

We all have innumerable amounts of time to do what we want, it's just that we're always afraid to do it. And once we build up the courage, it's too late.

The soft stirring from my cat wakes me up. I sit up in my bed and lightly massage my cat's, Pepsi, striped black and gray fur. Her purring puts me at ease so I reposition myself to go back to sleep. I cuddle up next to my pillow and look at the horizontal window in my room draped with white curtains. Suddenly blaring bright white lights, presumably from a vehicle, force their way through my curtains causing me to squint my eyes. The lights move away, but not a short distance. They stop most likely at my neighbor's house because I can hear the screeching brakes and the ignition turn off. After a couple of seconds curiosity strikes my attention and I find myself walking towards my curtains.

I pull back the curtain just enough for my right eye to peer through the transparent glass window. I look at my neighbor's lawn for a while where a big black truck is parked on the curb in front. I wait to see if it's going to happen.

Just when sleep is about to take their natural course in my veins, I see three men escort my neighbor out of her house. She walks steadily with her head hung and the three men holding her up by her arms and waist. I watch in pure trepidation how the lady I barely knew, but lived next to all my life and now suddenly feel pity for is fitted in the back of the truck. I jump back in my bed shaking in fear for myself.

I had just witnessed someone being 'Taken'. Taken is an event in my hometown of Mortem. Everyone experiences it, but no one knows when their time is coming. When Taken pops up into a conversation some people are petrified, dreading the moment when their time has come. Others don't mind the fact that one day they'll be taken from their daily life only to be forgotten as time moves on in Mortem.

The worst part is no one knows where anyone is going once they step in the truck, except for the three men driving. Many people have their own theorems and some people have the same theorem of what destination they travel to. Most people believe that they are taken to another town where their fears are finally subdued. But no one really knows. Living in a town where everyone is exempt fears would be great, but I just can't stand the fact that I'll be forgotten in Mortem.

Personally, I am frightened by the fact of Taken only because I want to be remembered for doing something great. But when I'm gone I don't want to be overly exalted by the fact you'll never see me again. Shoved in people's faces daily, when the young folk really don't care. Nor highly disregarded, treated as just another person to add to the Taken toll count. I yearn for something in the middle where my legacy will live on for generations.

The hardest part is how to do this. In Mortem there's nothing extraordinary. It seems that we all live our daily lives just waiting for the day when we are to experience Taken. We all mope around, and feel sorry for ourselves. Including me. It's not hard to stand out in a town like this, but will people even notice? Everyone is too preoccupied on the fact that they'll be Taken one day.

I hear the engine start up and the wheels crunch on the gravel as they drive away, the sounds of its vociferous engine getting farther and farther as they continue to drive. I stay up for about thirty minutes still thinking, but I force myself to sleep when my thoughts almost overwhelm me.

I wake up and my hands naturally reach for Pepsi's soft fur. Her vibrant sounds somehow give me the energy to get up and start my day. I take my shower, brush my teeth, wash my face, comb my brown hair in a rugged bob hairstyle so that my natural blonde streaks are visible, I get dressed, eat breakfast with my parents, and then head to school.

School starts at 9:30 AM, but I leave at 8:00 AM for two reasons. One: I live twenty minutes away from the school and I walk all the way there so it takes longer. Two: if I leave at 8:00 AM I get to have my daily thirty minute chats with my best friend. My best friend and I talk by this creek that's across the street from my school. She doesn't go to my school because she's homeschooled and by the time I get there she is already on one of her breaks. We met about a year ago. It seemed like destiny when I left home earlier than usual and decided to wander over to the creek because school hadn't begun yet. We instantly became friends, but I've always felt something more for her.

Her beautiful luscious brown hair never fails to put me in a trance and her eyes are breathtaking. They look like tiny crystals tinted with a shade of green from a mystical forest. Her laugh is the cutest thing and her dimples are a plus to her wonderful self-called Jen. She's amazing. And even though she's two years older than me, I don't know what I'd do without her.

Our daily talks keep me distracted for just a moment from the slow paced world ahead of us. I enjoy it. She keeps me sane.

I walk to school on the route I always take, through the forest. It is the easiest way to get to the creek and to school. I climb and jump over the chain link fence that outlines the perimeter of the forest. I land taking a moment to maintain balance, feeling the green grass settle underneath my shoes while I stand. Once I'm steady and firmly planted I run. The forest is manmade and is kept up by the automatic sprinkler service they recently installed. Before I was scared to walk through the parched dead forest, but now it's tolerable. Unfortunately the sprinklers come on when I get there. Evidently I run, hoping not to get soaked with the liquid released from the sprinklers. I take breaks when I get tired, but the water I'm splashed with when I'm resting cools me down.

Eventually I make it to the creek puffing for air like I'm some kind of dragon. I sit on a boulder, hold my stomach, and pant. My chest is burning and I can't seem to breathe normally. I look around and notice that Jen isn't here yet. This is strange because she's always here before me, waiting patiently for my arrival. Finally my breaths become regular again and the parts where I was hit with the sprinkler water has dried. I hear footsteps drawing closer to me. I know it's Jen. An uncontrollable smile spreads across on my face. I try to control the smile, but I can't. She makes me so happy.

