



Barbara E. Pleasant

A  
Haunting  
at  
Land's End

last time I went into town to meet Jeffery because the next time I went, I saw you and Jeffery through Ella's Tea Room window. You were gazing at each other across the table, lost in each other's eyes. He was holding your hand, and when he raised it to his lips, I knew then I'd lost him. My Jeffery, my hope for a husband and a home of my own, my hope for a child of my own was gone. My Jeffery was now your Jeffery."

Charlotte didn't care if Anna heard her or not. She was talking more to herself than Anna because Anna was drifting in and out of consciousness. Convincing herself that killing Anna was the only way out of her poor excuse of a life. Charlotte coughed violently spraying blood droplets across the dock. During a lull while she sucked air into her lungs, she continued her explanation, not to

Anna but telling it to the sea wind, explaining it to the marsh grass, and shouting it to the ever-present seagulls flying about overhead.

“Then my Jeffery married you and right away you became pregnant. I could hear you both in your bedroom moaning and crying out in the throes of passion. I hated you for making me hear your lovemaking. Then you gave birth to Jeffery’s baby. The baby I always wanted, the baby that would have loved me no matter how plain or unlovable I was. My baby would have been a beautiful golden-haired angel like little Rosemary. You, you even took the name I planned to give my baby with Jeffery. Well sister dear, with Father dead and buried in the cemetery, with Jeffery and the servants gone to the auction in Charleston, and with no one in the house to see or hear, I’m taking this opportunity to rid

my life of you. I have to do it now; I may never get another chance. I haven't thought about what I'll tell Jeffery about your disappearance, but I'll think of something."

Charlotte rolled Anna's limp body off the dock and into father's small fishing boat, and then dropped down in beside her.

Anna regained consciousness for a few moments. "Please Charlotte," she begged. "Don't do this terrible thing. I never meant to hurt you. Jeffery never told me he was supposed to marry you. I just thought he was a friend you had met and invited home to Land's End for dinner. You never said you loved him. You never told me anything about him or your relationship with him."

"I don't want to hear any of your excuses Anna. It's too late now." Charlotte picked up the paddle and pushed the boat away from the

dock, then paddled out to the channel where the quick moving water would pick up speed with the outgoing tide. Soon it would join the Atlantic Ocean. After what seemed an eternity in her weakened state, Charlotte saw this was the perfect spot to dump Anna's body. The current would carry her body out to sea, and Anna would never be seen again. She would just disappear and no one would ever know what happened to her. Charlotte laughed insanely at the thought. The ugly sound of it surprised even her. Then, trying to suck air into her blood-filled lungs, she suffered another coughing fit, spewing blood across the deck.

Anna drifted in and out of consciousness. In one lucid moment, her head throbbing with pain,

again she begged Charlotte not to do this

unspeakable thing. "Please Charlotte, my baby needs me. My breasts are full, and it's time to feed Rosemary. Don't kill me Charlotte please; I hear Rosemary crying for me." Anna raised her head and looked back toward the house. "She's hungry. Let me go to her, Charlotte. Please."

"Too late. I'm taking back what's mine. Jeffery and baby Rosemary are mine now. I'm taking that cameo pin too, that Jeffery gave you when Rosemary was born." She reached out and snatched the delicate cameo from the throat of Anna's blood-soaked dress. "With you out of the way, Jeffery will turn to me. He'll need me to help him with the baby. I'll raise baby Rosemary, I'll be her mother as I should have been all along, had it not been for you getting in the way. Good bye, Anna." Charlotte pushed Anna's limp body over the