



“Now look at me, don’t fear, and jump after your bundle across that wall,” he encouraged the girl.

The Wedding Shirts

This ghost story happened one dark night. That night the moon was watching over a small village from above, like a big bright eye. The lights in every dwelling had already gone out except for a small house at the edge of the woods. The clock in one of its little rooms had already struck eleven, but a lamp above the kneeler was still shining. A young girl could be seen through the little window, kneeling below a picture of the Virgin Mary. The girl's head was bowed and her hands were crossed on her chest. Tears trickled down her cheeks and every so often they made her dress wet. The girl moaned: "Oh, my dear father, where are you? The grass grows on your grave. And where are you, my mother? You are lying by my father. And what about you, my little sister? Why did you pass away so young? And you, my dear brother, what bullet killed you on the battlefield?" Thus the girl complained about her lonely fate.

"And where did you go, my love?" the girl continued her lament. "You comforted me before you went away. You told me to sow some flax seeds and think of you every day. I did everything as you said. The first year, I spun the flax, the second year, I wove the linen, and the third year, I sewed the shirts. You told me when the shirts were finished, I should weave myself a wedding crown. Everything is finished; the shirts are in my chest and my crown is already dry, and you are still somewhere far away. You've disappeared like a stone in the sea. I've already been waiting for three years, but I don't even know whether you are still alive," the girl lamented. Then, suddenly, she fixed her eyes on Mary, and began to plead: "Oh, Mary almighty, help me, please. Bring back my love from abroad. Either bring him back to me or cut my life short. I don't want to live without him. Oh, Mary, almighty Mother of God, stand by me in my sorrow."

At that moment the picture on the wall moved. The girl cried out in terror. The lamp sputtered out. 'Maybe it was just a draught of wind,' thought the girl. 'But what if it was a bad omen?' Then suddenly someone knocked on the little window. "Are you sleeping, my girl, or are you awake?" she could hear her boyfriend's voice. "I am back from abroad. Don't you recognize me? Or have you forgotten about me? Maybe you love someone else," sounded the voice. The girl couldn't believe her ears. Her heart leapt for joy. "Oh, my love, is it really you? You know that my heart has always beaten only for you. I've just been praying for you," she said soulfully. "Oh, my girl, quit praying and hurry up! I've come to fetch you, my bride. Just look at the bright moon! It'll light the way for us,"

said the voice impatiently. "Oh dear! What are you saying?" exclaimed the girl in surprise. "Where would we go in the dark night? Can't you hear the wind raging? Let's wait until it's daylight," she suggested. "It makes no difference if it's day or night," answered the voice. "I'm tired and I sleep in the daytime. We'll be married before the first roosters crow. Just stop worrying and hurry up! This very night you'll be my wife," the voice outside promised the girl.

It was the thick of night, and only the moon lit the sky. There was silence all around except for the raging wind. And in the dark night, two pilgrims marched; he walked ahead and she a step after him. In the silence, dogs howled as they picked up the travellers' scent. It was as if they wanted to say that a dead man was nearby. "It's a fine, clear night, my love. About this time, the dead climb out of their graves. Before you know where you are, they are close to you. My love, do you feel no fear?" asked the man. "Why should I fear?" said the girl. "You're by my side, and God's eye watches over me. But tell me, my darling, if your father is still alive. And will your mother be happy to meet me?" the girl wanted to know. "Oh, my dear, you want to know a lot. Come quickly and all will soon be clear. But hurry, time doesn't wait and we have a long way to go," the man told his bride. "Love, what's that in your right hand?" he asked then. "I've brought some prayer books," she answered. "Oh, throw them away right now!" he ordered. "Those prayers are heavier than stones. Throw them away so you can keep up with me," he said. Then he seized her books and threw them away, and at once they covered ten miles.

