

A detailed painting of a single, pale pink rose in full bloom, set against a dark, textured background. The rose's petals are delicately layered, showing soft gradients of pink and white. The stem is green and thorny, with a few dark green leaves. The overall style is reminiscent of classical oil painting, with visible brushstrokes and a rich, moody atmosphere.

Legend of Lady Rose

Cassie Exline

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Alex parked the car and said, “Well, we’re here.”

Maryanne looked around and said, “I don’t think this is a very good idea.”

“Nonsense. It’s a beautiful night. Full moon. Lots of stars. We’ll lie on the grass and be wrapped in each other’s arms.”

“Are you crazy! We’re at a cemetery in the middle of the night and it’s Halloween!” Maryanne’s voice was shrill. She gripped the armrest of the car door and peered into the darkness.

“Technically, it’s All Hallows’ Eve. Anyway, I thought you didn’t believe in spooks.”

“In bright sunlight, I don’t. But it’s dark and creepy out here. I believe. I believe.”

Alex erupted into laughter and got out of the car. He walked around to her side and opened her door. “Come on, babe. I brought wine, blankets, and pillows. We can fool around while waiting for Lady Rose to appear.”

Maryanne got out and looked around at the tombstones. “We shouldn’t be here.”

“You remember what it means if we see her ghost don’t you?”

“Yes I do. You’ve told me enough times. Just don’t repeat the legend out loud. It’ll come true.”

“Oh brother!” He unlocked the trunk and pulled out the items he brought with them. “Here, I’ll carry the blanket and stuff and you take the basket. Be careful. There’s wine glasses and wine inside.”

She took the basket and whirled around. “Did you hear that? Somebody is out there!”

“It’s an owl searching for its dinner. Will you just calm yourself down and follow me?” Alex walked down one of the many paths and looked over his shoulder. “Come on, we’ll go over to that tree.” He pointed and took a couple more steps, but Maryanne didn’t budge. “Suit yourself, but do you really want to be alone?”

Maryanne almost ran to catch up. When Alex suddenly stopped, she bumped into him, causing the blankets and pillows to spill to the ground.

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He put his hands on her shoulders and kissed the top of her head. “Sweetie, put the basket down and help me with the blanket. We’ll enjoy a glass of wine and gaze at the stars while we cuddle.”

“Okay. I like the sound of that.”

They smoothed the blanket, and Alex put a pillow against the tree and sat down. “Come here, my love. Let’s pour the bubbly and enjoy.”

“What’s the other blanket for?” she asked as she accepted a glass.

“In case you get chilly. With this crazy weather, who knows how cold it’ll get. Besides, we have a good hour to wait, and we can snuggle. Nothing will happen until after midnight.”

“I don’t know about this,” she muttered.

“Drink up. The wine will mellow you.”

She tipped the glass up and drank a big gulp. He topped off her glass and settled back against the tree. She hiccupped and said, “Let’s go back to the party.”

“Is Little Bo Peep afraid?” He tugged at one of the ribbons that was woven through her short, white, corset-style dress, pressing its bow against an eyelet.

“What are you trying to do?” she asked.

In answer, he pressed the dress against the full petticoat underneath, but the dress sprang back to its original flare. “I know you’re under there somewhere,” he said, and he tucked his hand under the dress, touching the place below her knee where her white stockings met bare flesh.

“Maybe I should go look for my sheep.”

“You need to be in my arms. Finish your drink and come here.”

Maryanne was soon wrapped in Alex’s arms. “This is nice.” They were in the spoon position and his hands cupped her breasts and he periodically tweaked her nipples, causing her to wiggle. His cock nuzzled her bottom.

“By the way, I didn’t see Bess when we left. What excuse did you give her for us leaving?” Alex asked. “After all, she’s your best friend, and she organized the party. Was she mad?”

“She didn’t say a word. She and Roger were fighting about something.”

“Those two are always fighting. I know one thing for sure, they would never see a ghost. They

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don't shut up long enough. I hope we see Lady Rose—that would make my whole night.”

“I don't think we need to see a ghost to know we are truly in love.”

“Ahhhh, but, honey, think of the fun.” Alex kissed her lips and sighed. “And it's a good omen for us to start off our life together. According to legend, if lovers see the ghost of Lady Rose, they are truly meant to be together. What a wonderful legacy to pass down to our children if we could tell them that we saw Lady Rose.”

“It's the rest of that legend that bothers me.”

He snorted. “Afraid Lady Rose's lover will ravish you?”

She nodded and held tighter onto his shirt.

