

Discovering Nafeteria

**Published by Emily O'Neil
Elma, Washington**

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First Edition

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Printed in US by InstantPublisher.com

**This book is lovingly dedicated to
my precious granddaughter
Breanna.**

Discovering Nafeteria

By Emily O'Neil

Chapter 1

“Breanna, get down here right now!”

Breanna’s mother yelled up the stairs.

“Breanna Huff, I said NOW!”

Breanna, upstairs in her room, could hear the frustration in her mother’s voice.

Snapping her cell phone shut, she swung her legs over the side of the high, massive, antique bed, and slid her feet onto the small throw rug covering the beautiful old wooden, mahogany floors in her bedroom.

“This time they actually picked an awesome place for us to stay for the summer,” she murmured to herself. “It’s about time. Most of the places we rent for the summer are so boring.” As she slowly walked down the hall toward the staircase, she glanced over and saw her little brother, Cody, sitting on the floor in his room playing with his dinosaurs. “He’s obviously not in trouble,” she thought, “why is it always me?” She was turning fifteen in two months and

thought it was so unfair that she couldn't have the freedom that she thought she should have. "They want me to stay a little kid forever. Why don't they just let me grow up?"

She headed down the gigantic staircase, paused at the landing, turned, and continued down the main staircase that ended in the formal living area. Breanna glanced around and admired the old mansion that would be their 'home' for the summer. She loved antiques and 'back in the day' houses. For two whole months she would be able to pretend that she lived in the 1900's. She glanced up and saw her mother glaring at her from the formal dining room. "What took you so long? Didn't you hear me calling you?"

"Sorry mom. What's wrong?" Breanna was annoyed at her mother's tone of voice. "Why are you so upset?" Her mother didn't say a word, instead she turned and pointed to a melting, gooey mess that was running off the table and onto the floor. "Oh, no!" Breanna ran to the table visibly upset, turned to her mother and exclaimed, "I forgot! Oh no! I forgot to put the ice cream away!" She scrambled toward the butler's pantry, grabbed some paper towels from the counter

and ran back to the dining room. She quickly mopped up the goeey mess, and turned toward her mother, “Oh, mom, I am so sorry. I got the ice cream out, then Josh called and I went upstairs to talk to him, and forgot all about the ice cream. Is the table ruined?”

Her mother, noticing how upset Breanna had become, quickly calmed down, and put her arm around Breanna’s shoulders. “No, honey, it looks like it will be fine, but you have to be more careful. This beautiful old mansion is full of original antiques and we need to take very good care of them. I know how much you love antiques and would never purposely damage any of them. Just, please be more careful.” She gave Breanna a quick hug, “So how is Josh?” Josh was Breanna’s boyfriend and she knew that it would be hard for her and Josh to spend the summer apart. They met when Josh started going to Ft. Campbell High School and the first time they met they had hit if off. It was like they had always known each other. Her daughter was growing up way too fast. It was hard to believe that her little girl was turning fifteen in August.

“He’s fine.” Breanna tossed her long brown hair and thought about her boyfriend.

Breanna and Josh both attended the same high school on the military base in Kentucky, where her dad was stationed. Breanna was an Army brat and had been one her whole life. First they had lived in New York, where she was born, then Texas, Germany, and now Kentucky. Moving all the time made it hard to make and keep friends. If she wasn't moving away from her friends, it seemed like they were moving away from her. Her dad had been stationed at Ft. Campbell for six years now, which was a long time when you were in the Army. She knew that he wanted to transfer to Ft. Lewis, Washington to be closer to his sister, Karen, but right now she wanted to be wherever Josh was. "When did you say dad would be here?" Breanna and her dad were very close and she missed him already, even though she had just seen him six days ago. "I wish he could spend the whole summer with us."

"I wish he could too," her mother sighed, "but you know how the Army is. They always have him doing something. He is going to try to be here for the 4th of July. That's only two weeks away." Two weeks was nothing when you were in the Army. Her husband, Rob, had been deployed so

many times that this crazy way of life was normal for them.

“Okay”, Breanna said, “I guess that’s not too long to wait, but I think I’ll call him tonight.” She turned and headed back upstairs to her room. Her room faced the Pacific Ocean and she could hear the roar of the ocean and the screeching of hungry seagulls. She loved the ocean. Her grandparents had taken her to the ocean for the first time when she came out to visit them five years ago. It had been almost a year since her grandmother had died. She missed her so much, and was heartbroken when they couldn’t make it out to Washington for the funeral. It was ironic that they were here now in Washington on vacation. Seaview was only two hours from where Grandpa and Grandma had lived, in Elma, Washington. Grandpa passed away a year before Grandma did. At least Aunt Karen, Uncle Joel and her cousin Alex would be able to come visit them.

