

THE HAPPINESS THIEF

by
Derek Boyes

DRAFT 5
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National Film & Television School
Beaconsfield Studios
Station Road
Beaconsfield
Bucks HP9 1LG
Tel: +44 (0)1494 671234
Fax: +44 (0)1494 674042

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EXT. FAIRY TALE TOWN. NIGHT

1

Dead of night. The moon is full and bright in the sky. The fairy tale town is bathed in moonlight. It's deserted.

2

EXT. HOUSE. NIGHT

2

A darkened house. Moonlight glints on an attic window. From inside, the sound of a young child playing happily. A toy figure hits the window and drops out of sight. Moments later a young six year old boy comes in to view.

3

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

3

The room is an idyllic children's bedroom, but there are dark patches where pictures once hung, tea chests packed with toys peeping out of the top, and no curtains at the window, allowing shafts of moonlight to fall on the floor. It's a room in the midst of being dismantled.

The toy figure, has fallen under a bed. The boy attempts to retrieve it without waking his older sister of ten, who seems asleep above.

He picks up the toy and turns away with a confident grin. Her eyes remain closed, but a frown appears on her forehead.

GIRL

Timmy, Go to sleep!

The BOY freezes momentarily, before reluctantly putting the toy figure back in the tea chest. But something catches the boy's eye. He looks back at his sister and then quietly pulls out a small wooden box from the tea chest and returns to his bed.

He looks at all the different pictures on the sides of the box and finding a hook on the front, pulls it.

The box springs open, revealing a grinning looney face that makes the boy jump. He laughs loudly, then looks up at his sister in fear.

The GIRL leaps out of the bed and picks up her blanket and pillow. She is furious.

GIRL (CONT'D)

Timmy just stop it! Don't you understand?
We're not going on holiday you know. It's
all going to change. Everything!

HAPPINESS THIEF

Shhh!

He smiles, leaning down to be his height.

HAPPINESS THIEF (CONT'D)

Hello little ray of sunshine, little giggler. Do you like magic?

He pulls tied silks from his breast pocket, pushes them into his fist and then opens his hand and blows.

Sparkling golden dust shoots into the air, illuminating the HAPPINESS THIEF's face for a split second. He's gaunt, pale, and evil. The BOY is oblivious, watching the wonderful twinkling dust, trying to catch it all.

8 **INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT**

8

Curious, the GIRL pokes her head out of the cupboard, as the HAPPINESS THIEF then produces a long glass straw from his cloak. He raises it above his head and then plunges it violently into the BOY's chest.

The girl jumps with horror and darts back into the cupboard, as he sucks hard. A bright golden light travels up the straw illuminating the Happiness Thief's creepy old face.

The BOY looks scared, the colour draining from his face, as his whole body shakes violently. The Happiness Thief keeps on sucking, making the boy weaker and weaker and himself younger and healthier.

9 **INT. CUPBOARD. NIGHT**

9

Watching through the curtain, the GIRL sees the HAPPINESS THIEF stand up tall. He belches loudly, yanking out the straw from the BOY's chest and letting him fall lifelessly onto the bed like a rag doll.

The GIRL jumps again, banging her head on the ceiling.

10 **INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT.**

10

Hearing the noise, the HAPPINESS THIEF cocks his head and turns slowly, looking around the room. He notices the small cupboard and grins.

11 **INT. CUPBOARD. NIGHT**

11

Seeing the HAPPINESS THIEF's eyes falling suspiciously on the cupboard, the GIRL backs away until she runs into the wall.

His spindly shadow casts over the thin curtain, getting bigger and bigger, until the cupboard is plunged into darkness, leaving only her frightened eyes still visible.

She trembles, as a bony finger curls slowly around the thin curtain and then yanks it aside. The GIRL shuts her eyes tightly.

The HAPPINESS THIEF's face peers into the darkness. He sniffs a few times, then pulls back, pirouettes and vanishes.

12

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

12

Frightened, the GIRL creeps out into the room. It's back in natural shadow. The HAPPINESS THIEF is gone. The boy lies lifeless on the bed, his breathing very slow and heavy.

GIRL (FRIGHTENED)
Timmy, Timmy?

He doesn't move. She takes a few steps closer.

GIRL (CONT'D)
Are you alright?

Again there is no response from the boy. She takes another few steps up to his bed and pulls on his sleeve.

GIRL (CONT'D)
Timmy, What's wrong?

His face flops to the side revealing his hollow eyes that stare into oblivion. Her eyes fill.

GIRL (CONT'D)
I didn't mean it!

The HAPPINESS THIEF leers gloatingly at her through the window behind.

HAPPINESS THIEF
Feeling guilty now are we?

The GIRL looks at the window, her face floods with anger. He laughs cruelly, then disappears from view.

The GIRL storms after him, pulling a toy trunk over to the window and stands on it to lean out.

13

EXT. ROOFTOPS. NIGHT.

13

She sees the HAPPINESS THIEF leaning against the far corner of the ledge.

GIRL
Come back here!

He looks behind him and then points innocently at himself, before pulling a devilish grin.

A hand covers his mouth and pulls him back around the corner (The hand being his own).

HAPPINESS THIEF
Come and get me!

The GIRL pulls herself out onto the windy ledge and looks down to see another four floors below. It makes her dizzy.

She bravely edges her way along the ledge. Her bare feet slip on the shiny lead, as she eases herself around the corner.

The Happiness Thief watches from another nearby rooftop, lounging against a chimney pot, whistling his 'Happiness Song' with amusement.

