

Tales of Horror and the Supernatural 2

by

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Sleeping Partner

I stood in the shadow of Ripon Cathedral's south side wrapped in the dark and gazed down the natural slope of the graveyard. A swirling mist engulfed the lower part and made the headstones look as if they were moving. The orange glow of streetlamps fought against the dark in the distance.

Organ music drifted out of the Cathedral as I flowed out of the shadows and levitated upright down the hill and mingled with the mist. Ecstasy gripped me as the long departed souls from the ancient graves flowed back and caressed my core. If I were alive, it would have been an orgasmic experience.

I laughed as I gazed up at the dark mass of the Cathedral which seemed to hover above the fog. I then drifted onto the street at the back of the graveyard with menacing energy flowing through me. A man walking his dog passed me. I growled! He turned around, but seeing nothing he hurried away.

I drifted through a walkway and drew back into the shadows as two women walked toward the town centre. I laughed out. One woman screamed, the other turned and said: "Who's there?"

"One who is neither here nor there!" I rasped.

"Show yourself!" shouted the woman who had spoken.

"Come on Izzie," said the other woman, anxiously pulling her friend.

I crawled away along the walls of the walkway cackling as the women scurried away.

In the town square nine PM rang, and a crowd gathered as I flew among the rooftops. A man in a long, grey coat blew a horn as the crowd cheered, so I landed next to him and blew in his ear. I then raised him up through the cold air before leaving him balancing on top of the tall obelisk which dominated the square.

The Hornblower screamed as he plunged through the air toward the ground. The crowd screamed in horror as they watched, with unbelieving eyes, the man thump into the cobbled ground.

As his soul left, I flowed in and raised the crumpled body and made it dance in front of the dazed crowd. Mothers grabbed their crying children and ran toward their cars.

"What devilry is this?" shouted a vicar.

"You ain't seen nothing yet." I said as I made the man's head spin.

I then felt myself being tugged up into the air, and I watched as Ripon became smaller and smaller before disappearing.

Opening my eyes, I watched lights dance around my darkened living room as cars passed the windows. *What a weird dream*, I thought. I had fallen asleep on my settee. Looking at my watch I drifted back to sleep.

I stood in the shadow of a shop doorway in Stonegate York and gazed along the ancient street toward the illuminated mass of the Minster. A strong wind blew litter along the street as the last of the shoppers scurried past well-lit windows. I screamed as I flew up and over them. Suddenly, I was dragged into an old room above a shop advertising a haunted house.

I hovered over a group sitting around a large circular table with a crystal ball in the middle. They had their arms stretched out at either side with hands held.

As I heard them ask if anyone was there I grabbed the breasts of one female who screamed. The room then erupted into chaos as I grabbed one of the men by the testicles and threw him onto the table.

"What's going on," screamed a panicking woman.

"Well, you asked if anyone was there... I'm here!" I rasped.

I walked into the ornate vastness that was York Minster and strolled along the Nave as the choir boys were bringing Evensong to a close. The admission desks were closed, and the attendants were closing the Cathedral. The last few tourists lingered in the light before heading out into the dark. Gazing up into the Central Tower I held my arms out in a cruciform shape and rose into the air. I revolved, slowly at first, but then becoming faster and

faster. I set up a vortex and screamed like a banshee as I spun. Choir boys and tourists shrieked and ran for cover as an internal storm raged. Candles snuffed out, sacred cloths and drapes were dragged along the floor and then sucked up into the vortex. The Tower windows imploded and the swirling air filled with a million deadly shards of glass.

I woke up, slipped off the settee and opened the curtains. The sun was shining through a freezing fog. *Another weird dream, I thought, just much more intense this time.* I showered, dressed then left for work after gulping a cup of coffee.

After another boring day serving the public I left the store and walked home through the frozen Wetherby streets. I bought the Yorkshire Evening Post on the way home intrigued by the headline ‘York Minster Vandalised’ on the billboard outside a newsagent.

The warmth from the central heating system greeted me as I opened my front door. Grabbing the mail I headed into the kitchen where I flicked on the kettle. Then, in the lounge I sat down to read the newspaper.

Apparently the Cathedral in York had been subject to a storm which blew through the interior and smashed the Tower windows. Investigators puzzled as to why the windows blew inwards rather than outwards. All the events happened with the door shut.

I stopped reading and gazed at the ceiling. Snatches of last night’s dream came to me. “Nah, just coincidence,” I told myself.

The kettle clicked, so I folded up the paper and was about to throw it on the carpet when I saw the small headline: ‘Odd Happenings in Ripon Results in Death.’ A local Hornblower was hoisted up to the top of the obelisk in the town square and then fell to his death in front of a gathering. “Coincidence?” I asked myself.

I burst through, and out of the cold turf into a night where a wind blew specks of snow horizontally. Looking around. I was in the graveyard of a massive dark structure. I realised the building was a cathedral when I saw the illuminated Gothic windows.

Keeping to the shadows I moved round to the front and then crossed a grassed courtyard. I turned and looked up at what I realised was the West Front of Peterborough Cathedral. Suddenly I heard a moan and looked in the direction. What seemed to be a thousand dead souls rushed at me and scooped me up. Together we ascended, swirling high into the sky as the snow stopped.

Eventually, I set down on Long Causeway one of the main shopping streets. I shape-shifted into a beggar and sat in a shop doorway. No one paid much attention except for a bunch of kids who mocked me and threatened to take my money. I stood up, and they ran off, so I sat again and watched the people of the night. Eventually, the snow and the kids returned. They stood around me in a semicircle, and one youth told me to hand over my money or I would get a kicking.

