

Julia Asparagus



*Morion
Necklace*

Yuliya Alpagut
Morion Necklace

«Издательские решения»

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The mysterious death of her beloved friend Carolyn, was for Miranda only the beginning of a series of terrible events. The key to understanding the death of the girl and many other horrific and unexplained incidents is the Morion necklace, which Miranda found in her apartment after the funeral...

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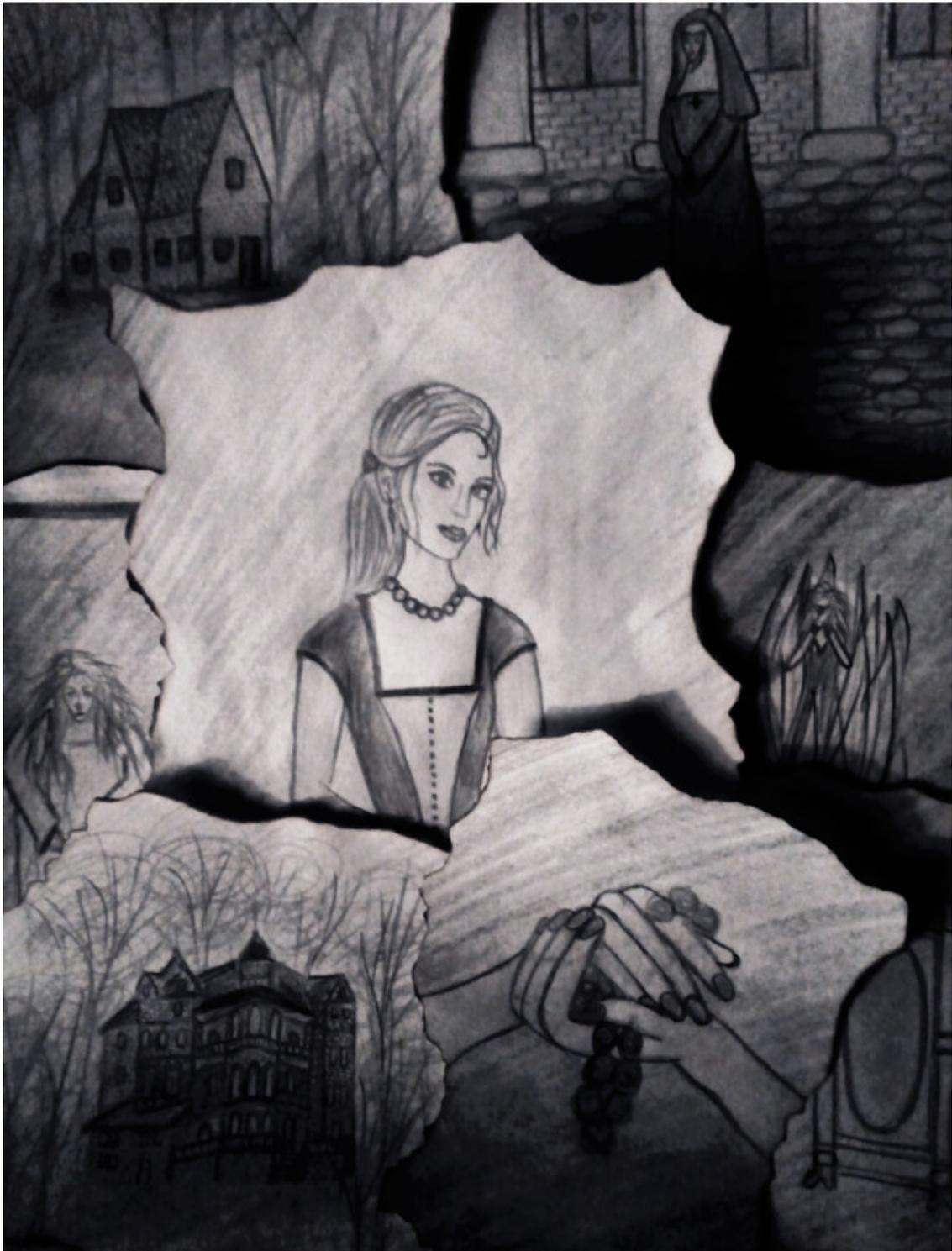
Morion Necklace

Yuliya Alpagut

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1. Carey, I'm home...

– What a beautiful necklace! – said the old woman to the girl who was sitting opposite her with hoping to distract the girl from bad thoughts. But nothing smarter than what she just said, she could not think of.

– Yes beautiful, – the girl agreed, fingering the bead behind the bead, – It belonged to Carolyn... Old woman sighed heavily.

– Sorry honey. —she said. – I did not know.

– Don't worry granny. Everything is good. – sadly the girl answered her. – You know... The day after her funeral, I found it in my casket on the chest of drawers. Strange... These were her favorite necklaces. She never took it off. At least I have never seen her without these necklaces. Well... Maybe only a couple of times... I think all the time, how could it be in my box?

– She probably took it off and put it there. And then she forgot it. That's all. – suggested an old woman.

– Maybe... Maybe... But I don't remember her taking off her necklace in my house. And why did she do it?

The girl looked at the interlocutor. The old woman just shrugged in response.

– When I found it here, – continued the girl, – At first I was surprised, but then I thought the same thing. That she just took it off and forgot here. But when I began to remember that evening...

The girl fell silent. Her eyes clouded with tears.

– That evening ... – she squeezed out and could say nothing more.

Covering her face with her hands, the girl sobbing and whispered:

– Oh, God... What a nightmare... What a horror... How could this happen?! I do not understand! But why? Why?

The old woman got up from the chair, coming up to the girl and hugged her tightly. The girl buried her face in her dress and burst into tears.

– Why? Why did she die? Why? And for what, for what sins, she suffered?

– I do not know, dear... I do not know ... – An old woman answered her and squeezed the girl in her arms as tightly as she could. She squeezed so tightly that it was difficult for the girl to breathe. But at the same time, the girl felt some relief. And after a minute, completely calmed down. Then the old woman pulled her granddaughter a little away and looked into her tear-stained blue eyes.

– Carolyn in paradise, – she said, – She looks at you. And I'm sure she doesn't like at all what you cry.

– Yes... – breathed girl. – I even know what she would say to me...

– And what? – asked an old woman.

– She would call me a crybaby and ugly.

– Ugly? – surprised old woman.

– Yes, – nodded girl and smiled. – When I cried, Carolyn always said that I'm ugly.

– Oh no, – said old woman, – No you are not ugly! You have such a beauty! Even when crying! But do not cry! – she said and threatened her granddaughter with her finger.

The girl looked into the gray, clouded and very kind eyes of the old woman and smiled.

– I love you, granny. Love very much. —she said.

– And I love you, my dear girl. – an old woman answered her and once again hugged her granddaughter.

– Thank you. – whispered girl.

– You're welcome, my dear, – the old woman answered her, lightly patting her on the back, – You're welcome, my dear Miranda.

The old woman released her granddaughter and gently held her soft wrinkled hand on the cheek of the girl. Miranda kissed her hand and asked:

– Granny, do you want some tea?

– Sit, – she said and headed towards the door, – I’ll be back soon.

– Grandma, where are you going? – asked Miranda.

– I’ll make hot tea for you and me! – an old woman answered her and opened the door.

– Ah, Grandma! – getting up from the couch, the girl was outraged. – Here you are always like that! You sit down! Have a rest! I’ll do everything myself!

– Rest? – surprised old woman. – From what?

She crossed her arms over her chest, frowned and looked at her granddaughter.

– Or what is this, in your opinion, I am so old that even tea is not able to brew?

– Granny ... – said Miranda, – What are you saying! I did not mean it at all!

– Okay! Okay! – old woman waved her hand. – I know. And don’t worry about me. So who needs to relax here, it’s you! Sit down! I’ll do everything now.

– Thank you, – smiled girl.

As if accepting gratitude, the woman nodded her head and disappeared behind the door. Miranda was left alone in the room. She carefully sat on the edge of the couch and looked around. Everything around was the same as a week ago. Nothing changed. “And why should something have changed?” She thought. “After all, no one has been here all this time!”.

Miranda did not want to believe that her beloved friend no longer exists. And looking around, she still hoped that at least something had changed in her familiar surroundings. “Carolyn was always moving or shifting something here.” – thought girl, – “The book does not lie in its place, or a vase... Something else...”.

These, in general, imperceptible movements of essentially unnecessary things, always irritated Miranda a little. But now she hoped to find anything lying in the wrong place. She hoped, but in her heart she knew that this would not happen. She knew that Carolyn was gone. But she still hoped that everything that had happened to her friend was just a bad dream. “How I would like to wake up now and find out that you are alive! And it was just a nightmare!” – thought Miranda.

– Carey! You were for me more than just a friend! You were like a sister to me! – the girl said out loud and looking at the chair in which Carolyn often sat when she came to visit her.

