# THE EYES OF THE GRAVESTONE

It was a cold windy night in October and there were small starry spaces in the sky which the clouds scudded quickly past. As the wind was strong the iron gate, outside Marianne Suominens house, creaked and banged continually.

Marianne smiled in her loneliness. She thought a real storm was on the way and when it arrived she intended to walk down to her son's grave. A churchyard in the clutches of an autumn storm is a solemn place and, if there was a cloudburst, she ventured to think the ground might open and make a tunnel for her to the underworld. She was superstitious but her superstition differed from other people's. The supernatural she believed in could usually throw off the impossible and become reality.

Her son Benjamin was only eight when he died and she adored his gravestone as if it was a gateway to a new world.

Marianne lived close to the small market town's churchyard. She put on an extra sweater and a raincoat, locked the outer door and left. She followed the deserted street round the corner, went diagonally through the park and continued along another deserted street to the church.

Little Benjamin's death was very tragic. He fell off a precipice, hit a flat rock and was killed instantly. But the awful part was not the way he died. This kind of accident happens sometimes and all that can be done is to set up a fence. The awful thing was that his mother laughed when it happened with an insane laugh which would make anybody's hair stand on end. She didn't believe that he was dead. Her tortured mind told her that he had only changed his appearance and moved from this world to a new existence in a mysterious ghostlike land.

She thought Benjamin must have had fun during his last seconds. Anyway, he felt alright now because in the kingdom of the dead, which Marianne had devised, everything was fine despite the darkness which prevailed.

Marianne was now standing at the rusty gate of the churchyard. Visiting churchyards at night was not a popular occupation among the older inhabitants and Marianne was the only one on this occasion. Sometimes ill-mannered young rascals ran around the graves at night, attracted by the moon and the werewolf myth, or in the hope of seeing a ghost. But is was probably best that the teenagers slept at home just now as Marianne might have strangled them in an act of pure love. This world was evil and sad, filled with pain and complaint but in the next life everything was wonderful. None of the ghosts moaned and none needed to be afraid of death. Without in any way suggesting that the insane Marianne was guilty, it can be said that this small market town was known, throughout the country for a series of unsolved murders.

"Only the dead are happy" would be Marianne's motto if ever she was chosen to be the queen of Sweden. The tree tops danced in the strong wind but is was to hard for them to enjoy. I began to rain as Marianne climbed over the gate and yellow autumn leaves whirled over the graves. Marianne thought that Benjamin wanted to wake up in his grave but he couldn't as he was dead.

The light from the street lamps only illuminated part of the churchyard and the rest remained in pitch-black darkness. Marianne believed that her son was the Crown Prince of the dead.

At last she stood by the dead child's gravestone. The rain increased and her rain cap was blown off by the wind but she didn't bother to chase after it.

Suddenly, something happened. Benjamin's corpse trembled; his brain became active and he seemed to breathe.

"Mum!" Said a weak voice from the grave. The flat surface from the gravestone seemed to bent inwards. Two small human eyes gleamed in hallows and they stared at the panic-stricken woman with looks filled with misery and painful sorrow.

However, there shouldn't be pain and sorrow on the other side of death. This was all wrong. It was contrary to the faith which Marianne had devised herself. But the gods didn't show her any mercy and her heart was pierced by the sharp sword of fear.

Her little boy spoke in the grave. There was only one reasonable explanation. Benjamin was no ghost. He must have been buried alive and only seemed to be dead.

"Mum!" Repeated the boys tender voice. "Come down to me please. I am so lonely and cold." Marianne felt afraid, terribly afraid.

"Why did you murder me, Mum?"

Marianne couldn't remain silent. She had to defend herself against such an unjust accusation.

"I didn't murder you! How can you say such a thing?"

"But you pushed me mum," said Benjamin reproachfully. "I wouldn't have fallen off the precipice if you hadn't pushed me so hard."

Marianne decided to dig up her little son. She couldn't just let him fade away down there in the eternal darkness of the coffin. She searched for something to dig with and luckily found a spade by the dreary stone wall of the church which a gravedigger must have forgotten to lock up with the other tools. So she began the long process of digging which wasn't completed until dawn.

When Marianne was ready she opened the lid of the coffin. Benjamin was alive but so stiff and tired that he had to be carried home.

However, after drinking some warm cocoa he felt so well and strong that he asked to be allowed to walk to school. Marianne agreed but insisted on holding his hand in order to prevent him falling down. After all he had been so badly injured that the doctors had officially declared him dead. She saw him wave to all the overstressed people they met in the morning rush and he seemed to be full of energy. She was content but tired as she hadn't slept all night. It was wonderful to have such a bright and cheery little son. But an observant old lady, who wasn't in such a hurry as all the others, screamed with horror. A policeman had to stop the woman with the crazed look who was dragging  a stinking child's corpse along the pavement.

Marianne was gravely insane.