

72 cases of the Blackhearts Detective Agency

By Aarne Uotila

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Chapter 1

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's 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. Fast. Herbert steps in the door and lays out his problems. I reel. It sounds bad. I don't savour the idea of visiting the power plant again.

I walk to the power plant. I raise an eyebrow. I go in. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted power plant always gives me the creeps. I snap out of it. Time for work. The thing won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a workbench. I look around. The air smells of traces of copper or iron 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 might be able to overload the monster 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 screeching howl comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. I start to second guess my plan. The creature roars and my wire starts throwing sparks around the room. 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 grip tightens. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to breathe. How do I deal with this? I consider 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 think. The realization hits me like a belligerent badger. I have to first weaken the creature 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. 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. I start to second guess my plan. I hit the creature with all my might. It only makes it angrier. The monster 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. I grit my teeth. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to concentrate. What do I do now? I examine the situation. Maybe it will just go away on its own? One can only hope. No, that won't work. I really need to get it together. Right. I have a plan. I have to weaken the place that anchors the creature to our world.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This is my last chance. I prepare myself for unmooring the swarm from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the monstrosity attacks. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? 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.

Alexander power plant 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, Herbert 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 pays the bills. Except when it doesn't. Oh well. Life goes on. I hail a cab and step into the rain.

Chapter 2

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's 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. Fast. The silence is broken by the ringing of the telephone. It's Martha. She sounds hopeless. I freeze. I feel like this one is going to be a hard one. I don't savour the idea of visiting Whittock bar again.

I arrive at the bar. I crack the lock quietly and step through. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted bar always gives me the creeps. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The thing won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a jukebox. I examine my surroundings. Thousands of tiny tracks criss-cross across all imaginable surfaces of the bar 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 might be able to overload the swarm 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. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? The wraith crawls all over the wiring, making sparks fly. 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 feel my body tense. At least I'm not feeding the worms yet. Okay, got to work this out. What do I do now? I examine my surroundings. Maybe it will just go away on its own? One can only hope. Could work. If I get lucky. Right. I need to focus. It hits me like a rampaging rhino. 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 wraith. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the swarm appears. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. 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 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 jukebox. I raise an eyebrow. At least I'm still sharp. Okay, got to get it together. How do I deal with this? I examine my surroundings. Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? Could work. If I get lucky. I really 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 monster.

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 swarm appears. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. I start to second guess my plan. 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.

The bar is opened for business soon after. Well, at least I'm not liquidated. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. In any case, Martha compensates me for my troubles. Maybe I'll use the money to go get my arm checked. 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 disappear into the sunrise.

Chapter 3

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's 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. A telegram arrives from Richard. I bite my lip. 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 general store.

I walk to the general store. I grit my teeth. 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 set my bag up on a safe. I examine my surroundings. Blackish ichor is pooled on the floor and curious symbols mar the general store. 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 could drain the power from the tricky devil if I can ground it.

I steady my breath. 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 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 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'm in deep trouble.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a counter. I bite my lip. At least I'm still alive and kicking. Okay, I need to focus. I consider the situation. What do I do now? Maybe I could bind it? Oh this is just hopeless. Okay, I need to focus. 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. 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 tricky devil drawing near. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? The abomination creates multiple illusionary copies of itself, leaving me wondering which is the original. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the monster fast behind me. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a windowsill. My fists clench. At least I'm not liquidated yet. Okay, I need to concentrate. I consider the situation. What can I do with this? Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? Could work. If I get lucky. Just stop and think. It hits me like a steel stallion. 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 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. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. How am I going to finish the circle like this? I fake out the abomination 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 general store 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. At least there's one less the thing 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 hail a cab and disappear into the rain.

Chapter 4

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. 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, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job. The silence is broken by the ringing of the telephone. It's Vera. 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 West morgue again.

I stop outside West morgue. I crack the lock quietly and step through. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted morgue always gives me the creeps. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The abomination won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a slab. I examine the situation. Hundreds of tiny holes dot the morgue and a faint smell of formaldehyde lingers in the place. 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 weaken the place that anchors the swarm to our world.

I reach for my bag for my tools. 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 monstrosity attacks. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. I start to second guess my plan. The demon 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 swarm behind me.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a paper shredder. My grip tightens. At least I'm still kicking. Okay, got to think. What do I do now? I consider the situation. Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? I don't think I can do this. Just breathe. Right. I could drain the power from the monster 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 swarm pounces on me. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. I try and drain the demon, but find the grounding is all wrong. The abomination is not even phased. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the monstrosity 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 windowsill. I freeze. At least I'm still kicking. Okay, I need to concentrate. I consider the situation. What do I do now? Maybe I could bind it? Oh this is just hopeless. Okay, I need to concentrate. It hits me like a freight train. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the monster.

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 monster appears. 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 complete the circle and it's trapped within! I quickly

perform the rite while it's contained and send it screeching back to hell.

West 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. In any case, Vera 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'm even remotely good at. Oh well. Life goes on. I fade into the city.

Chapter 5

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. No place like home. I feel a pain in my leg. 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. Eugene comes to my office and tells me his problems. I reel. It doesn't seem good. He will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for Hayes archive.

I arrive at Hayes archive. I raise an eyebrow. 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 open my bag and set it up on a windowsill. I examine the situation. The archive is totally trashed and tiny arcs of electricity dance on all metallic surfaces. 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 first weaken the wraith with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I steady my breath. This has got 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. It's bigger than I thought. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? The monstrosity 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. My fists clench. At least I'm still alive and kicking. Okay, got to stop and think. What do I do now? I look around. Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? I don't think I can do this. Right. I need to get it together. It hits me like a freight train. 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 demon. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the wraith appears. I didn't consider it would be this strong. Can anything even hold something that powerful? The wraith 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 bite my lip. At least I'm still alive and kicking. Okay, got to breathe. What do I do now? I examine the situation. Maybe I could overload it with electricity? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Right. I need to think. Okay, I think I got it. 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. 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? I dodge its gigantic claws 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 archive 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 money out of this. However, Eugene now owes me one. Maybe he can help me get my leg checked. 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 fade into the night.

Chapter 6

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 dig up the letter from Clarence. I feel my body tense. 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 nightclub.

I arrive at the nightclub. My fists clench. I step inside. The place smells of dried alcohol, vomit and blood. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The thing won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a counter. I consider the situation. Faint whispers emanate from dark corners and the nightclub stands in suspiciously good condition. 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 might be able to overload the thing 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 tricky devil drawing near. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? The demon disappears into the shadows. I hear it snickering. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the monstrosity fast behind me. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a jukebox. I bite my lip. 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 destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? Oh this is just hopeless. Right. I need to focus. Okay, I think I got it. I should be able to bind the monster to this vessel.

I fashion a makeshift receptacle from scrap. Time to kick some demon ass. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the tricky devil. 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. Can anything even hold something that powerful? The tricky devil sees the vessel, pounces at me in a blind rage. 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 billiard table. I tremble. At least I'm still alive. Okay, got to focus. How do I deal with this? I consider the situation. Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? I don't think I can do this. Right. I need to work this out. It hits me like a mad melody. 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 tricky devil 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 monster 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.

Bryant 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. 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 night.

Chapter 7

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. I'm throwing darts at the lord captain's picture when the phone rings. It's Rosa. She sounds hopeless. I raise an eyebrow. I feel like this one is going to be a hard one. I don't savour the idea of visiting Gedge balloon terminal again.

I arrive at the balloon terminal. I inspect the lock. Basic model. A few minutes work. I'm 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 creature won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a luggage cart. I examine my surroundings. I can see large claw marks covering the balloon terminal and the air smells of traces of copper or iron. The scene suggests a not-too-bright the thing. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. 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 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 thing punches me right through a plaster wall. I fly through the air and land on my arm, busting it. I'm in deep trouble.

I check my arm. It doesn't look too good. I tremble. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to work this out. I look around. What now? Maybe I could overload it with electricity? How am I supposed to do this? Right. I need to think. The realization hits me like the end of a bad weekend. I have to weaken the place that anchors the brute to our world.

I locate the anchor points. I pray that this will work. I prepare myself for unmooring the monster from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the creature attacks. 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 decide to retreat and take off running, with the monstrosity 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 luggage cart. My grip tightens. At least I'm not cashed in yet. Okay, I need to think. I examine my surroundings. What do I do now? Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? How am I supposed to do this? Okay, I need to concentrate. It hits me like a hurling hammer. 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. This is my last chance. 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. I start to second guess my plan. I dodge its gigantic pseudopod and slide under it. I block its attack with the live wire and electricity courses through the creature! 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. Now I can tend to my injuries. But that was way too close. In any case, Rosa 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. Life goes on. I disappear 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. The silence is broken by the ringing of the telephone. It's Sadie. I furrow my brow. 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 the college.

I walk up to the college. Sigh. I step inside. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted college always gives me the creeps. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The monster 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 college 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 thing.

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 brute appears. It's bigger than I thought. I start to second guess my plan. The monstrosity's hind muscles flex as it charges straight at me. The monstrosity maims my foot with its jaws. My foot hurts like the dickens. I check my injury.

I check my foot. It's bad. I grit my teeth. At least I'm still breathing. Okay, got to focus. What do I do 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 might be able to overload the brute if I can connect it to the power grid.

I steady my breath. This has got to work. 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. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I start to second guess my plan. The brute roars and my wire starts throwing sparks around the room. 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. I frown. At least I'm still alive. Okay, I need to think. I examine my surroundings. What can I do with this? Maybe I could bind it? How am I supposed to do this? Right. I need to think. The realization hits me like a moody Monday. 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 has got to work. 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 start to second guess my plan. I dodge its gigantic tail 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 college is opened for business soon after. Now I can tend to my injuries. 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 wraith 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 night.

Chapter 9

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, desperately. Mabel steps in the door and lays out her problems. I furrow my brow. It doesn't seem good. She really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to the train station.

I arrive at the train station. I feel a cold sweat coming on. I step inside. 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 swarm won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a bench. 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 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 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 to 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 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 locked into a side room. I bite my lip. At least I'm still alive. Okay, got to stop and think. What can I do with this? I consider 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. It hits me like a crazed cultist. I could drain the power from the swarm 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 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 swarm covers all light sources in the room, leaving it in darkness. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the abomination fast behind me. I'm in deep trouble.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a luggage cart. My gut sinks. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to focus. I look around. How do I deal with this? Maybe I could bind it? Oh this is just hopeless. Okay, I need to think. Right. I have a plan. I have to weaken the place that anchors the abomination to our world.

I locate the anchor points. Time to kick some demon ass. I prepare myself for unmooring the swarm from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the abomination attacks. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? 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 Yea 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 demon 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. Just another day in the life. I step into the city.

Chapter 10

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. 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, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job, desperately. I dig up the telegram from David. I feel a cold sweat coming on. It doesn't seem good. I don't savour the idea of visiting the law firm again.

