

THE WATCHER

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SAMPLE CHAPTER

PROLOGUE

She didn't know he was about to kill her of course. He stepped soundlessly behind the blonde, between chrome-coated elevator doors, his shoes gliding over polished grey marble. As she turned to the control panel to select her destination with a well-manicured fingernail, he craned his neck forward to inhale her scent. The sweet musky aroma curled around his nostrils pleasantly. It was familiar to him. It reminded him of her. *Anya*.

She stood waiting as the doors closed with a quiet hiss and the elevator started to descend. He glanced over her, taking in her elegant profile, her smooth alabaster skin, observing the details of her; breasts round and full, encased in a white shirt half a size too small and straining at the buttons, begging to be released. He noted the way her hair piled upon the top of her head, loose tendrils of spun gold escaping and caressing a slim neck. A hair pin edging its way out of the bun; aching to be plucked.

"It's an abomination, unnatural." His mother's voice in his head again. Would she never shut up?

Fingering the knife in his pocket as the elevator descended, he felt the sharp edge grate the pad of his finger. He clenched his fists, feeling the rage building inside him. How dare this girl taunt him so? The calm of the Brahms sonata being piped through to the elevator's occupants came in sharp contrast to his raggedly spiking mood. The feeling, rising within him, was irrepressible. The urgency to possess her climbed rapidly, like his blood pressure.

Unaware of his watchfulness, she fumbled around in the depths of her handbag, trying to locate something. The tilt of her lovely face tipped downwards in profile, made him catch his breath. Boldly he stepped forward, pulling the blade out of his pocket and placing one arm around her throat as he came up behind her, restraining her tightly against him. He didn't hesitate as he drew the blade deftly across the thin skin of her throat, slicing her neck.

The blood spurted violently as the blade bit into her jugular vein, spraying the shiny, mirrored walls. The piped sonata seemed to be slowing down and he felt as if the world had momentarily stopped. Blanched, devoid of colour. The only bright spots – the only things that existed at all – were her and him, and they existed in a lurid blur of light. He held her there, his head bent over her tumble of blonde hair, as she struggled pathetically in his arms, her body weakening with every kick.

He watched as she gasped her last, her mouth opening obscenely, as her fingers scratched at empty air. Drinking her in, he tried to memorise every atom of her, as her body became deadweight in his arms. Finally, in that last second, he felt the serenity that inevitably washed over him each time. A feeling of satisfaction. Of completion. *Peace*.

The temporary joy washing over him now would not last long though, he knew. Previous encounters had taught him this. He must act quickly. Stuffing the claret stained blade back in his pocket, he lowered the body reverently on to the ground, where it slumped, the girl's head lolling to one side, her expression one of frozen terror.

Peeling off thin black leather gloves, he rolled them deftly over his slender wrists, revealing the white latex medical gloves worn beneath. Retrieving a folded carrier from within the pocket of his coat, he shook it out hurriedly, unbuttoning the coat with speed, then hastily rolling it up and thrusting it inside the bag.

He reached into his pocket and pulled out the red velvet box, opening the lid and plucking the little gold necklace from its black satin cradle. Bending down, he placed it around her neck, his fingers scrabbling around for the catch as he fastened it. Pausing a second, he considered her, tilting his head to one side, before reaching down again and plucking out the hairpin. Long blonde hair tumbled down, some of the strands dampening and becoming bloodied by the wound in her neck as they fell. He peeled off the medical gloves hurriedly, stuffing them into the bag to join the coat.

The elevator stopped midway between the floor below and the one above, then, after some deliberation began to descend steadily again, taking its occupants, one dead, one living, into the bowels of the building. It came to a final halt at the basement, the doors opening with a hiss, and with one last parting glance at his handiwork, he was out and free, his smallish head with its neat cap of dark hair darting first left, then right, as he expertly scoped his environment.

The CCTV cameras this side of the building weren't working, he knew, they hadn't been working properly for three days now. The security firm wouldn't be here to fix them until Friday morning. Not that it mattered, he thought, pulling the scarf around his mouth. Confidently he made his way toward the exit, determined no one would stop him now. Exhilaration throbbed through him like a pulse. This was better than any high.

Reaching the small metal turnstile, he flipped it easily, passing through unchecked, deftly fleeing the horrifying tableau in the elevator, and escaping into the relative anonymity of the bustling London street outside.

The lift, called by some unseen patron, closed its doors again and began to ascend, the human cargo within encased within its sturdy walls. The blonde's now still body lay slumped on the floor as the elevator ferried it upwards, a tendril of bloodied blonde hair caressing the corpse's cheek in a close embrace; one black lace stocking top visible beneath the hem of the satin pencil skirt raised askew.

The Watcher releases on June 21st by Crooked Cat Books. Reserve your copy now at the special pre-order price here: getBook.at/thewatcher

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