



Blood Beneath Daybridge: The Making of a Monster

Every Monster Has an Origin. This Is His.

Welcome to ***Blood Beneath Daybridge: The Making of a Monster - The Butcher's Tale.***

Before he became the Ogre of Daybridge Bridge—before the legend, before the terror, before Detective Ethan Reeves hunted him through the city's shadows—Guthrie Knox was just a boy. An orphan with serious gray eyes and an unsettling way of watching the world.

1878. Blackwell Orphanage. A curious child discovers his calling.

When seven-year-old Guthrie witnesses a butcher's delivery, he doesn't turn away from the exposed flesh and bone. He leans in. Fascinated by how things work beneath the skin. Hungry to understand the machinery of death.

Master butcher Silas Holloway recognizes the boy's unusual aptitude—the clinical detachment, the meticulous precision, the complete comfort with mortality. He offers an apprenticeship that will transform Guthrie into a craftsman whose skills surpass even his teacher's.

But technical mastery without emotional connection creates something dangerous. And when Eliza Blackwood observes Guthrie's methodical work decades later, she sees not just a butcher—but the perfect canvas for her most ambitious transformation yet.

This is the official prequel to *Shadows of Daybridge*, revealing the dark origins of Daybridge's most infamous legend. Spanning more than a century, this is the story of how an orphan's natural talent became a monster's terrible gift. How precision became horror. How understanding anatomy led to rewriting it entirely.

Every legend begins somewhere. Every monster was once human.

Turn the page. The making of the Ogre begins with a single question: "How does it all fit together inside?"

— **Rae Stonehouse** - Author

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Free Sample:

Blood Beneath Daybridge: The Making of a Monster - *The Butcher's Tale*

Prologue: The Butcher's Apprentice

Guthrie Knox was seven years old when he first understood that he was different from other children.

It wasn't the circumstances of his birth or his residence at Blackwell Orphanage that set him apart—many children in Daybridge's industrial quarters were orphaned by accident or disease, abandoned by parents who couldn't feed another mouth, or simply lost in the administrative chaos of a city expanding faster than its institutions could manage. The gray stone building that housed sixty-three unwanted children was a common enough feature of the cityscape, neither particularly brutal nor especially kind in its administration of young lives.

No, what made Guthrie different was something more fundamental, something that caused the caretakers to watch him with wary eyes when they thought he wasn't looking, something that made the other children maintain a careful distance despite the overcrowded dormitories.

It was the way he watched.

On that particular autumn morning in 1878, he stood in the orphanage courtyard, a slight figure with serious gray eyes, observing with clinical detachment as the butcher's delivery boy unloaded a half carcass of pork from his cart. Most children would have been repelled by the sight of the splayed ribs, the exposed muscle tissue, the lingering bloodstains on the burlap wrapping. A few might have been morbidly fascinated, giggling nervously or daring each other to touch the cooling flesh.

Guthrie simply watched, his gaze steady, his expression betraying neither disgust nor excitement—only intense, focused curiosity.

"What are you staring at, boy?" The delivery assistant, a red-faced teenager named Thomas, had noticed Guthrie's unwavering attention. "Never seen meat before?"

"Not like that," Guthrie replied, his voice oddly mature for a child so young. "Only after Mrs. Smithson has cooked it."

Thomas snorted, heaving the pork carcass higher on his shoulder. "Well, it doesn't start out as chops and roasts, does it? Something's got to die for you lot to eat."

"I know that," Guthrie said with a slight frown, as if offended by the suggestion he might not understand such a basic principle. "I've seen dead things before. Cats and pigeons and once a dog by the canal. But they were whole. This is... opened."

Something in the boy's tone—the complete absence of the squeamishness Thomas expected—made the delivery assistant pause. He studied the small, solemn-faced child more carefully.

"You're not squeamish, are you?" he observed. "Most kids your age would be green around the gills, looking at fresh slaughter."

Guthrie shook his head. "It's interesting. How it all fits together inside. Like machinery but made of meat."

Thomas barked a laugh, genuinely amused by the unusual response. "That's one way of looking at it, I suppose. You should see a whole pig come apart. Now that's something—watching a skilled butcher turn a carcass into all the different cuts. Like a puzzle in reverse."

The boy's eyes widened slightly, the first real expression of emotion he had shown. "Do they let children watch that?"