I take a cab to the law firm. I feel a cold sweat coming on. I go in. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted law firm always gives me the creeps. I snap out of it. Time for work. The creature won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a safe. I look around. The law firm is totally trashed and small rusted flakes cover the floor. The scene suggests a not-too-bright the creature. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. 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 haven't even tested the grounding as the brute pounces on me. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I start to second guess my plan. The monstrosity disappears into the shadows when it sees the drain I'm holding. 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. Sigh. Well, it could be worse. 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. Okay, I need to get it together. It hits me like a freight train. 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. 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. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I start to second guess my plan. The demon 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 feel a cold sweat coming on. At least I'm still kicking. Okay, got to get it together. What can I do with this? I examine the situation. Maybe it will just go away on its own? One can only hope. How am I supposed to do this? Just breathe. Okay, I think I got it. I have to first weaken the creature 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. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I start to second guess my plan. I dodge its gigantic stinger and duck 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.

Gedge law firm is opened for business soon after. Well, at least I'm not dead. But that didn't at all go according to plan. At least David pays me the appropriate fee. 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 step into the night.

Chapter 11

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's 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. A telegram arrives from Louis. I hesitate. Already it seems like a tough case. I don't savour the idea of visiting Stevens police station again.

I arrive at the police station. I bite my lip. I step inside. Here the coroners of justice dissect and diagnose the corpse of law. I snap out of it. Time for work. The tricky devil won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a paper shredder. I examine the situation. Blackish ichor is pooled on the floor and the police station 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 could drain the power from the tricky devil 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. 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.

I find myself without my gear. I raise an eyebrow. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to think. What can I do with this? I examine my surroundings. Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? 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 abomination.

I steady my breath. 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 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 frown. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to concentrate. What now? I examine my surroundings. Maybe I could bind it? 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 tricky devil 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 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 fake out the tricky devil and duck 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.

Stevens police station 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. In any case, Louis 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 hail a cab and fade into the fog.

Chapter 12

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's home. I feel the familiar craving for opium. 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. I'm throwing darts at the lord mayor's picture when the phone rings. It's Benjamin. He sounds hopeless. My grip tightens. It doesn't seem good. He really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to Kaylock train station.

I stop outside the 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 creature won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a bench. I consider the situation. The air smells of traces of copper or iron and hundreds of tiny holes dot 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 monstrosity to this vessel.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This is my last chance. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the swarm. 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 swarm 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 swarm behind me.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a radio tower. Sigh. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to focus. What do I do now? I look around. Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? I don't think I can do this. Just think. Right. I have a plan. 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 got to 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 incessant buzzing drives me insane. I start to second guess my plan. 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. Sigh. At least I'm not feeding the worms yet. Okay, got to focus. What can I do with this? I consider the situation. My options seem hopeless. Oh this is just hopeless. Right. I need to get it together. The realization hits me like a ton of bricks. I have to weaken the place that anchors the thing to our world.

I reach for my bag for my tools. I pray that this will work. I prepare myself for unmooring the swarm from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the monster 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.

The situation at the 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 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 night.

Chapter 13

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 Harold. He sounds hopeless. I hesitate. It doesn't seem good. I don't savour the idea of visiting Kaylock courthouse again.

I walk to the courthouse. I inspect the lock. Basic model. A few minutes work. I'm in. The air is heavy with the sweat and dust of a thousand wasted man-hours. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The monster won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a filing cabinet. I examine the situation. Blackish ichor is pooled on the floor and hundreds of tiny holes dot the courthouse. 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 might be able to overload the swarm 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 abomination drawing near. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? 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 swarm cracks the floor 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 reel. At least I'm not dead yet. Okay, I need to breathe. I look around. What now? Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? No, that won't work. Okay, I need to stop and think. Right. I could drain the power from the monster 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. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. The monster 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. Sigh. At least I'm not cashed in yet. Okay, got to think. What do I do now? I examine the situation. Maybe it will just go away on its own? One can only hope. No, that won't work. Right. I need to concentrate. Okay, I think I got it. I should be able to bind the swarm to this vessel.

I fashion a makeshift receptacle from scrap. I need this to work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the swarm. 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 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 courthouse is opened for business soon after. Well, at least I'm not room temperature. But that didn't at all go according to plan. In any case, Harold 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. Life goes on. I step into the sunrise.

Chapter 14

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, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job. And I need it fast. Annie steps in the door and lays out her problems. I raise an eyebrow. I feel like this one is going to be a hard one. She will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for Halbard morgue.

I stop outside Halbard morgue. My fists clench. I step inside. The stench of death floats in the air like a persistent miasma. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The swarm won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a slab. I examine my surroundings. 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 monstrosity to this vessel.

I reach for my bag for my tools. I need this to work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the thing. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the thing appears. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. Can anything even hold 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 wraith fast behind me. I'm in deep trouble.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a desk. I bite my lip. At least I'm still alive and kicking. Okay, got to work this out. What now? I examine the situation. 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 swarm to our world.

I reach for my bag for my tools. 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 swarm attacks. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. I start to second guess my plan. 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 wraith fast behind me. I run and swerve as I desperately think of some way to evade the thing behind me.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a desk. My jaw clenches. At least I'm not feeding the worms yet. Okay, I need to work this out. I examine the situation. What now? My options seem hopeless. I don't think I can do this. Just work this out. The realization hits me like a ton of bricks. 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. 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 wraith pounces on me. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. I start to second guess my plan. 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.

The situation at Halbard morgue should be under control now. Well, at least I'm still alive. But that didn't at all go according to plan. In any case, Annie 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's the only thing I know how to do. Oh well. Life goes on. I hail a cab and step into the fog.

Chapter 15

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 phone rings. It's Irene. I grit my teeth. 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 Alexander graveyard.

I walk to the graveyard. I feel a cold sweat coming on. 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 monster won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a windowsill. I examine my surroundings. The air smells of traces of copper or iron and the graveyard 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 weaken the place that anchors the demon 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 hear it too late. A loud screech 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 thing 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 stumble in the dark. I feel my body tense. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to focus. What can I do with this? I examine the situation. Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? Could work. If I get lucky. Just breathe. The realization hits me like a ton of bricks. 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 creature drawing near. It's bigger than I thought. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? I zap the monster, 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. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I grope around in the dark. I tremble. At least I'm still breathing. Okay, got to concentrate. How do I deal with this? I look around. Maybe it will just go away on its own? One can only hope. Could work. If I get lucky. Okay, I need to focus. It hits me like a freight train. I should be able to bind the thing to this vessel.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has got to work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the monstrosity. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the demon appears. I didn't consider it would be this strong. Can anything even hold something that powerful? I dodge its gigantic nails and strafe around 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 graveyard is opened for business soon after. Well, at least I'm not sleeping the big sleep. But that was way too close. I get no money out of this. My only reward is the gratitude of Irene. 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 step into the sunrise.

Chapter 16

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. Fast. Susie comes to my office and lays out her problems. I tremble. It doesn't seem good. She will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for the factory.

I stop outside the factory. I raise an eyebrow. 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 tricky devil won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a windowsill. I examine my surroundings. Tiny arcs of electricity dance on all metallic surfaces and curious symbols mar the factory. The wraith 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 reach for my bag for my tools. I need this to work. I prepare myself for unmooring the demon 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 tricky devil flings me through the door before I have a chance to finish unmooring it. 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 furrow my brow. At least I'm still kicking. Okay, I need to focus. I look around. What do I do now? Maybe I could overload it with electricity? Oh this is just hopeless. Okay, I need to work this out. Right. I have a plan. I have to first weaken the demon 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 monster 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? I hit the demon with all my might but my attack just whiffs through the illusionary copy. 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 control panel. I tremble. At least I'm not six feet under yet. Okay, I need to concentrate. I examine my surroundings. What now? Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? Could work. If I get lucky. I really 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 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 howl 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? I fake out the demon and jump over 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 factory quickly gets up on its feet. Well, at least I'm still kicking. But that was way too close. In any case, Susie now owes me one. I'll make her 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 has to be done. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I hail a cab and disappear into the fog.

Chapter 17

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. Fast. Ida enters my office and explains her problems. My grip tightens. It doesn't seem good. She will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for the factory.

I take a cab to Ellis factory. I bite my lip. I go in. Heavy metal machines though still, show signs of the relentless march of industry. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The monster 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 factory. 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 monstrosity 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 abomination 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 demon punches me right through a plaster wall. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the abomination 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 control panel. My gut sinks. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to work this out. I examine the situation. How do I deal with this? Maybe I could bind it? No, that won't work. Okay, I need to stop and think. Right. 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 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. It's bigger than I thought. 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 brute 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 the floor. I bite my lip. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to get it together. What do I do now? I examine the situation. 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. It hits me like a freight train. 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 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? I dodge its 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 situation at Ellis factory should be under control now. Well, at least I'm still alive and kicking. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. In any case, Ida now owes me one. Maybe I can get she to help me with the 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. Life goes on. I disappear into the fog.

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. 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, desperately. The phone rings. It's Clyde. He sounds urgent. I tremble. 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 library.

I take a cab to the library. 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 abomination won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a windowsill. I examine my surroundings. Blackish ichor is pooled on the floor and I can see large claw marks covering the library. 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 demon to this vessel.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has to work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the monstrosity. 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 monstrosity crushes the only viable receptacle with its tail. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the monstrosity 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 windowsill. My jaw clenches. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to get it together. I consider the situation. How do I deal with this? Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? Oh this is just hopeless. Right. I need to breathe. Okay, I think I got it. I have to first weaken the thing 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. 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 hit the brute with all my might but my attack just whiffs through the illusionary copy. 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 thing behind me.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a bookshelf. I feel a cold sweat coming on. At least I'm not worm food yet. Okay, got to think. What can I do with this? I consider the situation. Maybe it will just go away on its own? One can only hope. All of my options at this point just seem bleak. I really need to stop and 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 monstrosity.

I steady my breath. 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 brute appears. I didn't consider it would be this strong. How am I going to finish the circle like this? I dodge its gigantic talons 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.

The library quickly gets up on its feet. Well, at least I'm still breathing. 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 monstrosity 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 it's the only thing I'm even remotely good at. Oh well. Life goes on. I fade into the rain.

Chapter 19

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, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. And I need it fast. The phone rings. It's Jesse. He is in a hurry. My grip tightens. It sounds bad. He will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for Reynolds police station.

I arrive at Reynolds police station. I grit my teeth. I step inside. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted police station always gives me the creeps. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The wraith won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a windowsill. I examine the situation. The police station 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. I could drain the power from the brute 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 monstrosity pounces on me. It's bigger than I thought. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. The monstrosity disappears into the shadows when it sees the drain I'm holding. 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 hesitate. At least I'm not feeding the worms yet. Okay, I need to breathe. I examine my surroundings. What now? Maybe I could overload it with electricity? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Just get it together. Right. I have to weaken the place that anchors the wraith to our world.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has to work. I prepare myself for unmooring the thing 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? The demon punches me right through a plaster wall. I fly through the air and land on my leg, busting it. My leg hurts like the dickens. I check my injury.

I check my leg. It doesn't look too good. I furrow my brow. At least I'm not resting in peace yet. Okay, I need to focus. I consider the situation. What do I do now? My options seem hopeless. How am I supposed to do this? Okay, I need to breathe. The realization hits me like a freight train. I should be able to bind the wraith 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 wraith. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the monstrosity appears. I didn't consider it would be this strong. Can anything even hold something that powerful? I dodge its gigantic tail 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 situation at the police 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, Jesse now owes me one. This should negate my debt nicely. 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 step into the fog.

Chapter 20

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. 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. Lewis steps in the door and explains his problems. I bite my lip. It sounds bad. I don't savour the idea of visiting the law firm again.

