

Her last gift to him was a grievable death

Once upon a time, a woman gave birth to a Son and three Sisters. The Sisters were agreeable and mild-mannered, but the Son was cruel and selfish. He was blessed, however, with a great gift – he could imagine the most fantastical characters. Fairies, knights, princesses and frogs... demons, witches, and vampires. At first, he used his prodigious talent to decorate the walls of his family's home, but over time he turned his hand to carving the characters from wood to make incredible toys with which he could act out his deepest fantasies.

One day, he met a beautiful Girl and charmed her with his toys and stories. The Girl was taken with his handsome face and captivating presence. As they played with the toys, she told him of a dream she had of a sweet doll with eyes the colour of a stormy sea and blood-red lips. The Son quickly fell in love with the Girl and decided to make her the doll from her dreams as a wedding gift. As he carved the wood, he thought of how much he loved the Girl and wanted to possess her, and he filled the Doll with a kind of magic.

After some weeks had passed, the Son asked the Girl to marry him and presented her with the Doll. The Girl was delighted and clutched the Doll to her breast – and as she did so, the Doll came to life! The Doll could move, it could walk and dance, it could open its arms and kiss. But it had no voice. Nevertheless, the Girl could not believe the magic Doll from her dream was hers, and her heart was full of gratitude and admiration for the Son. Together they presented the magic Doll to the Son's Mother and told her of their plans to marry. "Ah! Now I am a Grandmother!" she said and wished them both a life of happiness.

But it was not to be, for not long after marrying the Son, the Girl realised he had deceived her. He became jealous and angry and treated her savagely. She cried many bitter tears holding her magic Doll, and the Doll tried comforting her with gentle kisses and fetching her all the things the Girl loved best. But the Doll had no helping words to give, and as the hurt grew and grew, the Girl decided she must leave. She waited until the Son was out and ran out of the door with just the magic Doll in her hands, afraid that the Son would come back and catch her. The Girl was in such a rush that as she fled from the house, she dropped the magic Doll! She turned to pick it up but saw the Son returning and decided she must leave without it.

The Son was angry when he returned to the empty house and saw that the Girl was gone. He searched high and low but could not find her – only her magic Doll. Furious, he was cruel to the Doll instead and hurt it greatly. Over time the hurt grew and grew in the Doll and burned a hole right through its body where its heart would lie. The Son saw the great hole and was ashamed. He covered it with a pretty dress and took the Doll to see his Mother and Sisters. The Sisters cooed over its lovely face and the sweet way it moved, but as each took it in their hands, they felt the great hole, and it disgusted them. The Doll pleaded with its eyes for help, but they said nothing – for they, too, were afraid of the Son. Finally, the Mother took up the Doll, and the Doll thought it was saved at last, but alas, the Mother's pride in her only Son was too great. She could feel no great hole nor see any imperfection in the magic Doll or her beloved Son. She told him how clever he was to make such a gentle and quiet Doll and handed it to him.

Unbeknownst to the Doll, the Girl had met a handsome Prince, headstrong and clever. The Prince heard the Girl's story and was moved by her beauty and plight. Together they rode on his white horse to the Son's house and demanded that he hand over the magic Doll. The Son was cowardly and afraid of the Girl and her

Prince, and he threw the Doll at them. The Girl caught the doll, and as she did, she felt the great hole. She shuddered, placed the magic Doll in her bag, and climbed onto the Prince's great horse. The Prince rode fast and hard to their new home, leaving behind everything the Doll knew, but as they passed through a forest, the horse took a giant leap over a fallen log, and the Doll fell out of the Girl's bag. The Girl and her Prince rode on.

Now the Doll was lost and alone, left with the great hole and the shame of being unloved and unwanted. A wild woman found the Doll. As she picked it up and felt the great hole, she cried tears for its pain, and her wild magic turned the Doll into a real girl! The real girl was overjoyed and thanked the wild woman over and over again. The wild woman raised the real girl as her Daughter, but her heart was heavy, for she knew that although the great hole was no longer visible, it was still there, and a terrible magic resided in it. She gave the Daughter her trusty sword, and the Daughter had many great adventures in the world, but the wild woman warned her not to wield the sword in bitterness, for her old wound would reopen, and the terrible magic would no longer be contained.

Back home, rumours began to spread amongst the townspeople of the Son's cruelty, and they began to shun him. Even the Sisters no longer visited his house. Left all alone, his cruelty turned inward, and he became very sick. His Mother was the only person left who would care for him, and she stayed by his side. But her love was no match for his sickness, and eventually, he died. The Mother's heart felt like it was broken, but deep down, she knew that his many sins had caused this sad and lonely death. She pushed aside this thought and tried to focus on the good things she could remember about him – after all, hadn't she known him longer and better than anyone? Worried that she would be alone in her grief, she decided to convince the townspeople of the tragedy of her Son's death by making a beautiful monument to her Son in the town square. On it, she listed his talents -that he was a generous Brother, an honourable Son, and lastly, the maker and protector of the Daughter. When the monument was finished, the Mother stood at its base and cried so many salty tears that she turned to stone! The townspeople were astounded and told far and wide of the great sacrifice of the Sorrowful Mother and the tragic loss of her much-loved Son.

In time, the Daughter heard of the death of her maker. She made a pilgrimage to the place of her creation and there saw the monument, robed in flowers and votives from the townspeople. She fell to her knees in disbelief. How could anyone mourn the loss of such a wicked man? She read the inscriptions made by the Mother, and in righteous fury, she struck at them with her sword, hacking away at the Son's name and carving instead of his cruelty and the great hurt he had inflicted upon her. She saw the stony Sorrowful Mother, and understood the depth of her pain but felt no pity. Exhausted and spent, she turned to go home. But at that moment, as she thought of how the Sorrowful Mother had called herself "Grandmother" once, grief, anger, and bitterness erupted inside her, and she turned with a blood-curdling scream and rushed at the statue, thrusting her sword into its back. There was a crack, and a great hole appeared in place of the Sorrowful Mother's heart. The Daughter laughed and said, "Now your wound is as great as mine". She reached out to touch the great hole, but as she did, the fingers of her outstretched hand began to coil and elongate, twisting around the contours of the statue, and roots sprang from her toes so she could not move. The terrible magic had escaped, and the Daughter had turned into a rose bush with flowers as white as milk and thorns as sharp as a knife. And there the Sorrowful Mother and the Anchored Daughter still stand, two wounds forever entwined.