“Sir Hector loved Lady Rose. Did you know that he never forgave himself because she died?”

Not wanting to admit she only half listened to his tall tales, she asked, “Why? I thought her death was an accident.”

“It was. Sir Hector was chasing Lady Rose in this very cemetery on Halloween when she tripped over a grave marker and broke her neck when she fell.” Alex kissed Maryanne's forehead. “All he wanted to do was make mad passionate love to her. Now that I can understand.” He squeezed Maryanne's breast and she wiggled against his crotch. “They say he was found dead lying on top of her grave. He visited her every night, begging her to come back and make love to him one more time.”

“Sorry for his bad luck, but he can't have me.”

“It would mean our marriage would be blessed. Besides, it's my guess that if we see him, he'd only chase Lady Rose.”

“He better.”

They were silent for a few moments before Alex said, “I've always wanted to know something. Does Little Bo Peep wear panties?”

Maryanne giggled. “Why don't you find out for yourself?”

Alex worked his hand under the skirt. “You minx, you aren't wearing any panties. I think I'm going to ravish you myself.”

“Oh no, Lord Alex is going to ravish me. What shall I do?” She placed one hand next to her

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forehead and the other at her mouth just like a silent film star feigning terror.

“Let me remove your stockings and shoes, and I’ll show you what you’ll do.” Alex slipped the shiny black patent leather shoes off each foot and tenderly rolled down each sheer stocking. He kissed and nibbled at the bend in the back of each leg.

“We’re off to a fabulous start.”

“Sit up.” He tugged and tugged on the ribbons threaded in her corset and tried to find a zipper or buttons. “Well the start has fizzled. You’ll have to help me remove your costume.”

“Maybe I better, or I’ll have to pay to repair it.” Maryanne stood and unbuttoned the vest and dropped it. The apron soon followed.

“Boy, am I glad there’s a full moon tonight.” After he’d removed his clothes, he watched her finish undressing. “Why did you rent a costume when you could have saved your money and gone to the party as Lady Godiva?”

“Well, darling, if I came like that—like this—then all night long you’d be busy fighting off hoards of men. Scads and scads of men. Then you’d be exhausted. I want your battery charged when you make love to me.” Maryanne tossed the petticoat onto the grass. “I was thinking of you.”

“Good thinking.” Alex pulled her down onto the blanket and kissed her red lips. His hands explored every crevice of her body. He squeezed her butt cheeks and then pulled them apart. He licked one of his fingers and slid it down her butt crack and toyed with her rosette.

“Be gentle,” she whispered.

“Always.” He pushed the tip of his finger in, and then slid deeper. He wiggled it and then moved on to her cunt. “Oh Miss Peep, your pussy fur is as soft as a lamb’s wool.”

She guided his hands between her legs. “Make me bleat, baby. Make me bleat.”

His fingers opened her cunt wide, and he stuffed three digits deep. Her back arched, and she moaned, “Harder, harder.” He worked her clit and finger fucked her. She opened her legs wide and used the heels of her feet to thrust upward to meet him.

“Use your cock. Please fuck me.”

Alex positioned her legs over his shoulders and guided his cock to the entrance of her pussy. He

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thrust forward, driving his dick deep.

“That’s it. That’s it. Give it to me.” Maryanne tugged and pinched her nipples. This time when she saw stars they weren’t in the sky but behind her closed eyelids. “Come for me, Alex baby. Join me.” She pulled his nipples and ran her fingers down his chest, tugging at his curls.

“Yes!” Alex moaned. His once vigorous thrusts slowed as he climaxed. When he finished and caught his breath, he dropped down beside her and pulled her into his arms. “That was so good. Hard on my knees, but well worth it.”

She snuggled closer. “It was good. Shouldn’t we get dressed?”

“No.” he said. “Why cover up such beauty? No more Little Bo Peep, you’re now Lady Godiva. Let’s finish the wine and snuggle under a blanket.”

“Okay, but we should get dressed before midnight.”

“I don’t think ghosts punch a time clock, but we’ll get dressed.” Alex filled Maryanne’s glass to the brim. “Bottoms up, sugar.”

She took a sip and said, “If I didn’t know better, I’d swear you were trying to get me drunk to have your way with me. But you’ve already done that.”

He chuckled and asked, “More?”

“I don’t usually drink this much.”

“It’s a special occasion. Here let me top off your glass and empty this bottle.”

“Why aren’t you drinking much?”