I arrive at the 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 thing won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a safe. I consider the situation. The air smells of traces of copper or iron and the law firm stands in suspiciously good condition. The creature 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 tricky devil 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. The wire sizzles as a tell-tale sign of the tricky devil drawing near. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? The demon disappears into the shadows. I hear it snickering. The tricky devil appears from the shadows, cracking my head and leaving me seeing stars. I fall down on the floor and reel in pain.

I'm rolling on the floor, holding my head between my hands. My grip tightens. Well, it could be worse. 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? Oh this is just hopeless. I really 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 demon.

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 creature appears. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. How am I going to finish the circle like this? 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. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a windowsill. I bite my lip. At least I'm not room temperature 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? Could work. If I get lucky. Okay, I need to breathe. Right. 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 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. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. I fake out the demon 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.

The situation at Reynolds law firm should be under control now. Well, at least I'm not feeding the worms. But that didn't at all go according to plan. In any case, Lewis compensates me for my troubles. Time to refill that stash. Oh yeah. 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 disappear into the night.

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. 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. I look back at the telegram from Marion. 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 the factory.

I walk to the factory. I inspect the lock. Basic model. A few minutes work. I'm in. Heavy metal machines though still, show signs of the relentless march of industry. I snap out of it. Time for work. The monster won't catch itself. I set my bag up on the floor. I consider the situation. The factory is totally trashed 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 should be able to bind the demon 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 thing. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the brute appears. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I start to second guess my plan. The demon 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 doesn't look too good. My jaw clenches. At least I'm still alive. Okay, I need to breathe. I examine my surroundings. What do I do now? Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? Oh this is just hopeless. I really need to get it together. Right. I have a plan. 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 abomination pounces on me. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I start to second guess my plan. 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. I hesitate. At least I'm not feeding the worms yet. Okay, I need to focus. I examine the situation. What do I do now? Maybe I could overload it with electricity? How am I supposed to do this? Right. I need to breathe. Okay, I think I got it. 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 haven't even finished the first layer of the circle when the thing appears. I didn't consider it would be this strong. How am I going to finish the circle like this? I dodge its gigantic beak 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.

Owens factory quickly gets up on its feet. Now I can tend to my injuries. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. I get no monetary compensation. At least there's one less the abomination haunting the world. 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 someone has to do it. Might as well be me. Oh well. Life goes on. I fade into the night.

Chapter 22

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. Fast. Oscar enters my office and lays out his problems. I grit my teeth. It doesn't seem good. He really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to Wickes bar.

I take a cab to the bar. I freeze. I step inside. The place smells of dried alcohol, vomit and blood. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The tricky devil won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a jukebox. I examine the situation. The bar stands in suspiciously good condition and blackish ichor is pooled on the floor. 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 first weaken the abomination 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. 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. The monster 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 furrow my brow. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to breathe. I examine the situation. What do I do now? Maybe I could bind it? Could work. If I get lucky. 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 monster to our world.

I locate the anchor points. 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 tricky devil attacks. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I start to second guess my plan. The monstrosity 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's bad. I frown. At least I'm still alive. Okay, I need to concentrate. I examine my surroundings. What now? Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Okay, I need to stop and think. It hits me like a ton of bricks. I should be able to bind the thing to this vessel.

I steady my breath. Time to kick some demon ass. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the monster. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the abomination appears. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I start to second guess my plan. I fake out the tricky devil 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 bar quickly gets up on its feet. Well, at least I'm still kicking. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. I get no monetary compensation. At least there's one less the tricky devil 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 pays the bills. Except when it doesn't. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I fade into the fog.

Chapter 23

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. The phone rings. It's Will. He is in

a hurry. My gut sinks. Already it seems like a tough case. He really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to Hawk morgue.

I arrive at the morgue. My grip tightens. I step inside. The stench of death floats in the air like a persistent miasma. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The tricky devil won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a filing cabinet. I look around. Curious symbols mar the morgue and faint whispers emanate from dark corners. The monstrosity 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 should be able to bind the tricky devil to this vessel.

I reach for my bag for my tools. I pray that this will work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the wraith. 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. The monster disappears into the shadows. I hear it snickering. The monstrosity appears from the shadows, cracking my head and leaving me seeing stars. I fall down on the floor and reel in pain.

My head spins as I try to regain control. I grit my teeth. At least I'm not out of business yet. Okay, I need to breathe. I examine the situation. What do I do now? Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? Oh this is just hopeless. Right. I need to concentrate. Okay, I think I got it. I could drain the power from the tricky devil 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 haven't even tested the grounding as the tricky devil pounces on me. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. I try and drain the thing, but find the grounding is all wrong. The monstrosity is not even phased. The demon 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 grip tightens. At least I'm not liquidated yet. Okay, got to breathe. How do I deal with this? I look around. Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? No, that won't work. Okay, I need to concentrate. Right. 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 has got 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. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? I fake out the tricky devil and duck 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.

Hawk morgue 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. I get no monetary compensation. My only reward is the gratitude of Will. This should go nicely towards my heating 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. Just another day in the life. I hail a cab and disappear into the city.

Chapter 24

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. Claude enters my office and lays out his problems. My jaw clenches. 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 train station.

I walk up to Gibson 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 swarm won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a bench. I examine the situation. A faint smell of formaldehyde lingers in the place and hundreds of tiny holes dot 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 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 thing 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. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? The abomination carries me through the door before I have a chance to finish unmooring 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 monster behind me.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a luggage cart. I frown. At least I'm not sleeping the big sleep yet. Okay, I need to stop and think. I examine the situation. 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 breathe. It hits me like a freight train. 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. 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. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. 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 demon hot on my tail. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a luggage cart. Sigh. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to get it together. What can I do with this? I examine my surroundings. Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Okay, 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 fish out a suitable receptacle from my pockets. I need this to work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the demon. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the abomination appears. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. 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.

The situation at the train station should be under control now. Well, at least I'm not feeding the worms. 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 monster 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 someone has to do it. Might as well be me. 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 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. I'm throwing darts at the lord mayor's picture when the phone rings. It's Charlie. He is in a hurry. My fists clench. 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 Marshall mill.

I stop outside the mill. I bite my lip. I step inside. Heavy metal machines though still, show signs of the relentless march of industry. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The monstrosity won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a control panel. I look around. I can see large claw marks covering the mill and blackish ichor is pooled on the floor. The scene suggests a not-too-bright the monstrosity. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. 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. 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. I hit the abomination 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.

Facing a demon with no gear. Great. I grit my teeth. At least I'm still sharp. Okay, got to work this out. What do I do now? I examine my surroundings. Maybe I could overload it with electricity? Oh this is just hopeless. I really need to get it together. 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 abomination from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the monster attacks. It's bigger than I thought. I start to second guess my plan. The thing punches me right through a plaster wall. I fly through the air and land on my arm, busting it. My arm hurts like the dickens. I check my injury.

I check my arm. It doesn't look too good. I raise an eyebrow. At least I'm still sharp. Okay, got to work this out. What do I do now? I examine the situation. Maybe I could bind it? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Right. I need to stop and think. It hits me like a freight train. I might be able to overload the abomination if I can connect it to the power grid.

I steady my breath. 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. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I start to second guess my plan. I dodge its gigantic talons and strafe around 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.

Marshall mill quickly gets up on its feet. Well, at least I'm still alive and kicking. But that didn't at all go according to plan. It doesn't pay. My only reward is the gratitude of Charlie. My back still hurts though. 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 disappear into the rain.

Chapter 26

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's 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 Laura. I bite my lip. It sounds bad. I don't savour the idea of visiting Griffin metro station again.

I stop outside the metro station. My gut sinks. I go in. 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 thing won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a windowsill. I look around. Faint whispers emanate from dark corners and hundreds of tiny holes dot the metro 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 have to first weaken the wraith 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 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 swarm 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 raise an eyebrow. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to stop and think. What can I do with this? I consider the situation. Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? No, that won't work. Right. I need to focus. Right. I could drain the power from the thing 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 hear it too late. A loud laughter 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 disappears into the shadows when it sees the drain I'm holding. The thing 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. My fists clench. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to stop and think. I examine the situation. What do I do now? Maybe I could overload it with electricity? 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 monster to our world.

I steady my breath. 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 wraith 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.

Griffin metro station quickly gets up on its feet. Well, at least I'm still alive. But that didn't at all go according to plan. In any case, Laura compensates me for my troubles. At least the money should help fix the window. 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 27

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. No place like 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. The phone rings. It's Julia. I raise an eyebrow. It doesn't seem good. She really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to the factory.

I walk to the factory. I reel. I go in. Heavy metal machines though still, show signs of the relentless march of industry. I snap out of it. Time for work. The thing won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a windowsill. I consider the situation. Tiny arcs of electricity dance on all metallic surfaces and I can see large claw marks covering the factory. The scene suggests a not-too-bright the wraith. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. I have to first weaken the monster 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. 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 thing 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. My gut sinks. At least I'm still sharp. Okay, got to concentrate. What can I do with this? I examine my surroundings. Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Right. I need to breathe. The realization hits me like a freight train. I should be able to bind the brute to this vessel.

I fashion a makeshift receptacle from scrap. I need this to work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the brute. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the wraith 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 brute 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 control panel. Sigh. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to work this out. I examine the situation. How do I deal with this? 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 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 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. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I start to second guess my plan. I dodge its gigantic fist 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.

The factory 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 Julia. 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. Life goes on. I hail a cab and step into the sunrise.

Chapter 28

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. And I need it fast. A letter arrives from Herman. I frown. Already it seems like a tough case. I don't savour the idea of visiting the law firm again.

I stop outside Ellis law firm. I inspect the lock. Basic model. A few minutes work. I'm 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 open my bag and set it up on a desk. I consider the situation. Faint whispers emanate from dark corners and hundreds of tiny holes dot the law firm. 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 got to work. I prepare myself for unmooring the thing from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the thing attacks. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. I start to second guess my plan. 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 frown. At least I'm still sharp. Okay, I need to work this out. I consider the situation. What now? Maybe I could bind it? Could work. If I get lucky. I really need to get it together. Right. I might be able to overload the swarm 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 wraith drawing near. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? The monstrosity crawls all over the wiring, making sparks fly. The electric shocks short the lights and the room is plunged into darkness. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I stumble in the dark. I frown. At least I'm not dead yet. Okay, got to think. What do I do now? I examine my surroundings. Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? No, that won't work. Just concentrate. Right. I have a plan. 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. 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. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. I start to second guess my plan. I sidestep 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 law firm 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, Herman 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 know how to do. Oh well. Life goes on. I hail a cab and disappear into the city.

Chapter 29

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. I dig up the letter from Esther. I feel a cold sweat coming on. 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 the crypt.

I stop outside Lynch crypt. My jaw clenches. I step inside. The stench of death floats in the air like a persistent miasma. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The tricky devil won't catch itself. I open my bag

and set it up on the floor. I examine the situation. Blackish ichor is pooled on the floor and the crypt stands in suspiciously good condition. 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. 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 haven't even finished the first layer of the circle when the abomination appears. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. 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 wrestle with the monster and crash into a side room. I'm in deep trouble.

