

Dragons Aren't Real, Are They?!

By

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A Detective Danny Harper Fantystery

Prologue



The mist hung heavy in the air, curling around the cobblestone streets of Gastown like a shroud. The Steam Clock, an iconic sentinel of the past, stood at the corner, its brass and glass face dimly illuminated by flickering gas lamps. The clock's rhythmic hissing and occasional chime were the only sounds breaking the eerie silence of the night.

It was an autumn evening, the kind where the chill seeped through your coat and settled in your bones. Detective Danny Harper pulled his trench coat tighter around him, the collar turned up against the damp air. He lit a cigarette, the flare of the match briefly illuminating his weathered face, etched with lines from years of chasing shadows and solving puzzles no one else could.

Harper's eyes scanned the deserted street, every shadow a potential threat, every whisper of the wind

a clue. He had been summoned here by an anonymous tip, a cryptic message scribbled on a piece of parchment: "Midnight. Steam Clock. Come alone."

As the clock struck twelve, a dense fog rolled in from the harbor, obscuring the few remaining lights and casting the world in shades of gray. Harper's heart pounded in his chest, each beat echoing the ticking of the clock. He took a deep drag of his cigarette, the smoke mingling with the mist, and waited.

In the distance, a figure emerged from the fog, moving with a deliberate, almost ghostly grace. Harper's hand instinctively moved to the revolver at his hip. Under the watchful eye of the Steam Clock, a mystery was rolling in like the autumn mist.

The figure stepped closer, revealing a woman who could have passed for Snow White. Her skin was pale as moonlight, her hair a cascade of ebony curls, and her eyes held a distant, almost otherworldly gaze. She stopped a few paces from Harper, her voice soft and ethereal.

“We need a hero, Mr. Harper, or the enchanted world will fall into the sea, and the mist of dreams will turn dark,” she said, her words hanging in the air like a spell.

Harper’s grip on his revolver loosened, his curiosity piqued. The woman’s presence was both unsettling and captivating. She extended a delicate hand, her fingers cold to the touch as they brushed against his.

“Come with me,” she whispered, her voice barely audible over the rhythmic chime of the Steam Clock.

Without hesitation, Harper took her hand, feeling an inexplicable pull towards the unknown. The fog thickened around them, swallowing the gas lamps' flickering light and casting the world into an impenetrable gray. The Steam Clock struck midnight, its chimes echoing through the deserted streets.

Hand in hand, they stepped into the mist, the world of Gastown fading behind them. The air grew colder, the silence more profound, as they ventured deeper into the fog. Harper's heart raced, each beat a reminder of the mystery that lay ahead.

As they walked, the woman's grip tightened, her eyes never leaving the path before them. “The

enchanted world needs you, Detective," she said, her voice a haunting melody. "Only you can save it from the darkness that threatens to consume it."

Harper nodded, determination settling in his chest. He had faced countless puzzles and shadows in his career, but this was unlike anything he had ever encountered. Together, they would uncover the secrets hidden within the mist and fight to save the enchanted world from its impending doom.

As they emerged from the mist, Harper and the mysterious woman found themselves in a transformed Gastown. The cobblestone streets were now lined with gothic, medieval buildings, their spires reaching towards the sky. Gas lamps had been replaced by glowing orbs of light, suspended in mid-air by unseen forces.

Granville Island had become a grand castle, its towers surrounded by lush fruit orchards that stretched as far as the eye could see. The scent of ripe apples and pears filled the air, mingling with the crisp autumn breeze. Harper marveled at the sight, his mind struggling to comprehend the enchanted world that had unfolded before him.

Stanley Park, once a serene urban oasis, was now an enchanted forest. Ancient trees with gnarled branches loomed overhead, their leaves shimmering with an otherworldly glow. The sounds of rustling leaves and distant, melodic bird calls created an eerie yet captivating symphony.

The woman led Harper through the streets, her steps confident and purposeful. "This is the enchanted city," she explained, her voice carrying a

sense of urgency. "It is as vast as a kingdom, and its magic is what keeps our world in balance."

Harper's eyes widened as they approached a train station, unlike any he had ever seen. The trains ran on magic, their carriages floating above the tracks, propelled by shimmering streams of energy. The station was bustling with activity, enchanted beings of all shapes and sizes hurrying to their destinations.

"We must reach the heart of the city," the woman continued, her grip on Harper's hand tightening. "There, we will find the source of the darkness that threatens to consume us."

Harper nodded. He had been called to this enchanted world for a reason, and just like any other case he took on he would do whatever it took to save it.

Together, they boarded one of the magical trains, the carriage gliding smoothly through the air as it carried them towards their destination.

As they traveled, Harper couldn't help but feel a sense of awe and wonder. The enchanted city was a place of beauty and mystery. For the one and only time he wondered, "How can this be?"

