

"Emilia, Bodgan, wake up and come to breakfast, Filip might come home today, I'm going out to get some water." I woke up to mothers loud voice and her closing the door. Still tired and yawning I got up to sit at the bedside and rubbing my eyes. Bodgan was still sleeping at his own bed, the sunlight was coming slightly through the window in to our room and its rays touching my face. I could feel the warmth that was coming from the kitchen in to our cold room, I dressed up, combed my hair and made it to a bun. Hearing the door open and our mother coming in with a bucket of water, I went to the kitchen and sat down at the table yawning and watching mother pouring the water in to the kettle. "Good morning Emilia." Mother said and right after it, yelling Bodgan's name. Judging by the mumbling coming from our room, he must have heard it. "Is there any errands today to our neighboring farm?" I asked while mother was stirring porridge in the kettle. "No, not today and why I think you just want to go there to see if Teo is around?" Looking at me with a smirk, she knew I had a little crush on Teo. "I think Bodgan is still sleeping, should you go wake her up?" I quickly changed the subject, since I wasn't eager to talk about him with her. She stopped stirring the porridge and yelling Bodgan's name she walked in to our room, I got up and went standing at the entrance of our room to watch how mother started wake up the sleeping little brother. "Try tickle him, he sure likes to be waked up like that." I said with a little giggle, mother started to tickle him and in a matter of moments Bodgan was awake and got up to sit on his bed. "There, now get up and come to breakfast, we have a lot to do today young man." Mother said and walked back to the kitchen. Bodgan looked at me with an angry look while getting up from his bed. "I'll pull you hair when I get the chance, stupid Emilia." I laughed at Bodgan and went back to the kitchen, Bodgan followed shortly after he had gotten his clothes on. While we had our breakfast we had our usual conversations about the coming day. "So if father is coming today, are we having that deer tonight what Andrei gave us?" Andrei was a hunter and a good friend of our father, he sometimes gave us something if he have had a good hunting trip. Mother nodded and replied. "We have to cook it today or it will begin to spoil soon." Bodgan was acting like a pig as usual, he burped and looked both us. "I sure try to get some space for that deer for the evening." Mother looked at Bodgan and sighed. "I guess I should be glad that you have a good appetite, but start behaving young man." After breakfast, we started cleaning the house for our father's arrival. It was afternoon, stew was cooking in mild warmth and we all were resting and doing our own things, mother was sitting at the table watching through the window, clearly she was in her own state of mind and waiting father to arrive, Bodgan was outside doing his things and I was lying in my bed just resting and thinking when i might be seeing Teo, he had blue eyes, brown hair, stalwart young man, cute like a bear and probably as strong as a bear, i wondered how would i approach him, that he would take a free day off and spend it with me and does he feel towards me as i feel towards him, maybe he likes more of blond girls than dark brown haired girls like me. Suddenly the front door slammed open. "It's father! Mother, Emilia, he is coming, I can see the horse cart from the distance!". Mother almost jumped to the ceiling from the fright when Bodgan came in from the door like a madman. "Calm down Bodgan, why you always have to yell, you could just open the door calmly and state that father is coming, every time the same thing..." I sighed while getting up from the bed and walking to the empty front door, since obviously this nutcase was running already far away to greet our father, just to be the first one to greet him. "What an idiot Bodgan is, probably all the neighbors from far away heard him, i could even suspect that Andrei will not have any animals to hunt for weeks after that." I got to the porch looking how he was running towards fathers cart. Mother came next to me at the porch crossing her arms. "At least he is not ill but he sure gave me a scare and I almost peed under me." We looked at

each other and started laughing. Father's horse cart arrived to front of our house, Bodgan jumped off having big smile. "He has presents for us." Bodgan said and having greedy a smile on his face. "How are the ladies of the house?" Father said and smiled. "Bodgan is acting like an idiot, but else the ladies are fine." I said while giving a mean look at Bodgan. "Yes, I know, I saw him... well more like I heard him from the distance, a little bit too excited perhaps as usual, but hey, i'm glad that at least one of you is happy of my return." Father said while getting down from the horse cart and having a mischievous smirk on his face, he opened his arms. "Come here you two." He took both of us to his embrace, it was so nice moment to see our father again after 1,5 months, mother was so happy that she almost was starting to cry. It was a moment that I never would forget. Bodgan was jumping around us in joy and said with a loud voice. "The presents! You promised to show what you got for us." Father released us from his embrace and walked behind his cart and came back with a bag. "I almost forgot my promise Bodgan, glad you are here to remind me of these things, I found some nice things for you on my travels." He smiled and opened his bag. First he took out a toy dagger that was carved from wood, it did not look like an ordinary toy dagger, there was detailed carvings on it. "This is for you Bodgan, now you