

The blood
of
the black
tulip

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Barry Cussel

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This book is devoted with the greatest love that has ever existed in this world and Beyond to my wife Doris, without whom the characters of my novel would not be able to come to life.

I write that I love you

and thus I prove it.

I've always loved you

but never say it.

Barry Cussel

Chapter 1

Then she came to herself and shivered. With great will power the enchanting and beautiful young woman started digging with her hands into the hard soil. The price of that undertaking was her own life.

After Felicia had fallen down because of being inattentive into one of the caves of the Grand Montana, she lay unconscious for several hours in a state between life and death. The caverns were large holes in the ground and were scattered all over the mighty mountain. Down in its feet the newly built city New Montana was situated - a goldsmith centre. The gold fever had caught hold of the more bright and active newly arrived people to America. The fight for a piece of gold was relentlessly cruel.

Felicia, who had just arrived from the Old Continent did not know much about the hard life in New America. She remembered of the two-month forced stay among the soft satin bed-covers of Madam Sosho from "Sosho" brothel in Paris. Her rising star of a virgin-prostitute, however, had almost cost her head. Therefore she ran to the Wild West.

Fine gentlemen from the best society visited "Sosho". The price of an angel often surpassed the craziest ideas for paid work but the quality was very high. Madame herself had worked for many years as a prostitute and knew perfectly well all the intricacies of the profession. Her knowledge was also thorough in the dirty part of the trade. Her accessories included perversity and all kinds of cunning methods as well. She had strong connections both in high society and in the underworld of Paris. The choice of her little angels was a part of the dark side of the high stake in her life. Madam hired former clients of the brothel, murderers by inclination, to seek for beautiful and talented girls. The deliveries were effected mostly by kidnapping. The live staff arrived to her castle outside of Paris and there the girls were treated most cruelly in order to be prepared for their future profession as prostitutes. Three or four decades ago Madame herself had experienced those methods and now wanted to pay back to the world. She was, therefore, unscrupulous and arrogant.

One of the hired assassins was the Marquis. His nick-name had something to do with the title since he was an offspring of the

famous noblemen Du Bois. Outcast from the family because of his bad habits with women and fights, he had strolled along the road of corruption. His figure corresponded fully to the requirements for hired assassins. Although he was already forty, he had muscles that made every adversary shiver. He was rightfully known as the fright of Paris.

Felicia, who came from an ordinary family of French peasants had the habit to roam carefree round the lawns in the suburbs of Lille and enjoy the sunset with her friend Jean. Felicia's beauty troubled her parents. The girl was maturing and her luscious body drove crazy everyone in the village. Blessed with full breast and long thighs, graceful in movements, she resembled a swan flying into the unknown.

A lot of lads in this part of France had sacrificed for the inconvenience of the roads just to have a glimpse of lovely Felicia. Marriage proposals were uncountable and every young man wanted her. Her parents also wished for her to be married sooner so that people in the region would stop talking about them. The high moral of the family had left its reflection in the girl's behaviour. She

went out only with her girl-friend and kept away from the flow of candidates.

Of course the talks about that flower reached Paris and Madame had immediately sent the Marquis to investigate the rumours coming from Lille county.

In the morning he prepared the carriage with the eight horses and settling on the soft coach ordered the cabman to start for Lille.

Rain was pouring like a shower. The damned rain had not stopped for almost a week and that hampered his travel. Drinking of the King's wine kept boredom away from the Marquis. Arriving in Lille he stopped at "La Belle Francoise" Inn and it took him a couple of hours to get sober.

On the next morning he dressed as an ordinary peasant and sat on horseback, armed to the teeth under the village attire. He arrived shortly to Felicia's village and found quickly the way to her house.

The Marquis waited for her to appear. When he saw her the first thought in his mind was: 'Unbelievable beauty. This girl will be mine forever.'

