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# Dreamwalker: Dark of Night

Book 2 in the Dreamwalker Series

# PROLOGUE

*August 21, 2002*

*Bang!*

*I jumped.*

*Someone screamed and someone else made a big laugh. I looked up at Lily with wide six-year-old eyes. Her face made a smile. Next to me, her skirt swished, the circle sequins at the bottom sparkled up under the blinking lights. Her sandals and my bare feet crunched on the dry grass.*

*Those were sounds I knew, things I had seen before - but everything else was strange. New.*

*New people, with faces I didn't recognize. All over-flashing lights, clanging, ringing, talking, and laughing. My eyes got bigger with each new sight and I got tripped up as we walked. I sniffed in a long breath, trying to make a memory of all the new smells; there was a salty, buttery one, a sweet one, and one that kind of smelled the same as when Lily cooked pancakes in her black skillet. My fingers were still sticky from the fluffy blue stuff I'd touched earlier and I kept smooshing them together, liking the way it was kind of hard to pull them apart. It was supposed to be candy, but it looked like the furry mold that grew on a yucky orange I found once after it rolled under the seat in our van and was lost for a long time.*

*I had looked up at Sebastian and made a frown.*

*"Bash! You tricked me! It's not candy!"*

*He only laughed a big belly laugh and said, "Cotton candy!"*

*When it touched my tongue—it disappeared, and I made a face but ate the rest of it anyway. Bash said it was blueberry, but it didn't taste like any blueberries I'd ever had.*

*Just ahead, a man stood next to a small cart—at least, I thought he was a man. He had arms and legs and a head like a man, but he also had bright white skin and a big red ball for his nose. A curly poof of rainbow-colored hair sat on top of his head, and his clothes were funny: puffy, like Lily's dress that one time when she walked in the river and it got all filled with air. Bash said she looked like a bee-loon but I had never seen a bee like that before.*

*The funny man held a bunch of strings in his hand and tied to the ends were big, round floating things of all colors. I wanted to touch them. They looked like glass and I wanted to know how they could be floating in the air like that.*

*That's why I'd stopped. I walked towards him, and he smiled at me.*

*"Lily, what are those?" I pointed to the funny circles bobbing up and down on top of his strings.*

*Lily didn't answer. I turned real fast. Lily wasn't there. I was used to being on my own, but still—some little something told me I should find her.*

*"Lily?" I called, looking up at all the faces passing by. None of them belonged to her.*

*There were always new people where we lived; coming and going, staying and leaving. But I didn't know any of these faces. My tummy got a little rumbley.*

*"Bash?" I turned fast again in a circle, looking for his long silver-grey hair. My Bash was tall. I would be able to see him over the tops of all the grownups. He was wearing a...what color was his tunic again? Green...or maybe...blue.*

*I walked around some more. There were too many things to look at, and I quick forgot to find Bash and Lily. I stopped at a big machine that moved in a circle and people sat in buckets to ride it around. It looked high up when they got to the top. It didn't look like a happy thing to me.*

*I passed by a long row of tables where people stood throwing balls into buckets, and pointy sticks with feathers at more of those colored circles. They made a loud pop when the stick hit them. There were big toy animals hanging up behind the games and I watched a girl scream real loud when her friend tossed some rings around green glass bottles. She did a bunch of jumps and hugs, and the game man gave her a pink elephant that was bigger than she was.*

*Lots of people walked around, but none of them were Bash or Lily. The sky was dark now, and more lights came on all over. They were too bright and made my eyes go squinty when I looked up high. I couldn't see the stars. Lily said when you could see the stars it was a good time to rest, but I could stay up if that's what felt right to me. Sometimes I would stay up and feel grumpy. Grownups knew things; I wished they would just tell us so we could know too. That would make me happy. Finding Bash and Lily would make me happy, too. Being by myself didn't feel right to me. I looked around for them again, but they weren't there. My tummy got real rumbley then and I felt a new feeling.*

*I didn't like this new feeling—it made my heart hurt when it bumped, and there was a stinging thing in my throat when I tried to swallow. My eyes got tears and I didn't like that either. I remembered that we didn't walk far to get to this new place; camp was close. It was a new camp, but camp was always home. It was near that stripey tent where the lady in the purple dress had a shiny glass ball and told Lily about her grandma. She said Grandma Sue was happy and that made Lily cry. Lily said they were happy tears and hugged that lady two times. If I could find the ball lady, maybe I could find our camp.*