They kept on walking and their journey wound through hills, thick forests and along the rocks. Wild dogs barked all around, as if they had picked up the scent of some nearby misfortune. And the man always went ahead, while the girl hurried after him. Her white feet hurt from the wretched journey and left bloody tracks behind on the thorny bushes and stones. Then suddenly the man spoke to his young companion again. "It's a nice, clear night, my love. At this time the dead walk among the living. Before you know where you are, they're close to you. My darling, do you feel no fear?" "Why should I fear?" said the girl. "You're by my side and God's hand shelters me. But tell me, my love, what is your house like? Is it furnished well? A clean and bright room? And is the church nearby?" "You want to know a lot, my love," he answered. "You'll see everything this very night. Just hurry up, there's little time and we've a long way to go. What's that round your waist, my dear?" he asked his bride. "I've brought along my rosary," she said. "Oh, it twists around you like a snake and cuts off your breath. Throw

it away! There's no time to lose," he said. Then he seized her rosary and threw it away and they flew twenty miles at one bound.

Now their journey wound through lowlands, across meadows, streams and moors. There were blue jack-o'-lanterns fluttering and wheeling around in two rows of nine, over the moor. It was as if they were accompanying a corpse to the grave. The frogs in the stream croaked a strange funeral song. And the man always went ahead, while the girl followed him. Her legs were already growing weak, and her bloody feet, cut by the sharp grass, stained the ferns. And the man spoke to his young bride again. "It's a fine, clear night. Just now, the living go to their graves. Before you know where you are, the grave is near. Aren't you afraid, my darling?" "Oh no, I'm not. You're by my side and God's will shelters me," the girl answered. "Just don't hurry so much and let me have a short rest. I'm exhausted, my legs are failing and pain, like a knife, is stabbing into my heart," she begged. "Don't be afraid, my girl, we'll soon be there," he comforted her. "The feast is ready, our guests await. And time flies quickly. But what are you wearing on that string around your neck?" he asked. "A cross from my mother," the girl answered. "Oh, that damned bit of gold! Its sharp edges prick you and they do the same to me. Throw it away and you'll feel like a bird!" he said as he grabbed the little cross and threw it away. Within a moment they flew thirty miles at one bound.

Then, all of a sudden, a tall building appeared on the wide plain. Its windows were long and narrow and a bell tower soared from its roof. "Hey, my girl - we're here at last! Can't you see it?" the man asked his bride. "Good heavens! That church, perhaps?" asked the girl in terror. "A church? No, that's my castle!" the man cried out. "That graveyard and the rows of crosses?" asked the girl nervously. "Those aren't crosses, that's my orchard!" exclaimed the man with laughter. "Hey there, my darling, look at me and leap over this wall!" he encouraged his bride. The girl was seized with terror. "Oh no, leave me alone! Your eyes are wild and horrible. Your breath is as fetid as poison and your hands are icy hard as death," she said with disgust. "There's no need to fear, my darling," said the man encouragingly. "We'll have great fun at my place. There's plenty of everything there, plenty of meat, but no blood. Tonight it's going to be different, though. What have you got in that bundle, my love?" he asked. "Those are the shirts that I have sewn," the girl answered. "We won't need more than two: that's one for you, and one for me," said the man. Laughing, he took her bundle and tossed it onto a grave beyond the fence. "Now look at me, don't fear, and jump after your

bundle across that wall," he encouraged the girl. "But you've gone ahead and I've followed you all this way up till now," answered the girl. "So be the first to jump and show me the way again," she suggested. Not suspecting a trick, the man leapt over the fence. The girl took advantage of that moment and started running away. Only her white dress was visible in the darkness as it flowed around her in her flight. Her evil companion couldn't see that there was a shelter close by.

