

18+

Natalie Jacobson

# *At the demon's ball*

Gothic



Natalie Yacobson

**At the demon's ball. Gothic**

«Издательские решения»

**Yacobson N.**

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The beautiful Maerlin lives in a house by the sea. One stormy night, she manages to rescue a beautiful stranger who is shipwrecked. The young man is persecuted by demons, because he is the crown prince of the country on which the curse fell. Now Maerlin has to travel to a distant kingdom and attend a magnificent ball at which every mortal guest becomes a victim. Already on the way, a terrible danger awaits, but what you will not go for love!

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**At the demon's ball**  
**Gothic**  
**Natalie Yacobson**

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## SHADOWS BALL

Devilish dreams  
In them you are everywhere  
Sunny rose  
In this eerie darkness.  
Eternal spell  
Here above the edge of darkness  
You are my curse,  
Angel of beauty.  
Everything around is here forever  
Darkness and this blood  
You alone are mortal  
but only you are my love.

The bright light of lightning for a moment illuminated the castle on the hill. The building was beautiful, majestic, full of dark magic and secrets. How much terrible was in it, how many nightmares that settled there, turned its fabulous beauty into the embodiment of evil.

Running down a narrow stone staircase, Emily once again found herself in a huge hall, plunged into deep darkness. Only the light of lightning and the flickering of the candle threw reflections of a mysterious light on her beautiful face. It seemed that the very night, patronizing this world of nightmares, was laughing at her violent fear and eerie fright. She quickly looked around. There was only anxiety in her heart. The look, darting from side to side in a fit of fear, did not notice anything. But the danger was somewhere nearby. Every rustle made her flinch, like a doe, feeling the pursuit of those who hunt for her life. A sound sounded behind her, and she turned around, alarmed, but behind there was nothing but one ominous darkness and a frantic tremor of her own heart, transmitted to her, making the fluffy skirts of her white ball gown and long curly strands of her blonde hair that stood out from her delicate hairstyle.

She was afraid that they would return again, appear right out of this void, like ghosts, to destroy her once and for all. She thought she deserved their revenge. After all, he gave her this black gift, and she put him to death for the second time. Like instant flashes of lightning, pictures from the recent past flashed in her memory. Now they seemed to her just a dream. However, they were reality itself, as were the glare of flashing lightning. They disappeared like lightning, leaving nothing behind but an oppressive silence, preparing a new burst of dark light. The picture of how she enters the hall, sparkling with her beauty in the bright light of candles and the celebration of the ball, will never disappear from her memory. The crowd parted before her, he came up to her, and she danced with him. She is frightened by his fiery eyes, and then she desperately tries to escape from the circle of the dead or the fiends of hell themselves. It seems impossible for her to escape her own death. Until now, there was a roll of horror itself in her ears, her insane cry of pain and fear. She broke free of their crowd and ran away, but horror flashed in her blue eyes as he blocked her exit from the hall. Then, in a fit of fear, she grabbed that sparkling dagger and plunged it into his heart. Until now, his scarlet blood glowed with pain in her eyes.

Suddenly, in the wild whisper of a thunderstorm in the very silence sounded:

– Emily, Emily, Emily!

Emily looked around anxiously, tears now glistening in her frightened eyes, but why, could she admit it to herself.

Suddenly a dark figure appeared behind her, and clawed paws touched her bare shoulders. She turned around, no one again. Maybe the danger was left behind, or maybe it was already sneaking up on her.

Suddenly, all the candles around them burst into bright fire, filling the huge hall with warm light.

“Emily,” came from behind her, and she turned around. Her fear instantly passed when she saw such a familiar and beautiful face of a young man standing in front of her.

“I can’t bear it any longer,” she said, and her frightened voice echoed with a sonorous echo in the silence of the huge hall, “I don’t want to live in this gloomy fairy tale anymore.

“You don’t want to see the truth, Emily,” he tried to argue.

– No, not me, you don’t see it, – burst out from the beauty, – yes, you saved my life, but you took me to hell on earth. You snatched me out of the hands of my dreams, like a monster from a fairy tale, you threw me into a world of secrets, and now you doubt whether you acted wisely or just in you, at last, pity woke up. But creatures like you are incapable of experiencing either love or pity.

– You’re wrong, Emily, – he objected, – I tried to overcome the darkness, I wanted to give you the happiness that this world denied you.

“No, I will no longer stay here in this blue hell,” she said more than emphatically this time. – I want to save my life, my soul. Today I am leaving with or without you.

Her accusing voice rang out loudly in the dead silence. He, unwillingly, turned away from her. His eyes, filled with blood and fire, became insidious and sinister, a noble and beautiful face was distorted by a grimace. Pain pierced his body, and the all-conquering thirst for blood took possession of him, but the pain of his heart, where the love for the bright angel lived, was even stronger.

– What’s the matter? – burst out from Emily.

Even her voice, so beautiful and so beloved by him, could not stop his torment, but he could defeat the power of darkness that possessed his mind.

She looked at him, but what was happening to him. His long brown hair fell in a silky veil over his shoulders, he was as pale as death itself, and even his beauty could not hide the anguish that distorted his face. He cried out, clutching his hand.

“I’m sorry, Emily,” he whispered. – I am no longer eternal.

He raised his dagger and thrust it into himself. His body fell to the marble floor, but she involuntarily ran up to him, what was in her soul turned out to be stronger than fear, love remained invincible, and she bowed before him, he was still alive.

“I’m sorry, Emily,” he repeated.

“No,” she dropped to her knees next to him, and her blue eyes were full of tears.

“Don’t die,” she whispered, running her hand through his silk-soft hair and looking with a painful gaze at his young and handsome face, which already had the imprint of death.

He was dying, but his trembling hand passed over her beautiful face.

“Don’t cry, Emily,” he whispered, “my death is not worth your tears, take this and run. Rather, run away from here, you can leave, just don’t look them in the eyes, the power of death is hidden in them.

He put a golden cross in her trembling hand, the gold shone in the light of the witch’s night.

“I release you from our curse, my love, Emily,” he said, and her name echoed with some magic sound in the magical silence at the moment of his death. She involuntarily cried, but it was already useless, it was pointless to hug the cold corpse to her, and that beautiful face that she once loved so much, she had to save her life, although his death itself called her with him.

She ran out of the bright room, where once the joy of the ball shone, but now only peace and silence reigned. In the darkness of eternal darkness and evil, her bright beauty shone, the beauty of a beautiful angel. Suddenly she froze in place. In the gap of the stone stairs, he stood, the one who had already been dead twice and had risen in his devilish beauty. She looked into his fiery eyes. The chain of gold cross slipped out of her hand and hit the stone floor, and she, unwillingly, approached him, but his cold gaze did not express anything except the pain hidden in him.

“Forgive me, my fair angel,” he whispered, and the sharp teeth of the vampire dug into the neck of the fair-haired beauty. So they fell on the cold steps of the stone staircase, beauty and vampire, and the night itself took them into its arms, embraced by the gloomy, but incomprehensible and magical witchcraft that eternally reigned here.

## THERE WHERE LOVE DIED

The bitter dream  
Runs away with life  
The heart drowns  
In a whirlwind of witchcraft  
Death of sad love  
Where darkness is light  
Fills with mystery  
Everything where there is no life.  
All where life has crashed  
There is only fate again  
Surrendered to darkness  
But not you, love.  
Happiness escapes  
Into the quivering darkness  
But it saves  
A free dream.  
That dream forever  
In the heart of beauty  
It contains all the darkness of the river  
Love will not be killed.

Below, the sea was quietly rustling. High on the coastal rocks stood a dark and gloomy ominous castle in the gloomy beauty of its grandeur. A bright lightning, which for a moment cut in half the black sky above the castle, illuminated all its beauty, it was an invincible fortress on an impregnable rock, and only lightning dared to look at its mighty walls. All mortals were afraid even to go into the shadow cast by a high rock, because they knew that devilish evil dwelt in this bloody hell, and there is nothing worse in the world than to face it, as happened with the beautiful Maerlin. People were afraid to approach the rock and the castle where bloody death lurked, and darkness prevailed over the light, where bloodthirsty vampires lurked in the darkness of the night, and he reigned, their terrible master. On this night, as always, eternal darkness reigned, and in it were visible the sharp white fangs of the nightmarish monster, covered with hot human blood.

