

## A Strange Collection by Palak Tewrary

I collect hearts – broken hearts. In horror, you jump a mile from me and look at me aghast. Yes, it sounds awful, doesn't it? It may be a trying tale to tell but tell I must. For this cannot be hidden, you know. I collect broken hearts. Truth be told, its not as easy as it may sound – for, though there are many that are and remain broken, not many are willing to trade them away. They keep them holding tight in their fist, as if it was gold that I had asked for. Or they try to hide it from sight, so sometimes it's difficult to know its there. Or they try and convince me that it is not shattered at all – simply bruised. Mayhap, they are trying to persuade themselves? I collect broken hearts. Even though it's not as easy as it sounds. Rummaging deep (sometimes), I find there are incalculable amounts to add to my collection. In every corner. In every junction. On every street. At every meet. And though they all come from different places, they all look the same. Crimson. Shiny. Broken. I collect broken hearts. You may ask what I trade in return. That's where the magic is, my friend. They can choose what they want. Listening ear. Shoulder to cry on. Someone to sympathise. Empathy galore. Laughter to share. Burden to bear. Someone to understand. A helping hand. A friend indeed. A hug that they need. Perchance, my story you shall share and foraging for my compendium may become easier. Tell them, I collect broken hearts.