



THE THREE SISTERS WEBSTER

By Al Campbell

He had hoped from the summit he'd be able to see Nelson in the distance. Yet the weather in these parts played tricks. He had set out in cold, crisp December weather but, as he climbed, it turned violent.

Under lowering clouds, the lightning and first clap of thunder was only an overture to the icy squalls that started as he rounded Pendle Hill. Hastening his footsteps, he found an outcrop to hunker behind. He donned a waxed jacket and tweed cap from his rucksack, whilst peering to find points of reference on the horizon. To the left a light flickered through sleet flurries, but his map showed no signs of habitation – probably an outlying farm building.

Standing to leave, something glistened white in his peripheral vision. A spider's web caught the peak of his cap and he came face to face with the owner. Feeling his balls go hollow, he brushed it away. He had hated spiders ever since his older stepsisters had held him down, forced his mouth open and dropped three, one-by-one, down his throat.

He strode back onto the path, the storm driving straight at him, rods of slush stinging his cheeks. The path sloped downward, and the map suggested a bridge across one of the many streams that joined in the valley to power the mills which once made the area famous. It was now a torrent, the bridge gone, the storm raging fiercer by the minute.

Over his shoulder the light still flickered. Where there was light there should be shelter. Putting the wind to his back he retraced his steps to a track he had noticed heading in that direction.

Whilst the storm did not abate, with the light as his guide, the going was easier. In a shorter time than he had estimated he found himself beneath a lantern-lit creaking Inn sign announcing 'The Three Sisters'. He smelled woodsmoke – the smell of sanctuary. There was a wreath of holly and ivy on the massive old oak door. He pushed it open and stepped inside.

Logs burned bright in the fireplace. Candles, thrust in the necks of ancient bottles added to the light. The door blew shut behind him. He wiped the water from his eyes and looked around.

'Looks like you could use a drink and a seat by the fire.' The deep, husky voice belonged to a raven-haired woman behind the bar, dressed in a heavy low-cut medieval-styled red gown that did nothing to hide her voluptuous cleavage. Turning a spigot on a barrel, she drew beer into a pewter mug.

'Not the night for a Yuletide stroll, eh?' The lilting voice came from near the fire, where a buxom redhead in a revealing green dress gestured to a chair. 'You'd better come and dry off.'

'There's stew in the kitchen,' said a voice behind him. He turned to see a blonde in an off-the-shoulder blue gown, her décolletage spectacular.



'Thank you. That would be very welcome.'

Soon he was steaming gently in front of the flames, quaffing beer, tucking into a hearty meal.

'The Inn is called The Three Sisters. Is that you?' he asked.

Raven hair nodded. 'I'm Arachne, the oldest. Aranha is the middle one, Araignee is the baby.' She indicated the blonde, and the redhead, respectively.

'Your mother started all your names with the same letter?'

'She was called Athena,' all three replied in unison.

'Ahh, right.' He nodded, as if that made sense. 'Strange your pub isn't on the map.'

'We don't open often,' said Arachne. 'We're more of a pop-up.' The other two laughed deep in their throats.

'We're in the re-enactment business,' said Aranha, caressing and flouting her costume.

'Yes, we like to keep the past alive,' Araignee added.

Arachne yawned. 'There will be no more visitors tonight,' she announced. 'I'm locking up. Time for you two to be on your way.'

He stood up. 'Can you point me towards Nelson?'

'Sure. Just let me see these two out.' The women walked outside.

'Remember, the feast has to begin before midnight', Aranha said urgently.

'Worry not. I won't play for long, he's a big man, there will be plenty.'

'But you get to fuck him!' Araignee complained.

'It's my year,' Arachne indignantly asserted. 'Come back in an hour.'

'Don't know why you're whining, I haven't had a man for 66 years,' Aranha muttered. 'You chose once every 33 years for the spell. So it's my turn next!'

'There were three of us,' said Araignee turning away.

Back inside, Arachne put a hand on his shoulder. 'Why not stay the night.'

'You have a spare room?'

'Just mine.' She took his hand. 'Come and keep me warm.' She led him to an adjacent room with a four-poster bed, undressed him, pushed him onto the coverlet, lifted her skirts, and straddled him. His manhood swelled and, as she lowered herself, he felt hundreds of small ripples inside her.



Afterwards he quickly fell asleep. She gently kissed him and a white gossamer thread left her mouth and sealed his lips. She kissed his hands and feet, and threads flew to bind his limbs to the bed posts.

Her sisters arrived. Naked, they wrapped themselves around his body. Spiders poured from their every orifice and, as the women's bodies shrank, gorged on him, flesh, blood, and bone. Before midnight, he was gone, the spiders scuttling back into their *almae matres* who, once more, resumed feminine forms.

'Nothing like a good meal!' Arahna coaxed a wayward spider into her mouth with her tongue.

'Always tastes better after fucking,' Araignee pouted.

The three stood back-to-back, waved their hands in incantation, and the building sank into the earth, taking them with it.

By morning, the snow had blown away. As a weak sun rose those with keen eyes might just make out the words etched into an ancient slate.

Interred deep here lie the Three Sisters Webster – hanged for witchcraft upon the eve of Christ's Mass, 1612.

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