Her foot suddenly slips again. She grabs a drain pipe for support, but it comes away from the wall and she slips down even further, her legs dangling off the ledge, struggling to find a grip.

The Happiness Thief laughs behind her, as she manages to pull herself back up.

GIRL
(shouting)
Give my brother's happiness back!

He ignores her

GIRL (CONT'D)
Please!

The Happiness Thief flips his legs over and slides down the rooftop. He pirouettes and then leans across the large gap between the two buildings, so that he is inches away from the GIRL's face.

HAPPINESS THIEF
If you knew how I could get more
Happiness, then maybe I'd consider it.
But I doubt very much that you do!

The Happiness Thief turns and walks away. The GIRL panics.

GIRL
You can....

The Happiness Thief stops and turns around.

HAPPINESS THIEF

Yes?

He pretends to sit down on an imaginary chair waiting for her to finish her sentence. The girl struggles to continue the sentence.

HAPPINESS THIEF (CONT'D)

In your own time my sweet little petal.

The Happiness thief's eyes roll back into his head and he falls to the floor snoring.

GIRL

You can take my Happiness instead of Timmy's!

The HAPPINESS THIEF's eyes open suddenly, as he bursts into uncontrollable laughter, flipping backwards onto his feet and leaping over to the opposite building. He pulls out a small hand mirror from his coat and swings the girl around, over the edge, so that she can see both of them in the reflection.

HAPPINESS THIEF

Tell me, what is wrong with this delightful picture?

The HAPPINESS THIEF pulls a huge grin. The GIRL looks frightened. He swings her back onto her feet and leans into her face.

HAPPINESS THIEF (CONT'D)

You!

He throws the mirror away and heads off around the back of the building.

HAPPINESS THIEF (CONT'D)

There's nothing here for me, not even a crumb the size of a flea.

The girl follows him cautiously as out of sight, we hear his voice echoing across the rooftops.

HAPPINESS THIEF (CONT'D)

Nil, nothing, zero, zilch! If I stay around any longer I am likely to die...

The girl peers around the corner, as the Happiness Thief suddenly rises from behind her and shouts in her ear.

HAPPINESS THIEF (CONT'D)

Why?

The girl jumps and spins around to face him.

HAPPINESS THIEF (CONT'D)

Because you, my dear, are just a horrible
disgustingly unhappy little girl!

He leaps back over to the other rooftop.

GIRL

But that's not true! Look.

The GIRL does a little song and dance. It's pathetic

GIRL (CONT'D)

(anxiously)

I love happiness, I love smiles.
Ice cream makes me happy. And pizza...

He looks back at her with a scrunched up face.

HAPPINESS THIEF

I do better than that on a bad day.
Please little girl stop wasting my time.

The Happiness Thief bounces up to the top of the rooftop.

GIRL

No Wait!

Desperate, the girl makes the leap over to the other
rooftop, but it is too late, the Happiness Thief waves
goodbye, and falls off the rooftop, disappearing below.

The GIRL looks lost and falls to the floor.

GIRL (CONT'D)

(to herself)

But I can be happy.

She closes her eyes.

GIRL (CONT'D)

When I get hugs and cuddles and sing
songs with my Mum. Walking in the park
when the sun shines.

The Happiness Thief's face suddenly appears from the
other side of the rooftop, looking pleasantly surprised

GIRL (CONT'D)

When Dad used to take me to feed the
ducks. He used to hold my hands and swing
me around and around, and when I got too
dizzy, he'd pick me up again and spin me
the other direction

The Happiness Thief slides down the roof, stopping in
front of her. He is salivating, as he pulls out the glass
straw, raising it up high above his head and then stabs
it hard into her chest.

The GIRL opens her eyes with shock, to see the HAPPINESS THIEF leering at her.

GIRL (CONT'D)

You will give Timmy's happiness back
won't you?

His face looks evil and horrible.

HAPPINESS THIEF

No!

The girl looks terrified, her eyes fill with panic, as the Happiness Thief starts to suck. She starts to shudder violently, as a single tear runs down the her cheek.

Through the glittering gold, a black blob suddenly shoots up the straw and into the Happiness Thief's mouth. He immediately backs away, pulling out the straw from the girl and swallows heavily.

HAPPINESS THIEF (CONT'D)

What was that?

The girl backs away from him.

GIRL

What have you done!

He suddenly grips his throat tightly, spinning around in a panic.

He spasms violently, loosing his balance and stumbles off the edge of the building, out of sight.

Seconds later, there is a heavy thud, as the Happiness Thief hits the ground below. A strange powerful rumbling follows.

The GIRL creeps up to the edge of the roof top and peers over, just as a rocket of golden balls shoot up into the air and explode across the sky, illuminating the GIRL's surprised and happy face.

She watches the balls of light fall gently back to earth, as one by one they scamper away into a variety of windows.

One shoots into the children's bedroom window making the whole room inside glow with a warm light.

The GIRL climbing back through the window and jumps off the toy box. The boy lies still on his bed. She approaches him cautiously.

GIRL

Timmy?

She gently rocks him. His eyes open.

BOY

(anxious)

Is everything really going to change.

GIRL

Yes, but it'll be all right.

The GIRL then starts to pick up all the toys and put them back in the tea chests. The BOY jumps off his bed and helps her.

15

EXT. FAIRY TALE TOWN. DAWN

15

The clouds are thinner now, turning rosy with the dawn. The two children can be heard giggling happily from their room.

THE END