



# **THREE DREAMS ON ROMANTIC**

## **HEROINES**

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**American Literature Work**  
**by Alfred Carol**

## JUSTIFICATION

Coming back home after the class on Rappaccini's Daughter I was under the effect of a strong impression; besides, as I believed to see clear affinities with some of Poe's tales, I plunged at once into the reading of some of his works. They were: "Premature Burial", "The tell tale heart" and also a piece by another author, "Moonfleet". When I went to sleep, all these materials became entangled and animated three vivid dreams.

Of course the exposition of those dreams can not be an adequate subject for my Winter project, but on the other hand they block my imagination to the extent that I feel I could not write on any other subject unless I get rid of their domination by writing them down. So, I can only expect that even though you dismiss this as a project, you will find some amusement in the reading.

## THREE DREAMS ON ROMANTIC

### HEROINES

#### FIRST DREAM

##### **My mistress and the black veil**

I had found her waiting at the door when I came back from the afternoon service that I had conducted as a Parson. She wanted to hide herself from her father - she said - who was trying to marry her to an old rich landlord of the neighborhood. I let her go into the house, and made her sit down comfortably on the sofa.

Then I could look at her; she was a young girl, arranged with as much richness of taste as the most splendid of the flowers, and with a bloom so deep and vivid that one shade more would have been too much. She looked redundant with life, health, and energy all of which attributes were bound down and compressed, as it were, and girdled tensely, in their luxuriance, by her virgin zone. There was but an odd thing remarkable in her appearance: Swathed about her forehead, and hanging down over her face so low to be shaken by her breath, the girl had on a black veil.

- I need your protection - her voice sounded as rich as a tropical sunset and made me think of deep hues of purple or crimson, and of perfumes heavenly delectable.

She let go her emotions and started sobbing, which made her bosom rise and fall in soft uncontrolled movements. I could not refrain the wave of tenderness invading my heart; she looked lonely pitiful, so I put my arm around her shoulders and brought her head against my chest.

She kept talking: I half understood she belonged to a Spanish family bound by a very merciless set of traditions, and she could no longer stand the situation. I told her back a flow of warm, affectionate words in order to soothe her distress.

We went on talking, and sobbing, and whispering in the tender night, we did so well, that after a while - almost without noticing it - she was in my arms, nude as I was myself, except for her black veil that she would not take away despite my pressing claims.

Her sweet velvety breasts were rubbing against my chest and her lips were moving sensually - spontaneously uttering charming Spanish rhythms:

*"Béseme con su boca el mi amado  
son más dulces, quel vino, tus amores:*

*tu nombre es suave olor bien derramado  
y no hay olor que iguale tus olores"*

In those gushes of passion our spirits darted forth in articulated breath like tongues of long hidden flame... But then, came the fatal event that ruined our glory of the moment. I heard the noise of a coach stopping by the porch:

It was the Bishop! Through the little square glasses of the window I saw him stepping out of the coach with a kind of ominous solemnity. I had absolutely forgotten his visit. All of a sudden I panicked; I jumped up frantically, and gathering my clothes I pushed my bewildered friend - whom now looked like the most encumbering threat - through the door that opened to the back yard. My house - as it is usual in many similar cases - was next to the church, in such a way that they shared the same yard, which was, in fact, the grave yard.

The moon was rising, and the clouds stood in the sky like strange shapes of men; the moon shone red through them, illuminating my difficult situation: the yard was enclosed by a tall wall, the outside door was closed tied up with a heavy chain; there was no way out!

I was so scared that a most foolish idea appeared to me as the unique possible way of concealing the evidence of my fault: In one extremity of the yard, under an old oak tree, there was a grave half opened, - the covering stone lying half across the tomb hole. She quickly understood what I meant when I pointed in that direction, and with no complaint, nor the least protestation, she introduced herself into the narrow grave and lay there, face up. With a supreme effort, I pushed the heavy stone and moved it until it fitted to the grave. It fitted too well, I considered, while hurriedly getting dressed. It seemed sealed in a way that left little chance for fresh air to come into the grave.

