

Name Tripping

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Tripping over the jumbled roots like puzzle pieces laid on the dirt floor of the forest, my thoughts were clouded with those unnecessary facts of frustration. Like I am tripping over the very same roots since kindergarten, but me being uncoordinated was nothing in my control. My ranked number one accumulated thought was my name. Do you notice the majority of your class loves warm months? Which is basically saying screw winter and all it's miseries and with the help of all the Joes' and Jessica's born in spring and summer making the enjoyment level increase. It would be a little more comforting in people liked the winter here. Now you are like, what is this psycho boy talking about? Well, hold up and we'll get to that. When it comes to people named after their birth month, Jeez it's corny but I can live with corny. What I can't face is that my name isn't even telling my birth month, it's a flat lie. I am supposed to be a regular spring baby too. There should be a law against lying names or at least parents who intend on wanting their child to own the dark corner in the back of every room hiding from embarrassment and harassing kids. That stupid game that teachers *always* use, you know the "Hi my name is Jeff and I like my X-box 360", well I say "Hi my name is January, I was born normal and turned weird against my will." The only regular nickname you could get out of it would set off the wrong impression of my gender. Yeah, I am pretty sure "Jan" wouldn't flatter my manly side. My manly side is already in great need of repair as it is. Droplets of rain water, now plastered my blond hair to my forehead and cheeks. Mud lined the soles of my shoes. I had already gotten that uncomfortable feeling of damp jeans. I wasn't even half way home.

By the time I got home apparently I looked like a wet cat, not too long ago my mom said that "January was a name full of meaning and wonder", looking it up on Google the night after, it basically said that I am a door and the original name is Janus, another girl name. It's like calling a girl Douglas. I figured that my mom's interpretations were still crazy, so I didn't take any offense to being called a wet cat. Ten minutes later, while I had only accomplished changing into dry, Family Guy P.J. bottoms, I realized paranoia caught up with the whole wet cat thing, so I headed to the bathroom.

If anything I looked like a wet bird. I had thin blond hair but it was long for average guy hair length, falling to my shoulders. My nose was kind of hawkish, like the spiritual natives in their smoke circles, which looked odd with my pale complexion. I had a wiry build and narrow sea blue eyes. Think about that image, pour a thousand buckets of water over it, and you get the result.

I lay on my lumpy single bed, sighing. It seemed as though I was in a box, and you could think out of the box but not act on those thoughts. Isn't it only fair that I get the weird name, along with the not-so-normal life? I figured, the God that picked my future had serious amnesia and checked off "weird name to discourage good future" with "dull, lame life" by mistake. I had already passed age eleven to get my train ticket to Hogwarts, and I wasn't about to find a sword

in a huge boulder anywhere in the prairies. Maybe if I pushed fate in another direction, like normality, it would go along with the scheme of creating a new identity in Winchelsea, Australia, and live as a dazed surfer named Jude. That way I'd be more focused on alligators eating me, then my name. Now that I had my future sorted out, I switched off the light and drifted into a shapeless sleep. I was late for school and I could sense a detention coming this time. I rounded the corner to the only patch of woods there was in miles. My first step laid on the damp dirt ground, was when I heard the awful singing. I seemed out of my body, watching it walk away in the opposite direction of my original destination. Why I would be drawn to a girl singing like a moaning dog? I wouldn't know.

I looked up at the rusty-looking barn. A girl standing on top of it, singing her heart out. She jumped. As I screamed, she smiled. Before I knew it she was lying flat on her back. Her eyes opened, like she could sense my eyes staring and sighed, "I haven't mastered flying yet".

I numbly walked towards her and stood over her, "What?"

"It takes time you know, and you won't get anywhere without trying"

I just stared dumbfounded. She had curly brown hair, that had numerous bright colours that stopped at her mid back and tan skin coloured over her long body. She looked older than me.

"What's your name?" I was surprised by my own question; I usually excessively avoided going anywhere near the subject.

She grumbled, maybe there was something we had in common.

"My answer is disgusting." She paused and stared into my eyes. Seeing how I was waiting for an answer, she continued, "I'd rather not give my birth name but I have a good feeling about you, as long as you swear to secrecy and never repeat it. Got it?" the girl said, still on the ground. "Samantha" she said without waiting.

"Samantha? But there is so many, I have one in my class" I exclaimed.

"Exactly! And you weren't supposed to *ever* repeat it." Girl-who-disowned-her-name-said, "and what am I supposed to call you?"

"January." As soon as I said my name, she basically had a heart attack.

"I love it!" she squealed.

"Yeah, no shit it's a girl name" I said gloomily.

"Are you serious? January is a fabulous month, full of beginnings and it has an amazing story about these two-headed gods who guarded this door..." she continued on enthusiastically.

"What do I call you if I am sworn never to repeat your name?" I interrupted. She broke away from the story realm she had made.