Shifting into a vampire I shot up and grabbed the youth. I exposed his neck and sank my fangs into his soft flesh. After sucking his blood I tore away half his throat. Then looking up at the stunned other kids, with blood dripping from my fangs, I asked in a rasping voice: “Who’s next?”

Awoken from the shock they ran off screaming into the night. I laughed as I dropped the dead body and then, assuming my human form, I disappeared into the snow-flecked darkness.

I heard the moan as I was engulfed and then swept up by the dead souls. Carried over the buildings toward the black mass of the Cathedral I screamed as they carried me toward the snow covered cemetery and the open grave I had burst out from.

Down I went into the black, open maw. “No, no,” I shrieked. Then, I woke up shaking and switched on my bedside light. Placing my hands on the comforting feel of my bed I calmed down.

I left my bed, showered and dressed. I then sat ready for work determined that there would be no more sleep for me.

The next day I became alarmed after reading about a young man found dead in Peterborough with his throat ripped out. I made an early appointment with my doctor and gave him a shortened description of what had been happening to me. He prescribed sleeping pills under the assumption that drugged sleep would not produce the same levels of dreaming

I had been having. He also made an appointment with a psychologist for me. Due to my anxiety he acquired an appointment for the next day in Leeds.

That night, I stayed up for as long as I could before taking two sleeping pills and falling asleep on the settee. I awoke the next morning with the realisation I couldn't remember any dreams.

I dressed and took the bus into Leeds St James University Hospital. The Psychologist, Dr Taylor, a man in his late forties, ushered me into his surgery and asked me to sit in front of his desk. I then explained what had been happening to me, leaving out the nasty bits. He listened, asking the occasional question.

In his analysis he talked of dreams and astral projections, then he said: "You appear to be breaking new ground Mr Connal. Until now I thought the concept of the demon soul belonged to horror and science fiction tales. I wonder what Jung and Freud would make of this?" He mused with a smile. He then regained his serious countenance and continued in his deep voice. "So, summing up what, on the face of it, we have here is the soul being possessed during sleep. Not normal sleep with dreams, but sleep where your soul is leaving your body.

"What can be done?"

"Well, we can start with medication. You say there was no activity when you took the sleeping tablets?"

"Yes."

"These work on a certain part of the brain, so I'm going to prescribe something similar just a bit stronger. And I will set up an analytical survey."

Levitating just above ground level I moved across the iron bridge which connected part of Balgay Hill with Balgay Cemetery in Dundee. A full moon gazed down on the headstones, which covered the hill and then swept off in the direction of the river Tay.

A dog howled as I sucked up power from the dead souls, then flew into the air and headed over towards the river which looked like a giant silver snake in the moonlight as it passed by the orange glow of the city.

I dropped to a few metres above river level between the road and the rail bridges, which connected Dundee with Fife, and spun violently. Waves built in intensity from both directions of the river.

A huge wave surged up the Tay and crashed into the road bridge ripping away a central part of the structure. I moved up into the air and laughed as I watched cars pull-up just centimetres from a drop into the maelstrom.

Seconds later another huge wave, moving in the opposite direction, crashed into the rail bridge pushing over about a third of the metal structure. A train heading south stopped just short of the ragged edge of the expansive gap.

I stumbled out of bed and opened my curtains. The sun had just risen into the frosty sky. I showered and dressed, then sat in the living room and watched the breaking news from Scotland on the television. The bridges on the river Tay had been destroyed by a mysterious, violent storm.

At nine thirty I was sitting in Doctor Taylor's surgery.

"Now Mr Connal, I have had to cancel an appointment with another patient to deal with you and your demon soul." Taylor said.

"I need help Doctor Taylor. I had another dream last night where something bad happened even after taking the sleeping tablets."

"Look Mr Connal I think...."

"Please help me," I interrupted, moving forward on my seat.

"Very well, we will go ahead with the survey this afternoon."

At the survey in a large room in the hospital a nurse asked me to put on pyjamas, and when I was ready to lie on the bed, which I did. Then Dr Taylor and an assistant entered the room.

"Mr Connal are you comfortable?"

"Yes Dr Taylor."

He and his assistant then swabbed my scalp, which I keep shaven, and stuck padded electrodes on my head and one next to my heart. After a while the lights softened and relaxing music wafted.

Slipping silently into the room, I watched from the shadows. After a while the younger man stood up stretched and left the room. I left the shadows and moved the bed. The Psychologist looked up, but after a while returned his gaze to his monitor. I then grabbed my body and jerked it up into a sitting position.

The good Doctor howled, then stood up and ran to the door, but I beat him to it and after turning the lock I threw the key away. I then grabbed him, rose into the air and revolved. Suddenly the door crashed in and the assistant rushed in gazing at us in shock.

“Wake him up!” shouted the Doctor, between screams, “wake him up now!”

The assistant ran over to the bed and shook my body. I woke up and watched as the Doctor dropped out of the air.

“Shit!” I shouted as the assistant ran over to tend to the Psychologist. The Doctor, however jumped up and pressed a red button on the wall.

“Wind up the experiment,” he said to his colleague as two burly nurses appeared.

“Immobilize Mr Connal,” he said pointing at me.