*I stood up high on tiptoes, trying to see over the grownups and looking for the red and white tent. The grownups were too tall though. Over a little ways, I saw a circle fence with ponies inside. I ran over and started to climb up.*

*"Hey! No climbing on the fence!" A frowning man with a black beard and a red hat shook his finger at me. I didn't like him; he made my skin cold.*

*But I needed to be on the fence...I needed to see, so I pushed up higher.*

*“I said...get off the fence, kid!”*

*That pony man pushed my shoulder and my foot slipped off the bottom rail. I went down to the ground fast and a hard thing hit my chin. It hurt real bad and so did the rocks I landed on. When I touched my face, it was wet and there was sticky red on my fingers. My eyes got more tears. My tummy was awful rumbley now. Lily said the carnyville was a happy thing, but this was not happy to me.*

*Lily. Where is Lily? And Bash - I need them.*

*A big wind came up quick fast, some dirt stinged my eyes and all the tents made snapping sounds. I curled up real small, I wanted to run far away from this place but my legs were all shaky.*

*“Are you lost?”*

*The wind was gone.*

*I looked up and saw a boy. Those stingy tears made him blurry, but his voice was kind. He was bigger than me and had a box of popcorn in his hand.*

*“I need to find the ball lady,” I said. My words were shaky.*

*“Here.” The boy stuck out his hand.*

*I stared at it for a second and then put my hand out too. He pulled me up and a little zippy thing went up my arm when his fingers touched mine.*

*“Are you ‘lectric?”*

*“What?” He laughed, but he was looking at his hand too. “Who are you looking for?”*

*“The ball lady. She has a purple dress, and I can’t find Bash and...and..” It was hard to make words. I sniffed and rubbed my arm across my face to wipe it dry.*

*“You’re bleeding,” he said.*

*“The pony man pushed me.”*

*“I saw that. Here, put this on it.”*

*He handed me a white paper napkin. I tapped it on my chin real soft; there was a big red dot on the paper when I looked at it again.*

*“So...are you looking for your parents?”*

*“Uh huh, but we came from the ball lady.”*

*“You mean the fortune teller? She’s over there.”*

*I looked to where his finger pointed and saw the red and white stripes of the ball lady's tent. My heart did a jump and I smiled big, but it hurt my chin, so my smile went away.*

*"Do you want me to walk with you?"*

*"Okay."*

*The nice boy walked next to me; he was tall so he could see over the grownups and he said the way to go.*

*"You want some popcorn?"*

*I nodded and he tipped his box so I could get a handful. It was salty and kind of sweet too.*

*"Good, right?"*

*I nodded a big nod and he laughed.*

*"What's your name?" He asked.*

*"My name is An—there she is!"*

*Some grownups moved just then, and I saw Lily looking all around with her skirt bunched up tight in her hands. She dropped her skirt and put her hands up together on her chest when she saw me. Lily ran towards me and scooped me up quick. Her arms made me warm.*

*"Oh, you scared me! I turned around and you were gone!"*

*"There was a man with rainbow hair. What were those floating things he had, Lily?"*

*"This isn't camp, Andromeda. You can't wander!" She set me down and put her hands on my shoulders. Her mouth made a frown.*

*"The floating things were happy."*

*Most of the mommas at camp didn't make that face—they didn't tell the kids what to do. We did the happy things, but sometimes the grownups didn't like the same things we did. I didn't like those times because the grownups would talk loud and I would have to cover my ears. I was afraid Lily would talk loud now, but she didn't.*

*"Oh...what happened to your face?"*

*"The pony man pushed me, but the nice boy helped me and shared his pop-a-corn."*

*"What boy?"*

*I turned to point to the boy with the big brown eyes, but he was gone.*

*"Well never mind, you're safe now. Come on, Bash is waiting at the roller coaster!"*

*"What's a cola roaster?" I looked up at her. She did a giggle and held my hand; she squeezed a little tight, but I held on tight too.*

*"It's a ride. It's scary, but also exciting."*

*"Is it a happy thing?"*

*"I think so!"*

*We rode three times. I never could decide if it was a happy thing. When our cart went up, it was fun and bumpy, but the cart would click, click, click as it got to the top and I knew the down part was coming. That made my tummy go tight. The down parts were scary, but after the first time I knew they would be over fast quick. Sometimes the cart was jerky around the corners, but Bash and Lily were there, and I squished into them so it didn't hurt as much. When our car rolled into the gate at the end, I was happy to get off but a little sad, too, because there was one part on the ride where we weren't going up or down; we were just going straight, real fast, and it felt like I could fly.*

# CHAPTER 1

“Did you hear that?”