But the Bishop and his suite entered the house. I smiled to him, I bade the gentlemen welcome. They wanted to discuss with me the developments of the parish, my future position in that business - they said - with gestures of unpredictable implications. I took my visitors all over the house; I showed them the yard and they fatally decided that it would be a nice place for our meeting. I brought chairs into the yard and desired them to rest from their fatigues, while I myself, in the wild irrepressible audacity of my anguish, sat upon the very grave. They sat, and while I tried to answer cheerily, they chatted of things that seemed important. But, ere long, I felt myself pale and wished them gone. My head ached and I fancied a crying in my ears: but still they sat and still they chatted. The crying became more distinct: I tried to get rid of the feeling but it continued and gained definitiveness - until, at length, I found that the noise was not in my ears! I gasped for breath, I could not avoid any longer the fearful vision of my mysterious mistress' premature burial. I thought of the unendurable oppression of the lungs - the stifling fumes from the damp earth - the clinging of the death garments to the naked body - the rigid embrace of the narrow house - the blackness of the absolute night - the unseen but palpable presence of the Conqueror Worm. No event is so terribly adapted to the supremeness of bodily and mental distress.

Nevertheless I didn't give up, and although I was under extreme pressure and anxiety, I managed to resist until the unbearable gang decided to depart.

Then I rushed to the yard, and grabbing a huge staff, I feverishly endeavoured to take the heavy stone away from the tomb. It resisted my strains, and it was not until I invoked the wicked name of the devil that, in a sudden movement, the stone flew away, liberating the grave.

I bent over the hole expecting an awful vision, but... there she lay, peaceful as she was when the grave was closed, except that there might have been an unnatural stiffness in her attitude. As I stooped to remove the black veil from her face, I scrupled not to affirm, that, at the moment my hand began to disclose her face, her body had an slight shudder that made my arm retract as though the hand had been burned. The face of the moon was discovered now for an instant and a beam fell into the grave:

At last I realized the unfortunate maiden was dead. And thus to the head of the grave I tried to celebrate a funeral: a tender and heart dissolving prayer, full of sorrow, came to my lips. It lasted not long, though, for a huge black cloud came over the moon, submerging the whole scene in darkness. An extraordinary stillness floated all about me; then a light, brilliant like a million candles, filled the air, a horrid thunder burst out of the soil under my feet: the yard split like in an earthquake, the grave was englutted in the deepness, the door swung open, and I, poor wreck out of a doomed ship, I rushed past the wall in a last attempt to get rid of that nightmarish story, and.....

## SECOND DREAM

### The Hawk's Daughter

...On the other side "Splendor in the grass". I saw myself approaching the shore of a lake. The water in its stillness reflected the wigwams of the Sioux people settled on the lawn in the front border, among the fir trees. I recognized the site: It was the Malniu lake in the Pyrenees; the impressive mass of the Puigpedrós summit closed the landscape by the north side. I seemed not surprised by the incongruousness of the spot.

Next to the shore, a young squaw - Sha Tein, the daughter of Chief Stone Hawk - waited for me and, as I joined her, she offered me a beautiful bunch of wild flowers with a hawk feather planted in the middle of it. She asked me to put the feather on my head on account of the fact we were going to get married in the afternoon and I would be admitted into the Sioux brotherhood. They were all preparing a great feast for the ceremony - she added. I stopped by a little brook running out of the lake, took the feather in my hands and broke it into pieces; then I threw the remainders into the silver waters of the creek where they mingled with the foam and disappeared downstream. I explained that I would never become a Sioux and, instead, I expected her to follow me to my folks, in the plains near the sea.

The afternoon was now falling rapidly as we came back to the camp; the path ran across a field covered by thousands of little white flowers dotted with a blue center. In the background, people in the camp had already set a huge fire where they were sitting by, expecting our arrival.

I saw she talked briefly to her father; probably about my reaction to the proposal and my plans of leaving with her.

The feast was going to begin with the ceremonial dances. However, once I came next to the circle of the dancers I was amazed by the wild throng that stood hand in hand about the fire. It seemed that the Nymphs and Fauns of the fountains and forests had met there for a summer feast: On the shoulders of a comely youth, uprose the head and antlers of a stag; a second, human in all other points, had the grim visage of a wolf; a third still with the trunk and limbs of a mortal man, showed the beard and goats of a venerable he-goat. Other faces wore the similitude of man and woman, but distorted or extravagant with red and white paintings, feathery crests and wampum belts.