“Come on Davey-boy, you know I have no option. You’re a danger to others and to yourself,” the nurse said as I sat on a bed in a strait jacket in an empty room in a mental hospital weeks later. I didn’t know if it was day or night because the bright, electric lights shone all the time.

“You can’t stop me sleeping forever!” I shouted.

“You know the procedure, I’m just going to sedate you.”

He loaded a hypodermic needle and then with the help of the two other nurses he injected me.

“Wait!” I shouted. “You can’t do this, I have rights!”

One day or night the door opened and Doctor Taylor walked in and threw a bag on the floor. He grabbed me and released the strait jacket.

“Get some clothes on.” he growled with eyes that flickered red.

I pulled on the clothes and shoes that were in the bag. We then left the room. A big nurse appeared and asked: “What are you doing Doctor?”

Taylor showed his ID card.

“But...” said the nurse as Taylor grabbed him by the neck and threw him across the hallway.

Outside, Taylor rose into the air. “There you go, now get some sleep,” he said turning toward me. He then shot off into the dark screaming with laughter. It had appeared that my soul demon had selected another sleeping partner.

Sleeping Partner (Part Two)

A million souls tugged me out of my body and we flew through the starry night, finally landing on a converted church. Stamford Lincolnshire, a peaceful town until...

"Bastards!" I shouted as they flew off. I thought I was clear of this sort of thing—It had been months since I broke out of the mental hospital and, despite living roughly, I slept well.

Ah well, I thought. let's see what mischief I can get up to here.

I gazed through the window of a café. I could see the two red ball-like reflections of my eyes in the glass as could the young couple sitting in the window seats. The woman screamed hysterically as I laughed, pulled up my hood and walked away.

"Hey you!" shouted the woman's boyfriend, who had run out onto the High Street.

"Yes?" I asked turning around.

"You scared my girlfriend," he said approaching me.

"Yeah well, get over it sonny," I said turning away.

He grabbed me, so I pushed his arms off. I then swivelled around crouching, pulled his trousers down, and pushed him away. "Now consider this a let off son. Go back and sit with your girlfriend." I said as I stood up and then rose into the air.

Flying over the rooftops I landed in the grounds of a church after a while where I accidentally demolished a wooden noticeboard. I then walked over to a candle-lit pub, which fronted a brewery, and walked into the perfect semi-darkness.

The place was half full, so I walked over to a roaring open fire and sat at an empty table with my hood over my head. After a few moments of peace a bunch of young people approached.

The women sat at a table opposite me and the men jostled about asking what everyone was drinking. One boy dressed in a shell-suit and a baseball cap looked at me gazing at them and asked: "What's your problem?"

"You," I growled.

He then danced around me and pulled my hood down then sprinkled the rest of the packet of crisps, he had been eating from, over me.

"Derek stop that!" shouted a girl.

The youth left me and walked over to the table where the group was sitting and, bending over, he kissed the girl who had shouted. I grabbed the poker from the fire and flew over to their table and rammed it up his arse.

"Now *you've* got a problem," I said as I walked away from the screaming youth surrounded by his shocked pals. I then pulled my hood up and disappeared.

I levitated up the street wondering when I would wake up. Nothing happened, so I flew up through the night. The cold stars gazed at me. "I don't know what I'm doing," I shouted at them.

Drawn to a country estate in the middle of Lincolnshire. I landed outside three red-illuminated, Gothic-arched windows and peered inside the building. A hooded figure in front of an altar in a hall raised his hands over a pentagram drawn in chalk as a group of other hooded figures chanted a mantra.

Satanists, I thought, these well-off bastards—given privileges from God—never had to work in their lives seeking some dangerous excitement!

"Well, if it's a demonic visit they crave. Let's give them what they want!"

"Show us a sign of your presence Lord!" moaned the Priest as he swung his head from side to side.

I shape-shifted into a small girl in a white night gown and walked into the hall as the windows erupted, showering shards of glass everywhere.

"Wh- what's this?" stuttered the shocked priest.

"You wanted me to come, so here I am," I rasped pretentiously as I strode along the middle of the hall.

The hooded group ran to the sides of the hall and cowered. I spun my head, and they howled. Then, laughing, I rose into the air.

"What can we do to be worthy of you my Lord?" asked the Priest.

“Give your possessions to the people who work for you,” I commanded before smashing through the roof.

As I flew through the star-lit sky, I again wondered when I would wake up. I usually woke up sweating and regretting what I had done, I mused from a demon dominated mind. A thought then hit me: *perhaps this was reality, and my cosy little life back in Wetherby was a dream.*

“Oh well, what the fuck,” I said to myself as I spotted a couple having it off in an ancient graveyard.

I plunged under the turf in another part of the cemetery and blasted my way through to the grave nearest the couple where I smashed the old coffin and grabbing as much of the skeleton as I could I rose through the earth. Then, hovering horizontally a few centimetres above the back of the thrusting male, I held the skull facing forward over his shoulder and said: “Now look, you must do this somewhere else, I’m trying to rest.

The female screamed as she stared into the empty eye sockets, and she pushed the male off her. I jumped back, landed on my feet and held the skeleton up like it was a puppet. I placed the hands onto either side of the pelvis and made the skull look from male to female, who were shaking - unable to move.

“You shouldn’t be doing this sort of thing here, should you?” I growled.

“No,” they said shaking their heads like two naughty kids.

“Well go on—fuck off before my fellow sleepers wake up.”

I laughed as I watched them run off buttoning up their clothing. I then threw the skeleton away and rose up into the air. This felt so good I hoped that I never woke up again.