The black bat, screaming, flew away from the castle. An inhuman scream escaped from the beast's mouth, but even more terrible was the cry of its dying victim.

In the high tower of the castle, as if preparing to throw herself down, at the very edge of it stood a beautiful girl with pearly blond hair. Her face seemed like the face of a marble statue: cold, insensitive, lifeless, but still retaining the pain of a dead heart. The clawed paw of the monster lay on the shoulder of the beauty, and for a moment her face, clouded with thought, lit up with even greater sadness and pain.

– Why did you do this? – She whispered as if every sound caused her unbearable pain. – Why did you ruin my life?

The wind whipped furiously into her face, showering with drops of rain, threatening at any moment to throw the beauty from the tower of the castle into the raging sea. She did not notice this, for her everything had lost its meaning, and her heart did not care whether to live or die. The monster's clawed paw, moving on her shoulder, gave her back the pain of life.

“You have forgotten what forces live in your soul,” said a deaf and lifeless voice behind her.

“I know that,” she whispered, “but I don’t want to be what I have become and what you have become. You brought all the horror of the depths of hell to the surface of the earth in your guise, you are a monster, you are evil, you are a vampire, like many of your own creatures”.

The girl involuntarily shuddered when the monster ran its long claws over her beautiful face and gently stroked her golden hair in the light of the thunderstorm.

“But you are always beautiful, immortal beauty,” it whispered, “sad, lonely, beautiful, who has lost her love. Your beauty lives in the hearts of people, my princess, but your heart is even more black and cruel than mine, and darkness lives in it longer than in me.

“You grow stronger every day, every minute, bloody demon, king of vampires, and you crave even more.”

“It’s fate itself.”

“Yes, this is your destiny,” came her voice, and a sharp dagger flashed in her hand with a flash of lightning.

“Die forever,” the girl whispered and plunged the dagger right into the heart of the monster. A wild scream escaped him, and blood gushed from a huge wound, but he was immortal. Slowly he pulled the dagger from the bleeding wound and flung it aside. The demon’s eyes glittered with fire, and his mad laughter echoed across the gloomy sky.

“You cannot kill me, Emily,” he hissed maliciously to the beauty retreating in fear, “no one can kill me. Today, on this sacred night, you gave me new strength, and the blood from your heart will make me invincible. Remember, no matter what happens, I am forever the lord of vampires, the lord of death, the bloody demon, and you will regret that you disowned me.

“Never,” she shouted, “never”.

She pushed him away from her and dashed out of the castle, down the stone stairs. Every step she took was accompanied by the frantic laughter of a bloody demon. But now the last step of the staircase was already behind, and she ran out of the castle into the stormy night. Sharp thorns dug into her flesh, and blood gushed from her scratched palms. A cry of pain and despair escaped her. As soon as Emily ran out of the castle, a terrible black bird flew into the sky, it was even darker than the night itself. Emily looked around with a wary gaze. The monster’s laughter and threat were still ringing in her ears:

– You see, you cannot get away from me and from your own heart, you are my destiny”.

The beauty’s eyes widened in horror. In front of her, by a stone staircase, lay the bloody body of a young girl, a recent victim of a violent vampire.

In the dark dungeon of the castle, where the gloomy halls turned into gloomy caves, another, even more ominous darkness reigned. The light from the distant fire barely scattered her. A beautiful girl was standing by the fire in the back of the cave. Her hair, pale red like fire itself, seemed black in the darkness of the night, light clothes were waved in its violent gusts by the wind of darkness and fire, her slender body trembled every moment, as if in dying convulsions. She looked like a corpse, but she herself was death, resurrected by evil from the darkness of the grave. The fire witch, the victim of the vampire king, the forest sorceress, who sees in the flame of fire all the secrets of death and life, but on that night she herself was a lifeless death. Her unseeing eyes looked at the flames, and it was reflected in them in a fierce green fire. Her hand clenched in a mute witching gesture, and slurred words escaped from her lifeless lips. The flame flared up with renewed vigor, and a gloomy man slowly emerged from the darkness of the distant caves. His footsteps echoed through the caves, over the stone floors, over the cold walls, over every stone, and over the entire huge cave where the girl was, in an eerie threatening sound. It was as if she did not hear the steps and did not know about the presence of a strange person, on whose cold and white face some kind of cruel and evil expression was frozen. He looked like a statue, with a white mask of anger instead of a face and fiery eyes full of inhuman cruelty. He himself looked like an eerie statue made of stone, insensitive, cold and evil,

deprived of the last drop of the joy of life and living only by the evil of his stone heart. His pale lips twisted in a devilish grin whispered:

“Rise from death!”

His ominous voice echoed like a fatal and terrible echo through the witch's darkness:

“Let the darkness leave you, you no longer belong to the kingdom of darkness, come here, resurrect your heart, your soul in this fire, let it reveal everything to you. Rise from death.”

She shuddered all over at the bewitching command of his words. Now she no longer seemed dead, a drop of life settled in a dying corpse, but she was given to her by the forces of darkness. Now the flames of fire had for a moment infused the spark of their life into her. The beauty's weak lips parted as if preparing to utter the fateful words. Until now, lifeless, thin hands clenched into fists on a high stone by the fire, and silent eyes stared at the flame with a cold and incinerating gaze.

Together with her, the entire gloomy cave suddenly came to life. The light of the fire spread over the darkness and illuminated the bizarre stones of the walls, endowing everything around with a magical, ominous beauty, and the terrible figure of a girl in the middle of the cave by the fire shone with an otherworldly light.

Her light clothes fluttered in a fiery whirlwind, her hair in the darkness looked like tongues of flame, and her hands, white as snow, extended towards the fire in a silent, witchcraft gesture.

He slowly walked closer to the girl and stood right behind her. His lifeless gaze now shone with something malevolent.

“Show me everything, Madeleine,” he whispered to the beauty, “tell me what fate has in store for me.”

His words sounded like an incantation in the silence, and, obeying his command, she straightened up to her full height. A bright fire was reflected in her huge eyes, there was no real life in them. They sparkled with deathly emptiness, and she herself lived the magical life of the vampire. She was killed by a vampire, she lived and at the same time was dead, she was a living dead, a ghost of flesh, a ghost of a fire witch. At any moment she was once again serving the demon and the secrets of witchcraft.

She crossed her arms over her chest and quickly began to whisper indistinct words that echoed in a whirlwind of madness over the fire. Madness was reflected in her eyes, which at that moment became the eyes of a wild forest beast, a beast of fire. The depths of the flame and the depths of the blood of centuries parted before her gaze.

“From century to century,” she whispered, “you are the bloody legend of centuries, you are the king of devils, the lord of nightmares, the lord of eternity, you are the bloody curse of the earth, death from hell, but the power of blood is not eternal. Death will pay with death, love will kill you.

“Speak,” he whispered, and the uncontrollable fierce anger that sounded in his voice echoed in a threatening echo throughout the cave, “make the fire tell you all who she is, in whom the power of life is stronger than the blood of centuries.

“There has never been and never will be like her on earth,” Madeleine whispered as if in deep oblivion.

“She will combine beauty, daring and noble, and the heart of a hero. She will be half human, half dream. Even a magical dream is unable to reflect the purity of beauty that will be embodied in it. She is the one that is more beautiful than anyone in the world, she is eternal love herself, and her name will say everything for herself. Dreams and dreams will merge in it, and the only sincere love in this world of darkness.”

Words with sharp pain burst from her chest, as if someone else spoke for her, causing her unbearable pain, her body shook in silent sobs. The desire to know everything instilled even greater madness in his cruel heart.

– Who? he said. – Tell me who is she?”

“A dream,” the girl whispered, and the fire in her eyes flashed with renewed vigor, “the daughter of the most beautiful queen in the world, the beauty of her heart will become your death.”

