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I would dance with the Devil

When Scarlett came to Atlanta, she hated Melly and she was also jealous of her. Especially in the evenings when she was reading Ashley's letters aloud. Scarlett always left early to go to the room and poor Melly thought that it was because she missed Charles and his letters. But as the days went on Scarlett had to admit that Melly had a good heart and that there was a lot to love her for. Of course not for her looks, because even dressed in black, Scarlett was the prettiest girl in town.

Sometimes Scarlett spent the whole day with Melly, and it was usually very busy. In the morning they went to the market to buy fruit and vegetables and then they went to the hospital where they put the shopping into the kitchen.

Then Melly tried to help the doctors as a nurse. She wasn't trained but each day she got better. Her calm nature helped the wounded soldiers to feel better. She also never fainted when she saw a lot of blood; her face just turned very white.

Scarlett couldn't understand why Melly was working so hard, but one day on the way home Melly just whispered that this was the least she could do, when her husband and husbands and sons of other ladies were fighting in the war.

One morning Mrs. Merriwether came to the Hamiltons' house and knocked loudly on the door. Aunt Pittypat, Melly and Scarlett were just having breakfast. They offered her some sweet tea.

'I know that it is too early for a visit, but you all have to excuse me. I am here on an urgent matter.'

Melly put some sweet biscuits on the plate, offered them to Mrs. Merriwether and nodded at her to let her continue.

'It's about the ball.'

6

Tancovala by som aj s diablom

Keď Scarlett prišla do Atlanty, nenávidela Melly a tiež na ňu žiarlila. Prevažne po večeroch, kedy všetkým nahlas čítala Ashleyho listy. Scarlett radšej vždy čoskoro odišla do svojej izby a chudina Melly si myslela, že to bolo kvôli tomu, že jej chýbal Charles a jeho listy. Ako ale ubehlo pár dní, Scarlett si musela priznať, že má Melly dobré srdce a existuje veľa dôvodov, prečo ju milovať. Rozhodne ale nie pre jej vzhľad. Aj napriek tomu, že si obliekala čiernu, bola Scarlett najkrajšie dievča v meste.

Niekedy Scarlett s Melly strávila celý veľmi hektický deň. Ráno vyrazili na trh, kde nakúpili ovocie a zeleninu a potom si to namierili do nemocnice, kde nákup odovzdali do kuchyne.

Melly sa tiež pokúšala pomáhať lekárom ako sestra. Nemala síce výcvik, ale každý deň sa zlepšovala. Jej pokojná povaha pomáhala zraneným vojakom, aby sa cítili lepšie. Tiež pri pohľade na krv nikdy neomdlela, len príšerne zbledla.

Scarlett nemohla pochopiť, prečo Melly tak ťažko pracuje, ale raz jej Melly po ceste späť z nemocnice zašepkala, že je to to najmenšie, čo môže urobiť, keď jej manžel a manželia a synovia ostatných žien bojujú vo vojne.

Raz ráno navštívila dom Hamiltonovcov pani Merriwetherová a hlasno zaklopala na dvere. Teta Pittypat, Melly a Scarlett práve ráňajkovali, a tak jej ponúkli trocha sladkého čaju.

„Viem, že je príliš skoro na návštevu, ale musíte ma ospravedlniť. Je to veľmi dôležité.“

Melly naložila pár sladkých sušienok na tanier, ponúkla ich pani Merriwetherovej a kývla na ňu, aby pokračovala.

„Som tu kvôli plesu.“

‘A ball?!’ Scarlett almost screamed.

‘I know it is not a good time, Scarlett,’ Melly quickly apologised: ‘but it is more a bazaar than a ball. We need some money for herbs, medicine and clean linen for the hospital so we wanted to invite everybody from the city to help us.’

‘Yes, that is exactly what we are doing...’ Mrs. Merriwether took over: ‘but we won’t have enough ladies to help us sell things. I was told that we needed two more.’

Scarlett was dying to say yes, but she wanted to know more.

‘And why the ball?’ she asked, trying to sound uninterested.

‘Since there are no balls for young girls to meet their future husbands, we can put the two together.’