I looked over my shoulder. No one was there.

*Annnndyyyyy.*

There it was again. I scanned the trees for movement. Still...nothing.

“Hear what?” Will said, slowing his pace, turning to jog backwards.

“I thought I heard...never mind.” I sped past him, laughing as he yelled after me.

“Hey! That’s cheating!”

I meant to keep up my sprint and gain a strong lead ahead of him, but my laughter only slowed me down and he was on my heels in seconds.

“Nice try, Mrs. Carter,” he joked as he passed me and disappeared over the hill.

I slowed to a walk, placing my hands on my hips and tipping my head back to try and take deeper breaths, wincing as I swallowed down cold, dry air. We’d been running for at least thirty minutes now and I was ready to head back, but wasn’t ready to admit it. I was still trying to prove to Will that I was returning to normal...whatever that meant.

I noticed a thin deer path that cut through the trees and looked to be a promising shortcut. With a sly smile, I took off down the steep trail, determined to beat my husband back to the trailhead.

I could hear the pounding of his feet on the dirt, breaking twigs and crushing leaves as he ran ahead, but the trail made a wide arc, looping back around to the bottom of the hill. I could cut straight across and beat him by several minutes.

This path was much steeper and rugged than the trail, but the vision of his face as he rounded the bend and saw me waiting there at the sign far outweighed any thoughts of danger. I half-ran, half-slid down the thin path, which was still muddy from recent rains. An excited giggle escaped my lips as my feet slipped out from under me and I rode the trail down a particularly steep section on my backside. That excitement ended abruptly when I reached the end of the ride and was met with a sharp drop off. I would have sailed straight over the edge had I not seen it seconds before and turned on my side, frantically grabbing at branches and dirt in an effort to slow my descent. Finally, my fingers settled around the rough, wet roots of an uprooted tree. They stretched and groaned against my weight, but the gnarled tendrils remained intact and I jerked to a stop with my palms on fire and my legs dangling over the edge of a muddy precipice.

“Okay...maybe this was a bad idea.” I chastised myself out loud.

Will was nowhere in sight, and while I was quite certain he would find me eventually, I was not certain my grip would last that long. Plus, I didn’t want to endure the lecture that would come with such a rescue, not that I could blame him. After almost losing me to a poisonous snakebite, a near drowning, and the clutches of a villainous monster, he had reason to worry. Looking over my shoulder, I could see it wasn’t actually that far to the ground below. If I lowered myself as far as I could using the roots as a rope, I could drop down. I still might even have a chance of beating him to the end.

With arm muscles that screamed every inch of the way, I moved down, hand under hand, until I was fully over the edge. After one deep breath and a desperate prayer that my foolishness wouldn’t end in a broken ankle, I let go, landing on the soft brush covered ground with a grunt.

I looked myself over and found, surprisingly, no injuries. I was filthy, but other than raw, red flesh on my palms, there wasn’t even one scrape to show for my impulsiveness. My celebration didn’t last however; a sharp snap echoed through the trees, causing me to turn quickly.

I scanned the woods for movement but saw nothing. Unfortunately, I also saw that the trail I’d been following had ended at the cliff above and I was facing a blind downward climb through thick underbrush.

I jogged on in the direction I thought would lead me back to the trail. A cool wind snaked through the trees, sending a chill up my spine that raised the hair on my arms. Suddenly, I had the horrible, sickening feeling that something was right behind me. *Keep going...just keep moving forward, Andy.*

The air, once crisp and fresh, now smelled a little like sulfur. It burned in my nose and I coughed, trying to expel the discomfort. It was persistent though; invisible and sourceless, just like the mysterious voice that called out earlier.

I heard my name again; except it wasn't actually my name—it sounded as if someone was saying Andromeda and Joanna at the same time. The two words grated against each other, like gears that didn't quite fit. An irreconcilable conflict between the past and the present. The sound sent yet another chill down my spine, a shiver that clung to my skin even under the layers of fleece and cotton.

