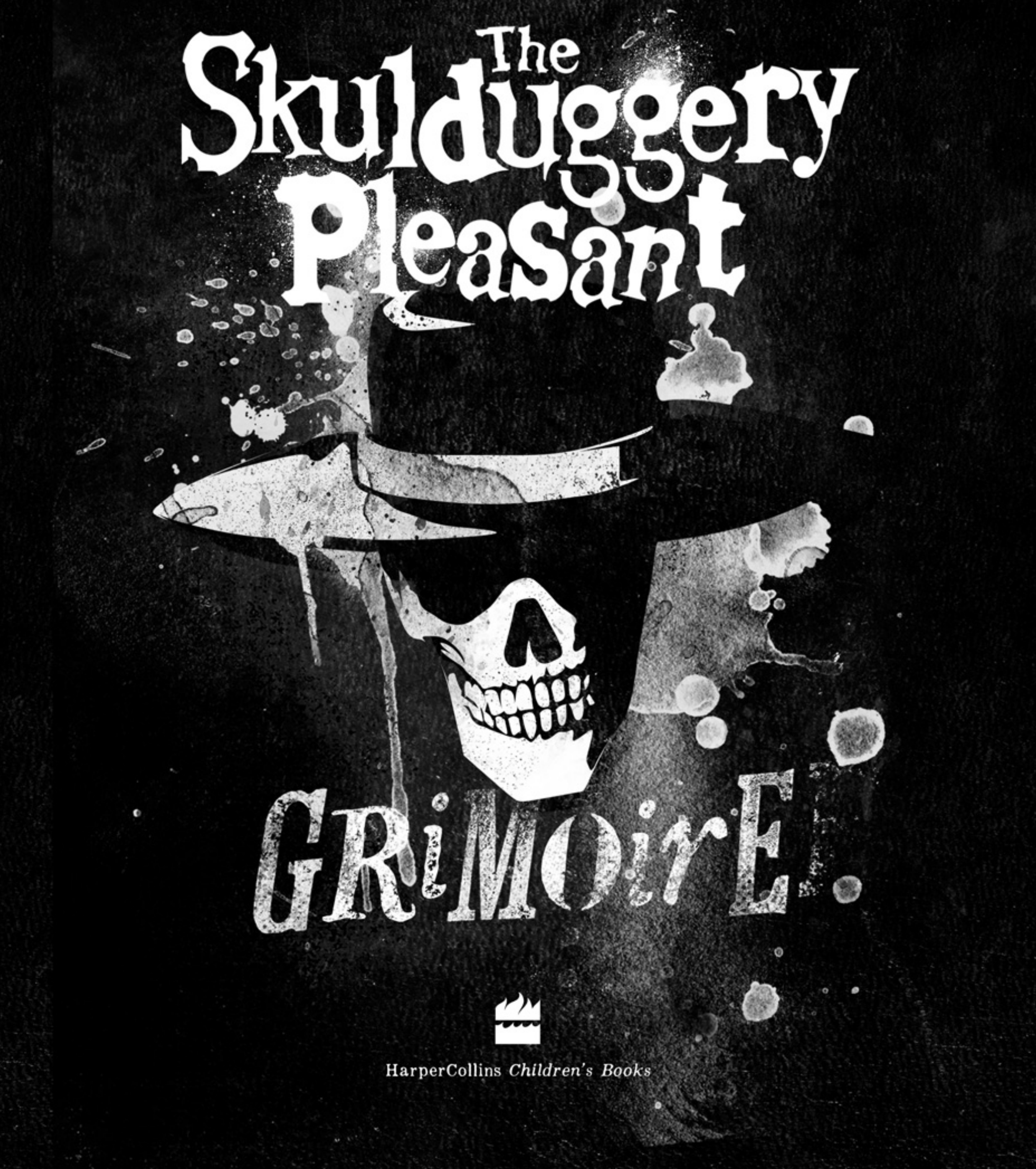
DEREK LANDY

The Skulduggery Pleasant GRIMOIRE



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FOREWORD

This edition is the result of the hard work and dedication of four members of the Archive Department and any mistakes/errors/omissions are solely the editors' responsibility and not the fault of the authors. In an effort to publish this book on time, we have made the decision to compile entries from all four Archivists, and include original notes, interviews and comments supplied by relevant parties as they appeared.

