

FICTION

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**THE CASTLE OF MADELEINE
ALLUSIONS OF MADELEINE**

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The strong-minded writer Yulia Safonova allusively expresses the idea that the happiness of having a relationship is possible only in the person's consciousness in the unrealised desire to master it. The name «Madeleine Castle» itself alludes to the Marcel Proust's literary works - «Madeleine cake», which is associated with the desire for the fleeting pleasure, and can be fixed only in consciousness, but impossible to hold it forever. By genre, the work «Madeleine Castle» has the features of a fairy tale, in which the world of ghosts and humans coexist. Julia Safonova presents to the reader the image of a romantic man who dreams of love, which does not exist in reality. It seems that the hero seeks this love, but the circumstances turn out to be in such a way that coexistence with a woman is impossible for him in this world. The reader is given the hope that in time, in the process of waiting, love can happen, but this is only a dream that may or may not come true...

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The Castle of Madeleine

In a distant and wonderful place, surrounded by dense forests and deepest lakes, stands, as if towering above all earthly, the palace of magnificent view and impressive size. Twenty-five years ago, it was home to the royal family with their son and Crown Prince Adamingo. But at the age of seventeen, the prince had to become the ruler of an entire kingdom, and this circumstance changed him a lot. Close to the prosperous kingdom of the haughty, spoiled Crown Prince Adamingo was a castle as large as a royal palace. The appearance of this castle was so gloomy and frightening that it seemed that no one had lived there for many centuries. People living in the kingdom began to multiply mysterious rumors about this castle, telling the story that anyone who enters inside will never leave it. Mothers frightened their children with fictional stories about the many disappearances of little kids, that decided to play in the castle and never returned. Of course, these rumors instilled in people even greater fear of the mysterious castle.

Each time, looking out of the windows of his palace at this castle, the prince was outraged only by its mere existence, and he decided to destroy the castle without leaving a single stone from it. He believed that such a grimmy and awkward castle had no right to be near within sight of the windows of his glorious palace. When the prince announced that it was necessary to immediately destroy this construction, all his lieges flatly refused to obey the order. The inhabitants of the kingdom believed that by doing this they would bring trouble.

Adamingo did not know how to accept refusal and told about an unexpected decision to his subjects. He told everyone that he would spend exactly one month in this castle until the full moon come out, and if he returned by the end of this period, the castle would be immediately destroyed. The prince's servants tried to dissuade him from this step, recalling that the late king would not approve of such a decision. But Adamingo said, since he has been the ruler of this kingdom for seven years, no one dares to disobey his order. And anyone who dares to obstruct the decision of the crown prince will go into eternal exile. Everyone had to obey unquestioningly after these words, and the very next day the prince settled in this mysteriously and dark castle.

The first thing that really surprised Adamingo was the huge discrepancy between the appearance of the castle and its interior. From the inside, everything just shone

with purity, although, according to all logic, everything should have been completely different:

The cobwebs on furniture and the ceiling, mirrors completely covered in dust, paintings with cracks and faded colors that could not have been avoided in so many years.

The only thing that reminded that this castle had been empty for a long time was the deathly silence. Even the birds did not chirp in the morning near the castle windows. That is why the castle not only amazed with its cleanliness, but, at the same time, frightened.

Returning to the theme of the paintings, we can notice another oddity: these were mainly landscapes, and only on the second floor in one of the rooms, the door with which was wide open, the prince saw a portrait, huge from ceiling to floor. This portrait depicted a girl with fiery red hair and incredibly deep eyes, and her eyes were reminiscent of the green foliage in spring. There was in her gaze some kind of deep longing and sadness, the reasons for which he really wanted to unravel. This sudden thought surprised the prince extremely, since he was not used to such outbursts of sentimental emotions, especially because of some simple portrait.

Meanwhile, dusk was approaching imperceptibly. Based on this, cold began to blow strongly in the castle, some otherworldly cold...