My jog was now a run, and my knees resisted the speed at which I was coursing downhill. I finally hit the trail, but it was more overgrown than I expected. Had I lost my way? With every step, my heart pounded harder, its rhythm pushing hard against my eardrums. Something was wrong... terribly wrong. Even though there was nothing but trees every time I looked over my shoulder, I couldn't shake the feeling that I was being followed. And my pursuer wasn't friendly.

Ahead the path split, and I skidded to a stop. This wasn't on the trail map.

“Which way?” I whispered to myself, breathless and panicked.

Another sharp snap caused me to spin around. Something moved in the woods. I squinted, trying to see what it was.

“Will?” I called. *Please be Will.*

No answer.

“William Graham Carter, this isn't funny!”

No...it wasn't him. If I'd gotten off the trail, I was deep in the woods and it could be any number of things, the scariest of which a bear or wolf. I remembered the smokey, sulfurous smell; something must be nearby. Could it be another cabin, or one of the many mountain sawmills? Maybe I was just on another trail, an old one not on the map, and our cabin was close.

Without looking back, I started down the path that looked less overgrown. searching through the trees for any sign of the reddish-brown logs of our cabin.

Our spontaneous vacation had brought us to the mountains of North Carolina. The house Will had rented was remote and peaceful, a perfect escape from downtown Alexandria. While Christ's Church was not the biggest tourist hot spot, especially in the winter, there was a constant buzz of city life all around us. It was nice to take a break from honking horns, revving engines, and the never-ending sounds of urban life. While I'd referred to it as our honeymoon, since we never really took one, Will refused to accept that, promising he had something else in mind to earn that title.

We'd set out on a trail run just half an hour before I heard the strange voice in the wind, before I had the silly idea of winning some imaginary race, before I tried to prove that I was fine. The barely there trail turned into a completely non-existent trail and I was simply in the woods. Always in the woods. I heard that grating sound again, the metallic scrape of my two names unable to reconcile. I clasped my hands over my ears, staring into the trees, trying to make out the source of the sound I'd heard. My brain turned trees into men, and shadows into monsters. I swallowed hard, my throat burning from the cold winter air. Something shifted in the distance. That definitely wasn't my mind playing tricks—there was a figure in the woods. My hands moved from my ears to my mouth and I stumbled backwards. The familiar sting of hot tears burned at the corner of my eyes.

I'd seen enough of horror movies to know not to call out the cliché' "Who's there?" that surely meant certain death. Instead my feet were moving, and I was making my own path. I wanted to call out for Will. If it was a bear, I needed to make noise in order to scare it away, but if it was a wolf, that might bring it closer. I decided to remain quiet, although I could hear the muffled chinking sounds of the bear bells in my pocket. When we left the cabin, we'd headed east. I glanced down at my watch which had a tiny direction indicator on the screen and saw the little "W" letting me know I was headed in the right direction.

Here I was, running scared through the woods...again. The last time was with Will as we ran together from The Agency, and before that, in a dream from a monster. Could he be chasing me again? Could Taklos have escaped and found me? *No...it's not him. He's just a man...just a man.* Of that, I was sure. Was my fear causing me to imagine things? Was I losing my mind? This felt like a nightmare. Was that what this was? Could I be dreaming? If I was...

Without stopping, I reached my hand out, willing the branches in front of me to bend backwards. While the leaves quivered a little, the branches did not obey. No. This was not a dream—I was awake, and this was real. I kept moving, trying to calm the panic that was rising, threatening to overtake any reason that remained. I could hear the thud of my steps on the earth, the shush of the leaves as I pushed through, and the high-pitched wheeze of my terrified breaths. Why did I agree to a vacation in the woods? Nothing good had ever happened in the woods.

Just ahead, a splotch of bright white appeared through a gap in the trees; I hurried towards it. The Something was closing in behind me. It was making no attempt at stealth, but I refused to risk a glance behind. Whatever it was, it was angry and strong; it matched my pace step for step. *Get to the building...get inside...get safe. Focus on the mission.*

I stumbled from the thickness of the forest into a brightly sunlit clearing. The building before me was actually a small, and very old, church. I sprinted across the lawn toward its arched double doors, finding them locked. I hammered against the wood with my fists, despite the fleeting logical conclusion that it was abandoned. I moved around the corner and pressed flat against the wall, white flakes of chipped paint scratching my skin. My lungs burned, my breaths were shallow and ragged. I knew I should turn and face whatever was chasing me, but I couldn't. I was frozen, my eyes squeezed tightly closed.

