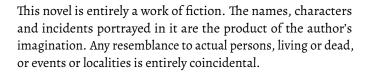
LOOT, STRINGS, AND HEARTBREAK

Aoife Hughes



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PROLOGUE

In the depth of the night I have always felt most comfortable. The stillness and quietness, but for the sounds of the wind and every so often a creak as a building adjusts itself, lets me feel like I've some control over my thoughts. The lack of stimulation allows my mind to breathe, and I can think clearly and focus on the task at hand. That is at least until *he* ruins it by opening his mouth.

"Do you think they're out?", Bill wondered aloud. As always he wasted words on things so obvious. To an external observer this might have seemed like a perfectly innocent and valid question. But, Bill and I have been at this a while and all the signs are there in front of him, same as me. To ask such a question fills me with worries about his competence for this job.

"No, the bedroom window is open."

"How'd you know that's the bedroom?"

I knew this would continue until daybreak if I let it. Bill has lived with me long enough to know that I heard

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his question and was purposefully ignoring it.

CHAPTER ONE

CHAPTER TWO

CHAPTER THREE

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CHAPTER FIVE

CHAPTER SIX