The Archive Department

INTRODUCTION

What you hold in your hands is the secret history of the universe.

This history reaches from the very beginning of time (in fact, if the legends are true, it reaches back *even further*) up to the very recent past. In these pages you'll find the obscurest of God Myths standing shoulder to shoulder with confirmed, provable fact — and you'll find that one is as impressively outrageous as the other.

As part of the High Sanctuary's drive to catalogue the many occasions where the world has been threatened by sorcerers (and subsequently saved by other sorcerers), we have come, inevitably, to the tale of Skulduggery Pleasant.

I do not claim to know him well and I certainly do not claim to be his friend — I've met him only three times over the years: the first two times he insulted me, and the third time he insulted me *and* my wife. Suffice it to say, I do not like the man. I find him arrogant, insufferable and rude. You may be wondering, therefore, why I have insisted on writing this introduction.

To put it plainly, this is an opportunity to tell him what I think of him in a medium in which he cannot immediately reply with a sarcastic one-liner or a supposedly witty observation about my taste, my intelligence, or the underlying motivations for my bias.

I have no bias against Skulduggery Pleasant. I simply don't like him.

I admit, somewhat grudgingly, that he has saved the world on occasion. I admit that he has put a stop to people even worse than himself. I haven't read the book you hold in your hands, save for the interesting bits about the gods and such, because reading an entire tome about the fabled "Skeleton Detective" is more than I could possibly handle. The only redeeming factor about this entire enterprise is that the contents of these pages will only ever be used as a reference tool, perhaps to check dates, or deaths, or as a quick reminder of a "madcap" escapade he had once upon a time. But mostly it will be put on a shelf to gather dust, and no one but those on the Council of Elders will have access to it.

I don't know why the story of Skulduggery Pleasant garners such secrecy. I'm a sorcerer, and I'm over four hundred years old, and no one wants to file any of my adventures in the Top Secret Section. And I have had some hair-raising adventures, believe you me. Maybe

they're not as obvious as his, though. Maybe they don't have the same kind of mass appeal. Perhaps if I'd made more jokes while I was engaged in fisticuffs, or if my enemies had been a little more flamboyant in their appearance or ridiculous in their ambitions. Maybe then I'd be a household name.

But, of course, he isn't alone, is he? He has a partner. Astonishingly, however, Valkyrie Cain is every bit as reckless, irresponsible and sarcastic as he is. When she first burst on to the magical scene, she was a precocious twelve-year-old who hurtled into danger with her head down and her eyes closed. Now that she's in her mid-to-late twenties, the only difference I can see is that she's in her mid-to-late twenties.

I'm not even going to mention what she did. I'm not going to even say *that* name. It's all here in these pages, presumably. If you don't know, you can find out for yourself. Far be it from me to spoil the surprise.

The editors have asked me to mention the layout of the book and explain and excuse the haphazard approach they've taken. Apparently, this was all a bit of a rushed job by the end. They won't say why. Maybe the Archivists (four! Four of them! Why did it take four?) found their subject to be as irritating as I do. Maybe each one of them walked away in disgust.

I hope you walk away in disgust, I truly do. Books

like these should be used to record the exploits of honourable, decent sorcerers, to secure those stories in our vaults for future generations to look back on and learn from. I don't think anyone should learn from Skulduggery Pleasant and Valkyrie Cain. He's a bad influence on her, she's a bad influence on him, and they're probably a bad influence on you, dear reader.

Do yourself a favour. Put this book back on the shelf and go about your life. You'll be happier without the darkness in these pages, I swear to you.

Austere Wycherly



"Doors are for people with NO imagination"

A NOTE FROM THE ARCHIVIST

I have been asked to introduce myself and to explain the decisions I am set to make over the course of this book as I make them. The intention, I believe, is to give you, the reader, supposedly valuable insight into the process of collating all the information before me and how I arrive at the finished product.

I find this a ridiculous prospect as I am merely an Archivist, and as such I should be invisible to the reader, and am in no way involved in the stories I am about to relay.

But the Archive Department has been cultivating some rather grand ideas as of late – ideas that seek to elevate it above its station – and so I have little recourse but to comply.