have a proper weapon for your adventures in the woods." Father said and handed it to Bodgan. "Be careful with that, it looks sharp." Mother said looking at Bodgan and then looking at father, she obviously was not liking the idea that Bodgan was running around with sharp a dagger although that been made of wood. "He will be fine, am I right son?" Bodgan nodded and was amazed by the present he had, he immediately started running to the close by forest while we managed to hear him promising to be careful. Mother sighed with a worrying look at father. "Madalina, i'm sure he will be fine, it's not that sharp." Father said and then looking at me and started to digging his bag. "Now for you Emilia, I found this, i'm sure you like it." He took out a handheld mirror from the bag and started looking himself from it, fixing his hair and then looking at us with a smirk and then looking again himself from it. "Yup, I look quite handsome from this." Mother gave a laugh to father's silliness and he handed the mirror to me while remembering something, he started to dig his chest pocket and pulled out a silver necklace that had a silver crucifix attached to it. "I almost forgot this, I hope you like this, it's not actually from me." He gave the necklace to me and continued. "This is from a priest I met in my travels, but I might tell more about it after supper, Madalina will you help me with the horse cart." Mother agreed and they left to the stables. I went back in to the house and in to our room, I sat on on my bed and admired the mirror, how beautiful it was, all these carvings on the sideframe and the backside of it, it was done by someone that had a really good handcrafting skills, it was a perfect gift and now i don't need to use that piece of glass which we had for a mirror. I opened my hair from the bun and looked at myself from the mirror, green eyes, sharp dark eyebrows, dark brown hair reaching little bit over my shoulders and my cheeks having a red blush on them. Maybe i should ask mother to cut my hair shorter or should i start using some kind of ponytail or what would Teo like I wondered, I tried on the necklace, it fitted for me nicely, now I had my first real jewelry. I went to lie down on my bed and looked at myself from the mirror, falling in to my deep thoughts. The time passed quickly and I heard mother and father coming in, I left the mirror on the bed and got up and went to the kitchen, where mother was talking with father. "You don't have to tell everything at the supper, kids would have nightmares from those nonsense stories." Mother was just finishing the sentence when I came in to the kitchen. "What nightmares are you talking about... mother?" Father placed his hand on mother's shoulder. "I do not believe they will have any nightmares, besides they will hear these stories and folklores sooner or later and besides the story fits well on Emilia's necklace."

Mother sighed and went to prepare the stew, I sat down at the table and father at the other side, he looked at me smiling. "Your mother is always worrying so much." He smirked and continued. "I got that necklace from a priest that told me about himself and why he was there, it sure was an exciting story, but I will tell you about it later, i'm sure Bodgan wants to hear it also." At the same moment Bodgan came in. "What story are we gonna be hearing?" He asked and came sitting next to father. Father gave a laugh and petted Bodgan's head. "You sure don't miss anything that we talk about Bodgan, I will tell the story later as I said to Emilia, i'm getting hungry." "Well you still have to wait a bit Filip, Bodgan can you go get us some firewood and I will light up some candles, it's getting cold and dark here." Mother replied to father and Bodgan went out to get firewood and mother lighted up two candles and placed them at the middle of the table and went back to prepare the stew. "That necklace looks good on you Emilia, I hope you like it aswell." Father said and mother noticing it also and agreed that it fitted fine on me. Bodgan came in with the firewood and dropped them next to mother and hopped back to sit at next to father. "So are we gonna eat soon so we can hear the story?" Bodgan was so eager little brother, he was a person that seemed to want everything fast, he sometimes was really annoying but yet still he was my little brother. We started our supper, father was telling about his travels through the land and where he had been and who he had seen and talked with but saving the promised story to the last. Bodgan being an adventurous soul, his eyes were like plates when listening the things father had been doing that mother had to time to time either to tell father to speak less and Bodgan to eat before the food went cold, I have to admit, I was also waiting about the promised story, but as an observant person and not speaking too much, I was the fastest to had my supper done. While waiting the others to be done with the supper and listening fathers stories, my vision caught on the flame of the candle and I fell in on my own thoughts, watching the candles flame dancing and lighting up the murky kitchen, the cold autumn wind was blowing outside where it was pitch dark already, for me it was a mystical and magical feeling and I felt really cozy like that. "Emilia, are you done?" I snapped out of my thoughts when mother asked if she can take my plate from the table. "Yes, i'm done, I was in my own thoughts" I replied. "So it seems, we should be going sleeping soon." Bodgan replied to mother. "Now the story that father promised." She sighed and took the plates from the table and was going out to wash them. "Promise, you two don't get any nightmares from the fathers folklore nonsense." She