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## Small Bites

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## *Small Bites*

The miniature castle erupted from the barren Kentucky landscape like a snaggle tooth. At no point were any townsfolk safe from the sight of the palace. Even at the furthest part of town, they could catch a glimpse of the gabled roof. Inside the palace, sat an older couple. A very old couple.

"Fake news! All newspapers ever do nowadays is spout lies." Claus shook the headline stating FIVE DEAD BLOODSUCKERS SUSPECTED in front of his wife's face.

"Please dear, you only started reading the paper a hundred years ago. You probably just missed the lies they were spouting back then." Merium looked up from her morning tea and replied.

"I didn't need to worry about lies back then; I could flay people."

"Well, you could still flay people," she said.

"Merium, you know I can't. That would just be another headline."

"But it'd be true this time."

"Do not be giving me ideas," he said, standing up to pace around the room.

"Why even bother with the mortal newspapers? We could take another holiday to the motherland. You know I've been wanting to visit my cousin Charlotte. We could isolate ourselves and just enjoy each other for a few years while other people deal with the lies."

It had been a few decades since Claus enjoyed Merium's company and even longer since he enjoyed the company of her relatives. "I refuse to let people believe we go around town and murder innocent people."

"So what do you plan to do? Host a charity gala? We already have to spend so much on your beloved orphans. My altruism can only stretch so far."

"It wouldn't be hard to hold a gala," he said.

"You only say that because I'd do all the work." After a long silence,

Merium spoke again, "The Maybe fear isn't such a bad thing. Claus, maybe it gives us power."

"Sure, we have power until the fear causes a mob with pitchforks."

"Oh please, people don't do that anymore. At best, they'll protest to a government that doesn't listen. At worst, the government listens but works too slowly to actually get anything done," she said.

"We were much better off as myths."

"So were those poor Unicorns," Merium reflected sadly upon the events of the last decade.

A silence again hung in the air.

"Mr. Collins will be here at noon," Claus said.

"Ah, is he coming for O or A today?"

"I believe O. Can you have it ready?" he said.

"Why? Don't you want to spend time with the orphans?" she asked.

"I'm just not feeling it today."

She walked out the ostentatious front door and along a side path to a large refurbished barn. Opening the door she called, "Hello children."

There were four or five little rooms with four or five little, hunched figures who, upon hearing her voice, scampered to stand before her.

"Oh I forgot breakfast again; I'm sorry you must be hungry," she said to the silent bunch. "Well, anyways, Ben come with me; everyone else you can go about your chores."

The thin boy, even paler than the vampire, walked slowly behind her out of the barn.

*-Eleanor Zilius*