“I have to drive us home.” Alex emptied the bottle, filling up Maryanne’s glass. “Can’t have the driver tipsy. Now drink that right up, and I’ll be able to put the bottle and glasses back in the car before we accidentally break them.”

“I feel funny.”

“Imagine that.” He gathered the glasses and tucked them into the basket. “Why don’t you curl up on the blanket and rest? I’ll be right back.”

“Hmmm ... I do feel sleepy.” She yawned.

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“There you go. You rest. I’ll wake you if anything happens.” Alex tucked the blanket around her, pulled on his pants, and headed down the path to the car.

* * *

Maryanne stirred. She sat up and threw back the blanket. She thought she heard the snap of a twig. She looked about. A mist covered the graveyard. “Alex?” she called out softly. An owl screeched. Maryanne’s breath caught. Through the light haze a dark figure darted between the granite grave stones. Maryanne’s eyes followed the flowing white gown of the figure as she swept from tombstone to tombstone. “It must be Lady Rose,” Maryanne whispered. “Alex, where are you?”

Just then a male figure stepped out from behind a tombstone, apparently surprising Lady Rose. The woman whirled as if to flee, but the man caught her from behind and yanked off her bonnet and tossed it on a stone. Long curls tumbled down Rose’s back. “It’s Hector,” Maryanne breathed. The ribbons of Lady Rose’s gown swayed back and forth as she struggled in Hector’s arms, but at last she was quiet. Hector turned her around. He took his lady’s hand, brought it to his lips, and kissed it. His hands moved to Rose’s shoulders and pushed her gown away, revealing pale ivory skin. He pulled Rose roughly to him and kissed her soundly. She didn’t resist. He took a step back and ripped the garment from her. The gown fluttered to the ground in diaphanous shreds. Maryanne blinked, and Hector’s clothes melted away as the lovers tumbled to the grass. Hector was between Rose’s legs, thrusting forcefully into her. She wrapped her legs around his waist and sighed.

Afraid to move an inch, Maryanne watched the lovers move rhythmically. Their whispers and laughter mingled with the night sounds. Then there was quiet, nothing but the liquid sounds of conjoinment and the smell of burning meat and crushed rose petals. The mist cleared. Still the pair flowed into each other. “So beautiful,” Maryanne sighed.

The ghosts stopped their fuck. Side by side their heads turned toward Maryanne. Rose looked puzzled, but Hector grinned. He withdrew from his lover and stood, his erect cock gleaming in the moonlight. Lady Rose, sitting on a tombstone now, smiled and shook her finger at Maryanne. Naughty, naughty for watching us, her finger seemed to say. Fresh mist surged and swirled. When Maryanne turned her eyes back to Hector, he had vanished.

Rose hopped off the tombstone and stepped towards Maryanne. “No! Go back! Don’t come any

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closer. Get!” Maryanne yelled, getting to her feet. She whirled to run, but before she could take a step, darkness covered her head. She thrashed against the blanket, but to no avail. The ghost was too strong.

Warm lips nuzzled her neck. Firm hands caressed her breasts. Strong arms held her and spun her around and around again and then lifted her and supported her above the ground, and fingers slipped between her thighs and skimmed their way along her skin, seeking her sex and opening it. “She’s ready,” a voice whispered, and an instant later a cock pushed urgently into her cunt, stretching her pussy, filling her as never before.

All thoughts of ghosts gone, Maryanne responded to her lover with every ounce of strength she had. Suspended as she was, all she could do was churn and clench against the cock in her cunt. She answered each and every forceful thrust, and soon wave after wave of orgasmic pleasure raced through her body. Her spasms set him off. Like a wounded animal he moaned and shuddered and shot semen deep into her womb. That smell of burnt meat and crushed rose petals filled her nostrils.

His kiss bruised her ear. “Thank you. I can rest in peace.”

“Rest in peace? What are you saying?”

“Farewell, my precious Rose.”

* * *

“Alex!”

“I’m coming, honey.” Alex’s voice sounded far away.

She was on the ground, fighting to get free of the blanket. “Alex!” The icy air shocked Maryanne’s body. She gulped in the night breezes and shivered. “Alex, where were you?”

“Right here. Shhhh, baby. You must have fainted.”

“Is that really you?” She sat up and looked around.

“You’re fine, sweetie. Just fine.” He dropped down on the ground beside her and held her close. “It’s okay. You must have had too much wine.”

“No. It was real. The ghost. I ... I saw the ghost. Both of them. They were ... didn’t you see?”

“See what?”

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“Alex, you’re teasing me, right?”

“I was over by that tree. I saw you having a nightmare. Too much wine.”