During the day, Adamingo managed to inspect the castle from the inside, it consisted of twenty-six guest rooms, a hall, a storage room, an attic, two greenhouses with access to the terrace. He decided that he would spend the night in a room with a portrait of a young girl. The second room seemed to him not entirely comfortable, although it was, as he understood, a guest room. And the third room was quite cramped, not burdened with unnecessary furniture. Most likely, this room was once intended for servants.

On the second floor of the castle there was a storage room and an attic. The door that led to the attic was apparently locked. Among the bunch of keys that Adamingo found in the pantry, the key to the attic was not found. He decided to sit in a leather chair by the fireplace. Memories flooded into Adamingo, and he remembered the main reason for his disgust for this castle:

- Your Majesty, Milady, the young crown prince, has cut all the flowers in the garden, again. How many times I warn him not to do this, he did not listen to me.

- Dear court gardener Ferdinand, we really appreciate your work, we are always



pleased with the beauty of your flowers. We will definitely have a serious conversation with Adamingo, be sure that this will not happen again.

- My dear King Aramin, don't be too hard on the boy, you know how much I love him, and my heart just breaks when I see how brutal you can be with him.

- Well, you are my dear Felicia, I will simply explain to our son that such behavior is not appropriate for him, as a future king.

The queen smiled faintly and coughed again. For several years now she has been plagued by a rare disease called consumption.

- Oh, my darling, how can I live without you... My heart will go after you if you leave me.

- Darling, please do not say that, you will have the symbol of our eternal love, little Adamingo.

Soon, when the third moon passed, the queen's last vitality left. After her death, King Aramin became gloomier than the darkest cloud of the sky, from that time he completely stopped paying attention for the son and his sincere tears.

Once, in the sunny day, King Aramin decided to take a horse and ride to the castle, where his old friend, Francis used to live with his little daughter a long time ago. The king, as usual, came there to consult with the spirit of his old friend...

Mournful Ferdinand hurried to the palace with all his might, after his words the heart of Crown Prince Adamingo froze forever...

- Hold on, your Highness, you must be strong, - the court gardener said with so much pain in his voice.

- It just became known that the king, your father has been covered with stones from the local castle. We were able to pull him out from under the rubble, but he was already dead. Eyewitnesses say they could see a blissful smile on his face.

Since that very moment, Crown Prince Adamingo did not shed a single tear...

- Damned castle! You took from me the most precious thing in life, I will be very happy when I turn you into solid ruins!

And then, suddenly, Adamingo heard a slight but distinct whisper.

- Ah, what malicious speeches are uttered by such beautiful lips...

- Who's here?! Speaking to me in such a low voice?

And then the hall was flooded with moonlight, and the crown prince saw the creature that spoke to him.

She looked translucent, wearing a light silk dress of light turquoise color. She

had long, tied in a braid, fiery red hair and bright green eyes, and her gaze was filled with deep sadness.

Adamingo glanced sharply at the portrait against the wall and exclaimed with a gasp:

- So it's you! I wanted to meet you, and, finally, you are here, next to, very close...

- Of course it's me, you silly! I am the only one living here, - the girl said with a laugh in her voice.

And then a cool wind blew, and the silhouette of the girl began to melt quickly.

- Wait, don't go, stay with me a little more! Tell me what happened to you?

- Later..., - was the answer.

Adamingo remained completely alone in this room. For the first time of his life, he did not want to be alone, but wanted to talk to this beautiful and mysterious girl more and more...

That night, the crown prince finally slept peacefully and had a beautiful dream about his beautiful ghostly nymph.

The next day, he was determined to see again and talk to the girl he had met yesterday at the castle.

But first, he decided to open the attic and see what has been hidden there.

In the pantry, Adamingo found a sturdy poker, and with a little effort, nevertheless, opened the cherished door. There he saw that it was the entrance to a small tower with a wide window and a picturesque mosaic that was depicted on it.

When evening came, the Crown Prince sat down again in a leather armchair by the fireplace and waited for yesterday's guest.

And he was not disappointed, the girl soon came to him again.

