

Day 31

Dread

by

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A country house kitchen. A woman has served up a plate of hot lunch on the table. A man enters, fresh from work. They kiss. He sits. He says a quick prayer with his eyes closed and digs in.

WOMAN

You better drink up some water. It's hot out.

MAN

It's not too bad.

WOMAN

I see you sweating.

MAN

You work, you sweat.

WOMAN

Drink some.

He drinks some water. She kisses his cheek.

WOMAN

You want a towel to wipe your face?

He wipes his forehead with his sleeve. She sits down at the table next to him.

WOMAN

I heard them again.

MAN

Heard what?

WOMAN

The voices. Whispering.

MAN

Where?

WOMAN

Out back.

MAN

Why were you out back?

WOMAN

My pecan trees needed watering.

MAN

They were voices?

WOMAN

Two. I usually only hear one. It sounds like my mother whispering. I can't ever make out what she's saying, but she's talking. I don't know if she's talking to me. But today, there was another voice. A man.

MAN

A man talking to your mother?

WOMAN

I've heard the man before. I don't know where. I know I have.

MAN

Someone we know?

WOMAN

I've heard it. Maybe I'm dreaming.

MAN

Sleepwalking?

WOMAN

Dreaming awake.

MAN

Daydreaming.

WOMAN

Not daydreaming. Dreaming awake.

MAN

I call that daydreaming.

WOMAN

I know I've heard that man's voice before.

MAN

You hear your mother, maybe that's your father.

WOMAN

I know what my father sounds like. This was a young man. I've heard him. His voice is sweet, but there's something, fills me full of dread.

MAN

What would a man be doing out back? Did you see anyone?

WOMAN

There was no one there.

MAN

You don't have to worry.

WOMAN

Will you take a look?

MAN

If you want me to take a look. But if you say no one was there, no one was there.

WOMAN

His breathing. So rough from a voice so sweet.

MAN

I'll take a look.

He's finished. He gives her cheek a kiss and downs a glass of water on his way out. The woman starts cleaning up. After a moment, a young woman, 16, enters in a light dress. She kisses the woman on the cheek.

WOMAN

I heard you.

YOUNG WOMAN

What?

WOMAN

With him.

YOUNG WOMAN

You didn't hear anything.

WOMAN

I told your father I heard. I didn't tell him what. I didn't tell him who. But he knows and will be watching. I want you to know. I want *him* to know. Tell him if your father finds out, he'll be kicked out of town. If he's lucky. Go finish up the washing.

YOUNG WOMAN

Yes, Mama.

She exits. The woman stares forward, unmoving. Her eyes close.