“David!” a voice thundered across the sky.

I looked around the stars and the darkened land.

“David, wake up.”

I opened my eyes. I was back in the mental hospital. Doctor Taylor the Psychologist was standing over me looking down into my eyes.

“What... what’s going on?” I asked. “You broke me out of this place!”

“I’m here to check on you David.”

I looked around, there were the two usual male nurses standing grinning.

“Now you just relax David everything’s fine. These two gentlemen will look after you,” he said as he left with a flicker of red in his eyes.

I’m still dreaming, I thought, or was I?

Boredom

There was a knock at the door.

"I'll get it!" shouted Brian Talbot, a fifty-year-old, balding man.

He opened the front door to two burly men.

"Can I help you?" he asked diverting his gaze to the floor.

"Mr Talbot?" asked one of the men.

"Yes, yes that's me." Brian said, childlike, without looking at the men.

"Mr Talbot we're debt collectors from Shield and Bryson," the other man said, showing an ID card. "We're here to collect the six hundred pounds you're due as you haven't responded to the letters we've sent you."

"C-c-come in," said Brian, who stuttered when he was nervous.

He stood aside letting the men enter the hall before closing the door.

"This way," he said scurrying in front.

Opening a green door he said: "My dear, there are two men here to collect money we owe."

"Oh," remarked Jean Talbot looking up, she was thin with dark frizzy, greying hair.

"I'll put the kettle on," said Brian, leaving the room.

"Look, Mr Talbot, we need to discuss..." one of the debt collectors started to say, but he was interrupted by Talbot.

"It won't take a minute. Please, take a seat."

The two men sat in the sparsely furnished living room talking to Jean, who answered questions with one word answers, until Brian returned with a tray with four mugs on it. He handed a mug to each of the men and Jean.

"Milk and sugar in each. I hope that's okay?"

"Yes that's fine," answered one of the men.

Brian Talbot looked at each man then gazed at the floor.

"J-J-Jean isn't feeling well today," he said.

"Are you working at the moment Mr Talbot?" one of the debt collectors asked as he took a sip from his mug.

"Made redundant last month."

"Where did you work?"

"In a factory, locally."

"Bill, I'm feeling a bit drowsy," said one of the men to the other as he stood up and keeled over, spilling his tea on the carpet, while the other collector passed out on the settee.

"Ah, you're with us then," said Brian Talbot as the two men came round strapped into chairs. They sat gagged with only their underpants on next to one another. Talbot spoke in a commanding voice as he strutted around in the basement of his house. Gone was the stutter and the childlike way of talking.

The men groaned and struggled as Talbot hauled out a huge butchers knife from a drawer. He then walked up to each man and looked him in the eye.

"Your type come here hassling working people who're going through a hard time... I don't know. Anyway, I hope you've had a good life up until now, because this is where it ends!"

Then, to the muffled sound of the opening music to 'Coronation Street' above, Talbot walked between the two chairs and slashed the near arm of each victim. The two men struggled more vigorously as they watched their blood splash onto the floor.

Talbot danced around the chairs, with a protrusion in the groin area of his trousers, slashing and stabbing his victims until a time when he stopped and retreated into a darkened area of the room. Then, with choral music from some advert seeping through the ceiling, he reappeared and slashed each man's throat.

A cold wind blew dead leaves around as two men walked along the front garden path of a 1950's bungalow and knocked on the door. One, a thick set man with a moustache, flattened his hair with his hands as the door opened.

“Mr Talbot?”

“Yes, I’m B-B-Brian Talbot.

“I’m Detective Sergeant Gary Haddows Yorkshire Police ,” said the thick set man, showing his warrant card. “This is Detective Constable Jim Nordale,” he continued, nodding toward his colleague, a tall man with short, red hair.

“Can I help you?” Talbot asked.

“We’d like to ask you a few questions if you don’t mind.”

“Please come in,” Talbot said standing aside.

When the door closed Haddows turned to Talbot and, holding up two photographs, asked: “Have you had a visit by, or have you seen, both or either of these men.

Talbot took the photographs and walked into the lounge followed by the policemen. He examined them under a lamp.

“No I’m afraid not. Why, whu-whu-what’s happened to them? Oh, this is my wife Jean,” he said, pointing toward his wife sitting in a chair wrapped in a blanket.

“Mrs Talbot,” nodded Haddows.

“Hello,” said Jean with a sigh.

“They’re both missing sir,” said Nordale.

“Oh dear. Where are my manners? Please gentlemen—sit down,”

After they sat he continued: “Now would you both like a cup of tea?”

“What’s this about Brian?” asked Jean.

“These g-g-gentlemen are looking for these men my dear,” Talbot said as he passed her the photographs.

“Have you seen them madam?” Haddows asked.

“No,” she said, shaking her head, “No I haven’t.”

“Okay then,” said Haddows as he rose, “If you do hear of something. Here’s my card,” he said passing a small, yellow card to Talbot.

“Won’t you stay for a cup of tea?” Talbot asked.

“Now Brian, the men are busy,” said Jean.

“Thank you, but no,” Haddows said as both policemen left.

At the police headquarters Haddows sat at his desk with the list of names that the two debt collectors were to visit on the day they disappeared.

“I don’t know Jim, that guy Talbot looked familiar.” He said to DC Nordale who was sitting at another desk working on a computer. “And did you see that look in his wife’s eyes!”

“What, that old couple? Give me a break Gary. What would they do to two big guy’s?” Nordale said looking up from his computer. “That guy Talbot was a weak, timid type.”