She slowly, with difficulty, turned to face him. Her weak body was trembling violently, life was leaving the dying soul, but the power of the fire gave determination to her heart. She held out her hand to the man in black, and the fire illuminated the girl's beautiful face. Slowly, drawing out the words, as if in some kind of dream, she. With difficulty moving her dead lips, she whispered barely audibly:

“Maerlin, beware of her,” these words, the last words of life before death came, echoed madly and menacingly through the caves.

Her prophecy confirmed what the bloody demon had known for centuries.

No matter what evil has settled in this sinful world, no matter what pain the darkness and hatred of misfortune may harbor, but, like eternal love, a true dream is immortal, and it is able to avenge itself with an even greater evil of its beauty. Having uttered the last words that took the last drop of life from the dying body, the beauty shuddered. The last cry of pain and inhuman fear froze on her lips, and her eyes stared into the void with their unseeing gaze. The imprint of death again lay on the beautiful face, the last spark of life extinguished, giving way to cold and terrible death.

The death of a young beauty could not strike pity in the demon's cruel heart. He silently looked at her bloody corpse with his icy gaze, in which there was a glimpse of gloating.

“You are dead, fire witch,” he whispered with a cold grin, “but your flame in its last hour could not tell the truth. The joys of life will not destroy me. I am eternal with my bloody curse. As long as it lives, so do I. You are my death, but of the two of us, it is not I who will die, but you, Maerlin, the eternal dream.

He clenched his hand into a fist, and the witch's body jerked in the last moment of life and froze, bleeding. At that very moment, at the other end of the cave, the blonde beauty cried out in horror, and the gaze of the black devil immediately turned to her. She was here again, against all odds, like an angel of light and revenge for her lost love. Her lush hair was disheveled, and an expression of horror and pain was frozen on her face and in her blue eyes in the light of the darkness. They stood opposite each other: an angel of light and an angel of darkness, black and light beauty, an idol of revenge and an idol of darkness, but something brought them closer together in the moment of witchcraft death.

“Why did you do this,” she whispered as if in disbelief. – Why did you kill her?

Her questioning gaze could not find an answer on the impassive face of the bloody demon.

“You killed my love, and you killed my life,” the fear on her beautiful face suddenly gave way to wild rage, “I hate you, I hate you,” she shouted, “let the fire witch's prediction turn out to be true. You cannot defeat the dream itself.

She darted from her place with her last cry of rage and rushed out of the castle, and the bloody demon grimly looked after her, bursting into evil and cruel laughter.

He turned and looked at the fire that flashed with the anger in his eyes.

“Forces of darkness, forces of blood, forces of hell,” he whispered, and his wild whisper merged with the hiss of fire, “catch up with her, hold her back, instill fear in her soul, defeat the dream of her beauty.

She did not hear his words, she quickly ran out of the castle into the cold of the dark night. She felt evil around her, wanted to run away from him, but she did not know from which side it could attack her. She looked around. The summer night was quiet. The full moon shone in the gloomy skies above the gloomy castle and its rock, illuminating everything with its golden light.

The beauty rushed away along the narrow path, but immediately a thorn scratched her. Thickets of thorny branches grew in her path, where before there was no shadow of them. Her hands were scratched, and blood oozed from them to the hem of her tattered dress, but she ran forward through the thickets of thorns, farther and farther from the blue hell that had taken her love and life, and now threatened her with death. The thorns grew thicker and thicker, a whole forest of it grew around

a small path. It clung to her hair, tore at her dress and scratched her face. On her way, bloody ghosts stood up, crying, threatening, beckoning, demanding that she returns.

“Turn around,” shouted the fiery ghost of a bloody Madeleine, “look what your dreams have done to me, my sister.

She ran on, oblivious to the screams of the ghosts or the numerous scratches from the thorns.

“Help me, Emily,” Madeleine shouted to her.

She turned around. The bloody ghost stretched out his hands to her, and she almost went to him, but then the moon returned to her for a moment the ghost of the one she loved and whose life was forever destroyed by her pure love.

“Run,” he whispered to her. Pleading was reflected on his handsome face, he loved her even after his death. He did not leave her in a moment of danger – run, my love, run away from the cliff, and the power of darkness will no longer be able to catch up with you, I beg you to save yourself and her, our child. Run, don't turn around, Emily, run away from the power of the blood over your soul.

His call struck her heart like lightning. She had to run away, she had to save her last hope. She quickly ran away, deflecting the thorns with her hands.

“Come back to me, Emily,” sounded behind, but did not turn around. Only by going down from the cliff, she could again find freedom from the forces of evil. Her love sustained her, and hope remained in her heart. She knew that her dreams are stronger than the forces of darkness. Screams, screams, noise – everything merged into one in her frightened mind, but she did not stop. The faster she moved away from the cursed castle, the weaker the power of darkness over her soul became. The screams behind her, the bloody hands, the devil's thorns – it all had to end at the foot of the cliff. Finally she ran to it. Here the mountain path ended, and with it the power of darkness ended. She, breathing heavily, pressed against the ledge of the rock. Her whole body groaned with unbearable pain, but she was alive, which means that hope itself remained.

“Come back to me, Emily,” was still heard from the cliff, where the deathly pale Madeleine stood in a fiery dress, but she could no longer see her. Fatigue fell on her. Her heavy breathing echoed over the shore near the cliff and mixed with the sound of the sea, which illuminated the beauty's tired face with its blue. She moved away from the cliff and tried to walk a few steps in the darkness of the night, but only the old sea cemetery greeted her with its gloomy, gothic beauty. Stone crosses, gloomy graves, among them, in the eternal peace of death, lay her love. Her beloved was dead, sudden death was sent to him by the forces of darkness.

Slowly, convulsively holding her side, she reached the middle of the cemetery. Tears of grief and despair gushed from her beautiful eyes, and the beauty involuntarily fell to her knees before the lonely grave.

– Forgive me, my love,” she whispered, “forgive me, if it were not for me, you would be alive, but I am glad alone, you died before the forces of evil touched your soul, and now they do not have power over you.”

“You're sure of that,” the same cruel, mocking voice rang out over her.

She shuddered all over at the sound of a voice so well known to her, and her wary gaze quickly ran all around. Suddenly cold hands with long sharp claws grabbed her, squeezing her shoulders with their icy weight and strength.

She almost screamed at the sudden wave of sudden fright that came to her heart.

Jumping to her feet, she realized that again, barely getting out of there, she entered the realm of evil, and this time nothing would have been able to rescue her from here. She ruined her love, and now the hour of reckoning has come. She also ruined her own life.

She tried to look her enemy in the face, but a clawed hand held her shoulders with its inhuman strength.

“You are still as beautiful as you were many, many years ago. Time spares you and your face. After all, it still has so much nobility, so much purity and innocent beauty. Your heart is not subject

to time, time is not powerful over you because your heart is not the heart of a person, it is the heart of the dream itself.

"It's you again," she burst out. For the first time in many years, the memory of the past returned to her again.

"Yes, from the depths of time," he responded, "fate itself helped me to find you."

She shuddered, and a clawed paw ran over her beautiful face. There was no longer any sea or rocks around, only darkness enveloped the gloomy crosses and Emily's blond hair shining in the darkness with golden fire. She cautiously scanned everything around, but the clawed hand, as before, tightly squeezed her shoulder, preventing her from turning around.

"You betrayed me, Emily," he whispered, "and you were one of us, but your heart was split in half, it became half the heart of a man.

"I don't want to be the evil creature of the night anymore," courage returned to her and filled her beautiful blue eyes with rage, forcing her to half-turn, "I don't want to be what you have become, I don't want to be death, I don't want to be evil."

"Yes, your beauty, it does not allow you to like that, but you betrayed me, Emily, you fell in love with a man, but love cannot save your soul from the power of darkness, even if you have the beauty of a dream and a human heart, but you were born at night, and you also my child, a child of blood."

They stood, black darkness and radiant light, evil and good, monster and beauty, a beautiful blonde girl against the background of a terrible black figure. The forces of darkness pursued the beautiful princess. The bloody flames of hell from the unfathomable darkness of the ages haunted her all her life with the cold wind of a cruel legend.

A feeling of pain, emptiness and unbearable sadness filled Emily's heart, bursting in the throes of terrible losses, suffering, but still managing to retain a drop of kindness.

