

# Shadowcrest Manor by Michaela Bishop

July 12, 1801 Charleston, South Carolina

A soft cold breeze flowed throughout the whole house, it carried the scent of the Sea Island cotton and seawater, taking away the smell of dust and stillness. Shadowrest Manor was to become our new home here in Charleston. The manor had been vacant for a while since its last owner had passed away and leaving no will or surviving heir, the plantation was shut down. The outside was a little bit weather damaged however, Father is having the whole house repainted a colonial white, the front columns will be a nice off white to balance the main color. The painters arrived tomorrow to do the whole house inside and out, they are even going to repaint the servants' quarters too.

Some of our servants back in England decided to stay on with us but most were let go. Betsey was our nanny when we were younger and now she is the head maid and she still helps the four of us whenever we need it. Antony is the best cook my family has ever had and he is one of the most understanding people I have ever met. He has always been there for me whenever I needed to talk about my family.

Mother and Father are so excited to open the plantation again and to start a new chapter in our lives. We left London a month ago and I am happy about the move but this place does not feel like home, yet.

"Rose, come up stairs and see our new room. I think you will like it," my twin sister Jessamine said from the doorway. "I know you miss London but this will be good for everyone."

"I know but I cannot help but miss the view from my window."

"Then come upstairs, you might find that you like this new view better."

I turned away from the window and walked with Jessamine up to our new room and I fell in love. The room was big enough for the two of us to share, as we have for most of our lives. We each had brought our bed frames and most of our furniture from our old home. Jessamine and I used to have bookshelves in our bedroom but in the new house we have a full library that Father had stocked for my use. I also insisted that we bring a vanity that was made especially for our great-grandmother, it was handcrafted by a suitor of hers when she first entered society. In the corner of the room are a set of double doors that led out onto the wrap around balcony. Mother said that my sisters and I can decorate our side however we wanted, I suggested that we put

some tables and chairs out there so we could enjoy the view while we entertain guests or for our own personal use whenever we want to. From the balcony, I could see the ships coming into port from the far reaches of the world. It reminded me of my old bedroom view. In London, I could see the sun set upon the river Thames, but this view is better.

“Rosalind, Jessamine. Come downstairs, we must go to town to pick up the new drapery for the main rooms and the bedrooms,” Mother said as she stood in the door way. Victoria and Juliette had their own separate rooms and the two of them are more particular about their styles so they always need to be present when new décor was being picked out.

Jessamine and I went along with Mother and our sisters to town. I would have rather been at home reading in the library, however today the library was being re-polished and painted this afternoon. While Mother and my sisters walked into the dress boutique and I stayed outside looking at my new surroundings, when a young gentleman walked up to me.

“Good morning, Miss. I have never seen you around here. Have you just arrived in our fair city?” the gentleman asked.

“A good morning to you too. My family and I have moved here quite recently.”

“Where did you come from and where are you living?”

“We came from London. We moved into Shadowrest Manor.”

“Rosalind, come here” Mother said tersely. “Who is that you are speaking with?”

“A young man I have just met.”

“What is your name young man?” Mother said to Daniel.

“I am Daniel Blackwood, Ma’am.”

“Have you lived in Charleston long?” Mother asked.

“Born and bred. I would not think of living anywhere else.”

“Well, it was nice to meet you. My daughters and I must be going now. Come girls.”

“It was wonderful to meet you Rosalind, I hope to see you again,” Daniel said as he kissed my hand good bye.

“Good bye, Daniel.”

As we got into the carriage, Mother expressed her happiness at my meeting Daniel.

“He is from the Blackwood’s. They are a very prestigious family around here.”

“Mother, how did you know that?” Victoria asked.

“When your father and I came here to first see Shadowrest Manor, we met with some of other families and they talked about the Blackwood family. They have been here for generations, they are one of the most influential families around here. However, no one has really seen any of the family expect for Daniel.”

“That’s strange,” Juliette stated.

“No, it is not. Some family patriarchs do not like to socialize with other families who are of a lower social status than them.” Mother explained.

“I did not like him. He had a weird feeling about him,” Jessamine said. “He seemed to attentive to you, Rosalind.”

“He was being friendly, Jessamine. You are so suspicious,” Juliette teased. My sister was right, Daniel was being friendly towards the new family who had just moved into town. Jessamine is only being paranoid, she has been nervous since we arrived here about a month ago. She tends to think the worse out of people she does not know. Daniel does seem like a person that we can trust, his green eyes seem trustworthy.

July 15th, 1801

My parents decided to throw a ball at our plantation to show off all the renovations my parents put into the house and they invited many influential families to join us. So, to prepare I went with some of the servants to *supervise* getting food and supplies. Mother and Father just wanted me out of the house while the rest of the staff was decorating the whole house and I guess I was in the way of some of the servants. On our way back to the carriage, with all the supplies, I spotted Daniel walking towards me.

“Greetings Daniel, how is your day?”

“Wonderful now that I have found you Rosalind. What are you doing on this fine day?”

“My family is hosting a ball so I went along with the servants to purchase the supplies. Would you like to attend? I am sure that there is more than enough room for one more person.”

“Yes, I would love to attend. When shall I be by?”

“Tomorrow evening at six o’clock. I hope to see you there.”

Then I went into the carriage and was taken home. When I arrived, the whole house had been cleaned and my sisters were all upstairs trying on their new dresses for the party.

“Mother, while I was out I saw Daniel and invited him to the party tomorrow night.”

“That is wonderful dear, we would love to have him join us. I will just let Gertie know that there will be one more for dinner,” Mother said as she walked out of the room. I was relieved that Mother is not mad at me for inviting Daniel at the last minute. I hope everything goes well tomorrow night....

July 16th, 1801

Most of the day Jessie and I were helping Victoria and Juliette get ready as both were not quite so used to lacing up corsets as Jessamine and I are.

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Then Daniel said that he should probably be heading home. We escorted him out but when Mother opened the door, we saw that it was pouring outside.

“Well, I will just be going then,” Daniel said as he walked out the door.

“Do you have a way home?” Father asked.

“Walking, Sir,” Daniel said.

“You cannot go home walking in this storm! Father cannot you give him a lift in the carriage?” Jessie asked.

“I will see if I can wake up the butler” Father said as he walked off into the hallway, Mother followed him and stopped him.

“Honey don’t you remember? You gave him the night off,” Mother said rather distantly. I looked closer at her and saw that her eyes looked a bit glazed over. Jessamine and I exchanged looks but thought nothing of it at the time. I turned my head towards Daniel to ask what he wanted to do but, I stopped myself when I noticed the look in his eyes. His face was distorted in an almost menacing way, kind of like he was enjoying where this conversation was going and he was looking at my parents like he was immensely concentrated with what my parents were saying in the hallway, they were far enough that it is politely considered a private conversation but we all are within ear shot so we can hear everything that they were saying.

“That’s right. Well, Daniel you just have to spend the night and in the morning, we can send you home,” Father said as he walked back into the sitting room and led Daniel up to one of the guest rooms.

“Thank you, Sir.”

I am a bit surprised that Father let Daniel stay and that he led him into the small guest room next to mine when the bigger and more comfortable room was just a few doors down. I could not imagine not having her there for me. We have always been together; it was always such fun when we were small and we used to sneak around our parents’ dinner parties.

Once our parents got Daniel settled they headed up to bed. Jessamine then helped Victoria and Juliette off to bed.

“Goodnight, Daniel.”

“Goodnight Rosalind, sweet dreams” he replied. I did not realize at the time but Daniel’s eyes gleamed maliciously as he watched me walk into my room.