"FOREVER THINE"

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FADE IN:

EXT. VICTORIAN HOUSE - NIGHT

On a windswept promontory above the sea. A dark and stormy night, waves dash against rocks below. Lightning, distant **THUNDER**.

INT. MAIN HALL - NIGHT

Below an ornate chandelier a slender, wan young woman stands, candle in hand.

CECILIA HUNGTINGTON, beautiful in an ethereal way, glances around the large, ornate hall. She coughs delicately, her movements are spare, weak.

A wide staircase leads to the upper floors. On the walls portraits glower. Outside, lightning flickers, there's a distant RUMBLE of THUNDER.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

She wanders in, hesitates. There's a SOUND behind her. She turns, heart in her throat.

A ghost wavers between this world and the next. Delicate garments billow around her. Her expression's cold. Forboding.

Cecilia, hand to her throat, backs away. The ghost drifts toward her, silent, intimidating. Cecilia shakes her head.

CECILIA

It... it's not time. Not yet...

It drifts closer, it's eyes bore into her.

CECILIA

I'm not ready! I don't know if
I -- no! Leave us alone! Please,
why can't you leave us --

It swoops toward her, accompanied by a blast of wind, a shriek that sounds like tormented souls. Cecilia backs away, breath rapid, heart pounding...

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Outside, the storm builds. Cecilia tosses fitfully on a four-poster, attended by her **DOCTOR**. He straightens up, shakes his head.

RODERICK

I asked her not to wander about alone. Her constitution...

RODERICK HUNGTINGTON steps away from the huge window, a glass of brandy in hand. Handsome. He glances at Cecilia. His words sounded concerned. His eyes aren't.

Doctor makes a non-committal sound. He picks a stoppered bottle up off the night table. Measures out a small amount of white powder. On another table nearby is a decanter of brandy.

Roderick watches. Impassive.

DOCTOR

Servants arrive tomorrow, do they? Good. She shouldn't be alone now. This'll help her sleep. If necessary, you can give her another dose, but not for at least six hours. But do be careful. Too much...

He dissolves some powder in a glass of water, helps her swallow it. She reaches out to Roderick. He comes over, takes her hand. Manages a smile. She lays back, restive.

INT. MAIN HALL - NIGHT

Roderick, Doctor come down the stairs. Doctor consults his pocket watch.

RODERICK

There's nothing else you can do?

DOCTOR

Nothing anyone can do. Just see that she doesn't have any excitement. She mentioned something about... visions?

RODERICK

Probably caused by the medicine. Her nervous system's very delicate. I imagine it wouldn't take much to...

Doctor nods, gathers his hat, coat. Pauses a moment to glance back at the stairs, then, with a nod, leaves.

Roderick beneath the chandelier. The hall's lit sporadically by flashes of lightning, still distant.

He stops beneath a framed painting of the ghost, a beautiful young woman, melancholy.

GHOST

Change of heart?

He turns, not surprised to see her. She's not frightening now. Just sad.

GHOST

I suppose you'd have to have one first.

They hold each other's eyes. She looks away.

RODERICK

What?

GHOST

She loves you.

He sighs, goes to a sideboard, pours a brandy. His smile's the opposite of her tone. He glances up the stairs.

RODERICK

"Not wisely, but too well".

Lightning, the **THUNDER**'s closer. She turns, angry. He regards her, calm.

RODERICK

Please spare me the righteous indignation. You'll be taken care of.

She glares at him. He produces a tattered diary-type book.

RODERICK

Spell of Unbinding. Provided, of course, you're the death of her. If you'd rather be stuck here for all eternity...

Her fists clench, she makes an effort to control herself. He moves to the window, watches the storm.

GHOST

She's asleep?

RODERICK

I diluted the powders. She'll be able to see you. Hail to thee, blithe spirit.

He raises his glass with a sardonic smile. Lightning illuminates the Ghost's portrait.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cecilia tosses in bed. Lightning. THUNDER. She comes awake, frightened, looks around. The room's empty. She lays down. A SOUND, she sits up, heart pounding.

Ghost's in the doorway. Scary. She raises an arm.

Cecilia, trembling, shakes her head.

Ghost moves toward her slowly...

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Roderick pours himself a brandy. O.S. SCREAM. He glances up, sighs, satisfied. Sips his drink.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Roderick enters. The floor-to-ceiling windows are open, curtains billow in the wind, rain. Cecilia lies in bed, unmoving, face turned away.

He sits on the edge of the bed, regards her. Ghost materializes behind him.

RODERICK

She's...

GHOST

See for yourself.

He considers it, shakes his head. Ghost hovers in front of him. He reacts, annoyed.

GHOST

It's time.

He regards her a moment, sits back.

RODERICK

Ah, yes. As to that.

She regards him, puzzled. He shrugs.

RODERICK

It isn't really a spellbook, dear Lenora. It's a diary. Hers.

Ghost blazes a moment. An unearthly **WAIL** swells around her. He smiles, indulgent, holds up the diary.

RODERICK

And yes, I do know how much she loved me. She went on and on about it in here. So much so, I'm certain she'd want me to have her... our money.

She just stares at him. He goes to the decanter, pours himself a drink.

RODERICK

Look at the bright side. At least you'll have company through those eternal nights of the soul.

He toasts her, tosses off the shot. Does his best attempt at a sympathetic smile. The storm's fury increases. He turns from it to see her, close now, seething.

RODERICK

Don't be tiresome.

He pours himself a brandy, downs it.

RODERICK

After all, you --

His smile falters. He looks confused.

The glass drops to the floor, shatters.

He looks at Ghost, panicked. Her turn now. She smiles.

GHOST

Pity. The grieving husband, unable to continue without his beloved, takes his own life.

He looks at the decanter, then at the stoppered bottle on the night table. It's empty.

She drifts closer.

GHOST

She wanted to be with you always. I told her there was a way. And that you felt the same way.

Roderick looks at Cecilia.

A faint smile on her lips.

He staggers back, clutches the curtains.

CECILIA

Roderick... Roderick, dearest.

He looks up. Ghostly, she hovers above her body. Smiles lovingly.

CECILIA

Now my love, I am forever thine.

Roderick sinks to his knees, gasping. Looks up at them. They hover, arms around each other's waists. He clutches at his throat.

EXT. VICTORIAN HOUSE - NIGHT

The storm lashes the house. The wind MOANS... a loving sigh... a laugh... a scream.

FADE OUT.

THE END.