

{ INTRODUCTION }

## THE DARK

*Get away, I must get away*, was John's only thought as he ran for all he was worth deeper into the forest. *I must get away from the wind and the voices. Hurry! Faster, they are getting close!* His lungs were burning and his legs started to ache, "I must... get away... Keep going," he whispered breathlessly as he kept running. He wasn't sure how far he had traveled or how much time had passed. But it didn't seem to matter because the voices were still right behind him.

John felt a sudden blow to his shoulder and he tumbled to the ground. *What hit me?* He thought in sudden agony as he tried to rise with his face full of dirt. Then he heard them. Voices - many voices. Familiar voices—they were all around him. John didn't move. Anything or anywhere is better than this. He wanted to get up and run again, but fear kept him immobilized. He tried to stand up but took a smashing blow to the top of his head. Dazed, he fell back to the ground in a heap.

DARK STATION, light of significance

“John, we have been waiting for you,” whispered a voice. “You have served us well through the years. Our dark father, your father, is proud of you. We, all of us, have enjoyed our life with you.”

“Who...who are you? What do you want with me?” cried John through his fear and agony.

The voices hissed their reply, “We are you. You are usss...We are mannnnyyyy...We are innnn you and around you. We have never left you or forssssaken you since you invited ussss in. We want you to join usss John. You belong with us. You alwayssss have.”

As if in reply to the threatening voices, a pair of headlights approached John’s location. He had once asked someone for help. He needed it now, more than ever.