

# Kowalski Lives

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There was a husband and a wife. They were happy. They were able to make their living through selling oil and sunflower oil. Then the husband was suddenly taken after the old oil pump collapsed on him, and he died an excruciatingly painful death.

The wife had a secret. She was pregnant, but that wasn't the secret. She was a witch, and the pain of losing her love was far greater than her labor pains. She was unfit to be a mother due to her grief, but no one would help take in her son, fearing that he, too, was a witch.

No one would see the mother or her child. One night, there was a flash of light coming from their house. No one would go near it. They stayed far away, and if they were quiet enough, they would hear the glass shattering from the windows and the sounds of a baby crying. No one would go near that house after that. Not for the oil in the ground and not for the sunflower oil.

Years would pass, and everyone would ignore that house. People assumed the witch committed some ancient dark spell that destroyed her and her child to try and bring back her husband. They called the house cursed and would tell dark stories so their own children would not go near it. Those who did, those who went past the old oil pump that killed the witch's husband, had disappeared.

Fifty years passed, and a stranger came to town. He was tall, he was young, he was handsome, and those who were very old and were still haunted by the memories of the witch would swear to God and the Devil that he looked familiar. He was friendly. He would smile. Girls would swoon over him from the little words he spoke and the rapturous feel of his deep voice. But his eyes, they never smiled. They were too dark. Too empty. They were inhuman, and he smelled of sunflowers.

"What's your name, son?" an old woman asked, unable to hold herself back anymore.

The young man would smile, but his eyes wouldn't, and he would reply, "My name is Kowalski, named after my father."

Kowalski was the name of the husband who died under the old broken oil pump.

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A hundred years had passed and there wasn't a town anymore. All the people had disappeared. There were no more children to laugh and play



on the streets, there were no more teenagers who dared each other to go to the old house, there were no more young ladies to court, there were no more men to court them, and there were no more old people to reminisce about their stupid mistakes in their youth. The buildings were gone as well, as if the town had never existed.

The witch's house was still there. The sunflower fields still growing, the collapsed old oil pump still in front, the shattered glass outside the windows, and the Store sign still standing. It was empty, and if people passed the old pump, they wouldn't disappear. But someone managed to spray-paint the house and the old pump: "Vanishing point" on the old pump for all the naughty children who dare went passed it, and "Kowalski lives" to remind the world that the witch's spell had worked.