I find myself locked into a side room. I bite my lip. At least I'm still kicking. Okay, I need to think. I consider the situation. What can I do with this? Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? Could work. If I get lucky. Just get it together. Right. I could drain the power from the abomination 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. 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. My gut sinks. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to breathe. What now? I look around. Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? Oh this is just hopeless. Just 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 got to work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the tricky devil. 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 fake out the abomination and strafe around 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 crypt 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 monstrosity 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 fade into the city.

Chapter 30

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's home. I feel the familiar craving for opium. My stash is empty and I desperately need some more. 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 captain's picture when the phone rings. It's Ray. I tremble. I feel like this one is going to be a hard one. He will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for Adams law firm.

I take a cab to the law firm. 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. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The swarm won't catch itself. I set my bag up on the floor. I consider the situation. Faint whispers emanate from dark corners and thousands of tiny tracks criss-cross across all imaginable surfaces of 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 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 pray that this will work. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. 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. 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 monstrosity is not even phased. 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 thing behind me.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a safe. I reel. At least I'm still alive and kicking. Okay, got to stop and think. What do I do now? I look around. Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? Could work. If I get lucky. Right. I need to work this out. The realization hits me like a freight train. I have to first weaken the thing 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. 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'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? I hit the wraith with all my might but my attack just whiffs through the illusionary copy. 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 safe. I grit my teeth. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to get it together. I look around. What do I do now? Maybe I could bind it? Oh this is just hopeless. Just breathe. 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 wraith from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the swarm 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 Adams law firm should be under control now. Well, at least I'm still breathing. But that was way too close. I get no money out of this. However, Ray 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 step into the city.

Chapter 31

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'm throwing darts at the lord barrister's picture when the phone rings. It's Fred. He sounds hopeless. I feel a cold sweat coming on. Already it seems like a tough case. I don't savour the idea of visiting Halbard garden again.

I walk up to Halbard 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. I snap out of it. Time for work. The wraith won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a statue. I examine the situation. Curious symbols mar the garden and faint whispers emanate from dark corners. The wraith 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 monster 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 laughter comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? I zap the wraith, 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 tricky devil 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 grit my teeth. Well, it could be worse. 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? Okay, I need to stop and think. 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. 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 monster pounces on me. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. The wraith disappears into the shadows when it sees the drain I'm holding. 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 tricky devil behind me.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a statue. My fists clench. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to think. How do I deal with this? I examine the situation. Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? Oh this is just hopeless. Right. I need to concentrate. Okay, I think I got it. I should be able to bind the wraith to this vessel.

I reach for my bag for my tools. I pray that this will work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the tricky devil. 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 start to second guess my plan. I fake out the thing and duck 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.

Halbard garden is opened for business soon after. Well, at least I'm still breathing. But that was way too close. At least Fred 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 hail a cab and fade into the sunrise.

Chapter 32

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's no place like home. I feel a pain in my hand. 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. The phone rings. It's Olive. She sounds hopeless. I reel. It doesn't seem good. I don't savour the idea of visiting Patterson park again.

I take a cab to Patterson park. I frown. I cross the fence. I don't know why, but the thought of a

haunted park 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 statue. I examine my surroundings. Curious symbols mar the park and the air smells of traces of copper or iron. 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. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the creature.

I clear some space for the circle. I need this to work. I haven't even finished the first layer of the circle when the thing appears. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. How am I going to finish the circle like this? The tricky devil disappears into the shadows. I hear it snickering. The demon 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. I furrow my brow. At least I'm still sharp. Okay, got to concentrate. What do I do now? I examine my surroundings. Maybe I could overload it with electricity? Could work. If I get lucky. Just breathe. Okay, I think I got it. I have to first weaken the tricky devil 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 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? I hit the monstrosity 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. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a statue. I furrow my brow. At least I'm still breathing. Okay, I need to stop and think. I look around. What now? Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? Oh this is just hopeless. Just stop and think. 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. 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 monstrosity 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 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 Patterson park should be under control now. Well, at least I'm not cashed in. But that was way too close. At least Olive pays me the appropriate fee. Maybe I'll use the money to go get my hand 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 rain.

Chapter 33

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. I dig up the letter from Ernest. I raise an eyebrow. It sounds bad. He will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for the factory.

I stop outside the factory. I crack the lock quietly and step through. Heavy metal machines though still, show signs of the relentless march of industry. I snap out of it. Time for work. The brute won't catch itself. I set my bag up on the floor. I examine my surroundings. Small rusted flakes cover the

floor and the factory 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 might be able to overload the creature 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. I didn't consider it would be this strong. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? The monster's hind muscles flex as it charges straight at me. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the brute fast behind me. I run and swerve as I desperately think of some way to evade the creature behind me.

I weave and scramble, knocking over the floor. My gut sinks. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to focus. I examine my surroundings. 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. Okay, I need to stop and think. Right. I have a plan. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the monster.

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. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I start to second guess my plan. The creature cracks my circle in half, erasing all hope of using it to destroy it. The thing cracks the floor underneath me and I'm plunged into the darkness below. I'm in deep trouble.

I stumble in the dark. My jaw clenches. At least I'm not resting in peace yet. Okay, got to work this out. What do I do now? I consider the situation. Maybe I could bind it? How am I supposed to do this? Okay, I need to get it together. Okay, I think I got it. I should be able to bind the brute 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 creature. I hear it too late. A loud laughter comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. It's bigger than I thought. Can anything even hold something that powerful? I dodge its gigantic tentacle 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.

Down 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. In any case, Ernest 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 has to be done. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I disappear into the night.

Chapter 34

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. And I need it fast. A note arrives from Ada. I furrow my brow. Already it seems like a tough case. She really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to Chattoway nightclub.

I walk to Chattoway nightclub. I inspect the lock. Basic model. A few minutes work. I'm in. 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 brute won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a jukebox. I examine my surroundings. Tiny arcs of electricity dance on all metallic surfaces and I can see large claw marks

covering the nightclub. 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 brute to our world.

I reach for my bag for my tools. 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 wraith attacks. It's bigger than I thought. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? The wraith flings me through the door before I have a chance to finish unmooring it. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the wraith 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 windowsill. I hesitate. At least I'm not croaked yet. Okay, I need to breathe. I examine my surroundings. What now? Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. I really need to concentrate. 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 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 brute appears. It's bigger than I thought. How am I going to finish the circle like this? The brute's hind muscles flex as it charges straight at me. The wraith maims my arm with its beak. I'm in deep trouble.

I check my arm. It doesn't look too good. I bite my lip. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to think. I look around. What now? Maybe I could bind it? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Okay, I need to get it together. Right. I could drain the power from the brute 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. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. I dodge its gigantic beak 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 nightclub is opened for business soon after. Well, at least I'm still alive. But that was way too close. It doesn't pay. My only reward is the gratitude of Ada. This should go nicely towards my bank 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 hail a cab and fade into the fog.

Chapter 35

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. Hazel comes to my office and tells me her problems. I grit my teeth. I feel like this one is going to be a hard one. She will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for the crypt.

I stop outside the crypt. I crack the lock quietly and step through. 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 sarcophagus. I look around. The air smells of traces of copper or iron and curious symbols mar the crypt. 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 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 haven't even tested the grounding as the tricky devil pounces on me. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. The thing 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 reel. At least I'm still sharp. Okay, I need to stop and think. I examine my surroundings. What now? My options seem hopeless. 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 monstrosity.

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 creature cracks my circle in half, erasing all hope of using it to destroy it. 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. My fists clench. At least I'm not dead yet. Okay, I need to focus. I look around. How do I deal with this? Maybe I could overload it with electricity? No, that won't work. Right. I need to concentrate. It hits me like a freight train. I have to weaken the place that anchors the thing to our world.

I locate the anchor points. I need this 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. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? I fake out the demon 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 crypt 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. It doesn't pay. However, Hazel 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 someone has to do it. Might as well be me. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I hail a cab and fade into the sunrise.

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, I don't exactly have a lot of cash at hand. I need a job. And I need it fast. I dig up the letter from Lee. I bite my lip. It sounds bad. He will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for the mill.

I take a cab to the mill. I furrow my brow. I step inside. Heavy metal machines though still, show signs of the relentless march of industry. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The demon won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a windowsill. I examine the situation. A faint smell of formaldehyde lingers in the place and the mill 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

thing to our world.

I steady my breath. 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 monster attacks. It's bigger than I thought. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? The demon 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 trapped in a small room. I freeze. At least I'm not sleeping the big sleep yet. Okay, I need to think. I examine the situation. What do I do now? Maybe I could bind it? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Right. I need to concentrate. Right. I have a plan. 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. 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. It's bigger than I thought. How am I going to finish the circle like this? The abomination cracks my circle in half, erasing all hope of using it to destroy it. 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 control panel. I feel my body tense. At least I'm still kicking. Okay, I need to get it together. I examine my surroundings. What can I do with this? Maybe it will just go away on its own? One can only hope. Could work. If I get lucky. I really need to get it together. It hits me like a ton of bricks. 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. 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 monstrosity pounces on me. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I start to second guess my plan. I dodge its 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 fizzle.

The mill is opened for business soon after. Well, at least I'm not sleeping the big sleep. But that was way too close. In any case, Lee now owes me one. I'll make he make me dinner. It's the least he 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 disappear into the fog.

Chapter 37

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, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job. I'm throwing darts at the lord mayor's picture when the phone rings. It's Carrie. I frown. It doesn't seem good. She really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to Hawk metro station.

I stop outside the metro station. My fists clench. I go in. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted metro station always gives me the creeps. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The monster won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a luggage cart. I examine the situation. A faint smell of formaldehyde lingers in the place and hundreds of tiny holes dot the metro 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. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can

contain the swarm.

I clear some space for the circle. 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 abomination appears. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. How am I going to finish the circle like this? The swarm crawls all over the wiring, making sparks fly. I get a shock from the stray electricity that leaves my head reeling. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

My head spins as I try to regain control. I grit my teeth. At least I'm not six feet under yet. Okay, got to get it together. What now? I consider the situation. Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? Oh this is just hopeless. Right. I need to breathe. Okay, I think I got it. I might be able to overload the swarm 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 monster drawing near. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. I start to second guess my plan. The swarm roars and my wire starts throwing sparks around the room. 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. Sigh. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to focus. I consider the situation. How do I deal with this? Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? Oh this is just hopeless. I really need to concentrate. Right. 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. This is my last chance. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The swarm 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 strafe around 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 situation at the metro station should be under control now. Well, at least I'm still alive and kicking. But that was way too close. I get no monetary compensation. At least there's one less the thing 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 fade into the rain.

Chapter 38

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's no place like home. I feel a pain in my leg. 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. I look back at the letter from Daisy. I reel. It doesn't seem good. I don't savour the idea of visiting the metro station again.

I stop outside Bryant metro station. I crack the lock quietly and step through. 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 radio tower. I look around. Hundreds of tiny holes dot the metro station and a faint smell of formaldehyde lingers in the place. 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 thing 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. 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'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? 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 abomination fast behind me. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a radio tower. My jaw clenches. At least I'm not liquidated yet. Okay, I need to get it together. I consider the situation. What do I do now? Maybe it will just go away on its own? One can only hope. How am I supposed to do this? Just focus. It hits me like a freight train. 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 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 swarm drawing near. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. 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 abomination fast behind me. I'm in deep trouble.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a windowsill. My fists clench. At least I'm not six feet under yet. Okay, I need to get it together. I consider the situation. What do I do now? Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? Oh this is just hopeless. I really need to get it together. Right. I have to weaken the place that anchors the swarm to our world.