- And hello again, my dear crown prince, glad to see you! Nobody has been here for so long before, you are the first and only...

- I am also very happy, whether to contemplate you, beauty! But I'm sorry that I still don't know your name.

- Why do you need to know it, my dear Adamingo?

- Well, you already know my name, don't you think it will be fair if I recognize yours? I'm sure the name is as beautiful as its owner.

- How can I refuse you, my dear prince? If you want to know it so much: my name is Madeleine Boileau.

- "Madeleine...", - said Adamingo very affectionately and felt something warming



the soul pouring through his heart, it was strange, because he had long believed that his heart had forever turned into a cruel and cold block of ice.

- Please, can you tell me your story, Madeleine?

- Oh no, no! Not today, my dear, I will tell you everything, but later! Goodbye... She disappeared again, and Adamingo was again completely alone.

But he managed to feel that he was one step closer to solving her fate. He decided that he would soon find out about everything.

The next evening, he noticed that the girl was longing and sad about something, so he asked:

- Something wrong, Madeleine? What are you sad about?

- Ah, I miss flowers, nothing grows in the garden of this castle for a long time, and I have always loved flowers so much...

The next morning, Adamingo decided to go to the palace to collect beautiful flowers for his beautiful Madeleine and to please her with this gift.

When Adamingo rode into the palace, he was met by the always faithful Ferdinand.

- Your Highness, I am so glad that you returned from that grimmy place safe and sound! I was so worried about you.

- My dear and faithful old man Ferdinand, I will definitely return there today. But I need your professional help, bring me a dozen of the best flowers.

- Oh, dear God, Sire, do you intend to return there? Why do you need so many flowers?

- And this is already a secret, good old Ferdinand, - replied Adamingo with a sly smile.

- What is it that attracts you there, my young Sire?

Adamingo had long guessed that, or rather, who attracted him to that castle, but he kept silent, he entrusted this secret only to his heart.

When the young crown prince rode back to the castle, the shrewd Ferdinand managed to notice positive changes in the behavior of his Master and this made for the first time in a long time a truly sincere smile.

As soon as Adamingo returned to the Castle, the first thing he did was arrange all the flowers that he brought with him to all the rooms in the castle.

This evening he was looking forward to his Madeleine even more, to show her his surprise.

And soon she responded to his expectation...

- Ah, my precious prince, you are here! I was so scared that you will never come back here.

- Forgive me, my sweetheart Madeleine, I didn't mean to scare you. I just had something very important to do. How could you even think that I would leave you here alone?

And then the girl noticed so many of beautiful flowers everywhere in the castle.

- Oh, how wonderful it is! This is just something incredibly magical! Oh, thank you, my dear Adamingo, you made me so happy!

You know, it reminded me of a story from my past:

Once upon a time, when I was just a charming red-haired girl, I met a boy who lived next door to us. We quickly became best friends. Every morning, when we had seen each other, he brought me bouquets of very beautiful flowers, although he knew perfectly well that he could be punished for this. Once this boy uttered such words that I cannot forget to this day...

And then this boy stopped visiting me, I didn't even know what happened to him...

When Adamingo listened to the end, he suddenly felt a little prick of jealousy towards this unknown boy, who could see Madeleine happy and alive, he had the opportunity to touch her, and then he left her so suddenly alone.

- Dear Madeleine, when will you tell me your own story?

- Sorry, my dear Adamingo, but today I am too tired. So for now we should say goodbye...

It has been about three weeks since Adamingo settled in the castle. He stopped noticing the real passage of time, when Madeleine was around, everything else lost of any importance for him.

That evening, Adamingo saw Madeleine through the window, she was standing by the pond, which was not far from the castle. He walked over and stood next to the girl.

This evening became special for him, as Madeleine finally decided to tell him her story:

- My Madeleine, I have long wanted to know how the castle remains so well-groomed from the inside?

- This is all thanks to my ghostly energy, it helps to keep my castle intact...

And now I will tell you the story of my life and death.