It was close now—I could feel it.

“Mrs. Carter?”

I jumped at the sound of my name. My eyes flew open, surprised to see a woman. A real one.

“Are...aren’t you Mrs. Carter?” she asked from where she stood at the other corner of the building. She had shoulder length brown hair and a concerned expression.

“Yes.” I nodded.

“Are you okay?”

“Something was...there’s something out there.”

She stepped back and looked towards the woods. She didn’t appear to be afraid.

“I don’t see anything.”

“I heard...I thought I heard something,” I said, realizing I was clutching my lion pendant with both hands.

The woman stepped closer. I didn’t know her, but I wasn’t afraid of her.

"I'm Samantha Prescott. I rented the cabin to your husband," she said, placing her hand on her chest. I didn't respond. "I hear things in the woods all the time too. It can be really scary. Do you want to come inside?"

"It's locked," I said.

"The front is, but the back is open. Come on, it's actually really lovely inside."

My heart was still pounding, but I peeled myself off the wall and walked toward the woman with the kind face who was holding her arm out. She was older than me, I guessed by about ten years, and was dressed comfortably in faded jeans, a hooded sweatshirt and brown hiking shoes. She looked absolutely normal. As I got closer, I saw she had the most beautiful hazel eyes. Her golden irises were rimmed with green, and I was suddenly warmed by the compassion that flowed from them like a waterfall. She was safe.

"What is this place?" I asked as she ushered me around the corner to the back of the chapel.

"It used to be Parker's Mill Chapel, but they moved to a new building closer to town and now it's just another old place that time forgot. I come out here sometimes...to pray and just be alone." She smiled as she spoke, looking around the dusty church with affection.

"Oh...I'm sorry, Mrs. Prescott, I didn't mean to disturb you." I suddenly felt silly for being such a coward.

"No! Oh, don't feel bad, really. I was actually just leaving, so I'm glad I got to meet you," she said, sticking out her hand. I shook her hand and she smiled.

"Please...call me Sam."

I laughed softly. For some reason, I felt a connection to her.

"Hi, Sam. I'm Andy."

"Andy." She repeated my name, her laugh matching mine.

"Um, so do you live near here then?" I asked as I walked down the center aisle, running my hands across the backs of broken pews.

Sam sank down onto one of the few sturdy benches near the entrance.

"Yes, our farm is just over the hill from the cabin. I'm surprised you haven't heard the roosters," she said.

"You have a farm?" I asked enthusiastically.

"Yes." She laughed again. "My husband and I bought it several years ago."

"I've always wanted to have a farm. Do you and he farm full time, then?"

Her smile faded a little and I felt like I'd just said something wrong, immediately recognizing the powerful combination of fondness, sadness, and bitter-sweet loneliness that pulsed from her. They were the same emotions my great uncle, Jubal Jones, felt when he'd talked about his late wife, Marie. I would never forget that heart wrenching moment, when I first realized I could feel someone else's strong emotions as if they were my own. It was a "gift" from Dovanny Taklos, an unwelcome exchange as he attempted to siphon off my ability to walk in dreams.

I cut my eyes away from hers, already knowing what she was going to say.

"My kids and I do. My husband, Michael, passed away. Tuesday will be four years and five months."

"I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to..." My hand fluttered to my mouth.

She looked down at her left hand and rubbed her thumb across her fingers, a pale line still visible where a ring had been. I had a feeling she'd only recently removed it.

I suddenly felt an urge to hurry back to the cabin. Saying Will would be worried would be a huge understatement.

"Thank you." She sucked in a deep breath and shoved her hands into the front pocket of her sweatshirt. "And really...it's okay. I miss him every day, but learning to live without him has taught me so much about myself and about the sweet, unexplainable comfort of my Savior."

Her words were genuine, and I wished I could sit with her for hours, learning to have the kind of faith I could feel radiating from her heart. It wrapped around her, shielding and protecting her like a blanket against the bitter cold.

"I can't imagine," I said.

Her hazel eyes met mine, and I could see a gentle understanding reflected in them.

"I know. It's not something you can ever prepare for, losing someone you love so much. It makes you question everything, I can't even explain the depths of doubt I nearly drowned in. It feels like you can't breathe... until one day, you can. It never really gets easier, but you learn to live through it, to abide in the truth of God's love, to have joy in the midst of the pain. You really learn the meaning of hope, and what it means to long for home."

