

DARK HORN

Mari Ann Caudill

DARKTHORN

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Rev 05/07/2022

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Darkthorn

The living room is a disaster. The couch is turned over, the glass coffee table is shattered, and the plasma TV is on the floor. Maggie reaches for the end table to steady herself as she gets to her feet. The laceration on her head causes shooting pain, her memory is foggy, and the last few hours are a blur. Her hand smears the blood on her forehead.

"Hello?" she cries out.

No Answer.

She stumbles into the kitchen, reaching for the light switch, but the light does not come on. The phone has no dial tone, and she tosses the headset across the room. She can see a red smear on the tile floor that leads out the door in the moonlight. It appears that something large was dragged across the lawn into the forest.

She grabs a gun, a large machete, and a backpack full of weapons from the closet. She pulls out a Maglite and follows the path into the trees, searching for something

she can't remember.

Screams can be heard somewhere in the dense forest. She runs, almost tripping over a fallen branch, but regains her balance and continues running until she reaches a wide hole in the ground. The Maglite shines into the blackness, revealing a path of blood. Her memories flood back like rainfall filling up the sewers.

Darkthorn.

A creature covered in thorns broke through the rear door of her home earlier in the night. His thorny arm knocks Brian off balance, forcing him into the kitchen cabinets, falling unconscious to the floor. He hits Maggie with his long arms, knocking the gun out of her hand, and she tumbles over the couch into the glass coffee table.

"Brian!" she calls out from the cliff surrounding the cave.

No Answer.

She descends into the darkness of the earth with the gun and light in her hand, searching for anything that may move in blackness. After a few minutes, she enters Darkthorn's lair seeing bones and decomposing bodies on the floor. Brian lies on the ground, not moving, covered in blood. She checks his pulse but finds none.

Damn the murderess animal.

"Darkthorn!" she calls out.

The creature moves from the shadows, and his movements remind her of the swamp monster in Scooby-Doo. The sweat races down her face, and her hands feel clammy as she grips the machete. Her heart pounds against her chest. Darkthorn moves quickly towards her swinging his thorny arm, hitting Maggie in the shoulder, and ripping her jacket.

They circle each other; he swings his arm, missing her, and she charges him with the weapon missing him. The dance continues for several minutes. In a defense move, she takes the machete cutting off his right arm, causing the green liquid to spatter the room. The remaining arm knocks her across the room into the dirt wall of the cave. He moves like phantom bringing destruction toward her. She rolls out of the way as his arm slams against the floor.

Darkthorn swings his arm again, and she eludes him by rolling out of the way. Darkthorn swings his arm one final time, and she can slice off his last arm. She swivels behind him as he stumbles around and cuts off his head. The creature's body falls to the ground, convulsing and melting into the earth.

After the green liquid finishes bubbling, she rechecks Brian's pulse, but there is still none. She kisses his forehead before returning to the house to gather supplies. She needs to burn Brian's body and leave town to search for other supernatural hunters. She knows one day that Darkthorn will return, bringing havoc once again. An immortal creature of darkness that returns every twenty years.

THE END

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