

The Silver Thief

Jorden Thomas was considered a certified thief. Small nimble fingers, a steady hand, and quiet breathing, any touch went unnoticed by his victims. His body could bend and contort to fit through slightly open windows and slide under furniture with ease. He convinced himself that he only stole to keep alive, but more often than not, the darkness in his soul would seep through to his fingers, as if they were controlled by it. He would steal prized possessions, mementos, treasured school projects and family pictures. Stealing was a drug that constantly left him itching with withdrawal. It wasn't just to keep alive; it was to keep the darkness away, to keep the demons from whispering and ringing softly in his ear. When he stole, his oppressors were fed by the immorality in his actions, slowly gaining strength by his submission to their every whim. But only for a fleeting moment was he free. Then he was thrown back into the fierce war between the good in his heart and evil dripping from the voices in his head. With each burglary, the evils demanded more and more, slowly eating away at his already broken soul.

His life started out like many others did in his hometown. He was born into pain stricken poverty. Born on a whim, he was what some would call an accidental miracle. He had nothing to do with his family's money issues but his arrival made a bigger, gaping hole in their already thinly lined pockets.

He never had a real, stable home. Sometimes if his mother found legitimate work, his family could actually eat three meals in one day. On the uneventful days of survival, he lived off of free school lunch and course, canned nonperishables. On the hopeless occasions when their pockets seemed to be full of emptiness and his father had found his fists in the bottom of a bottle, Jorden would hide with his mother in abandoned efficiency on top of the bar his father frequented. Each time this happened, Jorden would draw a line on the wall, counting each time he saw his father stagger to the families' small van, drunk, smelling of sweat and beer drenched clothing, from the window above.

Jorden had reached 60 marks when his drunk, enraged father wandered in and found them. That night was a blur of fast flying fists and the silent cries of his proud mother. He watched as she shed her last tear and her even in victory, her lungs fell in the sudden conclusion

of her life. He knew she hated how they survived, how she loathed the man who loved with his anger fists, finally, now she was free from his father's death grip. Jorden didn't make it out of the efficiency unmarred either. Thankfully his father passed out after one blow to Jorden's head, he'd used up all his energy and anger induced adrenaline on Jorden's mother. He grabbed his few things, the car keys to the van, and ran before his father could wake up, even though it seemed he would be out for a while because of the rising sore on his head and the lifeless position he held in his drunken stupor.

The only physical sign of battle was a small strip of skin, scraped crimson from contact with his father's fist, to the right his perfectly straight nose. There seemingly was no concussion or damage done from the fall, which had been broken by rough concrete, but even if there was any harm done, it would've been over looked because of his elated confusion. He'd finally escaped the one man who had held him and his mother captive in his insane game of love and tears, but now he was alone without a clue on where to go. For all he knew, he had no other family to contact, little money, and very few resources. Though he seemed to be perfectly fine and completely whole, he was lost and complete in shock of what he had just seen. In all his 16 years he had never seen something so horrific. For what seemed like hours, Jorden sat in a daze wondering about his fate. He contemplated going back to his father, or calling the police, which would end him in the foster care system. All the while, he never once noticed the frozen silence that had enveloped him, or the slight dizziness that had succumb him when he finally stopped running, nor would he ever really see that he could no longer hear.

Jorden concluded that he would live on streets but he refused to live off of friendly handouts or small charity because of the large sense of pride his mother instilled in him. School had just let out for summer, giving him freedom to roam the streets but also taking away his only constant supply of food. It was three days after his mother died, the little amount of food left in his family's van was spoiled by the summer heat and for two days, hunger coated him like an extra skin. The three days had also been the first sighting of the evils, at first just visiting him in dreams, reliving his mother's last moments and the fiery rage roaring in his father's eyes. But

they began to venture out into the daytime, plaguing him throughout the lonely hours he spent hidden away from sunlight. One the first day of summer, they actually told him to commit the first of many robberies, whispering how he needed to do this to be a real man, to get back at his father and avenge his mother, they told him he was nothing, he would have nothing, if he didn't take from the innocent.

Four days of hunger and silence after his mother's death was the first time he stole from the Johnsons. The night blanketed him and the town with quiet darkness, coupled with night dwellers and their notorious bad intentions. But a few of the bad intentions were his, so the gloom worked to an advantage, hiding him and his dark brown skin from sight. Every house he checked was locked up like Alcatraz, each window tightly closed shut and locked to keep people like him on the outside looking in.

"Finally!" He quietly exclaimed when he saw a small window open leading to the second floor bathroom on the Johnson's house. To any normal person, the small open bathroom window would go unnoticed and for the attentive thieves, it would be two high up and too small to even think about using to enter the house. It only took a single stretch of Jorden's slender, lengthy limbs for him the climb up on the windowsill. Agility and the talent for conforming to small spaces had become a strong suit, he'd spent many hours cowered in the back seat of their car and countless times had he slithered through the small window of the efficiency to then go open the door for his mother. He took his shoes off to mute any sound of his feet on the floor. Slowly he bent his body and slipped through the window, the slickness of his sweaty hands proved as a small problem. He slipped and a after three more tries and he was finally in the bathroom. He crawled towards the door, silently pushing it open with is hands and crawling silently towards the kitchen. He stood up and began walking on the hard wood floor, feeling vibrations under his feet as if the floor boards were creaking but everything was silent to him. He made his way into the kitchen, softly knocking things over as he stumbled in search of food. His only saving grace was the deep sleep everyone in the house was currently under, masking his muffled stomps and clumsiness with their deep throaty snoring. He found an abundance of food, stuffing as much as he could in his school bag, which he had emptied before entering the house. The second his bag was full he began to walk toward the front door passing all these beautiful family pictures that seemed to call him and the demons inside him, immediately thinking better, he attempted to open

the window to the right, knocking over a small table on the way. But he didn't hear it clatter to the floor, nor did he hear one of the people in the rooms stop snoring and gasp as they realized someone was in their house. His only saving grace was the light at the end of the hallway that spilled into the living room and onto the window latch. He quickly scrambled up and out of the window to safety. He ran all the way to the only home he's ever known; his old, dirty van that he took from his father.

What Jordan didn't know was that Mr. Johnson had seen him in the house, immediately recognizing him as one of his students and knowing about his family issues, understood why he took the food. Jordan also never knew he was seen in the street starving in the hot sun of Greenville, Georgia or that the Johnsons had decided they were going to help him the next day by giving him handouts. But now they see that he likes feeling independent. If everything goes right they can provide for him without letting him know of their plans to secretly help him. Jordan never once realized he was deaf.