

Excerpt from Chapter 20 of *Land of the Haunted Dolls*

By Susan Lien Whigham

Titi squinted her eyes for a moment, peering into the darkness, then relaxed them. "I'm picking up some psychometry from this location," she said slowly. "There are people buried under here. Unmarked graves, hundreds of them. They died of yellow fever." For a moment, the image of hundreds of people pale, jaundiced, and naked, bleeding from their vacant eyes as they aimlessly wandered a darkened forest at night, haunting their graves, flashed through Titi's vision. It always unsettled her to catch glimpses of the dead, though it happened often enough that she held out hope that someday she would grow to not feel so alarmed.

"What do you mean by psychometry?" said Rochelle, interrupting Titi's thoughts.

"It's a form of clairvoyance where the reader can sense the history of a place or an object by touching it."

Rochelle looked away at the wall, stifling a reaction. She wondered how much more surreal this experience could possibly get.

Titi was wondering the same thing. "Before that," she said, "there was a dense forest right here, with a river running through it. Pine trees everywhere. Late sixteenth century."

"So if you're psychic, what am I thinking right now?" said Rochelle.

"Psychic doesn't mean omniscient," said Titi with a glare.