### The Lady with the Emerald Ring

A rich man’s wife became deathly ill the night before Christmas in 1798, so he called for the doctor. By the time the doctor arrived, his wife had died, or so it seemed. Her husband was so grief stricken that he locked himself in his room and did not attend the funeral the following day. The servants of the house carried the rich woman’s body to the Vicar who, in a drunken stupor, held the ceremony quickly. The veil was drawn across her face, the stone lid lowered, and the iron grille locked. Just before the clergyman fell to sleep later that night, he remembered the beautiful emerald ring on the finger of the woman he had laid to rest. Wanting the ring and thinking no one would find out, he went downstairs, unlocked the lid, opened it, and tried to pry off the ring. It would not budge. He ran and brought back a file to cut the ring off her finger. When that did not work, he severed her finger and pulled the ring off. As he left, he turned around to pick up the iron lid, and screamed at the top of his lungs. He dropped the ring and ran. The woman had awakened, was moaning, and held her severed finger towards him with an evil smile on her face. Wearing nothing but her fine silk dress, the woman walked back to her home, knocked on the door, and rang the bell, but to no avail. The servants had all gone to sleep, for it was late on Christmas Eve. She lifted a heavy stone, threw it at her husband’s window, and waited. He came to the window with a sorrowful look on his face. Suddenly, to her surprise, he yelled, “Go away. Why must you torture me so? Don’t you know my wife has just died? Let me mourn and do not bother me again.”With this he shut the window. He did not realize it was his wife who had thrown the rock at the window. She repeated her actions, again throwing a rock at the window. He opened the window again, and she yelled to him, “I am no one but your so-called dead wife. Now come down here and open this door, unless you’d like me to die a second time on our doorstep.”

“You are a ghost then?” he said to her. She said, “No, for ghost’s don’t bleed. Now come down here before I catch my own death of cold.”The man with a joyous look on his face came down to meet his wife and took her inside where he called the doctor once more and told him the news. Meanwhile, the clergyman ran home and up the stairs. In a state of fright, he hung himself from the rafters of his home. If he had only known that the woman only wanted to thank him. She had not died after all but had gone into a coma. When he cut off her finger, the pain woke her up.