- I inherited the title of Duchess from the birth, my mother died in childbirth, so I remembered about her from the stories of my father, Duke Francis Boileau. Since childhood, I have been surrounded by excessive attention, care and love from my father. Probably, it also ruined me. When I was already nineteen years old, one day there was a serious quarrel between my father and me on the basis of how hastily and adamantly I rejected all candidates for my hand and heart. My father was so angry about this whole situation that he told the maid to lock me in a tower in the attic. But the maid was a kind soul and, after a while, she released me. As soon as this happened, I started to run, they chased me, my father's hound was barking loudly, I got scared and ran faster towards the pond and slipped into the water. I could not swim, so I quickly went to the bottom and drowned. Dad died soon after, unable to bear the grief of losing his own child. And people began to consider me a drowned woman, and I could no longer tell the whole truth. From that moment on, I kept thinking about that and if I haven't run away then, but simply having a heart-to-heart conversation with my father, all of this would not have happened, and we would have been alive. But now it is too late to complain about my fate.

And I still have something to regret about. Once the old king from the palace came to the castle, and fell under the collapse of a dilapidated wall, where he was covered with stones. I tried to call someone for help, but no one heard me. Then I decided to scare the king's horse, and he rushed to run straight to the palace.

The old gardener Ferdinand saw a horse without a rider, and immediately sounded the alarm. When help arrived, it was too late - the king was already dead, and the last thing he saw before he died was me. That's my whole sad story...

- So you helped my people to find my father!

- Oh, I'm so sorry they couldn't save your father!

- What are you saying, my dear, if not for your help, he would have remained under the rubble forever.

- My precious Adamingo, I don't want to leave you, but I must.

- What are you talking to me about, darling? Why should you leave me? - Adamingo exclaimed in fright.

- It's all thanks to you, my precious and beloved crown prince. You saved my lost soul, and now it's time for me to go to another world.

- No, please, don't leave me! My dear, precious, sweet... Madeleine! I can't stand it!

- Do not be sad, my only beloved, I will always be in your heart, just look into it when you are alone and remember me. I will never forget these gentle eyes the color of the ocean, these golden hair sparkling in the sun, and your kind and gentle smile dedicated only to me. The girl bent over the crown prince's face and gently touched her lips to his. It was like the touch of a cool breeze in the spring.

And the girl slowly melted, like a cloud in the clear blue sky.

Adamingo managed to whisper after her the cherished words that he had kept secret for so long, even from himself...

- I love you, my Madeleine! My heart is where you are...

For the first time in many years, Adamingo burst into tears, the bitter tears of loss...

Shortly after the events described, the crown prince returned to the palace. There he was greeted with exclamations of delight by all his people.

- Finally you have returned, our gracious Sire! Now we can happily carry out your order and destroy this grimmy castle.

- Just dare! If someone even thinks about such a terrible offense, he will be immediately executed. - The angry Adamingo thundered.

Henceforth and forever this castle belongs to the king and this kingdom. Now all the royal balls and festivities will take place here.

The whole crowd surrounded him and burst out into exclamations of joy and exultation!

When Crown Prince Adamingo was left alone in the throne room with oneself, long-forgotten memories flooded into him:

- Madeline! Madeleine! Where are you impudent girl ?!

- I am here! You won't catch up, you won't catch up! The legs are too short!

There was a girlish ringing laugh behind the boy's back and this small hand patted him on the shoulder again.

The boy managed to catch this little but lively hand.

- Wait just a minute, my Madeleine!

- Well, do you want to tell me something?

- I have not met such a lovely girl as you yet! When I grow up, I will immediately marry you, so don't even think about getting engaged to anyone else by this time! This is the oath of the future king!

- Okay, - the girl answered with a laugh in her voice.

- I will remember these words, Your Highness! So don't forget the promise you

made to the red-haired girl!

- The red-haired girl... All this was written by fate, so we met and fell in love with each other, Madeleine!

Wherever you are now, I will find you in another world or in the next life...

My forever beloved Madeleine!

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