Maryanne looked around and then back at Alex. “Why do you have leaves sticking out of your hair? Your trousers are covered in debris. Why are you dressed? Is that a ... it is! You have a knot on your forehead.”

“Remember I pulled on my pants to take the basket to the car? Somehow I got off the path and tripped over a tree root, or maybe it was a fallen log. Whatever it was I knocked myself out.”

She bit her lips to keep from laughing. Her mouth was sore. Her arms and legs ached. She could smell the sex they’d just had. “Right, right, sure baby, anything you say. Now let’s get out of here.”

“Before we go, I want to propose.”

“Now!”

“Take a couple deep breaths. I shouldn’t have let you drink the wine.”

“Let me?” Her eyebrows arched. “You don’t let me do anything.”

He chuckled. “I can see you’re feeling better. Listen to me. Look at me, Maryanne. Between too much wine and thinking you saw Lady Rose, you fainted. It was no more than that.”

“But I thought ... was sure that—”

“Shhhh, let me say this. I know I didn’t need to see Lady Rose to know that we truly love each other and should be married, but let’s make it official.” He held out a ring box and opened it. “I love you, Maryanne. Will you marry me?”

“Well, if it’s that important to you. Yes, I would be honored to be your wife.”

The ring fit perfectly. It sparkled in the moonlight. “It’s beautiful and I love it. I love you.”

“Good. Let’s get out of here.”

It didn’t take them long to pack up and drive to Maryanne’s apartment. “You are spending the night, aren’t you?” she asked.

“Of course. It’s two o’clock in the morning and I’m bushed,” he said. “Ghost hunting wears me out. Or perhaps it was getting engaged.”

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“Or could it be the wild lovemaking? You poor dear, you must be exhausted. Go on to bed, I’m getting a shower.” She sniffed her costume and wrinkled her nose. “We must have been lying on some kind of plant or something.” The pungent aroma made her shiver.

“A shower does sound like a good idea. Me first.”

“Alex!”

“I’ll only be a couple minutes and the shower is all yours.”

“You bum!”

While waiting her turn, the doorbell rang. She slipped into her robe and answered the door.

It was her best friend, Bess, almost dancing in the hallway. “Bess, is something wrong?”

“About tonight—” Bess began.

“I’m sorry,” said both women in unison.

“You’re sorry, Bess? Why?”

“Because I couldn’t do it.” Bess shook her head and wringed her hands. “I’m sorry that I didn’t dress up as a ghost.”

“Shhh, Alex is here. And you did dress as the ghost.”

“No, I didn’t.”

“I don’t understand.” Maryanne was confused. “What are you saying?”

“I’m sorry for letting you down. I feel bad,” Bess said. “I’ve been waiting in front of the apartment building for hours to apologize for messing up your plans. I’m sorry. Wish I had thought of hiring a replacement.”

“If it wasn’t you, then who did I see playing Lady Rose?”

“You saw her? You really did?” Bess’s eyes were bulging. “Damn!”

“And I’m engaged.” She held up her hand to show Bess her diamond ring.

“Wow! It’s gorgeous. Look at the fire in the stone.” Bess looked at Maryanne and asked, “By the way, why were you sorry? I’m the one who didn’t show.”

Maryanne felt her cheeks get hot. “Come on in and don’t say anything to Alex about the scheme.”

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Bess shook her head, making her dark curls dance, and rolled her eyes. “Oh please. As if. What happened?”

“Remember the rest of the legend about Hector, Lady Rose’s lover?”

“Yes.”

“Well he was there, too, and he came after me and ... and—”

“And what?”

“And he fucked me. At first I thought maybe it was Alex, but Alex doesn’t fuck like that. Please don’t be mad at me. I was helpless.”

Bess’s brow furrowed and then her mouth dropped open. “You thought it was Roger? You thought you fucked Roger?”

“Well I thought you were the ghost. What was I supposed to think? I thought he pitched in to help and got carried away. I was naked you know.”

“Naked? You wait for ghosts in the buff?” Bess burst out into laughter.

“Ha. Ha.” Maryanne put her hands on her hips and made a snoot at her friend. “Bess, I thought you would hate me and blame me. I never want that.”

“Roger isn’t important enough to lose my best friend over. But it wasn’t him. Roger’s been with me all night. It must have been Alex.” Maryanne squeezed Bess’ arm.

“What must have been Alex?” The two turned to see Alex standing in the archway wearing a fluffy towel.

“Alex, what are you talking about?” Maryanne asked.