"Not generally, no." Thomas adjusted his burden, preparing to carry it into the orphanage kitchen. "Health regulations and all that. Plus, most kids would either faint or be sick all over the shop floor."

Guthrie took a step closer; his gray eyes fixed on Thomas with unsettling intensity. "I wouldn't be sick. I'd be quiet and stay out of the way. I just want to see how it works."

Something about the boy's seriousness, his complete lack of childish squirming or pleading, made Thomas consider the request more seriously than he might have otherwise. He studied Guthrie for a long moment, noting the careful stillness, the focused attention, the absence of the manic energy that typically characterized children his age.

"Tell you what," Thomas said finally. "I'll speak to Old Silas—he's the master butcher I work for. If he says it's alright, maybe you can come by the shop sometime. No promises, mind you. Silas is particular about his workspace."

Guthrie nodded solemnly, as if they were businessmen concluding a serious negotiation. "Thank you. I would appreciate that."

As Thomas disappeared into the kitchen with his burden, Matron Smithson emerged from the building's side entrance, her sharp eyes immediately finding Guthrie standing alone in the yard.

"Guthrie Knox! What are you doing out here? You should be in the dining hall with the others, setting tables for lunch."

"Yes, Matron. I was just watching the delivery." Guthrie turned toward the building, his expression once again neutral, revealing nothing of the conversation that had just transpired or the anticipation he felt at the possibility of visiting the butcher's shop.

"Always watching, that one," Matron Smithson muttered to herself as she followed him inside. "Never playing, never laughing like a proper child. Just watching everything with those old eyes. It isn't natural."

Three days later, Thomas returned to Blackwell Orphanage with the regular delivery and a message: Old Silas had agreed to allow one visit from the curious orphan, provided he stayed out of the way and followed instructions precisely. Matron Smithson was reluctant—allowing a child to leave the orphanage's supervision was irregular, particularly for such an unusual purpose—but Silas Holloway was a respected businessman and significant donor to Blackwell's perpetually strained resources. Permission was grudgingly granted for Guthrie to accompany Thomas back to the shop the following Saturday morning.

The anticipation that filled Guthrie during the intervening days was unlike anything he had previously experienced. He had always been a studious child, preferring books to the rough games that occupied most orphanage residents, but this was different—a focused excitement that manifested not in the fidgeting or chattering that might have betrayed another child's eagerness, but in an even more intense stillness, a heightened attention to detail in his chores and lessons, as if proving his worthiness for the opportunity ahead.

Saturday dawned clear and cold, a perfect late autumn day in Daybridge. Guthrie was awake before the bell, dressed in his cleanest clothes, his hair carefully combed with water from the dormitory basin. When Thomas arrived, the boy was waiting in the entrance hall, standing straight-backed beside a suspicious Matron Smithson.

"Now you mind your manners, Guthrie," she instructed sternly. "Mr. Holloway is doing you a great kindness in allowing this visit. I expect you to be on your best behavior and return by noon precisely."

"Yes, Matron," Guthrie replied, his serious gray eyes meeting hers directly. "I'll be good."

The walk to Holloway's Meat Emporium took them through Daybridge's commercial district, a section of the city Guthrie had rarely visited. He absorbed the sights with his characteristic quiet attention—the shop fronts with their polished windows, the street vendors hawking hot chestnuts and meat pies, the carts and carriages navigating the cobblestone streets with varying degrees of success. He asked no questions, made no childish observations, simply processed everything with the same detached curiosity that had first caught Thomas's attention.

Holloway's occupied a prime corner location, its large windows displaying an array of cuts arranged with artistic precision on beds of fresh straw. The shop front, painted a deep burgundy that disguised the inevitable small bloodstains, bore the establishment's name in gold lettering along with the founding date: 1842. A small brass bell tinkled as Thomas ushered Guthrie through the front door.

The shop's interior was impeccably clean, the tile floor scrubbed to a dull shine, the marble counters wiped free of any residue from the previous day's business. Glass cases displayed premium cuts—crown roasts, tenderloins, specialty sausages—while hooks along the back wall held larger pieces awaiting further processing. The air carried the distinctive metallic scent of fresh meat mingled with the sharper notes of spices used in Holloway's signature preparations.

