

Hank Kane is

The Dead Detective

He always knew who was guilty. He just got tired proving it.

Introducing The Dead Detective in the Blood Brothers series

Background

Hank Kane, the Dead Detective, was still getting used to his new 'life' if you can call being dead any kind of life.

Hank had been the greatest detective in 1950s Los Angeles. He'd always known who was guilty. He'd just gotten tired proving it. Bad guys didn't deserve pity. Only justice. Hank's justice. Hank always found evidence. And somehow that evidence always found its way to suspects.

Who was going to argue with Hank Kane? The man was a legend. The City of Angels needed legends. The press made him one. The Mayor loved him. Crooks hated him. Hank liked that.

But after being killed on his last case in L.A., Hank had found himself in front of the Court Of Ghouls. This court decided who could go to Heaven and who went to Hell. With a Vampire Judge presiding, the Court proved that Hank had planted evidence on many crooks.

So, where was Hank to end up? The Vampire Judge gave Hank one last chance to do things legally. He spun a large globe of the world that was placed on his desk in Court. He placed a finger on it and it stopped. "Glasgow!" he shouted. Hank had never heard of the place. But, hey, it was better than hell. Maybe. Glasgow was known as Ghostville in the ghost world.

The Court explained to Hank that, in Ghostville, ghosts inhabited the same space as humans but they couldn't see each other, unless some mischievous ghosts indulged in "haunting".

Hank was taken to a cell but, when the cell door opened, it was not into a room but, instead, onto the dark, misty streets of Ghostville.

The Court of Ghouls ran Ghostville. At least, that's what The Grim Reaper, let them think. The court had appointed The Grim Reaper to run Ghostville according to the Court's laws. But, unknown to the Court, The Grim Reaper had abused this trust and now everyone - apart from the Court - knew that The Grim Reaper ran Ghostville as if it was his own kingdom.

As the official *Collector of Souls of the Departed*, The Grim Reaper (known to all as TG) could decide who ended up in Ghostville. The place was full of ghosts who believed that just more favour to TG would persuade him to let them move on properly. But, by the time they'd figured out TG had no intention of letting them go, they were in too deep with his scams. TG's company, *The Grim Group*

Corporation, owned everything in Ghostville. The *Cesspit Night Club*, where ghosts hung out was where his spies gathered information from loose talking ghosts. *Radio Deadbeat*, *Dead Guys TV*, *The Daily Ghost* - every media platform was owned by him. Screens on buildings throughout the city flashed never-ending adverts for products owned by *The Grim Group Corps*. The most prized product was *Etherjuice*.

Etherjuice was originally an underground, illegal substance. Its main benefit was to enable ghosts to appear to the human world. In Hank's case, it meant that his skeleton grew flesh and he was once again human – or at least looked human, until the Etherjuice wore off. Then his temporary flesh would slowly disintegrate and he'd be a skeleton again.

Etherjuice was rationed. In the wrong hands, ghosts could visit the human world anytime. So when TG had busted the Etherjuice bootlegging racket, he'd vowed to "make Etherjuice a force for good." Translation -all profits from Etherjuice would now flow into the bank of *The Grim Group Corps*.

Etherjuice came in many forms and many dosages and had many purposes. In its benign form it was a powerful medicine and a force for good. But in the wrong hands, Etherjuice could be manufactured in high doses to become an explosive, its little bottles being as powerful as hand grenades.

TG had time on his hands. He'd long given up the troublesome chore of collecting the souls of the departed, apart from in exceptional cases. Now he franchised out the collection of souls to aspiring Reapers who paid handsomely for TG's Reaper Classes. Of course, TG handed them lists of the people he wanted collected. Usually "low lives" as Hank called them. TG's army of Reapers were creating a personal army of gangsters all to further tighten TG's grip on the city.

Blood Brothers Storyline

In Ghostville, blood banks are like money banks are to humans. Full of treasure. Blood was in short supply in Ghostville. Access to it was strictly controlled by TG. Ghosts themselves have no need for blood, but then there's the vampires. And they have every need for blood.

Vampiria, the vampire ghetto at the edge of town, is where vampires are corralled. No one likes vampires. There're not even dead, so they shouldn't even be allowed into Ghostville, complain the local ghosts. Vampire's endure shameless discrimination borne out of fear and ignorance, as if all vampires still bit the necks of humans, and fought with other ghosts. Times move on but the old prejudices hang around. Having the ability to operate in both the ghost and human worlds, vampires attracted suspicion and derision in equal measure.

Sure, it would be unwise to wander around Vampiria unless you were a vampire. Sure, there were illegal blood dealers on many corners who preyed on vampires starved of blood, bled them dry, if you will, now that biting humans had been outlawed by the Court of Ghouls. The supply of illegal blood was making someone very rich and Hank Kane had his suspicions. Despite TG's proclamation to punish all blood dealers, it seemed some got punished more than others.

But now things had come to a head. Blood banks were being robbed in both human Glasgow and the ghostly Ghostville. Someone was stashing blood somewhere. Vampiria was the obvious place link to such crimes. And Duso Mandel, the obvious suspect.

Duso Mandel, the charismatic young leader of the Vampire Rights Movement, was TG's least favourite person. An *Enemy of Life* was how he described Duso. Then again, thought Hank, anyone who resisted TG's tyranny was an *Enemy of Life*.

Duso was a hunted man. If only he could make contact with the Court of Ghouls and the exceptional Vampire Judge, one of the token vampires allowed into public office. But TG knows that if the court learned of what really happens in Ghostville, TG would be in the dock. Maybe...

TG calls his nemeses, Hank Kane. TG knows Hank is one of the few people to have worked out this whole shoddy city and TG's webs of corruption. But Hank is not powerful enough to challenge TG. Nor does Hank have anything like the authority or credibility with the court compared to TG with his centuries of "managing" the world below the court. Who was Hank Kane to them? Some evidence-planting, renegade cop. No, Hank would have to do TG's bidding for the time being. All he could do was let TG know that he wasn't fooled.

TG knows Hank has it all figured out. But TG knows that Hank can't hurt him. Yet. Their relationship is like dancing with the devil, each patiently seeking a point of weakness in the other while ostensibly working together. As TG says, "Better, the Devil you know, Hank."

Hank is tasked by TG of finding the *terrorist* Duso. Duso robbed the Blood Banks in order to hold decent society to ransom over vampire rights, according to TG anyway. But as Hank investigates, he discovers a whole lot more about the blood dealing business. The question is, who can he tell? His reports to TG deliberately leave out important information. Hank soon works out that TG is not interested in solving the crime. What is TG's real interest?

Hank solves the case. But no one can ever know that he did. This truly is hell for the world's best detective.