

A spindly girl, who's hair hung in braids down the length of her back; giggled as she and her handful of sisters ran through their humble farm. The girls finally settled in the dilapidated barn their father housed the family's sheep and milking cow.

"Do you have the flyer?" Trixie squealed. Let me see it again."

Lily, Trixie's oldest sister replied, "Why are you so obsessed with a piece of paper?"

But Lily knew all of the sisters loved gazing at the worn out piece of parchment. Lily handed the folded paper to her baby sister. With a squeal, Trixie took the paper, and with the care of a mother cradling her baby, Trixie unfolded her prize. She beamed at the beautifully dressed woman. Her dress was light in color and only hung halfway down her calves. Elaborate beading detailed the neckline and cascaded past the waistline. A matching headdress sat upon the top her raven hair. The paper advertised a show scheduled to preform in their small rural town. It was a big todo for their quaint corner of the world. It was unheard of to have a show of such class. In Trixie's small town, if it didn't include men with banjos, it was most likely a Sunday at church. So the day that the flyers went up on the main road through town, everyone bustled with excitement at the thought of real entertainment.

"All the way from Chicago," Trixie cooed. "Could you just imagine being a famous star from Chicago?"

Trixie ran her hands across the paper's weathered surface. The woman's picture was accented with smudgy fingerprints, dust, and even a piece of someone's candy.

"She must not be too famous if she's singin' in our crummy town." Gini groaned.

Gini was one of the middle sisters. Always the pessimist. Trixie glared at her, looked at her as if Gini had just slapped her in the face.

"How dare you," Trixie exclaimed. "I hope we get to go to the show." Trixie sighed and held the paper against her chest.

"Yeah right," piped in Gini. "You really think Mama and Daddy are goin' waste money on some stupid show?"

"Gini's right, Trix." Lily replied. "They don't have that kind of money."

Lily sat beside Trixie and brought her into a sideways hug.

"I'll make you a deal. When we're older, I'll take you to one of these shows...In Chicago."

Trixie's eyes welled up with tears. She wiped them away with grubby hands and replied. "When I get older, I'll be in one of these shows."

### Trixie, Ten years Later

"Frankie," Trixie exclaimed. I'm going to be late if you don't hurry, this is the biggest night of the week."

Trixie gazed at herself in a silver-gilded mirror, which hung over an elaborate vanity. Her hair, once long and pale now rested at her ears, curled tightly in ringlets. The pale wheat color was now a polished, high gloss snow.

She ran her fingers across one cheek as she dabbed the high cheek bone with rouge. She pressed her lips as she double checked the coverage of lipstick; the perfect shade of Cherry Red. She had searched three different catalogs from France before finally finding the "right one".

"You always worry." Frank McAlister said as he walked into the room. "You're going to be a hit. Where's Lily?"

"She's out on a date. He's a real doll. She said she would meet us at the club."

Frank bent down and gave Trixie a soft kiss to the top of her head.

"Stop that! You'll mess up my hair." Trixie shooed Frank away and fidgeted with the perfectly placed curls.

"You look perfect." Frank said with a smile. He knew how to press her buttons. Trixie was the first dame, Frank had come across that could give him a run for his money. When his wife, Camilla passed of fever, he never thought he'd find another

woman who could fill his life with as much joy as Camilla had. "Now let's get going before you make us late."

Frank smiled and grabbed for a wool coat that hung on the back of a chair. Trixie glanced one last time in the mirror before retrieving her own coat.

"You have to say those things." Trixie said. "You're my manager, you have to say I'll do good, and that I look pretty." Trixie loved compliments and Frank knew that. That was one of the reasons he gave them to her so often. That and he truly meant them.

"Yes, that is true, but I'm also your friend." Frank replied. He wished to be more than just her friend and manager but he knew Trixie wasn't ready. He wasn't sure if his own heart was fully ready. It had only been a year since his wife's passing.

Frank settled Trixie's arm into his as he escorted her down the sidewalk. The evening was brisk and the first snowfall hit the busy streets of Chicago. It was a Friday night and people were already preparing for a night of shenanigans. The club was only a couple of blocks from Trixie's apartment and she loved the sights and sounds of "her city". No matter how many times Frank insisted on picking her up in his car, she would always tell him that she preferred the walk. Trixie was never really fond of cars. She preferred a horse and carriage, but that was most likely due to the fact that she grew up on a farm; and had been dirt poor. She wouldn't tell Frankie this, but she was also quite fond of the smell of horses.