Bitter tears poured from the eyes of the beauty, full of grief and confusion, and yet they managed to make her face even more wonderful, crying about the misfortunes of her love, a beautiful angel.

"I have nothing more to grieve for, demon," she whispered through her tears, "you stole my dreams."

"Dreams of youth, my princess, this is just the remorse of nature, cruel, evil, depriving, like life. You did know their charms on yourself, but you are a dream, Emily, you have embodied all the beauty of a ruthless world, for which people in vain plead with a merciless fate. You are a beauty, and even at the expense of the suffering of others. Do you hate yourself for that?"

"Not for that," she whispered, "for the fact that, by the will of fate, I became a nightmare creature of the night, like you, a dark creature of evil with a soul full of darkness and secrets, eternally thirsting for torment and blood. I hate myself and you for this, but at the last moment of repentance of my soul, I pray to the God forgotten by me to bring to life the witchcraft prophecy. May your death finally find you. May, when I die, she will kill you, a dream. Maerlin, remember she is your death and your curse, which, in spite of everything, will come true.

His evil eyes lit up with fierce fire, and long claws sank deep into the beauty's shoulder.

"Damn you, Emily," he hissed, "damn your witchcraft beauty. You betrayed your heart, you became a human, and with this you ruined your immortal love. You are cursed forever with me. Unless your daughter Maerlin saves you, she can't. She bears the same curse, she is half human, half her soul belongs to the call of the blood. Only she can become my death, but this will not happen, she will die today the same night as you.""

She shuddered involuntarily. Her death stood before her in the face of a nightmarish demon. She will die like the fiery witch Madeleine, like thousands of other victims of the demon, like the one she loved.

“Emily,” he said gently and passionately, and the claws of a terrible hand with a lightning movement passed along the snow-white neck of the young girl, and as if from a sharp dagger, a long bloody trail remained on her.

A wild cry of unbearable pain pierced the silence of the lonely cemetery. He became a prophecy and a curse, condemning a bloody demon to torment, who invented new tortures for people, but was not used to suffering himself.

This cry promised that the prophecy would come true, and the cruel demon himself would finally die at the hands of a beautiful dream.

The beauty fell to the ground at the stone cross. Her blond hair scattered over the cold earth, illuminating her with some kind of magical radiance, the eyelids of her beautiful eyes closed, one snow-white hand covered with blood stretched out at the crucifix, like the only ray of pure beauty in the darkness of night and evil.

“It’s your fault, Emily,” the demon said quietly.

“I will find your daughter, the call of the blood will lead me to her, and then I will know if your prophecy is true,” he whispered. It was his oath, an oath of eternal vengeance from evil to beauty itself.

“I’ll find you, Maerlin,” echoed mysteriously in the darkness of the night cemetery. The body of the beauty barely stirred in death throes, the wind of the cold sea brought ominous words to her, and this was much more terrible than any death. The demon’s eyes were bloodshot when he saw this subtle movement, but then from the side of the sea there was the sound of steps and a loud cry came:

“Emily.”

The sound of footsteps came closer and closer. Behind the bend in the rocks, footsteps were already clearly audible, and the stately figure of a young man became visible. The cruciform hilt of his sword embodied the very struggle for life and immortal faith. The wary gaze of the demon turned into the gaze of a wild beast, and in a moment the dark figure soared upward like a black bird, a hawk of death, which flew towards the gloomy castle.

In the old cemetery, a handsome young man knelt in front of a dying girl. Pain at that moment overwhelmed his heart.

“Emily,” he whispered, squeezing an ice-cold, snow-white hand in his hand. At that moment, the beauty’s eyelids, closed in death throes, slowly opened.

“It’s you,” she whispered, barely audible, moving her dead lips with difficulty.

“It’s me, Emily,” he said anxiously, “you shouldn’t have come here, the dead still remain dead, and there is no need to ruin your own life because of it.

“No,” she cut him off, “that was my destiny, and there was no escape from it, no escape. The only thing I beg from you, save my daughter. Now all the forces of darkness are up in arms against her. She’s at my house, just off the coast. Take her out of there, take her away from these rocks. They contain the terrible power of all the blood that is spilled on the earth, a bloody demon dwells in them, death itself lurks in them. Take my daughter away from here, save her, please. Call her Maerlin, her destiny is to be the finest dream in the world.”

The gaze penetrated the very depths of his blue eyes.

“Please,” she whispered.

“Yes,” he replied, “I’ll call her Maerlin.

– Never a bloody demon, not another of the devils of hell can harm her.”

She nodded. He did not want to leave, and she knew this, she knew that there was love in his heart, to which she could not answer. Now she was dying and prayed to the God long forgotten by her, and yet who was her last hope, to help her. She fervently believed that her prayer would help her save the beautiful Maerlin, who could kill all evil on earth.

“Please, take Maerlin away from here as soon as possible,” she said, “I pray to God that he will help you and that he will forgive my soul. If my daughter survives, if she destroys evil, give her this symbol that her heart should always remain with faith in God forgiving me.”

With a trembling, cold hand, she held out a small golden cross to him.

– May she never part with him.

Her cold hand for a moment squeezed the hand outstretched to her. The eyes of the beauty closed in endless sleep, but her soul remained with God, who forgave, and this hope burning in his heart helped him overcome the unbearable pain, because he knew that his own heart had sunk with her into the darkness of endless death forever.

The winds of the sea returned to her face the freshness of life and the purity of true faith, which managed to save her soul from the power of darkness and make her here, among the rocks of sorcery, the only symbol of light. He gently ran his hand over his cheek, where a tear had frozen before, and gently touched his cold lips with his lips. She was beautiful, and he would have been looking at her forever if he had not suddenly heard some strange sound. A black bird flew over the sea with a melancholy cry, but it was not an ordinary bird, in the rustle of its wings was the ominous whisper of death itself. She was black as night itself, and her wings concealed a destructive power that no human could possess. The flames of hell itself seemed to be lurking in her evil eyes. Roderick realized that he heard the sound of the wings of death itself, and he realized that bloody death, indeed, has lightning wings. His heart also knew that he shouldn't die now, no matter how much he wanted to. He had to stay alive at all costs, find and save Emily's daughter.

The bird of death has already rushed at him. Its sharp claws flashed like ominous lightning in the darkness, its eyes glowed with blood, and a shrill cry erupted from its steel beak. Rows of claws like sharp swords flashed once more in the darkness and dug into his left shoulder as deep as they could. Roderick almost screamed in pain himself.

He had to win, although it was impossible, but for Emily's sake, he was ready to do anything. Pain ripped through his body, and red blood gushed from the pierced flesh.

"Emily," he whispered with gritted teeth, "help me, Emily, my love, God help me."

With force, he tore from himself the winged demon who was drinking his blood and drew a glittering sword from its sheath.

Reflections of the silvery light of its point fell on the black plumage of the gloomy bird, and it, soaring high into the sky, began headlong downward to inflict a wound in Roderick's back.

Another moment, and he would have been dead, but he, despite the bird's evil designs, managed to dodge, and he himself struck her so strong that he pierced his wounded body with pain. Now Roderick felt his victory. The rustle of wings subsided, the fiery lightning of bloody eyes no longer tormented him with their deadly gaze, something shot up in the darkness, and a wild deafening cry echoed over the cemetery, but in the next moment everything disappeared. Calm reigned here again, but it was an oppressive silence that foreshadowed danger. Somewhere behind him there was a noise, and Roderick turned sharply, holding the sword tightly in his hands and always ready to fight. But there was nothing to be seen anywhere. Then, as if out of the darkness itself, a tall and sombre figure in black clothing emerged.

"And you are still true to your dream, young prince," the black monster whispered with malicious mockery, and his bloody eyes flashed with fierce fire. Only now Roderick saw that the grim demon's left shoulder was covered with hot blood. Before him stood his worst enemy, who killed Emily. Roderick hated him as he never did.

"You are brave, since you could come here, right behind her, for your sad love," the bloody demon said in the same mocking voice, "but now you are in my possession. The same fate awaits you as your beautiful Emily. Because of her, two hearts are already dead: her unfortunate lover and yours. I will not allow her daughter to ruin many more lives with her beautiful face of the dream itself. She is my death, but remember, Roderick, I am stronger than God who blessed her.

