sees the vessel, pounces at me in a blind rage. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the creature fast behind me. I'm in deep trouble.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a windowsill. I furrow my brow. At least I'm still breathing. Okay, got to breathe. What now? I look around. My options seem hopeless. How am I supposed to do this? Just think. It hits me like a ton of bricks. I have to first weaken the brute with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I take the electric brand from my pocket. This is my last chance. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The creature shows itself and I start to second guess a full-on assault. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? I dodge the creature's gigantic tentacle and slide under it. I smash it between the eyes! It reels in pain. I pummel it again and again until it can't hold itself together any more and disintegrates.

The situation at Dosett courthouse should be under control now. Well, at least I'm not cashed in. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. I get no money out of this. At least there's one less the brute haunting the world. This should go nicely towards my heating bills. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I'm even remotely good at. Oh well. Life goes on. I hail a cab and disappear into the city.

Chapter 71

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. No place like home. My poker buddies are breathing down my neck about those debts though. I've just gotten my last warning, too. Problem is, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. And I need it fast. A letter arrives from Ada. I freeze. It sounds bad. She will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for Graham factory.

I stop outside the factory. I inspect the lock. Basic model. A few minutes work. I'm in. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted factory always gives me the creeps. Okay, enough waxing poetic.

The brute won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a workbench. I examine the situation. I can see large claw marks covering the factory and faint whispers emanate from dark corners. The scene suggests a not-too-bright the thing. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. I have to first weaken the monstrosity with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I take the electric brand from my pocket. I pray that this will work I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The wraith shows itself and I start to second guess a full-on assault. It's bigger than I thought. I start to second guess my plan. The monster's hind muscles flex as it charges straight at me. The it maims my leg with its jaws. I'm in deep trouble.

I check my leg. It doesn't look too good. My gut sinks. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to stop and think. What can I do with this? I examine my surroundings. Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? I don't think I can do this. Just get it together. The realization hits me like a ton of bricks. I should be able to bind the wraith to this vessel.

I fish out a suitable receptacle from my pockets. I pray that this will work I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the wraith. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the thing appears. It's bigger than I thought. I start to second guess my plan. The wraith sees the vessel, pounces at me in a blind rage. I wrestle with the monstrosity and crash into a side room This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I find myself trapped in a small room. My grip tightens. At least I'm not out of business yet. Okay, got to focus. What now? I examine the situation. Maybe I could overload it with electricity? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Okay, I need to work this out. Right. I have a plan. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the monster.

I steady my breath. Time to kick some demon ass. I begin drawing a large circle on the floor. I haven't even finished the first layer of the circle when the wraith appears. It's bigger than I thought. How am I going to finish the circle like this? I dodge the monstrosity's gigantic stinger and duck under it. I complete the circle and it's trapped within! I quickly perform the rite while it's contained and send it screeching back to hell.

Graham factory is opened for business soon after. Well, at least I'm still alive. But that didn't at all go according to plan. In any case, Ada now owes me one. This should negate my debt nicely. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it's the only thing I'm even remotely good at. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I hail a cab and fade into the city.

Chapter 72

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's home. I feel a pang of hunger in my stomach. I'd fill my fridge if I could. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job. And I need it fast. I look back at the note from Maggie. I frown. It doesn't seem good. I don't savour the idea of visiting the police station again.

I walk to the police station. I freeze. I step inside. Here the coroners of justice dissect and diagnose the corpse of law. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The it won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a paper shredder. I look around. The police station is totally trashed and the air smells of traces of copper or iron. The scene suggests a not-too-bright the brute. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. I have to first weaken the brute with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I raise my fists. I pray that this will work I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The creature shows itself and I start to second guess a full-on assault. It's bigger than I thought. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? The creature's hind muscles flex as it charges straight at me. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the creature fast behind me. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a paper shredder. I tremble. At least I'm not out of business yet. Okay, got to get it together. What now? I examine the situation. My options seem hopeless. Oh this is just hopeless. I really need to concentrate. The realization hits me like a ton of bricks. I should be able to bind the monster to this vessel.

I fish out a suitable receptacle from my pockets. I need this to work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the it. I hear it too late. A loud howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I start to second guess my plan. The monstrosity punches me right through a plaster wall. I fly through the air and land on my hand, busting it. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I check my hand. It doesn't look too good. I frown. At least I'm still kicking. Okay, got to concentrate. What can I do with this? I look around. Maybe it will just go away on its own? One can only hope. All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Okay, I need to stop and think. Right. I have a plan. I have to weaken the place that anchors the creature to our world.

I locate the anchor points. Time to kick some demon ass. I prepare myself for unmooring the creature from its anchor points. I hear it too late. A loud screech comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. I didn't consider it would be this strong. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? I dodge the monster's gigantic tentacle and sidestep it. I grab the last anchor point with my bare hands. I finally remove the last anchor binding it to our world and send it screeching back to the collective unconscious.

The situation at the police station should be under control now. Now I can tend to my injuries. But that was way too close. At least Maggie pays me the appropriate fee. Now I can fill my larder again. Sometimes I wonder why the hell am I even doing this job? I suppose it pays the bills. Except when it doesn't. Oh well. Life goes on. I hail a cab and step into the sunrise.