– Honey, did you say something? – asked an old woman who had already entered the living room at that moment.

Miranda looked at the old woman.

– What granny? – she asked.

– Did you say something to me? I did not hear well, – the old woman asked again.

She put a tray of tea and cookies on a small coffee table next to the sofa and, waiting for an answer, looked at her granddaughter.

– Oh no! No! Nothing! – smiled girl, – I was talking to myself!

– With yourself? – the old woman was indignant, and having put her fists on her hips, – You do not need me?

In response, Miranda smiled sweetly.

– Oh, – old woman playfully threatened with a finger. – Okay my dear, – she said, – Let’s drink tea!

Miranda took the cup and looked around again. A sofa, two armchairs, a coffee table, a chest of drawers, a floor lamp, shelves with books and all sorts of trinkets... Everything was as it was a week ago. Then, when she left this place in the hope of at least a little to relax and forget about what happened.

Miranda prepared a guest room for her grandmother. Dismantled her suitcase. Went to the grocery store and cooked dinner.

– Mmmm... Delicious! – moaned old woman, – You're so cool! Your fiance should be happy because he has you! Lucky boy! – she praised her beloved and only granddaughter.

Miranda was embarrassed, but said nothing. In fact, she really liked when her grandmother praised her.

– Oh, by the way! – suddenly said an old woman. – And where is your handsome fiance? Why did not he meet us?

– Granny, I told you! Aiden has a lot of work.

– Oh yes... Work, work ... – old woman shook her head. – And when will he honor us with his presence?

– I do not know, – Miranda shrugged. – I called him before leaving. He was very apologetic, but... He really couldn't meet us. And, as I understood, today we will not see him. Maybe tomorrow...

– He will not spend the night at home? – asked the old woman.

– Most likely no. He will stay with a friend with whom he works. From there it is much closer to work. They need to finish something...

– But tomorrow I will have to leave you, my dear, – interrupted her grandmother, – You know, your grandfather can't even live a day without me!

– I know, – Miranda smiled. – And so I do not understand why you went here?!

– Just wanted to make sure that... well ... – trying to find the right words, mumbled old woman.

– That I can be here after what happened? – girl helped her.

The old woman nodded. Miranda moved closer to her and, taking her hands in her, looked into her dim eyes.

– Granny, everything is fine. – the girl said convincingly, – True! You can not worry about me!

– Are you sure about that?

– I'm sure, granny. Do not worry. All is well. So tomorrow you can safely go home to grandfather.

– If you want, I can stay with you longer, – old woman offered.

Miranda shook her head.

– No! – she said, – I mean... I love you very much, but... You really need to go back to grandfather. He loves you so much! He will go crazy without you! And I... I need to be here alone for a while. Try to get used to the idea that Carey is no longer alive. Honestly, I even asked Aiden to stay with his parents for a couple of days. I need some time to put my feelings in order. To...

– Ok, ok, – the old woman interrupted her, – I understand everything, my dear. You don't need to explain anything to me. But, if you need something – call me! I will definitely come!

– Ok, – Miranda smiled. – I hope I don't need anything.

– Is it because you don't want to see me? – narrowing her eyes, the old woman asked jokingly.

– Oh God! What a bore you are! – waving her arms, the girl said and laughed.

Knocking on the door quietly and not waiting for an answer, Miranda looked into the guest room. An old woman stood near the window and looked out into the street.

– Are you sleeping? – Miranda asked her.

Old woman turned.

– Of course I sleep! What else can I do when I standing on my feet?! – she said and laughed.

– Granny, —Miranda said. – Enough! You're laughing at me all the time!

– What? I already can not laugh?

– Here we go again! – the girl threw up her hands.

– OK OK. Do not be angry. I won't do that anymore!

– I'm not angry, but... Thank you, – Miranda smiled.

– At least... Today, – grinning, old woman mumbling.

Miranda smiled and shook her head.

– My dear, did you want something? – asked an old woman.

The girl looked questioningly at her grandmother.

– Well, what are you looking like this? Did you come for something? And, by the way, you knocked, but actually you should to wait for an answer before you entered.

– Granny... I'm sorry ... – Miranda uttered guiltily and lowered her eyes like a little naughty child.

– Oh, my dear girl, do not apologize, – the old woman smiled, – You know, you can come to me without knocking. So what did you want?

– Nothing, granny. I wanted to wish you good night.

A little old woman came up to the girl. She raised herself to her toes and kissed Miranda on the cheek. The girl in response firmly hugged her.

– Thank you, – Miranda said softly.

– For what? – grandmother asked her.

Miranda looked into her dim eyes, taking her face in her hand and said with a smile:

– For the fact that I have you!

– Oh stop it, – the old woman was suddenly embarrassed. And, after a short pause, she said:

– My dear girl, go to sleep. It's late.

– Good night granny, – Miranda said and kissed her soft, wrinkled hand.

– Good night, my dear. And... If you suddenly want to talk, or you can not sleep, do not be shy, come to me.

– Okay, – the girl nodded her head. – But I'm going to sleep tonight. And I will sleep until the morning!

– That is great! – the old woman said approvingly.

Miranda once again wished her grandmother good night and left the room. The girl closed the door behind her and pressed her back to the door. She touched the necklace with her fingers, Necklaces that were hanging around her neck and which once belonged to her friend Carolyn. And whispered softly:

– Oh, Carey... Well, I am at home...

In the morning, after breakfast, Miranda's grandmother started getting ready to go.

– Granny, are you sure you don't want me to escort you to the station? – asked the girl.

– Sure, – old woman answered her. – Why do you need to go to the station, and then go back?

Are you afraid that I will get lost and not get to the train?

– Are you starting again?! – Miranda shook her head.

The old woman took her small bag and put the belt on her shoulder.

– Don't bother yourself, honey. I already called a taxi, – she said.

– Oh, granny! It's not hard for me!

– I know, honey, I know. But do not do this. So much time will be wasted!

– Will not be wasted, – Miranda said. – We can talk to you about something along the way.

– It's only there... And back? And you still have not talked enough with me? – the old woman smiled.

The girl shook her head.

– No, – she said.

– Don't insist, honey. I still think that you should not go back and forth. And we can talk to you when I come home and call you. Better go somewhere...

- Yes? Good. And where will I go so early?
- That’s it! It’s too early! – suddenly the old woman said loudly, – Better get back in bed. You are very pale. Probably did not sleep at all!
- Slept, granny, slept. And i slept well the first time in the last two weeks!
- You’re not lying? – narrowing eyes, asked the old woman.
- Did I ever lie to you? – Miranda offended.
- Always, – grandma laughed.
- Oh, stop it! So someone will hear you and believe!
- Well, stop talking, – old woman waved her hand. – Or I’ll be late for the train! Better close the door behind me and go to sleep! You look like a... Rumpled.
- So... You know what?! – Miranda got a little angry, – I, perhaps, will accompany you!
- I will go without you.
- Enough! The conversation is over! Wait five minutes! I’ll just change clothes. And do not dare to go anywhere!
- Miranda threatened her grandmother with a finger, turning and wanted to leave, but heard how the old woman quietly hissed:
 - Well, yes, of course, I will stand here and wait...
 - Did you say something? – turning sharply, Miranda asked her.
 - No no! Nothing! It probably seemed to you! – An old woman replied to her and made such an innocent look that Miranda could not restrain a smile.
 - Oh yeah! Of course! Come on, give me that! – said the girl and grabbed the bag that the old woman was holding tightly.
 - Oh no! My bag! Why do you need it?
 - Come on, come on! I know you! Now I will leave, so you will immediately run away!
 - Run away? Am I a criminal? – the old woman was indignant.
 - Not! I will be a criminal if I let you go alone!
 - Oh! Oh my God! What is the problem to get to the station, – slamming her hand on her leg ironically said the old woman.
 - Stop you bicker or you’ll really be late, – muttered Miranda and quietly pulled the bag.
 - Yes... It’s no use arguing with you! You are the same as your mother!
 - Yes! Which is the same as her mother! – narrowing her eyes, said Miranda and the old woman finally gave up.
 - Okay go change clothes, – she said, – I will wait for you. But only five minutes!
 - If you are not going to leave without me, then be so kind...
 - What else?
 - Do not hold the bag!
- The old woman opened her fist. The girl quickly left with her grandmother’s bag and returned a few minutes later.
 - Ok! I’m ready! – she said loudly, – Let’s go!
 - Come on, let’s go. It was already time to get out! – said the old woman and opened the front door.



2. Vision

Miranda accompanied her grandmother to the train station. Said goodbye to her and put her on the train. Old woman left.

Sitting in a taxi, the girl suddenly realized that she absolutely did not want to go back home now. It was a warm June morning, and she decided to stroll through the park near her house. Then she went to the café. Went shopping. Walked around the city a little more and returned home only in the evening. Closing the front door behind her, Miranda casually tossed her keys on the shelf in the hallway and threw off her shoes.

