

10 Days of Pain

The Teen Rebels, Season 1
(Episode 5)



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Where We Last Left Off

The Teen Rebels face off against the cruel Marion Henderson and put him in his place while Trix and Moira reveal some very damning secrets about themselves.

Chapter 1

All Good Things Must Come to an End

It was Wednesday, February 10, 1988, and Josie was sitting by herself at a table in the library, as Seth and Moira were ordered to see their school counselors regarding their issues and Trixie was ordered to go to mandatory tutoring in Alston Hall. It was one of those rare days, when she really had nothing to do. Because of those rare days, especially today, when everyone at the school was feeling subdued due to the school rules and such, Josie couldn't just walk around the school as she wanted to.

In fact, she spent a good part of that day just listening to her Walkman and making up plans to host a conference with the Baines family to talk about everything that Sheila had been doing while she was still a student at Montagne Beach Middle School. She didn't know what to call it, and she certainly needed Seth, Moira, and Trixie to help her set her plan for the conference into motion.

It was time for the Baines family to be taken down a notch for their decision to raise Sheila; they had ignored any and all complaints about Sheila for far too long. Someone needed to tell them point blank that Sheila Baines was nothing more than a troublemaker, and her troublemaking wasn't going to stop unless someone was smart enough to nip it in the bud.

I sincerely hope that Mr. and Mrs. Baines would listen to me and stop Sheila before someone else gets hurt, Josie thought to herself as she continued making plans for the meeting, including a speech that she would make after the meeting ended. It's not enough to have them hearing about Sheila bullying from me. Several other people should be able to speak about how Sheila had bullied them. Jacey included. If I could get some people who are willing to talk about how much Sheila had hurt and humiliated them, then people will listen. If I could get a few teachers to talk about how Sheila had disrupted the class with her awful behavior, then everyone will know how much of a nuisance Sheila is. But when I make my speech about how horrible she is...

Josie froze, knowing what would happen the moment that she made her speech about Sheila: people would immediately call for Sheila to face the guillotine for what she had done to not only the kids at Montagne Beach Middle School, but to poor innocent Carter McMillan and his family.

She found herself crying for Carter; she had been his "special school buddy" during her years at Montagne Beach Elementary School, and she made sure that Carter was happy and safe while at school. (She learned from Jacey Mayford that children will always be cruel towards those who have mental disabilities.)

After a few moments, Josie calmed herself, then went back to her task. The plot to get rid of Sheila Baines wasn't going to make itself.

Very soon, Jacey came into the library and sat beside her. She too was bored with everything that was going on since Sheila and Marion were kicked out of school earlier that month and the brand-new school rules that were set in place following the incidents involving Sheila and Marion. To her, those rules were nothing but stifling and restrictive. She already had a difficult time following her mother's rules for her life, so why should school problems be thrown into the mix?

She said, "It's quiet in here."

"Yeah," Josie agreed. "Much too quiet for my liking. I'm so bored."

"Me too," said Jacey. "We can't go walking around the school and even if we do, we can't really g

anywhere. The teachers have been ordered to lock up their classrooms at lunchtime and the computer lab is too crowded."

"This is the pits," said Josie. "And it's too bad that Seth, Moira, and Trixie have to go to counseling during lunchtime and I'm stuck here. Nothing exciting ever happens to me."

"Well, look on the bright side," said Jacey. "At least Sheila isn't here to kick us around."

"And now we go back to Sheila," said Josie as she rolled her eyes. "Things around here haven't been the same since she was kicked out of here last week."

"Yeah, I know," said Jacey, "and that thing with you guys and Marion in history class last week was just despicable. I mean, where did he get the gall to call Moira a whore? Doesn't he even know what a whore is?"

"I don't know," said Josie, "but I know that he's starting to pay for that, as if he wasn't already punished for cutting my hair and ruining the lives of several other kids. Can we please have at least one person who does NOT cause trouble and uses their ethnicity to avoid punishment? That would be so much better than what we have right now."

"I agree," said Jacey. "When is it all going to end?"

"I don't know," said Josie, but she had a feeling that when the situation came to Sheila Baines, it would not be over.

In fact, it would only be the beginning of a long and unbearable nightmare for all of them...

Speaking of which, at the Montagne Beach Police Station, Officer McCleary received a tip from an anonymous source (also known as Marion Henderson) that claimed that Sheila Baines had something to do with the disappearance of the McMillan family. The anonymous tipster also claimed that the Sheila had killed the family because of Carter's mental disability.