‘I’ll help you!’ Scarlett said and looked around the table. She saw aunt Pittypat looking for her sniffing salt that prevented her from fainting. A widow at the ball! It would be a scandal! Scarlett could almost read her aunt’s mind, so she quickly said:

‘My poor Charles would have wanted me to help, I am sure of it. Remember how excited he was when he was getting ready to join the army?’

All the women around the table nodded and Scarlett knew that she had won.

The music was loud, but Scarlett did not mind. After two weeks of preparations and one year of pretended sadness she was finally at a party. Her selling booth was covered in pink and green colours and although she was dressed in black she finally felt alive again. Aunt Pittypat was sitting in the corner of the hall and she was talking to other older women who were surprised to see Scarlett there.

„Ples?!“ vykrikla takmer Scarlett.

„Scarlett, viem, že teraz nie je ten najlepší čas,“ ospravedlnila sa rýchlo Melly, „ale je to skôr bazár než ples. Potrebujeme nejaké bylinky, lieky a čisté plátno do nemocnice. A tak pozveme všetkých z mesta, aby nám pomohli.“

„Áno, to je presne to, čo robíme,“ vložila sa do rozhovoru pani Merriwetherová, „ale nemáme dostatok dām, ktoré by nám pomohli predávať. Povedali mi, že potrebujeme dve ďalšie.“

Scarlett umierala túžbou povedať áno, ale chcela sa dozvedieť viac.

„A prečo vlastne ples?“ spýtala sa s predstieraným nezaujmom.

„Pretože teraz neprebiehajú žiadne plesy, kde by sa mladé dievčatá mohli stretnúť s budúcimi manželmi, tak spojíme dve akcie do jednej.“

„Pomôžem vám!“ povedala Scarlett a rozhladla sa okolo stola. Videla tetu Pittypat hľadať jej vonnú soľ, ktorá jej pomáhala proti mdlobám. Vdova na plese! To by bol škandál!

Scarlett tušila, nad čím teta premýšľa, tak rýchlo povedala: „Môj drahý Charles by chcel, aby som pomohla. Som si tým istá. Pamätáte, ako bol nadšený, keď sa pripravoval do vojny?“

Všetky ženy pri stole pokývali hlavou a Scarlett vedela, že vyhrala.

Hudba hrala veľmi hlasno, ale Scarlett to nevadilo. Po dvoch týždňoch príprav a roku predstieraného smútku sa konečne ocitla na večierku. Jej predajný stánok bol celý v ružovej a zelenej farbe, a hoci ona sama bola v čiernej, mala pocit, že znova žije. Teta Pittypat sedela v rohu sály a rozprávala sa s ostatnými postarším ženami, ktoré boli veľmi prekvapené, že je medzi nimi aj Scarlett.

Scarlett did not care what other people thought. She was enjoying the moment and envied the young girls dancing around with huge smiles on their faces.

After an hour of dancing the music stopped and the director of the hospital stepped up to the stage and welcomed everybody.

‘You all know why we have gathered here. Our hospital needs money and our troops too. Do what you can to help us continue. ... And before I let you enjoy this evening I would like to thank somebody who has been helping not only us but also our men in Virginia; tonight he gave us a lot money and he also supplied our city with beautiful fabrics you all are dressed in... Captain Rhett Butler!’

Everybody was clapping and cheering except for Scarlett.

She turned away from the stage and tried to push back the memory of her standing in the library with Ashley and him listening to their conversation from the couch.

She started folding some clothes when she heard a familiar voice behind her:

‘Good day Mrs. Wilkes, I had the honour to meet you at your engagement barbecue at the Twelve Oaks.’

‘Oh, Mr. Butler, I remember you. Thank you for everything you have done for us. It is truly amazing,’ said Melanie with gratitude.

‘Scarlett, dear, have you met Mr. Butler?’ she then asked sweetly.

Scarlett was so nervous that she only said: ‘I am not sure, I don’t remember.’

‘I can help you with your memory, we met in the library where you broke something...’ he jumped in.

‘I think I remember now,’ said Scarlett, looking annoyed.

Melanie turned away and Rhett stepped closer to Scarlett.

‘How are you Miss O’Hara?’ he asked.

Margaret Mitchell
Sabrina D. Harris

Gone with the Wind
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