

The knife edge



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著者:

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(i)
Total blackness. A tomb within a tomb. She tried
desperately to call outi¼Œ but no sound came. A suffocat-
ing weight bore down on heri¼Œ stifling her voice. She
could not see what it was that bestrode heri¼Œ aware only
that it was evil and terrifyingi¼Œ hanging over her like a
dark pall. She struggled to escape its embrace but her
arms were pinioned and her legs felt leaden and would
not move.
The blackness slid awayi¼Œ like a curtain being drawn
to one sidei¼Œ and a white mistiness filled her vision and
instead of darkness there was light: a clammy lumi-
nosityi¼Œ claustrophobic gs a winding sheet.
And all the while a~ slowi¼Œ rhythmic crunching of
graveli¼Œ like ponderous fbotsteps closing in on heri¼Œ in-
spired a fearful urgency to her petrified struggles and
her soundless cries.
With a finali¼Œ frenzied effort she burst

through the
>nightmare shroud of sleep and sat up
her heart
>pounding. A trickle of sweat ran from her neck and
>across her breast and she felt the clinging wetness of
>her nightdress against her back. She pushed away the
>heavy eiderdown and swung her legs over the side of
>the bed and sat for a time with her hands resting
>against her legs until her breathing became more con-
>trolled. The house was silent
the night air completely
still
only the pounding pulse of blood beating in her
>ear drums. She stood up
and to dispel the oppressive
>stillness with the commotion of her own movement
walked quickly across to the open window.
>A nearly full moon
newly escaped from a billowing
>bank of cloud
rode high above a big oak tree
filling
>the room with its dead
white glow. From beyond the
>cliff she heard the rasping noise of a gentle sea swell
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Et
plno:
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>j.o~Otl.19 U~
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