

# The Demon Cleanser

## Blake

He raised his muddy hands into the deluge, and rubbed them together to dislodge the stubborn chunks of dirt. He was already soaked to the skin, but he pulled off his old fedora, and leaned his head back. The rain poured over his face, and ran past his collar and into his shirt. The rain was purifying him; cleansing him of sin. After several minutes he finally lowered his head and replaced his hat. It plopped on his head like an oversized and overripe tomato. He looked around one last time, and stepped out of the shadows, and onto the thin sidewalk that ran around the park. He headed for his car.

His overcoat pulled on his shoulders when he slid into the driver's seat of his car. It was wet and it stuck to the back of his legs. He yanked on it angrily and started the car. The drive home would be taxing. It always was when he was out like this... for this reason. He felt release, and yet at the same time he also felt the emptiness beginning in his soul. He was leaving something important in the park, but he couldn't keep it. It had to be disposed of, or it would have stolen his soul. He knew it was true, but that didn't stop him from missing it.

When he got home, he switched off his car lights a block away, and coasted quietly into his drive. He manually lifted the garage door, and eased his old Dodge inside. He looked around to see if there were any faces in his neighbor's windows before closing the garage door and going inside the house. It was a good neighborhood, but sometimes that meant that the neighbors were nosey. He hung his coat and hat on the outdoor hook to drain, and exchanged his boots for slippers, before entering the house.

On the way through the kitchen, he stopped at the refrigerator and pulled out a cold beer, before heading for the basement door. He slurped on the beer as he walked through the dark and damp basement. He reached a wall that was covered with a pegboard that had several tools hanging from it. With his free hand he shoved the wall hard, and it slid back about six inches. With the same hand he slid the section of the wall to the side. It rolled easily. He stepped into the room beyond the wall, and slid the wall/door shut. Then he turned on the lights.

Most garages are built on a concrete slab, but his was built on a foundation which meant that the basement extended under the garage. His house was the only one built in this manner in the entire development. He knew this because his father had been one of the Architects that designed the project when the development had been built in the mid 1970's. No-one that had ever been to their

house had ever suspected that this room even existed. His father had planned it that way, of course he had simply used it to hide his porn and his magazine collection from his wife, but it was just as affective for what Blake used it for today.

Blake always suspected by the way the room was built that his father had other designs for it, but he had died before he could use it for its intended purpose. After all who puts a garden hose outlet, and a drain hole in a secret living room?

Blake put his beer down on his work table, and picked up the Polaroid picture that he had tossed onto the table before he had left this evening. It was a piece of art! The subject of the picture had been posed so perfectly. Her makeup was perfect. Her hair was perfect. Only one thing detracted from the overall composition... she had a huge bruise on her eye, and despite the makeup he could tell that it was swollen shut. The other eye had been gently closed by him. But, he could tell that one of them was swollen shut. Other than that, she looked so peaceful, and so beautiful. Blake kissed the picture lightly, wrote her name and the date on the bottom edge, and opened up the flat cabinet above the work table.

A smile broke over his face. Inside the cabinet lined up by date, were over a dozen pictures similar to the one that he now held. Each had a name and a date, and each woman had been meticulously cleaned and posed before the picture had been taken. Blake let his eyes take in each and every face, before he added the new picture to his collection. Then he closed the cabinet and turned to look out at the room. It was a mess.

The cage where he had kept the female temptress had urine and fecal matter smeared on the floor and bars. The open space in the middle of the room near the drain had a dried trickle of blood. He was certain that he would find more once he started cleaning. His latest temptress had fought him all the way. She had been reluctant to release her Demon, so it could return to his fiery home. But, Blake had most assuredly sent him there anyway. It was strange to Blake that so many of the evil sirens tried so hard to seduce him before they learned that he would try to send their Demon home, then they fought or they pleaded and cried. Neither tactic worked on him. He knew that he was weak, he was a sinner but, he wasn't as weak as his father. He got rid of the evil women before they could steal his soul, it wasn't his fault that their Demons killed them before they left.

Blake picked up the water hose and turned on the water. He adjusted the spray nozzle and got to work. While he worked he hummed tunelessly to himself.