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translated from the Croatian by Andrea Jurjević

## Devil & Freedom

I met the devil at eight in front of the mosque in Galata, and he immediately started talking about freedom in a way that made me think he must've been a newspaper editor or a diplomat.

You're in a city that has just about everything and no one knows you, are you ready to take that, he asked.

But I'm never quite ready, and I've never been interested in everything.

The devil rolls his eyes, drags me to the first *meyhane*, and starts stuffing himself with delicacies from the menu: lamb and chicken kebab, stuffed eggplant, *yaprak sarma*, anise liquor, pineapples on sticks, peppers with walnuts, black tea and iced almonds, shellfish, soups, warm hummus, marinated mackerel, *börek* and baklavas, beef salami and volcano soufflé, sheep cheese with mint, then liver and a few cubes of sugar.

You must be very hungry? I ask considerately. And the devil grabs the skinny four-eyed waiter, dips him into yogurt and takes a bite, spits out the glasses, burps satisfaction and says: Take all that life has to offer.

But I'm never quite ready, and I've never been interested in everything.

