

# Sonata for the Deaf

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Urban nightfall squints through neon  
glasses at a rainstorm gone on too long.

Two lovers, clumsily climbing out of an impatient cab, stare up at the high-rise  
apartments before them.

Now in the center of the sprawling downtown, it seems Eve was right about taking  
Main to 7<sup>th</sup>.

“He does live here right?” Adam intones, his face reflecting the strawberry glare of  
taillights.

She rolled her eyes, stepping over a puddle.

“Doubt again? I need your trust if we’re gonna be up there talking to Flesh...”

“So I’m still high from the pre-dinner joint but, of course, I trust you... His name is  
Flesh?” Doubt strikes again.

The pair was new to the city, the weed was gone and one of the drug dealer’s pretty  
girlfriends had hooked them all up.

Eve laughed, leaving a soprano note tinkling on the street as the two entered the  
dingy apartment elevator.

The apartment floors lit up successfully while Adam leafed through crumpled bank notes, his free hand still holding Eve. Deceived by the rusty elevator, the lovers were surprised to find the top floor exquisitely decorated, thick carpets gutting the serpentine hallways. Reaching the door, they hadn't even time for nervous breath before it swung open to reveal a white flash of teeth above a dangerously low blouse.

Adam choked, wincing from the sudden blush of Eve-fueled heat to his left.

"The twelve o'clock for Flesh?" the ivory-skinned beauty asked, amusedly.

She eyed them for a moment though simultaneously waving them in.

Eve answered, "We talked to Mischa? She dates FI--"

Cut off by a deep voice with an untraceable, yet barely audible accent, the lovers stopped short in the front room, abruptly abandoned by their escort.

"Welcome. I see you've not lost your way just yet," Flesh laughed. The vaulted ceilings loomed, occasionally kissed by the wandering tendrils of smoke below. Slow music unwound from a corner of the room, the lone bassist's seemingly feminine face turned towards the floor.

Flesh reclined on a leather throne with the iron weight of a man who needed nothing. The disfiguring burn under his right eye made Adam wince internally, wondering the origin of the dealer's name. A small pharmacy's worth of drugs lie before him, all kinds, all unmarked in various plastic baggies.

Adam collected his voice.

"Sorry to bother you but we're new to this town, friends of Mischa, you know, and were simply wondering if--"

Adam choked off again, this time interrupted by a ringing cellphone.

The glossy interruption was casually flipped, the speaker at the dealer's ear while he held up a crooked finger to the couple.

"Forgive me, I'm going to answer this. It won't take long and I'm still gonna help you out." He pointed to a jar of weed, "To tide you over; nothing else."

Flesh waited at the doorway for a second before stepping outside with yet another girl on what looked like to Adam to be some sort of balcony.

"Thank you," Eve quickly added to no one in particular as the door slammed shut.

The bass player continued with her set, as seemingly oblivious to the dealer's exit as to the lover's arrival. Eve, her eyes a marijuana shade of rose, noticed that the young woman was left-handed, the bass restrung accordingly.

The two looked at the weed before looking back at one another again as the original escort returned to give them a glass bowl and lighter.

"Good shit, really good shit," she said, motioning to the weed while scooping up the rest of the drugs on the table. Making idle conversation with them, she knocked over two baggies on accident distracted by a misplucked string.

"Mess up while he's away," she warned on her way out, not even eliciting a pause from the bassist.

The lovers were "alone" again and as Adam ground the frosted buds, Eve inspected the bowl.

"Thick glass," she remarked, "Flesh is supposed to be the real deal. Not only did he grow this weed, but I've heard he's something of a chemist."

Adam took the bowl from her, thoughtlessly packing it.

“Like he makes his own drugs or he makes drugs in his free time?” Adam asked,  
looking for that lighter.

“Not entirely sure, though I’d prefer the latter,” she told him quietly eyeing the bassist.

Adam didn’t meet her eyes when she looked back because he had just remembered  
the two baggies an arm length away underneath the couch.

Eve took the lighter to the bowl, green giving way to black.

The bassist started up another song from her corner, this one more moving than the  
last. Her fingers made a snapping rhythm, punctuating the melody, while weaving a  
tune that made the lovers unravel upon one another through the haze of the  
marijuana.

Eve exhaled slowly, her head on Adam’s shoulder so that her lips found his ear.

Adam inhaled slowly, careful not to drop his newfound discovery.

“Babe...” he nodded towards his lap in the third movement of the bassist’s song.