“At the cemetery. I thought Sir Hector was Roger, but Beth says Roger was with her all night, so it must have been you.”

Alex raked his fingers through his hair. “What do you mean it wasn’t Roger? He was just supposed to chase Maryanne.”

“We didn’t go to the cemetery, Alex, nowhere close. We were at Hank’s Bar until after one this morning. Then both of us waited outside this building for you two to return. I had to talk to Maryanne.”

“Roger was with you the whole time?” Alex asked.

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“I wouldn’t lie for him, and if I had been there, I would never let him touch Maryanne.”

“Wait a minute,” Maryanne said. “Alex, you asked Roger and Bess to portray the ghosts?”

A knock at the front door interrupted the conversation.

“That has to be Roger,” Bess said. “Let me get it.”

Maryanne turned to Alex. “Did you arrange for me to see ghosts?”

“All I wanted was that the night I proposed to you to be exciting. One that you’d never forget and would tell all your friends about it again and again. But Roger wasn’t supposed to touch you.”

“I didn’t touch her,” Roger said as he and Bess joined them. “Bess and I didn’t go to the cemetery.”

“Well, someone did,” Maryanne said.

“Or maybe it was just the wine,” Alex said.

“Honey, the evening was exciting.” Maryanne squeezed his arm. “I’ll be telling everyone about seeing Lady Rose over and over until I drive them crazy. Let’s just drop it.”

“You’re right,” Alex said. “I don’t want to argue, but why didn’t you go as you promised, Roger?”

“Because I saw that flimsy see-through costume Bess hid in the closet and then she showed me that witch outfit she was wearing to the party.” Roger looked at the floor and shrugged. “I was afraid she was seeing some other guy.”

“Ohhh honey, is that what’s been wrong with you?” Bess asked. “You thought I was cheating on you?” He nodded and she kissed his cheek. “I don’t cheat, but I also don’t betray my friends. I couldn’t tell you what Maryanne had asked me to do.”

“So then, Miss Maryanne, you were also trying to pull a fast one on me?” Alex folded his arms in front of him and tried to keep a straight face, but the grin won out.

“I love you, darling.” She grinned. “Besides that cemetery was creepy and made me jittery. I can’t believe I saw two ghosts fucking.” A shiver coursed through Maryanne’s body. “And I interrupted them.”

“Poor Sir Hector. No wonder he went after you. Let’s hope Lady Rose doesn’t hold a grudge.” Alex laughed when Maryanne gasped. “Sweetie, get a grip, they were ghosts and it’s over.”

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“True, but ... Lady Rose was wearing the same dress that Bess bought to wear.”

“She was?” Bess murmured. “That is spooky.”

The smoke alarm in the kitchen suddenly went off and the women squealed. Maryanne almost knocked Alex down when she grabbed him and wrapped her arms around him. “What’s that? What’s that?”

“Honey, did you leave something cooking in the kitchen?” Alex asked.

“I haven’t been near the kitchen since we left for the Halloween party.”

“It smells like roast lamb,” Alex said and sniffed the air.

“Very funny,” Maryanne said and swatted him.

“With a hint of rose sauce?” Bess said.

“Bess!”

“I’m a chef, Maryanne. I know the aroma.”

“Come on, let’s check the kitchen,” Roger said.

The four tramped into the kitchen but found nothing on the stove. The oven was empty as was the microwave.

“That’s odd,” Maryanne said. “No sign of anything, yet I can still smell it.”

“Me too,” Bess said and got closer to Roger. “Maybe it’s Lady Rose. Maybe she’s here.”

“If she is, she’s after Miss Bo Peep,” Alex said and turned off the alarm. “Maryanne’s the one who messed up her yearly fuck.”

“Thanks a lot, Alex. I’m getting some clothes on and we’re going to an all night diner.” Maryanne walked into the living room on her way to the bedroom and stopped. “Do you three smell roses?”

The trio joined her.

“Yes, I do.” Bess walked around the room and pointed. “The scent is coming from the bedroom.”

The four entered the room and saw what appeared to be someone humping under the comforter.

On the floor at the foot of the bed was a gauzy tattered gown. A bouquet of dead roses was beside it. Next to that was a man’s dirty trousers, white shirt, and a frock coat.

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“Bess, isn’t that the flimsy gown you were supposed to wear at the cemetery?” Roger asked.

“There’s that strong odor again.” Maryanne’s eyes widened when she remembered that was the same smell when her blanket lover climaxed. “It’s ... it’s irresistible.”

The four were powerless to resist being drawn under the covers.

The End