Officer Olson said to him, "I wonder if this is the break in the case that we've been waiting for."

"As if this confession came straight from the horse's mouth," said McCleary. "It seems that we have question Gloria Wiley, Octavia Ballard, and Taylor Watson about their role in the kidnappings of the McMillan family."

"And those guys are between the ages of 19-23," said Olson. "They really had no business being around a 16-year-old girl."

"Or committing a crime with a 16-year-old girl for that matter," said McCleary. "Now, let's find them so we can put an end to this case."

Needless to say, 19-year-old Gloria Wiley, 21-year-old Octavia Ballard, and 23-year-old Taylor Watson were soon arrested by the police for their roles in the kidnapping of the McMillan family. Yet when questioned about their roles in the kidnapping of the McMillan family, they left Sheila's name out of their carefully rehearsed testimonies. If anything, they knew that Sheila would come after them if they pointed their fingers at her.

"I really don't think that they have the capacity to commit any crimes," said McCleary as he and Olson were on their way to patrolling the halls of Montagne Beach High School. The high school recently had a huge fight in the cafeteria, with one student critically injured as a result of the fight and currently in the hospital. There was still a lot of anger in that school, especially since the injured kid in question was both African-American and mentally disabled. Plus, he had been beaten up by three biracial boys for almost no reason. Because of that fight, the school was currently "on the edge" as the kids called it. The three boys who had beaten up the other boy had yet to be disciplined for their actions.

"Are you sure about this?" said Olson. "To be honest, I can't really call them innocent, not if they were seen hanging around with Sheila Baines and plotting to bully schoolchildren and destroy families."

"I will erase your doubts and firmly insist that they are good kids, not the type of kids that you would see hanging around a monster like Sheila Baines," said McCleary. "And I don't want to hear another word about this matter."

"I will ignore that, yet I can't help but wonder if Sheila was the mastermind behind the crime," said Olson.

"If she was, then that would explain a few things," said McCleary as he conceded.

He shuddered to think about the possible fates that the McMillan family was possibly suffering right now. Death was high on that list, according to the tip. Carter was 11 years old and he was in Kit Olson's (Olson's niece) class at Montagne Beach Elementary School. Olson knew that all the kids in Mrs. Rivera's fifth grade class would be crushed to learn that Sheila Baines had murdered one of the classmates. Who knew how that parents of those kids would react if word got out that one of the children's classmates was killed by Sheila Baines.

Someone had to stop Sheila Baines before she struck again.

"This can't be true," Josie said as Trixie told her about the arrests of three people who confessed to the kidnapping of the McMillan family. The girls were sitting in the Teen Rebels' hiding spot trying to do homework. School had been let out for the day, yet the library usually remained open until 5:30 PM which was when the librarian went home for the day.

The rumor about the arrests had begun earlier that day, when a girl named Sharon Travis had apparently found out about the confessions and then spread a rumor about the three accomplices Sheila Baines. Very soon, everyone in the entire school learned that story.

The story was that Sheila had hired her three henchmen to lure Carter McMillan away from his family as they vacationed in Half-Moon Bay, but Carter's parents and siblings had gone with him when he was lured away, resulting in the disappearance of the McMillan family.

When Josie heard that rumor, her blood boiled; she had always known that Sheila hated little Carter and tried to harm the boy and Josie tried to protect him from Sheila's cruelty, but this was too much for her to bear. Josie truly wanted to get rid of Sheila now.

"Tell me that it's not true," she cried out in pain.

"It is," said Trixie. "I know Sheila Baines had something to do with it. I just know it."

"But still, what are we going to do about Carter?" said Josie. "I've known the McMillan family since I first came here in 1982; I was Carter's special school buddy during my time at Montagne Beach Elementary School. I don't know how Anne Marie's going to handle the news of Lena and Eugene possibly being dead. The trips will be crushed to the max once they hear about Eugene. I don't know how mom and dad are going to take this."

"Not to worry," said Trixie. "I have overheard that there's a rumor that's spreading around the African-American community that's suggesting that not all the family is dead, just Carter and the parents. Eugene and Lena could still be alive somewhere for all they know."

"Well, good for them," said Josie. "I always knew that Lena would never go down without a fight and Eugene can snap a bone if he wants to. Maybe they got away from the bad guys and are hiding somewhere. Who knows?"

