

Scents

by Morgue McMillan

"Ah, finally the rain stopped pouring!" She opens the window to let the sticky air out of the house. The colours outside have changed. The air is clear and the sky turns into light pink while the sun is drowning at the horizon. She takes a deep breath. The smell of the world washed, mixed with the scents of the soil - this is where she has been living all her life. She pictures her mother seeding herbs and planting tomatoes. Later herself doing the same - and always the children around when the first red was to be seen. They could not wait to pick the fresh fruits. But now they seldom show up, busy with their own families and jobs. Tears run down her face as she thinks of another smell of earth - the graveyard. He left her almost a year ago.

"Autumn's coming early this year." She watches the old oak, shaking her head, and with a big sigh closes the window. "I know you're hungry - but first let me have another cup of tea." The aroma of Earl Grey fills the room. As she sits down at the small round table close to the window the cat jumps onto her lap, trips around for a short while, then curls up, softly purring. "Ulysses," her voice is almost a broken whisper, "your adventurous times are gone already, just like mine. Oh well, we've grown old together, oh yes ... time's a traitor."

The cat stretches and elegantly jumps to the ground. "Only cats can move like this even when they're old," she thinks, sipping her tea, the bergamot crawling up inside her nose.

"Time for your dinner!" Slowly she places the teacup on the table, then stands up, her hands pressing hard against the armchair for support. Ulysses mews and strolls around her feet while she starts rummaging in the kitchen, preparing his food.

"How long will I be ...?" The question arises while she puts down the bowl and shuffles back to the armchair, lets herself fall into it. She can see him sitting face to face with her, having tea, preparing

his pipe carefully. The oriental aroma of the tobacco mixed with bergamot wafts through the house ...

When they found her five days later she was still sitting in the armchair at the window, the tousled cat at her feet hissing at them. The intensely overpowering smell had caused the postman to alert the police.

