

FROZEN BEAUTY

THE CASTLE OVERLOOKS A MOUNTAIN PASS. ITS OWNER HAS GROWN RICH ON TARIFFS, BUT WEALTH ALONE DOES NOT SATISFY ALL DESIRES... WITHIN THE CASTLE'S OWNER WAS A TERRIBLE NEED THAT HAD LONG SINCE DECAYED INTO EVIL MONOMANIA, AND IT WAS THIS UNHOLY LONGING THAT NOW FORCED THE SORCERER... DARMAN, TO THE CASTLE OF COUNTESS MALEVA...



MALEVA WILL SEE YOU NOW!

WELL, IT'S ABOUT TIME! SHE KIDNAPS ME, BRINGS ME HUNDREDS OF MILES TO THIS FORSAKEN LAND AND THEN I MUST WAIT TWO DAYS BEFORE SHE WILL SEE ME!



OOHH! MALEVA, MY DEAR, I DIDN'T REALIZE YOU WERE SO YOUNG!

YOU ARE MISTAKEN, SORCERER... THAT IS MY NIECE MARIANNE...

I AM OVER HERE!



CONTROL YOURSELF, DARMAN! IT SEEMS MY BEAUTY HAS ASTOUNDED YOU... BUT POOR MARIANNE... I AM CONCERNED OVER HER FAILING HEALTH!



LEAVE US NOW, CHILD... I MUST DISCUSS WITH OUR GUEST HOW BEST TREAT YOUR MALADY...



SHE IS BEAUTIFUL... ISN'T SHE, DARMAN?



YET BEAUTY IS SO OFTEN WASTED ON THE YOUNG...

A SERVANT BROUGHT FORTH A CHEST AND SET IT BEFORE THE SORCERER...

IT'S YOURS! A FORTUNE IN GOLD AND PRECIOUS STONES... ALL YOURS!



SIMPLY GIVE ME THE BEAUTY MARIANNE POSSESSES DARMAN... MAKE THIS GROTESQUE FLESH OF MINE LOVELY AS HERS!



YOU WILL CAST A SPELL TO MAKE ME LOOK LIKE MY NIECE...

OR YOU WILL DIE!



A CHILL PASSED THROUGH THE SORCERER. THE MAGIC THAT WOULD GIVE MALEVA THE YOUNG GIRL'S LOOKS WOULD LEAVE MARIANNE A MINDLESS VESSEL TO BE DRAINED UNTIL HER BEAUTY FADED. YET HE HAD NO CHOICE. MALEVA FURTHER DEMANDED THAT THE CHANGE BE MADE UP ON THE MOUNTAIN... THE COLD, FROZEN MOUNTAIN THAT KNEW NO SEASON BUT DEEPEST WINTER... AND DARMAN SENSED MALEVA'S DEMAND HAD SECRET, SINISTER PURPOSE...



AUNT MALEVA, COULD WE STOP SOON?
I FEEL SO DROWSY... I CAN BARELY
STAY ON THE HORSE...

JUST A BIT FURTHER, MY
DEAR. THE CAPTAIN
KNOWS OF A CAVE
WHERE WE CAN SPEND
THE NIGHT.

ME THINKS THE GIRL
IS DRUGGED!

THERE IS THE CAVE, MARIANNE!
THE SORCERER SHALL SOON
MAKE YOU WELL...



HERE, DARLING... *DRINK* THIS!
YOU'LL FEEL BETTER!



IS EVERYTHING READY?
THE SPELL WILL CAUSE
ME TO BE LIKE HER IN
STRUCTURE AND APPEAR-
ANCE ONLY... IS THIS
RIGHT?

UH... YES.

AND WHILE
MARIANNE'S
BEAUTY BLOOMS
SO TOO SHALL
YOURS, BUT...

GOOD!! YOU WILL MAKE
THE SPELL TOMORROW!
**CAPTAIN!
LEND A
HAND!**



WAIT! SHE'LL FREEZE
OUT THERE!



...YES!





FIEND! SHE IS MONSTROUS IN FAR MORE THAN MERE LOOKS...! THE GIRL'S BODY WILL NOT DECAY! IT WILL STAY BEAUTIFUL, AS WILL MALEVA ONCE SHE IS TRANSFORMED!



SORCERER! IT IS TIME... A COLD, CLEAR ICY DAWN... HEH HEH OUR LITTLE BEAUTY IS FROZEN FROZEN FOREVER!



NA HAGRATH! SUM TRANSMOBLIOD... MORPHULT!

AS THE UNHOLY CEREMONY PROCEEDED, MALEVA'S MEN WATCHED CAREFULLY TO INSURE THAT THE MAGICIAN PLAYED NO TRICKS...

FINALLY, DARMAN'S MOANING RITUAL REACHED A VIOLENT CRESCENDO! SHRIEKING, HE FELL TO THE CAVERN FLOOR IN A FAINT! MALEVA TWITCHED, HAD THE SORCERER FAILED? THEN HER FACE UNDULATED, TWISTED, THE SKIN SHRANK AGAINST TIGHTENING MUSCULATURE... SLOWLY, PAINFULLY, THE CYCLE OF TRANSFORMATION MOVED TO A MIRACULOUS END!





YES, YES... AT LAST! IT'S ME... AND I'M BEAUTIFUL! *&GIGGLE&* YES, IT'S ME!



MALEVA... I'VE DONE AS YOU DEMANDED! LET US HURRY BACK, I WOULD COLLECT MY REWARD AND BE ON MY WAY!



YOUR REWARD...? AH, YES... GIVE HIM HIS REWARD!



NO! NO! NOOAK!



HURRY! SEAL THE CAVERN'S MOUTH WITH ROCKS AND SNOW! I WANT NOTHING TO DISTURB THESE TWO!



MONSTER! GROSS, UNNATURAL MONSTER AAGH!



THE COUNTESS'S CHANGE IN APPEARANCE GAVE HER VAST NEW INTEREST IN LIFE. FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING EVENINGS, GAY REVELS WERE HELD IN THE CASTLE... AND NONE WERE GAYER THAN MALEVA...



UNTIL SUDDENLY, SOMETHING CUT HER

SOME INVISIBLE FORCE WAS BUTCHERING HER!

AAAAH!

WHAT...?
MY LADY...?

THE CAVE... ARGH!

T-THE COUNTESS
IS CHOKED!
SHE'S BEEN
DISMEMBERED

AND HER
FLESH...
PARTS OF
HER FLESH
ARE
BURNING...!



DARMAN HUNCHED NEAR THE FIRE AGAINST THE CAVE'S BITTER COLD, THE SAME COLD THAT HAD STOPPED THE BLEEDING OF HIS WOUND. SOON, HE WOULD BE ABLE TO DIG FREE, BUT FIRST, HE NEEDED NOURISHMENT...

...AND OF COURSE THERE WAS ONLY ONE WAY HE COULD GET THAT! FOR SEVERAL DAYS DARMAN WAS REVULSED BY THE IDEA... THEN, WITH SLOW STARVATION FACING HIM, HE REALIZED WHAT IT WOULD DO TO MALEVA...



...AND AS YOU SAW THE SORCERERS VENGEANCE MADE THE MONSTROUS MALEVA GO ALL TO PIECES... AND THEN SOME *BLECH*