"Camille."

"What do your parents say about that?"

"What parents?" Camille smirked, "now are you done playing twenty questions?"

"Err..sorry I didn-"

"Alright goodbye!" And Camille, the terrible singer, the survivor of jumping off a bloody barn roof, leap to her feet and left.

I came back every day. *Every day*. It took her a week to finally show up, which was when I was getting depressed by the idea that she wouldn't come back. From that point on, my world evolved around *her*.

It was like an addition, seeing Camille. My name no longer mattered. Camille loved it anyway.

Just her quirks of bad singing, annoying hand gestures, and scaring-the-living-hell-out-of-me flying lessons; made my heart pound harder, more butterflies develop, and my hazy mind drugged more with love, just because *she* was the clone of a moaning dog, the greatest mimes could not perform such wonderful hand expressions and how every time she jumped from a twenty foot drop, she bounced right up again. Her whole spirit mesmerised me to the state of obsession. School, home, life were merely inconveniences, not at all priorities. This was my secret way in, into a thrilling life.

I came home at 11:00 PM.

As the creaking floors ceased at my pause, I heard sobbing. Deciding all I wanted to do was think about my day with Camille, I continued to my room. "January?" the door opened, "I was worried about you! You are coming home later each night and not telling me what's hap-" "I have never had rules before" I said staring into my mom's blood shot eyes. Camille wanted our meetings to be kept secret. Shaking my head, I walked to my room. Thinking love would give me sweet dreams would make you wrong. When sleep hit me I'd be lucky to sleep for an hour, and during that long hour the nightmares would start...

I looked into the lake.

The reflection could never possibly be me. The body was worse than the nightmare last night; anorexic with sunken eyes falling into the black circles surrounding them, ghostly as ever. The only colour was red gouges on my neck. I had a sickness and I think the worst part was that I was completely numb to the idea that I should stop it from getting worse. I just stared and stared at the image until it turned into Camille's face.

I woke up, and checked the time, about 11:50. I never really thought about those dreams since it had to be the price to pay for seeing Camille every day. Plus, living through those dreams was just as bad not being with her.

Those routines/adventures weren't even things out-of-the-ordinary, Camille made polluting smoke stacks fireworks. Every second was a bullet to my head with her absences. I've acquired a habit of pinching, and itching my neck. When mom saw those marks, she screamed and blubbered through tears about how I was tearing myself up bit by bit and that is was psychotically unnatural to do this. I walked away, yelling in my head that these habits weren't unnatural and you are being a paranoid bitch. Or at least that's what Camille thinks.

The constant lectures and sobbing from my mother saying that I was becoming isolated from the regular world, got me thinking against Camille's rules of outreach. I am in the hands of this miracle girl and I can't show her off to the world. Only the wind knows. This girl got me past thinking those silly childish thoughts of the future, when life is all about getting the high of the moment. Though I can't tell you the rest of what I've learned, not because I'd have to kill you, but because I don't remember. Every night after that eternal running nightmare ends, it's like all the past had been flushed down the toilet with it all being someone else's problem. It's a relief in a way.

Those eyes, those feet, her whole body was leaning on a huge gallant tree. Before I stopped myself...I said, "Come with me", my hand dangled out, waiting to be held. As far as her abilities went, I was almost certain that they didn't stretch to mind reading. I pushed forward into a run. Anything faster than a walk was a race to Camille and she lunged ahead of me, tilting her head sideways ever so often to see which direction headed to the destination-the finish line. I was in front as soon as we got to the sidewalks, her face was blank but her legs and feet took high suspicion and were laid cautiously on the pavement but I wasn't thinking of Camille for once, every step I took -knowing that there was a beautiful girl chasing after me-was boasting to all who looked my way.

We reached the house. Camille had made a safe distance between us. "You heard me" she said, her hair wasn't a calming sea of colours, her brown eyes sparked with flames. This wasn't my Camille. "*You* know, you don't want me to be seen."

"I've changed my mind."

She gave me a look, no protests just a I-don't-want-to-be-known-to-your-little-group-of-family-and-friends look and that hurt more than any verbal abuse. I ignored the rock in my stomach and walked in. I couldn't help thinking about this scenario: she knew everything, we almost did everything. Why would she exclude this small part of reality? She followed through the door behind me, keeping the icy aura.

Mom never came to the door anymore, and I didn't trust Camille to stay. Yelling out was the only option. "Mom I want you to meet someone!" I shouted down the hallway.

Mom wandered down, seemingly in a state of shock. "Who am I meeting?" she croaked.

"This is Camille" I directed my finger towards where I thought Camille was standing, but I ended up with the hall mirror instead. The image in the mirror was a replica of the ghostly gaunt figure in my nightmare, that sickness, *my* sickness... I looked at *her*, "What's going on, Camille?" trying to find comfort in her eyes.

"January, there is nobody there."