

THE TAKEN by Donnette Smith

EXCERPT

She half sat half fell against the hard ground. Her hands worked their way down her calf, massaging the muscles that cramped so severely she wanted to cry out.

No one would hear her if she did. It was so dark out here. It was getting nearly impossible to tell if she was still following the vehicle tracks. Every patch of ground and tree appeared the same as all the others. There were no landmarks, no breadcrumbs left behind—like in the fairy tales—to ensure she wasn't running in circles.

It was no use. She didn't have a clue where she was and wouldn't know the way out if the answer flew through the darkness at the speed of light and smacked her in the face.

Am I going to die out here?

Tears racked her body, and she lowered her head, shaking it. She was foolish enough to believe she was free when she ran out of that house and put a distance between her and the people in it. But she wasn't free at all, only locked in a different kind of prison. And the enormous forest swallowing her up wasn't going to come to her aid.