Felicia, not suspecting anything, smiled at him and kept her glance longer than

with the other suitors. The Marquise really looked very well even in the peasant's clothes. In spite of the graying long hair his charm was as strong as ever. His big body was in great shape and the young beauty trembled with feminine desire, awoken inside her.

The mother and father were watching from the small window. The mother's heart was in turmoil, sensing trouble. The father felt in the Marquis something unnatural, telling him that in that giant enormous force was hiding as well as vile intentions for his flower. The charm of the stranger was just a mask of which the bastard often availed.

And that was what happened. The Marquis immediately resorted to action and spoke in his enchanting voice:

“Bonjour, mademoiselle! I am glad to see the flower of Northern France.”

“Thank you for the compliment but the flower is still too young”, Felicia replied and went on walking with pounding heart.

Then something very fast and surprising for everyone present occurred. The Marquis spurred his horse and with a lithe move hovered above Felicia. He grabbed her as a predator bird and threw her in front of him on the saddle. Several lads, watching the

strong man from a distance ran to him, hoping to release the girl fast and win her heart.

The father, having witnessed the kidnapping of his own child also ran to the stables to get his horse. The pursuers were about a dozen, all keen to reach the kidnapper, each one secretly harbouring the hope to be the first to save the lovely flower from the brutal criminal.

There had been fights so far among the lads but there never had been a murder, just a few broken noses. Now the young men from the village had united against the unknown competitor, though he looked much stronger than each of them but on the other side his clothes hinted that he was of their class. A simple peasant.

Felicia, pressed hard, was at a loss what to think. Was she to be glad that at last the knight of her life appeared or was it bad that everything happened in such an unnatural way?

The Marquis, having gained some distance between him and his pursuers, tied strongly his victim to the saddle and carelessly opened his clothes revealing to her the numerous hidden weapons. The girl realized the treachery only now and screamed

terrified. The cruel hired assassin slapped her - not very hard but enough to make her unconscious and continued without hearing her screams any more.

Almost reached by the village men, he suddenly stopped and easily jumped on the ground. One whistle was enough for the horse to understand that he had to run with the load on his back to the nearby grove and to wait for his master there.

The lads surrounded in circle the grinning stranger. The fight started so instantly that two of the young men fell immediately, killed by sharp knives that the stranger took from under his cape and stuck into their throats. The Marquis' exact moves did not allow the rest of them to do anything and they just retreated in fear. The blood gushing from their friends paralyzed even their thoughts. The hired assassin, trained to perfection, was scattering death whenever he encountered an enemy. With several jumps and somersaults he killed each one of the group. In the end only dead bodies with blood flowing from them were lying around.

The Marquis' second whistle was enough for his obedient horse to understand

that everything had ended in the usual way, in favour of its master.

When Felicia, barely awoke from her fainting, saw this picture, she relapsed into unconsciousness again. That made the Marquis' task as well as the galloping of the horse easier. No one bothered them further on the way to Lille.

The father of the young beauty, who was behind the group, reached in minutes the place of the massacre. He did not believe his eyes and his mind got dim. He fell dead by the rest of them.

The Marquis took down the barely alive girl in front of the inn when it was already dark and immediately prepared the carriage for the trip. The cabman, loyal to Madame to his death, immediately grasped the urgency of the situation, jumped on his seat and they got on their way with the precious load. Quickness was to obliterate the track of the murderer. Paris was the place of safety.

Madame Sosho's castle was old with high turrets, surrounded on all sides with water. As soon as she got rich enough, Madame Sosho de la Morse saw it as the only place for the realization of her evil scheme - to

kidnap the most beautiful girls in France and win lots of money. The victims would be trained here by hardened and expert lovers, her previous clients. That was what was done to her, the same she would do to others. Against human will. The owner of the brothel then - Madame Frances - had used a strong Arab to rape her and had put her in the role of the most beautiful and most wanted prostitute.

