

a tale of mhybraz

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Darkness appeared. Tulane lifted her brow. A slight breeze began slowly to rise over the bay. Somewhere a guitar played softly. Red like the wall of Nygasear appeared the moon. It was large—large as mythical Orizon and his horse, Oftmanser. But Tulane was not thinking of the moon. She was bored. She did not care whether Old Rhedymic came or not. Certainly he could only make matters worse. Meddling old fool that he was. But then, he had a right to know. Should she tell him now or wait until some more opportune time? Tulane was puzzled. But Old Rhedymic did not come. Nine. Ten. Eleven. Twelve o'clock and Old Rhedymic still absent. What if he should not come at all? No matter, Tulane thought. Still, he must find out sometime. And it would be better if she should tell him. How she dreaded the sound of his horse's hoofs. How she disliked the sight of the old sombrero hanging by a black cord at the back of his neck. How she hated his greasy hands on her white shoulders. No, she hoped intensely that he would not come. But, if he did, should she not tell him? She became so nervous that she arose from the knoll above the bay and started to walk on the narrow stone ridge toward the little hamlet. How she hated to go home. Everything was so ugly there. Squalid quarters. Nothing beautiful to look at, except the whitewashed crucifix above her bed. Out upon Mengraser, the hill, she could see the breaking clouds; the silver waves; the red wall of Nygasear tinged with silver. Oh! must she spend her entire life in this village, Mhybraz? With Old Rhedymic? Then there was that dreadful something that she must tell Rhedymic. It could not be, Tulane thought. Kneeling before the whitewashed crucifix she prayed earnestly and entreatingly to the Virgin Mother. A white light which Tulane could not see shone upon the crucifix. Tulane had bowed her head to the floor in tears. Suddenly a knocking was heard at the outer door. Tulane did not hear the three men enter and stand at her door. She continued to sit upon the floor with her head buried in her lap. The three men placed the body of Old Rhedymic upon a grass mat on the floor. The three tried to arouse the praying girl. "Come. Come. Tulane," said one of the three, who was better dressed than his companions. Tulane did not raise her head. She did not move. "Tulane," continued the man, "Tulane. Old Rhedymic's body was found lying at the foot of Mengraser, the hill." But Tulane remained motionless in the attitude of prayer. One of the three bent over her. He listened. He heard nothing.