The girl slipped into a little building, whose door wasn't locked. There weren't any windows in the room, merely moonlight flashing through the cracks. She hastily bolted the door, shaking like a leaf and begging God for help. Then she fixed her eyes on an odd shape in the middle of the room. She went closer and almost fainted in horror. It was a corpse lying on a board. Then suddenly some strange noise could be heard outside. The monsters from the graves started running around, clattering their jaws and singing this song: "The corpse belongs in the grave's dark hole, woe to him who neglects his soul!" And then someone knocked at the door of the girl's shelter. "Hey, dead man, stand up and draw back that bolt for me!" sounded the horrible voice. And the girl recognized it was her evil companion at the door. At his command the dead man opened his eyes, raised his head, and looked around. In despair the girl began to pray earnestly: "Good God, help me! Don't give me up to Satan's power! Dead man, lie down, and do not rise. God grant you eternal peace!" said the girl in mortal fear. And the dead man lay down and shut his eyes as before. But her evil groom knocked at the door again. "Hey, dead man, stand up and open your room for me!" he ordered. And the corpse rose from the board and with his stiff arm pointed to the bolt on the door. The girl cried out in horror: "Oh, save my soul, Lord Jesus Christ! Have mercy in my hour of need! Dead man, lie down, and do not stand. God comfort you and me too," she said. And the dead man lay down again and stretched his limbs, just as before. However, the evil companion outside wasn't going to surrender. He pounded on the door even more fiercely. "Hey! Dead man, stand up and give me that living girl!" he shouted out. Oh, poor, poor girl! The dead man got up for the third time and fixed his big, bleary eyes on the poor maid. She was half-dead with fright, but she gathered her strength and started praying: "Oh, Mary, stand by me, plead with your dear Son for me. Forgive me for my wicked prayer. Forgive my sin! Oh, free me, Mary, Mother of grace, from evil." And lo! A rooster began to crow nearby and soon all the roosters in the village responded. And the dead man, just as fast as he'd risen before, suddenly

fell on the floor and stayed motionless. Everything outside went silent; the wild crowd and the girl's evil groom disappeared.

In the morning the people from the village went to early mass and froze in astonishment. One grave was wide open and a young girl was standing in the mortuary. And on every tomb were scattered shreds of her new shirts. The girl had done well to think of God in her time of need. If she'd obeyed her evil groom, she'd have come to grief. Her graceful body, white and pure, would have been like those shirts.