Just then, Seth and Moira walked into the Teen Rebels' hiding spot, putting an end to all talk about the probability of the survival of Lena and Eugene McMillan. Josie and Trixie silently agreed to talk about Lena and Eugene later; they, Seth and Moira were still planning for the Bully Conference, and they could not afford to have any distractions right now.

Seth said, "Well, we're in luck. The Baines are going to be coming here this Saturday for a meeting and we can finally tell them what we think of Sheila. I'm so eager to knock them down for raising a monster like her it's not funny!"

"We need to be sensitive towards them," said Moira. Everyone stared at her. "Remember, if Sheila tortures us during the day, she probably tortures her parents at night. They have to live with her, you know."

"Indeed," said Trixie. "Now I can make her pay for threatening to take me down when I first came here. I'm stronger than her, in case you haven't noticed, and there's no insult that can't be thrown at me that I haven't heard before."

"Yeah, we know," said Seth.

"I say it's time to come up with a strategy," said Moira. "We need something that'll expose Sheila for what she truly is. But we need to be careful not to hurt them or anything like that."

"They will get hurt nonetheless," said Josie. "Just because she's their daughter doesn't mean that they won't get hurt by all the things that we are telling them about Sheila. I mean, what if they're actually nice?"

"That's what I'm wondering," said Moira. "If Sheila's parents are nice, then how did they get a monster like her?"

"I really want them to be nice," said Trixie, "but should they really be nice to us even if we're slamming them for choosing to be involved with Sheila?"

"I hope so," said Seth, "for their sake."

They left their spot and went to the bike racks, where the carbike was parked, courtesy of Seth, who was able to drive the carbike to school. They all hopped onto the carbike and Josie drove off, heading directly for the Montagne Beach Public Library. There wasn't a minute for them to lose.

Chapter 2

Meet the Baines

Donald and Wanda Baines could only be described as yuppies, which was a term of a person who lives in an urban area who had a professional career. They were also African-American, one of the few members of the large-and-still-growing African-American population of Montagne Beach. They were also a part of the growing upper middle-class population that was beginning to take root in the city.

Don and Wanda both worked at high-paying jobs (Wanda worked for a lawyer and Don worked for a computer company), drove nice cars, and lived in an affluent part of Montagne Beach, which was very different from the poor neighborhood that Moira and Seth lived in. They also had two children of their own, an 11-year-old son named Cameron, and an 8-year-old daughter named Amirah. They had also adopted Sheila, who was taken from her severely disabled mother at birth and raised by a series of foster families. None of those families wanted a disabled girl near their own children, especially someone like Sheila; Sheila had a history of causing nothing but trouble for each of her foster families with her cruelty and bad behavior.

That was not seen as a good move, especially by the African-American population of Montagne Beach. Most of the African-American community initially believed that Sheila's birth mother, 17-year-old Eliana Blake, was a severely troubled high school dropout who often ran away from home. She also accused various family members of abusing her, even sending her own father, grandfather, and uncles to jail for her lies. She herself was currently living in Broadview Sanitarium in Stockton, California and will not be seen in this story.

As for Sheila's birth father, his name was never revealed and he too will not be seen in this story. Yet due to Eliana's accusations of abuse against her own family, most of the community believed that either a cousin or a family friend could be Sheila's father.

However, that won't be discussed until later in the story.

Anyway, while the Baines family were seen as respectable according to the residents of Montagne Beach, only a handful of people who actually knew them (such as the Stebbins family) could say that the Baines could be a bit superficial and insensitive to the plight of people who were not African-American. They were seen that way by how they apparently appeared to be petty and indifferent towards their neighbors, from accosting them to outrightly being mean to them.

That, and the fact that the Baines always seemed to ignore the various claims from students, teachers, and the principal that Sheila was causing nothing but trouble at Montagne Beach Middle School. Most people believed that Mr. and Mrs. Baines did not care about Sheila, or they would have made Sheila stop misbehaving several years ago.

The Teen Rebels decided that they had to put an end to that, so they decided to hold a conference for Sheila's parents that weekend. Josie had known the Baines family for as long as she had known the McMillan family, and she was looking forward to letting them all know what Sheila had done to Carter.

Josie, Seth, Moira, and Trixie had dubbed the conference "The Bully Conference", and they had invited scores of students who had been bullied by Sheila to come to the school. They were naming Ronnie Sutton, Talia Mullins, Tim Lamar, Irish Collins, and Lily Soliz to speak at the conference.

those kids had been bullied by Sheila and they were eager to get her back for all the years that she had made fun of them or was mean to them. Jacey was not forgotten; she blamed Sheila for ruining her life, even though it was Seth who had done the dirty deed. She too had known the Baines family for many years and she hated them all.