Behind the main counter stood a man who could only be Old Silas himself—though the nickname, Guthrie would later learn, referred more to his position as the oldest established butcher in this district than to his actual age, which was perhaps fifty. Tall and barrel-chested, with forearms corded with muscle beneath rolled-up sleeves, Silas Holloway possessed the physical presence of a man who had spent decades working with carcasses weighing as much as he did. His face, framed by muttonchop whiskers just beginning to show threads of gray, conveyed both the sternness of a master craftsman and a hint of genuine curiosity as he regarded his unusual visitor.

"So, this is the boy who wants to see how a carcass comes apart," Silas said, his voice a deep rumble that suited his imposing frame. "Thomas says you've got an unusual interest for one so young."

"Yes, sir," Guthrie replied, meeting the butcher's gaze with his customary directness. "I want to understand how things work. Inside."

Silas studied the child for a long moment, noting the serious expression, the controlled stillness, the complete absence of the nervousness or exuberance he would have expected from a boy this age. Then he nodded once, decisively.

"Understanding is a worthy pursuit," he said. "Too many people go through life never questioning what's beneath the surface. Come through to the back, then. We've got a hog to break down this morning, delivered fresh from the Hargreaves farm yesterday. You'll see the process from start to finish."

He lifted a section of the counter, creating a passage to the workshop behind the retail space. Guthrie followed without hesitation, Thomas bringing up the rear with an expression that mingled amusement and lingering curiosity about this unusual orphan.

The workshop was larger than the front shop, designed for the practical business of transforming animal carcasses into retail products. A massive butcher block dominated the center of the room, its wooden surface stained dark from years of use despite regular scraping and sanding. Various tools hung from hooks on the walls—cleavers, saws, knives of different shapes and sizes, each meticulously maintained and arranged in order of use. At the far end, a large sink and drainage area provided facilities for the necessary cleaning, while a heavy door presumably led to cold storage where carcasses were kept before processing.

"First rule in my workshop," Silas said, turning to face Guthrie with sudden sternness, "is absolute attention to instruction. One wrong move around these tools can cost a finger or worse. You'll stand exactly where I tell you, move only when I say you can, and touch nothing without explicit permission. Understood?"

"Yes, sir," Guthrie replied without hesitation.

"Second rule is cleanliness. Butchery is not a dirty business, despite what some might think. It requires precision, care, and proper hygiene. Thomas will get you an apron. It'll be too big, but it'll keep your clothes clean."

Thomas fetched a canvas apron from a hook by the door, helping Guthrie tie it behind his back. The garment indeed engulfed his small frame, the bottom edge nearly touching the floor, but the boy made no complaint.

"Now," Silas continued, "I'll explain each step as we go. Questions are permitted, but only between steps, not during cutting. Sharp tools require complete concentration."

With these preliminaries established, Silas nodded to Thomas, who disappeared through the heavy door at the rear of the workshop. He returned moments later, struggling slightly under the weight of half a pig carcass, already split lengthwise down the spine but otherwise intact from snout to tail. With practiced efficiency, he hoisted it onto the butcher block, positioning it precisely according to some system Guthrie didn't yet understand.

Silas studied the carcass with a professional eye, running his hand along certain sections as if confirming what his vision told him about the quality and condition of the meat. Then he turned to a sink, washing his hands thoroughly before selecting a specific knife from the array on the wall.

"We begin with the separation of the primal cuts," he explained, positioning himself at the butcher block. "Observe the natural seams in the muscle structure. A good butcher works with the animal's anatomy, not against it. The knife follows the paths already present in the carcass."

What followed was a revelation to young Guthrie Knox. With movements that combined raw strength and balletic precision, Silas began transforming the uniform mass of the carcass into distinct sections—shoulder, loin, belly, ham—each separated along natural divisions in the muscle tissue with minimal sawing through bone. His commentary was sparse but precise, identifying each cut, explaining its characteristics, noting its best culinary applications.

Guthrie watched with unprecedented fascination. His already remarkable focus intensified, his gray eyes tracking every movement of Silas's hands, every incision of the blade, every separation of muscle from bone. He absorbed the terminology without effort—Boston butt, picnic shoulder, baby back ribs, pork belly—connecting each name to the specific part of the animal's anatomy as it emerged under Silas's skilled hands.

Most striking to both Silas and Thomas was the boy's complete comfort with the process. Where most children might have flinched at the occasional snap of cartilage or the subtle resistance of the knife against gristle, Guthrie showed only deepening interest. There was no disgust, no squeamishness, not even the morbid fascination that sometimes drew boys to bloody spectacles. Instead, there was only pure, clinical curiosity—the satisfaction of seeing a complex system revealed and understood.

