

# THE GHOST OF SHANTEL THOMPSON

## by Curtis Maynard

### EXCERPT

Hours drifted away as they immersed themselves in the accounts of the murder day, meticulously examining interviews with the neighbors. It was during this exhaustive search that Sarah stumbled upon an article that sent a shiver down her spine. Her face turned pale, and she repeated the word "no" in disbelief.

Concern etched on his features, Damian inquired, "Honey, what's wrong?" His worry grew as he witnessed his wife's deteriorating condition.

Handing him the article, Sarah whispered, "Read it. It's about the little girl who was murdered. She was adopted, just like Alicia. And look at the name. Shantel."

Damian's trembling hands held the article as he absorbed its contents. Shantel had been ten years old, the exact age their daughter had been when they had adopted her and moved to this very town. The uncanny similarities between the two girls sent a chill down his spine.

"D-Damian?" Sarah attempted to regain her husband's attention, her voice quivering. "Damian?"

"I'm sorry," he replied, placing the article down. "It's just... It hits too close to home. I mean, what are the odds that we would move into the very house where she was killed?"

"And the name, Damian. Shantel. How could Alicia possibly know about her? We never disclosed the fact that a murder had occurred in our home," Sarah lamented.

"Do you think she found out from someone else?" Damian posed the question, searching for answers.

"Who, Damian? She hardly leaves the house, except to go to school. Yet somehow, she learned about Shantel. Unless... never mind," Sarah dismissed a fleeting thought, her anxiety evident. "I'm letting my imagination run wild again. I've watched one too many horror movies," she chuckled nervously, masking her unease.