The night before the conference, before dinner was made, Don said to Wanda, "I don't know half of what's going on here, but I don't like it. This so-called "*bully conference*" is nothing more than a plot by the city to force us to send Sheila away to a mental hospital. We don't just throw people away whenever they do something wrong. We're not like those rich White families who think that they can just get rid of the disabled person by hiding them in the attic or sending them away to a mental hospital. We did not hide Sheila away or send her away; instead, we tried to make her a part of our family. I don't know why the city is punishing us for giving a girl a good home when she could have been living in a padded cell and be forgotten about by the rest of society."

"Yet think of those who are in prison," said Wanda. "They're in jail because they had done something wrong. We know that stealing or hurting other people is wrong, and because some people have insight on doing only what's wrong, they should go to jail for that. What if Sheila really was behind what happened to the McMillan family? What if she had been bullying the other children at the school, as some of the people are insisting that she is doing? We both know that that Josie had something to do with the bully conference, and she has something against Sheila. She won't stop until she has Sheila facing the electric chair, for better or worse."

"Indeed," said Don as their children came into the kitchen, effectively ending the conversation. As dinner was being served, with an extra plate of food being made for Sheila, Mr. and Mrs. Baines began to wonder if it was even worth the effort to keep Sheila in the family, despite her problems. If anything, they had tried to protect their children from most of Sheila's crimes, making sure that their children were kept away from Sheila and not allowing them to interact with her in any way.

But was it enough for them to keep Sheila away from their family? Was Josie Tremlett-Kahn right in claiming that Sheila had killed Carter McMillan? Would they have to send Sheila away to a mental hospital if push came to shove at the bully conference?

Not even they knew the answer to those questions.

"Well, this just doesn't make any sense," said Moira as she picked up yet another newspaper article about Sheila and put it aside in the quickly growing pile of newspapers that were gathering at her left hand. "Just who exactly is Eliana Blake?"

"I don't know," said Seth. "But what I do know is that whoever this Eliana person is, there's no way on this earth that Mr. and Mrs. Baines could ever share their DNA with such a monster like Sheila."

The kids had gone to the Montage Beach Public Library, where they were doing some research on Sheila Baines for the past three hours. So far, all they could find out about Sheila was the fact that she was born on January 27, 1972. There seemed to be very little information about Sheila's birth mother and nothing concerning Sheila's birth father, something that wasn't lost on Moira.

"I guess that there's a guy somewhere out there in this world who doesn't know that he has a kid," she said.

"And that kid is nothing more than a murderess," said Trixie.

"I've been watching *"60 Minutes"* and it says that girls who don't have a good relationship with their fathers end up becoming bullies," said Josie. "I wonder if that's the case with Sheila here."

"Not to mention the fact that Sheila can't be trusted as far as she can be thrown," said Seth.

Josie stared at the articles again, making note of the name Eliana Blake. If anything, she would look up that name when she wasn't pressed for time.

"You know what?" she said. The others looked at her. "Enough about Sheila; we'll deal with her later. Who wants to watch a movie?"

"I don't know," said Moira as she stared at the list of movies in the next newspaper that she was reading. "It seems that most of these movies won't even get into our theaters before spring. Not unless we want to drive the carbike to Salinas."

"Absolutely not!" said Josie. "No way am I going to Salinas! It's too crowded and not all the people there are friendly."

"Indeed," said Seth.

"I say that we have a choice between *"The Edge of the Stone"*, *"Silent Light"*, and *"Rose of Night"*, none of which we actually want to see," said Trixie.

"What about *Voyage to Atlantis*?" said Josie. "I'm sure that that's a good movie."

"But it's rated PG-13," said Moira. "My grandma forbids me from watching PG-13 rated movies!"

"I wonder why," said Josie. "We don't even have any PG-13 rated movies in our local theaters yet."

"Good point," said Moira. "Anyway, let's go before the movie starts."

They all gathered their things and went to the carbike, determined to take off before anyone noticed them. As far as they could tell, it would be nothing short of scandalous if the Teen Rebels were to be caught BEFORE the meeting started. That would ruin their plans to get rid of Sheila Baines, and none of them wanted that.

