

CHAPTER 2

Bad Dreams



SAVANNAH BOLTED UPRIGHT IN bed, shaking from a bad dream. It took her a moment to realize she was safe in her own bedroom. Relief flooded over her, but her heart kept pounding. She glanced at her husband, who was sound asleep, then got up, grabbing her robe from the foot of the bed.

She walked out of the bedroom and down the dark stairwell, reaching the living room decorated with rattan furniture that mimicked the tropics. The overhead palm-leaf fan slowly spun.

Savannah pulled open the sliding glass door. The sea breeze rushed past her, rustling the vertical blinds. She stepped outside, walking across the deck. The ocean roared. She stood by the railing, watching the waves ebb

and flow under the moon's glow. The salty mist settled over her, layer by layer, slowly creating a vaporous cocoon. Savannah didn't mind the dampness. It made her feel connected—like an old house being overcome by the elements, metamorphosing back to its natural state. In the distance, thunder rumbled. A storm was brewing.

Someone opened the sliding glass door, startling Savannah, who turned to see her husband, Steve, walking towards her.

He reached her side, asking, "What are you doing out here?"

"Just getting some fresh air."

Steve didn't believe her. "Something wrong?"

Savannah appreciated his concern, however, thinking about the nightmare sent shivers down her spine. She didn't want to talk about it. "Oh, nothing."

"Are you sure?"

She stared at the water to avoid his gaze.

Steve continued staring at her, hoping she would confide in him. When she didn't answer, he became concerned, asking, "What is it? Do you feel okay?"

"Yes, I'm fine. It was just a bad dream. That's all."

"A dream? What was it about?"

"You don't want to hear about it. Trust me."

"I can handle it."

“Fine. I don’t remember the first part, but the dream began with a car accident.” She was surprised at the intensity of her emotions as she recounted the details. Her breathing grew labored. “All of us were in the SUV. There were sirens and ambulances everywhere. The worst part is...” she hesitated to say, “you and the kids were killed.”

Steve’s gut tightened. His wife’s fear was contagious. He fought against it, reminding himself, *It was just a dream*. His rational mind took control and he calmly responded, “We’re all fine. Like you said, ‘It was just a dream.’”

“I know,” she agreed, but truthfully she was worried the dream was more than that. She feared it was a premonition.

Steve consoled her, “I once read that when you dream about someone dying, it really means your relationship is changing. Maybe you’re afraid of the kids getting older and leaving the nest.”

Savannah replied, “Maybe,” even though the explanation didn’t feel right to her.

Her husband wrapped his arm around her, pulling her closer. Together, they watched the indigo waves pitch to a primordial rhythm.

Savannah wanted to claim this moment, hoping that somehow she could stop the approaching black train that bore an ominous warning. In the distance, she heard it

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rumbling down the tracks. A long shrill whistle drifted through the air, coming closer and closer until it crossed the divide between realities, whispering in her ear, "I'm coming."