I didn't have words to respond.

"I'm sorry...you really didn't come here for a sermon," she said, then laughed as her eyes traced the lines of ancient walls that once housed a vibrant congregation. "Or did you?"

I laughed along with her.

"I'm just in awe of your faith," I said sincerely. "I don't know if I could..."

"You can't." Her response startled me. "But God can. Trust me, I tried. I'm a little ashamed of how long I tried. And I'll be honest, I have my good days and bad days, but God is always faithful—even when I'm not." She glanced down at her watch and stood.

"I really wish I could stay longer, Andy, but I've got to meet the ladies group at church. We are expecting the new youth pastor next week, and we are going to get his rental ready."

I followed her to the door and out into the clearing.

"Will you be able to find your way back?" she asked, hesitating.

"Um...could you point me in the right direction?"

"Sure." She pointed in the opposite direction from which I had come. "It's just over that ridge."

"Thanks," I said. "And thank you for letting us stay. It's really beautiful here."

"Oh, of course, I'm glad I got to meet you." She pulled me in for an unexpected hug.

I hugged her back before she stepped away, her cheeks flushed. "Sorry...I'm a hugger."

"Never apologize for that," I said, unable to hide the smile on my face.

I waved to her as she disappeared into the trees that lined another path leading away from the church.

"Andy?" called a familiar, deep voice from behind me.

I turned around quickly to face the confused, and slightly aggravated, face of Will Carter.

"I turned around and you were gone."

He stood just a few feet away, red faced, his hands on his hips and chest heaving as if he'd just run a marathon. "I've been looking for you for an hour."

An hour? Surely, I wasn't off the trail that long. I blinked at him for a brief second before realizing we were out in the open. I scanned the woods. It remained still—there was nothing there.

"Seriously, Andy...you can't just disappear like that. I thought..." He shook his head and ran a hand through his dark hair, which dripped with sweat. I know what he thought; he didn't have to say.

"I'm sorry," I said automatically. "Wait...how did you know where I was?"

"I just..." He shrugged.

“You just knew,” I finished for him. Of course he did. That was Will-finder of lost things, rescuer of the needy. The first time he rescued someone, it was his brother, and it was also the exact day and time I was born. There were so many things about our lives we didn’t understand, so many mysteries, but he understood he was meant to protect me, and he took his calling very seriously.

The disapproving look faded from his expression and he turned his attention to the building behind me.

“What is this place?”

“Uh...an old chapel,” I said, looking once again towards the woods. “I think she said it was called Parker’s Mill.”

“Who?”

“Sam...er, Ms. Prescott. She owns the cabin.”

“Oh, yeah, she’s nice.” He walked towards the church.

“I wonder what congregation met all the way out here,” he mused while looking through one of the broken windows. “Looks ancient.”

His brown eyes fell on mine, and whatever he saw there caused his brows to draw together.

“Are you okay?”

“Yeah...I guess I got lost.”

I slipped my arms up and locked my hands around the back of his neck. He drew me close, pulling me up to my tiptoes. It was bright, he was here, we were safe...everything was okay. I closed my eyes and let deep breaths of cool winter air fill my lungs.

“I’m always finding you in the woods.” He laughed softly.

I opened my eyes again, and from my view over his shoulder, I could see into those woods. While I was in the chapel with Sam, I’d forgotten about it, but now that sickening feeling returned, and I squeezed my arms tighter; Will returned the gesture.

Whatever had been chasing me was still there—watching from some place hidden, I could feel it. In the distance, deep in the shadows of the trees, I thought I saw...something impossible.

I gasped.

“What’s wrong?” Will pulled back from our embrace, holding me by the shoulders.

“I...uh...thought I saw something,” I said, blinking hard. When I looked again, it was gone. Will turned, following my gaze into the trees.

“What was it?”

I searched the trees again, shaking my head. “Nothing, I guess. I must be imagining things.”

I took his hand and pulled him away from the building. “Come on, take me home.”

“As you wish, Mrs. Carter.”

As we walked across the clearing, I chanced one last glance over my shoulder. Whatever I’d seen was gone, but the image still burned in my mind. It must have been a trick of the light, but I could have sworn I’d seen my own face staring back at me.