I locate the anchor points. 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 abomination attacks. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? I duck under 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.

Bryant metro station quickly gets up on its feet. Well, at least I'm not liquidated. But that was way too close. In any case, Daisy compensates me for my troubles. Maybe I'll use the money to go get my leg 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 rain.

Chapter 39

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's 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, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job, desperately. I'm throwing darts at the lord captain's picture when the phone rings. It's Andrew. He sounds urgent. I reel. 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 metro station.

I arrive at the metro station. I furrow my brow. 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 wraith won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a radio tower. I examine my surroundings. Faint whispers emanate from dark corners and curious symbols mar the metro station. 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 wraith 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 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? I hit the monstrosity with all my might. It only makes it angrier. The wraith 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 freeze. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to breathe. I look around. How do I deal with this? Maybe I could bind it? How am I supposed to do this? Okay, I need to think. 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 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 wraith 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 locked into a side room. I raise an eyebrow. 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. I really need to breathe. Right. I have a plan. I should be able to bind the monstrosity 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 monster. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the tricky devil appears. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. Can anything even hold something that powerful? I fake out the wraith and strafe around 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.

Baldwin metro station 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. I get no monetary compensation. My only reward is the gratitude of Andrew. This should go nicely towards my electricity 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. Just another day in the life. I hail a cab and disappear into the fog.

Chapter 40

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. 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. Jack comes to my office and explains his problems. I tremble. It sounds bad. I don't savour the idea of visiting the morgue again.

I take a cab to Griffin morgue. I grit my teeth. I step inside. The stench of death floats in the air like a persistent miasma. I snap out of it. Time for work. The creature won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a filing cabinet. I look around. The air smells of traces of copper or iron and I can see large claw marks covering the morgue. The scene suggests a not-too-bright the brute. Shouldn't be too hard. It's all about the brains, after all. I should be able to bind the thing 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 monster. 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 start to second guess my plan. The thing sees the vessel, pounces at me in a blind rage. I wrestle with the brute and crash into a side room. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I find myself locked into a side room. I tremble. At least I'm not snuffed out yet. Okay, got to concentrate. What do I do now? I consider the situation. Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? Oh this is just hopeless. Okay, I need to concentrate. Right. I have a plan. 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. 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 monstrosity appears. It's bigger than I thought. How am I going to finish the circle like this? The brute 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. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I grope around in the dark. My fists clench. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to get it together. I examine my surroundings. What now? Maybe I could overload it with electricity? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. I really need to get it together. Okay, I think I got it. 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. Time to kick some demon ass. 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 dodge its gigantic nails 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.

Griffin morgue is opened for business soon after. Well, at least I'm not sleeping the big sleep. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. At least Jack pays me the appropriate fee. 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'm even remotely good at. Oh well. Life goes on. I hail a cab and fade into the fog.

Chapter 41

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, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job. And I need it fast. The phone rings. It's Gladys. I reel. It sounds bad. She really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to the law firm.

I arrive at Hopkin law firm. I raise an eyebrow. I step inside. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted law firm 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 filing cabinet. I examine my surroundings. Thousands of tiny tracks criss-cross across all imaginable surfaces of the law firm and small rusted flakes cover the floor. 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 weaken the place that anchors the thing to our world.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has got to work. I prepare myself for unmooring the swarm from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the creature attacks. The

incessant buzzing drives me insane. 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. 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 paper shredder. I frown. At least I'm still alive. Okay, got to work this out. What now? I consider the situation. Maybe it will just go away on its own? One can only hope. How am I supposed to 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 creature.

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 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 monstrosity 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 monster behind me.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a safe. I hesitate. At least I'm not cashed in yet. Okay, I need to concentrate. I examine the situation. What can I do with this? Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? I don't think I can do this. I really need to focus. Right. I have a plan. 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 got to work. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The swarm 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. I step back 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 situation at the law firm should be under control now. Well, at least I'm not room temperature. But that was way too close. I get no money out of this. At least there's one less the monstrosity haunting the world. 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 disappear into the sunrise.

Chapter 42

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's 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. I'm throwing darts at the lord mayor's picture when the phone rings. It's Myrtle. My grip tightens. 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 law firm.

I arrive at the law firm. My fists clench. I step inside. The air is heavy with the sweat and dust of a thousand wasted man-hours. I snap out of it. Time for work. The abomination won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a paper shredder. I consider the situation. Thousands of tiny tracks criss-cross across all imaginable surfaces of the law firm 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. 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 swarm 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. The demon disappears into the shadows when it sees the drain I'm holding. The monster appears from the shadows, cracking my head and leaving me seeing stars. I fall down on the floor and reel in pain.

I'm rolling on the floor, holding my head between my hands. I feel my body tense. At least I'm still alive and kicking. Okay, got to get it together. 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 concentrate. Okay, I think I got it. I have to weaken the place that anchors the swarm to our world.

I locate the anchor points. I pray that this will work. I prepare myself for unmooring the swarm from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the abomination attacks. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. I start to second guess my plan. The whirling swarm completely overruns me and I get swept along the tide of demon matter. I'm tossed inside a small room. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I find myself trapped in a small room. I grit my teeth. At least I'm still alive and kicking. Okay, I need to focus. I look around. How do I deal with this? Maybe I could overload it with electricity? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Right. I need to work this out. Right. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the swarm.

I reach for my bag for my tools. 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 monstrosity appears. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. I start to second guess my plan. I slide under 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 law firm should be under control now. Well, at least I'm still sharp. But that was way too close. I get no money out of this. 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's the only thing I know how to do. Oh well. Life goes on. I fade into the city.

Chapter 43

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. 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, desperately. The silence is broken by the ringing of the telephone. It's Maggie. She is in a hurry. My jaw clenches. It sounds bad. I don't savour the idea of visiting the law firm again.

I walk to the law firm. I furrow my brow. I go in. Here the coroners of justice dissect and diagnose the corpse of law. I snap out of it. Time for work. The monster won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a paper shredder. I look around. Small rusted flakes cover the floor and hundreds of tiny holes dot the law firm. 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 monster to our world.

I reach for my bag for my tools. Time to kick some demon ass. I prepare myself for unmooring the demon from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the swarm attacks. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? The

creature 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. I'm in deep trouble.

I check my chest. It's bad. I freeze. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to breathe. I examine my surroundings. What do I do now? My options seem hopeless. How am I supposed to do this? I really need to get it together. Okay, I think I got it. I have to first weaken the swarm 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 laughter comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? 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 back, busting it. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I check my back. It's bad. My jaw clenches. At least I'm still alive. Okay, got to focus. What can I do with this? I examine the situation. Maybe I could bind it? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Okay, I need to work this out. Okay, I think I got it. I should be able to bind the swarm 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 demon. I hear it too late. A loud screech comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. I start to second guess my plan. 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.

The law firm is opened for business soon after. Now I can tend to my injuries. But that didn't at all go according to plan. In any case, Maggie 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's the only thing I'm even remotely good at. Oh well. Life goes on. I fade into the sunrise.

Chapter 44

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. 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, desperately. I look back at the note from Samuel. I furrow my brow. It sounds bad. I don't savour the idea of visiting Murray crypt again.

I stop outside Murray crypt. I raise an eyebrow. I step inside. 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 coffin. I consider the situation. Curious symbols mar the crypt 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. 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 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. How am I going to finish the circle like this? 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. I reel. 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? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Right. I need to stop and think. 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. 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 monster pounces on me. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. The monster disappears into the shadows when it sees the drain I'm holding. The monstrosity appears from the shadows, cracking my head and leaving me seeing stars. I fall down on the floor and reel in pain.

I'm rolling on the floor, holding my head between my hands. My fists clench. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to work this out. What now? I examine my surroundings. Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? Oh this is just hopeless. Just concentrate. It hits me like a ton of bricks. I have to weaken the place that anchors the monster 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've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the tricky devil attacks. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. I start to second guess my plan. I fake out the demon and slide 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 crypt 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, Samuel compensates me for my troubles. Time to refill that stash. Oh yeah. 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 step into the sunrise.

Chapter 45

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, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job. I'm throwing darts at the lord mayor's picture when the phone rings. It's Michael. He sounds hopeless. I feel my body tense. It doesn't seem good. He will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for the train station.

I take a cab to the 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 thing won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a luggage cart. I consider the situation. The air smells of traces of copper or iron and curious symbols mar the train station. 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 thing if I can connect it to the power grid.

I steady my breath. 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 monster drawing near. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? The demon roars and my wire starts throwing sparks around the room. 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 bite my lip. At least I'm still breathing. Okay, got to think. What now? I consider the situation. Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? No, that won't work. I really need to work this out. It hits me like a ton of bricks. 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 creature appears. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I start to second guess my plan. The unfinished circle breaks as the demon jumps at me and scrapes the floor with its claws. The tricky devil maims my shoulder with its talons. I'm in deep trouble.

I check my shoulder. It doesn't look too good. I reel. At least I'm still sharp. Okay, got to concentrate. What do I do now? I examine my surroundings. 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. The realization hits me like a ton of bricks. I should be able to bind the tricky devil to this vessel.

I reach for my bag for my tools. I pray that this will work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the demon. 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. Can anything even hold something that powerful? I fake out the creature 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 situation at Gunn train station should be under control now. Now I can tend to my injuries. But that didn't at all go according to plan. I get no money out of this. However, Michael now owes me one. 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 step into the sunrise.

Chapter 46

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. The silence is broken by the ringing of the telephone. It's Walter. I feel my body tense. It doesn't seem good. I don't savour the idea of visiting the mill again.

I stop outside the mill. I grit my teeth. I go in. Heavy metal machines though still, show signs of the relentless march of industry. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The wraith won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a control panel. I examine the situation. The mill 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 might be able to overload the demon 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 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 roars and my wire starts throwing sparks around the room. 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 tremble. At least I'm not cashed in yet. Okay, I need to

think. I examine my surroundings. What now? My options seem hopeless. All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Just get it together. Right. 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. 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'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. 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 a windowsill. I feel a cold sweat coming on. At least I'm still breathing. Okay, I need to concentrate. I look around. What do I do now? Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? Could work. If I get lucky. Right. I need to work this out. Okay, I think I got it. I have to weaken the place that anchors the thing to our world.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This is my last chance. 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. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? I fake out the tricky devil 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 mill should be under control now. Well, it wasn't as bad as it could have been. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. At least Walter pays me the appropriate fee. 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 has to be done. Oh well. Life goes on. I hail a cab and disappear into the night.

Chapter 47

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. And I need it fast. Katherine enters my office and explains her problems. I feel a cold sweat coming on. It doesn't seem good. I don't savour the idea of visiting Wakefield crypt again.

I take a cab to the crypt. Sigh. I step inside. The stench of death floats in the air like a persistent miasma. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The tricky devil won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a windowsill. I look around. The crypt 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 should be able to bind the abomination to this vessel.

I fashion a makeshift receptacle from scrap. This is my last chance. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the demon. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the monstrosity appears. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. Can anything even hold something that powerful? The monster sees the vessel, pounces at me in a blind rage. The tricky devil maims my arm with its fist. My arm hurts like the dickens. I check my injury.