said and went out and closed the door. Father looked at us both and started his story. "Alright then, a few weeks ago I arrived to the town called Bistrița, it is a very lively place, I saw a lot of opportunities to make some profit and from there I got you those presents, I rented this small room from the local inn, it was a small inn, at upstairs they had few rooms for travelers to rent and at the downstairs, there was a small pub." Bodgan interrupted to ask, what was a pub. "You will learn later on in your life about pubs Bodgan, so the city was very lively, there was a lot of soldiers with their swords and armor, they were preparing to some war, even I don't always follow what war is going on and where." Bodgan interrupted again, he was excited about to hear more about these swords and soldiers. "Shut up Bodgan, let father tell the story, you can ask him about those soldiers later." I got little bit of frustrated of Bodgan constantly asking about something, father was looking at me and smirking and then looking at Bodgan. "You should listen to your big sister, i'll tell about them later." Bodgan sighed and crossed his arms. "Fine, I won't ask anything, stupid Emilia." Father gave a laugh and continued. "For Bodgan's dagger I traded a few things, but it looked just like something that Bodgan would like, that dagger has been carved from good quality oak, so it should last long and not break up apart even on your future adventures Bodgan." Bodgan looked at his dagger

that was on the table, he looked happy to have it. Father continued. "The mirror I got also with some trading, but the necklace, it was the last night that I was at Bistrița, I went to downstairs to the pub and I met this priest who sat to my table, he introduced himself with a name Caleb, I think he had been having some wine from the local church, based on his story. So we started to talk about churches, religions, wars, it took like an hour before I asked what he was doing there and where he was from, I can't remember anymore where he said he was from, but I do remember that he was from some other country." Father stopped for a moment to drink some water from his cup, we were both, Bodgan and me all ears waiting for what was coming next, mother came in with the plates and placed them on the shelf and sat down at the table. "Have you told your story already." She asked and father looked at her smiling. "No we are just coming there." He replied and mother sighed. "Well I will hear it then also." Mother said and father continued. "Priest told me that he was a vampirehunter and he was there cause of the wars, he had been ordered to come to Bistrița to look out for vampires, since the war will always have casualties and it's a great opportunity for vampires to feed from dying soldiers." Bodgan interrupted again. "What is a vampire?" I looked at Bodgan and sighed. "Bodgan please... let father tell the story." Mother sighed and got up and went to do her chores, she was obviously not happy about these stories, father gave a laugh about mother's reactions and continued. "I will tell you about them, be patient Bodgan." So the priest was there because of vampires, Caleb told that it was a growing menace on the battlefields, well this all might be his talk by drinking too much wine so don't you kids take it too seriously." All of a sudden I had a weird feeling about all this, maybe I was taking this story already too seriously and would have nightmares about it, the murky kitchen, wind blowing outside and the cold air coming from under the front door, I did not feel so cozy anymore. "Priest warned me to be careful if I'm moving at nights and if I would meet up any pale skinned looking person on my way home, I should not stop but keep going, he told me that he had killed few of them and their not to be taken lightly and some of them had attacked him like a crazy person when they had noticed him, but he had suspicion that some of them are more clever and not come at you straight away or not at all, I don't know exactly what he meant with that." Now I had to interrupt father. "But what are those vampires then?" Bodgan had his chance to give his revenge. "Shut up Emilia, stop interrupting." Mother and father both laughed, I looked at Bodgan and was about to say something to him but I chose to ignore Bodgan and looked at father, after he had his laugh, he continued. "Vampires are people that are risen from their graves, they feed on blood and the folklore says, that they only move at nights, their skin are pale and they have fangs to suck blood from out of their victims, they also could be missing a finger or having a horrible appearance, usually the sign of a vampire activity is bitemarks on horses or cattle, also they can carry diseases. It is said that you turn in to a vampire if they bite you, or your corpse is being possessed by a malevolent spirit, they also can be invisible to people and for someone to see it, it has to be a family member." Bodgan had his mouth open from all of this and I think I was also, mother was rolling her eyes and sighing. "That is so much nonsense that you really should not tell these stories to our kids." Father turned to look at mother. "Atleast it's a good story to tell and it's only a folklore." I wondered myself where did this folklore originate from. "So about the vampires, how they can be killed, well we have us a security on the table and on Emilia's on neck, the priest had some holy water with him and so he cast it on the Bodgan's dagger and it is told that vampires hate crucifixes, they can be killed by sunlight, dismembering their head and place it between their legs or with wooden stake, so Bodgan your dagger can be used as a wooden stake." He said and pointed the dagger, Bodgan got excited. "When I get older I will adventure all around the

