

Tarene Thomas

Untitled

"I hate Fridays!" Trenidy outburst. Everyone gave her a prolonged stare. Trenidy never said anything, and when she did it was a rare occasion.

"Why?" Kenneth asked flatly. Not exactly caring why, but he didn't want her to feel ignored.

"Because, it's welfare day and everyone's just gunnah party," Exclaimed Trenidy while she pulled her dark blue hoodie over her head. It was the middle of February and walking around the Reserve at night was cold. Trenidy's short cropped hair didn't help much to keep her ears warm either.

"Who cares, when our parents are all drunk enough we can go bottle hustlin!" Everyone laughed except Trenidy. Everyone always laughed at Tasha's ignorant remarks.

"Whatever, go hard you guys I'm out," Trenidy crossed her arms over her chest and started walking towards her Kukuoms house.

"Ducces!" Trenidy heard voices call in the distance but she was paying no attention. She trudged through the ankle deep snow and was glad she decided to wear her rabbit fur moccasins. Her feet were toasty warm.

She looked up to the sky and it was just starting to get dark. Trenidy would have gone home, but there would have already been a big party. She didn't feel like facing a bunch of old drunk people still babbling on about her brother. Always the same stuff. "He's in a better place babe don't worry," or "He's watching down on you smiling Tren, it'll be ok." The first two months of that were enough. She was sick of it.

Trenidy remembered back to a time not too long ago, sitting in her basement with him. About two weeks before Christmas. She remembered it as if it were only yesterday.

"Tren, don't ever drink. It aint worth it. Trust me," Xavier sounded dead serious while he looked at his baby sister.

"Obviously ZayZay, look at your ugly shiner!" Trenidy laughed as she

pointed at her brother's swollen eye, his hazel eye. Xavian had one brown eye and one hazel eye, just like Trenidy. They could have been twins. They were exact look a likes. Both had long black hair all the way down their back, the same penny colored skin, and one hazel and one brown eye. The only difference was their height and age. Separated by four inches and two years.

"Man! I don't even remember how I got this! And I'm serious! If I ever catch any body drinking with my baby sister that will be the last time they'll even be capable of lifting a drink to their mouth!" ZayZay gave Trenidy a questioning stare, as if he was waiting for some kind of logical come back.

"Settle down! Your only two years older than me, and I'm not a baby, I'm fourteen!" She protested then laughed. Trenidy had no idea this would be one of the last times she would spend with her brother. If she did she would have begged him to take his own advice and stay home.

Trenidy got pulled back into reality by the sound of a car honking at her. She had trailed off into the middle of the gravel road and she was almost at her kustoms house. She walked to the side of the road and wiped her face. The tears that fell from her eyes were already frozen on her cheeks.

"Dammit," Tren said to herself while she pulled her hood farther over her head. Her ears were freezing and she was so used to having a thick curtain of her own hair protecting her neck and ears from the fierce winter wind. But after her brother passed away she cut off all her hair for him, and she had never been the same.

It was the day after Christmas, boxing day when Xavian got into a fight with their dad. Trenidy hadn't heard what it was about but she heard him slam the door on his way out. Trenidy ran out after him like a reflex just went off inside her.

"Leave me alone Trenidy. I'll be back in a couple days," Trenidy knew Zay was mad because he never called her Trenidy, just Tren.

"Wait! Where are you going?" Trenidy yelled after him. She was

worried about him and had a sick feeling in the pit of her stomach.

"One love sister!" Were the last words she ever heard from her brother.

"One love brother..." She muttered under her breath and slowly walked back inside.

Later on the next day the phone was ringing at about noon. Everyone was still passed out and Zay hadn't made it home yet. As soon as she heard the phone ringing she knew something was wrong.

As Trenidy picked up the phone her heart sank to her stomach. "He-h-hello?" The word managed to slip out.

"Hello Trenidy, is your mother or father home? It's er, urgent."

Trenidy recognised his deep husky voice as soon as he said hello. Constable Jones, head RCMP on the reserve.

"Sorry, everyone's sleeping," she spit the words.

"I'm sorry to inform you dear, but your brother Xavier... I'm afraid he's died of alcohol poisoning. We don't know for sure if it was that, the autopsy report should be in shortly. I know this is hard..." The voice on the phone faded into a far off distance and she heard someone scream, not quite sure... if it was her own scream or someone else. Trenidy dropped the phone and collapsed to the floor. First her knees gave in followed by the rest of her body. She felt like someone ripped out her heart, burned it, then put it in her stomach so she could feel the ashes inside her.