She was outraged but there was not anything she could do - just be patient and wait for her hour to come. And it came. One night Sosho took Madame Frances by surprise and cut her throat in cold blood. She managed to throw the blame on the Arab, her rapist, and thus got rid of both at the same time. After that she got charge of the brothel and decided to take revenge on the world.

Hearing the noise of the rattling carriage Madame Sosho went outside, curious to meet the girl. What she saw was way beyond her expectations. She had never before seen such beauty and gracefulness. Young Felicia, tied with strong ropes, was thrown rudely by the cabman on the stone pavement. Terror was streaming from her eyes after everything she had experienced so

far. Her kidnapping and especially the massacre of the young men from her village proved to be fatal for her.

Naturally, Madame Sosho knew how to act in such delicate cases and snapped at the cabman:

“You oaf, how dare you be so rude to this gentle child!? Untie her at once!”

“But, Madame...”, the cabman tried to protest and she cut him short by beating him with the whip that always accompanied her.

“Not a word from you, Gritfilt! You are brutes!” she exclaimed, winking at the Marquis.

Felicia seemed to trust the woman and threw herself into her arms all trembling. Hearing, however, that she was addressed with ‘Madame’ she guessed where she was and asked:

“Good lady, where am I and what does all of this mean?”

“Dear child, you are in Paris and from now on your life will be completely changed. You will be very rich if you only listen to me well, of course”. Then she relaxed her embrace and addressed Gritfilt coldly: “Now take her to Lucia’s room, which will be hers temporarily.”

For nearly a month Madame explained to her the inevitability of her situation. Employing threats and psychological harassment, the authoritative owner of the castle persuaded her that there was no going back.

After several days Felicia was to be transferred to the brothel in the street of the centre of Paris. From the talks Madame understood that the girl was still a virgin and that, of course, raised her price a hundredfold. The first one who would be with her had to pay a fortune for this pleasure. But if there were several of them... what then? An evil plan was born in Madam's head. Only four of the powerful men, who visited secretly her brothel could pay the price. These were the Mayor, the nephew of the Spanish King and two marquises, who were domineering over the markets of France. From the preliminary arrangement it became clear that all four of them wanted her at the same time, regardless of the price. After the secret inspection at the

castle they were all crazy about her. The King's nephew had even declared that if the lovely girl was of noble origin he would make her his wife.

Felicia would always remember the sinister day on which she got transferred.

After she was settled in the most spacious of all rooms - the so called Orange Room - she got very tense. Madame introduced her to the four lustful men. Each of them had paid to Madame enough money to buy an even bigger castle.

The condition was that Felicia would be taken by the four of them at the same time. The Marquis knew from Madame that only the small bald Mayor would be with the virgin that night and that he was to guard the house from casual curious visitors, but nobody had told him anything about the brutal orgy, prepared by the bawd. He was very surprised by Madam's decision to close the brothel and the fact that she banned even him from going upstairs to the Orange Room. Why was that?

The foursome arrived and since they had paid a lot, Madame met them in person at the back entrance according to their previous arrangement. Only the Mayor passed through

the front door, guarded by the Marquis, in order to mislead him.

Like a batch of wolves they rushed into the Orange Room where Felicia sat shivering on the bed. The men started throwing aside their expensive cloaks and undressing. When they took off their underwear they hungrily attacked the gentle girl, swaying their hardened penises. They began tearing her fine robe and in no time she was naked. Then they were stunned for a moment with the luscious forms of that divine creature. Her breast was full and firm, her waist was unbelievably thin and her bottom, so sweetly rounded was with smooth velvet skin. Her tan, acquired from her outdoor excursions in the sun and bathing in the small river with crystal water that was flowing by her father's field, made her all the more desired. However, her clear blue eyes were filled with horror. Her blond hair, streaming to her waist was entangled in the hands of the four men that were all touching her at once.

Everything was so unusual to her that she was breathless and unable to scream or even moan.

