

Grimoire: Thief

The final pin clicked into place with a satisfying, albeit quiet, click. With a gentle push, the door creaked open. I pulled the delicate metal instrument from inside the lock, stowed it back in my pocket.

Picking locks was the easy part. Now came the actual risk.

Breaking into a rich man's mansion, a man connected to the criminal underworld no less, was liable to result in a significantly shorter lifespan for myself. If I got caught, it was over. If I left behind evidence of my entry, it would become a competition between police and crooks to see who could hunt me down first.

No evidence. When I left the mansion tonight, there couldn't be a single hint of my ever having been there. As far as its occupants were concerned, there'd be no break in tonight.

I reached into a different pocket, pulled out the bundle of long, black cloths. Blindfolds. One for each of the mansion's servants.

One by one, I raised the Bands of Blind Sight to my eyes.

Two of the three maids were asleep, the third was in a common room eating soup. The cook was in a building separate from the mansion - a small hut they shared with their husband. The butler and the gardener were in bed together, their secret and forbidden relationship relegating them to a dark, rarely visited corner of the mansion. The chauffeur was elsewhere, waiting in a car at the party the mansion's owner and his wife were attending.

That left one person in the mansion unaccounted for - the daughter. And, unfortunately, I didn't have a blindfold with her hair in it.

Likewise, I didn't have the hairs of the wife nor the family patriarch. If I did, I wouldn't need to break in and steal them.

I pocketed the bundle of blindfolds, made my way through the mansion slowly, silently. I'd learned the layout from the eyes of its servants - memorised every room.

A few hairs were all I needed. A few hairs from the mansion's owner. Enough to make a single Band of Blind Sight.

Then I'd really be in the money. It'd be the easiest thing in the world to learn the man's secrets - the number to his safe, the secrets he kept with the crime syndicates, all his dark dirty activities. It'd be the easiest thing in the world to make money by selling that information.

All I needed were some hairs.

Here's to hoping that the mansion's maids weren't as efficient at their jobs as they claimed to be.

After a bit of carefully searching the master bedroom, I found quite a few hairs - long black hairs belonging to the wife and the short grey hairs of the master himself. More than enough.

I was just about to leave when the master bedroom's door creaked open, a womanly silhouette visible through the crack.

No time to hide. All I could do was crouch there, eyes wide.

The daughter - a young woman named Jennifer - stepped into the master bedroom, froze when she saw me there.

Her mouth dropped open, eyes huge.

Time seemed to freeze in that moment. We stared at each other, neither of us knowing what to do. My mind was blank, no answers coming to me.

I'd been caught. My life was done. Over.

All Jennifer had to do was tell her father what I looked like and I'd be dead within a day. I was done for.

A dark part of my mind offered unwanted suggestions. I could kill the girl, run away. I could threaten her, or blackmail her into silence. I could-

No, I had to tell myself. That wasn't me. That wasn't how I operated.

Jennifer regained her composure before I did. Her back straightened, eyes narrowing at me accusingly.

"Who are you?" She asked, voice hard. "What are you doing?"

I could tell from her eyes, her expression, that she knew exactly what I was doing - or at least what she thought I was doing. A thief come to burgle her home.

"I'm Davin," I answered truthfully.

That's the trick with getting people to trust you. Tell them the truth. People have a sixth sense when it comes to honesty and dishonesty. Tell them the truth and, even if they don't believe it's the truth, they'll quickly learn to trust you regardless.

The girl's eyes narrowed tighter.

"You're a burglar, aren't you? What have you stolen?"

Her eyes roamed over me, searching for any items that I might have taken. She saw nothing, of course. No bag of stolen valuables. Just me and my trusty, many-pocketed jacket.

To be fair to the girl, my jacket was big enough that I'd be able to stash a fair bit of jewellery in it. Not that I had, mind.

"Hair. A few strands of hair belonging to your mother and father. Nothing else, I promise."

Jennifer snorted in derision.

From the look on her face, she didn't believe me.

"Why on Earth would you steal *hair*? You're nothing but a-"

"Magic," I said simply.

She said nothing, just stared at me like I was a madman.

"I need the hair for magic spells."

"Bullshit," Jennifer growled, glaring now.

She thought I was making fun of her. Insulting her intelligence.

"It's true."

"Magic isn't real," Jennifer said, she took a step back turned her head to the side, opened her mouth. I could see it on her face - she was about to call out for help, scream that there was an intruder. In the next fraction of a second, my fate would be sealed.

"I can prove it," I said quickly, a little louder than was wise. I could hear the hint of desperation in my own voice.

Jennifer looked back at me, eyes still narrowed.

I reached slowly, non-threateningly, into my pocket and grabbed the bundle of clothes there. The collection of Bands of Blind Sight. Jennifer's eyes fell on them, a hint of curiosity glistering in her dark irises.

"Here," I nodded, holding the bundle of blindfolds out to her. "Proof, see?"

She led me into her private quarters - a bedroom, bathroom, living space and miniature library. I'd seen the rooms before, through the eyes of the maids, but actually being there was a totally different experience.

I could smell a faint, flowery fragrance on the air, feel the soft warmth. The furniture was elegant, expensive.

Jennifer sat down, looked at the blindfold in her hand.

She'd already tested it, tested them all. She knew the magic was real.

Most people took time to accept that kind of dramatic change to their world-view. It was one thing to believe that magic was possible, and another thing entirely to hold it in your hands - to have that belief proven true beyond a doubt.