"No," Roderick whispered, "no, I know who you are, you are darkness, you are evil, but you are not stronger than good, my love is stronger than darkness, and the forces of light are even more

powerful, like my God. After all, contrary to your black desires, the world has faith in it, there are dreams, there is love, and I believe that a dream given by God can prevail over you.”

“No,” the fire demon laughed, “you must die with her today, and her daughter will die with you.”

He looked at Emily's body lying at the stone cross, and his gaze burned with blood. Roderick, looking at Emily's beautiful face, gained new strength.

“You will never defeat me, demon,” he protested.

“So come on, try to save your dream,” an ominous smile reflected in the eyes of the bloody demon.

“I'll save her,” Roderick shouted, running away from this devilish place to where he wanted to find salvation for his last hope, but for a long time behind him sounded the laughter of a bloody demon.

“Run,” the demon whispered, “try to catch and save your dreams, but I will still win.”

He walked over to Emily's corpse and stood next to it. He was given to command the world of shadows, but it was not in his power to kill eternal love. She was lying on the cold ground, beautiful, pure, light, as before in her life, and even more beautiful than then. But he did not want to succumb to the charm of her beauty.

“You are beautiful, Emily,” he whispered, “but you are dead, as will your daughter. I hate love and I despise people's dreams. I am stronger than fate, and by killing her, I will prove to you that I am the strongest of all. This is my oath, and let all the forces of evil come to my aid.”

His gaze flashed with fire again, and he extended his black arms as a sign of his strength.

“I will destroy anyone who gets in my way, even my own heart,” he shouted. “I will kill you, a human dream, you are dead, Maerlin.

This mad scream echoed along the entire coast, and the magic rocks themselves seemed to shudder from the hatred and anger that filled it.

Meanwhile, Roderick quickly ran along the coast to a lonely house. He was supposed to fulfill his vow, but still behind him he heard the dreadful and blood-curdling laugh of the demon. Roderick fled with a drawn sword in his hand, he was ready to fend off any danger, he knew that now all the forces of evil rose up against him. He was helped by a sincere love for the beautiful Emily. Even if she herself died, love for her will live in his soul, in his heart and in himself. He had to keep his vow to Emily, a vow to defeat the forces of darkness at all costs and save her daughter Maerlin. Roderick was ready to keep his oath even at the cost of his life in memory of his love. One thought drove him forward along the sandy coast, past the magical rocks, the witch's castle and the forces of evil embodied in them. In spite of everything and in spite of all the forces of evil that want to destroy him, he had to win, he had to get to a lonely house by the sea before the demon descended there. A black-bloody fog lay on the ground, and before the eyes of the tired Roderick appeared the grim victims of the vampire devil, who after their death became his voluntary followers. Seeing their crazy and terrible face, Roderick was glad that this did not happen to Emily. A bloody ghost of a fire witch stood in his way at the witch's rocks. Her wild eyes glared directly at Roderick. Her deathly pale face was like a snow-white mask, shining in the darkness with a predatory grin.

“Come to me,” she called to Roderick, holding out her long arms to him.

Her call made the prince run even faster. He gathered all his last strength and tried not to notice either bloody visions or witchcraft fog. At the same time, he did not notice his own fatigue.

Finally, the ring of rocks ended, and with it their magic power ended.

Just a little, and he will get there. Roderick saw a fork in three roads, one leading to the sea, one to the rocks, and the third to Emily's house.

Where the roads diverged in different directions, there was a stone cross.

Roderick stopped involuntarily to see what was written on him in small letters that cut deep into the stone. For a moment it seemed to Roderick that a black bird was sitting on the cross, thirsting, as

before, for his blood. However, instead of a bird from the darkness creeping on the ground, a huge black wolf appeared with the same bloody eyes glowing in the darkness with magical fire.

Roderick managed to dodge his jump and found himself on another road. He boldly moved forward along the mysterious road, and nothing could stop him. Now the road turned into a viscous quagmire, then the branches of forest trees clung to him and tore his clothes, then someone reached out to him from the very darkness of the forest.

A gap had already appeared behind the trees, there, by a small lake, was Emily's house.

The root of the tree wrapped itself around Roderick's feet and, involuntarily falling, he dropped his sword. The earth opened up, and against the background of fire and darkness, the silhouette of a bloody devil clearly loomed. At the very last moment, he managed to jump up from the ground before it fell into the depths of hell. As soon as he raised his sword, everything was quiet again.

"My God," Roderick said, gripping the sword tightly in his hands. Only now did he realize that the ground around him was soaked in human blood, rivers of blood had spilled here, but Roderick knew that Emily's daughter was still alive.

Suddenly, some strange darkness again enveloped everything around, and in its misty veil on a huge stone near the house there appeared the clear outlines of a slender figure sitting on it in a beautiful dark red dress.

Or an obsession, or in front of Roderick, Emily was resurrected on a stone. Roderick, bewitched, froze in place. Life and death did not matter anymore. Now only one vision of a blonde beauty existed for him all over the world.

He did not move, but he could not close his amazed eyes, and only his numb lips, barely obeying him, could whisper:

"Emily."

She sighed heavily, as if bitter sobs were about to burst from her pain-pierced chest, but she did not raise her eyes to look at him, she knew that he was there.

"Roderick," she said, and although it was her beautiful, sonorous voice, it seemed now that it didn't come from her at all, and it didn't have the same life at all.

"Roderick," she repeated with a start, and her pale lips moved strangely in a faint semblance of supplication, but her beautiful face remained the face of a marble statue.

She shook her head as if in a dream. Her eyes flashed for a moment with a bright dazzling light from under lowered black eyelashes.

"There is a kingdom of darkness, and a humans' love cannot disturb it," Emily said quietly. "How could you leave me there, how could you get out of there at the first onslaught of witchcraft, from which you swore to protect Maerlin, but the dream does not need anyone's help.

Perhaps, to the surprised Roderick, it only seemed that in the last words of Emily there slipped some kind of malevolent note that he had heard somewhere before, but could not remember where.

"I don't understand," the prince whispered, but Emily cut him off with a slight movement.

"Come to me," she whispered, "forget about everything, don't leave me. Roderick, not knowing how, but against his will and common sense, involuntarily approached her.

"Come," it sounded again in the silence, "don't leave me".

A snow-white hand, still lying motionless on the stone, reached out to him. Roderick almost took the hand outstretched to him, almost touched her shoulder, wanting to calm her.

"Emily," he said, already reaching out his hand to her.

As soon as he touched her shoulder, a shining lightning ran down her and with a sharp blade of a knife struck his palm, forcing him to withdraw his hand, along which blood flowed from a huge wound.

Roderick stared at Emily in dismay, but it was no longer her, but a monster created by a bloody demon.

Roderick lifted the fallen sword from the ground with lightning speed and dashed away from the monster. He ran into the house and found himself in a completely different world that kept the memory of Emily. The prince found himself in a long corridor with many doors. Roderick thought Emily was calling him to one of them. Roderick barely touched the handle of this door, and it immediately opened slowly, as if from a gust of witchcraft wind. Roderick froze in amazement on the threshold of the great dark hall. The first thing the prince saw in the hall was a beautiful portrait over an old fireplace. Roderick would recognize her anywhere. Emily's beautiful face looked at him as if alive from the depths of the picture. If Roderick didn't know that she was dead, he probably would have thought that she herself was now standing in front of him.

Roderick involuntarily came very close to the portrait and peered into her face. It hid some kind of secret that no longer remained with the real Emily in the cemetery. This mystery, as if by magic, is now completely transferred to the portrait, giving the beauty's face a half mysterious, half ominous expression.

The shadows of evil that had left the repentant soul still continued to live in the portrait and cast their ominous reflection on her beautiful face. Suddenly, Emily's lips slowly parted into an ominous, secret smile. A tremor ran through Roderick's entire body in a quivering wave, and perhaps it was fright at the thought that the devil might again take possession of Emily's soul. A sudden call came from behind him.

– Roderick.