Vocabulary

ahead [əˈhed]	<i>vpředu</i>	damned [dæmd]	<i>prokletý, zlořečený</i>
almighty [oːlˈmaɪti]	<i>všemocný, všemohoucí</i>	dead [ded]	<i>umrlec</i>
at one bound [baʊnd]	<i>jedním skokem</i>	draught [dra:ft]	<i>přůvan</i>
await [əˈweɪt]	<i>očekávat, čekat na</i>	draw [dro:]	back
bad omen [ˈəʊmən]	<i>zlé znamení</i>	dwelling [ˈdwellɪŋ]	<i>odstrčit (závoru)</i>
battlefield [ˈbætl̩ f̩ fi:lɪd]	<i>bitevní pole</i>	earnestly [ˈɜ:nɪstli]	<i>obydlí</i>
be alive [əˈlaɪv]	<i>být naživu</i>	every so often	<i>upřímně, vroucně</i>
be awake [əˈweɪk]	<i>být vzhůru</i>	evil [ˈi:vl]	<i>každou chvíli</i>
before you know	<i>než se naděješ</i>	exclaim [ɪkˈskleɪm]	<i>zlo; zlý</i>
where you are		exhausted [ɪgˈzɔ:stɪd]	<i>zvolat</i>
bleary [ˈbliəri] eyes	<i>kalné oči</i>	fern [fɜ:n]	<i>vyčerpaný (únavu)</i>
bolt [bəʊlt]	<i>závora; zavřít na závoru</i>	fetch [feč]	<i>kapradí</i>
bow [bau] one's head	<i>sklonit hlavu</i>	fetid [ˈfetɪd]	<i>zajít pro, vyzvednout</i>
breather [ˈbri:ðə]	<i>oddech, pauza</i>	fiercely [ˈfɪəsli]	<i>páchnoucí</i>
bride [braɪd]	<i>nevěsta</i>	flax seed [ˈflæx f̩ si:d]	<i>urputně, zuřivě</i>
bright [braɪt]	<i>jasný; veselý</i>	flow [fləʊ]	<i>lněné semeno</i>
bring along [brɪŋ əˈlɒŋ]	<i>přinést s sebou</i>	flutter [ˈflʌtə]	<i>vlát (šaty)</i>
bullet [ˈbulɪt]	<i>kulka, střela</i>	fright [fraɪt]	<i>třepetat se</i>
bundle [ˈbʌndl]	<i>uzlík, ranec</i>	furnished [ˈfɜ:niʃt]	<i>strach</i>
by my side [saɪd]	<i>po mém boku</i>	gather [ˈgæðə]	<i>zařizený (byt)</i>
chest [čest]	<i>hrud', prsa</i>	one's strength	<i>sebrat sílu</i>
clatter [ˈklætə]	<i>klapat</i>	ghost story [ˈgəʊst f̩ sto:ri]	<i>strašidelný příběh</i>
come to grief [grɪ:f]	<i>dopadnout špatně</i>	go out [gəʊ ˈaʊt]	<i>zhasnout (světlo)</i>
companion [kəmˈpænjən]	<i>druh, družka</i>	God grant [grɑ:nt] you	<i>Bůh ti dej věčný klid!</i>
corpse [kɔ:ps]	<i>umrlec</i>	eternal peace [iˈtɜ:nl pi:s]!	
crack [kræk]	<i>štěrbina</i>	Good heavens [ˈhevnz]!	<i>Ježíši Kriste! Proboha!</i>
croak [krəʊk]	<i>kvákat, skřehotat</i>	grab [græb] sth	<i>urvat co</i>
crow [krəʊ]	<i>kokrhát</i>	graceful [ˈgreɪsfəl]	<i>půvabný, spanilý</i>
cut off one's breath [breθ]	<i>krátit komu dech</i>	grave [greɪv]	<i>hrob</i>
cut one's life short [čhybí fonetika]	<i>zkrátit komu život</i>	graveyard [ˈgreɪv f̩ ja:d]	<i>hřbitov</i>