Breanna decided to take a walk on the beach before calling her dad. She put on her tennis shoes that were on the floor just inside the front door. The front door opened to the outside private drive which ran parallel to the front of the old mansion.

She grabbed her sweatshirt on the way out the door and headed toward the sound of the ocean. The beach was a short three minute walk. The mansion sat on six acres of oceanfront property. It was wonderful to have this much privacy. The day was beautiful, the weather warm, and the ocean was an inviting place to relax and have some private time to herself. As she approached the ocean she could hear the roar of the powerful waves crashing upon the smooth, sandy beach and the hungry seagulls screeching in the distance. As she inhaled the aroma of the sea, she thought about how much she had missed the ocean. Breanna spent several hours on the beach looking for shells and pretty rocks to add to her collection. Heading back she found several more rocks along the short, sandy path that led back to the mansion. Approaching the huge mansion, she looked up and admired the magnificent, gigantic home that was built in 1890. With over twenty rooms, it was an unbelievably breathtaking place to stay. After putting her sweatshirt in the closet just inside the door, she headed up to her room to wash her treasures. Walking down the hall toward her room, she heard voices coming from her room. "Oh great, I

wonder what is going on now?” Entering her room, she saw her mom standing at her bathroom door.

“Oh, Breanna, there you are. We had a leak in your bathroom, and I had to call the plumber. He’s almost finished,” her mother explained.

The plumber turned to Breanna now standing in the doorway beside her mother and replied, “Yep, just about done. I had to tear into this wall. I called the owners to get their permission. This old place is really something. I wouldn’t want to get into trouble for tearing up an historic home or something.” Breanna peered around the corner and noticed that the wall above the sink had been carefully torn into. “Look at this,” continued the plumber, “looks like some kid was trying to hide something.” He pointed to the trash container nearby. “I described everything to the owners and they said to just throw it all away and to be careful repairing the wall so it doesn’t look like it had been torn into. Well, that’s all that I can do today. At least your bathroom is working now. You guys have this place for two months. After that I’m supposed to come back and repair the wall.” Her mother walked the plumber downstairs, thanking

him for coming out on such short notice.

After the plumber had left, Breanna put her treasures from the beach into the sink and then looked into the trash container to see what he had found in the wall. He was right, it looked like junk, nothing of value. There were bits and pieces of old wall paper covered with dust. It looked like it had been in there for a hundred years. The plumber had said that it had looked like kids had hidden things in the wall. Breanna wondered what he had meant by that. She decided to take another look at the stuff he had pulled out of the wall. She picked up several pieces and examined them. Not finding anything of interest, she dug deeper into the pile until she found a small folded piece of paper. Carefully picking it up, she took it to her room and laid it on her bed. Wiping off the dust, she very carefully unfolded it. There was writing on the inside. **HELP! PUT THE BASEMENT KEY ON THE THIRD STEP DURING THE NEXT THUNDER STORM!**

Chapter 2

While Breanna sat on her bed shocked over the note that she had found, her mom appeared out of nowhere and was obviously in a hurry. “Breanna, I need to run up town and get some groceries. I need for you to take Cody to the library while I’m at the grocery store. Maybe you can find some good mystery books for yourself while you are there. Let’s go. Cody is already in the car.” Breanna followed her mom who was quickly heading for the car.

“Darn, now I won’t be able find out more about the note until I get back.” Breanna was disappointed and irritated that she had no choice about going to the library. Cody, who was in the gifted program at school, was always reading. At age eight he had received the highest scores at his school for entrance into the gifted program. Breanna actually was very proud of her brother, but today she was not thrilled to have to babysit while her mom grocery shopped.

The trip into town only took a few minutes and soon they were parking in front of Sid’s Supermarket, the only grocery store in Seaview. Two blocks up, on the same side of the street was the Seaview Public

Library. Breanna and Cody quickly walked the two short blocks and entered the old brick two story building with Breanna leading. Cody already had a library card, one of the things on his must do list within 24 hours of arriving in Seaview. Breanna was not crazy about reading and avoided it if she could. The required reading assignments at school were torturous for her. It was only within the last year that she had become interested in mystery books, which is why her mom suggested that she look for some that might interest her while she was at the library with Cody.

While Cody was busy looking for books about astronomy, his newest interest, Breanna strolled over to the nearby bulletin board and scanned the notices that were posted. It was so full that it was hard to read them. It looked like no one ever took any notices down, just added more. “What a mess,” she muttered to herself. She noticed several garage sale postings that she was interested in and a blue flyer for the upcoming 4th of July firework display that would be held soon. “We definitely want to go to that. I wonder if we can see the display from the beach right in front of our home?” She noticed a faded poster peeking

out from underneath several layers of notices. The faded paper was barely visible, but she could see the words Bloomer Mansion. As she reached up to move the light blue flyer out of the way, she heard a yell from across the room.

