Paranoid Fantasy #1

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The alarm went off, and Nathan woke up.

He glanced out through the bulletproof glass of the window by his bed; seeing no obvious danger, he unstrapped himself, sat up, and turned off the burglar alarm, muttering the charm, “Rabbit, rabbit,” as he did so. He took the silver cross from around his neck and dressed for the day, starting with chainmail undershirt and lead-lined jockey shorts.

After replacing the garlic at each window, he burned a cone of incense, with the appropriate prayers, to placate the gods. Carefully, his hands protected by rubber gloves, he took his defanged white mouse, Theodosius, from its massive cage, then headed down to the corner restaurant for breakfast, being certain to lock the door behind him, both the three regular locks and the special one the police couldn’t open. Always watching for the things that come through the walls, he ate heartily, after feeding a little of everything to Theodosius to check for poison.

Shortly thereafter Nathan, briefcase in hand, was off to his downtown office. As if from nowhere, his obnoxious neighbor Eddie appeared before him. Nathan had been too busy not stepping on the cracks in the sidewalk to see him coming.

Eddie cried out, “Hi, Nathan! How’s business?”

Nathan made a sign to ward off the evil eye, glanced about for other menaces, then muttered something about being late.

“Aw, hell, Nathan, so you’ll be a few minutes late! I missed the entire day yesterday, and nothing’s happened to me! You worry too much, you know that? Why are you always...hey! What’s that? Hey! Help!” This last was said as several large trolls and assorted gargoyles suddenly leaped out of the nearby shrubbery. With nasty giggles and remarks about foolhardiness, they grabbed Eddie, trussed him up tightly, and carried him off.

Nathan watched them go, then continued on his way to the bus stop, unconcerned. He was safe from that bunch. It was the Others that worried him, and they only come out at night.