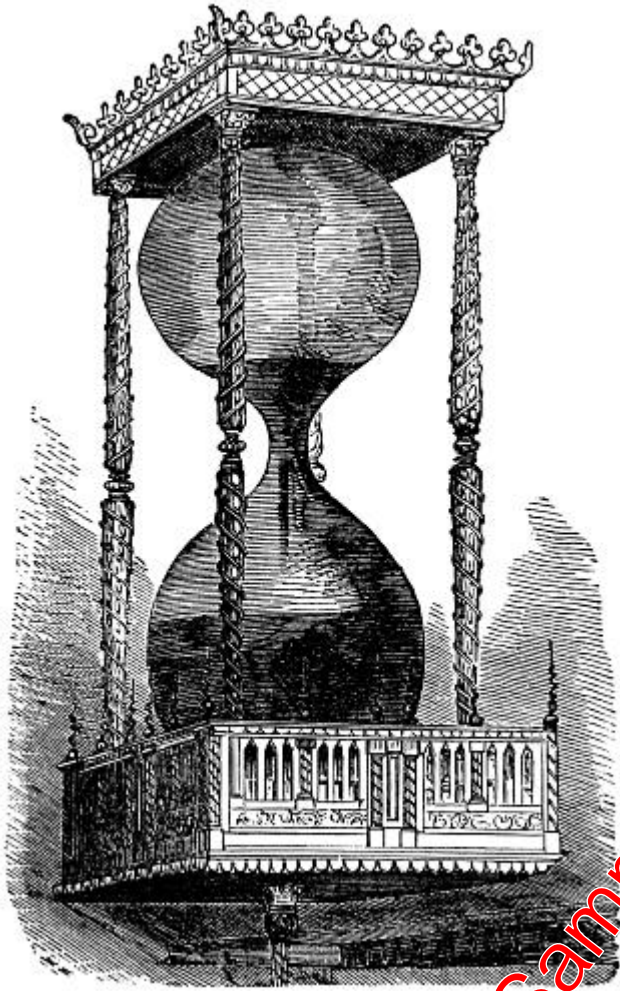


The Sarcer Hourglass



The Sarcer Curse

Such is the history of “swift justice” that often-innocent people pay the ultimate price for crimes they did not commit. Such is the case of one William Dellen. Dellen was a poor farmer that ended up in the wrong place at the wrong time, and was accused of a heinous murder of a young woman. He was sentenced to death by hanging. At his trial, his wife begged the judge for mercy, sure that her husband was innocent. The judge, taking some pity upon the woman, agreed to give her three days to accumulate evidence to bring doubt to her husband’s guilt. If she could, he would reopen the case and offer the condemned a new trial.

For three days, she and her sons talked to everyone they could find, and eventually came upon a homeless street urchin that admitted to seeing another fellow leaving the scene just before her husband arrived. She rushed the child to the town magistrate, a man named Louis Sarcer, to inform the judge that she had found a potential witness and that he needed to stay the execution of her husband until the judge could interview the boy.

But Louis Sarcer was a man who stuck with the letter of the law. He pointed to the hourglass on the counter of his office. The hourglass was a large, gaudy thing some three feet high, and it counted down a complete ten hours of the workday. The sand had

already run out on the clock, and thus the workday was over. She was about five minutes too late for him to process any appeal.

In a frantic state, the woman sought out the judge herself, finally knocking upon his door at a late hour. Hearing the woman’s story, the judge immediately rushed to the jail to put a hold on the execution. But they were too late. Three hours after Mrs. Dellen had arrived at Sarcer’s office, her innocent husband had been executed.

In her agony, the now widowed Mrs. Dellen placed a curse upon the entire Sarcer line. The following day, Louis Sarcer set his hourglass as he had always done. At the end of the workday, he went home. Three hours later, his wife suffered a heart attack. Sarcer did not return to work for a ten-day after her death. When he did return, he set the hourglass as normal, and began the process of catching up on his work. He worked late that night, and did not arrive home until three hours later than usual. As he entered his home, his eldest son slipped and cracked his head on the corner of the desk, dying a few moments later. Sarcer became despondent, and retired from the magistrate position. The Hourglass was left at the office, however. Several weeks went by before a replacement was named. And when the fellow first arrived at the office, he admired the hourglass and decided it would be wise to put it to use. Three hours after the last grains of sand ran out of the hourglass, Elizabeth Sarcer, Louis Sarcer’s sister, was tending to her chickens when a wolf snuck into the hen house and attacked her.

Current Status of the Hourglass

Sarcer reclaimed the hourglass from the office, and attempted to destroy it. However, the item would not shatter. He then stored it, assuming that if it was never reset then the curse could be halted. But the item would not be denied in this manner, and the sand started to fall upwards to reset itself. He then attempted to store the

item on its side, to prevent the sand from running out, but by some strange magic the sand continued to run even when the hourglass was placed on its side. Sarcer now spends his days attempting to reset the hourglass before all of the sand runs out. This seems to have stayed the curse, but there seems to be another peculiar effect. Sarcer has grown older over the last five decades, but at the age of 110 realizes the hourglass is artificially extending his life. He sleeps more and more each day, and often barely awakens in time to stop the sand from running out. His grandchildren care for him, and he fears which one of them will die if he fails to reset the hourglass. He has not mentioned the dreadful relic to anyone in his family, as his heavy guilt and shame over the events that brought about the curse, along with the fear that such information might instill in his beloved grandchildren, keeps him silent.

Story Seeds

The Hourglass has been stolen, and a frantic Sarcer is offering an exorbitant amount of money for its return.

Sarcer is seeking information on how to finally end the curse once and for all, and will pay any price to the group that can figure out how to break the curse.

Removing the Curse

The curse can be removed by any of Dellen's descendents. The problem is finding any. They moved out of the area long ago, and tracking them down may prove difficult. Depending on your story, it may be a simple matter of Sarcer asking for forgiveness, or something complicated like completing a dangerous task.

The Drowning Lute

A Fisherman's Tale

One day, a fisherman named Remus was hauling in his net when he noticed an odd shaped lute caught in with an fish. As he removed the lute from the net, a mermaid came up out of the water.

"Oh, thank you, good sir! You found my lute! I am Kalliana, and I shall repay you handsomely for its return, as it is very dear and special to me, and I surely cannot live without it."

Remus was shocked by the strange turn of events, for he had always believed mermaids to be strange superstitions. But here was one swimming up against his boat, with flowing green hair and eyes as clear and sparkling as emeralds. Remus was overwhelmed by the mermaid, and had no idea as to what kind of reward to request. So instead he invited her to come to his home, and asked her to play a few songs on the lute, so that he could enjoy the beauty of her songs. She happily agreed, and after peeling off her tailfin so she could walk on land, hopped into the boat.

Remus welcomed Kalliana into his humble home, and made a simple meal. She played her lute and sang several songs, attracting the attention of curious neighbors. His neighbors were amazed by his houseguest, and begged her to stay a while longer. Flattered by the attention and enjoying the company of her new friends, she agreed to stay.

Over the next few months, Kalliana would venture back and forth between the sea and her new friends. Often she would bring back small gifts of coral and pearls for her friends, and in exchange they gave her items made on the surface to take home to her other mermaid friends. But one neighbor's daughter grew jealous of all of the attention the mermaid received, particularly

