



Oklahoma!

Jane Hurst

D’Encanto’s is the closest thing we have to fine dining in town. Hell, it might be a low-quality diner dripping in Americana and decades of bad habits, but it is home. I hardly ever look at the menu. I mean, what is the point when it hasn’t changed a bit in the thirteen years since I first ordered?

I used to come here with her, but now I sit alone in the mint-colored booth. “Pumpkin, you want the usual?” Cindy breaks me out of my inner spiral. I nod, offer a smile, and return to my comfortable loneliness. It wasn’t always a lonely booth. If I listen closely, a faint hum of “Oklahoma!” or the smell of gardenias will entrench my senses. I am small again, she is here.

I receive my order—two chocolate-chip pancakes with a side of bacon. Perfection. I say my silent grace and dig in. She would tell me to eat like a lady. She would sip her black coffee and daintily eat her grapefruit with a small spoon of sugar. But no one corrects me. So, I haphazardly dive into my pancakes.

D’Encanto’s has mastered the ratio of chocolate chips to the batter. Not too little, the chips and not rare, but not too many. I hear the clamor of centuries-old workmen’s boots as Dale D’Encanto appears behind the counter. Dale offers me a nod and a smile, the type of smile I’ve only encountered after the wake flowers rotted and dried. The type of smile that keeps its distance from the wreckage of a red Corvette on I-95.

An old Dolly song echoes around the almost empty diner. Dale shuffles out of the diner toward Mr. Finch’s old truck. I eat my cooling pancakes. I listen to Cindy’s bracelets rhythmically clink together as she pours a coffee.

The bell rings and Dale re-enters the diner. I hardly look up until I feel two pairs of eyes dart toward me, and then dart away as quickly as they came. “I forgot to cancel the order,” Dale mumbles to Cindy. He carries a crate of grapefruits.

Laurel Street on Film | Annie Jicka | acrylic