As Silas moved from primary separation to the more detailed work of trimming and final preparation, he began to direct occasional questions to the unusually attentive child.

"Why do you think I'm cutting along this line here, boy?" he asked, his knife poised above a section of loin.

Guthrie studied the exposed muscle structure, his brow furrowed in concentration. "Because the fibers change direction there," he replied after a moment. "They run lengthwise on this side, but crosswise over there."

Silas's eyebrows rose slightly. "That's exactly right. Different muscle groups have different fiber orientations. Cutting against the grain gives you tender meat for quick cooking. Cutting with the grain gives you pieces that hold together during long, slow cooking." He nodded approvingly. "You've got a good eye."

The work continued, Silas occasionally testing Guthrie's understanding with similar questions, the boy responding with increasingly accurate observations as he began to grasp the underlying principles of the butcher's craft. Thomas, initially amused by the unusual situation, found himself impressed by the child's aptitude and seriousness.

When the final cuts had been wrapped and set aside for transfer to the shop displays, Silas turned to the cleaning process, demonstrating the same meticulous care in maintaining his workspace and tools that he had shown in the butchery itself. Guthrie assisted where permitted, his small hands surprisingly capable as he helped wipe down surfaces and organize tools for proper storage.

As they completed these final tasks, Silas studied the orphan with renewed interest. "You've got an uncommon mind, young Knox," he said finally. "Most boys your age couldn't sit still for ten minutes of this work, let alone a full morning. And still fewer would understand what they were seeing."

Guthrie looked up from the cleaver he had been carefully drying. "It makes sense to me," he said simply. "Everything has a structure. Once you see it, you can understand how it works."

"Indeed, it does," Silas agreed, taking the cleaver and hanging it in its designated place. "And that understanding is the difference between a butcher and a mere meat-cutter. Anyone can hack a carcass to pieces with enough strength and sharp tools. But to do it properly—to respect the animal's design, to maximize the value of each part, to create cuts that will cook well and taste good—that requires knowledge and precision."

He paused, studying the serious-faced child before him. Something in the boy's focused attention, his natural affinity for the systematic approach that characterized good butchery, resonated with Silas in a way he hadn't anticipated when agreeing to this unusual visit.

"How would you like to come back next Saturday?" he asked abruptly. "There's a lamb scheduled for processing. Different animal, different muscle structure. Might be educational to see the comparison."

Guthrie's eyes widened slightly; the first real expression of emotion he had shown all morning. "I would like that very much, sir," he replied, his voice carefully controlled despite the obvious eagerness beneath the words.

"I'll speak to your matron, then," Silas said with a decisive nod. "If she's agreeable, perhaps we can make this a regular arrangement. Saturday mornings before the shop opens to customers. You'd help with cleanup afterward, of course—earning your education, as it were."

"Yes, sir," Guthrie agreed immediately. "I'd work hard. I wouldn't be any trouble."

"I believe you," Silas said, and realized with some surprise that he meant it. There was something in this unusual child that inspired confidence—a seriousness of purpose, a natural discipline, that belied his seven years. "Thomas will walk you back to the orphanage now. We'll see about next week."

As Thomas escorted Guthrie back through the shop toward the front entrance, Silas Holloway watched the small figure in the oversized apron with thoughtful eyes. In his forty years as a butcher, he had trained several apprentices, but never one so young—and certainly never one who had shown such natural aptitude from the very first observation.

There was something different about Guthrie Knox, something in the way those serious gray eyes watched and analyzed and understood. Silas couldn't quite name it, this quality that set the boy apart, but he recognized its value. In his profession, such clinical detachment, such precise attention to structural detail, was not merely useful but essential.

The butcher nodded to himself; decision made. He would speak to Matron Smithson about a formal arrangement—Saturday mornings to start, perhaps expanding as the boy grew older and more capable. Blackwell Orphanage was always in need of financial support, and Silas had no children of his own to inherit his business. It was an unconventional arrangement, certainly, but one that might benefit all concerned.

As the shop door closed behind young Guthrie Knox, Silas returned to his workshop, unaware that his impulsive decision would shape not only the boy's future but, decades later, the very fabric of Daybridge itself. He could not have known that the skills he would teach—the precise dissection, the intimate understanding of how living things were constructed, the methodical transformation of once-living flesh—would one day be applied in ways he could never have imagined.

