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Co-Op (Fridge Worthy/Terror)  
Sara Islas, Humanities Period 4½  
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### THE EDGE

**Tuesday, October 2nd, 1932 - 6:00 pm**

*"Wake up Louisiana! The unemployment rate has hit an all time high at an estimate of 23.6% this past year. Suicide rates are up, and so is the amount of homeless, parentless children roaming the streets of New Orleans."*

*My hands are filthy. I haven't washed them in far too long, I can't. We haven't had running water since Papa lost his job a few months ago. I turn off the radio and proceed to pick away at the scabs that encrust my bare arms. The newly emerging blood drip, drip, drips onto my feet. The feeling of it is intoxicating. It reminds me of war. My papa is so proud of the war. Well, he must be; he always talks about it. "The filthy Germans!" he says, "They got what they deserved!" Maybe if he were as good in the assembly line as he were on the battlefield, we wouldn't be in this mess. I dream of a world with only children, there would be no war, and there would be no parents. Who needs parents anyway? I jump as I hear a loud POP!; it breaks the comfortable silence of my bedroom.*

*"Really mama?" I mumble, "Another one?" I find asylum beneath my bed, she's too dumb to even look here.*

*"Tristan! Where is that damn failure you call a father!?" Just wait it out. You can take it. The underside of the bed reeked of sweat and dead skin. Thump. Thump. Thump. Thump. My fists were clenched and my teeth grinded against each other. Maybe she wasn't too dumb after all.*

**Wednesday, October 3rd, 1932 - 3:00 pm**

*A day later I'm broken and bruised in a washtub full of ice. A grimy mirror hangs above the sink, the harsh reflection of the sun blinding my already swollen eye. The porcelain beneath my body sweats a thick coat of dirt and slime, like the swamp had flooded into the house while I wasn't looking. I shift wearily, and to my discontent, find yet another wound. I stare at my parallel in shame. "Look what she's done to you Tristan. What did you do to deserve this?" My hands wrap around a palm-sized chunk of ice. Tears escape down my cheeks. Every throw distorts the horrific reflection before me, cracking into a million pieces, long held emotions, and buried memories. I scream and feel every word searing in the back of my throat. "ALL I WANT IS OUT! ANYWHERE BUT HERE! I'M TIRED OF BEING ALONE! I HATE ADULTS! I- I just want so-someone wh-who understands me. I just want-t-t-t a friend." My voice fades into uneven breaths and whimpers. Finally, my swollen face breaks into shards of empty glass, each feature raining onto the floor. The room is still and lifeless. My thoughts are the same. My existence is the same. My family is the same. **Lifeless.***

**CRASH!**

**Thursday, October 4th, 1932 - 9:00 am**

I lay in bed, my head pounding and my eyes watering. Memories come flooding back, but so does the pain that must've caused me to block them out initially. I remember some parts so vividly, but how did I get from the bathtub into my bed? What was that crash? What else could've happened between yesterday and now? I press my eyes shut, trying force back the answers, but find only blank thoughts. I try again several times, but my failure becomes routine. I look around my bedroom, in search of clues. The whole world looks dimmer and darker than before, the usual shouting has faded, and the neighbor's dog is strangely quiet. I hear no children playing outside, no movement in the rest of the house, nothing. Everything is dead silent. My body feels light, almost like I don't even have to use it to move. I check the bathroom. A red, black, stain covers the path inside. My breathing intensifies and I hope to God that it isn't blood. I back away and try to steady my heart rate, but the further I go, the larger *it* grows. I turn around, frozen with fear as I gape at the trail of gore before me. *Do I dare follow it?* I take a step forward, then another, then another. I peek around the corner, and see my mother's cold, dead, eyes staring at me through the open back door. I run, never looking back, and trying my best to forget everything I saw. Empty streets and vacant homes blur past me. Cool morning air stings my pale face. I don't know where I am going, I don't know how long it will take me, all I know is that I haven't arrived yet.

**Thursday, October 4th, 1932 - 5:00 pm**

I reach a large home near the outskirts of town. I've seen no signs of life all day, but at this particular orphanage, or so the reads the sign, smoke billows from the chimney. The instant I walk through the chipped, solid wood doors, I am greeted by around 20 other children. Some young, some older, but all of their faces seem to blend. They all stare at me in silence, but instantly turn away when they realise that I've noticed. They look at each other and then back at me. Grins spread across their faces. They speak in unison. "Hello Tristan. Please, come in." I grin back and wander further into the home. Each child wears a uniform. A clean blue gown, regardless of gender. The lights flicker making expression hard to read, but I am eventually guided into a pleasant dining room. This feels like the home I've always dreamt of. *I like it here.*

They show me to a long, narrow table set neatly. The room is warm, but not like the humid air outside, it feels comfortable. I take a seat beside an excited looking boy. He has short, golden hair, and serene blue eyes. His tender skin, his lack of cuts and bruises, you can tell that he hasn't seen trouble, but for a second I am lost in his presence. Though we've been speaking for only minutes, or rather, he's been speaking for the entirety of our conversation, he already seems to understand everything about me. I wish to ask him of his name, but he responds before I have the chance.

"It's Alfred," he states.

