

Awake at night

She opened her eyes.

She never slashed around her arms. She never screamed. She never cried, desperately fumbling for the switch of her bedside lamp, when waking up from a nightmare. She had stopped that a long time ago. For her, there was no relief to find in the light. The evil did not lurk in the darkness. It was neither hidden by the heavy brocade curtains, nor waiting on the corridor behind the half-closed door.

It slumbered right next to her, deeply, soundly, in perfect peace.

She lay quietly, listening to his deep, smooth breaths, while her heart kept on pounding inside her that loud, she could sense her fear of waking him up at any moment. Gently, she turned her head to the side. Her eyes got used to the relative darkness of the room, gradually revealing his relaxed features. He was handsome, she knew that. And not just because everyone kept telling her. She was not blind, although it was not that simple anymore for her to see what made him attractive to anyone else.

Only in the loneliness of the night, it did not strike how easily his heart-warming smile could turn into his real face. It did not strike what he hid behind his beautiful bright eyes that could catch her so effortlessly. Even the bruises did not strike that much, hidden under her sleeves, a memory, unpleasant, of course, but nearly forgotten. In the loneliness of the night, she sometimes managed to convince herself that she was laying next to someone else. Someone good.

Unfortunately, sooner or later, every night became another morning. And in the cruelty of the day, she had to face the truth, over and over again. As soon as his lids stopped covering his eyes, no one but she was able to look right into his innermost parts, and what she had found there, had made her heart shiver, too. Just like snow, his coldness had trickled through her skin, until she had felt as frozen as he was. She knew that sometimes, he also thought about her as his most dangerous creation.

So many times, she had imagined killing him.

The idea had spurred her, pulsed in her veins, so vividly, that sometimes she had been afraid of herself. Hate had welled up in her, black, intense, devastating. For hours, she had turned nauseating ideas over and over in her head, to always feel a little bit better afterwards, even

relieved from time to time. *How much better would she have felt if she had taken her plans into practise?* She certainly could have made the world a better place. In the end, she even had been willing to sacrifice herself, if that only had meant that his existence also would have come to an end, once and for all.

But she had missed her opportunity.

Hesitations, apprehensions, *fears* had built up in front of her, were removed little by little, but too slow. *Too late, too late, too late.* Silently, she turned her head, again watching the beautiful canopy of the four-poster bed. She could sense the child's gentle movements, and instinctively, her hands stroked her slightly rounded belly. She had already started loving it. *How should she take away its father now?*

Too late. Too late. Too late.

When the morning dawned outside, she fell into a restless sleep again. A second later, he opened his eyes. *She was not the only one to lie awake at night.* Without the slightest noise he turned his head towards her, carefully maintaining his rhythm of breath. Slowly, he stretched out his hand, caressing her cheek, before he let his fingers slide a bit lower. He felt the first smile of the day appearing on his face. *Maybe she was the one enjoying it less.*