

# The Indigo Heart

A Short Story  
By  
Chris Riley

## **The Indigo Heart:**

### **1**

The water was cold, but still I lay there, my toes resting against the bath taps.

Chills jolted up and down my spine like volts of electricity flowing through me. It tingled, and my body flinched and flickered. My eyes rested, shut tight, but I was not asleep. My mind looked out, as my body remained captive to the cold water. I watched, forced.

The pictures in my mind were vaguely familiar.

My mind played the film, flickering like the old celluloid film rolls, and every now and then scratches appeared to the sides of the pictures.

I saw a man flat on his back. He appeared to be sleeping. The bed was wide with a frumpy flowery duvet. The room looked like an American motel. Every few moments, his bare chest rose and fell, followed by the snorts of the expelled air.

I watched the film closing, and noted his eyes flickered. He was dreaming.

The camera changed angle and zoomed in on the man. There was a close up of his face, but the film appeared to be misty, and everything was blurred. The camera stayed on the face for a few moments and then zoomed out again, backing away.

I watched closely as the tension seemed to be mounting. I could sense the director's intentions, and now the camera flicked around the room. There was a clock ticking in the background, and now the noise moved into the foreground. The clock came into view, and then it was gone again, and the noise was fading back.

The bedside cabinet came into view, and I noted a pair of glasses rested on top of a book. The camera moved in closer, trying to bring the title into focus, but just like the face of the man, it remained fogged.

Once again, the camera turned, but this time it was looking for the door. When it reached it, the camera fixed on the handle. It waited patiently, and I felt the tension building further. My heart was pounding in my chest and I held my breath, waiting.

The camera watched, waited...

The handle moved, and I felt my heart jump.

I watched as the door opened, and a gloved hand came into view, followed by a figure dressed in dark clothing. I wanted to scream out, to rouse the man and wake him, but my voice froze in the water along with me. The camera shifted, looking from above, watching the man on the bed. His face was out of focus still, and then from the left side the dark figure moved in.

I watched in horror. The sleeping man didn't stir. He knew nothing of the impending danger. Again, I felt the urge to scream, but nothing came out. The dangerous dark figure stepped closer to the bed, making no noise as he moved through the room.

The camera shifted, and now lay on the bed, behind the sleeping man's head. It looked out at the looming dark figure. The gloved hand reached into the inside the dark clothing. When the hand moved back, it moved out of view, but I knew there was an object clasped in the gloved hand. Films like this are always predictable.

The object was a knife.

I could see the chest rising and falling on the sleeping man, soft snorts rose from his nose as the air pressed its way out.

In one swift movement, I saw the glint of the knife come down and plunge into the chest of the sleeping man. Blood spurted out, uncontrollably. The man remained asleep, knowing nothing of his own death.

The blade came down a second time, then a third, and then oh God I felt sick.

I watched as the man gave his final breath and passed from our world to the next. I felt the sickness rise in my stomach.

My eyes opened, and I sat upright.

*Had I been dreaming?* I thought.

I was cold and wet, shivering in the bath. I quickly stood and felt the rush of blood to my head. Butterflies flew in my vision, taking a few moments to pass. As I wrapped the towel around my body, I shivered, unable to shake the images from my head. It left me feeling very uncomfortable and all too aware that I was alone.

I half dressed and flopped onto the bed. Within minutes my tired eyes were closing once again, and I knew soon the dreams would come again. They had haunted me all my life. I drifted into a dreamless sleep.

Off in the distance I heard a faint chime of a clock and the soft ticking.

## **2**

An elderly lady stepped into the mortuary room led by Sergeant Robertson. She stopped by the side of the table; a clean white cloth covered it, hiding the body beneath. She looked up at the Sergeant and nodded. He reached out and lifted the cloth just enough to expose the features of the face. The lady burst into tears and immediately the sergeant dropped the cloth and led her out of the room.

It was almost an hour before she had calmed down enough to speak.

“He had dreams.” She spoke. “He started having them when he was six. We thought he was ill, but the doctors didn’t agree. In years to come, we took him to see psychotherapists, but they found nothing wrong with him.” She trailed off, wiped her eyes and then continued. “Three years ago, he met a lady on his travels; she told him he had a gift. She called it the Indigo heart, we called it a curse. He didn’t understand, we didn’t understand. If only we had understood, he could have prevented this.”

“Nothing could have prevented this.” The Sergeant spoke softly, trying to calm the woman down.

“You don’t understand.” She said, shaking his head. “He saw death; he saw it every time he closed his eyes. He saw people dying, being murdered by their family, by their friends. He saw their lives draining away. He saw it like you or I would see a film at the cinema.”

“You think he saw his own death?”

“Yes,” the woman did not hesitate, and then shook her head. “If only he had listened to it.” The tears came again, but she stood up collected her things and left without another word.

Sergeant Robertson sat for a few minutes longer thinking about what she had told him. With a smile to himself and a shake of his head, he dismissed everything that she had told him.

A few hours later, he was passing the mortuary room when he stopped. He stepped into the room and paused by the lumpy cloth. He rolled it back to see the face of the dead man brought in early that day.

*Chris Riley*

He shook his head, dismissing the theories that had been swirling around his head, and then he hesitated. He saw something in the blank stare of the man's half open eyes. Without thinking, he reached out and touched the man on his forehead.

A powerful image flashed through his mind and he screamed out as he saw his own death. He ran from the room, screaming and crying something about a bloody Indigo heart.

He left the police force a day later, reporting he couldn't live with the constant threat of danger, but he never told anyone the truth. They would never have believed him.

Four years later, he heard a news report about a police sergeant from his old force. He had just cuffed a man when a second shot him four times. He died instantaneously. Scott Robertson shivered, shaking his head, those bullets used to have his name engraved in them.

He owed his life to the man with the Indigo Heart.