I check my arm. It's bad. I tremble. At least I'm still breathing. Okay, got to concentrate. How do I deal with this? I examine my surroundings. Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this

world? No, that won't work. 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 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? I hit the demon 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 run and swerve as I desperately think of some way to evade the demon behind me.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a sarcophagus. I grit my teeth. At least I'm not six feet under yet. Okay, got to stop and think. What now? I consider the situation. Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? How am I supposed to do this? Right. I need to focus. It hits me like a ton of bricks. 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. This has to 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. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. How am I going to finish the circle like this? I fake out the abomination and jump over 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 crypt is opened for business soon after. Now I can tend to my injuries. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. In any case, Katherine compensates me for my troubles. 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 hail a cab and step into the fog.

Chapter 48

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. 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. Fast. Eva comes to my office and explains her problems. I feel a cold sweat coming on. I feel like this one is going to be a hard one. I don't savour the idea of visiting the park again.

I walk to the park. I grit my teeth. I cross the fence. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted park always gives me the creeps. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The creature won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a statue. I examine my surroundings. The park stands in suspiciously good condition and small rusted flakes cover the ground. 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 monstrosity 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 thing drawing near. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? 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 monstrosity 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. My grip tightens. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to concentrate. What can I do with this? I look around. Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? How am I supposed to do this? Right. I need to focus. Right. I should be able to bind the creature to this vessel.

I steady my breath. I pray that this will work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the creature. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the creature appears. 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. 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 statue. I tremble. At least I'm not snuffed out yet. Okay, got to focus. What 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 work this out. It hits me like a freight train. 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. This is my last chance. I haven't even finished the first layer of the circle when the monster 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 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 Kim park 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 Eva 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. Life goes on. I fade into the city.

Chapter 49

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. Josephine steps in the door and lays out her problems. I freeze. Already it seems like a tough case. I don't savour the idea of visiting the crypt again.

I take a cab to the crypt. My fists clench. I go in. The stench of death floats in the air like a persistent miasma. 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. Thousands of tiny tracks criss-cross across all imaginable surfaces of the crypt and tiny arcs of electricity dance on all metallic surfaces. 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 thing.

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. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. I start to second guess my plan. The wraith 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 feel my body tense. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to get it together. I consider the situation. What now? Maybe I could bind it? Could work. If I get lucky. I really need to work this out. It hits me like a freight train. I have to first weaken the demon 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 demon 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? The swarm covers all light sources in the room, leaving it in darkness. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the wraith 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 windowsill. I furrow my brow. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to think. I look around. What now? Maybe I could destroy the loci anchoring it to this world? No, that won't work. Just concentrate. It hits me like a freight train. I should be able to bind the swarm to this vessel.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This has got to work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the swarm. I hear it too late. A loud screech comes from behind me and chills me to the bone. 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.

The situation at the crypt should be under control now. Well, at least I'm not snuffed out. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. At least Josephine 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. Just another day in the life. I hail a cab and step into the sunrise.

Chapter 50

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 captain's picture when the phone rings. It's Louise. She sounds urgent. I reel. Already it seems like a tough case. She will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for the balloon terminal.

I stop outside the balloon terminal. I grit my teeth. I go in. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted balloon terminal always gives me the creeps. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The thing won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a luggage cart. I examine the situation. 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. 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. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? The demon's hind muscles flex as it charges straight at me. The abomination maims my arm with its jaws. I'm in deep trouble.

I check my arm. It's bad. I grit my teeth. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to focus. What now? I examine my surroundings. Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Right. I need to breathe. The realization hits me like a freight train. 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 brute's hind muscles flex as it charges straight at me. I wrestle with the brute and crash into a side room. I'm in deep trouble.

I find myself locked into a side room. I bite my lip. At least I'm not dead yet. Okay, I need to concentrate. I consider the situation. What do I do now? Maybe I could bind it? Could work. If I get lucky. Just think. Okay, I think I got it. 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 thing. 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. Can anything even hold something that powerful? I dodge its gigantic tail and duck 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.

The situation at Weston balloon terminal should be under control now. Well, at least I'm still sharp. But that was way too close. In any case, Louise now owes me one. I'll make her make me dinner. It's the least she can do. 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 step into the fog.

Chapter 51

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's home. I feel the familiar craving for opium. My stash is empty and I desperately need some more. 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 mayor's picture when the phone rings. It's Viola. She is in a hurry. I reel. It doesn't seem good. She really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to the crypt.

I walk up to the crypt. I freeze. I go in. The stench of death floats in the air like a persistent miasma. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The demon won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a windowsill. I examine the situation. Small rusted flakes cover the floor and the crypt stands in suspiciously good condition. 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 could drain the power from the thing 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 monster pounces on me. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. The monster disappears into the shadows when it sees the drain I'm holding. The monster appears from the shadows, cracking my head and leaving me seeing stars. I fall down on the floor and reel in pain.

My head spins as I try to regain control. I raise an eyebrow. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to get it together. What can I do with this? I examine the situation. Maybe I could overload it with electricity? I don't think I can do this. Okay, I need to focus. The realization hits me like a ton of bricks. I have to first weaken the tricky devil 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. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? I hit the tricky devil with all my might. It only makes it angrier. The tricky devil cracks the floor 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 furrow my brow. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to focus. I examine my surroundings. What do I do now? Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? Oh this is just hopeless. Right. I need to breathe. Okay, I think I got it. I might be able to overload the creature 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 got to work. 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. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? I fake out the demon and slide under it. I block its attack with the live wire and electricity courses through the creature! It screeches and pulses as the energy overloads it, exploding it in a burst of static electricity.

The 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 money out of this. My only reward is the gratitude of Viola. 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 hail a cab and step into the city.

Chapter 52

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. Willie enters my office and tells me his problems. My jaw clenches. Already it seems like a tough case. He will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for the bar.

I walk up to the bar. I reel. 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 open my bag and set it up on a windowsill. I look around. The air smells of traces of copper or iron and I can see large claw marks covering the bar. The scene suggests a not-too-bright the creature. 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 take the electric brand from my pocket. 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. It's bigger than I thought. I'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? The creature smashes the wall, making sparks fly from the exposed wiring. The electric shocks short the lights and the room is plunged into darkness. I'm in deep trouble.

I grope around in the dark. My grip tightens. At least I'm not sleeping the big sleep yet. Okay, I need to focus. I examine my surroundings. What now? Maybe I could bind it? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Okay, I need to breathe. Right. I might be able to overload the thing 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 monstrosity drawing near. It's bigger than I thought. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? The brute 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.

My head spins as I try to regain control. I grit my teeth. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to work this out. How do I deal with this? I look around. Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? No, that won't work. Just think. The realization hits me like a freight train. 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. 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. It's bigger than I thought. I start to second guess my plan. I dodge its gigantic claws 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 fizzles.

Wallace bar 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. However, Willie 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's the only thing I'm even remotely good at. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I fade into the sunrise.

Chapter 53

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's 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, desperately. The phone rings. It's Effie. She sounds hopeless. I tremble. I feel like this one is going to be a hard one. I don't savour the idea of visiting the bar again.

I walk to the bar. I crack the lock quietly and step through. The place smells of dried alcohol, vomit and blood. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The tricky devil won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a counter. I consider the situation. Curious symbols mar the bar and a faint smell of formaldehyde lingers in the place. The monstrosity 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 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. 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 start to second guess my plan. The tricky devil 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 run and swerve as I desperately think of some way to evade the tricky devil behind me.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a jukebox. I bite my lip. At least I'm still sharp. Okay, I need to think. I consider the situation. What can I do with this? Maybe it will just go away on its own? One can only hope. No, that won't work. Okay, I need to concentrate. It hits me like a freight train. I have to first weaken the monster 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 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? I hit the thing with all my might. It only makes it angrier. 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 counter. I feel a cold sweat coming on. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to concentrate. I look around. What can I do with this? Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? Oh this is just hopeless. Right. I need to concentrate. Okay, I think I got it. I could drain the power from the monster 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. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. I fake out the demon 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.

Seymour bar is opened for business soon after. Well, at least I'm still breathing. But that didn't at all go according to plan. At least Effie 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'm even remotely good at. Oh well. Life goes on. I hail a cab and disappear into the night.

Chapter 54

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's home. I feel the familiar craving for opium. My stash is empty and I desperately need some more. Problem is, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job. And I need it fast. The phone rings. It's Roy. He sounds urgent. I hesitate. It doesn't seem good. He really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to Kenward general store.

I walk up to Kenward general store. I bite my lip. I step inside. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted general store always gives me the creeps. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The monster won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a counter. I examine my surroundings. A faint smell of formaldehyde lingers in the place 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 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 abomination drawing near. I didn't consider it would be this strong. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? 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. I tremble. At least I'm still sharp. Okay, I need to think. I examine my surroundings. What can I do with this? Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? Could work. If I get lucky. Just stop and think. Right. I have to weaken the place that anchors the demon to our world.

I reach for my bag for my tools. This is my last chance. I prepare myself for unmooring the brute from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the abomination attacks. 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 tumble across the floor and crumble into a heap.

I find myself locked into a side room. I grit my teeth. At least I'm not snuffed out yet. Okay, I need to concentrate. I consider the situation. How do I deal with this? Maybe I could bind it? I don't think I can do this. Okay, I need to get it together. Right. All I need to do is set up a barrier circle so I can contain the brute.

I steady my breath. 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. I didn't consider it would be this strong. How am I going to finish the circle like this? I dodge its gigantic stinger and jump over 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.

Kenward general store quickly gets up on its feet. Well, at least I'm still breathing. But that was way too close. I get no monetary compensation. At least there's one less the abomination 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 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 fog.

Chapter 55

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. 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, desperately. The phone rings. It's Leo. He is in a hurry. I furrow my brow. It sounds bad. He will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for the hardware store.

I walk to the hardware store. I inspect the lock. Basic model. A few minutes work. I'm in. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted hardware store always gives me the creeps. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The brute won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a windowsill. I consider the situation. The hardware store is totally trashed 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. I have to weaken the place that anchors the brute to our world.

I reach for my bag for my tools. 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 brute attacks. It's bigger than I thought. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? The demon 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. My gut sinks. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to breathe. What do I do now? I examine the situation. Maybe I could overload it with electricity? How am I supposed to do this? Right. I need to focus. 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. 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 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 fall down on the floor and reel in pain.

I'm rolling on the floor, holding my head between my hands. Sigh. At least I'm still sharp. Okay, got

to focus. What now? I examine the situation. Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? How am I supposed to do this? I really need to concentrate. The realization hits me like a freight train. I could drain the power from the brute if I can ground it.

I reach for my bag for my tools. I pray that this will work. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. 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 don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. I dodge its gigantic tail 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 hardware store quickly gets up on its feet. Well, it wasn't as bad as it could have been. But that was way too close. In any case, Leo now owes me one. I'll have he 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. Just another day in the life. I step into the sunrise.

Chapter 56

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. I dig up the note from Floyd. I feel my body tense. Already it seems like a tough case. I don't savour the idea of visiting Griggs garden again.

