Chapter One

Carolina Night Rain



Things just always seem to perk up after a night rain, like watching a wilted houseplant come back to life after a good drench. But this late summer morning was more special than most as I was helping my dearest friend, Elizabeth, or as I call her, “Liz,” with a farm gathering. The gathering was actually for her husband Hundley’s 80th birthday, but as he shuns all attention, it was being prepared in secret.

“Martha Adams, you just go too far out of your way for me!” Liz would always shout at me in jest whenever I offered her aid. As she aged, she was almost 70, with myself at only 45. That help seemed to now happen more and more often.

And after voicing such a comment as that, Liz would always add the zinger, "And you'd think someone who was related to the Adams presidents would have more sense!"

I never smartly replied to her that it was my husband that might be related to such an esteemed family as the Adams, not myself. My maiden name was Bartshorn. Yes, a hideous last name. My siblings and I, as we were growing up in Maryland, were constantly ribbed and teased about our amusing last name. As children, we begged our father to change it. Of course, Father would just smile and say it was a great name that once belonged to a king. A king in the English village of Bartshorn, naturally. So having the last name of Adams was now a godsend, even if I wasn't born with it.



My dear friend Liz Evatt and I met years ago after my husband and I bought and moved to our 50-acre farm on Ten Mile Road in the Pickens District of South Carolina. Arthur and I had quite a journey to get here, truth be told. We'd spent near three years in Charleston, living in his great-aunt's old row house on Church Street, down below Broad Street where the older homes sat quiet and dignified.

Arthur's great-aunt, a peculiar woman if ever there was one, had moved to Charleston back in the 1820s for the sea air, she said. She bought a modest two-story

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