groom [gru:m]	<i>ženich</i>	rosary [ˈrəʊzəri]	<i>ruženec</i>
Hey! [hei] there!	<i>Hola!</i>	row [rəʊ]	<i>řada</i>
howl [haʊl]	<i>výt (pes)</i>	scatter [ˈskætə]	<i>rozházet (oblečení)</i>
in time of need	<i>v době nouze</i>	seize [si:z]	<i>popadnout, chytit</i>
It makes no difference.	<i>Na tom nezáleží.</i>	sew [səʊ]	<i>šít</i>
jack-o'-lantern [dʒæk ə ˈlæntən]	<i>bludička</i>	min. čas sewed [səʊd]	
jaw [dʒo:]	<i>čelist</i>	shelter [ˈʃeltə]	<i>úkryt; (u)chránit</i>
keep up with sb	<i>stačit komu</i>	shred [ʃred]	<i>cár, útržek</i>
kneel [ˈni:l]	<i>klečat</i>	soar [so:(r)]	<i>tyčit se do výše</i>
kneeler [ˈni:lə]	<i>klekátko</i>	soul [saʊl]	<i>duše (filoz., náb.)</i>
leap [li:p] for joy [dʒɔi]	<i>poskočit radostí</i>	soulfully [ˈsaʊlfəli]	<i>vroucně</i>
limbs [limz]	<i>údy</i>	sow flax [səʊ ˈflæks]	<i>zasít len</i>
linen [ˈlinin]	<i>plátno</i>	spin [spɪn]	<i>příst</i>
lo [ləʊ]	<i>hle!</i>	min.čas spun [span]	
lowland [ˈləʊlənd]	<i>nížina</i>	sputter [ˈspatə] out	<i>prasknout a zhasnout (lampa)</i>
make for [meik fo:]	<i>namířit kam, vyrazit k</i>	stab [stæb] into	<i>bodat do</i>
march [ˈma:č]	<i>jít, kráčet; pochodovat</i>	stiff [stɪf]	<i>ztuhlý</i>
merely [ˈmiəli]	<i>jen, pouze</i>	string [strɪŋ]	<i>tkanice</i>
misfortune [misˈfo:čən]	<i>neštěstí, smůla</i>	the dead [ded]	<i>mrtvý (člověk)</i>
monster [ˈmɒnstə]	<i>obluda, nestvůra</i>	The girl was seized	<i>Dívky se zmocnila hrůza.</i>
moor [muə, mo:]	<i>bažina, vřesoviště</i>	with terror.	
mortal fear [ɸ mo:tl ˈfiə]	<i>smrtný strach</i>	the living [ˈli:vɪŋ]	<i>živý (člověk)</i>
mortuary [ˈmo:čuəri]	<i>márnice</i>	the Virgin Mary [ˈvɜ:dʒɪn ɸ meəri]	<i>Panna Maria</i>
Mother of grace [greɪs]!	<i>Matko milosti!</i>	this very night	<i>ještě tuto noc</i>
motionless [ˈməʊʃənli:s]	<i>nehýbný</i>	throw [θrəʊ] away	<i>vyhodit, zahodit</i>
neglect [niˈglekt]	<i>nedbat o, zanedbávat</i>	tomb [tu:m]	<i>hrob, hrobka</i>
obey [əˈbeɪ]	<i>(u)poslechnout</i>	torment [ˈto:ment]	<i>trápení</i>
Oh dear!	<i>Proboha!</i>	toss [tos]	<i>hodit, mrštit</i>
pass away [pa:s əˈwei]	<i>zemřít</i>	track [træk]	<i>stopa</i>
pick up a scent [sent]	<i>zavěťřit</i>	trickle [ˈtrɪkl] down	<i>stékat (slzy)</i>
pilgrim [ˈpɪlgrɪm]	<i>poutník, poutnice</i>	twist [twɪst] around	<i>vinout se kolem</i>
Plead [pli:d] with your	<i>Oroduj za mě u svého Syna.</i>	visible [ˈvɪzɪbl]	<i>viditelný</i>
Son for me.		waist [weɪst]	<i>pás (část těla)</i>
pleadingly [ˈpli:dɪŋli]	<i>úpěnlivě</i>	watch over [wɔč ˈəʊvə]	<i>dohlížet na</i>
point [poɪnt] to	<i>ukázat na</i>	weave [wi:v]	<i>tkát; plést (košík, věnec)</i>
poison [ˈpoɪzn]	<i>jed</i>	min. čas wove [wəʊv]	
prayer books	<i>modlitební knížky</i>	wedding crown	<i>svatební věneček</i>
prick [prɪk]	<i>píchat</i>	[ˈwediŋ ɸ kraʊn]	
quit [kwɪt]	<i>zanechat (čeho)</i>	wicked prayer	<i>zlá (bezbožná) modlitba</i>
rage [reɪdʒ]	<i>buráčet (vítř)</i>	[ɸ wɪkɪd ˈpreɪ]	
raise [reɪz]	<i>zvednout (hlavu)</i>	wild [waɪld]	<i>divoký</i>
respond [riˈspɒnd]	<i>odpovědět, reagovat</i>	wind [waɪnd]	<i>obtočit, ovinout; klikatit se (cesta)</i>
rise [raɪz], min. čas rose	<i>vstát, zvednout se</i>	min. čas wound [waʊnd]	
rooster [ˈru:stə] (<i>Amer.</i>)	<i>kohout</i>	wretched [ˈrečɪd]	<i>strastiplný</i>