– Oh... I'm so tired, – she exhaled.

Somewhere in the apartment her mobile phone rang.

– Oh my God! – exclaimed the girl, – I completely forgot about Aiden and Granny!

Miranda ran into the kitchen, where the bell rang from.

– Hello! – grabbing the phone, she said loudly.

– Oh my God, Miranda! Finally! Why didn't you answer the calls? – excitedly asked Aiden.

– Sorry, sorry, honey! I escorted Granny to the station and then went shopping... I completely lost track of time... I forgot the phone at home... Sorry...

– Uh, Miranda ... – he exhaled, – Thank God you're okay! I did not know what to think!

– Forgive me, – apologizes Miranda.

– When we meet, I will glue the phone on your hand, – said the man.

– Oh, well, you started talking like grandma! – exclaimed Miranda.

– This is all because your dear grandmother destroyed my brain today! Do you know how many times she called me?

– Yes... I can imagine ... – exhaled Miranda.

– Honey, I have to work. I'll call you later. Please hold the phone nearby. Ok?

– Okay.

– And call your granny! She is very worried!

– I'll call, – Miranda said and turned off the phone.

A few seconds later she called her grandmother. After hearing from her beloved old woman the story of how much she was worried until she could get through to her, and how did she get to the house, and how grandfather met her, and many other things, Miranda completely exhausted.

– Grandma, I'm so tired ... – she squeaked.

– Oh ... – said old woman. – My dear, i talk too much... It's late. Go. Do your business and go to bed. Be sure to call me tomorrow. And do not forget the phone!

– I will not forget, – Miranda assured her. – Aiden is going to glue it to me.

– It is right, – supported grandmother, – Good boy!

– Always knew you would get along, – the girl smiled.

– Yes, yes... Go, honey. Do not forget to call me tomorrow!

– I will not forget, – Miranda said and turned off the phone.

The girl went into the bathroom and looked at her reflection in the mirror.

– You're so pale, Miranda, – she said to herself and tapped on the mirror with her index finger.

– You need to take a bath. Yes Yes! This is a good idea! A hot bubble bath is what you need right now! – she talked with her reflection.

– Today you and I will be alone here. And tomorrow... And, probably, the day after tomorrow... Although... Maybe this is too much? – Miranda thought. – I do not know... I already

missed Aiden. The last time I saw him was a week ago, when he took me to the station ... – she said and, taking a deep breath and opened the tap.

A strong jet of water gushed into the bath. Slightly twisting the mixer, Miranda adjusted her temperature and plugged the drain with a silver stopper.

Taking off her jersey, the girl caught a glimpse of herself in a fogging mirror. “Something is wrong...” – flashed through her head. She undid her pants and stooped to pull them off. Throwing clothes in a basket of dirty laundry, Miranda turned to the mirror and looked at her reflection again.

– Something is not right... You are strange, Miranda... What’s wrong with you? – the girl said softly, bringing her face to the mirror and wiped it with her hand.

– Oh my God! – bounced back sharply, she exclaimed in horror, not looking away from her reflection.

– How is this possible? It can’t be ... – Miranda whispered and put her hands on her chest, where her heart was now beating so hard.

From the mirror, Miranda watched her startled reflection. And only one thing distinguished them from each other. She, Miranda, had blue eyes, and her reflection had brown eyes. Same as hers, now deceased, friend.

“Carey” – the girl thought and covered her face with her hands.

– I’m probably losing my mind, – she said softly and took a deep breath.

“This is a hallucination... a hallucination... There can be no such thing... Really?! I’m just tired... I just need to rest... That’s all... Everything is fine... Everything is good ...», – she calmed herself. “You need to open your eyes and see... Now I will look in the mirror, and everything is as before! I am as before... As always ...», – Miranda thought and finally decided to look in the mirror at the girl she knew, who looked at her a minute ago with someone else’s eyes.

Miranda slowly removed her hands from her face and opened her eyes. The mirror was completely foggy. And the girl had to come closer to wipe mirror again.

Holding her breath, Miranda looked at her reflection and exhaled with relief. A pretty girl of about twenty-five with long dark hair and blue eyes was looking at her from the mirror. Pale and a little scared, but that was her. It was Miranda. The way she was supposed to be.

About two hours later, Miranda came out of the bathroom. Having poured herself a large mug of hot cocoa, the girl went into the living room. Outside it was completely dark. But she did not turn on the light in the room.

Sitting comfortably on the couch, Miranda grabbed the mug in both hands and sipping hot cocoa. She began to inspect the dark room and the chair in which Carolyn used to sit when she came to visit her. The girl wanted to see her beloved friend again. Alive... A sweet and cheerful girl with big brown eyes and a smile that always shines on her face. But no matter how much Miranda wanted it, it was not possible.

– I’ll never see you again, – looking at the empty chair she said sadly. – Ah, my dear Carey... I do not understand how this could happen... It does not fit in my head. The police said you set yourself on fire! I can not believe this...

Miranda thought and a moment later continued as if Carolyn was there, next to her, and could hear her.

– You were so afraid of fire... Do you remember? We were out of town with your parents... Do you remember? Then, in childhood, when in our tree house burning candles fell on our drawings and magazines. And we talked and laughed so much that we didn’t notice it. And then everything flashed... We could not approach the exit... And shouted... We shouted, but no one heard... And then we jumped out the window... We had to do it. You broke your leg then, and I broke my arm... Do you remember? Of course you remember... You were so scared then. You slept with me in the

same bed for a month because you were scared. And then, when we returned to the city, you still had nightmares for a very long time. Fire... Fire ... – the girl sighed heavily, – They said that you set yourself on fire... But I know... I know how much you were afraid of fire! I know that you never had a match or a candle at your house... But they say that you did it yourself! It's so hard for me to believe it! How could you, such a kind, nice, beautiful and cheerful person, do that? Do I really not know something? Did you really hide something from me?! After all, you can't just do what you did! Did you do it?!

Miranda looked at the empty chair and tears flowed from her eyes.

– I want to see you so much, – after a minute pause she continued, – So I want to ask you what happened in your life, what I don't know about... What pushed you into what you did with yourself?!

Miranda tried to imagine Carolyn entering the room and sitting opposite her in that chair.

– You know, Carey ... – the girl sighed heavily, – I do not understand what happened that night... That night... You told me about Danny and you seemed so happy! And when you left... You all shone with happiness! And... I don't understand what could have happened... You know... All this time, that you are not alive... Oh my God, it seems that an entire eternity has passed! And it took only two weeks... Carey... Carey, all this time I have been tormented by a terrible feeling of guilt... God! I think all the time, what would happen if I did not tell you that the apartment next to me is for sale? What if you didn't buy it? Maybe you would be alive now? You lived next to me just a month... So close... Just a few steps from me... Just a month...

Miranda dropped a mug of cocoa on the floor and covered her face with shaking hands.

– Why? Why haven't I heard your screams? – she sobbed, – You screamed! You should have screamed! Why haven't I heard? Why didn't I help you?

– Miranda ... – suddenly a girl heard a quiet voice, – Miranda...

The girl immediately fell silent. She removed her hands from her face, peering into the darkness and began to listen to the whisper.

– Miranda... Miranda ... – someone quietly repeated her name.

“This is Carolyn's voice” – the girl thought with horror and frightened looked at the empty chair.

– It can not be... It can not be... I'm going crazy ... – shaking her head she said.

– Miranda, – suddenly someone said her name loudly.

Girl with fright jumped up from the couch.

– Who is there? – she cried out.

– I'm here, Miranda, – said voice.

Miranda turned her head toward the door and swayed in fear. In the doorway, in the dark, someone was standing.

– Oh my God! Who you are? How did you get here? – she asked excitedly and frightened.

– You do not recognize me, Miranda?! – asked the dark figure and took a few steps forward so that the dim light entering the room from the window could light up her face a little. Miranda turned white with horror.

– Carolyn? Is that you? No... No... It can not be! You ... – the girl only had time to say it and her heart almost stopped in fear when the phone suddenly rang. Miranda looked for a moment in the direction from where the phone rang, and then looked again at the place where her deceased friend had just stood. But Carolyn was no longer there. The girl looked into the emptiness, and the phone rang, making loud ringing sounds. Finally Miranda answered.

– Hello, – she said in a trembling voice, – Hello! Who is this? Do not be silent!

– Murderer... – someone hissed softly in a voice like Carolyn's and hung up.

Miranda stood alone in the dark room. Eyes wide with horror, she looked somewhere in the void. She held a handset near her ear, from which came unpleasant short beeps. And tears flowed down her cheeks.