With great reluctance, therefore, allow me to tell you that I am Archivist Palaverous and I will be doing my best to provide context and explanation (where needed) to the history lesson you are about to receive. Apologies for the shocking lack of professionalism in this approach.[1]

1. In our continuing efforts to make seamless the reader's travels through the assorted sources, interviews and essays contained in this edition, these footnotes will provide necessary guidance and explanation – the Editors

A SHORT GUIDE TO THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

ADEPTS: those who have chosen non-Elemental disciplines of power, such as Teleporters and Necromancers. Sometimes known by colloquialisms (for instance, Arbokinetics are known as "Energy Throwers" and Vitakinetics are known as "Healers".)

DARK SORCERER: a colloquial term as apt as it is vague, usually denoting a mage who has used magic for nefarious purposes.

ELEMENTALS: those with the ability to manipulate earth, air, fire and water.

HOLLOW MEN: bloated bags of noxious gases with papery skin. They obey orders, and little more.

MORTAL: a person without magic.

NEOTERIC: a sorcerer who has discovered their magic beyond the point of their Surge. Lacking proper instruction, and without the necessary focus, their magical ability forms around their subconscious needs and/or desires.

SORCERER/MAGE: a person with magic. The constant use of magic rejuvenates the sorcerer, leading to a much longer lifespan. The physical signs of ageing are slowed, the rate of which can vary wildly from mage to mage.

VAMPIRE: human by day, their true nature quelled by the sun; by night they are uncontrollable monsters. Stakes and crucifixes do nothing to harm them, though they are deathly allergic to saltwater, and fire and beheading will kill them.

The Infected undergo two to three days of "mindless slavery" to the vampire that bit them, or constant, debilitating pain – sometimes both. Assuming they survive the physical and psychological changes that occur within those forty-eight to seventy-two hours, they will then have no choice but to shed their human skin, hair and human qualities every night, and become a vampire.

WARLOCK: a catch-all term for a variety of mages whose disciplines do not conform to the standard/recommended/healthy branches of magic.

WITCH: a female-centric avenue of the mystical arts, categorised into the Maidens of the New Dawn, Brides of Blood Tears and Crones of the Cold Embrace.

WRETCHLING: a flesh-and-blood version of the Hollow Men. Stronger. More vicious.

ZOMBIE: a person raised from the dead and sustained by magic. They cannot use magic from this point on, and feel an unnatural level of devotion to their new "Master". This zombie, the Alpha, can transmit the infection through bite. The subsequent zombies will decay faster and, unlike the Alpha, lose all control if they taste human flesh.



VAMPIRE

Extract from *Straight from the Source: Understanding Magic* by Galliday Monfreak (a textbook for First Years used in Corrival Academy):

The Source of All Magic is a theoretical universe that encompasses all other universes.

Imagine that our universe is a box of cereal, standing on a table. And beside our box is another box of cereal. It's the same cereal, but it's not the same box. It has, maybe, a different number of flakes in there, or maybe it's less sugary or more sugary or less healthy or more healthy. Whatever. This isn't really about cereal. Cereal is a metaphor. A metaphor is like a simile, only sneakier. So in the metaphor, in the box, we're the cereal, or rather we're a part of the cereal, just one of the flakes, or a grain of a flake, not even a grain, a part of a grain on a part of a flake. The flake itself is a galaxy, and the grains are the planets, and we're on one of those planets, only we're really small.

So, as we've established, beside our box is another box, and it's a little different from ours, and beside *that* box is *another* box, and that's different again.

Now, imagine that this table is ridiculously big. And it has an infinite number of cereal boxes on one side of our own box, and it has an infinite number on the other side, and an infinite number in front, and behind, and even above us and below us.

That's a lot of cereal boxes, right? A lot of *alternate* cereal boxes. A lot of *parallel* cereal boxes.

Now I want you to imagine holes that have been punched in these boxes so the air can get in. I don't know why you'd punch air holes in cereal boxes – they'd make the cereal go stale – but that's what I want

you to imagine. Some of these boxes have many holes in them – called *rifts* – and some only have a few, and I suppose some even have no holes at all. For cereal, that's probably good, but for the metaphor that's pretty awful.

So, taking all this into account, do you know what the Source is? Have you worked it out? Is the Source the table, perhaps? The floor the table stands on?

No. The Source is the kitchen. The Source is around all of these cereal boxes. It contains them. And the air in this kitchen passes through those rifts and allows the people inside the cereal boxes to be sorcerers.

And that's where magic comes from.