



BUTTERFLY HARVEST

EXCERPT

The sky was completely black. Startled by the drastic change, I tried to feel my way through the inky night.

Crap.

A branch snagged my shirt, jerking me back as something sharp scraped against the back of my leg. *Where has the day gone and how in the hell am I going to get out of these woods?* Could the clouds be so thick they completely concealed the glow of the stars and moon, so impenetrable that not a single speck of light could shine through to guide me home? Or, it occurred to me, maybe the explanation was as simple as an eclipse. Everyone who went to school and paid attention would be completely aware and ready to observe such an amazing event, but not me. Here I was in woods I know like the back of my hand, only a few miles from home, and yet I was totally unable to find my way out. I tried to be amused by the irony of my situation, but I wasn't, not in the least.

The wind exploded through the treetops. Small leaves and twigs fell like rain around me. Thunder rumbled overhead and shook the ground. A flash of lightening revealed a white-petaled tree just ahead, except the lightening was sustained like a spot light shining down from the heavens. It wasn't the light that drew me in, however, but the radiating warmth, which moved me in a way I found hard to explain. The tree grew in the center of a dilapidated shack. Looking around, I realized I was in an old makeshift church. Eight poorly constructed pews formed two rows in front of the remains of a very humble altar. A large wooden cross had fallen and lay in broken pieces on the ground. The small dogwood tree flourished in the center of the room under a collapsed roof. The scene I found myself in was serene and breathtaking. A drop of water landed on my cheek. The lightly falling rain was refreshing, and this lost place of worship before me was magical, like something out of a movie.