I take a cab to the garden. Sigh. I cross the fence. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted garden always gives me the creeps. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The monstrosity won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a statue. I examine the situation. Hundreds of tiny holes dot the garden and the air smells of traces of copper or iron. 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 might be able to overload the swarm 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 swarm drawing near. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? The creature crawls all over the wiring, making sparks fly. 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 frown. At least I'm still alive and kicking. Okay, I need to breathe. I look around. What can I do with this? Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? Could work. If I get lucky. I really need to work this out. Right. 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 creature 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. 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 still breathing. Okay, I need to breathe. 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. Just stop and 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 creature.

I steady my breath. Time to kick some demon ass. I haven't even finished the first layer of the circle when the creature appears. 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 ground. 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 garden quickly gets up on its feet. Well, at least I'm still breathing. But that was way too close. In any case, Floyd 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 57

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, a detective's pay is not exactly luxurious. I need a job, desperately. The phone rings. It's Nora. I raise an eyebrow. It sounds bad. She really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to the bar.

I stop outside the bar. I crack the lock quietly and step through. 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 thing won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on the floor. I look around. Blackish ichor is pooled on the floor and thousands of tiny tracks criss-cross across all imaginable surfaces of the bar. 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 locate the anchor points. This has to work. I prepare myself for unmooring the swarm from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the abomination attacks. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. How am I supposed to break its anchoring like this? The monster covers all light sources in the room, leaving it in darkness. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the abomination fast behind me. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I weave and scramble, knocking over a jukebox. My gut sinks. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to think. I look around. What do I do now? Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? Could work. If I get lucky. Just focus. Okay, I think I got it. 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. 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 swarm pounces on me. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. I start to second guess my plan. The monstrosity covers all light sources in the room, leaving it in darkness. 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 stool. I raise an eyebrow. At least I'm not liquidated yet. Okay, I need to get it together. I consider the situation. How do I deal with this? Maybe it will just go away on its own? One can only hope. How am I supposed to do this? Just work this out. The realization hits me like a freight train. 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 abomination. 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? I duck 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.

The situation at Dosett bar should be under control now. Well, it wasn't as bad as it could have been. But that was way too close. It doesn't pay. My only reward is the gratitude of Nora. 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. Life goes on. I hail a cab and fade into the fog.

Chapter 58

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. No place like 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. Fast. I dig up the telegram from Ruby. I freeze. It doesn't seem good. She will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for the power plant.

I walk up to Beechworth power plant. I crack the lock quietly and step through. Heavy metal machines though still, show signs of the relentless march of industry. I snap out of it. Time for work. The swarm won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a windowsill. I consider the situation. Tiny arcs of electricity dance on all metallic surfaces and thousands of tiny tracks criss-cross across all imaginable surfaces of the power plant. 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 weaken the place that anchors the monstrosity to our world.

I steady my breath. This has to work. I prepare myself for unmooring the swarm from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the monster attacks. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. 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 wraith fast behind me. I'm in deep trouble.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a windowsill. I feel a cold sweat coming on. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to work this out. I examine my surroundings. What can I do with this? Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? Could work. If I get lucky. Right. I need to breathe. Okay, I think I got it. I might be able to overload the swarm 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. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? I zap the monster, but it only slows it down for a second before the power fails and sparks fly from the wires as a fuse busts broken. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the monstrosity 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 control panel. I feel my body tense. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to get it together. I examine my surroundings. What now? My options seem hopeless. I don't think I can do this. Right. I need to work this out. The realization hits me like a freight train. 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. This is my last chance. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The demon 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 sidestep 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.

Beechworth power plant 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. However, Ruby 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. Just another day in the life. I step into the night.

Chapter 59

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. 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. Fast. A letter arrives from Willie. 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 Ashdown bar.

I take a cab to Ashdown bar. I bite my lip. I step inside. The place smells of dried alcohol, vomit and blood. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The tricky devil won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a billiard table. I examine my surroundings. The bar stands in suspiciously good condition and the air smells of traces of copper or iron. 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 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 got to work. I grab a piece of exposed wiring, its end bristling with electricity. The wire sizzles as a tell-tale sign of the creature drawing near. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. I start to second guess my plan. I zap the thing, but it only slows it down for a second before the power fails and sparks fly from the wires as a fuse busts broken. 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 windowsill. I grit my teeth. At least I'm not snuffed out yet. Okay, I need to get it together. I look around. What can I do with this? Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? No, that won't work. Right. I need to work this out. Right. I have a plan. I should be able to bind the creature to this vessel.

I fashion a makeshift receptacle from scrap. This has got to work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the tricky devil. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the monster appears. 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 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 windowsill. Sigh. At least I'm not room temperature yet. Okay, I need to work this out. I examine my surroundings. What do I do now? Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? Oh this is just hopeless. Okay, I need to focus. Okay, I think I got it. I have to first weaken the creature with an electric assault before I can properly

banish it.

I steady my breath. 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. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. I start to second guess my plan. I fake out the monster 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 situation at Ashdown bar should be under control now. Well, at least I'm still breathing. But that was way too close. It doesn't pay. My only reward is the gratitude of Willie. 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. Life goes on. I hail a cab and step into the sunrise.

Chapter 60

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 dig up the letter from Albert. I hesitate. Already it seems like a tough case. He will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for Kenward law firm.

I stop outside Kenward law firm. I raise an eyebrow. 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 tricky devil won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a safe. I examine my surroundings. Curious symbols mar the law firm and blackish ichor is pooled on the floor. 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 have to weaken the place that anchors the monstrosity to our world.

I locate the anchor points. Time to kick some demon ass. I prepare myself for unmooring the thing 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. I start to second guess my plan. 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 tricky devil 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 desk. I frown. At least I'm not croaked yet. Okay, I need to get it together. I consider the situation. How do I deal with this? Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? No, that won't work. Okay, I need to think. Right. I could drain the power from the abomination 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 tricky devil pounces on me. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. The abomination creates multiple illusionary copies of itself, leaving me wondering which is the original. I run wildly through the illusions, the monstrosity hot on my tail. 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 windowsill. I furrow my brow. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to breathe. I consider the situation. What can I do with this? Maybe I could overload it with electricity? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Okay, I need to stop and think. Okay, I think I got it. I should be able to bind the tricky devil 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 monstrosity appears. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I start to second guess my plan. I fake out the thing 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.

The situation at Kenward law firm should be under control now. Well, at least I'm still alive and kicking. But that didn't at all go according to plan. In any case, Albert 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 has to be done. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I fade into the fog.

Chapter 61

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. A telegram arrives from Lena. I feel a cold sweat coming on. I feel like this one is going to be a hard one. She will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for Kim morgue.

I stop outside Kim morgue. I bite my lip. 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 monstrosity won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a windowsill. I examine the situation. Tiny arcs of electricity dance on all metallic surfaces and the morgue 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 demon to our world.

I reach for my bag for my tools. 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 thing attacks. I didn't consider it would be this strong. I start to second guess my plan. The brute flings me through the door before I have a chance to finish unmooring it. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the monstrosity fast behind me. I run and swerve as I desperately think of some way to evade the wraith behind me.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a filing cabinet. My fists clench. At least I'm not worm food yet. Okay, I need to work this out. I look around. What do I do now? Maybe I could overload it with electricity? No, that won't work. Okay, I need to get it together. Right. I have a plan. 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. 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 thing pounces on me. It's bigger than I thought. 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 wraith is not even phased. The demon cracks the floor underneath me and I'm plunged into the darkness below. I'm in deep trouble.

I stumble in the dark. I furrow my brow. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to stop and think. What now? I examine my surroundings. Maybe it will just go away on its own? One can only hope. I don't think I can do this. Okay, I need to think. Right. I should be able to bind the demon 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 brute. 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. I dodge its gigantic nails and duck 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.

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. In any case, Lena 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'm even remotely good at. Oh well. Life goes on. I hail a cab and step into the night.

Chapter 62

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. 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. A telegram arrives from Rose. I tremble. Already it seems like a tough case. She will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for the factory.

I walk to Whitlock factory. I inspect the lock. Basic model. A few minutes work. I'm in. Heavy metal machines though still, show signs of the relentless march of industry. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The demon won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a control panel. I examine my surroundings. Curious symbols mar the factory and tiny arcs of electricity dance on all metallic surfaces. The wraith 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 monster 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. The monstrosity 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 monstrosity 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.

I'm rolling on the floor, holding my head between my hands. I grit my teeth. At least I'm still kicking. Okay, I need to stop and think. I consider the situation. What now? Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? I don't think I can do this. Okay, I need to get it together. Right. I have a plan. 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 wraith. 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. Can anything even hold something that powerful? The monstrosity 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 floor and reel in pain.

I'm rolling on the floor, holding my head between my hands. I frown. At least I'm not feeding the worms yet. Okay, I need to think. I look around. What now? Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? Oh this is just hopeless. Right. I 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 steady my breath. Time to kick some demon ass. 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. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I start to second guess my plan. I fake out the thing and step back 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.

Whitlock factory 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. In any case, Rose now owes me one. Well, I still need to get that sink 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 hail a cab and fade into the rain.

Chapter 63

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. Fast. The phone rings. It's Sarah. She sounds urgent. My grip tightens. It doesn't seem good. She really needs my help. I guess I don't have a choice. I'm going to the mill.

I walk to Sinnett mill. I inspect the lock. Basic model. A few minutes work. I'm in. Heavy metal machines though still, show signs of the relentless march of industry. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The swarm won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a control panel. I consider the situation. The air smells of traces of copper or iron and thousands of tiny tracks criss-cross across all imaginable surfaces of the mill. 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 swarm.

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 swarm appears. 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'm tossed inside a small room. I'm in deep trouble.

I find myself trapped in a small room. I frown. At least I'm still alive and kicking. Okay, I need to work this out. I examine my surroundings. What do I do now? Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. I really need to work this out. It hits me like a freight train. I could drain the power from the swarm 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. The incessant buzzing drives me insane. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. The swarm disappears into the shadows when it sees the drain I'm holding. The swarm 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 tremble. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to get it together. I look around. What can I do with this? Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? How am I supposed to do this? Okay, I need to get it together. Okay, I think I got it. I should be able to bind the monstrosity to this vessel.

I steady my breath. This has got to work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the creature. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the swarm appears. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. 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.

The mill 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. My only reward is the gratitude of Sarah. 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. Just another day in the life. I hail a cab and disappear into the sunrise.

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, 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 Dorothy. She sounds hopeless. I frown. It sounds bad. I don't savour the idea of visiting Chattoway nightclub again.

I take a cab to Chattoway nightclub. 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 monstrosity won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a billiard table. I examine the situation. Faint whispers emanate from dark corners and the nightclub 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 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 got 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. I didn't consider it would be this strong. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? The monster 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. I freeze. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to focus. I consider the situation. How do I deal with this? Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? No, that won't work. Okay, I need to focus. The realization hits me like a freight train. I have to weaken the place that anchors the monster to our world.

I reach for my bag for my tools. I need this to work. I prepare myself for unmooring the wraith from its anchor points. 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 supposed to break its anchoring like this? The monstrosity punches me right through a plaster wall. I fly through the air and land on my stomach, busting it. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I check my stomach. It doesn't look too good. I frown. At least I'm not out of business yet. Okay, got to focus. What now? I consider the situation. Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? Could work. If I get lucky. I really need to work this out. Okay, I think I got it. 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 pray that this will work. I begin drawing a large circle on the dancefloor. 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? I dodge its gigantic pseudopod 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 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 Dorothy 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 someone has to do it. Might as well be me. Oh well. Just another day in the life. I step into the city.

