

Caesar Salad and the Pocketed Pearls

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It's a five minute mystery I wrote for Language as a project. Comments would be nice... ^^

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Caesar Salad and the Pocketed Pearls

"I don't care how you do it, just find my pearls!" The shriek rang throughout the midday air. Her tone cut the previous silence like a knife. It seemed as if the world itself halted at hearing the woman's words. Almost as if the Earth, was waiting for her to silence herself before beginning its pattern of rotation and revolution. Not even the worms beneath the soil could have been spared from her screaming into the telephone. Old styled, like most of the town already was. And the woman, seemed to be thoroughly upset over something. One could only wonder...

It didn't take long after the phone call, for detective Caesar Salad to arrive at the scene in his rusty beat up car. The whole, albeit small, neighborhood was peeping out their windows, doors, over their fences, and from the sides of their houses, to watch his arrival. It wasn't everyday that something happened in this quaint little town. No, especially nothing that would concern a detective; especially one such as Inspector Caesar Salad, and his partner Tom Ato.

Caesar and Tom were quick to the door, and the inspector rang the doorbell with practiced ease. Though with his middle finger, as his index finger - the one he used to use more often - seemed to be gone entirely. As if it had never been there. It took two seconds before a small, placid, frail looking woman arrived at the door. Her eyes filled with tears and it seemed her very heart cried out from within her chest by the sobbing coming from her chapped, and uncared for lips.

"Thank God you're here! They're gone, oh dear Lord they're gone!" She didn't leave the detectives time to ask for she seemed to prattle on with ease. "My pearls! Oh they've gone missing! I placed them on the top counter above the sink to wash the dishes, and when I looked up again, they were gone!" Caesar and Tom were ushered into the home as fast as lightning and her words seemed to be nothing more than mumbles and globs of nonsense. It didn't take a genius to guess that she was upset. With the invitation into the home, Caesar let no time waste as he hurried to the kitchen. He had seen the small room upon his entrance into the house, and made note of Miss Barb E. Doll's mention of washing the dishes. The soft clicking of his dress shoes against the hard wood floors seemed to stop as he entered the kitchen, and the loud clanging of his shoes then echoed through the house. Tom was slower at moving than his partner was, and he took time to catch his breath after the short jog into the kitchen. His beady eyes stared out through his glasses as he finally saw what Caesar had directed his aim to.

"Is this where you set the pearls Ma'm?"

"Yes, yes that's exactly where I set them before they disappeared! I checked the drain and called the plumber, they're not down the drain so someone **MUST** have taken them!" Caesar merely nodded at her statement, and hurriedly walked outside, and around the back of the house, leaving a confused Tom and Miss Doll.

It didn't take long for the detective to reach the window above the sink, and in moments, he peered inside. His head fully visible, from his height, and Tom let out a slight gasp realizing what Caesar had seemingly discovered much sooner than him. Caesar only nodded approving what he knew Tom was thinking, and reached out to touch the window sill, where Miss Doll had placed her pearls. A small gasp was emitted from Miss Doll as she realized anyone could have taken the pearls while she was not looking. Before the inspector even asked, Miss Doll was quick to reply to his thoughts.

"Yes, this window was open while I was washing dishes! Oh I can't believe how foolish I was to leave my precious pearls in plain sight like that!" Her eyebrows curved upwards at the inner edges, making her look grief filled and slightly depressed.

"Oh, and I must compliment you on your lawn Miss Doll, it's freshly cut. May I ask who mows for you, or do you labor out here yourself?" His question was simple, more like a compliment, but Tom could already tell the brain under Caesar's brown head of hair was working furiously.

"Why thank you, and heavens no, I don't toil out in the hot sun! The Prince boy from down the street mows my lawn for me. I pay him well enough he better be doing a good job. He keeps saying he won't be around much longer, once he gets enough to pay for that crazy contraption he calls a stereo. Whatever happened to the record players? Now that was good music." The detective made a mental note of the last name Price, before asking if anyone else might have had the right motive to take her pearls. It seemed Miss Doll had more information to provide.

"Now that you mention it, the Choke woman next door, keeps complaining to her husband Arti, that she never gets a good taste of the fancy life. Now, the whole town knows what lengths Arti'll go to for his wife, and he might have just nabbed my pearls to offer her what she really wanted."