world to hunt vampires and..." Mother interrupted Bodgan. "You are not doing such thing young man, see Filip, now this story of yours is giving such awful ideas to our son." Father did not want to start argue about it, so he did not reply to mother and continued. "Kids, these are only stories, I did not meet any pale people or vampires on my way home, only pale people I saw was in Bistrița and they all seemed to have had a good drink, but i'll tell more tomorrow , it's getting late already and i'm all tired from the day." Father got up from his chair yawning and walked to mother who was watching out from the window. "My dear, it's all ok, tomorrow is a new day, we should all go to sleep." "Are you scared little brother?" I asked Bodgan and gave him an evil big sisters smirk. "No, I am not, I think you are scared." Bodgan replied. He was not wrong, the story did gave me chills, if it is true, but I was glad that we were far away from any battlefields that I know of and from Bistrița, having my crucifix and Bodgan's dagger made me feel secure, while still I was having this odd feeling, I've never have had this feeling before that something is not right, so I replied in complete honesty to Bodgan, I wanted to settle our small argument that started from the tickling at the morning. "Yes I actually got little bit scared of the story, but I am girl and you are the brave adventurer." Bodgan smiled and got up from his chair to hug me. "I will never ever let anything happen to you Emilia, you are the best sister." I was amazed what he did and said, but it was something that I will never forget. Father turned to look at us and noticed us hugging, even he had amazed look on his face. "Madalina, well would you look at that, they are once behaving nicely." She turned to look at us. "Seems like your story was not all bad, Filip." Bodgan released me from his hug and sat next to me, mother turned around to do her chores, same time noticing something through the window. "Filip, is that Andrei coming here on the road?" She said and father turned to look through the window. "I don't know, can't see clearly who it is, i'll go check." Father put on his coat and went out to see who was coming here, my odd feeling just got more stronger, something was not right, mother watched father approaching the stranger. Suddenly she screamed. "Oh my God, that stranger attacked Filip." Me and Bodgan got up and ran to the door and opened it to see if we could help, we opened the door and saw this stranger far away being on top of father and him lying on the ground. The stranger raised his head and looked straight at us, I never forget those bloodlust red eyes glowing far away at the darkness. The stranger got up and started to walk fast towards us, I noticed his pale skin, his hands and mouth were covered in blood. Mother pulled us both in and slammed the door shut and yelled loud in panic. "Help me move the table to the front of the door!" We moved the heavy kitchen table to the front of the door, not even thinking about that the door opens outside and not inside and that thing would come in through the window if it so wants. We had just gotten the table to the front of the door, with huge force the whole door shattered to pieces and the we all fell down to the floor, table flying over us and shattering against the wall behind us. Bodgan managed to crawl fast to the left corner of the kitchen, me and mother were lying on the floor looking this pale skinned person to its red eyes. In that moment I knew that it was a vampire, I crawled slowly back to the other corner of the kitchen, looking how the vampire grapped mother from her throat and lifted her up and took her in to its embrace, sinking its teeths in to her neck, blood was gushing out. I was petrified, I just looked how it was sucking the blood out from her, Bodgan got up from his corner to try stopping the vampire, but when he got close, the vampire slammed Bodgan away with single swing with the back of its hand, Bodgan flew like a ragdoll over the room against the wall, I looked how my little brother was lying on the floor. Remembering the crucifix I had on my neck, I got up moving towards the vampire keeping the crufix on my hand and showing it to it, the vampire noticed my approach and stopped sucking the blood out of our mother, raising its head and looking at me. I

could see the fangs when it opened its mouth and saying with a lustful angry voice. "You are next, little girl." I had moved next to the vampire, showing the crucifix to it, but it did not even care about it and in one hit with back of its hand, I flew back against the wall. For a moment I was dazed from the hit, I tried to get up but then felt this immense pain on my chest, I coughed blood out of my mouth. Noticing that I was impaled by the leg of the shattered kitchen table what was leaning against back of the wall. I tried to say something but couldn't, the pain was unbearable but slowly started disappearing along with my hearing. In that moment I realized, I was about to die, I felt how my consciousness started to fade. I raised my head to see the vampire one more time to curse it in my mind, my vision was getting blurry and I barely could notice that someone was fighting with it. I closed my eyes and let my head go down, I was ready to let go, when this person was suddenly next to me saying something and raising my head to upward position, this person dropped something in my mouth but I did not care anymore. I draw my last breath and felt this serenity of peace taking over me and my last thought was the hope to see my family again somewhere. I died at autumn of a year 1329.