From what I knew of Jennifer, she wasn't very spiritual. She studied the sciences - a

woman of reason and logic.

You'd think she'd be shaken, disbelieving. But no. She'd simply accepted her new reality, told me to follow her.

"How does it work?" She asked at last.

I inhaled, held the breath, sighed. So much for a quick in and out - this was going to take a while.

The story began with death - the death of a relative I'd never met and his inheritance. I'd been given a box with an odd book inside. The Undying's Grimoire of Body, Mind and Soul. A tome of magic spells. I told Jennifer about how I used hair to make Bands of Blind Sight, spied in on wealthy and powerful individuals, sold information I'd gathered to a select few cloak-and-dagger types.

"That's why you want my father's hair," the woman stated. It wasn't a question, simply her pointing out the facts.

I nodded my head.

Jennifer tilted her head to the side, eyes never leaving me.

"Okay," she said, straightening.

'Okay'? That was it? She didn't have any complaints about me spying on her father? No worries about what I'd do with whatever dark secrets I uncovered?

Jennifer saw the questions on my face, shrugged as if to say 'I don't care'. Then she smiled, leaned forward.

"Tell me more about this magic book."

"Why don't you unlock more pages," Jennifer asked, her slender finger drawing circles on my bare chest. She was laying next to me, the lower half of her body hidden under my blanket. Her chest, those lovely, perky breasts of hers pressing into my side.

I shrugged.

"Don't need to. The Bands are enough for me."

She stared at me for a long time, thoughts hidden behind her beautiful eyes. Six months, and I still had no idea what Jennifer was thinking. She was unreadable.

A smile spread her lips.

She leaned in, her lips brushing mine as her body shifted beside me. A second later, she was on top of me, straddling my waist. Hot fire blazed in her eyes.

I reached out, planted one of my hands on her hip, took hold of my cock with the other. I held it in place as Jennifer lowered herself onto me, closing my eyes and allowing the sensation to take over.

Above me, Jennifer gasped, let out a breathy sigh.

Her fingers were digging into my chest, pussy crushing my cock, her hair fell down and tickled my cheeks.

The bed creaked underneath us, muted slightly by the sounds of skin slapping skin, the soft panting. I opened my eyes, stared up at the beauty. She smiled down at me, leaned down and kissed my shoulder.

Her lips were like fire on my skin - leaving a tingling, burning sensation behind when she pulled away.

I forced myself to sit up, wrapped my arms around Jennifer and held her close. My face pressed into the paradise between her breasts, I began thrusting hard and fast. Jennifer's body danced and bounced against me, writhing in pleasure. Her hands wrapped around my head, squeezed it closer to her body, fingers digging into my scalp.

All the while, she gasped and moaned my name.

I woke up alone in the darkness, a cold breeze filling my room.

It took a moment to remember falling asleep with Jennifer in my arms, another to realize she wasn't there now.

I sat up in bed, glanced around my bedroom.

Drawers were open, clothes and junk scattered across the floor. My bedroom door was open and, from how cold it was, so was the front door to my small house.

It dawned on me slowly, painfully.

I climbed out of bed, walked over to the locked cabinet I kept the grimoire hidden in.

As expected, it'd been unlocked, pillaged.

She'd stolen it. Jennifer had taken the grimoire while I'd slept. Not just the grimoire, but the blindfolds too.

A memory flashed before my eyes. Jennifer asking me to teach her how to pick a lock. I'd thought it'd be amusing at the time - a rich girl learning to steal. Now he knew why she'd wanted to learn. She'd been plotting this.

All of it, their entire relationship - a lie.

A cold fist wrapped around his heart.

Betrayal.

And for what? Magic? Power?

Jennifer was the heiress to one of the wealthiest and most powerful families around. What could the grimoire possibly offer her that she couldn't gain through money?

It didn't matter. She wouldn't have it.

Not wanting to waste another second, I jumped out of bed, threw on a pair of trousers, ran for the door.

The moment Jennifer walked through the threshold into her private quarters, she spun around, began locking her door shut with bolts that hadn't been there the last time I'd been in the mansion.

Locks like that couldn't be picked. Smart.

Not smart enough to lock her windows the same way, though.

There was a leather satchel around her waist - one big enough and full enough to contain the grimoire.

I crept close, grabbed her from behind - making sure to cover her mouth before she could scream or cry out for help.

Taking the satchel from her was simple enough.

I released her, pushed her aside and walked back over to the unlocked window.

"Run as fast and far as you can," a harsh, angry voice sounded behind me. "I'll find you. And I will have that book."

As I scaled down the building, a shrill scream echoed from inside Jennifer's room.

"Thief! Help!"

By the time I discovered my mistake, it was already too late.

The satchel contained the grimoire, yes. But not the Bands of Blind Sight.

If she hadn't already collected some of my hair, it'd be the easiest thing in the world for her to do so now. My home was swarming with cops searching for me. I couldn't just walk into the place and ask if I could clean up - get rid of all the stray hairs left behind. No, it was only a matter of time until Jennifer had hairs and found a way to repurpose a Band of Blind Sight.

She'd find me, as she'd promised.

But not the grimoire. I wouldn't give her that victory.

Instead, I threw it away. Walked to a nearby river and tossed the grimoire in, watching with a satisfied smile on my face as the leather-bound book floated downstream - lost forever.