Eve ran a soft hand between his legs mistaking his nod. The third movement was  
proving to be too sexy for that kind of mistake. He released his breath audibly, able  
to feel the bassist’s gaze from behind him shift for but a second. His heart skipped a  
beat. *Flesh is the real deal...* He could not get caught stealing from a damned drug  
dealer, especially one rumored to be any kind of deal.

The one baggie held several mysterious looking tabs but the other held two electric  
blue pills.

“I’m not doing pills with you,” Eve hissed in Adam’s one ear, her grip now strained  
against him.

“Well there are only two so it’d be sketchy anyways,” he slipped out two tabs from the one, casually tucking both bags in the cushions of the couch away from the two.

“If I wasn’t high...” she whispered, weighing the decision under the vaulted ceilings.

The music crackled from the bassist’s amplifier, vibrating through the nervous systems and words, spoken and unspoken, of the people in and outside of that room, spilling over onto the jumbled city skyline outside.

The lovers clasped hands on the sofa, eyes beginning to dilate in response to what the two thought would make the walls breathe and warp. With the music under their skin and the drugs smoldering in their veins, they’d almost forgotten Flesh even existed.

“Enjoying yourselves?” Flesh questioned, striding back into the room.

The bassist faltered ever so slightly, continuing with her face obscured by her flowing hair.

Adam had put on shades and Eve kept her eyes down as both had pupils in almost complete eclipse. Flesh weighed the marijuana, looking Eve fully in the eyes before turning off the scale. The dealer rose to grab a bag.

“It’s not bright in here is it?” motioning at Adams glasses, “let me make up for the wait; I’ve something for the two of you.”

The lovers looked at one another, shrugging.

“You don’t have to, you know?” Eve started before Flesh hushed her with a hand.

“Just do the damn free drugs and protest less,” he laughed, the mirth not reaching his predatory eyes.

The chemicals the lovers had ingested boiled the room somehow, peeling the essence off of everything to leave the skeletal leftovers just barely propped up. Eve wondered if Adam was sweating similarly.

“I heard you were a chemist,” Eve attempted casually, leaning in though her eyes looked elsewhere still; she sounded diseased to Adam.

Flesh quickly looked up from the powder he was chop-chopping, eyes raking her very being for an eternity-spanning millisecond.

“I dabble, I suppose. Creation on such a scale...” he paused, scraping the powder covered mirror before handing his drug-covered card to a blonde, leggy woman.

Peering at the lovers, she softly kissed his neck before licking the card clean.

“You’re not allergic to ecstasy are you?” Flesh questioned, his tone bordering on rhetorical.

The lovers stuttered in dissent and Flesh waived them over carelessly.

“Pure. Even the forest burns every now and then though,” he warned.

Adam’s glasses fell low while he snorted the long Z-shaped line off the glass and he messed up Eve’s line pushing the aviators back on his nose. Eve took her line immediately afterwards, inwardly intent to leave the drug dealer’s smoky den.

“Takes a moment to feel, huh?” Flesh spoke, quietly.

No sooner than that was said, the sensation of angry fire ants erupted in each of the couple’s nostrils, stinging their eyes and fracturing their swollen vision.

The room started to tilt uncontrollably and Eve threw up on the floor.

Flesh stood and walked over to the bassist. Adam, bent over Eve, distantly wondered when the bassist had stopped playing.

“Look at me,” Flesh demanded of both Adam and Eve, lifting the bassist’s stricken face with a cruel hand and squeezing her cheeks.

“The only thing I loathe more than disobedience is an encourager of disobedience.”

With his free hand, he broke the bassist’s left hand in one fluid, violent movement.

The screaming was cut short as he slapped a veined hand over her red mouth.

“Before you entered, did you ever contemplate the eventual mutilation I’d exact once you’d stolen from me?”

Adam eyes bulged as he desperately searched for a place to vomit. To his side, Eve straightened up rapidly from her opened purse, flicking what looked to be a thin knife in the dim light. Pain bloomed from the back of her head and as Eve’s consciousness flickered, she vaguely wondered if it were still raining outside.

“Mischa gives her regards,” Flesh said absently.

Two of the dealer’s harem grabbed Adam on either side, motioning for the other girls to drag Eve similarly. Flesh sat down on the couch and lit the unfinished bowl, exhaling a full nebula to consume the room and muffle the sobbing, young bassist in the corner. One could just barely make out the sound of Adam pleading when the door slammed shut.

The city was a garden, its speed rails, vines, existentially tangled in pursuit of pleasure.

The resident worms, mortal as suns, drowned under the mute foliage of deaf constellations.