

# Heart Thief

**I AM AFTER THE HEART** of the matter, the thick of it – the beating, pulsing thick of it. Seeking the hum which calls me sweetly – singing a haunting melancholy in the hush of evening when all is still and the people dream careless dreams. It sings to me and whispers that it is mine indeed. And when it cries out the loudest, buzzing at its peak, I sweep in through the cracks like a shadow and bear down, bear down to reap. The human heart is rarely used to its potential. In fact, it's used quite ill. I never feel badly about the harvest, my chance to take my fill. It's a freedom, an act of emancipation. My kindest, fondest task. To let the beating and pumping wander, give into its little wants.

And it is on an evening much like this, still and quiet, just so, that I steal down upon the twilight streets and listen; listen to the humming chords. It is far past midnight when the crescendo approaches, rising to that peak of delectable tune. Life has been unkind of late. The stress is undermining your hope. That trip you'd been carefully planning, well that, that it's been put on hold. Next year, you mumble, fumbling with drawstrings and buttons, slipping quietly into your bed. The bed which is cold, has been so, ever since your latest occupation. The one you care for most is absent,

gone for weeks and they're slipping, slipping away. It's numbness as you cage yourself off and focus on the pay. Focus on the merit and the doing and the work. The rising at five and the eternity of chore. Focus on the coffee and the parchment and the ink, on the walk up the drive and the city's link. Eye on the memos and the statements and the promotion you hope is lurking just out of sight. Another step up, another move forward. Play chess, play it with your life.

Deep, deep, fallen under the draught of sleep, I come just past two when your heart is humming, singing sweetly to me. I scale the walls of your light colored apartment, painted to seem cheery but the color's only faded to grey. I slip and I slide through the cracks in your window and settle in the dusk of your room. I perch on your bed, on the side where they should have been leaving no trace, no little indent. There you slumber in the thick of it and your pulse it jumps and I can hear the whoosh and the gush like poetry coming to life. There I know it's time. The reaping has arrived.

I'm swift, a master carver. My blade is made of Damascus steel and kept always at a point. You shift in slumber, falling flat on your back, eyes rolling inviting me to take what was never truly yours. Your heart, it's been waiting for me. And with a sigh I start and I cut and I cleave a perfect little flap. I draw it back and with a slurp it gives. You shine like a million rubies; you glisten with a sheen of pearl. I set aside my tools and my own chest it heaves as I plunge wrists deep inside, excavating, taking precious hold of the master of the song. I do not rip. I do not tear. I cut. I snip. You'd never know I was there. I steal your heart with the greatest of ease. It's mine. It wants to be free. With one hand I hold the pulsing, writhing mass and the other I sew you up tight. My skill with a needle is unrivaled. The thread it never shows. You'll never know. Never ever know.

My serpentine jaw it unhinges and I take in your heart in one swallow. And it burns within me making beautiful music, a chorus humming along. I sneak out as swiftly as I came in and still you sleep on, lost in the thick of it, never to know exactly what's missing, never to know what is quite wrong.