

Tune In To Your Past

By Brianna C.

“Drantal Mantal, Drantal Mantal.: The group of tall skinny bullies purposely said out loud. She tried to hold back her tears but they just clouded up her eyes, she hesitated to yell back. “It’s Mant, my last name is Mant.” The leader of the group, which was her worst enemy, responded with confidence. “Are you crying, I guess you’re just a cry baby with a cry baby name.” Drantal didn’t care if what he said didn’t make since, she took as an insult. She covered her teary face up with her long hair.

Later that night after dinner, she got up and randomly started yelling at her mom. She ran upstairs screaming at her mom that it was all her fault. Her last words to her mom before going to her bed were, “It’s all your fault for giving me this name and everyone else has normal names. Why couldn’t I?” Her mom said “Sorry” and closed the door. Before thinking, Drantal grabbed a few coins, put them in her pocket, and slid open the window. She hopped out the window. As she started springing down the road, she could hear the coins jingling in her pocket.

After a couple of minutes, she took a break and stopped at a gas station right next to a tall oak tree. Just then she realized what she had done. She went inside and said hello to the owner. She bought snacks and water and quickly ran out. She looked down at the bottom of the tree, and there was a bright yellow ukulele. She grabbed it, swiped the dirt off of it, strapped it to her back, and kept running. After what seemed to be forever she ended up in Kentucky. Although she did live on the border of Kentucky and Tennessee, she felt like she had accomplished a lot. She realized that she was not far from her grandpa’s, so she walked into a neighborhood and took a couple of turns. After a while she finally ended up at her grandpa’s house.

Drantal knocked on the door about thirteen times before he answered. Her mind was thinking a lot of things but the one thing that came out was, “Well, he lives alone, he’s really old, and it’s only 5:45 in the morning. I don’t blame him for taking so long.” When he finally answered, she stepped in with her ukulele rattling on her back. She looked down at the ground, and didn’t say anything. Just by looking at her grandpa, she could tell that he was surprised than his eleven year old grandchild just stepped in and made herself at home but he just observed and didn’t say a word.

She set her few things down and picked up a book. She looked through it but didn’t find anything interesting, just old pictures. She flipped to the last page and saw a big tree. On the bottom of the truck it started with “Drantal Mant.” Next to it, said “Present Day”. Branching off of it was her mom, “Bella Mant”, then her grandma, “Brooke Lint”. She sadly thought of their normal names, and returned back to her name, which unlike theirs, hers isn’t normal. At the top she saw “Drantal Linoford:.. She was very confused. “Why am I at the top and the bottom?” she asked. Her grandpa replied in so few words, “It’s your G.G.” She turned around and her face seemed like he just said that the earth was ending. He replied again, “Your Great Grandma.” She acted like that cleared it up. “Drantal, I named you, not your mom. You’ve been mad at your mom for no reason.” Her grandpa meaningfully said. She flipped to the back cover of the book. She could read this picture with no explanation. Without doubt, her grandma was a professional ukulele player. She grabbed her new bright;y sun-colored ukulele and turned it over and back to the front again. There was nothing on the back except dirt and dust. She went to the sink and her grandpa helped her wash it off. All of the sudden, she got really interested in her ancestry and the ukulele. Looking into it, she could see her reflection. She looked at the picture of her GG and looked back at the

shiny ukulele. Her dimples and dark freckles stood out just like her great grandma's in the picture. She stood up and started to gather her stuff. Her grandpa guarded the door and kindly said, "I'll make you breakfast then drive you home." Drantal was surprised that he knew she had run away.

By 7:30am she was back home. She turned to her mom and started to cry. "Its ok sweetie, you're not in trouble. I understand", she kept saying over and over. Drantal slowly walked to her room with her ukulele in hand. In her room, she sat down on the floor as the courage she once had flickered away. This was the end, or was it just the start of a beginning? The hope of the future twinkled and unlocked a new door. She leaned back and closed her eyes. She remembered the rattling from when she stepped into her grandpa's house. She sat back up and shook the ukulele. It rattled just like it did in Kentucky. She shook it upside down and a receipt fell out. The name on the receipt was "Drantal Linoford". This was just the start. She ran to her mom and without saying anything else asked for ukulele lessons. Her mom didn't hesitate for a second to call her aunt Fillerma Tamlt, who was also a great musician. From then on, all the kids and grandkids who were descendants of Drantal Linoford tuned in to their past. They might not have all been great musicians like Drantal but all of them had two things in common- they honored their ancestry, and they weren't afraid to try anything new.