3. I will stay

Miranda woke up in the morning on the couch in the living room from some noise. Opening her eyes, she looked around. The room was bright and there was no one there but her. The girl began to listen to the noise that reached her from behind the closed door. There was definitely someone else in the apartment besides her. She heard someone's quiet footsteps. Some kind of rustling. Then someone walked along the corridor. As he moved closer to the living room where Miranda was now located, his steps became clearer and louder, but after a few seconds it became quiet. Miranda listened with horror to silence, when suddenly the doorknob slowly turned. From fright, the girl jumped up from the couch. She stepped on a mug lying on the floor and flew down with a cry. She collapsed on her back and, hitting her head hard on the floor, lost consciousness.

– Miranda! Miranda! – from somewhere far away came to her mind a familiar male voice.

The girl opened her eyes. Everything was blurring around. Miranda tried to make out the man bent over her and when her gaze finally focused on his face, she happily discovered for herself, that in front of her was her beloved Aiden. The girl gasped with relief and smiled.

– What are you doing here? – she asked quietly.

– Strange question, – he grinned.

Miranda rose a little.

– Ouch! So painful! – grimaced and clutching at the back of her head, she said.

– Of course! – said Aiden, – Make such a flight! My heart almost stopped when I saw it!

A man helped Miranda up and sat her in a chair.

– Are you okay? How do you feel? – he was worried.

– It's okay, do not worry, – the girl assured him. – It hurts a little and then stops hurting.

– Let's call a doctor? – he suggested.

– No no, no need, – she refused and rubbing the back of the head asked:

– What happened?

– I do not know, – Aiden shrugged, – When I entered, you were already in flight!

Miranda laughed and this made her head sick even more.

– Heck! It hurts so much! – again clutching the back of the head she said.

– I'll bring ice, – said Aiden and quickly left the room.

A minute later he came back. He held a towel in which he wrapped ice cubes.

– I guess you stepped on a mug, – he suggested and putting a cold towel to the back of the girl.

– What? – asked Miranda and looked at him questioningly.

Aiden pointed to this unfortunate object, which was lying on the floor.

– Oh yes... yes ... – said the girl, remembering what happened, – I heard footsteps outside the door and was frightened. I jumped up from the couch and... There was this damn mug! Today I'll throw it out, – as if she was angry with this inanimate object, Miranda growled.

– Yeah. Come on. I think it will not be very upset about this, – joked Aiden.

– Who? – Miranda did not understand.

– Mug, of course. – the man explained.

Miranda looked at him disapprovingly.

– Can you be serious at least once in your life? At least now! My head breaks, and you stand here and laugh! – she was offended.

– Sorry, sorry. But I did not want to laugh at you. And I did not laugh at all! Maybe take you to the hospital?

– No thanks, it is not necessary.

– And if you have a concussion?

– Well, in that case, then you will have something else to laugh at, – Miranda said resentfully.

– Please, honey, don't be mad. You know that I did not want to upset you, – the man said, and gently kissed her on the back of the head.

– I just don't like ... – she began and looked at Aiden.

– What Don 't you like? – he asked.

– Nothing.

Miranda puffed out her cheeks and turned away a little from Aiden.

– So, – he said, – Since you started talking, go ahead! Come on, come on! I'm listening!

– Well, since you want it... Ok, – she said and raised her eyebrows, – I do not like that you and grandmother always kidding me! Constantly laugh! What do you think I'm a clown?

The girl got up from her chair and, pending an answer, looked intently at the man's brown eyes.

– That's all? – after a short pause he asked.

– And what, this is not enough?!

– Ah, you're my silly, – Aiden smiled and hugged her, – No one laugh at you. And especially not making fun! It's just that we are like this with her... And you... You are our silly little girl!

Miranda twitched, thus showing the man that she does not want him to embrace her. But Aiden only stronger pressed her to him.

– I love you, Miranda! I love very much! – he said.

– I love you very much too, – she said and hugged him back.

– Maybe we will go to the hospital? – a little moving away from the girl and looking into her eyes, once again suggested Aiden.

– No. – shook her head softly, she said. – Everything is fine with me. No longer hurts. And, you know, I hate hospitals.

– You are so stubborn, – the man smiled.

– So you did not answer me. What are you doing here?

– I live here.

– Aiden, – Miranda said, – Well, I'm serious!

– Me too, – he smiled.

– All right, I will ask in another way. You should have come only in a couple of days. Right?

– Right.

– And come now. Right?

The man nodded his head.

– You are so funny, – he said.

– And you... You are so... so...

– What?

– Harmful!

– Very harmful?

– Very very! So what are you doing here?

– Are you not happy to see me?

– I'm happy. Very. And see, and hear, and feel... I just did not expect...

– I called you late in the evening. When finished work. You again did not answer. I thought you were already asleep. And then my friend, with whom I stayed overnight, called me to the telephone. Said it was you. When I answered, you already hung up.

– Me?! – Miranda was surprised. – But I didn't call anyone yesterday. He probably mistook something.

– Maybe, – the man agreed, – It was already late at night. But I called you. You picked up the phone, but apparently did not hear me. You had a worried voice. So I decided to come. I would have come earlier, but there was an accident there, on the road... That's why I'm a little late.

– Accident? – Miranda was scared. – Are you okay?

– Everything is good. I was not even a witness. – Aiden reassured her.

– Thank God, – exhaled Miranda and thought about something.

– Did you call at night? – after a short pause she asked.

The man nodded back.

– The call ... – Miranda said softly and her face suddenly changed and turned white.

– What? What happened? Something is wrong? – Aiden worried when he saw this strange change.

– This is so strange ... – as if looking through him, the girl said, – I think I... I saw Carolyn at night...

– Carolyn? – the man asked in confusion.

And Miranda told him about the eyes in the mirror, and about the vision that was so real and so similar to her dead friend, and about the strange call.

– Damn, – hissed Aiden, – I knew that you could not come back here! It was necessary to immediately rent another apartment! Why do I always fulfill your whims?!

– This is not a whim! This is my home! I live here!

– It was your home! And now, I am afraid, it will become for you something like a torture chamber!

– Why do you say that?

– Because I know how much you loved Carolyn! I know how much time you spent together! And here everything reminds you of her! Right? Maybe that's why your imagination is playing with you? Or maybe because her apartment is opposite? And she is there ... – Aiden did not finish this sentence. Miranda understood so well what he meant.

– You did not see the dead when, you lived with your grandmother outside the city for a week? – he asked.

– No, I have not seen, – she shook her head.

– Well, – Aiden said, – Pack your bags.

– Why? Where? What for?

– I want us to leave here today. We will stay with my parents until we find another apartment.

– No, Aiden, – Miranda shook her head, – I'm not going anywhere from here! – she said emphatically, – And it is useless to persuade me! I will not leave! At least for now... I need to be here some more. I must! And do not argue! It makes no sense!

– Ufff, – the man exhaled, – Ok... Ok, – he agreed, – If you really need it... Although I do not think so...

4. Where is the necklace?

In the morning Miranda walked into the kitchen and saw Aiden there.

– What are you doing here? – she was surprised.

– I’m going to make breakfast for us, – the man answered and got something out of the fridge.

– I see. I mean, what are you doing HERE? Don’t you have to go to work?

– I have to go. But today I decided to stay with you. Are you not happy?

– I’m happy, but...

The man looked at Miranda.

– What “but”? – raising his eyebrows, he asked.

– Nothing, – she shrugged. – Why didn’t you tell me yesterday that you would stay at home?

– I was afraid that you will expel me, – Aiden smiled.

Miranda also smiled back. She went to her beloved, rising on toes to reach his lips, because he was much taller than her, and gently kissed him.

– Good morning honey, – she said.

– From this it was necessary to start, – he smiled, – Good morning my love!

– What’s for breakfast? – looking around, the girl asked.

– What do you want?

– Mmmmm...

Miranda put her index finger to her lips, thinking and looked somewhere up.

– Pancakes! – after some thought, she said.

– Pancakes?! – Aiden looked at her inquiringly.

– Aha, – Miranda nodded.

– Maybe something simpler?

The man looked at her pleadingly. Miranda laughed.

– It’s simple! – she said.

– Okay! I asked for it myself... Pancakes, so pancakes!

After breakfast, Aiden’s cell phone rang. After talking to someone, he angrily threw the phone on the table. Miranda flinched from surprise and almost dropped her cup of tea from her hands, which she had not had time to finish.

– Damn it, – he hissed.

Seeing the frightened face of the girl, Aiden immediately apologized for this unexpected flight of his phone on the table.

– What happened? – worriedly asked Miranda.

– Nothing special. Do not worry, – the man calmed her, – Just these idiots can’t do anything without me! – he said loudly and indignantly.

– What idiots? – Miranda asked.

– Those around me! – clutching his head with both hands, said the man.

He took a deep breath and, crouching next to the girl, took her hand in his.

– I’m sorry, Miranda, but I have to leave.

– Work?

– Yes, but... If you say it, I will not go anywhere. In the end, at least once, they can do without me?!

