



Death for a godfather

This is a tale to make even the bravest quake with fear. It all began in a little cottage in the wilds. It was so isolated that the nearest hamlet was over an hour's walk away. It was a very humble dwelling, made out of a few wooden planks crudely nailed together. Someone had built it near an ancient fig tree that was over 100 years old.

The cottage is now abandoned because people are too frightened to live in it. They say that a terrible curse lays on the house. On dark moonless nights, you can see Death flying around the place.

Many, many years ago, a woman called Leonora had lived in the house. The poor woman's husband had died just a few days before her son Ambrose was born.

On the darkest nights, a terrible shadow lay over the little wooden cottage. It was the shadow of Death, who had come to carry off Leonora, too.

So that was how poor Ambrose became an orphan when he was just a week old, with no one left to care for him. Ambrose lay in his cradle and cried his heart out. He cried so hard that Death, tired of so much wailing, went back to the house to silence the child for good.

Little Ambrose had no idea that from that day forth, he was to have: Death for a godfather

As time went by, Ambrose grew up. He went to live in the city and became the best doctor in the whole county. Doctor Ambrose was always visiting patients. He carried a bag with him everywhere he went, which contained all his instruments to practice medicine.

Ambrose was well-known in the city. All the sick people for miles around sought him out. Everyone agreed that he was an excellent doctor because he always knew exactly what the matter was. And that's the truth; he was never wrong! But what people didn't know is that he always got it right because Death gave him a helping hand.

Death always went along with Doctor Ambrose when he visited his patients. Dr. Ambrose would go into the bedroom, stand by the patient's bedside like all doctors do, but before making his diagnosis, he'd wait to see where his companion stood. If Death went to the head of the bed, it meant the patient would recover.

But if, on the contrary, Death stood at the foot of the bed... well, that meant the poor patient was going to die and that Death would carry him off to the afterlife.

Thanks to Death's help, Dr. Ambrose's fame spread far and wide until word at last reached the castle where King Taruk lived with his daughter, Princess Camilla. As you can see, it was an impregnable fortress, a wonderful castle whose lofty towers rose from the mountain tops until they reached the sky.

King Taruk was a good ruler. But the poor man was deeply worried. Princess Camilla had fallen ill and none of the palace physicians could discover what was wrong with her.

"Summon Dr. Ambrose!" the king told his ministers. "I want Doctor Ambrose to see my daughter. Go and fetch him here straight away!" he ordered.

And while the messengers went to look for Doctor Ambrose, King Taruk wouldn't budge from his daughter's bedside as she lay there, delirious from a very high fever.

When Dr. Ambrose reached the castle, he went straight to the princess' bed chamber. The princess was so beautiful and delicate, so fragile and pale, that Ambrose fell in love with her on first sight.

Tears welled in his eyes when he saw Death stand at the foot of the bed. It meant Princess Camilla would soon die.

He embraced the princess in silence. With her last strength, Camilla whispered into Ambrose's ear, begging the doctor to save her and telling him that she wanted to live so that she could love him more than she had ever loved anyone in all her life.

Then suddenly, beside himself with desperation, Dr. Ambrose turned the bed round in a flash. He pushed it so that it faced the other way. He did it so fast that Death was taken by surprise. Dr. Ambrose was so swift that Death had no time to change place.

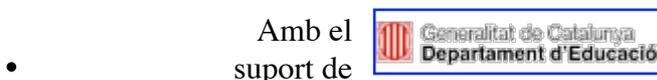
Now Death was left standing at the head of the bed instead of the foot. It could mean only one thing. The princess would live.

Death was furious, enraged. Dr. Ambrose had played a dirty trick on him and changed the patient's fate. Death started flying round the castle and the city in general, and especially around the little wooden cottage where Dr. Ambrose had been born. People say that was when Death laid a terrible curse on the dwelling.

From that day on, Dr. Ambrose lost all his powers. But he didn't care. Ambrose was happy to give up medicine because thanks to his loss of power and knowledge, Princess Camilla had fully recovered.

Soon after that, wedding bells pealed out from the castle. Ambrose and Princess Camilla were married and lived happily ever after because Ambrose no longer had Death for a Godfather.

Script: J.M. Hernandez Ripoll



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