“Hm... that’s maybe what we were supposed to think.”

That night, Haddows sat in a darkened, empty CID room, the only light being his desk lamp. He was going through wanted persons files. He came upon the file of Derek Watson a paranoid schizophrenic who had walked out of a maximum security hospital ten years ago posing as the doctor he had just killed. Watson was serving a life sentence for murder.

“Got you! You bastard!” he shouted.

A woman jumped out of her Audi and stared at one house then another and then picked the second. She walked along the front garden path in her dark blue, pinstriped power suit with her long, red hair bouncing.

“Y-y-yes? Brian Talbot asked, sounding like a shy child as he answered the door.

“Hello, I’m Geraldine Gedy. I represent Denby Constuction, you have been chosen for this month’s prize of a free estimate for a quality conservatory.

“Come in my dear. Jean, my wife, and I were th-th-thinking of getting a conservatory where we could sit and watch the s-s-s-setting sun.”

“Jean, this young woman is going to give us a free estimate for a conservatory where we can sit instead of in here all the time,” Talbot said, leading the saleswoman into the living room.

“Oh Brian, I don’t know...” sighed Jean as she looked Gedy up and down.

“Please sit down. Would you like an n-n-nice cup of tea?” Brian asked rubbing his hands.

“Why yes, that would be great,” said Geraldine as she sat on the settee.

Brian left the room to fetch the tea.

“Listen my dear, I don’t think we need a conservatory. We’re fine as we are,” said Jean

“What about your husband, he seems to be under the apprehension you wanted a conservatory?”

“No, I think you should probably leave.”

“Well, I always listen to wives,” said Geraldine as she rose.

“Where are you going? Here’s your tea, and I’ve buttered scones,” said Brian as he entered the room.

“But, your wife...”

“Never mind Jean. She’s an old skinflint!” Brian said casting a look at Jean.

“Hello Geraldine,” said Talbot to the woman as she came out of the drug-induced sleep. Her long-red hair had been crudely cut off and her suit stripped. She sat strapped into a chair in her under clothes gagged.

The confident Brian Talbot walked around the chair, illuminated from one small spot light from above—the rest of the room being in shadow.

“Now madam, how does it feel—no power suit, no long-red hair. And, I’m going to take your dignity.” Talbot said pulling away the gag

“You’re mad!” whined Geraldine. “If you’re going to rape me just get on with it!”

“Rape you! Oh no, I’m not going to rape you. You will beg me for your life, however, I’m afraid.” Talbot said as he faded into the shadow.

Then after a while with the strains of the theme tune to ‘East Enders’ filtering down from above Talbot appeared out of the dark with a butchers knife in one hand. Geraldine struggled and screamed.

“It won’t do no good. You see, she’s deaf upstairs especially when the soaps are on TV.” Talbot said as he approached the chair.

Geraldine shook as the raised knife glinted in the light. Suddenly a hand grabbed Talbot around the head and a knife slit his throat spurting blood out over his clothes.

“You will not harm any part of this girl’s body you bastard,” said Jean as she let her husband drop to the floor with the butchers knife clattering away into the darkness.

Haddows and other police burst into the scene as Jean released the sobbing Geraldine.

“I don’t care what you do with me as long as he can’t harm anyone else. I’ve lived too long with it.” Jean announced.

At the police station DS Haddows interviewed Jean Talbot in the squalid interview room in the presence of an appointed solicitor.

“Now Mrs Talbot what is your real name?”

“I’m Valerie Wales.”

“And you lived as man and wife with Brian Talbot.”

“Yes that’s right. His real name is Derek Watson,” she said placing a nervous finger on her lower lip.

“I want you to tell me of the day the two debt collectors called.”

Valerie described the whole event.

“And did you help him downstairs with the bodies Valerie?”

“No! Detective Sergeant, I hate violence. I only stayed with Derek because I thought he had mended his ways and because I was frightened of him. If I ran away, he would only find me!”

“Why, after ten years do you think he had returned to his killing ways?”

“I don’t know. I suppose through boredom!”

On the Other Side of the Fence

I hated the nights they drank. The shouting and screaming went on forever. My mother and her boyfriend had been together for three months now. Unfortunately my bedroom was right next to hers, so I heard everything. She often came in to see if I was all right, breathing alcoholic fumes over me.

I hated her boyfriend, Ron, he looked like a caveman with tattoo's. Often, when he was leaving in the morning, I would be sitting in the kitchen having my breakfast. He would come up to me with sad eyes and look as if he was going to say something, but I would grab my bowl and head into the lounge.

On my way to school I looked at other kids, and thought: *Why can't I have a normal, happy childhood?*

"What's wrong with you Martin?" my mother asked me once when she saw me staring into space.

"I want Dad back. That'd make me happy."

"You know that's not possible he's gone to heaven."

"You mean he's dead. Mum-I'm 11!" I said with a sigh. "And I don't like your boyfriend!"

"Ron makes me laugh. Surely I'm allowed to be happy!"

"I want to be happy too," I said, stomping out of the room.

Taken on holiday to Gran Canaria, I enjoyed the sunshine. We stayed in an apartment at a place called Koala Gardens in Maspalomas. I slept on the settee in the living room while my mother and Ron occupied the only bedroom.

They went out drinking every night, so I did my own thing.

My mother would say, "Oh, let's go down to the beach tomorrow," before she went out for the evening. Then the next day she would say she wasn't feeling well!