He saw only a serious child with unusual aptitude and focus—not the seeds of something that would one day become a monster.

In the years that followed, Guthrie's Saturday mornings at Holloway's Meat Emporium expanded into a formal apprenticeship. By age twelve, he was spending every day after school at the shop, learning every aspect of the butcher's trade under Silas's exacting tutelage. By fifteen, he had left school entirely to work full-time, developing skills that impressed even veteran butchers who visited from other districts.

Guthrie's quiet intensity, his meticulous precision, his absolute focus on mastering each technique—these qualities made him an exceptional apprentice. Where other boys might have been distracted by social pursuits or youthful rebellions, Guthrie remained singular in his dedication to understanding the structural intricacies of his chosen profession.

What neither Silas nor anyone else at the orphanage fully recognized was that this same clinical detachment, this ability to separate form from feeling, structure from sentiment, was developing in all aspects of Guthrie's interaction with the world. The emotional distance that made him an excellent butcher—able to transform living creatures into marketable products without distress or hesitation—was simultaneously creating a young man who moved through human society with the same analytical remove, observing social connections and emotional exchanges as systems to be studied rather than experiences to be felt.

By the time Guthrie Knox reached adulthood, he had become exactly what Silas Holloway had hoped for—a master butcher whose skills equaled or surpassed his own. But he had also become something neither of them had anticipated: a man whose understanding of physical structures far exceeded his comprehension of human emotion, whose precision with a knife was matched only by his disconnect from normal human bonding, whose perfect knowledge of how bodies were assembled existed alongside a profound ignorance of how hearts and minds connected.

It was this unique combination—technical mastery paired with emotional detachment—that would one day attract the attention of Eliza Blackwood, a woman whose own interest in the

transformation of flesh extended far beyond conventional butchery. When she first observed Guthrie's work at Holloway's, she recognized something special in his methodical precision, his complete comfort with the intimate details of mortality, his natural talent for understanding how living things could be taken apart and, perhaps, put back together in new configurations.

In Guthrie Knox, master butcher and emotional outsider, Eliza saw the perfect candidate for a very particular kind of transformation—one that would require both his skills and his psychological distance from normal human concerns. She saw not just a craftsman, but a canvas for her most ambitious work yet.

She saw the man who would become the Ogre of Daybridge Bridge.

Chapter 1: The Boy on Stygian Street

The air hung heavy with coal smoke as dawn broke over Daybridge in the spring of 1870. The city was transforming—brick factories rising like monoliths along the Shadowlair River, their chimneys belching black plumes that dimmed the morning sun. Horse-drawn carriages clattered over cobblestones while workers shuffled toward the textile mills and ironworks that had sprung up seemingly overnight, turning what had once been a sleepy river town into an industrial powerhouse.

On Stygian Street, in the shadow of the hulking Blackwell Orphanage, a woman's scream pierced the predawn quiet. Inside a small, filthy room at Madame Lowell's boarding house, seventeen-year-old Josephine Knox clutched at bloodied sheets, her labor having started hours earlier. The midwife—a withered crone who smelled of gin and carbolic soap—shook her head gravely.

"Push, girl," she commanded, her voice like rusted hinges. "The baby's comin', but you're losin' too much blood."

Josephine, a thin wisp of a woman with copper hair and emerald eyes now dulled with pain, summoned her remaining strength. With one final agonizing effort, she brought her son into the world. The newborn's first cry was powerful, almost unnaturally so for a baby born to such a frail mother.

"A boy," the midwife announced, wrapping the unusually large infant in a threadbare blanket. "Strong one, too."

But Josephine would never hold her child. Even as the midwife worked to stem the bleeding, the young woman's life ebbed away, her final whisper naming her son: "Guthrie... after my father."

By noon, the orphanage cart arrived, and Guthrie Knox—not yet twelve hours old—began his life as ward number 342 of Blackwell Orphanage, a grim, Gothic structure that loomed like a sentinel of misery over the Eastern Quarter of Daybridge.

Seven years passed in a blur of gray walls, watery gruel, and the constant drone of children's coughs. Blackwell Orphanage operated less as a sanctuary for Daybridge's abandoned children and more as a warehouse for unwanted humanity. Headmaster Silas Blackwell—a cadaverous man with fingers like talons and breath that reeked of cheap whiskey—ruled the institution with casual cruelty.