The footsteps have stopped, but I don't see her anywhere around me. I walk away from Jen and I's rendezvous point and search for where the footsteps ended. The rushing creek water flush out my greatest fears and keep me warm. I walk about thirty steps till I come across a large boulder. It's so large that it's blocking what's on the other side of it. I squeeze past the little space it grants and see a figure standing worriedly on the edge of the creek with a cigarette between its fingers. It's not Jen. It can't be Jen. Jen is always care free. And does she even smoke? I mean sure she's seventeen years old, but that doesn't allow her to harm herself like that.

I gape at the figure speechless, then she turns around. There are bags under the girl's eyes, her hair is frail and I notice that she is mighty skinny. The dimples that once overtook her face suddenly appear when she says, "Hey, Kenneth." Even her voice sounds different. It sounds weak and out of life.

Jen takes a step forward causing me to take a step back. We then both stand and stare at each other.

"How long have you been doing this?" I say coldly. These are the only words to escape my mouth, but it's the last thing on my mind. I'm more concerned about her and why she's doing this. I don't care about the details.

"Since...since I can remember, basically," she says shying up at the shoulders. She proceeds to take another step forward, but I edge away again.

"Why?" I ask.

"Something to take my mind off of things...I guess," she tells me.

Her words hurt more than anything. She was someone to take my mind off of things because I cared about her. Doesn't she feel the same way about me? Aren't I enough? Aren't I enough to escape from the perils of reality? She was my fantasy, why can't I be hers?

I look down at the ground to keep me from crying. Or so that she won't see me crying.

"You know, those things aren't good for you," I manage to say. My voice comes out shaky. I hope she didn't notice.

"Kenneth," she begins in a melancholy tone. Her voice puts me in a serene state, but I run away anyway.

I try to ignore what just happened and go to cross the street to the high school. I walk across with the cross walk lady leading me with her hand. I make it to school and just wait until class starts, all the while thinking about Jen.

Ultimately the bell rings and I go to class. My first class is History. I don't pay attention much in that class because it's usually about other countries' history, and I don't care about them. Fortunately I'm lucky enough to sit by the window in that class, so I often spend the period gazing out the window dreaming of different scenarios between me and Jen. This time as the class settles down in their rightful seats and the drooling Mr. Wallace starts his lesson, I hold my head in my right hand, stare out of the nearby window, and my thoughts begin to be engulfed by only one subject, Jen. That's when I see it.

The big black truck from last night skids down the street only to park at the creek. Immediately I am frozen solid, in my mind millions of thoughts circle my mind and make me apprehensive, but my feet are so cold I can barely feel them. I'm aware that the whole class is quiet now and is probably staring at the truck like I am. But I have a purpose to be cautious of that truck, and this time it's not for myself.

Once the three men hop out of the truck heat circulates my body once more. I become red hot and find the ability to move. With that I run out of the classroom, headed to the creek.

I run as fast as my tall legs will take me and suddenly I find myself at the creek standing in front of Jen. She is staring wide eyed past me, most likely at the three men behind me. I realize that Jen is going to go through Taken today. But I don't want her to go. She makes me okay. Her outspoken attitude serves as something new in my life. I need her. At that moment her horrifying words that she had spoken this morning enters their way back into my memory. *Something to take my mind off of things...I guess.* Jen doesn't need me. Me in her life doesn't serve a purpose. As far as I know I may be irrelevant in her life. But this doesn't demolish the fact that I need her. I love her.

I turn around to face the men. I become happy looking at their faces, and my heart swells up with love. Their demeanor is really welcoming. I retain my focus and get straight to the point.

"Take me. Not her," I say.

A hand lands on my shoulder, but it's not one of the three men. It's coming from behind me. The hand spins me around and I am staring into the eyes of Jen. Her eyes greet me, but express sorrow at the same time.

"Kenneth, please don't," she says.

I just felt it. The moment was right and I had to tell her somehow. I figured this was the best way. Without warning I fit my hand behind her neck and place my thumb close to her ear. I massage the part of her face my thumb has landed on gently as I hold her gaze. She is searching my eyes madly and I just smirk. I slowly press my lips up against hers. I linger for a while not wanting to let go even though her lips are stale with the recent scent of tobacco. Then I feel her kiss me back and I know that I mean something to her. I don't know exactly what I mean to her, but I know it's something.

I let go first and turn away quickly so she won't force me to stay. The three men guide me with their nimble touch to the truck. I'm not afraid of what will happen next, or what will become of Jen because I know that one day we'll meet again and it'll be amazing. I can't wait.

As I walk to the infamous black Taken truck I see a crowd of people standing outside the school and watching the scene that is currently taking place. Nods of heads suddenly occur throughout the crowd. Those meaningful nods lead me to believe that I will be remembered. But what for?

At that crucial point I realize that through my tacit actions I have conveyed to the city of Mortem that Taken is always a factor which makes things change. People you've never thought to be gone, are gone. And people that you have never imagined existed are an essential part of your life now. It all makes little sense and sometimes forces you to quit. But don't let that stop you. In fact use it to your advantage and let it serve more of a reason to make the most of now. Take in the moment because later all of this will only be memories.