

VERSE: A LEGEND OF PROVENCE

In a moment of solitude and dim light, the narrator finds themselves entranced by a portrait of a sorrowful nun, launching into a legend tied to this image. The story, set in the picturesque south of France, unfolds around a convent known as "Our Lady of the Hawthorns," celebrated for its benevolence, skill in the healing arts, and a peaceful life dedicated to service and prayer. Among the nuns, Sister Angela, a young orphan raised within the convent's walls, stood out for her devotion, innocence, and the joy she brought to her sisters.

Angela's peaceful existence took a dramatic turn when war brought a wave of wounded soldiers to the convent's door. Among them was a foreign knight whose tales of the world beyond the convent walls filled Angela's imagination with dreams of chivalry, romance, and beauty. Enticed by these stories and the affection she developed for the knight, Angela fled the convent with him, only to face betrayal and disillusionment. As the years passed, Angela's life outside the convent spiraled into misery, leading her to yearn for her former home and redemption.

One night, driven by desperation and remorse, Angela returned to the convent. In a miraculous turn, she discovered that the Virgin Mary had taken her place during her absence, ensuring none knew of her departure. Wrapped in this divine forgiveness and acceptance, Angela found peace.

The story concludes years later as Angela, on her deathbed, confides her tale to her fellow sisters, emphasizing the mercy and forgiveness that shaped her final years back at the convent. Her life and return exemplify the profound themes of repentance and divine grace, leaving a lasting impression of serenity and redemption on those she leaves behind.