His mind was ensnared by the woman's whisper, "I am The Lady Destiny. Our paths cross but once, until the enchanted realm is secure. Only then shall I return for you, to guide you back to your world. The darkness that threatens to consume the kingdom bears the name Horace Dragon, a nefarious gangster with a singular ambition: to plunge the realm into the abyss of his malevolence and transform its people into his thralls and minions."

The magical train glided to a halt, and The Lady Destiny led Danny Harper through the bustling streets of the enchanted city. The air was thick with the scent of magic and mystery, and Harper's senses were on high alert. They arrived at a small, cottage-like building nestled between towering gothic structures. The building exuded an air of both comfort and secrecy, with ivy creeping up its stone walls and a warm light glowing from within.

"This will be your home and office," Destiny said, her voice soft yet commanding. "Here, you will receive those who seek your help. Each client will present you with a mystery, and solving these mysteries will lead you to the seven keys of darkness."

Harper nodded, taking in the quaint yet enigmatic surroundings. The interior of the cottage was a

blend of old-world charm and modern convenience. A large wooden desk dominated the main room, cluttered with papers, maps, and strange artifacts. Shelves lined the walls, filled with ancient tomes and curious trinkets. A cozy fireplace crackled in the corner, casting flickering shadows across the room.

Destiny gestured to a door at the back of the room. "Through there, you'll find your living quarters. Make yourself at home, Detective. Your journey begins now."

Harper's mind raced with questions, but he knew better than to bombard Destiny with them. Instead, he focused on the task at hand. "Tell me more about these keys," he said, his voice steady.

"The seven keys of darkness are hidden throughout the enchanted city," Destiny explained. "Each key is

guarded by a mystery, and only by solving these mysteries can you obtain the keys. Horace Flame, the dragon gangster, has hidden them well. But I believe in your abilities, Detective. You are the only one who can save this realm."

Harper stood fast. He had faced countless challenges in his career, but this was unlike anything he had ever encountered. "Where do I start?" he asked.

Destiny smiled, a hint of sadness in her eyes. "Your first client will arrive soon. Be prepared, for the path ahead is fraught with danger and deception. But remember, you are not alone. The enchanted city has many allies, and they will aid you in your quest."

With that, Destiny turned and disappeared into the mist, leaving Harper alone in his new home. He took

a deep breath, feeling the weight of his new responsibility settle on his shoulders.

Harper decided to take a walk around the downtown core of the enchanted city, hoping to familiarize himself with his new surroundings. He stepped out of the cottage and into the misty streets, the air thick with an otherworldly chill. The cobblestone paths wound through the city like veins, leading him past gothic, medieval buildings that loomed overhead, their spires piercing the foggy sky.

As he walked, Harper marveled at the transformation of the city. The once-modern structures of Vancouver had been replaced by grand castles, ancient towers, and enchanted forests. The gas lamps had given way to glowing orbs of light, suspended in mid-air by unseen forces. The city

was alive with magic, and Harper could feel its pulse with every step he took.

He made his way to the first of the three bridges over False Creek, now transformed into a medieval marvel. The bridge was constructed of dark stone, adorned with intricate carvings of mythical creatures and symbols of enchantment. Harper paused at the center of the bridge, gazing out over the water below. The creek itself shimmered with an ethereal glow, reflecting the enchanted city that surrounded it.

Continuing his walk, Harper crossed the second bridge, which was guarded by stone gargoyles that seemed to watch his every move. The bridge's arches were draped in ivy, and the air was filled with the scent of blooming nightshade. Harper couldn't

help but feel a sense of awe as he took in the gothic beauty of the scene.

The third bridge was the most magnificent of all. It was a suspension bridge made of enchanted steel, its cables glowing with a soft, blue light. As Harper crossed, he felt a sense of weightlessness, as if the bridge itself was carrying him across. The view from the bridge was breathtaking, with the enchanted city stretching out before him in all its mystical glory.

Harper continued his walk through the downtown core, taking in the sights and sounds of the enchanted city. He passed by bustling marketplaces filled with enchanted beings, their wares ranging from magical potions to ancient relics. The air was alive with the hum of activity, and Harper felt a

sense of purpose as he navigated the labyrinthine streets.

As the night grew darker, Harper made his way back to his cottage. The mist had thickened, casting the city in an impenetrable gray. He felt a sense of familiarity as he approached the small, cottage-like building that was now his home. The warm light from within beckoned him, and he stepped inside, feeling the weight of his new responsibility settle on his shoulders once more.

Harper took a moment to gather his thoughts, the events of the evening replaying in his mind. He knew that the path ahead would be a mess of danger and deception, but he was ready like he always was. Now this unbelievable world of the enchanted city needed him, and he would do whatever it took to save it.

As he settled into his new home, Harper couldn't help but feel a sense of anticipation. The deepest mysteries of the enchanted city awaited, and for whatever reason he had been chosen to uncover the secrets hidden within the mist.

To Be Continued

The Case Of The Vanishing Veil

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