

The Thieving Fox

by Kitty March

With the back door closed between them Kevin could finally stop.

He stood, staring at the deadlock, transfixed for longer than he'd like...just in case. No shadows, just darkness and reverberations of kitchen white goods humming, mocking him behind glossy, bespoke, cabinets.

Beads of sweat stung his eyes and salted his lips. He wiped them away. Kevin noticed the blood smeared across the floor and up the units to the counter top. He screwed his eyes shut and the night swallowed him up like a thieving fox. His mind scrambled, heart thudding panic...he shivered. Kevin couldn't recall...fragments of the preceding hours shutter stocked an imagined order.

The door remained shut, Kevin felt safe.

It's surprising how much comfort can be felt from familiarity or disassociation. Kevin felt both. The outside world could no longer hurt him. Kevin lowered the kitchen blinds and whispered "Alexa...lamp on...warm white". Alexa obeyed. Kevin smiled. He stood at the sink, turned the fancy taps to tepid and held his bloodstained hands under. He plucked small splinters of glass from ragged cuts, oblivious to pain or crowds or blue lights beyond the blinds.

Once the water was running clear he purposely patted his hands dry. Kevin left the kitchen, took his Bluetooth headphones from the mirrored console table in the hallway, slid open a pocket door to the snug and eased himself down into an orange velvet recliner. He had time, this was his time. Kevin didn't want to think or speak or remember. The only comfort Kevin wanted, or knew, or could connect with, Bose'd left and right through his ears. Mike Oldfield... Tubular Bells. Kevin rearranged his unwelcome erection.

The world could wait and the thieving fox could take him to his den and devour him... if that was his fate.