Chapter 65

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. There's no place like home. I feel a pain in my chest. 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. A note arrives from Elsie. 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 the library.

I take a cab to the library. I grit my teeth. I go in. Tens of thousands of words stare at me from the bookshelves, bound in crumbling leather. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The tricky devil won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a bookshelf. I examine my surroundings. Faint whispers emanate from dark corners and the library stands in suspiciously good condition. 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 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 has got to work. 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. 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. I run wildly through the illusions, the demon hot on my tail. I run and swerve as I desperately think of some way to evade the wraith behind me.

I run like a madman, scrambling over the floor. I furrow my brow. At least I'm not liquidated yet. Okay, got to concentrate. What do I do now? I examine my surroundings. Maybe I could drain it of its power somehow? No, that won't work. Right. I need to think. It hits me like a ton of bricks. I could drain the power from the monster if I can ground it.

I reach for my bag for my tools. I pray that this will work. I grab a piece of copper cord and connect it to a void anchor. 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 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 tricky devil is not even phased. I decide to retreat and take off running, with the wraith 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 windowsill. My fists clench. At least I'm still alive and kicking. Okay, got to think. What do I do now? I look around. Maybe I could bind it? Oh this is just hopeless. Just concentrate. Right. I have a plan. I have to weaken the place that anchors the wraith to our world.

I locate the anchor points. This has to work. I prepare myself for unmooring the thing 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 tricky devil and step back 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.

Devitt library is opened for business soon after. Well, at least I'm not sleeping the big sleep. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. It doesn't pay. At least there's one less the demon haunting the world. My chest 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 hail a cab and fade into the sunrise.

Chapter 66

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. The phone rings. It's Lucy. She sounds urgent. I hesitate. I feel like this one is going to be a hard one. She will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for Gonzales law firm.

I walk to Gonzales law firm. I frown. I step inside. 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 set my bag up on a safe. I examine my surroundings. I can see large claw marks covering the law firm and tiny arcs of electricity dance on all metallic surfaces. 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 weaken the place that anchors the brute to our world.

I reach for my bag for my tools. 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 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 fly through the air and land on my back, busting it. My back hurts like the dickens. I check my injury.

I check my back. It's bad. I furrow my brow. At least I'm not resting in peace yet. Okay, got to focus. What now? I examine the situation. Maybe I could bind it? I don't think I can do this. Just focus. The realization hits me like a freight train. 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. 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 demon pounces on me. It's bigger than I thought. I don't even know if I've grounded the drain correctly. The brute punches me right through a plaster wall. I fly through the air and land on my back, busting it. My back hurts like the dickens. I check my injury.

I check my back. It's bad. I furrow my brow. At least I'm still kicking. Okay, I need to focus. I look around. What now? Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Okay, I need to stop and think. Okay, I think I got it. I should be able to bind the demon to this vessel.

I fashion a makeshift receptacle from scrap. I pray that this will work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the brute. 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. I dodge its

gigantic tentacle 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 situation at the law firm should be under control now. Now I can tend to my injuries. But that didn't at all go according to plan. I get no money out of this. However, Lucy now owes me one. I'll have her 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 city.

Chapter 67

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, desperately. The silence is broken by the ringing of the telephone. It's Paul. He is in a hurry. My jaw clenches. Already it seems like a tough case. He will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for the garden.

I walk to the garden. I inspect the lock. Basic model. A few minutes work. I'm in. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted garden 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 the ground. I look around. Curious symbols mar the garden 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 should be able to bind the tricky devil 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 monster. 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. 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. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a statue. My gut sinks. At least I'm still sharp. Okay, I need to breathe. I examine my surroundings. What now? Maybe I could overload it with electricity? Oh this is just hopeless. Okay, I need to think. Okay, I think I got it. 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 demon drawing near. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. I start to second guess my plan. I zap the monster, 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 demon 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. My fists clench. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to focus. What now? I look around. Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Okay, I need to focus. It hits me like a freight train. I have to first weaken the monstrosity with an electric assault before I can properly banish it.

I steady my breath. This is my last chance. I take a stance and ready myself for an assault. The demon 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? 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 garden quickly gets up on its feet. Well, at least I'm not croaked. But that was not what I would call an ideal execution. I get no money out of this. However, Paul now owes me one. I'll have he refill my stash. 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 sunrise.

Chapter 68

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, desperately. Dora steps in the door and lays out her problems. I feel my body tense. It doesn't seem good. She will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for the morgue.

I walk to the morgue. I hesitate. I step inside. 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 paper shredder. I look around. Tiny arcs of electricity dance on all metallic surfaces and the morgue stands in suspiciously good condition. 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 could drain the power from the wraith 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 monstrosity pounces on me. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. I start to second guess my plan. The wraith 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 reel. At least I'm not out of business yet. Okay, got to concentrate. What can I do with this? I consider the situation. My options seem hopeless. No, that won't work. Right. I need to breathe. It 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 steady my breath. 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. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. How am I going to finish the circle like this? 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. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I find myself without my gear. My gut sinks. At least I'm not snuffed out yet. Okay, got to focus. What can I do with this? I look around. Maybe I can try to overpower it somehow? Oh this is just hopeless. I really need to think. Right. I should be able to bind the monster to this vessel.

I fashion a makeshift receptacle from scrap. Time to kick some demon ass. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the monster. 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 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.

Strain morgue 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, Dora now owes me one. This should negate my debt nicely. 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 sunrise.

Chapter 69

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. And I need it fast. I'm throwing darts at the lord captain's picture when the phone rings. It's Nellie. She sounds hopeless. I tremble. Already it seems like a tough case. I don't savour the idea of visiting the library again.

I stop outside the library. I crack the lock quietly and step through. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted library always gives me the creeps. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The tricky devil won't catch itself. I set my bag up on the floor. I examine my surroundings. Faint whispers emanate from dark corners and curious symbols mar the library. 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. 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 wraith. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the tricky devil appears. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. Can anything even hold 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.

Facing a demon with no gear. Great. I bite my lip. At least I'm not sleeping the big sleep yet. Okay, got to focus. What can I do with this? I examine my surroundings. Maybe I could try and improvise a containment circle and trap it? I don't think I can do this. I really need to breathe. It 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 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 tricky devil appears. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. How am I going to finish the circle like this? The demon 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 double-check my pockets. Yep. All empty.

Facing a demon with no gear. Great. My fists clench. Well, it could be worse. Okay, I need to stop and think. I look around. What do I do now? My options seem hopeless. All of my options at this point just seem bleak. Right. I need to work this out. The realization hits me like a ton of bricks. I might be able to overload the tricky devil if I can connect it to the power grid.

I steady my breath. This has got 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. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. I start to second guess my plan. I fake out the wraith and duck under 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.

Highmore library quickly gets up on its feet. Well, at least I'm not feeding the worms. But that was way too close. In any case, Nellie compensates me for my troubles. Time to refill that stash. Oh yeah. 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 step into the sunrise.

Chapter 70

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. Fast. I dig up the telegram from Daniel. My gut sinks. It doesn't seem good. I don't savour the idea of visiting Ashdown college again.

I stop outside the college. I tremble. 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 swarm won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a bookshelf. I examine my surroundings. Hundreds of tiny holes dot the college and small rusted flakes cover 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. I have to weaken the place that anchors the creature to our world.

I locate the anchor points. This has to work. I prepare myself for unmooring the thing from its anchor points. I've managed to destroy all anchors but one when the creature attacks. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. I start to second guess my plan. 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.

I find myself without my gear. I feel a cold sweat coming on. 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. Okay, I need to focus. Right. I have a plan. 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. The demonic swarm covers all the walls and even the ceiling. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? I zap the creature, but it only slows it down for a second before the power fails and sparks fly from the wires as a fuse busts broken. 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 windowsill. Sigh. At least I'm not cashed in yet. Okay, I need to get it together. I examine my surroundings. How do I deal with this? Maybe I could bind it? How am I supposed to do this? 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 fashion a makeshift receptacle from scrap. This has to work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the swarm. I've barely finished preparing the receptacle when the swarm appears. 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 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.

Ashdown college 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, Daniel 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 pays the bills. Except when it doesn't. Oh well. Life goes on. I hail a cab and fade into the fog.

Chapter 71

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. The silence is broken by the ringing of the telephone. It's Arthur. He is in a hurry. My gut sinks. It sounds bad. He will owe me after this. I get ready to leave for the garden.

I walk to Strong garden. My jaw clenches. 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 tricky devil won't catch itself. I set my bag up on a statue. I consider the situation. Curious symbols mar the garden and faint whispers emanate from dark corners. 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 could drain the power from the tricky devil 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 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 try and drain the wraith, but find the grounding is all wrong. The wraith is not even phased. The tricky devil cracks the ground underneath me and I'm plunged into the darkness below. I'm in deep trouble.

I grope around in the dark. I bite my lip. Well, it could be worse. Okay, got to stop and think. How do I deal with this? I examine my surroundings. Maybe I could overload it with electricity? Could work. If I get lucky. I really need to get it together. The realization hits me like a freight train. 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 wraith drawing near. A mad electric giggle echoes inside my brain. Is this even enough to overload something that powerful? 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 double-check my pockets. Yep. All empty.

I find myself without my gear. I hesitate. At least I'm not feeding the worms yet. Okay, I need to work this out. I examine the situation. What do I do now? Maybe I could bind it? How am I supposed to do this? Okay, I need to concentrate. It hits me like a freight train. I have to first weaken the wraith 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. 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'm supposed to beat something that powerful? Really? I fake out the demon 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.

Strong garden 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. However, Arthur 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 someone has to do it. Might as well be me. Oh well. Life goes on. I step into the night.

Chapter 72

The Blackhearts Detective Agency. It's not perfect but it's home. I feel a pain in my hand. 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 mayor's picture when the phone rings. It's Lydia. I reel. I feel like this one is going to be a hard one. I don't savour the idea of visiting the metro station again.

I walk to Whiston metro station. I frown. I step inside. I don't know why, but the thought of a haunted metro station always gives me the creeps. Okay, enough waxing poetic. The demon won't catch itself. I open my bag and set it up on a bench. I consider the situation. Curious symbols mar the metro station and faint whispers emanate from dark corners. 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 should be able to bind the demon to this vessel.

I reach for my bag for my tools. I pray that this will work. I begin preparing the receptacle to hold the tricky devil. 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? 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 run and swerve as I desperately think of some way to evade the thing behind me.

I run like a madman, scrambling over a radio tower. My fists clench. At least I'm not dead yet. Okay, got to get it together. What now? I look around. My options seem hopeless. I don't think I can do this. Okay, I need to get it together. Right. I have a plan. 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 has got 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. This hasn't gone at all according to plan.

I'm rolling on the floor, holding my head between my hands. I raise an eyebrow. At least I'm not feeding the worms yet. Okay, I need to focus. I consider the situation. What now? Maybe it will just go away on its own? One can only hope. No, that won't work. Right. I need to think. Right. 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 monster appears. Phantoms dance at the edges of my vision. How am I going to finish the circle like this? I fake out the demon 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 metro station 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, Lydia compensates me for my troubles. Maybe

I'll use the money to go get my hand checked. 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 fade into the sunrise.