She was thrown on the large bed and the Mayor was the first to thrust himself

between her legs. She felt a sharp pain as if from a knife and screamed. Then the blood streamed and she fainted with fear. When Felicia came to herself, one of the rapists was pushing his penis into her mouth. At the same time he was licking the blood that had dried on the Mayor's balls. The rest of them were licking her body all over and were moaning with pleasure. Each of them had got two turns between her legs. Felicia did not feel anything, only overwhelming nausea. She became sick and lost consciousness again.

The Marquis was walking round the brothel and his eyes stayed fixed to the Orange Room above. After the kidnapping some strange change occurred in him. He was love sick for Felicia. Madame did not allow him to approach her since she knew him and was afraid that he might spoil her plans.

He was wondering now whether to rush into the room and take her before the evil Mayor made her dirty. He was thinking of kidnapping her for the second time and taking her far away. But he did not have the courage to do it. He was aware of Madame's power. One step against her and he was going to the scaffold. Therefore he was to have patience at least for that night. He hoped that the bald

midget would not be able to do his male job. After that night Madame had promised him that the beauty would be his own.

When Felicia came to her senses she saw one of the rapists taking out a sharp stick from his bag and directing it to her vagina. The other three were holding her and were laughing hysterically. Then she screamed so loud that the sound tore the night and was heard by the Marquis.

With the fastness of a lightning he rushed upstairs to the Orange Room. The door was latched but it was not an obstacle for his strength. He broke it to splinters and went in. Not expecting to see four rapists he froze at the door.

The sharp pole, directed to Felicia changed its direction to the intruder. The stunning of the Marquis, however, did not last for long. Trained by Chinese men and the best masters in martial arts, he caught the pole flying at him and skillfully stuck it into the Mayor's stomach. Blood gushed between the hands of the small man that were holding the pole. The sharp end was seen sticking from his back, where the flesh was torn.

The other three jumped against the attacker sensing that there was no way to

escape the fight. They all came against him together and this was their mistake, since the Marquis jumped high and crushed both with his hands, turned into lethal weapons, while the third one was kicked and fell down with a broken back. The Marquis himself did not expect all this to happen so quickly because all four of them were well trained in battle. But it was not all finished yet.

The Spanish King's nephew brought him back to reality with a mighty double somersault. He was no longer a young man but was lithe and strong. With a blow in his chest he made the Marquis step back. The fast and powerful movement of his arms resembled a wind-mill.

The Marquis barely managed to defend himself. A jump on his left and the blow threw him next to the body of Felicia, who was near death. Dazed, he lost coordination of his movements. Dense fog like a blanket fell before his eyes.

The skillful enemy, realizing that the giant was unconscious, approached with the intention to murder him. He took some knife from a sheath that lay on the floor and was just ready to strike the last lethal blow, when he felt something piercing his back.

Felicia, with her last remaining powers had taken the pole out of the dead Mayor and with the rage of a wounded tigress stuck it in the Spaniard's back. He moaned and fell next to the Marquis.

The young woman was watching horrified the four bloody corpses of the rapists. In a minute she fell by her saviour.

Both screens became dim simultaneously but Alexandra's, surprisingly for the Doctor, went blank a couple of minutes earlier.

"That means, Yolanda, that Alexandra was the Marquis. I can't believe it", Raidsma said with a slight smile. "The present woman was a man in her past life."

"Incredible!"

"Let's see what happens further! Keis is not ready yet with the new program and until then we can at least watch some more of the reincarnations of that wonderful couple."

The screens were filled again with bright images. Obviously the Marquis and Felicia were coming to consciousness.

Worn out they both opened their eyes at the same time. The strong Marquis, realizing what Felicia had done for him, took her in his arms and gently kissed her bloody cheek. She began crying.

“Let’s get away from this brothel, my dear. If Madame finds out we will both be hanged”, the Marquis whispered in her ear and added: “Tonight a sailing boat leaves for the New Continent. That’s what George, my trustee, told me. Several people that are persecuted and threatened to go on the scaffold will escape with it.”