At the same time that the Teen Rebels were making their plans to take down Sheila Baines, Officer McCleary and Olson were preparing for the bully conference, but in their own way. As soon as it became known that there would be scores of people at the meeting, the Montagne Beach Police Department would be out in full force. A possible riot over Sheila Baines' possible fate was the last thing the police department needed.

"I can't wait until this is over," said Olson. "This nightmare involving Sheila is too much for me to handle. No child should have the capacity to commit such a crime as kidnapping and murder, especially if the victim in question was an 11-year-old boy who just happened to have a mental disability."

"And yet, we have Sheila," said McCleary. "Who is she and where did she come from?"

Just then, Officer Estelle Franklin walked into the room. She said, "This thing definitely has Sheila's fingerprint all over it."

McCleary was flabbergasted. "What did you do with my case?" he yelled.

"Simple. I scared the truth out of the kids that you arrested," said Franklin. The two men glared at her, wondering to themselves how dare this woman takes over our case! Just who does she think she is anyway? "Did you seriously think that you were going to allow them to lie about Sheila's involvement in the kidnapping of Carter McMillan?" Franklin continued while completely ignoring the two men staring at her in anger. "No way. I say that it's time for Sheila to face justice and judgment for what she did to that family."

"But we both know who her parents are," said McCleary, "and we both know that it's wrong to demand that they hand her over to the authorities to face justice, even if she did commit the crime in question. What will the African-American community think if it ever got out that we had to arrest Sheila Baines for the kidnapping and murders of the entire McMillan family?"

"If the African-American community knows what's good for it, they will allow justice to be served for the McMillan family," said Franklin. "It doesn't matter what racial ethnicity you are. If you commit a crime, then you have to answer for that crime. There's no other way around it. Sheila did something wrong, so now she has to answer for what she did."

"And what if the community says no?" said Olson.

"They will not, lest it gets out that our city is harboring a murderess," said Franklin. "The boy Carter is in your niece's class, am I right?"

"You leave Kitty out of this!" Olson snapped in anger. "She has done nothing wrong!"

"And you stay out of our case!" McCleary said in turn. "We were doing just fine until you poked your nose in it!"

"I will be questioning your niece about Carter," said Franklin to Olson. To McCleary, she said, "and I would advise you to keep your mouth shut if you know what's good for you. You're a police officer, not Sheila's father. Get over the notion that you have to prevent every African-American child who misbehaves from facing their rightly deserved punishment."

She left the room as Olson said, "She really needs a lesson on racism and the justice system."

"Indeed," said McCleary, "but for all intents and purposes, let's go back to when it all began. Let's go back to what happened during the New Year."

Olson knew what was up. "The Baines family usually goes on vacation in Half -Moon Bay every summer," he said, "but they never take Sheila with them."

"I wonder why," said McCleary.

"Anyway," said Olson, "I have reasons to believe that Sheila found out that the Baines family wanted nothing to do with her and they tried to send her to a mental institution in San José, which was why she left the Baines family in the first place. Now why would she target the McMillan family?"

"Because of what Dennis McMillan does," said McCleary. "He processes applications for people"

who are sent to mental institution all over California."

"Exactly," said McCleary. "Surely Sheila must have found out that Dennis was helping Wanda get an application for her to be committed to the Griel Memorial Psychiatric Hospital in San Francisco and decided to put an end to it immediately."

"Which was why Sheila kidnapped Dennis and his family," said Olson. "She was willing to do anything to get out of being sent away from the Baines family and this was the only way that it was possible."

McCleary was confused by the new revelation, but it soon became clear: Sheila enjoyed bullying other people and she resisted all efforts to be disciplined for her bullying, even preventing Wanda from knowing about her bullying and doing something about it. She made sure that the only person who could have put an end of her cruelty disappeared without a trace. Sheila thought that with the disappearance of Dennis McMillan and his family, the issue surrounding her bullying others was resolved and she could go back to bullying the other children unchecked.

Until Thursday, January 14, 1988, when four kids named Josie Tremlett-Kahn, Seth Burke, Moira Downing, and Trixie Kalbrunner stood up to Sheila Baines and put her in her place, of course. Sheila did not forgive them for humiliating her in front of the entire school. She especially was angrier with Trixie for refusing to join her and Jacey Mayford for beating her up, but it was the fact that Josie refused to be her friend when they first met that put the nail in that coffin.

McCleary decided to track down the Teen Rebels and question them about why they decided to humiliate Sheila and stop her from bullying the other students. Surely the kids didn't plot to stop Sheila without having an ulterior motive. McCleary was going to find out what that motive was, one way or another.

