

# Ghost in the Library

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# Chapter 1

## Ghost in the Library

### An Urban Dead Short Story

“It’s DCC,” I muttered looking through my binoculars.

“I told you so.”

I shrugged. “We head over to Broadbelt and tell them. Good hunch of yours.”

“You won’t get there and back in time. You’ll also lose any chance of following her and finding where the Dead are gathering.”

I couldn’t help scowling. “You engineered this situation.”

“If you’d done as I asked in the first place and gotten Delta squad up here, we wouldn’t be having this conversation.”

“No one, least of all Delta squad, is going to follow a random hunch of mine.”

Bryn tutted. “Could have told them it came from me.”

“We’ve been through that already.”

She shrugged. “Well Purple Cat, time to pick up a gun and show what you can do.”

I don’t free run quietly. I wasn’t, therefore, all that surprised when DCC looked up as I followed her. She ducked into the building below me.

“That’s torn it,” I said.

“Not at all,” returned Bryn. “You can shoot straight. All you have to do is hold your nerve.”

“We’ll lose the location of the Dead.”

“True, but DCC won’t be talking to them.”

“Bryn, I’m not a Delta.”

“You can do this. Put down the pack. It’ll slow you up. Check that gun I made you bring.”

I was standing on the roof of Garland library. It was a small building on two floors. Once inside, I ducked behind a fallen shelf. I closed my eyes and listened. I couldn’t hear anything.

“She’ll still be downstairs,” said Bryn. “Wait here, I’ll take a look.”

I stared at the pistol in my hands and reminded myself that DCC would be up again as soon as she found a revive. Murder is a game in Malton. There was a check out desk at the head of the stairs. It would provide better cover so I stood up and headed over to it.

Naturally I trod on a pile of colouring pencils which scattered and rolled. One tipped over the top step and clattered and bounced down the stairs.

I cursed silently and ducked behind the desk. Bryn reappeared next to me.

“Well she’s on her way up the stairs now,” she drawled sarcastically.

I listened but still couldn’t hear a sound. Damn! DCC was good, but then she would be.

“I’m watching,” said Bryn. “When I give the word all you need to do is stand up and shoot. She’ll be on the third step down. You have a clear shot from where I am. All you have to do is hit her.”

Dust motes danced through the pale light of Bryn’s body as she watched the stairs.

“On my mark,” said Bryn. “Remember look before you shoot. One well-aimed shot is worth six wild ones. Now!”

I stood up, pointing my gun. I saw DCC. She stood on the third step down and she held some kind of rifle. I took the moment to aim and then pulled the trigger.

The first shot hit her in the leg. I adjusted my aim and shot again. The rifle was pointing at me. The check out desk splintered. She staggered back. I’d hit her in the chest. I aimed again, the shot went wild, aimed once more and pulled the trigger. Something hit me, slamming me against the wall. I slid down to the floor.

“You killed her with that last shot,” said Bryn.

“Good!” I felt at my chest. It hurt like hell. My hand came away covered in blood. “I thought this thing was supposed to be bullet-proof.”

“Not against rifle ammo, hon.”

I thought of my pack on the roof. I wasn’t going to be making it up there.

“I’ll be back,” whispered Bryn.

I managed to tear a wad of cloth from my shirt to press over the wound but the pain prevented me being effective. After a while I passed out.

I struggled back to consciousness through a haze of morphine. BD was sitting next to me.

“You made it then,” he said.

“How did you find me?” I asked.

“You’d never believe me if I told you.”

Behind his shoulder I could see Bryn’s ghostly form. She grinned at me and made as if to ruffle his hair. Her hand passed through his solid form and it didn’t look like he could see her. However she’d obviously communicated with him somehow which was progress. I smiled at them both, closed my eyes and fell back into sleep.