

The Portrait of Doom

By Dawn Sands

Until yesterday, I had never been in our attic. I wish I hadn't. What I saw was enough to haunt me forever.

The attic was a dark sort of place, quite large, with cobwebs and spiders aligning the fading wall. I clambered amongst the old boxes that previous owners had left there, looking for items of possible interest. *Why did I come anyway?* I thought. *What did I think I might find?* Suddenly, something caught my eye. Somewhere, beneath the old cardboard boxes and dust, I caught a glint of gold. Not a dusty, aged gold, but a gold that looked brand new! Curiously, I brought it out into the open. Despite the dust that covered it, the object might have been freshly made. It was a portrait, a portrait of...possibly...a witch. If it was, it was her magic that made it look new. Her hair was short, black and wiry, matching her cold, staring eyes and crooked nose. Her mouth, you could barely see, just a short, thin line. A golden chain necklace lay hung round her long, bony neck, and at the bottom of the chain, an oval. Just a plain, golden oval. My eyes were drawn to the plate on the bottom bearing her name, but her eyes suddenly changed. They were red.

I ran, dropping the painting and letting it crash onto the floor. I leapt over boxes blindly, not knowing or caring where I was going. For the only image in my mind was that lady with blood red eyes, and I knew it would never leave me.