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Opening extract from  
**The Shadowing: Hunted**

Written by  
**Adam Slater**

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THE  
**SHADOWING**  
**HUNTED**

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ADAM SLATER

EGMONT

*With special thanks to Elizabeth Wein*

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*We bring stories to life*

*The Shadowing: Hunted*

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# Prologue

Rain drills the surface of the black canal. It's too dark to see properly, but the girl can hear it. Ahead of her, the narrow footpath is nearly blocked with rubbish tipped over the motorway embankment. The girl doesn't go any further. She's waiting for someone.

This is a bad place.

She knows it in her bones. She doesn't want to be here. Every nerve is telling her to run the other way. She peers ahead into the gloom, looks up at the dark windows of the warehouses, looks down in the gutter, looks over her shoulder. Her hands tingle as if they are

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on fire. She can't shake the feeling there is something or someone watching her.

But she waits anyway.

\*

It hungers, always.

It takes shape after shape as its own, and each body it puts on is as hungry as the last.

It crouches on slick tiles above the black canal. In the faint glow of the motorway lights, it can see the prey it has been seeking for the last three days. It makes the leap from slippery rooftop to wet street without a sound.

\*

The rain is relentless: the thunder of it louder than the swish of invisible traffic passing high above. The girl shivers. Water is seeping down her neck. She pulls up the collar of her jacket and looks behind her again. Nothing there. She waits with hunched shoulders and wide eyes, straining to see in the dark.

The girl jumps when the silent shape comes towards her along the footpath. For a moment, instinct tells her to run. But then she sees the face. She gives a little cry of joy and relief.

‘You took long enough! What a place to meet!’

She holds out her hands as she steps forwards. It’s a face she loves, a face she’s missed. How long has it been? More than a year. But he’s here now. He’ll know what to do.

He holds his hands out to return her greeting as he approaches. They are nearly within touching distance before she can see him properly in the dim light. And then, in an instant of confusion, she realises something is not right. She knows the face, but not the eyes. She does not know the savage twist of the mouth, nor the hands that are growing black talons as they reach towards her. She does not know this creature wearing her friend’s face.

But she knows it has come to take her life.

The revelation is like a jolt of raw electricity, shocking her so much she can’t think straight. Her mind tells her to run, but her body can’t move. When

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she opens her mouth to scream, no sound comes out.  
At last, she manages to make one foot take a step  
backwards.

But by then it's too late.

\*

The Hunter looks down at its fallen quarry. The hunt is  
less satisfying when the prize is taken so easily.

It turns and walks away in its borrowed shape.

It is still hungry.

\*

The girl lies by the black canal, her face turned  
upwards to the sky like a stargazer. But she will never  
see the stars again. Her eyes have been torn out. The  
rain fills the empty sockets until they brim over,  
spilling bloody tears down her cold, white cheeks.