

The 28th Day

By: Vivian L.

“Tessa Sloane, one more strike and you're out. I'm serious this time.” principal Thomas told the eleven year old girl sitting across the desk from her.

The girl was in her office for the 28th day in a row because of discipline issues (Principal Thomas had been counting). I mean, yeah, people aren't perfect, but 28!? Come on, Tessa. Do better.

Anyway, Principal Elanor Thomas ran a tight operation, and was exactly the kind of principal you'd expect in a reform school; not afraid to pick favorites, and she hated you if you weren't her favorite. However, one student, in room 402, she hated most.

“I need you to take this home, okay?” principal Thomas told the girl, handing her a piece of paper.

“What is it?” the girl asked slyly, even though she obviously knew what it was.

It was a referral form, and believe me, the girl had seen plenty.

“You darn well know what it is! Pardon my language.” retorted principal Thomas, agitated by how calm the girl was, “And you'd bring it back tomorrow, signed by a parent if you know what's good for you.”

“Whoa, wait, signed by a parent? Isn't that a little extreme?” the girl asked, her calm almost completely gone.

“Either it's back in my office, signed tomorrow, or ten days suspension. On top of what you already have.” Said principal Thomas, satisfied with her punishment.

“Okay, Okay, but I still don't see what warrants this much punishment.” said the girl, trying to sound completely innocent.

“Yesterday's incident, that's what.” replied principal Thomas “So, it's agreed, two weeks out-of-school suspension, plus ten

more days in-school, if I, or my secretary doesn't get that form back."

The girl glanced at the clock, mounted on the wall above the principal's head. 2:11. She needed to stall for a couple of minutes, so she continued her argument.

"Alright, but in my defense, yesterday's 'incident' was just to maintain my reputation." the girl shot back.

"Your what?"

"My reputation. You know, who I'm known as."

"Well then, who are you known as?" questioned the principal.

"I'm Tessa Sloane, the bad-kid." replied the girl, as if it were obvious.

"Right. So you decided, 'you know what? I'm going to hack the P.A. system, tell everyone in the school that principal Thomas is going to cancel field day', just so you could be known as 'the bad-kid?'" principal Thomas asked, on her last nerve.

"Well, you were going to. Just sayin'." Tessa whispered

"Well yes, I was going to. But, you heard that because you were eavesdropping." Principal Thomas said "And, you made my house get egged last night."

"OK, I didn't do that."

"No, but people did it because of what you said." principal Thomas snapped. "And! You hacked school property!"

"Alright, alright. Calm down lady. Am I going home, or what?"

"Yes, Miss Sloane, you're going home early. Shall I call your mother to come pick you up?" asked Principal Thomas, then, under her breath, added "I'll be glad to be rid of you."

"Nah, my mom's at work. Call my sister." Tessa replied

"Fine. What's the number?"

"Ummm...." Tessa muttered briefly before bolting towards the door.

"YOUNG LADY, WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!?!?" principal Thomas hollered, panicked and confused.

“Makin’ a run for it!!” Tessa yelled back as she dashed with incredible speed through the empty hallways.

“That’s it!” Principal Thomas shouted, “Tessa Sloane, you are officially expelled!!!”

Principal Thomas’s bun had become undone, and frizzy, her glasses were crooked, and she was red in the face. Tessa shot towards the nearest exit, laughing as she ran.

“Good riddance. I always hated that school.” Tessa murmured to herself as she burst through the double doors, into the sunlight.

2:15. Perfect timing.

Juniper’s red pick-up truck was waiting for Tessa outside the school, as promised.

“Geez, Kid, what kind of a school did you get sent to?” Asked Juniper, as she stared up at the old Scottish castle that principal Thomas had turned into a school.

“Reform school. Long story.” replied Tessa “Now can we get going?”

“Ok, Ok. You think I’d get a little respect from my own sister.” Juniper muttered as she started up the truck.

“So...” Juniper continued, “Did you... Ya know... get... expelled?”

“Yeah.” Tessa replied, like it was no big deal. “But you should have seen her face when she said it! It looked like an angry pig! It was hilarious!”

“Tessa, that’s 13 schools! You’ve gotten expelled from 13 schools! Look, I know we move around a lot, but you have to put more effort into your education.” Juniper said, sounding motherly.

“Ok, Fine. I’ll try to actually learn something at the next school. Happy?” Tessa snapped, agitated.

The only response she received was a disapproving murmur from Juniper, who had, conveniently, become very focused on the road.

A few minutes passed before either girl said anything else.

Finally Tessa broke the extremely awkward silence, by telling Juniper, "You took a wrong turn."

"No, I didn't." Juniper replied.

"What are you talking about? Camryn's apartment is that way." Tessa said, confused, and pointing in the opposite direction.

"We're not going that way, because we're not going to Camryn's apartment." Juniper told Tessa

The red pick-up passed city limits and began its journey down the unpaved country road.

"If we're not going to Camryn's, where are we going?" Tessa questioned.

"Home."

There was a brief silence before Tessa said, "You're not joking, right?"

"Nope." Juniper answered, smiling

"Home," Tessa repeated, smiling, as she watched the scenery roll by.