

ALLURED

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. CASTLE - NIGHT

The wind howls as it blows through the towers of the vast and damp castle right next to a seemingly bottomless cliff.

A young Sergeant of the Austrian Imperial Infantry, FRANZ, approaches the large main doorway. He is ragged and torn, but retains his dignity.

He knocks with the door knocker and rubs his hands to keep his hands warm while waiting.

After a few moments the door creaks open and an old man in drabby clothing, FRIEDRICH, appears. He carries a lantern.

FRIEDRICH

How may I be of service?

FRANZ

I am sorry to bother you at such a late hour, but I lost my platoon and the storm blew away my equipment. Would it be possible for me to take shelter here until my platoon returns. I expect them to be back in a few days.

Friedrich opens the door wider.

FRIEDRICH

Of course. We are always happy to help the servants of the Empire.

FRANZ

Thank you.

FRIEDRICH

Please follow me.

Franz steps in.

INT. HALL - CONTINUOUS

Friedrich walks slightly hunched as he leads Franz through the massive hall.

It is filled with luxurious furniture and items, but most of it is covered with cloth or is worn down.

FRANZ

Are you the master of this castle?

FRIEDRICH

Oh, no. I am simply taking care of it until my master returns from the war.

FRANZ

How long has he been gone?

Friedrich smiles a little.

FRIEDRICH

Much longer than you'd think. Please, follow me closely. It's easy to get lost.

INT. GUEST CHAMBER - NIGHT

The large chamber is equally as luxurious but it too has seen its best days. The bed has already been made and it is not as dusty as the hall.

The two men enter.

FRIEDRICH

I hope you'll find these chambers to your satisfaction, good sir.

FRANZ

Very much so, thank you.

Franz notices the bed while Friedrich lights a lantern beside the bed.

FRANZ (CONT'D)

Were you expecting someone?

FRIEDRICH

It is always good to be prepared for situations like these.

FRANZ

Surely situations like these don't happen that often?

FRIEDRICH

You do not need to concern yourself with such things. I will bring you breakfast in the morning. If you need anything, I will be in the servant chambers next to the hall.

FRANZ

Very well. Thank you.

Friedrich bows a little as he retreats from the room.

FRIEDRICH

Good night, sir.

FRANZ

Good night.

Friedrich closes the door behind him.

Franz tries the bed with his hand; approves. He loosens his coat and folds it away before he lays on the bed on his back.

He sighs and closes his eyes. But he immediately opens them when he hears FABRIC RUSTLING very nearby.

He looks around. There is nobody else in the room.

FRANZ (CONT'D)

Hello?

He shoots up when he hears the SCUTTLING OF LITTLE FEET.

He grabs the lantern and goes to the door. He exits.

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Franz looks around, but the lantern is weak and it's dark.

FRANZ

Hello?

Unseen LAUGHTER of a group of young children is followed by more THUMPING, moving away.

Franz runs down the corridor and turns around a corner. But the corridor around the corner is deserted.

FRANZ (CONT'D)

Is anybody there?! Come back!

Silence. Frustrated, he goes back to the guest chambers.

INT. GUEST CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Franz closes the door behind him, places the lantern on the bedside table and climbs under the covers.

He reaches to shut off the lantern, but then thinks better off it. He turns his back to the light and closes his eyes.

But he opens them again when the COVERS RUSTLE loudly right beside him.

He is shocked to see a YOUNG WOMAN in an elaborate nightgown sleeping on the bed right next to him, her back to him.

He looks around, but there is nobody else in the room.

FRANZ
Umm, excuse me?

She does not react. He carefully reaches her shoulder.

FRANZ (CONT'D)
Excuse me? Miss?

He yelps and jumps up from the bed when his hand goes right through the woman.

The woman rouses and turns to look at him. She slowly shushes him and then settles back.

Franz grabs the lantern and bolts out of the room.

INT. HALL - NIGHT

Franz pounds a door frantically.

After a beat, Friedrich comes to the door.

FRIEDRICH
Is there a problem?

FRANZ
Yes, I believe we have a bit of a situation. It seems that someone else was planning to use those chambers after all.

FRIEDRICH
How so?

FRANZ
There's a young girl sleeping there right now.

FRIEDRICH
A girl?

FRANZ
Yes. Is she your daughter or something?

FRIEDRICH
I'm afraid that I was never blessed with children. There shouldn't be anybody but the two of us in the castle. When did she come in?

FRANZ

Well, that's kind of the thing. She didn't. She just kind of appeared right beside me. I think.

FRIEDRICH

Are you quite sure you weren't dreaming, sir? It's been a long day and the mind can play all kinds of tricks.

Franz is about to argue back, but then falters.

FRANZ

That - that would seem like the logical explanation, doesn't it?

FRIEDRICH

Quite.

FRANZ

I feel like a bit of a fool. I'm terribly sorry to have bothered you.

FRIEDRICH

Do not worry about it. These empty halls and corridors can be a little unsettling at nights. Believe me, I know.

FRANZ

Thank you. I'll see you in the morning, then.

FRIEDRICH

Certainly. Good night, sir.

FRANZ

Good night.

Friedrich is about to close the door, but Franz stops him just in time.

FRANZ (CONT'D)

Oh, just one last question.

FRIEDRICH

Yes?

FRANZ

Are there any children in the castle?

FRIEDRICH

As I said, we are the only ones in the castle at the moment.

Franz swallows a little.

FRANZ
Has there ever been any children in
the castle?

FRIEDRICH
I wouldn't know, sir. Surely it is
possible.

FRANZ
Ok. Thank you.

FRIEDRICH
Good night.

Friedrich closes the door.

Suddenly feeling rather eerie, Franz looks around once more
before hurrying off.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Franz is quite jumpy as he walks down a corridor, carefully
illuminating every corner and crevasse with the lantern.

He grinds to a halt as he hears the sounds of a DINNER PARTY
being held, not far away.

He comes to an intersection and notices that light shines
from one direction. The sounds are very close.

He hesitates for a moment, but then turns around corner.

INT. DINING HALL - CONTINUOUS

The hall is unnaturally bright and a LARGE GROUP OF ARISTOCRACY
are dining at a long table. There is something off about
them and in the brightness, they seem almost transparent.

As Franz looks at them in shock, the closest diners turn and
stare at him blankly.

MALE DINER #1
Welcome. Join us.

MALE DINER #2
Yes, join us.

FEMALE DINER #1
Join us here, on the other side.

FEMALE DINER #2
Don't be afraid.

MALE DINER #1
Come on. It won't hurt.

FEMALE DINER #1
We've been waiting for you.

Some of the diners rise and start to beckon him. They all call for him to join them in various ways.

Franz backs away as they approach. His back hits the wall and he drops the lantern.

He grabs two sticks from the ground and holds them in a cross.

FRANZ
Be gone, you foul demons! You'll
never allure me to your wretched
purgatory!

Franz runs away holding the cross between them. The diners watch him go and then casually return to the table.

MALE DINER #2
What was that all about?

MALE DINER #1
Oh, him? He's just the local ghost.
He does this like every year. I really
don't know what's his problem.

They continue dining.

FADE OUT.

THE END