“I will go with you to the end of the world, you, my destroyer and saviour! Only I’m not sure that my power won’t fail me.”

The Marquis left the house, carrying the beauty in his arms. The darkness hid them and they were lost in the direction to the river Seine.

Felicia came to her senses. The memories, flooding her mind quickly retreated before reality. Digging the soil she felt under her fingers something big, damp and slippery. Yes, that was the tail of an animal. But what kind of an enormous animal could be found here, underground? The girl was terrified with the thought that this could be a 'goika'.

She had heard from the local Indians that here, in the Grand Montana, such creatures appeared from time to time and one could hardly get away without being torn to pieces. The legend said that the 'goikas' were servants to the Bad Spirit of an Indian tribe. Rumours were heard also that they were ghosts at night while at daytime they buried themselves in the ground and feasted there. But how? Nobody knew.

The earth trembled when the creature moved. The cave into which Felicia had fallen down was not very large and the creature almost filled it. The young woman huddled in

one of the corners and waited for her last hour. The creature was in full height now and she could have a good look at it. Its height was twice that of a human and it had a scaly skin. Eight limbs like those of a crocodile ended with five human fingers and hard sharp claws. The body was that of an alligator but with the muscles of a stallion. The tail was slimy with a sharp prong in the end. There were two horns on the head, coming out of large elephant-like ears. The matted hair fell over bright red eyes. What was surprising was that the features of the face were human and reminded her of someone. But of whom?

She thought that she was dreaming when she heard the 'goika' speak in a human voice:

“ I've gone a long way underground and in the air to follow you, my love, and I found you at last!”

Then she recognized the voice and the face of the beast. That was the Mayor of Paris, whom the Marquis had killed to save her.

“Yes, that's right, I am the Mayor. After I died from the pole that the damned mercenary stuck in me I roamed for a long time above my body and the gorgeous city of Paris as a ghost. Of course, my debasing

passions did not allow me to pass the Border to the world beyond. I traveled long above the Ocean, following you. Here, in America, I was caught by the 'goikas'. At night they are ghosts and during the day they are what you see now before you. That is a punishment. In order to keep our life as beasts we are bound to kill and to take the souls to the 'Mother Goika'. I realized here that I could exist and moreover, near you. I am so happy that I found you."

"This is a dream! It can't be possible!" Felicia wiped her eyes but the reality was not changed.

"You can't imagine, my dear, how sorry I am for acting with you like that. Anyway, I am the one who took your virginity. I simply shouldn't share you with the other three, who are also here, under the ground, but are sleeping at the moment by the Mother."

"Then take me out of here to prove your words" Felicia said with the hope that she might escape death.

"All right, but remember, you will be the first human who will have escaped death. If the Mother learns about it she will bury me for half a century even deeper, in the magma", the 'goika' whispered sadly. Then with his

horns he made such a whirl that only in seconds a tunnel was formed under the rocks, leading to the surface.

The girl had caught the creature by the tail and along with him went back out. The sun was shining as bright as ever. The green foliage inspired new life in Felicia. She did not notice when and where the 'goika' disappear. Light was lethal for those creatures so he had tried to sink underground instantaneously.

The young woman got to her feet, staggering. She would miss the big lump next to her had she not stumbled into it. It was probably metal, since it was too heavy to be earth. She cleaned it a little and observed it. Gold? Yes, really, pure gold! That was the doing of the 'goika'. But why?

The beauty looked round. Not a soul was to be seen anywhere. With the help of a sharp pole she managed to bury the lump of gold and put at a distance of several feet a cross to mark it. The place where the Marquis was digging was quite far and the lump was too heavy for her to carry it.

She strolled fast, eager to tell her beloved about the strange experience. She hoped to find him there.