As the two walked arm in arm down the sidewalk, Trixie thought back to her childhood. The small, two room farmhouse, her father built with his own hands. The floor full of blanket covered pallets, her and her four sisters shared as a bed. And the love. The never ending love she felt when she was with her family. She missed those days. Missed running through the field of wheat before a harvest, or the girls all sneaking a sip of their daddy's moonshine. Those days would live inside her heart until she took her last breathe.

"Are you okay?" Frank asked.

"What?" Trixie murmured.

"Are you okay? I lost you there for a bit." Frank lightly squeezed Trixie's hand.

"Oh yes, just got caught up in thought. That's all."

"You mean you think?"

Frank gasped and grabbed his chest in mock horror. Trixie sent an elbow to his ribs and they both let out a laugh. Trixie wasn't sure how she had gotten so lucky to have a man like Frank in her life, but damn she wasn't going to take him for granted.

The lights of the club flickered up ahead. A sign stood in front, advertising Trixie's name. Seeing her name never got dull, it still sent a tiny flutter of nerves throughout her body.

"Trixie Blue" (changed from O'Connor because it sounded too poor, and too Irish) Tonight at the Green Mill Gardens.

It had been six months since Frank found Trixie in a shady blind tiger. Slinging drinks and kissing cheeks, as Trixie puts it. You got better tips if you acted sweet and coy. Trixie was good at playing sweet, coy was a bigger stretch for the country tomboy but she got by.

Frank and three other men had walked into the lowbrow establishment one Friday evening. They were already bent on hooch and Trixie could tell they were going to be good tippers. Each one looked to be Jacks—loaded with money. The group of heels sat in a far corner of the small cramped basement and waited to be served.

Frankie was a well polished man and looked completely out of place. To be honest, his entire group didn't fit the characteristics of "The Brown Plaid's" usual patron. They were dressed for a night at a jazz club, not the depths of the pit they were in.

Trixie walked up to the group of men and sweetly asked them what they would like to drink.

"We'll take your best whiskey," one goof replied.

"Since we only got coffin varnish, I'll get you that." Trixie said. She placed her hand on her hip and waited for the man's retort.

The man had enough sense not to reply. Frank though, grew a sly smile. He saw something in that blonde, pixie of a girl. A small ball of fire, that if not careful would burn him alive. Trixie spun on her heels and returned moments later with a round of hooch. Frank cleared his throat and with liquor induced courage went to say something to Trixie.

"Trixie." A man called out from behind her. "Jane cast a kitten and refuses to go on stage. you need to cover for her." The man gave her a stern look and then went back to polishing a spot on the bar. The same spot Trixie had noticed him polishing when she started her shift.

Trixie rolled her eyes and then plastered a smile on her face. "I hope you boys enjoy." She said, then turned towards a small makeshift stage in the center of the room. Frank was disappointed that she had left the table before he could say something, but he was also excited to see what she would preform.

"I'm going to murder that heifer.", she thought as she stepped up on stage. Jane always threw little tantrums and ole' Rusty always let her flake out on preforming.

Trixie steadied herself as she grabbed for the microphone. The stage was built out of old wood, Rusty probably found on someone else's property. It creaked under her weight and competed for attention. A small band sat behind her, waiting for her cue. She licked her lips and gave the saxophone player a slight nod. The band's instruments came to life.

Trixie only knew the words to a handful of songs well enough to sing them. She had already run through two of them that evening so there was only one left to preform.

"I know a triflin' man. They call him Triflin' Sam. He lives in Birmingham. Way down in Alabam'..."

Frank stared at Trixie as she belted out "Aggravatin' Papa". Her voice was rich and full of life. She delivered the words with the emotion only a woman who had been scorned could. Her presence on stage was what captivated Frank the most. She flowed with the words, her body moving as if she were telling a story. She would be a star. Frank knew, Trixie would be something amazing.

"...Just treat me pretty, be nice and sweet. I got a forty-four that don't repeat. Aggravatin' Papa, don't you try to two-time me."

As Trixie finished the last word the room went up in cheers. All she saw were drunk fools but it still filled her with joy knowing they liked her singing. She gazed around the room taking in all of the applause until she hit the table of men stationed in the corner. her eyes hit Frank's. He was staring at her. He wasn't hootin' and hollering like the rest of them. He was just still. Quiet, like stone. His features gave away little of

what he thought about her performance. Trixie wasn't sure why, she should care if this complete stranger liked her performance, but something inside of her told her she should.

Trixie thanked the band and stepped down from the stage. She swigged a small glass of whiskey and slammed the glass down on the bar.

