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Unnamed Valentine

I peek around a corner, see her pale flesh gently expand and decline with each soft intake of breath and beating of her heart. She is perfect; in fact, she even reminds me of you. I come around the corner ever so slowly, and stroke her smooth, warm cheek with the side of my knife, a chill running down both of our spines, and for a moment, we are one. Then, just as her eyelids begin to flutter open, eyelashes untangling from sleep's embrace, I slash the knife across her throat, blood first spurting through the air, then bubbling out of the wound as I press deeper. Another soul becomes a part of me through its pain. I feel the warm blood splatter seeping into my chest with a gentle stroke of a middle finger. One day, you will touch me in this way.

I push the knife into her breastplate, disappointed with the amount of blood left as the remnants pulse through her throat. Still, now I am able to stick my hand in her warm entrails. I know time is running short, and I should rush if I am to get you your present in time. But I am always hungrier after I've had a small taste. I let at least my hand revive, then get the last piece of the puzzle: a lover's heart. I slip the ring off her now completely lifeless finger, the part of me that is her craving it. I push it through my flesh and let myself cradle it inside me. I don't have time for such thoughts; I must get back. I slip through the wall again and fly to my home that has become my workstation, careful not to squeeze the blood out of the heart like I wish I could. I slip into the cavern and grab the only sole heart left on the desk. Next to it there are hundreds of others. I take my needle from its place on the other side. It is already strung expertly with two life veins, braided together just as they are in the wrist of the hand you will touch me with. I should've taken one of her veins, stupid. I've done this so many times, how could I forget? Oh well, in some loves one person holds on more than the other, but do not fear: I will use one from both of us when I bind our hearts. I begin sowing theirs together, with a wanting sigh. If I do it perfectly it will look like that heart symbol you so love. Forged out of love, together in life, bound in death, and embodied forever, inseparable, in the spirit of me.  On this night, February 13th, I am going to give you hearts, repaired hearts, whole hearts, for each of the broken ones you have seen, for each of the ones that made you stop believing in love. There's one for each of your parents, when they divorced. And your sister, when her husband had that affair, and your brother, when his girlfriend moved to Germany and said long distance would never work. For your aunt, when your uncle promised life then left. For your grandfather when he watched cancer eat away your grandmother. For your cousin when she came home from the party sobbing, and numb, and you couldn't tell what was wrong till long after the rope was taken away.

This, this heart is Denise and Daniel, who are still madly in love fifty years later. This is Aaron, who's helping Katie deal with her depression every day. This is Stephen, who worked through everything with Cassie even after she cheated. Dave had watched Amy in a coma for five years, just waiting until she woke up, still loving her when she did. This is Regina, who does everything for Joey since his accident. This is Matt, who made long distance work with Juliet until he could come back from war. This is Shellie, who learned sign language for Doug. This is Kevin and Maddie, who pulled together rather than apart through the death of a child. This is Kelly and Alex who were friends for years before either said anything; Diego and Mallory were enemies; June and Faron couldn't muster up the courage to talk to each other; John loved someone besides Lynn. And so many other hearts, so many other stories, turned from bad to better by the bonds formed for another. There is only one pair missing. The beauty, and the beast. And so, I will give you a pair of hearts for every heart you saw broken, and maybe you will wake up tomorrow's Valentine’s Day morning, and begin to believe in love again. So that tomorrow night, when I come, you'll think about all the amazing love stories, and maybe, just maybe, see it fit to give me your heart, because I have loved you since before you were a twinkle in your mother's eyes, and every single second since then, and now, I present myself to you, a living sacrifice. And I will give myself to you either way, but, will you take it?