He turned quickly. Once again, the beautiful Emily stood in front of him and smiled mysteriously. Roderick turned his eyes to the portrait, and a smile filled with hellish evil burned his gaze. Suddenly, from the depths of the gloomy hall, Roderick heard the quiet cry of a child, which brought him back to real life. Emily's vision, a devilish smile – everything disappeared, and there was only this salutary cry calling him to her.

Roderick involuntarily flinched from crying, now that the devilish vision had disappeared, he could remember who he was and why he had come here.

Roderick walked swiftly to where the body of a crying child shone like a bright star in the darkness of the great hall. Roderick took the baby in his arms. The child was as beautiful as the dream itself.

Suddenly a wave of terror swept through Roderick's body and made him turn around. Shrouded in a mist of darkness, a bloody demon stood before him, emerging from the very darkness, and his fiery eyes shone with a fierce triumphant fire.

“Give her to me,” he ordered, “give me Maerlin.

“No,” Roderick said firmly, boldly looking the bloody demon in the eye. “No way in the world,” he repeated boldly, squeezing the child tightly in his arms.

Courage and fearlessness gave him his vow Emily.

The demon chuckled.

“You think you defeated me,” he said, “but you are wrong, I needed you, so you are still alive. It was you who brought me here, to Maerlin, you let me in here, you opened the way for me to her. Now I can kill both of you, but you can still be saved. I will let you go, just give me Maerlin.

He held out his clawed hands, covered in the blood of many people, towards him, but Roderick did not hesitate for a moment.

“Give it to me,” the demon repeated.

“And forget your love,” Roderick looked straight into the monster's eyes.

“I'm not afraid of you,” he whispered, “no matter what, I will keep my oath, and in the end your fate will find you.

– Your love was also just a dream teasing you, and in gratitude for the torment you are faithful to it,” the tempting voice of the devil sounded in the darkness.

– Now take revenge on this dream that gave you not love, but eternal suffering and sorrow, help me kill her, give us both liberation.”

He persuaded, but his speech could not suppress Roderick's will. The prince gripped Emily's child tightly in his arms, like the last spark of life.

“No,” he said firmly, “I'm not afraid of you, demon. Let the whole world shudder at the mere sound of your name, but it will not inspire fear in me, I loved Emily and I still love, so may my hatred for you help fate kill you.

“Give her to me,” the devil almost cried out, slowly approaching Roderick.

“No,” the prince said even more firmly.

“Well, then try to save her,” the bloody demon said with the same cruel mockery, “prove your immortal love.

Roderick no longer looked into inhuman eyes, clouded with bloodlust, but tightly squeezed the child in his arms and quickly rushed away from the mysterious house, where darkness of evil and mysteries prevailed over the light.

He ran out of the hall without even looking at the beautiful portrait of Emily, whose wonderful face at that moment was distorted by an ominous smile.

Roderick quickly ran down the narrow steps of the stairs, but suddenly at the very end, at the behest of something incomprehensible, he looked up and again saw her, Emily.

“Emily,” Roderick blurted out. He was ready to forget that it was the spirit of darkness, the ghost of a bloody demon. The only thing he wanted now was to stay with her with Emily forever.

“Give it to me,” in a voice similar to a mournful moan, whispered Emily, holding out her hands to him, “give me my daughter.”

Only a few steps separated him from her, and at that moment Roderick noticed that Emily's hands were covered with streams of blood.

“No,” Roderick said.

The silhouette of a bloody demon flashed in Emily's beautiful eyes, but Roderick managed to run past her and rushed out of the house.

Roderick leaned against the wall and hugged the small child tightly to him. Already, he loved her as much as he loved anyone else, a beautiful dream with Emily's face and soul.

“Roderick,” suddenly it was heard not far from him. Again the silhouette of the beautiful Emily appeared in front of him.

“Come to me.”

Then another hateful voice sounded:

“You belong to her forever, and she will destroy you, because now her beauty is born of darkness.”

“No,” Roderick could only whisper back, although Emily's beautiful image was already obscuring all his thoughts with a veil of unrestrained fog. He no longer controlled himself, all his feelings, all his actions, prayers, all his dreams were already subordinated to the darkness in this beautiful image. He was ready to rush to her, forgetting about everything, to surrender himself into the arms of death itself, if only the bloody death had her face.

“Emily,” he whispered.

He was already ready to completely and completely surrender to the forces of evil, but suddenly it was heard behind him:

“Roderick.”

The sound of this voice suddenly brought him back from the world of dark dreams to ordinary human life.

The prince turned involuntarily quickly.

Before him stood a beautiful girl, as beautiful as the ghosts of the rocks of sorcery, but, unlike them, kind, sympathetic and open.

“Clara,” Roderick said, hiding his weariness.

He was looking at a cute face, similar to Emily's, but so implacably different from it. One was the embodiment of purity, the second was a seductive sorceress, a siren who stole his soul forever. The black-haired Clara was a kindness, Emily was an eternal darkness. One was innocence, the other evil. One was a beauty with golden blond hair, a symbol of a clean day, although her soul was covered with an eternal darkness of mystery. The flame of the night itself burned in the black hair of the other, but in her heart there was not even a drop of mysterious evil that overwhelmed Emily's soul, which had been completely sold to darkness. Nevertheless, they have always been real sisters, although the soul of one of them was open and pure, and the other was hidden by the eternal darkness.

Roderick, in the throes of despair and unwillingness to believe that Emily is no longer alive, closed his eyes for a moment, and only Clara's soft voice woke him up again, forcing him to wake up from his dreams.

“I don't know why I came here,” Clara said quietly, “but I feel like Emily needs help.

“That's right,” Roderick whispered.

He knew that this was his only hope to save Maerlin, until a vision of Emily made him give his soul to the darkness, and he was already close to it. The bloody demon knew he could hurt him, and he was about to deliver his final crushing blow, which Roderick could no longer resist.

He approached Clara, and now they stood together against the background of the old house, the tomb of ghosts.

“Take Emily's baby,” Roderick said, “get her out of here as far as you can. Evil and death reign here, which will lie in wait for you if you appear here at least once. You can handle it, can you save her?”

He looked hopefully into Clara's clear and open eyes.

“Yes,” she replied, “I'll take her as far away from the damned rocks of sorcery as possible. This is what Emily wanted, and that means I must do it, I must give her the name of the dream itself.

She looked at Roderick with pain in her eyes.

“I know that Emily died,” said Clara, “after all, not only your heart died with her, but part of my soul as well. I know you loved Emily and never loved me, but I don't blame you for that. I loved her myself, even though she ruined my own life. It was impossible not to love such a beauty as her.

“You look so much like her,” said Roderick, already peering into the beautiful face covered with the shadow of sadness, “but you are not her.

“I know,” Clara whispered with the same sadness, “I know everything.

“Will you save Emily's daughter?” Promise me.

“I promise,” she said slowly, “I will love her as much as I can. I'll call it Maerlin, a dream.

“But will there be happiness in your life?” Roderick looked at Clara for the last time, some distant pain flashed in his eyes.

“Go away,” he asked, “the sooner the better, and no matter where, it's important that you leave here as soon as possible.

He slowly held out the child to her, and she took it.

“Go away,” Roderick repeated, and shouted again, “go, go, Clara, save Maerlin. Just thinking that you will take her away from here will allow me to find peace. I must die, Clara, I cannot live without Emily, and you still have a whole life ahead of you, like the life of the one who will give you light in this fog of time, and now leave.

Clara knew that she needed to leave now, once and for all. She loved, but her love was unrequited. Beautiful Emily forever killed her happiness with her beauty, but she loved her and her child with all her heart. She had to save Maerlin, had to get her out of here. However, in the depths of her heart, not wanting to admit even to herself, she knew that the memory of the past would forever remain in her soul.

Now Roderick was left alone, he tightly gripped the hilt of his sword, but could this time ordinary human steel defeat the merciless power of witchcraft.

Roderick became alert, a black bird flew past with a wild, soul-tearing cry in the dark sky. Suddenly there was a rustle behind Roderick's back that made him instantly turn around. Again, Emily was standing in front of him not far away.

Life and death have now lost their meaning for him, and only it, alluring and beautiful, the image of Emily remains.