– Aiden, honey, don’t be mad, – the girl said softly and gently ran her hand over his cheek, – I don’t like it at all! Of course I want you to stay home, but...

– But?!

– But I’m not going anywhere! I will wait for you, as always. And these yours, as you call them “idiots”, will not wait! They will do something wrong, and then you will clear up the mess. And then,

judging by the tone in which you just spoke with one of them and how angry you are now... I don't know... It seems to me that now, in any case, you will be thinking about your work all day. Of course, you decide, but I think that you still better deal with your affairs.

– You know, honey, I have the impression now that you openly expel me, – Aiden confessed. Judging by the expression on his face, he was not joking at all. Miranda even felt uncomfortable.

– Aiden, honey, what are you saying?! Are you serious?

The man nodded his head.

– Want to stay? – she asked, – Stay! I'll be happy!

Aiden suddenly laughed.

– Are you kidding me again? – leaping up from her chair, she cried out.

Aiden also rose. And Miranda looked at him as menacingly as she could, and from that he laughed even louder.

– Yes, – through the laughter said a man, – Oh no! Not! I'm not kidding! – calmed down a little, he said.

– Then what does this laugh of yours mean? Did I really say something funny?!

In response, Aiden shook his head.

– What then? – crossing her arms over her chest, she said.

– You did not say, but did!

Aiden laughed again.

– And what have I done that has caused you so hysterical laughter?!

– At first you had such a sweet and slightly scared look on your face. And then you become angry, so funny! – still laughing, he explained.

– Angry?! – the girl squealed indignantly. – You know what, Aiden?!

Miranda put her fists on her hips.

– Wait wait, – putting forward his palms, the man told her and, catching his breath, asked:

– What?

– Sometimes I want to strangle you! And so that I do not do it now, you better get ready faster and...

– Ok, ok, – Aiden interrupted her, – I got it. I'm leaving!

A man without looking away from Miranda, backed up to the exit and, staying in the doorway, said loudly:

– Still, you're very funny! Love you!

– And I love you, – the girl smiled.

– You really don't want me to stay with you today? – asked Aiden already standing in the doorway and ready to leave the apartment.

– Honey, – Miranda exhaled, – Again this question! I already told you! Or do you want to quarrel again?!

– I want, – he answered smiling, – I love it when we are with you... No, not so! When you're with me swearing!

– Oh, enough! Enough! Go already! – gently shoving him in the chest, said the girl.

– And kiss? – said Aiden and, taking her by the shoulders, pulled her to him.

– You didn't deserve it! – with her head up to look him in the eyes, said Miranda.

– Me?! – he said, – I maybe not! But you...

The man kissed his beloved.

– When will you come? – Miranda asked when he finally let her go.

– I do not know, – he shrugged, – I am afraid that today I will have to linger until late. I do not know for sure. I will call you. Okay?

- Okay, – the girl nodded and, gently running her fingers over his cheek, said softly:
- I love you!

Aiden left somewhere around noon. And Miranda took up cleaning. Then she walked around the park a bit and returned home around four in the afternoon.

The phone rang.

– Grandma, it's you! – answering the call, the girl was delighted. – I'm so glad you called! How are you?

– Everything is good, my girl, – said the old woman, – Actually, I called to find out how you are...

– Everything is fine, granny, – Miranda answered her.

– Well, that's good, my dear. And how is your fiance? You said you wanted him to live with his parents for a while. I thought it was not a good idea for you and for your relationship... Sorry, but when I left, you were not in very good condition.

– Granny, don't worry. I'm fine. And Aiden arrived yesterday, and... I realized how much I missed him! So no parents!

– Right, my girl. You do not need to be alone, – the old woman supported her.

– Yeah ... – Miranda exhaled, – I no longer want to be here alone... At night...

The girl put her hand on her chest. There, where Carolyn's necklace hung. She wanted to stroke smooth and warm stones.

– Oh no! – she suddenly exclaimed, – Only not this!

– Honey, what happened?! – old woman got worried.

– It seems... I lost Carey's necklace!

– Oh, Miranda ... – the old woman exhaled with relief, – You scared me so much! I already thought that something serious had happened!

– I'm sorry, granny, I did not want to scare you, – Miranda apologized and immediately asked:

– Isn't that serious?

– I think not.

– But this necklace is so important to me!

– I know, honey, I know. Maybe you just forgot where you put it?

– Granny, it's been on me all day! Yesterday... It was exactly on me... And today... And now it is not... I remember exactly that I did not take it off!

– Maybe you just forgot, – suggested the old lady. – Look for it. You will find it, – she assured.

– It would be good ... – Miranda said frustratedly, – The main thing that I did not lose them during the walk. Then I will never find them for sure!

– Miranda dear, – after a short pause the grandmother called, – I have to go. I, probably, will call you in the evening.

– Ok, granny.

– And do not worry, my girl. You will surely find it! You will see!

– I hope so, – Miranda said.

Saying goodbye to her grandmother, she turned off the phone and, sprawling in an armchair, stared at the ceiling. She tried to remember where she could lose a necklace. Or perhaps she really took it off herself and just forgot about it.

– It was on me yesterday... I got up in the morning. Washed my face. Took it from the nightstand. Put on me. It was on me. I probably went to sleep in this... I do not remember that I took it off myself last night ... – she said out loud.

Frustrated, Miranda turned the whole apartment upside down in search of a necklace that was very dear to her. But she did not find it.

The phone rang, but the girl, upset by the loss, did not pay any attention to it.

– Oh, Cary! Have I really lost it?! – flopping on the sofa and covering her face with her hands, she whispered and burst into tears.

A few minutes later the phone rang again. The phone rang loudly and rattled. And Miranda, who did not want to talk to anyone now could not stand those annoying sounds.

– Who else is there?! – she mumbled wiping away tears and nevertheless answered the call.

– Hello! – picking up the phone she said.

– Miranda? – asked a male voice.

– Yes it's me Aiden, – answered girl. – Who else?

– You have a strange voice, – noticed a man, – Something happened?

– Nothing nothing happened, – she lied. – Did you want something?

– I wanted to know, how are you?

– Everything is good.

– I will stay late at work. Go to bed without me. Okay?

– Okay.

– Are you sure everything is fine? – he asked again.

– Yes, honey, I'm just a little tired, – she told him.

– Tired? – asked Aiden, – What are you doing?

– Nothing special. Just I decided to make a big cleaning, – Miranda again lied and looked with horror at the living room, in which she herself had recently turned everything upside down.

– Big cleaning?! – asked Aiden.

– Something like that ... – the girl exhaled, – Well, can I go?

– Go, go. My cinderella, – he laughed. – I'll be home around midnight. Love you!

– And I love you, – Miranda said, and turned off the phone.

She looked around again, and with a heavy sigh, said quietly:

– I hope I have time to clean it all before you came...

5. I want to live...

It was twenty to eleven in the evening, when Miranda finally brought the apartment in perfect order. Before Aiden's return, there was just over an hour. The girl quickly prepared to eat. She had a snack and tiredly flopped down on the sofa in the living room.

– Oh God, i'm so tired, – she whispered and, throwing her head back, closed her eyes.

Suddenly something slammed loudly. With a scream of fright, Miranda jumped on the sofa and the lights in the room went out. In the dark, she again heard the voice of her deceased friend, who again quietly called her.

– Miranda... Miranda ... – whispered, once a sister beloved, but now terribly frightening her, voice.

– Carey? Is that you? – peering into the darkness, the girl asked.

– Miranda ... – came from somewhere.

– Carolyn! Where are you? I can not see you!

Miranda cautiously got up from the sofa and quietly went to the switch to turn on the light. But there was no light.

– Miranda ... – the voice hissed terribly.

The girl pressed her back against the wall and again began to peer into the darkness of the room.

– Miranda...

– Carey! Please! You're scaring me! Tell me where are you?

– I'm here, Miranda ... – the voice hissed, and the girl instinctively turned to the chair.

There was a figure sitting in the chair. A dim streak of light entering the room through the gap between the thick curtains did not allow Miranda to make out her face.

– Carey? Is that you? – Miranda asked quietly.

But there was no answer. In horror, the girl rushed to the door leading into the corridor. But the door slammed by itself. And no matter how hard Miranda tried to open the door, nothing came of it.

– Stupid ... – hissed voice, – You can not run away from me...

– Who are you? – turning sharply, the girl screamed, – What do you want from me?

In response, silence again. The figure slowly rose from the chair and took a step forward. In horror, Miranda rushed to the window and, opening the curtains, looked at the woman standing near her. The dim light from the street allowed the girl to see her face. There, near the chair, stood her dead friend Carolyn. She just as alive and smiled. But her smile was not the same as that of Carey, kind and sweet. The smile of the dead Carolyn was cold and angry. So creepy that Miranda, who was already terribly frightened by what was happening, had goosebumps running through her body.

– I was waiting for you, my dear friend ... – a pale woman hissed terribly, – After you left here, I thought that you would never come back...