One morning, I left the apartment and walked in the direction of the beach as the sun crept over the tops of the palm trees. I walked along paths which cut through well-trimmed, water-soaked parkland.

Drawn by screams of joy, I approached a large fence which surrounded a water park. Oceanic Park was teeming with families enjoying themselves in the sun. Kids were sliding down the water chutes and wading through the shallow pools. Adults were sunning themselves while keeping a watchful eye on the children.

Two boys ran up to the fence where I was standing and banged their fists into the wire mesh. I jumped back in shock.

"Come in and join us," one of them said, smiling.

I felt my heart lighten as the other boy pulled up part of the fence.

I was going to crawl under when something in my mind shouted: "Stop! What are you doing?"

I stepped back and shook my head. Suddenly the two boys wrinkled into skeletons before becoming dust. The water on the chutes dried up and small lizards scampered across the hot plastic.

I stepped further back from the fence shaking my head. The loungers which had people on them by sparkling pools now were broken wrecks sitting by empty pits. The brightly painted signs were now peeled and broken. I turned and ran until my legs hurt.

I slowed down as I approached a busy road and was about to cross as a hand tugged me back. Someone shouted something in Spanish. I shook free and ran on along by a storm drain where palm trees stood in lines on either side.

I could see people wrinkling to skeletons on every side the paradise was rapidly becoming a hell. Running on toward a lighthouse I found myself on a beach. I shrieked as people on loungers became skeletons. The ocean dried up and the beach stretched on forever into the distance.

I stepped on a bus which took me back to Koala Gardens.

"Martin, where have you been? I was worried," my mother said as I walked into the apartment through the small terraced area which looked on to the pool.

“Oh, you know? Just went out for a walk.”

Ron was lying on a lounge on the terrace listening to music while reading a magazine.

I shouted: “kick the ball Dad!” as my father ran up to the plastic football in our back garden.

He kicked it clean over the fence hitting the washing on the line next door. We then collapsed laughing onto the lawn.

“Martin,” he said.

I woke up in the living room of the apartment, the early morning sun was streaming in between the curtains. Loud snoring was coming from the bedroom.

“Martin,” said my father.

I sat up and looked around. Why did I hear my father’s voice? Was it reaching me from the dream? I jumped off the sofa and opened the curtains. I had to be hearing things, my father had been dead for over two years.

Dressing and then grabbing a drink from the fridge I sat on a plastic seat on the terrace. I gazed at a couple taking an early dip in the pool as I took a sip.

“Martin,” said my father.

I dropped my drink and stood up. The voice wafted on the breeze from beyond the apartments. I left the terrace, walked around the pool and left the area in the direction of the voice.

I left Koala Gardens and crossed a road and walked along a well-trimmed path until I reached a familiar area.

“Martin,” said my father.

I peered through the palm trees at the fence of Oceanic Park. The water was back, and children slid down the chutes. Grown-ups on loungers splashed sun cream over their skin. My father walked up to the fence.

“Come on Martin,” he coaxed. “I want you to be with me son.

“Dad!” I shouted running up to the fence.

He lifted the wire and said: “Come on son. I’ve missed you.”

I ducked, but was suddenly jerked back by a hand with a tattoo on it.

“Martin what are you doing son,” said Ron, turning me to face him.

“Leave me alone. I want to be with my dad and the happy kids. They want my friendship.”

Ron crouched down and looked at me. “Despite what you think of me, I’m a Medium—I mean I speak to dead people. And believe me son your great father isn’t there. They don’t want your friendship, they want your soul. I hope you understand what I’m telling you.”

I turned toward the fence and my father looked at me with pleading eyes.

Ron turned me back to face him. “Whatever you see on the other side of that fence isn’t real. What is real is that your mother loves you.”

A Necessary Evil Part two (The Bus Driver)

I found it easy to walk out of the prison after I found I could shape-shift. The demon power was now taking up increasingly more of me. I should have been horrified, but I was strangely ecstatic. “We have unfinished business in Arbroath,” the demon whispered in my mind as I changed into a friend of mine and made my way to the local railway station. The police would be on the lookout for someone answering my description.

As I watched the countryside pass by, my mind pulled me back to 1975 where I was walking along Arbroath High Street. I stopped at a shop and checked my reflection in the window.

“Hey you,” said a voice. I turned to see Ed Duncan walking toward me followed by his gang. I made to escape, but I was surrounded. “See here, I'm a hard man,” he said taking me by the neck and pulling me down.”Now I want ye to pray to yer mother before I kick the shit out of ye!” I saw a girl I fancied across the street laughing at me as I knelt and prayed to my mother. I arrived back in Arbroath, and that night a figure left the house I was watching from the dark confines of Carnegie Park. Ed Duncan was heading out. I flew over the park hedge and landed on the pavement behind him in the orange glow of the street lamps. “Hey you—hard man!” I growled.

“What...? He uttered, turning.

“You-you're the hard man!”

“Look, I don't know what you're talking about,” Duncan said, turning around and hurrying toward the end of the street.

“Oh don't you!” I said, landing in front of him.

“Wh - what are you?” he said, in a trembling voice.

“Down on your knees,” I said.

“What?”

“On your fucking knees!” I thundered in the unworldly voice of the demon.

He knelt down and cried.

“Pray to your mother before I kill you!” I commanded.

He prayed as a woman appeared walking a dog. I turned and hissed, sending her scurrying back along the street.