But that wasn't going to solve the mystery of the disappearance and rumored deaths of the McMillan family. Only Sheila was going to answer that question, whether she wanted to or not; the only way that that was going to ever happen was at the bully conference.

McCleary steeled his nerves as he mentally prepared himself for what would surely be the most talked-about event of 1988...

Chapter 3

The Bully Conference

It was now Saturday, February 13, 1988, and nearly 9:00 AM when scores of people crowded into the Montagne Beach Middle School Library. All of them were eager to witness the first ever "*Bully Conference*", even if only a handful of people were going to actually participate in the conference itself.

The police were out in full force, making sure that order was in the room and the people were behaving properly. The chief police had made it clear that there was to be no disorderly conduct allowed in the school, and anyone who violated the rules would be ejected from the meeting.

Josie, Seth, Moira, and Trixie were sitting at a long table that was in the front of the room. They were dressed in the school colors, with Josie tying a black ribbon in her hair. The Teen Rebels were practicing their "angry look" while Josie was preparing a speech that she would recite at the end of the conference. She was eager to see the faces of the audience when she made her speech; there would be no way that Sheila would be able to walk around Montagne Beach after this.

Jacey came to them, saying, "We need to get going; the seats are quickly filling up and the Baines family is here." Everyone glanced around; Josie spotted her family in the front row as well as the parents of the children who were going to speak at the conference. Donald and Wanda Baines were also there, along with their children, Cameron and Amirah. The Baines family sat in the second row, just a few feet from Colonel Harvey Mayford. Joyce Mayford was not present.

"Good," said Josie as she adjusted the ribbon in her hair and straightened up her clothes. "I can't wait to knock down the Baines family for even adopting a monster like Sheila. Somebody needs to pay for that mistake."

"I say that we should find Sheila's birth mother and sue her for bringing Sheila into the world," said Moira. They all glared at her. "What?" she cried out. "You can't sue someone for raising a bad child. What kind of country allows this kind of crap to happen?"

"This one," said Seth as he glared at Moira.

"Exactly," said Moira as they and Jacey took their seats. Ronnie Sutton, Talia Mullins, Tim Lama, Irish Collins, and Lily Soliz also took their seats at the table as the conference began.

Just then, Mrs. Carker came to the podium and said, "Hello, and welcome to this student-led conference at Montagne Beach Middle School. The reason that this is happening is because there have been claims that a student by the name of Sheila Baines has been bullying many of the students at this school and she refuses to change her behavior no matter how many times we have asked her to stop bothering the students. She was even behind several other people being bullies themselves, a problem that we will resolve after we deal with this problem.

"But that alone is not the reason why this conference has been called. Some of the teachers here have been targets of Sheila's bullying, which is something that has never happened in the history of this school. This upsets me and I am sure that many of you are upset about this as well. No child should have any business harassing adults, let alone other children. I'm sure that you parents have heard enough about Sheila from your children, so you will be hearing from some of them about how Sheila had bullied them."

She left the stage as Ronnie, Talia, Tim, Irish, and Lily came onto the stage. As each of them spoke about the number of times that Sheila had pushed them down, cursed at them, slapped them, and even said some very derogatory remarks about their heritage and ethnicities, Josie stared into the crowd and noticed that most of them were glaring at Mr. and Mrs. Baines. The couple was scared into silence. Sheila herself was sitting in the back of the room in chains, being forced to listen to every horrible thing that she had done to them and not being allowed to say anything at all.

However, that was not the worst of it.

Josie stared at her friends; it was time for them to put on their "angry faces" and face the crowd. Jacey had just finished her speech about how Sheila had broken into her house and beaten her up for having imaginary friends, thus giving out the reason why she was absent from school that week. She also claimed that Sheila had made fun of her for her imaginary friends on a number of occasions.

As soon as Jacey had finished her speech, Josie went to the podium and said, "What you all have just heard is the cold hard truth about Sheila Baines. She is nothing more than a cruel and abusive bully whose main pleasure in life is to make sure that your own lives are a nightmare. She throws her ethnicity around, using it as a weapon and a shield against those who she has deemed *undesirable*. She has also taught other students of the African-American race to be as cruel to others as she is.

"But this isn't the only reason I'm here.