A solitary sunset beam was fading from the summit, and leaves, only a faint golden tinge, blended with the hues of the rainbow banner. Immediately a prelude of strongly rhythmic music, touched with practised minstrelly, begun to play from a neighboring

thicket, in such a mirthful cadence, that even the boughs of the surrounding fir-trees quivered to the sound.

Now, the dancers began to turn like a compact wheel, slowly waving back and forth to the rhythm of the drummers. The rhythm speeded up: projected against the flares of the fire, dancers were dark, one-dimensional figures of sharp contours, moving in exaggerated gestures that deformed them to the point they nearly broke into pieces. After a while the music softened, dancers stopped; a young maiden dressed in a gold loin cloth, with eyes nightward, holding a white pigeon in her hands, stepped into the circle and went on with this wonderful song, whose charming melody I am not able to reproduce:

*"All thoughts, all passions, all delights  
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,  
All are but ministers of Love,  
And feed his sacred flame."*

As soon as she finished she vanished in the darkness. The circle of dancers broke and they moved close to me, forming a sort of bracket around my place, although they kept the fire in the inside.

Chief Stone Hawk uprose, went to the fire and took something long in his hands. As he neared I saw what it was: a ceremonial Indian pipe; the bowl, at first, looked like the skull of a devil, for it wore a pair of disquieting horns, after a second look, though, it turned out to be the representation of a goat's head carved in wood. Once he was in front of me, he leaned offering the pipe - already filled and lighted - with the following exhortation:

"My dear Alfred; our fate is not yet desperate, behold! This is medicine, potent, as our wisest wizard has assured to me and almost divine in its efficacy. It is composed of ingredients the most opposite to those you know. It is distilled of blessed herbs. Smoke it! Take this marvelous gift against which no power nor strength could avail an enemy."

I reached my hand in order to take hold of the pipe, and I would have done what I was ordered, were it not for the presence of Sha Tein:

Give it to me! said she, extending her hand to intercept the wooden pipe which her father was lending to me, and added with a particular emphasis: "I will smoke - but do thou await the result."

She put her father's pipe to her lips; - through the smoke that faintly rose from the pipe I could distinguish the bent form of Stone Hawk to grow erect with conscious resignation. He spread out his hands over us in the attitude of a father imploring a last blessing upon his children: Sha Tein shuddered nervously, and pressed her hand upon her heart.

She addressed to me feebly: "I would fain have been loved, not dominated", and then to both of us - "but now it matters not; I am going to the place where all the struggle will pass away like a dream, like the smell of this poisonous smoke, which will no longer taint my breath among the flowers of the Hunters' Paradise. Farewell, my love, thy

words of dismissal - your contempt - are like lead within my heart - but they too, will fall away as I ascend. Oh, was there not, from the first, this unhappy ending, carved in your nature?"

With these last words she sank down upon the ground, and she perished there, at the feet of her father and mine.

In a shot of madness I took the poisoned pipe and threw it into the fire: There was an immense glare that made my eyes close, then I fainted in a cushion of brightness...



## THIRD DREAM (UNFINISHED)

### I Substitute for a Dead Daughter

I awoke when he entered the little room shouting excitedly:

- We are lost, Jeanette, German paratroops are surrounding the village!

I rushed to the window; I put a hand before my eyes in order to protect them from the setting sun. John was right; I could see the tanks closing the issues of the village, and several columns of soldiers in battle-dresses were advancing through the vineyards.

St. Paul de Vence had become a trap from which nobody was going to escape.

- Ces salopards nous pris au piège John, nous ne pourrons pas leur échapper!

- Yes, they are going to look up every house in the village. Our hide-out will certainly be found. Shit - what a bloody luck! Americans are debarking tomorrow at Cannes; one more day and we could have joined them in liberate territory. I don't know what to do.

- Tu sais, mon chéri, ce n'est pas si mal, notre mission est presque finie. Nous avons envoyé tous les renseignements sur la situation des défenses allemandes à l'état major de la flotte de débarquement, aussi nous avons coordonné le soulèvement des maquisards. Tout est prêt maintenant, nous n'avons qu'à attendre et fermer notre bouche lorsqu'on sera interrogés par les boches.

- This is exactly what worries me, you know very well how they do the sons-of-a-bitches of the SS. They are going to strip us into tatters unless....

(to be followed)