The Marquis fell on the dirty floor and blood streamed from his mouth. The blow of Gray Ben was really professional but not strong enough to crush the big Frenchman. The strong fighter got to his feet again and sprang with his typical agility. The jump which he had trained for many years was perfect. He used it for hitting his enemies sharply, as if with swords. With a graceful pirouette the Marquis got behind Ben who was no less strong physically. His head was unprotected and the Frenchman only waited for him to turn in order to deliver his special sword-like blow. Ben did not take long. His instinctive turning was the natural reaction of an old fighter but he had not expected such a high leap and the complex pirouette that his adversary performed. It was too late now for a different reaction. It was a death blow. Gray Ben's wind pipe was broken and his head hung listlessly down. He fell down and died not even uttering a sound.

The bets went on with even greater eagerness. The lucky gold-searchers found

pleasure betting on this game, called 'Spartan Death'. Of course, the entrance fee was quite high, since all this was against the law. Not everyone could afford watching the fights. Most of the battles resulted in death or crippling for life. The participants in the ring were either callous professional bullies or hired assassins, deep in debts, for whom there was nothing else left but to attempt victory that would make them rich or else to die.

The Marquis had not found this day even a trace of gold in the pit that was allotted to him. They had arranged with Felicia that he would dig and she would walk around to find some gold streak in the mountain. He had warned her to beware of the caverns of the Grand Montana. He also had promised her not to participate in the 'Spartan Death' but he was put in a tight corner and believed to be home by sunset.

The audience applauded and appealed for him to go on. And he would, without hesitation, if he knew who his next adversary would be. However, the rules were such that the couples were drawn by lot and were only known at the last moment.

All the betting audience knew about the Russian giant Misha, who was sustaining

for months now in the cruel battle. Having piled up a fortune from his victories the Russian now appeared rarely but nobody knew when exactly and thus he maintained the tension both among the viewers and the Spartan fighters. Only at the thought of standing against him one's muscles were paralyzed and the fight was decided before it had begun.

The Marquis had seen him only once on the day of his arrival in Dulfen Spinks' bar and had shuddered then. The Russian had also stopped his glance on him, maybe because he was accompanying Felicia. The fight between them was inevitable though when and where it was impossible to tell.

The Marquis decided to go on, tempted with the easy victory over Gray Ben. It was evident for him that he would not get rich soon by digging and hoped that the lot would meet him with an easy adversary. He made a clear gesture that he would like to continue.

The applause and whistles got so loud that he felt confused. No one could make the audience explode like that but one person - the Russian bear Misha. And it was he who appeared in the ring.

A real bear with human countenance. He was much taller than the Marquis and twice as broad, with huge hairy stomach and big sturdy legs that supported solidly the 400-pound body.

They started stalking one another. The Russian, sure in his victory, had come as if only for entertainment. The Marquis relied on his extensive experience and excellent training in Chinese martial arts.

The Russian was the first to attack, aiming a lethal blow at the head of his enemy. With a quick jump the Marquis avoided the attack and rolled over on the dirty bloody floor. He felt the clumsiness of the Russian and planned an early outcome of the battle. The pirouette with the sword-like blow would do nicely. He jumped using all his agility and force to reach the necessary height and his body whirled into the frantic Chinese pirouette. He landed behind the Russian bear and waited for him to turn. The huge man did not seem troubled at all and turned round too self-assuredly. The sword-like hit of the Marquis was powerful and exact. It found Misha's throat. But he could not realize at once what had happened to his hand. Sharp pain paralyzed his palm. From the Russian's

neck a piece of hard skin was detached and fell rattling on the floor. It was strong metal sheet, painted in pink. The Russian looked at him and grinned.

“Not like with Gray Ben, don’t you think, Frenchman? Prepare to die!”

Surprisingly for the Marquis who thought that only he could master the pirouette with the sword-blow, the Russian was already in the air and passed inches above his head. If he turned at that moment his wind pipe would be broken. He turned, however, but spreading his legs in side-split. The Russian’s heavy hand passed like an arrow by his neck. The side-split had saved his life.