"I'm here because I have never been a victim of her attacks until now, when the McMillan family disappeared without a trace last month. I knew Carter from my days at Montagne Beach Elementary School and I knew that his mental disability would have gotten him in trouble with various students, but I never imagined that I would be standing here telling you that I believe that Sheila Baines had something to do with Carter's death."

Josie noted the looks of shock that were on the faces of the audience before continuing, "Sheila Baines killed Carter McMillan just because he was mentally disabled."

A collective gasp of horror passed through the entire room as Josie continued, "Sheila knew that I knew Carter, so that was why she went after him. She killed him to get back at me. Knowing that I wouldn't give into her crap, Sheila decided that she would punish me by killing Carter."

By then, several members in the audience were crying while several other members looked as if they were ready to kill Sheila. But Josie wasn't finished with her speech, as she said to Mr. and Mrs. Baines, she said, "What you two have done was one of the insane and idiotic things that I have seen in my 13 years of living on this earth. Choosing to adopt Sheila was just stupid and you never should have done it to begin with. Now there is a dead boy because of you, and everyone in the city is going to find out who and what you truly are. May God have mercy on your souls."

Chapter 4

Shock and Horror Abound

At this point, no one knew what to say. Josie stared at her family, who was sitting in the audience; her mother had tears in her eyes while her father looked stern. Even Anne-Marie and the triplets looked very sad. However, that was nothing compared to what Mr. Baines had to say.

He said, "You are telling me that you believe that Sheila killed Carter McMillan?" Josie nodded with an angry look on her face.

"We already knew so much regarding that allegation," said Officer McCleary as he came into the room. "In fact, a few days ago, three older people claimed to have been working for Sheila informing us that she hired them to have Carter killed due to his disability. But one must wonder...why."

The room fell silent at the officer's words. No one knew what to say in regards to that question. Even the Baines family had no idea that Sheila was capable of such an atrocity as what she had done to Carter McMillan. Not until Josie had brought it up.

Officer Olson said, "We are now going to have Sheila committed to the Montagne Beach Institution for the Criminally Insane, seeing as she is a danger to society." No one protested the decision, not even Mr. or Mrs. Baines. They knew that this would have to happen eventually, seeing as Sheila had caused more than enough trouble for them to beg the community to give her another chance.

"Sheila is indeed a danger to society," Olson continued. "How long will it be before she kills another family or kidnaps another mentally disabled child? We must put an end to this right now before some other family suffers the same fate as the McMillan family suffered."

The crowd immediately burst into chatter as Josie, Seth, Moira, and Trixie approached Sheila, still wearing their "*angry faces*" that they had worn throughout the conference. Sheila said to them, "You got some serious nerve calling me a murderess."

"That's because you are a murderess," said Josie. "You killed Carter. You killed him just to get back at me for ignoring you. What gives you the right to go around hurting kids who are mentally retarded just because I didn't choose to give you the time of day to bother me?"

At this, the room grew deathly silent as scores of people watched the ultimate confrontation between Josie Tremlett-Kahn and Sheila Baines. In truth, the confrontation was long awaited and much needed, especially since Josie had never confronted Sheila over her behavior.

Not until now.

"You're going to pay for Carter's death," Josie snapped at Sheila as she sized up the older girl. "The entire state of California is going to find out what a monster you are, and not even Jesse Jackson will protect you from some White person's righteous wrath. Just you wait and see."

Sheila glared at Josie, Seth, Moira, and Trixie as they glared at her right back. Sheila knew that she had lost the moment that she had dared to mess with the Teen Rebels.

Nevertheless, she had one more trick up her sleeve.

"I'm going to make you sorry that you ever decided to fight me," Sheila snapped. "And to get that little retarded brat involved in your scheme," here, she pointed to Jacey, "is just as disgusting as your friendship with these three bastards. Because you have decided to persist with this disgusting behavior of fighting me and calling me a bully and accusing me of killing that little retarded kid, I'm going

make you pay you pay for it. I will get out of whatever loony bin that they send me to and I will make you all sorry that you ever stopped me from bullying other people."

"Oh, I'm certainly looking forward to that," Seth snapped as the crowd gasped in horror. "And when that happens, I hope that you are torn to pieces by an angry grizzly bear before you even lay a single fingernail on us. No one threatens me and my friends and lives!"

"Let's go, Miss Crazy," said a nurse who worked at the Montagne Beach Hospital for the Criminally Insane. "I don't have all day." Sheila could only give the Teen Rebels murderous glare as she was taken away.