– Waited? – trembling with fear in her voice, asked Miranda, – What for? Why did you wait for me?

– To once again look into the eyes of the murderer! – growled Carolyn.

– What are you talking about?! Carey, I don't understand you! You're scaring me!

– Murderer... Murderer ... – hissed terrible vision.

– Enough, Carey! Please stop! – covering her ears with her hands, Miranda shook her head. – Please, Carey! I'm scared!

– You can't even imagine how scary I was ... – hissed Carolyn, – So scary... So painful...

– Please! Stop it! You're scaring me! You are the biggest loss in my life! Why are you so scaring me?! I loved you!

– And I loved you... And you... You killed me! Murderer... Murderer...

– Oh my God! Carey! What are you talking about?! – Miranda cried, – Tell me why you came? Say and I will do everything for you! What do you want? – with a voice that trembled with fear and tears the girl begged.

In an instant, Carolyn was suddenly right in front of Miranda. Her pale, almost white face was so close to the tear-stained face of a girl, that Miranda felt what a terrible cold emanated from it. Miranda saw her dead friend's eyes fill with even greater fury and her face appears a terrible smile, more like animal grin.

– What do you want?! – barely heard whispered, to death scared, Miranda.

Something came close to Miranda, very close and hissed right in her face:

– I want to live...

Aiden returned home around one in the morning. There was no light in the apartment. And the man thought that Miranda was already sleeping. He quietly went to the bathroom, quickly took a shower and went to the bedroom. But the girl he did not find there. “Maybe she fell asleep on the sofa in the living room?” – he thought and went there. Opening the door to the room he quietly called:

– Miranda... Miranda, are you here?

But no one answered. Then Aiden turned on the light in the room, and with horror he saw a girl lying on the floor near the window.

– Oh my god, Miranda! – he shouted and rushed to her.

The girl was unconscious. Aiden fell on knees in front of her and gently lifted her. Miranda opened her eyes.

– Miranda, honey, can you hear me? – he asked worriedly.

– Aiden? – she whispered coming to her senses.

– Yes, honey, it's me, – man answered.

– Aiden! – suddenly the girl cried out and, clinging tightly to him, she began to cry softly.

– Oh God, Miranda, – he said stroking her long hair, – You scared me so much! What happened? Have you lost consciousness? How do you feel?

– My head hurts, – she answered quietly.

– It's all because of your “flight”, – he said, – I told you! We had to show you to the doctor!

– No, – Miranda said, – Not, it's not because of it...

– Stop stubborn! – seriously as never before, said Aiden. – I'll take you to the hospital now! – he said.

– Okay, – dutifully answered Miranda.

A hour and a half later, Aiden and Miranda drove back to the home.

– I told you I'm fine, – getting out of the car she said. – Just bruised.

– I should have heard it from the doctor, – Aiden answered her and shutting the door. – But...

The girl looked at him questioningly.

– What “but”? – she asked.

– There is something wrong with you. You fainted? Fainted...

– You know, the doctor checked me. I'm fine.

– I know. But maybe he missed something? – suggested Aiden.

Miranda sighed heavily.

– He missed nothing, – she said softly, – Please, let's go home. I want to lie down.

Miranda took a shower and went to the bedroom. There, sitting in a chair, Aiden was waiting for her. The girl sat up in bed and looked at him.

– Will you go to sleep? – she asked.

– We need to talk, – he said.

– About what? – Miranda asked.

– About what's going on with you, – he answered. – Would you like to tell me what happened today?

– Nothing happened, – the girl answered him.

She did not want to tell Aiden what had happened. Didn't want to bother him. And she was afraid that he might decide that she was going crazy. But Aiden knew very well how much she was experiencing Carolyn's death and understood if her swoon was not related to her physical health, then it was caused by something else.

– Do not lie to me, – he said. – I listen to you carefully.

Miranda looked at him and did not recognize in him that Aiden whom she had always known. Aiden, who is constantly teased her. Now in front of her sat like some other man. He was serious and, despite his seemingly calm look, she understood how much he was worried about her. Miranda sighed heavily.

– So will you tell me what happened to you? – he asked again.

And the girl told him about what happened before she passed out.

Aiden, listened to her carefully. Then he rose from his chair and walked over to her. Then he rose from his chair and walked over to her. He sat down next to her on the bed and hugged her tightly.

– Sorry honey, – he said. – I stayed at work... If I had come a little earlier...

– You are not guilty of anything, – she answered. – If this happened, then it should have happened.

Aiden a little pulled Miranda from himself and looked into her blue, sad eyes.

– Let's move to another place? Away from this house, – he suggested.

– No, Aiden, we already talked about this. I feel like I need to be here. – she answered.

– In this case, maybe then you should contact a specialist? – he said.

Miranda's expression suddenly changed dramatically. It was obvious that the girl was offended and even a little angry.

– Something is wrong? – asked Aiden.

– Do you think I'm crazy? – trying to hold back her tears, she squeezed out.

– Oh God, Miranda! – he exclaimed. – I did not mean it at all!

– What did you mean then?

– I meant a psychic or medium, or whatever they are called?!

– Medium? – calm down, asked Miranda. – You do not believe in all this...

– I do not believe, – confirmed the man, – But I believe you!

Miranda smiled. Aiden could not even imagine how important these words were for her. She hugged the man tightly and said softly:

– Thank you.

6. Seance

The next morning, while Miranda was still sleeping, Aiden began to search for the psychic. And although he didn't really believe in all these supernatural things and especially didn't trust these people, who, he believed, were just good psychologists and cashing in on someone else's grief, he still hoped to help his bride. He did not know whether she really saw Carolyn, or whether these visions were simply the fruit of her imagination, caused by such intense experiences because of the terrible and sudden death of her friend. But he believed her. He believed that she really saw and felt something. Aiden was supposed to help her somehow.

– Good morning, – going into the kitchen said Miranda.

– Good afternoon! – he answered her, – You slept for a long time. Sleep well?

– Oddly but yes.

– Did you not go to work? – she asked.

– Of course not. I can't leave you alone after what happened.

– Thank you.

– Sit down You need to eat and... I found a couple of psychics. Look here. – he said and turned the laptop towards her. – Choose someone. If you want, we can invite them all.

In the evening the doorbell rang. Miranda opened the door and invited the guest to enter the living room. Aiden was waiting there. When he saw the woman entering the room, he could barely restrain his laugh. It was a fat lady of about fifty with short black hair and a "stone" face. She was wearing some kind of mourning black dress. On her neck is a thick silver chain with some kind of huge amulet. Almost every finger she wore silver rings with large gems. Black eyes, bright red lips and the same bright red long nails. In her hands she held a big black bag.

– Good evening, – with some kind of afterlife voice uttered a woman.

– Good evening, – Aiden answered her barely holding back his smile.

Miranda noticed this and walked over to the man.

– Stop it, – quietly, through clenched teeth, she hissed and turned to the guest. – Do you need anything for work? – she asked.

– No, Miss Morton, – said the woman in the same afterlife voice, – All i need i carry with me.

– No doubt, – whispered Aiden.

Miranda looked at him disapprovingly. Guest began to look around. With a stone look, she touched, it seemed, everything she could touch in the room. Miranda watched her curiously. And Aiden could not hold back his laughter.

– Where did you find her? In the circus? – he whispered softly.

– Aiden, please stop, – the girl whispered back to him.

– There's someone here, – suddenly said a strange woman.

– Of course there is someone here, – Aiden could not resist to himself anymore. – And these "someone" here are three!

– Young man, – the woman was indignant, – If you thought of teasing me, I can leave now! I'm here to help Miss Morton! Not to entertain you!

– Aiden, please, stop it! – Miranda told him reproachfully.

– Okay okay i'm silent, – he answered and, looking at the funny woman, said:

– Sorry. Sorry, I will not interfere with your work. Honestly.

Miranda gently shoved him with her elbow.

– I need a table for my work, – said woman.

– Is a coffee table suitable? – Miranda asked, pointing to a small coffee table next to the sofa.

The woman looked at the table, and then looked disapprovingly at Miranda.

– Too low, – she said.

– Then maybe we can go to the kitchen? – suggested Miranda.

– There is a great table! – Aiden said loudly.

– In the kitchen? – the woman asked in surprise. – Not. You have been cooking something recently. Foreign smells can interfere with my work, – she declared and began to look around the room again.

– Foreign smells? – he quietly asked Miranda and after a moment added: – That is why from her so strongly stinks disgusting spirits. To kill all other smells!

– Stop it, – Miranda hissed again.

– Maybe you will transfer the table from the kitchen here? – suggested woman.

Miranda and Aiden looked at each other. “Is she kidding?” The man thought.

– I know! – suddenly Miranda said loudly.

Aiden and a strange woman looked at Miranda, in the expectation that she was going to say.