I am once again interrupted, but this time, it's by mountains of food being shoveled onto my plate. I dig in immediately, remembering that my last meal was a day and a half ago. Each bite I take is a step towards the comfort I've wished for my entire life. "I'm glad you feel welcome." Alfred says. I look up. "I get so lonely, even with all of these kids. I enjoy their

company, but I just can't seem to connect with them. I feel like you might just be the person I've been waiting for." A smile stretches across my face. His tone is optimistic and kind, unlike anything I've heard before. He puts his hand on my shoulder and we stare at each other. It is in no way uncomfortable. His eyes captivate me. They seem to speak to me. *I'm safe now.*

**CRASH!** A plate falls across the room, the culprit is *drip, drip, dripping* sweet scented, scarlet blood. The smell intoxicates me and memories fade in...

### **Wednesday, October 3rd, 1932 - 3:30 pm: MOTHER**

#### **CRASH!**

*"Tristan!" My mother stomps into the room, the smell of her breath louder than the sound in question. "What the hell are you doin' in here?!" She glares at me with violent eyes. My stomach twists in fear. "Nothin. It ain't me Ma." My hands are up and my head is down. It's only physical pain, you can take just a little bit more. She takes an intimidating step toward me. Stomp... Stomp!... STOMP!... Her footsteps ring loud in my ears and the sound pushes me over the edge. I drop to the floor and grab a piece of the broken mirror, first slicing her knees. She curses and bends over to hold her open skin together. I step toward her, anger and adrenaline pumping through my veins. I slice her throat open and she gasps for air. I hear her choke and watch her fall to the floor. "NO. MORE. YELLING." Blood drip, drip, drips onto my feet, and I feel a familiar feeling of intoxication rush through my body.*

### **Wednesday, October 4th, 1932 - 5:30 pm**

I gasp for air and Alfred is holding my hand for support. My head pounds, just like before, and my facial muscles tense up in agony. I can still feel the fear strengthening each cell of my body, but it only makes the situation feel more real. "Hey, it's all okay Tristan. You'll be fine."

### **Wednesday, October 4th, 1932 - 9:30 pm**

Alfred and I sit peacefully on the grass outside of the house. "I'm so sorry you had to go through that Tristan." I nod in agreement. I've had time to think, but it's only brought up more questions. *How could I forget that? What else could I have forgotten? Why can't I make myself remember?* My mind is a novel of confusion and worry. Alfred sees this and his expressions brighten. He seems to have some sort of idea. "Maybe we could use a change of scenery." He gets up and starts running toward the back door. I roll my eyes, following close behind. I chase him all the way into the house, up the staircase, through the attic, and finally through a small window in the roof. The breeze is refreshing and the view is beautiful. Miles of trees stretch on before me, my heart racing at the thought of endless climbing and adventures with my new friend. My parents never used to let me go outside, I feel so much calmer up here where I can see the vast amount of freedom I now have. I slide down next to Alfred, dangling my feet off of the rough, wooden shingles. "Don't look down!" He chuckles. But unfortunately, that's exactly what I do...

**Wednesday, October 3rd, 1932 - 4:00 pm: FATHER**

*The once green grass is stained red, and the source lies desolate before me. I stare down at the mangled mess of cowardice. The source of the crash, and the reason for the previous situation that led to me killing my mother. But I don't care. He was a terrible father. He'd only ever spoke to me when I needed discipline.*

*"Spoiled is what you are, boy. Back when I was a kid, I'd've been hung for actin' like you do. You wanna walk around here, glarin' like you got somethin' to say to me? Then say it boy! Say it straight to my face like a man. Whether or not you can take what comes after is up to God."*

*How ironic that he's the one who ended up committing the ultimate act of gutlessness.*

*"Really father?! Suicide?!" I yell, overwhelmed with the events of the past few hours.*

*The heat and humidity have already begun the decaying process. The flies seem to be swarming quickly. I see the blood drip, drip, drip from his cracked neck. I picture that he looked almost like a ballerina, dancing, falling through the sky, an unseen beauty lasting for only an instant. Now, he looks more like a contortionist. Unfortunately, his debut performance ended quickly, my house is only one story tall. The smell finally catches up to me. I fall over and begin to vomit, he watches beside me. Each forceful push sent from my stomach makes my vision more unfocused.*

**Wednesday, October 4th, 1932 - 9:50 pm**

*"Are you starting to understand Tristan?"*

*Alfred's stare penetrates my blurred eyesight. I try to ask him what's going on, but no sound comes out. I reach to grab my throat and feel soft, uncovered tissue. My stomach drops. WHAT IS GOING ON? I bring my hands up to my face. They are completely drenched in my own blood. The whole area goes from feeling free, to feeling dangerously isolated.*

*"I'm only trying to help. Let me help you Tristan. I can make you remember."*

*I back away from his murderous glare. He reaches out to me, like he thinks that I'll accept his offer. I slap away his hand and push out one final scream before he uses the other to push me off of the roof's edge. I fall backward, trying to pray, but knowing that even God could not make words out of my wheezing. My body hits the ground...*

**Wednesday, October 3rd, 1932 - 4:30 pm: ME**

*My clothes are stained red. Tears rush down my face. I stand over my mama's body, now that I've accomplished my previous goal to drag it outside. I wanted her to see my father. I wanted her to see me. I cry silently, biting my lip to contain my screams. "Don't worry mom. It's only physical pain." I feel the glass shard in my hand, covered in my mother's vital fluid and now, some of my own. I squeeze my palm around it and bring the sharp edge up to my neck. With a final drag, I feel pure intoxication wash over me. My blood drip, drip, drips onto my chest.*

*I feel the tender, open skin beneath my fingers. I fall onto the floor twitching. I smile, and Alfred shuts my eyes.*