

Return of the Witches

By AbyssalEros

Like every year, the campus was already under the sign of Halloween months before. For the student body of the New Arkham University and its alumni, Halloween was always something special.

Not that anyone believed the old stories about witches and gates to other worlds told in this area since time immemorial, but the occult did have a specific tradition in this part of Massachusetts.

Thus, every Halloween Eve, they hold up a cosplay contest of the sororities, in which the participants dressed up appropriately and performed as impressively as possible on the central stage of the campus. The winners won a prestigious trophy and a seat on New Arkham's festivities committee for the upcoming year.

After she had to admit defeat to her rival Sophie from the Thetas' sisterhood for the last two years, Charleen was determined to win at any price this year. So, she got involved with one of the Miskatonic University students to learn more about Salem's old witches and their circle incantations - as she pretended to him. Of course, her motives were different from those she revealed to him.

In no time, the pathetic fool was wrapped around her little finger in such a way that he was unconditionally under her spell. As planned, he gave her unauthorized access to the locked library rooms of the Miskatonic.

There she found what she had been looking for. When her fingers covetously stroked the ancient leather of her ancestors' grimoire, she knew that from then on, she could achieve much more than just win the competition.

How she had laughed with her sisters that evening as she proudly presented the grimoire and told them how she had managed to smuggle it out of the library rooms.

Charleen grinned in anticipation.

On this night, a new era would dawn on New Arkham; the return of the Witches of Salem had begun. With the Grimoire, Charleen could unfold her true potential and fully use her ancestors' powers to serve her will.

Charleen had used its powers in the run-up to influence the event's course, to ensure that her sisterhood would be on stage in time for the witching hour.

The second full moon of the month was high above New Arkham, witnessing the new era's beginning.

Under orchestral music, the mightiest of their sisters and herself, wearing flowing black dresses, were carried to the stage like ancient empresses on the broad and bare shoulders of the best-looking sports students.

Charleen ran her slender fingers through the hair of Sophie's boyfriend and brother, on whose shoulders she sat. She smiled smugly, thinking about the last night she spent with them and how she defiled Sophie's love.

Provocatively, she slipped off their shoulders. She positioned herself at the zenith of the semicircle she and her six sisters formed. The music briefly rose high, and they stretched up their hands towards the sky.

An anticipating murmur ran through the crowd.

While they were waiting with their arms raised and the music was playing a tension-increasing passage, eight of the university's strongest students carried a large and heavy cast-iron cauldron onto the stage. Silently, they put the cauldron down in front of the semicircle of waiting witches, withdrew the carrying rods from the eyelets, and left.

The music faded away, only to resound with a fanfare shortly afterward. The men who had remained behind Charleen and her sisters simultaneously tore off the flowing black clothes of their respective mistresses to the crowd's thunderous applause.

No longer looking like classical witches at all, the sisters began to sing as they swayed to the rhythm with their beguiling curves, only sparsely covered.

The cauldron's concoction began to bubble and steam; billowing waves of shimmering violet haze rose from its depths and spread crawling among the spectators to subject them to Charlene's will. She did not want to reveal herself to the world yet.

She looked triumphantly at her new subjects who, with eyes wide open, were under the spell of the ritual and her power. She haunted Sophie with her icy look. For her, she had devised special torments for later. Taking away her brother and boyfriend was only the beginning.

Charlene's scornful look turned into irritation when she saw Sophie smiling smugly, reclining in the arms of a sinister-looking man.

How dared she!

Then the realization took hold of her, coupled with fear.

Why was he here?

His gaze was firm. His whole being was characterized by a self-confidence that did not correspond to that of the fool that Charleen thought he was. On his lips rested a mocking, triumphant grin.

Why?

He and Sophie were clearly not under her spell, had somehow resisted her. Nevertheless ... *he had no right to grin so impudently!*

Then she saw his raven, which fluttered over the cauldron and dropped something, croaking.

Fear gripped Charleen as the unknown ingredient fell into the concoction, and she lost control of the ritual.

The haze turned green and withdrew into the cauldron. But as it did so, it transformed from mist to matter, to animated matter.

A coarse, smacking voice sounded from the space between the worlds, which seemed to simultaneously speak from countless mouths.

"Tasty morsels!"

Then the green tentacles grabbed all her sisters, who were pulled screaming into the foaming cauldron to disappear into it.

Her entire coven was devoured by the cauldron in front of her panic-stricken eyes.

Charleen wanted to run away, hide until the horror ended. But she could not. With inhuman strength, one of the tentacles had grabbed her and lifted her into the air. Screaming, she was pulled toward the voracious mouth of the cauldron.

The last she saw were the eyes of the fool and her rival.

The last she heard was, "How delicious!"