“Right, say 'I'm a hard man', and I won't kill you,” I said, lifting him up by the neck.

“Oh, I'm a hard man,” he said.

I snapped his neck and then, pulling the dead face toward mine, I said: “I'm a hell'va liar I'm afraid,” before throwing the body into a front garden.

I flew through the night and landed in the Western Cemetery. I strolled up the main road surrounded by darkened headstones which swept off in all directions eventually washing up against the perimeter walls. The moon rose and silhouetted a huge shape with turrets which I recognised as the Mortuary Chapel. I flew over and landed in front of the building.

Constructed in the neo-Gothic style it appealed to my present being.

As I was about to explore I was tugged away and flew over the town to Viewfield Road where I landed behind a figure walking a dog. The figure turned around and as I saw the face illuminated by the moonlight I was transported back to the time when I was a 16-year-old apprentice electrician. I was always a big person, so manoeuvring under floorboards to run cables was difficult. A nasty tradesman didn't help; Ian Tate jumped on any mistake I made. I hated him, he made my whole working life hell.

Once, he pushed me under floorboards and told me he would nail up the hatch If I didn't run the cables in a certain time—he had told the boss he would have the job done that particular day.

Now, I was creeping up on the electrician with demon power pulsing through my veins. I grabbed the bastard and flew off into the night. I landed outside an empty property where I kicked the door open and pulled Tate in.

“You're Ross Robertson,” said Tate. “I've been waiting on this—I saw it in a dream. Now you're going to rip up floorboards and throw me in and then replace them. What I did back then son, I did for you - to make you hate me and become an electrician to spite me.”

This threw me, and I stood staring at him for a while before I said: “So you know how this ends. Well I hate to disappoint!”

I then prized up some floorboards releasing a musty smell into the room. Tate suddenly ran to the open door which slammed shut. He then pulled on the handle and banged on the door as I grabbed him and pulled him over and pushed him into the founds of the house.

“You’ll never know how much festering hate I have built up for you. What bullshit—doing it for me! You boss-crawling bastard!” I growled at the struggling man as I replaced the floorboards and hammered the old nails home with a brick I found in the fireplace of the room.

The moon shone on the headstones in the Abbey Cemetery within the grounds of the ancient monument giving them a ghostly appearance. I floated between them as I sucked up energy from the souls of the dead.

Satiated, I burst out of the graveyard and onto the town where I came across two drug addicts sitting on a bench beside a car park making howling noises at the moon.

I settled behind a bush and shook it.

“Hey, What’s that Jimmy?” one boy said to the other.

“Nothing, just the wind Dougie!”

I shook it again.

“That’s not the wind,” said Dougie, rising and approaching the bush with his friend.

When they opened the plant I shape-shifted into a giant wolf and growled at them through large canines.

“Oh shit—run!” shouted Jimmy as the two addicts sped away leaping over cars.

Comically howling at the moon I changed back into my human form.

I then levitated up Market Place wondering how long I could carry on like this. The doors to The Corn Exchange pub swung open, and a couple descended the steps to street level and headed toward the High Street.

I drew into the shadow of a shop doorway noticing that the female of the pair was Helen, my girlfriend. I followed the couple up the High Street and into The Pageant pub where I scampered over the ceiling and hung over where they sat. Things had got so out of control I wasn’t sure if I was visible or not. I didn’t, however, want Helen to see me.

Helen’s date got up and headed toward the toilet so I scampered over and dropped behind him as the door swung shut. I pushed the door open and stole into the well-lit room.

Helen’s friend, who was standing at one of the urinals, turned his head and seeing no-one just shrugged and carried on, which told me I was invisible.

I tapped him on the shoulder and he looked around spraying his shoes and the bottom of his trousers.

“Shit!” he shouted. “Who the hells there?”

“Oh dear, you can’t let Helen see you like that,” I said as I pulled him into one cubicle and slammed the door shut. I then grabbed him and smashed through the window to the outside. I flew over to the ancient Abbey and placed him on the bottom of the glassless rim of the south transept window, known locally as the Round ‘O’, some 100 metres from the ground.

“Now be a good boy and hang on here until someone sees you in the morning,”

“Jesus! Are you the Devil or something?” he wailed.

“No, none of the above, just someone who’s paying a high price for being stupid,” I said as I flew away.

Slumping into a doorway I waited across from the Pageant pub. Eventually Helen appeared with a man. They walked along Ponderlaw Street toward her house. I followed in the shadows.

The man pulled Helen into a hedge lined front garden and forced himself onto her. “Stop it Norrie,” she screamed. “I want to go home.”

He ignored her plea and continued. I grabbed him and threw him away with such force I knew he wouldn’t survive. I then stepped back into the shadow cast by the hedge.

“Oh,” said Helen, “I know it’s you Ross.”

“Look Helen... I didn’t mean to follow you.”

“It’s just as well you did.”

She walked toward me. “Let me see you.”

I walked out into the open.

“Oh dear,” gasped Helen. “What’s happened to you Ross?”

“I crossed a line Helen. A line I can’t re-cross.”

“You look different—white skin - red eyes.”

“I can’t stay. I just wanted to talk to you one more time.”

“The police are turning Arbroath upside down looking for you. And a body was found in Strachan Street this morning; was that you?”

“It’s not me Helen. Please believe that.”

“I do.”

“I have to go,” I said, turning. “Oh, I forgot,” I continued, turning back, “your boyfriend is clinging to the Round ‘O’ at the Abbey.”

