

From *Doc*:

Doc was in the living room of their sixth floor condo, barefoot in blue jeans and a white t-shirt, sprawled out in his customary chair, the old, green-leather recliner. The worn, nineties-era recliner that Keesha kept threatening to get rid of. *The Green Monster* she called it these days. 'The Green Monster has to go, Doc' she said, from across the room, trying not to sound too insistent. She was on the floor, playing with the baby, surrounded by toys.

'Why?' Doc answered, annoyed. 'It's still good. It's comfortable. It's sturdy. It's my chair. Why waste money on something new we don't need?'

'You ever look at that thing, Doc? You've got vinyl tape along the side, blotches on the back where you tried to remove that white paint, a stain down the arm, a big dent where your head usually goes, and permanent butt marks on the seat.'

'Keesha, I'll make you a deal, all right?'

'What kind of deal?'

'I'll throw out a few pairs of your shoes and you can throw out my recliner.'

'My shoes? What are you talking about? What do my shoes have to do with anything?'

'You've got old shoes, don't you? Worn, faded, scuffed... Let's throw 'em out!'

'You're crazy. This has nothing to do with shoes.'

'Yah, right. That's how you see it. And by the way, do you have to call my chair *The Green Monster* all the time? It's not funny anymore.'

'Hey. It's big and it's green and it's ugly. What can I say? What's wrong with making a little joke about it? Isn't that the name of your favourite baseball mascot?'

'It's not the name of the mascot, Keesha. It's the left field wall.'

'Whatever, Doc. You gotta let it go.'

Doc could never stay annoyed at Keesha for very long, especially not now, looking at her and their eleven-month-old granddaughter. What a picture they made together. Keesha in her black tights and old grey USC hoodie, her hair pulled back under a white headband; Kylie crawling around in her purple unicorn shirt, with her chubby legs, her curly black hair starting to come in, wearing a smile from ear to ear.

Keesha and the baby started making tall stacks of coloured wooden squares and then knocking them down, laughing their faces off.

Doc went back to staring blankly out the patio door, trying to focus his thoughts, looking down over the park and out to the bay in the distance. It was early in the afternoon and light rain was starting to fall, tapping softly on the half-open door. Rain... Doc grumbled to himself. How had that happened? There was a lot of blue sky when he'd first sat down. How long ago was that? Fifteen minutes? Was there supposed to be this much rain in September?

Keesha knew how bad Doc was feeling. All morning she'd been going back and forth between trying to cheer him up and just leaving him alone. 'Doc, it's not your fault' she said, for the hundredth time, looking over at him. 'There's nothing you could have done about it. It's just stupid. The whole thing is stupid. I mean, the guy creates cartoons, right? That's what he does. They're supposed to be controversial. They're supposed to be about what's happening in the world. They're supposed to push people's buttons. That's the whole point. That just means he's good at what he does.'

Doc heard what Keesha said, but he didn't answer. He didn't even move. He just kept staring off into the distance. Finally, he stood up, walked over to the patio and slid the door closed. He turned and looked over at Keesha and the baby. There was an intense, troubled expression in his eyes. 'I've gotta do something, Keesh' he said. 'I can't just let this happen.'

'Doc, this is not on you. What are you going to do? You already phoned Jackson. You already phoned the editor. What's his name? Henry. You already phoned Henry.'

'Yah, but they never answered. As if they would. Big deal, I left a message. What good's that going to do?'

'All you can do is support Namonté. Maybe he's going to sue them or something. Take them to court to keep his job. We'll be there to support him.'

'I hope he does.'

'Just don't do anything crazy, Doc.'

'Maybe I can get everybody at work behind this. Everyone that works for the magazine. Shut the magazine down. The only problem is everyone's working from home now. It'll be hard to get a hold of people.'