She turned quickly as she recognized Cody's voice. Cody lay sprawled out on the floor at the bottom of the steps that led into the room where Breanna was. "Cody!" Breanna cried with alarm. "What happened? Are you hurt?"

"I tripped on that old bench." Cody explained as he pointed toward the old antique iron bench that sat nearby at the top of the steps. He scrambled to his feet at the same time the librarian approached.

"Is everything okay here?" She inquired as she looked at Cody. "Are you okay young man? Looks like you took a little tumble."

Cody hobbled around gingerly as he checked for any injuries. "I'm okay. I don't think I hurt anything." He reached over and picked up the four books that he had dropped. "These are the books that I want to check out. I have a library card." He handed the books and card to the librarian.

"Well, now these look very interesting. Let's get these checked out for you." As she

headed for the desk, she turned and questioned Breanna, “Did you find any books dear?”

“No, not this time, but I’ll look when we return my brother’s books. He’s a fast reader, so we’ll be back soon.” Breanna thought quickly and added, “But I’m curious about something. Do you ever have any big thunder and lightning storms around here?”

The librarian, with a strange look on her face, replied, “No, not very often. We had a doozie of one a year ago. I don’t think anyone will ever forget that one. That was the storm when that lady over at the Bloomer Mansion disappeared.”

Chapter 3

Breanna and Cody sat outside the Seaview Library, on the front cement steps, waiting for their mom. “What’s wrong with you?” asked her brother. “You’re as white as a ghost.”

“I’ll tell you later Cody,” replied Breanna. “But I’ll tell you this, something very strange is going on around here.”

Just then their mom, Lynn, pulled up to the curb in their Dodge van. “Let’s go,” she yelled, “I have frozen food that is thawing. It sure did get hot fast today.” They scrambled into the van and took off down the road toward their vacation rental. “Thanks for looking after Cody, Breanna. I appreciate your help today. What would you two like to do tonight? I thought maybe we could go see the new movie, “Eclipse”. I heard that it’s playing at the theater up town.”

Breanna quickly forgot about notes, storms and missing people. “Really? Yes! I want to go! I can’t believe it’s playing here already.” Breanna was a Twilight fan and was excited to go see the third movie in the “Twilight” series. She had even gotten to meet Kristen Stewart in Nashville when she

had gone to see “New Moon” the second movie in the series. After the movie, Kristen, who plays Bella, was signing autographs and Breanna had even gotten her picture taken with her. She had it framed and it hung in her bedroom next to all of her “Twilight” movie posters back home in Tennessee.

Breanna helped her mom put the groceries away, and then walked out to the paper box to get the newspaper, “The Chinook Observer” to check the movie section. Seaview didn’t have its own newspaper, but Long Beach, a nearby town, put out “The Chinook Observer” that also covered Seaview news. As she pulled out the newspaper from the box, she thought about the time when Grandpa told her that his dad had owned and ran “The Chinook Observer” in Long Beach, many years ago. She filed that bit of knowledge away, thinking it might be useful information if she ever needed to research some history of the Bloomer Mansion.

Laying the paper out on the dining room table she quickly scanned the movies playing that evening. “Mom, the first showing tonight is at 5 o’clock. That’s only an hour from now. Let’s go at 4:30 so we

can get good seats.”

Her mother quickly agreed and they all took off toward their rooms to get ready. “I want to sit in the front row,” Cody exclaimed on the way up the stairs.

“No way,” Breanna replied, “If you sit that close your eyes will cross and they’ll stay that way until your twenty or so.” She laughed as she climbed the stairs towards her room. “I’ll meet you downstairs in twenty minutes, and I get to choose where we sit. The next movie you can choose and we’ll sit wherever you want. Well, I will. I don’t think you’ll get mom to sit in the front row.” Breanna went into her room and shut the door.

Sitting in the theater twenty-five minutes later, Breanna started thinking of what the librarian had said. A woman had gone missing last year at the Boomer Mansion. She wondered what the caretaker knew about it. She planned on talking to her the next day. Surely she would know something. The caretaker lived in an apartment in part of the basement of the Mansion. She had her own entrance on the other side of the house, so they never saw her unless they needed something. Breanna had met her when they checked in on their

first day. She seemed nice enough. Susie Monroe, the caretaker, had shown them through the mansion and had explained how to use the tricky television, and how to contact her if they had any questions. Breanna wondered if the missing lady had ever been found. And what about the note? "Put the key on the third step." What on earth did that mean? The third step of the staircase? The basement stairs? The outside steps? And what key? And why? Questions were spinning around Breanna's head when the movie started. Tomorrow, she thought, tomorrow I'll start asking questions. She leaned back in her theater chair and was soon lost in the world of vampires and werewolves.