“He’s not my boyfriend and... we’ll leave him there until morning—he was starting to bore me!”

I flew over the darkened parkland toward the sea with demonic laughing in my head. I landed beside a bus, where a bunch of youths were kicking another youth in a white jacket, realising that I had flown back in time. What I saw was me being set upon by a gang of thugs from Dundee, who roamed around the local area looking for trouble.

I flew under the ground and then rose slowly out of the ground beside my younger self. Then I made the whole area lift and fall.

“Now I have your attention please stop that—it hurts me!” I said as I circled the whole mob at great speed.

“What the fuck's this!” shouted a youth as he ran on to the bus followed by the others.

I pulled my younger self up and said:” You’d better get yourself home, your mother will be worried.”

I watched the fear and question in his eyes. “I’ll deal with this lot,” I said looking toward the coach.

Watching myself run away I turned to the bus and its violent inhabitants realising that I was to be the eternal bus driver for these souls.

The driver who had now returned, tried to ignite the engine. I waved a hand, and the electrics cut out. I then levitated around the vehicle with eyes burning red. The bus driver ran out of the open door which I then shut stopping the others leaving.

After a while the coach door opened, and I walked in and sat in the driver’s seat. The door zipped shut as I turned to my hosts and said in the grating voice of the demon: “So you like danger and causing trouble do you lads! Well, strap yourselves in for a hell’va ride!”

The Dark Man

Street light reflected off the branches of the gnarled trees that slithered around the Howff Graveyard in the centre of Dundee. The darkness of a winter's night slipped over gravestones and rushed to the border of the cemetery and then crawled up the surface of the peripheral buildings. Darkened paths led off through shadows as outside buses and taxis flowed along Ward Road spraying light through the wall railing.

A man in a great black coat flowed along the primary aisle as the monolithic DC Thomson building looked down through the gloom. He caressed the headstones as he went on by and smirked as sighs issued from the graves. His crimson eyes penetrated the gloom as he lifted a hand and darkness seeped into the regions behind the stones. A child knocked him over onto the turf.

"Hoy! What's this!" The man shouted freezing the boy in the running pose. He wore 19th century clothes.

"Please, I need to get away from them!" The boy pleaded.

"Who?"

"The coppers... can't you see them?" The boy said as he looked from side to side.

"There's no one there son," said the Dark Man.

"Oh, but... they're coming! Let me go!"

"I think you've been running around here too long! And now it's time to go." He waved a hand and black vapours crept over the gravestones and engulfed the boy sweeping him away.

A mist settled over Balgay Cemetery as the dark that had invaded the Howff flowed up the hill on which the graveyard sat. Through the headstones it crept up and over the trees chasing the light out of every crevice.

The man with the long black coat walked along the iron bridge which connected the Mills Observatory with the graveyard. Owls hooted and small mammals rustled around as he strode off the walkway and along the path between the brooding graves.

He waved a hand, and shadows ran from headstone to headstone muttering and giggling. Ancient chains around the edge of graves rattled as he passed-by. The partially full moon appeared from behind a dark cloud and illuminated the pallid features of his face.

The man walked on, around the large spiral path which wound round the main hill of the graveyard like a viper. He stopped and turned to gaze with crimson eyes over the gravestones. They flowed down the hillside and through the trees right up to the small wall beside Glamis Road where street lights formed orange balls in the mist. He watched as a huge cloud of darkness seeped toward him. The dark engulfed him, and he laughed as spirits appeared and pulled him into the air. He rose into hidden worlds where souls swept around him and through him.

"Ah, my friends I see you are restless," he said as he held out a hand, Please don't be anxious. Your time will come. He then raised a fist, and the cloud split up into many parts as he floated back on to the path.

The man heard sobbing in the distance and flowed over headstones to the source of the sound where he found a woman standing beside an engraved granite, medium-sized stone.

"What's the matter my dear?" he asked.

The woman looked up in surprise. She appeared to be in her late thirties and dressed in early twentieth century clothes.

"It's my family... I miss them so!" she sighed as her gaze fell back upon the headstone.

"How long have you been standing here?"

“Not long.”

“Oh but you have, and it's time to go... and join your loved ones!”

The man raised a hand and the parts of the black cloud joined up and descended sweeping up the sad woman.

“Farewell my love find the peace you deserve,” said the man watching the ascending blackness.

The moon shone on the sandstone sculpture that was the large mortuary chapel in the Western Cemetery Arbroath as a black cloud descended. The dark man stepped down and walked along the cemetery central path as leaves rose into the air either side of him.

He raised a hand and phantoms opened the doors of the mortuary and disappeared. Inside, shadows fled up into the rafters and shafts of light flowed down forming a figure of a man, who walked along the central aisle.

“I've been waiting for you coming.”

“Why have you done this son?”

The phantom looked around him and sighed. I can't pass over to the other side as the other souls around me have.

“Why is that?” The Dark Man asked as he flowed along the central aisle toward the young man.

“I... I have been waiting here for a long time. I did something bad and found refuge here.”

“Come, tell me what you did.”

“I... can't,” sobbed the man.

“Come now, I am not here to judge or condemn, but to help.”

“I killed... my love in a fit of rage out of jealousy!”

“Okay, I can tell this was a long time ago, and your wife has forgiven you as she moves within the astral planes.

The black cloud flowed in through the open doors and grasped the man.

“And who helps you?” asked a ghostly voice from the shadows.

“Me...” asked the man as he rose into the air, “I am beyond help.”

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