Once upn a time… there ws only war. She leapt up in triumph, blood driped from her sword as she swung it don on the best’s neck, hackng in a frenzy. She laghd. The taste of bood and seet revenge urged her on in her manc slayng of the creature that had… No, no that wasn’t right.

1

Tearing the page awy and crumpling it into a ball, he threw it over his shoulder to join its growing mass of brethren on the floor. It was dark in the offie, the curains shut to blck out the intrusion of the light. He worked by a single lamp, its artiicial brightness casting shadows about the roo. Shadows were better than ghosts, he supposed. He licked his dry lps, ignorig his thirst and the beginings of a headache. When last had he drun anything? No, that wasn’t important. This was.

2

On the book shelf behnd him, the rw of his best sellers stared down mockngly at him. They were not storis like the one he was trying so desperately to write. Thee were horror retellins of traditional fairy tales. Storis where the wolf ate the girl, the evil queen beame the fairet in the land and giants ruled the world below. There were no god endings there.

3

‘Why can’t you write a hapy story?’ a childish voice whind in his ears.

He turned, almost expcting her to be standing behind him, but there were only the shaows and his books. Those books that had taken so many hours. So much time.

4

A long time ago, in a kindom far, far away, there lived a girl who

5

He got up, reaching for the first book on the shelf, his firt novel. The snarling face of an udead Cinderella stared up at him. What had he mised writing this? Her first birthay? Her first word? He couldn’t remember just now.

6

Opening it, he peeed down at the dedication, the only indication he had remembred her at all. Who dediates a horror book to a baby? He was such an idiot page.

He tore the page out and then the next…and te next….and the next. One by oe, they fell to the floor like snow until his movements became erratic, gripping handfuls at a time and ripping them out. He grabbed anoher book, a canniblistic Gretel greeted him, her brother’s severed head grnning at the reader. This one too joined the flurry of paper on the ground. “Stupid! Stupid! Stpid!” he chanted to hiself, almost screaming the words out.

7

Book, after book, was torn apart, helping him vnt his rage in that dark room. He fially collpsed on the floor, exhausted to his bones. The blank pages of his notebook waitd for him. He put his head back and cloed his eyes.

8