– A small, folding plastic table in the pantry, – she told Aiden.

– The one we take on a picnic? – he asked.

– Yes that, – answered Miranda, – Will you bring it? – she asked Aiden.

– I’ll bring it. But I will need your help.

– Help?

– Yes, let’s go, – Aiden said, and headed for the door to leave the room.

– Madame Josephine, – Miranda turned to the woman, – Will you wait a bit? We will bring you a table now.

– Sure, I will wait, – replied the woman sitting down on the sofa.

– Josephine? Madame Josephine? – Aiden asked Miranda when they were alone.

– Well yes. What?

– Oh God, Miranda, seriously, where did you find her?!

– In the Internet.

– But I showed you completely different people. I would never call such a clown here.

– I read reviews on her site. Everyone is happy with her work. And I opted for it. And enough about that. Like her or not, she is already here. Let’s get the table, – she commanded.

– Are you sure that this Madame Josephine will be satisfied with your plastic folding table? – pulling a small white square out of the closet, Aiden asked.

– She will be satisfied, do not worry, – Miranda answered him.

Aiden set the table in the center of the living room. Madame Josephine looked at him with a sort of dislike.

– I am so sorry, – putting his right hand to his chest and stooping a little, Aiden said to her. – We have nothing worthy of your majesty.

A strange woman opened her mouth and wanted to say something to Aiden at his rudeness, but Miranda suddenly shouted:

– Wait, wait!

The girl rushed to the dresser and quickly pulled out of it a large multi-colored tablecloth and set the table for her.

– That’s good, – she said smoothing the tablecloth with her hands.

– I need two chairs, – said Madame Josephine.

Taking a deep breath, Aiden left the room and after a minute came back with two chairs from the kitchen.

– Put them near the table opposite each other, – madame said in an commanding voice.

Aiden really wanted to say something to her, but noticing Miranda's gaze on himself said nothing.

When the chairs were in their seats, Madame Josephine took her bag and put it on one of them. A couple of minutes on the table was already a crystal ball, several candlesticks with candles, some figurines, a pack of fortunetelling cards and some other trifle.

– Close the curtains and turn off the lights, – Madame commanded.

Miranda quickly went to the window and closed the curtains. She was already impatient to begin a seance as soon as possible. Then she looked at Aiden. He nodded back and turned off the light. In the room in an instant it was pitch dark.

Madame Josephine lit a big matchstick about an equally large matchbox and lit the candles. There was a kind of mystical atmosphere in the room.

Madame sat at the table.

– Sit down, – she said to Miranda and pointed to the chair opposite her.

Miranda dutifully sat down. Aiden stood right behind Madame.

– Mister ... – not turning to him said madam.

– Davis. Aiden Davis, – said the man.

– Miste Davis, – said madam, – I see your skepticism... Do you believe in something or not – it's your right. But I will ask you not to interfere with my work.

– As you say, – said Aiden.

– And be so kind, please, move away from me. – said madam.

Aiden stepped away a little and took a few steps back so as to see at least part of Madame Josephine's face. Although he was very worried about Miranda and understood that what was happening now was just necessary for her, he also understood very well that this Madame psychic was just an ordinary charlatan. "At least she can somehow calm Miranda" – he hoped.

Aiden crossed his arms on the chest and began to observe what was happening.

The fat woman shifted in her chair and, sitting comfortably, took a deep breath and then exhaled slowly.

– Let's get started, – looking at Miranda she said.

The girl nodded approvingly. Then Madame Josephine brought her hands with huge rings and with long bright red nails to the crystal ball and closed her eyes. Deathly silence reigned around. Madame sat like this for about a minute. Then, without opening her eye, she began to drive her hands over the ball and moaned.

– Mmmmm... Mmmmm...

Aiden even closed his mouth with his hand holding back his laughter. And Miranda, wide-eyed, watched the woman with interest.

– I see! – opening her eyes, suddenly the woman said loudly in her otherworldly voice.

Miranda, in surprise, even jumped on a chair.

– I see, – repeated madam.

Madame Josephine looked straight at Miranda, but did not seem to see her. As if she was looking through the girl somewhere in space. And from this Miranda was a little uncomfortable.

– What? What do you see? – she asked quietly.

– I see a young woman on fire ... – said madam.

– Oh my God... Carey ... – Miranda breathed softly.

– Fire... Fire everywhere...

– Can you see what happened? – the girl asked with hope.

– I see a short young woman... Short dark hair... Brown eyes... Carolyn... Her name is Carolyn... I see... I see...

– What? What?

– She takes a plastic bottle with a flammable liquid... Drenches herself... Matches... Where are the matches? She is looking for... Looking for... Found... In the box is one single match... She gets a match... Striking a match on the box... Fire... Fire everywhere... She screams... It hurts... It hurts...

– Enough, please, stop! – suddenly Miranda screamed and covered her ears with her palms. Aiden wanted to rush to her, but Madame was silent, and he stopped.

Madame stared at the girl.

– Does she come to you?

– Yes, yes, she comes to me, – Miranda nodded her head.

– Does she show you something? Does she speak? Why does she come to you?

– I don't know... I don't know... She... She seems to blame me for her death...

– But you are not to blame for her death.

– Not. I do not know... Sometimes I feel that I am guilty. Carolyn was my best friend!

– She blames you for her death because you blame yourself, – said madam. – You need to let her go so she can safely go to the world of spirits.

– Let her go? How?

– You need to talk to Carolyn.

– But how ... – Miranda wanted to say something, but Madame interrupted her.

– Give me your hands, – she said and, across the table, stretched out her arms to the girl.

Miranda put her hands in the hands of Madame.

– Close your eyes, – said madam. – Close your eyes and think about Carolyn. This will help her to enter my body for a while, and you can talk to her.

Miranda closed her eyes and began to think about her deceased friend. A few minutes passed. But Miranda did not even notice how time flew by. And Aiden was looking forward to what happens next.

– Miranda ... – suddenly said madam not in her own voice.

The girl opened her eyes and looked at the woman. She looked at her too.

– Carolyn? – the girl asked.

– It's me, Miranda, – Madame replied and squeezed the hands of the girl a little.

– Ah, Carey...

Tears flowed from Miranda's eyes.

– I'm so sorry... So sorry... I am so guilty... If it were not for me, you would not have bought this unfortunate apartment. Who knows, maybe then you would not do what you did...

– It would have happened anyway, – Madame speak not in her own voice. – This is not your fault, Miranda.

– Carey, honey, please tell me what happened then? Why did you do this? – the girl begged.

– That i can't tell you, – answered madam.

– Please, Carolyn, tell me.

– Why didn't you help me, Miranda? – suddenly asked madam. – I called you...

– I... I did not hear... I really did not hear... Forgive me, my dear Carey. I love you so much.

Please forgive me, – the girl was crying.

– I have to go...

– No, no, Carolyn, wait! – Miranda cried out.

– I forgive you, Miranda, – said madam and let go of the girl's hands.

– Carey, Carey...

– She left, – said Madame Josephine in her otherworldly voice. – Carolyn is gone. She won't bother you again.

Miranda sighed heavily.

– What a pity she didn't tell me why she did that.

– Some things must remain inside us, – said madam.

– Yes, maybe, – the girl agreed.

– Mister Davis, – the woman called loudly.

– Yes, madam, – he responded.

– Be so kind, turn on the light.

– Yes, madam, – he meekly said, and after a few seconds the room was as bright as day.

Madame extinguished the candles.

– My work here is finished, – she said and rose from the chair.

– Thank you, thank you, – Miranda thanked her while the woman put her magical things back in her bag.

– You're welcome, Miss Morton. I did what I could.

– You helped me a lot, Madame Josephine, – said Miranda and handed her money.

Madame took the money. She put the money in the bag and closed it. Then she put her hand in her pocket and took out her business card.

– Here, take it, – said the woman and handed the business card to Miranda. – If you will need anything else – call me.

– Once again, thank you very much, – taking a business card said Miranda.

The girl escorted Madame Josephine to the door and a few minutes later returned to the living room. There, at the table where Madame had just sat, sat Aiden. He had some paper in his hands.

– You know, I almost believed her, – he said to Miranda who entered the room.

– What are you talking about? – she asked in confusion.

– Sit down, – said Aiden, and the girl sat opposite him.

– What is the problem? – she asked.

The man put in front of her the paper that he was holding.

– What is it? – asked Miranda.

– This is a newspaper clipping, – he explained.

– So what?

– And the fact that this article is about what happened to Carolyn. And this clipping fell out of the pocket of your almighty Madame Josephine, when she took out a business card.

– Oh my God, – exhaled Miranda and clutched her head with both hands, – What a fool I am!

– We are both fools, – grinned Aiden.

– And I so thanked her... This... This...

– Charlatan, – Aiden finished for her.

– Exactly, – Miranda nodded her head. – Do you know how much money she took?!