Caesar and Tom thanked Miss Doll for all the information she provided and set off to question their first of two main suspects; the 'Prince boy' from down the street. Finding him wasn't a very hard task; all they had to do was ask one of the many willing neighbors of Miss Doll. Soon enough they had driven down to the Prince residence and it didn't take long for Caesar to exit the car, and hurriedly knock on the door. As the painted wooden door opened, Tom was finally arriving up the walk. What they saw was a very out of place looking teen. His flame red hair seemed to be the least of his differences. His skin had a tan only around his neck and on his elongated face. His shirt seemed odd, with some band from the city printed on it. His locks, though oddly colored, were covered by a black baseball cap, turned backwards like the style of the teens and kids from the city. Also, the black jacket he wore was faded, and showed a lot of wear and tear. But, it was his cough that alerted Caesar and Tom both.

"Can I help you two, I'm sort of busy..."

"Oh, yes, well, we will only take a moment. We're here doing some work for Miss Barb E. Doll down the street, I believe you know her?"

"Yeah, I know her; I mow her lawn once every week, Saturday afternoons. Much like today, but I don't know who did it this afternoon."

"You mean, you didn't mow her lawn today?"

"Nope, I was at a golf tournament, everybody was given a certificate to remember the tournament, this town can't really afford trophies you know."

"Right, well, we'll be off then, thank you for spending a bit of your time talking to us." Caesar left as quickly as he had come, and was already in the car before Tom had made it fully down the drive. He really needed to diet more often. The detective had received an alibi from one of the suspects. But they couldn't cross him off yet. No, something about that kid screamed that he was hiding something. Maybe it was the way that as soon as his bright green eyes lay upon Tom and him, the door seemed to close ever so slightly. It also might have been the way that his hands, though uncovered, didn't show signs of any abrasions or irritation from golf gloves, like most golfers. But he had to push this to the side for the moment. He had one more suspect to question. It was only a few minutes until Caesar and Tom had arrived at the Choke residence. It was a small house, old fashioned, much like everything else in the neighborhood. With a sharp knock upon the door, it didn't take long, just as before, for someone to answer the green painted wooden front door.

"Y-yes, may I help you sirs?" The man's voice quivered, what did he have to be frightened of? People usually were only worried when talking to a detective when they had something to hide.

"Yes, I believe you can, Mr. Choke I presume? Well yes, anyways, I've been sent by Miss Barb E. Doll to question anyone I see fit about a piece of missing jewelry of hers." Caesar's voice was much different than Mr. Choke's, it was stern, and calm. Almost soothing, in a `movie type of detective' sort of way.

"Oh...err...yes, why don't you gentlemen come inside. My wife's been baking all afternoon. Arti Choke, that's my name if you were wondering." The man opened his front door wide almost as if humbly offering his home to the two gentlemen. Arti hadn't really expected them to leave. Not with the fact still remaining they wanted to question him.

"No thank you Arti, we'll just be on our way, thank you for offering your home to us." Caesar left without another word and hurried back down the walk, a confused Tom shortly following after his retreating figure. Caesar knew something, and Tom could only guess that it was the way Arti acted. Generous, not acted, but true kindness. Like he was willing to let them do and ask anything they deemed fit. But it seemed Caesar wasn't headed to the car, but headed back to the Prince house. Tom was surprised with how swiftly the man was moving. It was only a few seconds before he heard the angered, almost urgent knock upon the Prince door, and it flung open just as he was coming up the walk to this house. There were a few words exchanged and the boy went inside the house, was gone only a moment and came back with some sort of paper in his hand.

"Where did you golf this afternoon Mr. Prince?"

"Special neighborhood course, the only golfing place in this town, pity they don't offer clubs. I don't even have my own set. Don't know anybody who owns a set of golf clubs around here." There, he had finally slipped. Tom caught it, but he suspected Caesar had too, long ago.

"Mr. Prince, may I ask, why this paper has `from the desk of Vincent Prince' in bold ink at the top? Oh yes, and one more question Mr. Prince, would you mind telling me how you golfed...without clubs?" That was all Caesar Salad needed to say for Vincent to widen his eyes in shock. Yes, he finally realized

where he had slipped up. Unwillingly, Vincent slipped the pearls from his jacket pocket and handed them over.

“Well, I'll just let you return these...”

“No, it's not that easy you see, you get to take a little car ride with us.” The smile on Caesar's face was priceless. The idiot gave himself away.