"Roderick," she whispered, "may death unite us forever, may she not deny us what life has denied. It is a wonderful world, my love, a world of blood, a world of death, but it can give you a precious moment of selected happiness.

The hilt of the sword involuntarily slipped out of Roderick's hand as he approached Emily. He was no longer able to resist, only the vision created by the demon of the night now completely commanded him, all his thoughts, feelings, dreams.

"You're mine now," came the demon's triumphant voice.

The prince did not hear him.

"Yes," Roderick said. "Yes. Emily. In spite of everything, I forever love you alone. Even if I did not give it away with a single word, now I appeal to your immortal soul, hear me, Emily. The Lord has forgiven you, so let him send this forgiveness to me too. I will always pray to him about this, as now I pray you to hear the request of my heart.

For a moment, something frank, pure and innocent shone in Emily's eyes. Her face was cleared of evil. Maybe it really was Emily's very soul for a moment, driving out the spirit of the nightmare demon from its image.

"Emily," Roderick whispered.

This very image Roderick loved all his life, with it he was ready to die, so beautiful, secretly, and selflessly loved by him. Emily for a wonderful and dazzling moment of happiness returned to life from death, and now remorse shone in her eyes, almost tears of bitter joy with which she looked at Roderick stood in them.

"Be with me forever," she whispered.

Suddenly the ominous cry of a hellish bird echoed over the desolate space.

Pity and sympathy flashed across Emily's beautiful face before she disappeared into the darkness again, just as suddenly. as it had appeared, but the kingdom of death could not for a moment do without evil, and Roderick knew it.

Before he even had time to recover, the bloody demon appeared in the darkness of the night again.

"You sought your death," he hissed, "and you will get it.

Roderick barely had time to grab his sword before the rays of some strange glow almost pierced him with the point of his lightning. There was a wound on his shoulder.

He knew that in this fight he would not survive, but he did not want to give up.

"I'll kill you, demon," he whispered, "and now nothing can stop me.

With a lightning strike, Roderick thrust his sword into the demon's heart up to the hilt, and streams of blood gushed out of it, but the devil was still alive. He drew the prince's sword from his heart with his clawed paw and immediately plunged into Roderick's shoulder.

"Enough," said the demon, "I've had enough of the games of death and human victories for you and me. You must die, how Emily died and how her daughter dies.

Probably, the power of love for a moment returned the ghostly image of Emily to the prince.

"Get away, get out of here quickly," she whispered, and her face reflected the same intense pain, the same suffering, the same anguish as in Roderick's heart.

"I cannot," – he answered, – now I will forever stay with you, and it doesn't matter that along with this I leave my soul to bloody death.

He looked at Emily again, and she gave him the last kiss of death itself.

Fire flared around their figures, and in its flames they both disappeared.

Clara, with sadness and heart-tearing longing, looked from afar at the hellish fire, where her own heart was also burning. She looked like a dream, but she was not a dream, she loved, and she wanted to love, but she was never loved. The beautiful Emily took away forever her happiness, her dreams, her love.

She loved Roderick and at the same time loved Emily, who took her love away from her. Even now, she loved her daughter as her own flesh and blood, and she knew that she could save her and protect her from all evil and all the powers of darkness.

Yes, she will take her away from here, forgetting about everything, and she will be able to save the beautiful Maerlin, she will help her become a dream come true, and this only possible love in her life, full of the betrayals and deceptions she experienced, will become expiation for all the torments that haunt her, and, perhaps, will give real happiness.

– We will leave here, Maerlin, – Klara whispered, – the forces of evil will never be able to find you, we will defeat them forever.

Clara involuntarily shuddered, trying to contain her sobs, and looked at the fire.

Yes, her love burned out in the flame of this fire, and there was no way to return happiness.

The feeling of great loss has never left Klara since then.

The eyes of the bloody demon, burning with fierce malice, looked at the flame of the same fire. He whispered:

– I will seek you, Maerlin, your heart will lead you to me, your soul belongs to death forever, and the dreams of your heart will give you to her.

Time was flowing inexorably, taking with it all new moments, days, months, years into eternal immortality. The fire of the bloody demon's mad eyes mingled with the legend of the past. It was ready to show itself at any moment, but still it was inexorably fading in memory. Not only time destroyed the memory of the past, but human life itself wanted to destroy the memories of evil.

Above the blazing fire of a beautiful fireplace at the end of the huge hall hung a charming portrait filled with endless magic of beauty, and the light of a weakening day, barely breaking through the hall, filled it with inexplicable mystery.

Two people stood in the room and silently looked at the wonderful face depicted in the mysterious portrait, not daring to carry out the order and destroy it.

“Is this a portrait?” Said one of the servants, addressing a beautiful blonde girl who stood alone in the middle of a deserted room, but did not want to come closer to the beautiful portrait, but only looked at it from afar.

She looked pretty much like the beauty in the portrait. Only her whole appearance radiated goodness, and in the ominous depth of beautiful eyes from the portrait was read cruelty.

“Burn it,” she ordered, but every word was given to her with incredible difficulty. “Burn it.

Without a drop of regret, the ruthless servants tore the portrait of a beautiful young girl from the wall and threw it into the fire. The picture flared up with a bright flame and it, touching it, for a moment illuminated the beautiful face of the witch with its light.

A tear rolled down the face of the young beauty, but then a snow-white hand fell on her shoulder in a gesture of tender sympathy and support, and the beauty touched her with the same love.

“What should I do, Clara?” She whispered, barely audibly.

“Forget everything,” Clara's quiet voice answered her.

“Forget it all, Maerlin,” she repeated, “it doesn't matter anymore.”

The portrait of the beautiful Emily was already burning in the fire, and a particle of evil embodied in the portrait burned with it.

“I would like to be as beautiful as she,” Maerlin said.

She did not yet know that fate was preparing her fate to be many times more beautiful than her own dream.

Waves beat against the shore at the wild rocks. It was another sea and other rocks, Clara took Maerlin away from the witch's castle and the kingdom of evil.

Clara stood on a high cliff by the steep, deserted shore.

Neither time nor tears could change her beautiful face, not a single wrinkle was visible on her still young face. There was not even a strand of gray in her black hair.

She gazed sadly down at the sea, so beautiful, distant and deadly here on the top of the cliff.

A cold wind blew from the sea, driving the icy waves of the tide. Clara's hands involuntarily pressed against her body, trying to keep warm.

"Your dreams have died, Clara," a voice filled with evil whispered behind her, "the memory of them revived me in your memory, your memories brought me here.

She barely flinched when she heard his voice, but did not even turn around, because she already knew who was standing in front of her.

"Why did you come back," she said, restraining her anger, "why did you come here, this place does not belong to you, there is no magic of your witchcraft in these rocks.

"Forces of darkness are present everywhere, they just need to be awakened by human evil, grief or pain. They will become even more powerful, and the whole world will belong to me when there is no pure, bright and beautiful dream left in it.

"It will never happen," she hastily interrupted him, "the dream of goodness is immortal in the hearts of people, and it will defeat you."

"Oh no," – a short laugh escaped from the chest of the bloody demon, "she needs to be saved, not me. After all, even in goodness I can find evil, in beauty ugliness, in a dream inconsolable grief. This is my strength, I can find the worst in the beautiful soul of people, I can turn their dignity into a curse. It happened with Roderick, it will happen with the daughter of our princess."

"I will not allow," said Clara, "I will not allow you to kill her.

"She's only a human."

"But why then did you wait for so many years, why do you need her life now?"

"I just know that if some time passes, then the same magical charm of the princess will appear in her, she took your life, so why would you save her daughter."

"Because she became my daughter, and you cannot deceive me, demon."

"And I don't need it, I just give you a choice, Clara, give me Maerlin, and then I will save your life."

"No," Clara answered firmly, her decision was unshakable.

Clara slowly turned around and looked straight into the fiery eyes of the bloody demon, who now wanted to destroy her. She believed that Maerlin would survive, no forces of evil could defeat her. Clara understood this, because she loved her, but now she looked into the eyes of her own bloody death.

