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A Breeze Through the Window

Olivia Brown

Introduction

I hope you enjoy this story based on my research about Lincolnville and the Florida Master Site Files. At times I felt intimidated by the information that never seemed to stop but it pushed me in a way that I had never explored and pushed the way I think about history.

As I watched Edward enter my store the bell rang and the screen door snapped shut behind him, I was leaning against the counter and I felt a breeze come in from the open window next to me but it didn't do much to cool off that hot sticky feeling Florida always had that seemed to never leave. It didn't matter much whether it helped or not I just liked to see what was going on in the neighborhood cause you could never be too careful.

Edward Kearsse wasn't necessarily an unkind man but he was a businessman through and through which meant he could only be here for one thing.

"Afternoon, Mr. Kearsse" I said

"And hello to you Ryals" he replied

I knew he wasn't going to beat around the bush and I didnt want to either and waste his time but I was just surprised to see him usually I see Mr. Palmer.

"Hows business going these days?" Edward asked.

"Business is good actually the neighborhood seems to like my fresh oranges" I replied back

"Good for you Ryals... well you know why I am here or do I need to get you calendar too"

Just as I thought, straight to the point as always.

"Nah Mr. Kearse, I'm just surprised to see you thats all, I'm used to seeing Mr. Palmer on pick up days" I replied

I quickly turned around and unlocked the drawer to get the envelope full of cash, it was already pre counted ready to be handed off to its new owner. I grabbed it, closed and locked the drawer as quick as I had opened it. I was trying really hard to not seem nervous but I couldn't help it there's just something about Edward that made me uncomfortable.

"Here you go Mr. Kearse" I said as I handed over the envelope.

As he grabbed it I noticed the firm grip he had on it, the paper wrinkled under thumb. It wasn't sealed so I watched as he opened it and quickly thumbed through the bills, doing a quick look over to make sure it was all there.

"Seems to be all here Ryals" Edward said

"I hope so Mr. Kearse, I would be a terrible grocery store owner if I didn't know how to count"
I said jokingly

Mr. Kearse was an odd man if you didn't know him that's why I couldn't help but notice how he did things. From the way he carried himself to how he counted his money. I liked to think he trusted me enough to not short him but if I was a man his position I may have done the same.

"Before you go Mr Kearse, can I ask something?"

"Sure Ryals"

"Don't take this the wrong way but where did you learn to count like that?"

He looked up at the ceiling and smiled

"Well my momma taught me, she wanted to make sure I was going to be a smart black man, unfortunately she passed before she could see it happen"

And right on cue there was a breeze not much but just enough to shake the leaves.

He smiled again before he replied, "well until next time Ryals"

"Until then Mr. Kearsse"

Edward turned around to walk back through the screen door but before that he paused like he forgot something. He back around to grab an orange out of one of the many baskets of them lined up against the wall .

He held it up to his nose and said "and I'll take this one for the road"

Before I could even think about saying anything he turned back around and walked out the door, I wouldn't have charged him anyway so I didn't care he took one.

"And you know what Im thinking this place needs Ryals?" he yelled through the screen door.

Surprised he had more to say, I walked up to the screen door and replied "What's that Mr Kearsse?"

“This place would look real nice with a porch one day”

“I think so too Mr. Kearsse really make this place feel like a home...not just some big white house at the end of the street.”

He didn't say anything this time, just smiled and turned his back to me and headed down the road. I walked away from the door and looked out the window and I watched him walk back down the road closer into town. The wind seemed to be in my favor today cause there it was again that gentle breeze, it even cooled off the back of my neck this time.

I heard footsteps come up the stairs and just as I raised my head to look at the door the bell rang and the screen door creaked open and slowly closed behind him. There stood Edward Kearsse with sweat slicking his forehead to help cool him off from the hot Florida sun he looked tired but then again aren't we all.

"How you liking the new addition on the house June?" he asked

"Mr Kearsse the porch is lovely but still unnecessary" I replied "and what have I told you about just walking up in here like you own the place?"

"Well June I hate to be the one to tell you but I do own the place" Edward said with a smile,

"And what have I told you about calling me Mr Kearsse, please you can call me Edward"

"Now Mr. Kearsse just because I lost my husband 2 years ago doesn't mean I am looking for a new one" I said

Edward was quiet for a moment, a breeze came through the window that usually stayed open. Every time a breeze come through that window it always made me feel like my husband was still here.

“Well anyway June, its Wednesday and I have a few more stops to make” Edward said

I knew what that meant, he was trying to be nice but he was in a rush. I got up from my chair and walked over to the locked drawer, I knew he was stopping by at some point today so I left it unlocked when I put the envelope in it earlier. I grabbed it opened it up again wetting my thumb with my tongue I quickly thumbed through the bills again to make sure it was all there.

“Here you are Mr. Kears” I said as I handed it over to him

“Who taught you to do that?” Edward said as he grabbed it

“No one did really, I saw my husband do it one day so I just kept watching and kept doing it till I got it right” I replied.

He didn't say anything back but I knew he was thinking about something. He always was.

“Well until next time June” he said walking out the door.

The screen door snapped shut behind him and he kept walking down the steps onto the road. I got up and sat next to the open window and watched him walk down the street. A breeze floated by and gently caressed my face, I leaned my head into it and smiled it felt like my husband was here.