There is a magnetism to excellence. Shining cities on hills draw people to them. Some hope to bask in the light. Some hope to augment it. Others hope the dazzling and dizzying heights of achievement will blind their prey. Such was the case with the Chicago World’s Fair and its White City. Its construction was the largest nonviolent campaign ever mounted. It changed the way humans saw their living spaces, the fundamental forces of the Earth, and each other, even if just by seeing humans they would not have otherwise.

It was so bright as to be incandescent.

It also coincided with H.H. Holmes coming to Chicago and building the Castle in Englewood. He built it with stolen materials, stolen labor, and then he used it to kill women and children. There is a resonance to excellence, even and especially the worst kinds. Holmes was America’s first serial killer, called across time and maybe into his insanity by the Ripper. But he was summoned economically by the White City, built for a fair to celebrate the discovery of the new world.

To a great many people, several of them not human, several of *them* personal friends of Chloe’s, all the Earth was old.

“This is where H.H. Holmes built a hotel and sold his guests’ skeletons to medical schools,” said Chloe.

“And now it’s an overpass,” said Garrett.

“Yup. The house wasn’t built right, so even if it hadn’t been a huge murder weapon it probably wouldn’t be standing today. It had weirdly-shaped rooms and lights at odd intervals. Real *The Shining* stuff. But that’s only part of it, I think. Sharon?” Sharon went across the street and started sprinkling some talismans into an empty lot. “I wonder,” Chloe continued, “if that wasn’t all of it, though.”

“What do you mean?” said Garrett.

“Just something I read about the Hancock Building. It’s just a theory.”

“So she’s not going to talk about it,” yelled Sharon.

“So I’m not going to talk about it,” said Chloe.

“So I’m wondering what a serial killer’s murder house has to do with--” said Garrett, until he felt very, very cold.

“It’s always gotta be upfront with you living types, doesn’t it?” said the ghost floating right next to Garrett.

“Ahh! Oh, shit,” he yelled, and felt bad for yelling.

“Hello, Chloe,” said the ghost, who appeared feminine, the kind of feminine one would expect from the late-1800’s, but other than that, none of them could say for sure. Looking at her was like looking at light dancing on the ceiling after it’s reflected by a pitcher of iced tea, or a broken TV playing an old mascara ad. Chloe had asked the ghost her name once, but she’d forgotten her name along with history. She might not even be one of the victims; her psyche might have just lodged itself in with the other trapped and nameless dead.

History remembered the house, though, and it rose, spectral, behind them in the lot. It wasn’t that the house was there. It wasn’t. It loomed there because it needed to be somewhere, somewhere because people remembered and, by Chloe and Sharon’s talismans, recalled.

“Excuse me for liking a nice, logical progression,” said Garrett, who’d gotten ahold of himself.

“We tend to work more with the poetry of things,” said the ghost. “And we see that something is happening in the depths of the city. It is architecture and power.” The ghost shrugged. “Curses are archways and can withstand much weight.”

“Can you point us in a direction?” asked Chloe.

The Green Line rumbled overhead.

“It has something to do with the train lines converging. Where people do their getting around, there’s power.”