The stalking between the two continued. The audience was hysterical now. Such high quality fight was not seen here recently. After several blows and parries the adversaries were waiting for a mistake on the opposite side. The tension was obvious in their faces. The mistake seemed to be on both sides. They attacked together with heads. The impact was terrific. The sound was pounding. Then silence fell over the hall.

From the head of the Russian brain exploded, mingled with blood and dust. His

body shuddered and dropped on the ring. The Marquis, with convulsing limbs, also fell on top of the Russian. Both of them were thought dead and were thrown into the basement so that later their bodies could be driven to the new cemetery.

Felicia, who had just arrived, looked in the pit. Her beloved was not there.

'He lied to me, the rascal!' she said to herself and started down for the town.

Not a week had passed since they had arrived in New Montana and everybody was talking about her. Rumours of her beauty had gone round all bars and inns in the town and the region. She was considered an upright woman since she wanted to acquire gold with honest labour. The digging for a week in the pit, which was bought with the money the Marquis earned from fights in market-places, was enough to convince New Montana's citizens in their steadfastness.

When Felicia arrived in the town, weary with her experiences with the 'goika'

and the found lump of gold, she looked at her feet, covered with blood and her torn dress.

She knew where to search for her saviour. He could only be at 'Spartan Death'. Felicia knew she would not be easily admitted there, therefore she passed the entrance and came in through the barbed wire. The back door was not guarded and she hoped to sneak through it. The Negro slaves, who worked at 'Spartan Death' noticed the young woman and looked her with curiosity. Several Chinese men dragged from inside two dead bodies. They loaded them on a cab and drove it towards the new cemetery. From the head of the bigger corpse brain was trickling.

Felicia's heart felt heavy in her chest, when the cab went past her. Then she recognized him. She had remembered the Russian from the bar while the face of the other one was turned down and could not be seen, but the clothes... the clothes were those of her Marquis. Mist covered her eyes and she fainted in the dust. One of the Negroes ran to her and started talking fast in his African language. He helped her get on her feet. Another Negro came to help, asking in English Felicia, who was coming to herself:

“What the hell are you doing here, young lady?”

“My beloved was in the cab. He’s dead”, she said weeping. “Where do you suppose they will take him?”

“Usually they are cast in a common tomb in the new cemetery at the end of the forest. Hurry up! At least you can dig him up and bury him properly. God rest his soul”, the Negro said and ran back to the rear entrance.

Felicia started to the forest with her last remaining strength. She followed the tracks, left by the cab and was crying softly. Soon she saw the Chinese men returning from the cemetery. They had obviously done their job quickly.

Utterly hopeless, the young woman sat on a stump and went on weeping. Night had come unnoticeably. Silver glow hovered above her and she was startled.

‘A ghost! The goika!’ she guessed immediately looking at the glow.

Then the sound of human speech came into her head.

‘Felicia, he is alive and only you can save him’, spoke the voice, then added: ‘I need him alive.’

The moon had raised in the sky, shining brightly. Felicia started towards the end of the forest. She had almost reached the last trees when she heard howling and saw many pairs of red eyes, directed at her. These were wolves. With slimy snouts and bared teeth they were approaching her. She started climbing the nearest tree and had almost succeeded when one of them bit fiercely her foot. Frozen with terror the girl dropped on the ground. Sensing fresh blood the wolves surrounded her.

Then something happened which this time did not surprise the victim so much. Half of the silver glow had turned into an alive 'goika' with sharp horns and teeth and the other half was still a silver glow but in the shape of a tail with a sharp prong. It whirled with such power that all the wolves scattered aside, one with ripped stomach, another with torn head. The batch was destroyed in seconds by the 'goika ghost'.

'Be grateful to the moon, Felicia. It saved you', the voice said to the girl who was listlessly lying on the ground.

After some time Felicia resumed her trip to the cemetery. She hoped that the 'goika' had told her the truth and he was alive.