

Witch on the Holy Night

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Prologue

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The child's shadow appeared on a winter 8 years in the past.

quiet

The first time she touched on life was on a solemn morning.

Her house was on the side of a mountain.

The surroundings were a deserted wasteland.

She could not hope for childhood friends living next door, and going to school and playing outside were of utmost inconvenience for her.

But the water and the stars were quite lovely. A little discontentment accompanied by an overwhelming peace -- this was the house she remembered.

Of course, that was only during summer.

Winter in the mountains was extremely cold, and mornings were always bitter.

Even when her father drove her to the station,

the car windows would be covered thickly in frost, that they could not get the engine started and running for how many minutes before their departure.

" , go turn the key for me, would you?"

When her father would enjoy his coffee after a meal, going outside to start the car's engine was her routine.

Stepping off the porch, she crossed the yard while coughing out a white breath, and opened the antique sedan's door.

As always, she inserted the key and cranked, causing the engine to shudder.

Having done so repeatedly dozens of times up to now, it was when the task taken up all by her little self was finished.

"  -----"

A high-pitched scream rang out.

voice

Even though it was inhuman, she heard a little, little sound that sounded like painful crying.

A few minutes later. Father opened the hood of the car, and inside was a single life.

A creaky belt-thing,

the monstrous engine was,

in a box that was tightly crammed inside.

The cat that was Mother, and the two kittens, were terribly out of place.

The three cats were curled up as if snuggling with each other inside the engine.

The mother cat was missing from the neck up.

belt

One of the kittens lay still; the pieces that were rolled up in the machine were too many to count. It most certainly died in an instant.

The remaining kitten was covered deep red on one side of its face. It wheezed while it gulped for air. It looked like a very thin dog drenched in rainwater.

As it cuddled up to the remains of---- no, half of the piece of meat that was its parent, it was probable that it would cling to its mother's breast--with its might, all of its might--until the last few minutes it had alive would be gone.

"Oh, the poor things----"

Her father's voice was filled with grief.

Last night's chill had gotten worse.

After Father came back home in his car, the cats that were drawn to the warmth of the engine snuck under the hood.

They spent the night in the engine room,
and were awoken by the belt's rotation swallowing them the following morning.

Cars that were lacking airtightness in the 80s were said to be that way, it seems.

"----Now, now. It wasn't your fault, ."

Father's voice was far away.

The kitten's coat was split finely in gray.

Together with the blood of its mother and its sibling, the blood taken from half of its own body,

----Ohh, there's its round skull----

speckled the small life.

The kitten, not able to see even with its own eyes, shivered while doing its best to be covered by the breast of its dead mother.

"? Wait now, ----!"

Holding the kitten in her arms,
she ran back to her grandfather, who lived apart from them, deep in the mountains.

Shaken by regret, maybe.

Her confusion that was saddening, maybe. To be perfectly honest, she has no idea even now.

While fighting down the tears that welled up inside, she barged into her grandfather's workshop.

Grandfather was a magician who could do anything.

She herself never saw anything like "magic". She knew it was a fairy-tale fantasy. But seeing as common sense applied to a different standard, she knew that her grandfather was a living embodiment of that "magic".

And so.

Coming to her grandfather, she thought he could help her, for certain.

"Change the kitten's destiny, you say?"

Inside the cave he lived in, the magician said so with a voice empty of concern.

Help it please, she asked of him.

Without saying it would be as good as done,
or that it was great enough to be traded for the world,

easily like a machine to the fullest, the magician granted her inconsiderate wish.

".....Oh."

Next thing she knew, she had a small corpse in her hands.

Its fur was completely cold.

Its temperature faded long ago.

The tears that she told herself she wouldn't shed, spilled from her eyes.

In her heart was, as endless as a gray sky, regret that was too great to bear.

"An exercise in futility. In the end, we're back at the start."

What just happened? She had no way of understanding.

In this ten-minute void: what did she go through,

who did she meet with,

and what did she know? They were as before, however lacking in responsibility.

What is dead certain is: life that goes towards death is said to not come back and,

"Umm---- is someone, over there?"

that day.

She was nothing but a mistake that was born, and that's who I am.

.....Ah.

However way you want it,
everything is missed, and looked forward to.

now

That was a fairy tale from 8 years ago that took place in our reality.

No matter how magic is used, there's no getting it back. The day that the two girls met
at the very most beginning.