"You'll pay for that." Rusty replied.

"You going to pay me for singing?" Trixie asked. "No, I didn't think so. The drink's on the house." She slammed the glass once more and stomped towards the well dressed man in the corner.

"What is your problem?" Trixie asked. "The alcohol warmed her insides, and made her slightly dizzy. She wasn't a big drinker.

"Excuse me?" Frank asked.

"What is your problem? Wasn't I entertaining enough? Did I not meet your standards in this high end establishment?" Trixie's face grew red.

"I...I mean." Frank stuttered, trying to get a word in.

"And if you think that for one second your opinion matters to me, you're wrong." Trixie stammered.

Frank slammed his hand on the table; he was entertained by Trixie's passion but the alcohol was blurring his senses and he wanted to make sure he told her how he felt before the bootlegged whiskey took complete hold. "I mean no disrespect but why on earth are you preforming in digs such as this?"

Trixie gasped."What am I not even good enough for a dive? Should I just go out back and put myself out of my misery?"

Frank stood. He crossed his arms and smiled down at Trixie. Her long curls bounced in fury as she stepped a few feet back. She too, crossed her arms and glared up at Frank.

"Quite to contrary," Frank replied. "It'd be a waste if you offed yourself. I could make you and me a lot of money."

Trixie was taken aback. She studied the well dressed man with great scrutiny. After a few excruciating minutes, Trixie let out a large huff.

"What are you talking about?" Trixie asked.

"I could make you a star." Frank replied.

"Ha!" Trixie laughed. "Me a star. Rusty says—."

"I can only imagine what Rusty says. What I am saying is you are wasting your talents in this pit and you should be preforming in San Fransisco, New York, Chicago."

"Chicago?" Trixie asked.

"Yep, in the best clubs in the city."

"Do you mean it? Or are you just tryin' to get lucky? I've heard sweet words before mister. You ain't the first Joe to come in saying nice things to me."

"I'm not a Joe and I know what I'm talking about." Frank replied.

"He does, Sweetie." One of his cohorts replied. "You ever hear of Tilly Jones?"

Of course Trixie had heard of Tilly Jones, she was one of the newest rising stars. Her music was like listening to a nightingale.

"Frank here is her manager." The same cohort replied. "If he says you got it. You got it."

Frank reached into a lapel pocket and pulled out a small rectangular card. He gestured for Trixie to take it. She frowned at him but took the small piece of paper. On it was Frank's name, status, and number.

"So what am I suppose to do? just walk out of here and put my life in your hands?"

"That's exactly what you're suppose to do." Frank replied. "I promise you, that if I can't make you a star within the year, I'll give you five-hundred dollars out of my own pocket and you can go back to slinging hooch."

Trixie's eyes shot wide. Five-hundred dollars was a lot of money to offer. He seemed like a relatively trustworthy man, and the view she had become accustomed to at The Brown Plaid was growing old. Anything, even death was better than working for Rusty. Trixie shot out her hand.

"You've got yourself a deal."

Frank grabbed her hand and shook; and he knew in that moment he'd never let it go.

Trixie and Frank stepped up to the door of the Green Mill Gardens club. Music was humming and the glass windows vibrated with excitement. Trixie loved how the club made her feel. How it made her feel alive; as if itself was alive. A living breathing thing that gave her everything she had ever wanted. With a warm smile, she stared at the man beside her. He knew how much she loved the club. How important it made her feel. No, it wasn't the club that gave her what she had always wanted. It hadn't been the club that made her feel complete. It was him. Her best friend, her champion, her cheerleader. Frank was who made her see herself for who she really was. He convinced her to see past the self-doubt and focus on her dreams. He never questioned her abilities or doubted her ambitions. He nurtured them, he embraced them. He embraced her with all of her poor manners, and bad habits. He didn't care if she had grown up poor. He just cared about her.

A tear ran down Trixie's cheek. Frank reached up and softly dabbed the tear away. With a knowing smile he asked.

"Shall we?"

Trixie replied. "We shall."

The door to the club opened and Trixie was home.

Note: Some of the wording is slang used in the 20's and the song Trixie sand is an actual song from that era. Take a look and listen.

Again before you go to the image on the next page, sketch and write down how you imagine Trixie. What do you think her favorite color is? What do you think hoe coat looked like, was it a fur? A wool coat with pearl buttons? What do you picture her style to be like?

Thank you for joining me in this taste of the roaring 20's Now lets step into the art of the 20's see you in a week.

