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FICTION

Midnight Toccata

BY ELIZABETH MOONLIGHT — 2025-10-29

Midnight Toccata

Midnight Toccata - a musical touch for Halloween.

Watch: https://thehiddencircle.com/media/2025/10/halloween-2b.mp4

Technical notes and commentary.

THE STORY

The church is 400 years old and abandoned. There are two tombs with stone statues of the man and woman who are buried within. I leave it to you to fill in the details.

THE MUSIC

The organ you hear was made from two virtual organ instruments combined to create a fuller sound. The music you hear was composed by me, initially notated, not played live, and then imported into the music software to render the composition into sound. Some of the organ music was written specifically to accompany the Gregorian Chants. The

chants are pre-recorded short phrases which were combined into longer phrases. I had to select the Latin phrase, the key for the phrase, and the speed it should be sung. This then ensured that all the musical parts blended both in key and in timing, and that the result also synchronised with the video. Even the note of the church bell was in tune with the organ.

> Note: A toccata is a free-form piece of music, typically for a keyboard instrument, designed to show the technical skill of the performer. It comes from the Italian word for 'to touch' as it places emphasis on fast moving passages and rapid fingerwork. It is fully intentional that, consequently, the use of the word 'toccata' in the title of the video has two possible meanings.

THE VIDEO

I prompted the AI for the scene inside the church with the tombs and the organ. The view outside the church was taken from a photograph I found on the internet. The animations were created letting AI produce the ghostly figures and then animated based on my prompts as to how the scene should develop from the given starting points.

THE TESTAMENT OF FATHER THOMAS WHITE

To whomsoever shall read these words in some age far henceforth.

MORE

My name is *Thomas White* — or to speak more truly, *Father Thomas White*. Here beneath this hallowed roof am I laid to rest, within the church wherein I did serve as minister for the space of twenty years. Thou mayst behold my tomb within the church, standing beside another wherein lieth *Lady Alice*.

Never was there a great flock in this poor parish, being set deep amidst the country fields. The number of souls did wane by little and little, till scarce a handful did come to Mass upon the Lord's Day. Oft would Lady Alice play the organ, for after the death of our regular organist we had none other. She was a skilful musician and a gentle teacher, and gave me lessons that I might learn to make some melody upon the instrument. She seemed well content with my progress.

Lady Alice was a widow; her husband had been slain in that grievous Civil War some fifteen years past. I must needs confess that my heart grew much inclined toward her, and methinks hers toward me. Yet my sacred vows did bind me fast, so that I durst not utter what lay within my breast, nor draw nigh unto her in such wise.

But in the last year she was stricken with that dreadful plague which hath wrought so much sorrow in this realm; and though I prayed with all fervour and the physicians tended her with care, she departed this life. My heart was sorely rent. Oft would I sit alone at the organ by night, fancying that she was yet beside me, her fair hands guiding mine upon the keys. I longed to be with her once more.

Not many months thereafter I was seized with pain of the head, with sickness and burning fever. Soon I perceived that I too had taken that same mortal distemper. I yielded my spirit unto God upon the one and thirtieth day of October, in the year of our Lord *1667*.

After my passing they laid me in a tomb within the church, even beside Lady Alice. The doors were shut fast and the place left desolate, never to be opened again.

Perchance this is the chastisement of Heaven — that for mine unholy desire toward Alice, I am doomed to lie ever near her, yet never to behold her face again.

Yet once in each year, when the night of *All Hallows' Eve* draweth on, I am loosed for a brief hour from my grievous penance. Then do I fancy myself once more seated at the organ, and methinks my Lady is beside me as in days long past. I behold her countenance faintly in the candle's dying light, and stretch forth my hand toward her, yearning but to touch her once.

Alas, ere my fingers may find hers, she vanisheth like mist before the dawn. Thus am I reminded that the vows I took were not for the span of mortal life alone, but for all eternity.

With heavy heart I return unto my cold tomb, there to abide in silence till that hour cometh round again — and so endure this endless sorrow, this torment without end.