– I can imagine, – said Aiden, – But this show was worth it, – he smiled.

– You know, you were probably right about all these psychics...

– And here I thought about the opposite. Maybe someone really has some super abilities?

– What?! – Miranda was surprised, – Are you serious? You never believed it! And then, after this, as you called it a “show”, did you suddenly think that someone could really have super abilities?! – Miranda laughed.

– Strange, really ... – he smiled, – But... yes.

– Well, – the girl said, – Then another “show” is waiting for you.

– Madame Clowness is not the only one you called? – Aiden asked.

– Yes. I called another one.

– Is she as funny as Josie?

– Josie? – Miranda grinned. – Like you’ve known her for a hundred years, and she’s your best friend, – said Miranda and, suddenly remembering Carolyn, visibly darkened.

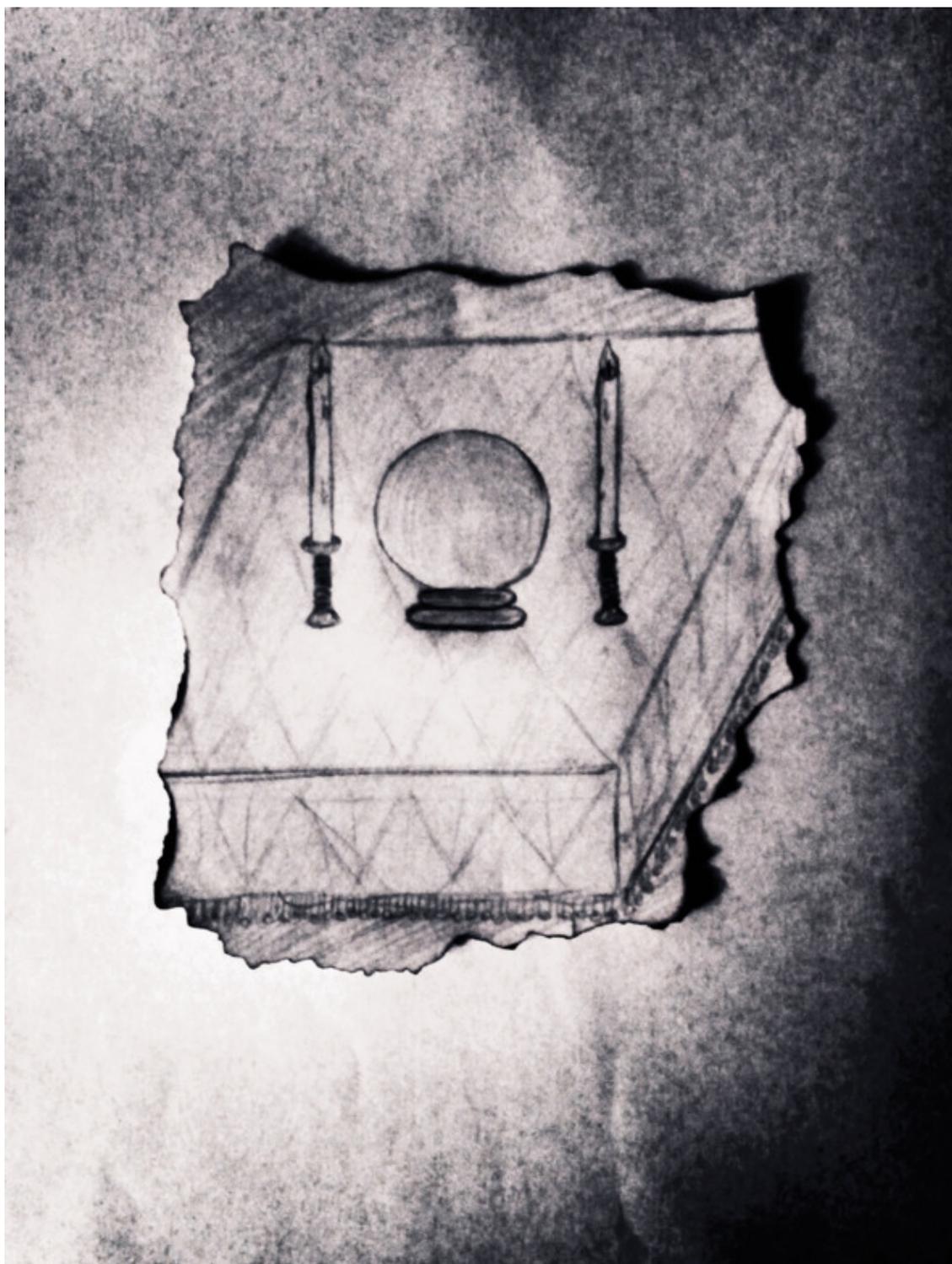
– Sorry honey, – said Aiden, rising from his chair and walked over to the girl.

– Forgive me, – he said again and pressed her head to himself. – I know how important this is for you... And I am very sorry, indeed it is a pity that this Madame Josephine turned out to be just a soulless cheat. I really hoped she could help. I hoped that I was wrong...

– Do not need to apologize, – Miranda said, – You are not guilty of anything.

The girl looked up at Aiden.

– No, she’s not as funny as Josie, – she smiled. – Just an elderly and, seemingly sweet, woman.



7. Unexpected visit

Somewhere around ten in the evening the doorbell rang.

– Wait, Miranda, – Aiden called the girl when she rushed to open the door. – Maybe we will check her somehow? – he suggested.

– Check? – Miranda asked, – But how?

– I don't know, I'll think of something, – he said, – Do not tell her that there is someone else at home besides you. Okay?

– Okay, – Miranda agreed.

The doorbell rang again. Aiden quickly went into the living room. There, in the living room, there was another door leading to a small room like an office. A man went there. From there he could perfectly hear everything that happened in the living room.

Miranda opened the door and was surprised to find that on the threshold of her apartment there was a short young woman who looked to be about thirty-five. Usually dressed. Nothing special. In light blue jeans, a black blouse with a short sleeve and a small handbag. Long blond hair was gathered in a ponytail. On the neck hung some amulet.

– Good evening, – Miranda said.

– Good evening, – the guest answered her.

Without waiting for an invitation or any questions, the woman neatly walked between Miranda and the door jamb straight into the apartment and began to look around like Miranda was not here at all.

– Excuse me ... – said the owner of the apartment, – Who you are? What do you need? – she did not understand.

The woman, as if recovering herself, looked at Miranda.

– Oh, I apologize, – guest said, – I know you were waiting for another person. But she won't come.

– Will not come? – Miranda asked.

The woman nodded back.

– Well... So she sent you instead of herself?

– Not. Nobody sent me. This woman you are waiting for... There was an accident on the way to you...

– Oh my God! Is she all right?

– Yes. Nothing serious. Will live. But she will hardly be able to visit you anytime soon.

Silence reigned around for a minute.

– Excuse me, – Miranda started, – If she didn't send you, then...

– I was just passing by your house, – the woman interrupted her. – saw Madame Josephine coming out of your door a couple of hours ago...

– Do you know her?

– Unfortunately yes.

– Why “Unfortunately”? – Miranda asked.

– Because I can not stand people like her, – guest explained. – She could play in the theater...

– Yeah ... – Miranda exhaled.

Silence again. The woman was looking at something again.

– So how do you know that Mrs. Lorac will not come and that she had an accident? – after a moment of silence Miranda asked.

– I had a vision...

– Vision? – Miranda was surprised.

– Ah, sorry for the sake of God, I still have not introduced myself. Anna Miller. I'm a psychic.

– I do not understand anything, – Miranda shook her head.

I passed by your house. Seen Madame Josephine. Actually, my plans did not include visiting you. I had almost reached my house when something suddenly stopped me. And... Something pulled me back.

Aiden all this time stood in the office with his ear to the door. But there was no one in the living room, and he could not hear anything. The man opened the door a little and was about to exit when he heard someone enter the living room.

– Come in, sit down please, —Miranda said.

– No thanks, I'll stand, – Anna answered her and looked at the table covered with a colorful tablecloth. The woman gently ran her hand over its surface and grinned.

– Funny, – she said, and then suddenly looked at Miranda, – There is someone else in the apartment, – she said.

– No, no one else, – Miranda lied, – I'm alone here.

Then Anna closed her eyes and said:

– A young man of about thirty. Tall. Dark hair, brown eyes. This is your fiance, – having opened eyes and having looked at the girl, Anna concluded.

Miranda sighed.

– Aiden, come out, – she said loudly.

A man came out of a small room in the living room.

– You said she was old! – he said loudly when he saw a young, pretty, fair-haired woman.

– Oh God, Aiden! – exclaimed Miranda and covered her face with her hands.

Anna smiled.

– Did you decide to check me out? More precisely, the one that should have come... So what? Have I been tested? – she asked, turning to Aiden.

– Not yet, – he answered.

– You do not believe me, – said Anna, – I understand you. If I were you, I would not believe either.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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