

# Tormented Dreams

## By Faith Hatch

The Gravestones stood, row upon row like long forgotten soldiers awaiting battle. Ava cast a wary eye over them, something seemed off, then suddenly the wind changed, Ava smelled decay, she shivered as the icy wind ran up her spine. Ava had never laid eyes upon a ghost, she didn't believe in such things on principle, but like they say, there is a first time for everything. Why had she been assigned *this* job? Her mother had simply said "Ava go lay down flowers on Nana's grave." but that had proved increasingly difficult, especially in the dark. She turned around and threw the flowers down not caring where they landed, then turned on her heel and ran. She knew, just knew there was something back there. Ava had never been a particularly fast runner, generally ranging from slow to very slow, but now she found herself fuelled with new adrenaline. Ava dashed out of the gates and pulled the rusty chain behind her. As it clanged shut Ava could have sworn she heard a long forgotten groan.

The cobblestones felt hard below her numb feet, her hands ached and her head throbbed. Ava ran, full tilt towards her quaint little house on the hill, with its thatched roof and vegetable gardens, now covered in a thin blanket of snow. She bolted through the front yard and into her house, slamming the door behind her.

"AVA!" Her mother's cry cut through the air, "Darling, are you alright? You're father and I have been so worried, oh darling." Ava watched as her mother flung her arms around her and sobbed hysterically into her shoulder. Ava said nothing, all she did was pull away from her mother's embrace and shake her head as though to clear recent thoughts.

The next day Ava woke up in a sweat. All she could think about was what had been chasing her the night before. She looked up as her sister Alexis walked in closely followed by her mother, father and cousins while her Aunty lagged behind.

"You Ok?" Asked her cousin Adele.

"Fine..." mumbled Ava.

In the dead of night Ava was visited by strange apparitions of a ghost lady dressed in a lace black dress with a long cigar protruding from her black lips. She spoke four words to Ava before she disappeared and as she said them Ava felt as though her head was splitting in two, *I am the Necromancer*. Ava screamed, screamed and screamed, claspng her hands to her forehead, the pain was unbearable and she felt she wouldn't survive if it went for a second longer, then all of a sudden it stopped, just as quickly as it had began and Ava fell into a restless sleep.

The next day Ava woke up to find herself in a damp, dark enclosed space. She rubbed her eyes and blinked slowly, carefully adjusting to the light. *Where am I?* She wondered. She scraped her finger along the sides and flakes of dirt fell down. Ava's claustrophobia began to kick in and she slowly began to hyperventilate, breaking down to an incredibly sappy mess.

"*I can get you out you know.*" Ava shook her head.

"NO I can't trust you, whoever you are, wherever you are, you put me here and anyone who does something like that certainly does not deserve my trust." She yelled this aloud even though the voice had spoken inside her head.

*"What's the worst that can happen?"* The voice asked slyly.

*"Everything..."*

*"And, if I was to ask you what "everything" was,"* The voice continued, *"would you say something along the lines of death?"*

"So what if I would!" Ava cried, "I am currently living my worst nightmare, and you are doing nothing to help."

*"Oh but I can help..."* The voice said, *"However I don't help pansies..."*

"Well you're in luck," Ava replied sarcastically "I consider myself more of a rose; robust, fierce and all round thorny." She clutched her hand to head as the voice burst into high, cold laughter, it had apparently found her remark rather amusing.

Thoughts whirled through Ava's head and most prominent of all was a memory of her Nana, she was saying something Ava couldn't quite make out, it sounded something like Happy keys. That didn't make sense though and certainly didn't help her beat the necromancer...

*"Sooo much sorrow, dear child..."* The voice began and something clicked, Ava finally understood what her Nana had said.

"I do not fear you." Ava said clearly and calmly, "I know now, the key to a long fulfilled life, is happiness, something you never, never even tried to understand. I have family," As she said it Ava felt a rush of affection for all of them, even her Aunty. "I have friends," She remembered their smiling faces laughing at one of her jokes, "And most importantly, I am happy." And with an ear-piercing cry of rage the Necromancer left her forever.

Ava stared down at the prickly stems of the flowers she was supposed to lay on Nana's grave. She still felt sad sometimes but Nana lived on in her heart and now she finally felt happy. Ava navigated the graveyard and laid the flowers upon the grave.

*The End*