Trenidy walked up the long driveway to her kukoms and walked in. "Hello? Kukom it's me." Trenidy called out.

"Tansi my baby." Her grandmother called.

"Mayonanto, heeyamaga." Trenidy answered. Tansi means hello in Cree, Trenidy responded with I'm ok. She rarely spoke Cree. Only with her kukom. Nobody spoke Cree anymore.

"My baby come here, you sound sad..." Her grandmother spoke in such a loving tone of voice which soothed Trenidy.

She took off her rabbit fur moccasins and walked into her Kukum's living room.

"My girl you look lonesome. Come give Kukum a big hug." She went and sat on the couch with her grandmother and let herself go into her arms.

"He wasn't suppose to go! It wasn't his time!" Trenidy exclaimed trying to fight back Tears that would come no matter how hard she tried to hold them back. Her grandmother just sat there and let Trenidy cry into her shoulders. For the first time in a long time, Trenidy felt safe.

"You know my girl, when I was your age or a bit younger I lost someone very important to me as well." Her grandmother sounded like she was talking about something that took place today, heart broken. "Her name was Ivory, she was my first cousin, but we were raised like sisters."

"How old was she? What happened?" Trenidy sounded sad for her grandmother, but curious at the same time. She never heard her grandmother talk about Ivory before.

"She was thirteen, and I was twelve. It was tragic my girl." Trenidy noticed her Kukum drift off to a far away place as she reminisced what happened.

"We both got sent off to residential school when I was seven. That place..." As Trenidy's grandmother spoke of residential school her eyes shut and her voice cracked. Trenidy had heard stories from people in schools like that. They got beat up, starved, molested... It was unbelievable. "It was evil my baby. I'm so glad you or your parents never had to live through such horrible things." Trenidy held her grandmother's gaze and was listening intently. "We were in class, and the teacher called on Ivory and she answered in Cree. I gave her this look to tell her to tell her to stop! But she didn't listen. She kept rebelling the only way she could." Trenidy's grandmother spoke with a certain desperation in her voice she had never heard in her Kukum's voice before.

" "Why couldn't you speak Cree? I-I don't understand." questioned Trenidy.

"They wanted to turn us all into Moon yows my baby, turn us like them. Kill the Indian in every child is what they wanted to do." Trenidy noticed her kukom didn't enjoy talking about this. But she wanted to know what happened.

"What happened when you spoke cree?" Curiosity and remorse laced Trenidy's voice. She knew something bad happened, she didn't want to pain her kukom by the memories, but she wanted to know more.

"Terrible, terrible things my child... When Ivory was speaking in Cree the teacher grabbed her by the arm and dragged her out of the classroom I heard her scream my name.. 'Journey'.. she wanted me to come help her, she needed me, but I just sat there in my chair and didn't do anything." A tear escaped Journeys aged face and she closed her eyes. "The next day I asked the teacher where she was, and she told me Ivory got sent home. But Ivory never went home. They beat her up, and probably locked her in a closet to die. That day in class was the last time I ever saw Ivory. The day I sat there and did nothing to help her." Remorse and guilt surrounded Journeys tattered voice, and tears were falling from her dark brown old wise eyes.

"It's not your fault kukom, you couldn't do anything!" Trenidy tried to comfort her kukom.

"When I was your age, the battle to stay alive was residential schools, today with your generation its all the dam booze and drugs. Our people won't be hurting like this forever my girl. We are a healing race. One day someone's going to make a change, to stop this never ending cycle of sadness. Both Ivory and Xavian died in the hauntings of First Nations trecherous past my baby. They died because of a domino effect that happend many moons ago. So many horrible things have

happened to our people.. Many bad things. It's
nobody's fault, but we pay for it in many ways,"
Trenidy's grandmother spoke with wisdom in her voice.

Trenidy held on to her grandmother and hugged her
tight. In this time of sadness she was glad she went to
her Kukoms house. For the first time in a while, Trenidy
knew she was going to be ok.

My name is Taree Juanita Thomas. I grew up on the Enoch Cree Nation reserve, I am 15 years old. I enjoy singing, writing, archery, poetry and psychology. I've loved writing since I was a little girl and its how I express myself.