A clawed, bloody hand rested on her shoulder, and pain shot through Clara's entire body. Suddenly, something unexpected forced the demon to release its victim from the embrace of death, and Clara's bloody corpse fell lifelessly down, where the sea was rustling, and its waves forever preserved the beauty of her sweet face. The gaze of the bloody demon instantly rushed to where not far away, on a high rock, stood a small lonely house, filled with warmth and comfort.

"Clara," came from there the low cry of someone's clear and beautiful voice, barely drowning out the violent gusts of wind. A beautiful young girl came out of the house, and the fiery eyes of the devil widened in insane anger when he saw her.

"Clara," she shouted again, gathering all her strength.

She quickly ran forward, although gusts of wind blocked her way to the sea and to the edge of the cliff, where Clara had previously stood.

"Clara," she whispered softly with growing fear, looking around, but nowhere was a living soul to be seen.

“Maerlin, Maerlin,” a mysterious whisper echoed in a mysterious silence.

“Clara,” Maerlin repeated involuntarily, but she knew that the voice was not Klara’s.

“Maerlin, beautiful dream,” sounded again in the silence, making her shudder all over.

“Who is there?” Looking around apprehensively, she whispered softly and again, in a terrible fit of fear, shouted with all her might:

“Clara!”

Her desperate cry went unanswered. A long, clawed hand from behind reached out to Maerlin, almost touching her shoulder, but as soon as she flinched with a bad feeling, the strange hand disappeared into the mist again.

“Clara,” Maerlin whispered for the last time, but then a sound suddenly made her turn sharply, but there was no one around. Sighing heavily, Maerlin involuntarily backed away. Suddenly icy hands grabbed her from behind.

Maerlin screamed and dashed away with all her might. In the very last moment, when she was about to run back home, something made her turn around. At the edge of the cliff, a huge figure surged up in a fit of pain, or, perhaps, inhuman anger.

Bloody eyes looked directly at her from somewhere in the very darkness, and it seemed to her that if they only wanted, they could kill her at any moment.

“You are beautiful,” the monster whispered softly, almost touching her face with its clawed paw.

In wild fright, Maerlin recoiled, and the small golden cross in her hand, always kept by her as the last spark of good in memory of her mother, slipped out of her fingers and fell to the cold ground with a clang.

The monster’s eyes flashed with fire, now he longed for the death of Maerlin.

Maerlin made a sharp movement, wanting to get away from here as soon as possible, but involuntarily fell to the cold ground next to her golden crucifix. Her hand, in the last hope of salvation, reached out to this cross.

She did not understand that the last moment saved her. As if some light and pure radiance helped her reach the cross, some magic of light blinded the bloody demon for a moment. Maerlin quickly grabbed the cross in her hand.

The cross in her hand immediately shone with a blinding light, reflected in the eyes of the bloody demon. The demon screamed in pain and disappeared.

Then the snow-white hand of the figure slowly bending over her gently touched her shoulder, and there was so much tenderness in this light touch that made Maerlin distinctly whisper one single and so sweet, but never known to her word:

– Mum.

She gripped the golden crucifix tightly in her hand and barely opened her eyes.

Before her was a beautiful face, so similar to Clara’s and so different from her in its truly magical beauty.

“Mom,” she whispered in a dream.

The beauty ran her snow-white sparkling magic hand over Maerlin’s cheek, and from her hand a magical radiance of light spread around and filled Maerlin’s soul with something magical forever. Emily disappeared into the beams of an unreal, magical glow. This radiance is forever etched in Maerlin’s heart, as is Emily’s fabulous beauty.

Only a miracle saved her, and she did not know who summoned him. In the fog of the sea, another indescribably beautiful face of a young man flashed before her for a moment, and she realized that he had saved her.

Maerlin gripped the small gold cross tightly in her hand and headed towards the house.



## **DIARY MAERLIN WOUND OF MYSTERY**

Emily, lovely Emily. This name is forever etched in my heart.

How many years have passed since she appeared before me as a vision, but I knew that now I would never forget her face, full of fabulous beauty and incomprehensible to me, but wonderful magic.

A sweet image has remained in my soul forever, and it now lives in me, inside me, in the very depths of my consciousness and burns my soul with the same fire in which the portrait of my mother burned.

Together with her beauty, in my memory, it remained forever my terrible bloody scar, which almost killed the heart of a very young girl, the face of the devil in clothes black like the darkness of the night and bloody eyes sparkling with terrible anger.

He was horror itself, but what a terrible secret, perhaps, imprinted in his fiery eyes. Still, I would like to think that he also has a heart, and behind the flame of his eyes hides the pain and sorrow of a lonely soul.

I do not know how I saw it in the fiery eyes clouded with malice and cruelty, I myself did not fully understand this, but perhaps a guess about the secret came to me because at the sight of me there was only a gap of unprecedented and unnatural kindness flashed for a moment in the fiery gleam of his bloody eyes. Most likely, I realized this because from the same blow of cruel fate my own heart was broken. No, I never knew love, and at the same time I loved the hopelessly and passionately beautiful face, the owner of which I dreamed of being, the face of a fabulous ghost from the sea cliffs, the face of Emily, my mother.

For females, the burning desire of my whole life has ignited in me since I saw the beautiful portrait of the unique Emily. I wanted to be like her. Did I know then that an unpredictable fate prepares me for a special fate, and with it a beauty that surpasses the beauty of my dreams, and I do not know, fortunately or not.

If only I could be that wonderful little girl again, charming and not knowing the painful memories. Then I was carefree, kind and cheerful, but even then an incomprehensible anxiety and some kind of painful thoughtfulness, unusual at this age, arose in my soul. I was looking for an answer to the passionate appeal of my soul, to the frantic feelings in my heart, but I could not find it, then there was only one thing left – my all-consuming call to adventure. Nevertheless, I lived a calm and measured life in our little house by the sea. Outwardly, I seemed carefree, and even then there was not a shadow of calm in my soul, as if I felt in advance everything that had to happen to me, so that later I would not be at all afraid of it.

I remember all my feelings and always relive them, I remember Klara. Her kindness, as well as a strange and inexplicable resemblance to my mother, although not as bright and strong as mine.

Clara has always loved me very much. I also loved her as much as I could. Emily took all my dreams, delight and admiration, and I gave to Clara all that tender love that was in my soul, and it was preserved in the memory of her.

Clara has always loved to walk by the rocks on the coast. She walked in any weather. Whether the coast was covered with a thick veil of fog, whether the weather was clear and the sea was calm and quiet, or a storm was raging, Clara stood on the rocks and gazed thoughtfully at the sea. Who knows what she saw there, and what her thoughts were busy with in those moments.

I will never understand this. as well as the agony of your own heart. On that day, I heard strange voices and ran out of the house to find Clara. I saw both the bloody demon, and the beautiful ghost of my mother, and the bloody body of Clara by the coastal rocks. Then I understood the power of the

cross bequeathed to me many years ago by my mother, and now it will always be a sacred symbol of goodness and my sudden salvation from the mysterious and incomprehensible to me dark rocks.

After Klara's death, I lived all alone in my small house on a coastal cliff next to the sea and far from people.

I could not entrust my thoughts to anyone, they were too beautiful, and besides, I hated the customs of people to find obscene even in beauty itself. Nevertheless, I had several friends who were hermits like me, although they occasionally had to communicate with other people.

I didn't know another reason why Clara wanted us to live so far from everyone, but I never regretted it.

I liked our beautiful place with its untouched nature and pure, virgin beauty, untouched by ordinary human life, I loved the magic ring of sleeping rocks, I loved the foggy coast, covered with incomprehensible sadness and longing, I loved the wonderful waves. all the time running away into the endless distance and with a foamy tide, beating against the shore, as well as the charming smooth surface of the sea.

I could fall in love with all seasons, because only here, in my native place, they always acquired extraordinary beauty, or it was the color of their homeland that painted them so. I also loved the hot, wonderful summer with all the colors of the rainbow in its bright and native beauty and the fresh beauty of spring, which forever rejuvenates the earth. I loved them with the same equal vigor as the motley, luxurious, wonderful autumn, as well as the fabulous, but such a cold winter, when through the fogged glass of my window I could look at a fast whirlwind of beautiful snowflakes, full of endless charm and so similar to forever a wonderful and cold legend.

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