Young Guthrie stood out from his earliest days. By age seven, he was already larger than boys several years his senior. His broad shoulders and thick limbs seemed at odds with the malnourishment that plagued the other children. While they grew pale and thin, Guthrie thrived like a stubborn weed, drawing strength from the same meager rations that left others weakened.

It was this physical vitality, combined with the unsettling intensity of his gray-eyed gaze, that first caught the attention of Thomas, the butcher's delivery boy. The encounter in the orphanage courtyard—Guthrie's unwavering focus as he watched Thomas unload the day's delivery, his odd maturity as he questioned the process of breaking down a carcass—marked the beginning of the boy's journey from mere orphan to apprentice butcher, from unwanted child to something far more ominous.

At seven, Guthrie Knox already understood that he was different. The way he watched, the things that held his interest, the detached curiosity with which he observed the world—all set him apart from the other children at Blackwell. When Thomas offered him the chance to visit Holloway's Meat Emporium, to see firsthand how death was transformed into sustenance, the boy seized the opportunity with a focus that belied his years.

That first visit to the butcher shop opened a door in Guthrie's mind, one that could never be fully closed again. The sight of carcasses being methodically disassembled, flesh parted from bone with ritualistic precision, blood flowing in controlled rivulets—it resonated with something deep inside him, some wordless hunger that craved understanding of how things worked beneath the skin.

Silas Holloway, master butcher and owner of the shop, recognized the boy's unusual aptitude immediately. The uncanny stillness, the unblinking absorption of each phase of the process, the penetrating questions that cut to the hidden logic of the craft—in Guthrie, the old butcher saw a kindred spirit, someone who instinctively grasped the sacramental nature of his work.

And so, the orphan became an apprentice, trading the gray misery of Blackwell for the cathedral of blood and bone that was Holloway's. Every spare moment—stolen from chores and lessons, earned through impeccable behavior—Guthrie spent at the shop, learning at the master's side. His hands, so clumsy with childish games, proved preternaturally deft with a blade. His mind, so often chided for inattention in the classroom, focused like a burning glass when presented with the intricacies of anatomy.

In the blood-spattered sanctuary of the butcher shop, Guthrie Knox found more than a trade. He found a calling, a purpose that resonated in his very marrow. The first time he made the killing cut himself—the long, precise slice that transformed a living creature into mere meat—something shifted inside him. A hunger long denied took its first full breath.

And deep in the shadowed corners of Daybridge, ancient eyes marked the boy's progress with avid interest. Wheels that had been turning since before the city rose from the riverbank mud clicked into a new configuration. A plan centuries in the making saw a new piece slide into place on the board.

Guthrie Knox, so young, so full of promise. The boy who watched, and learned, and hungered. He would learn to cut so much more than mere meat in time.

All the time in the world.

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About the Author

Rae Stonehouse crafts dark supernatural mysteries where noir meets the paranormal. Drawing on over 40 years in psychology and mental health, he brings emotional depth and psychological complexity to urban fantasy. The Ethan Reeves series explores the shadows lurking in Daybridge—where every case uncovers secrets better left buried.

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Want to Know What Happens Next?

The Boy Who Watched. The Apprentice Who Mastered. The Monster Who Emerged.

You've witnessed Guthrie's first encounter with butchery. You've seen Silas Holloway recognize the boy's unsettling aptitude. You've watched an orphan find purpose in understanding how living things come apart.

But the transformation has barely begun.

What happens when technical mastery exists without empathy?

How does a skilled butcher become Eliza Blackwood's greatest creation?

And what connects the boy in Holloway's shop to the Ogre that Detective Reeves will hunt more than a century later?

The horror escalates in ***Blood Beneath Daybridge: The Making of a Monster.***

Guthrie's apprenticeship deepens as he masters every aspect of the butcher's craft. His clinical detachment—the quality that makes him exceptional with a blade—simultaneously creates emotional distance from all human connection. And when Eliza Blackwood appears with plans that extend far beyond conventional butchery, she finds exactly what she needs: a man whose understanding of flesh is matched only by his disconnect from humanity.

The skills will evolve. The hunger will deepen. And the question that fascinated a seven-year-old boy—"How does it all fit together inside?"—will find answers that transform him into something that haunts Daybridge for generations.

This is the origin story that connects directly to Shadows of Daybridge. This is how the legend began. This is the making of a monster.

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