"Well, that went well," said Josie as the place began to empty out. The crowd, satisfied that they had seen Sheila Baines getting her much-deserved comeuppance, went to the school parking lot in a peaceful manner. The police were also patrolling the parking lot, as protesting the decision to send Sheila away was not allowed. Josie's family quickly went home the moment the decision was announced.

"Well, I must admit that it could have been worse," said Trixie as they all stared at the Baines family, who were surrounded by reporters trying to get information about Sheila's story. "They could have denied everything and accused us of trying to turn them against Sheila and forcing the city to force them to send her away."

"Not to mention that the rest of the African-American community would have accused us of racism," said Moira.

"They would, except for the fact that I'm Black," said Seth, "and even then, why would I want to be a part of that culture?"

"I'll ignore that," said Josie, "but this is terrible. We've essentially forced a family to wash its hands of a member, be it that member is Sheila herself. It's like we're no better than our great-great-grandparents, who held these kinds of inquiries 100 years ago and forced families to break up and send away kids who were deformed or disabled, even punishing the mothers for giving birth to those kids. What we have shown is that nothing in this city has changed at all, not when we send people away for being disabled."

"Yet you said it yourself, Josie," said Moira. "Sheila bullied students. She murdered Carter. She was too dangerous to be among normal people. Things could have been so much worse if we didn't stop her when we did."

Josie stared at her family, who were busy talking to several other people. How would she feel if Anne-Marie or one of the triplets was mentally retarded and Sheila killed them because of their disability? That thought made her shudder violently.

She then said, "You're right, Moira. I'm glad that we stopped Sheila when we did. I just regret that we didn't meet sooner so we could prevent Carter's death and the deaths of his parents. I only wish that more people knew that disabled people exist and they are not to be treated as an object of ridicule, or locked away and forgotten about."

The four kids all walked out the door and just walked around the place aimlessly. Most of the people who attended the bully conference had gone home while some other people stayed to talk. The Teen Rebels realized that in exposing Sheila Baines as a criminally insane person, they had invoked her wrath. She swore to make them all pay for their deeds. The main question was, though, were they ready to pay the price for stopping Sheila?

To that question, no one knew what the answer was.

Chapter 5

The Plan

A few hours after the "*bully conference*" ended, Josie, Seth, Moira, and Trixie were sitting at the Purple Peddler Tavern. They could not believe that they had just exposed Sheila Baines as not only a bully, but a murderess as well. The kids knew that it would only be a matter of time before that deed came back to haunt them.

"I still can't believe that the plan actually worked," Moira said as the kids feasted on Fried wild rice with New Zealand spinach, Prussian asparagus and garlic with a side of sautéed cress, epazote and snowberries. "I mean, who knew that she was a murderess?"

"Not me," said Trixie, "and here I was beginning to think that she was just a simple bully. But I was severely mistaken."

"Not only that, she threatened to do something awful to us," said Seth, "and in public too. What was wrong with her?"

Josie said nothing; she still couldn't believe that Sheila would do something terrible to Carter McMillan. Josie has known that boy since she was in the second grade and the fact that he was probably dead somewhere still hurt her.

"Josie?" Trixie said to her. "You've been unusually silent since we've been here. What's wrong?"

"It's Carter," said Josie. "I knew him. And now he's gone." She stared at a group of children who were playing on the beach outside the bar and continued, "I just don't understand why Carter had to die. I mean, whatever did he do to Sheila to earn his death at her hands?"

"Besides existing," said Seth.

"Who knows?" Moira chimed in. "Sheila is just... bad to the bone, I guess. I mean, just look at her. She's fricking messed up in the head. No teenager just goes around hurting little kids just for kicks. It's not natural."

"No, it's not," said Trixie, "and yet, why we are shutting down mental hospitals and letting the crazies run around in the streets unchecked is beyond me."

Josie said, "I'll have to deal with Carter's death sooner or later. Let's go home."

They all gathered their things and headed out the door, making their way to the carbike. As Josie drove the carbike in the direction of Trixie's house, she realized that there was going to be a party being held in honor of her grandfather's 80th birthday next week. She knew that no one in the Salama family, save for her and her grandfather, father, and uncle, knew that Trixie existed. Rajasthan Kalbrunner had done a very good job of keeping knowledge of Patricia Leigh Kalbrunner secret from the world.

Instead of going to Trixie's house, Josie turned in the direction of her own house. She had work to do.

"We're never going to dye your hair again," Sindy said as she washed out the remaining blond dye from Skylar's hair. They had gone home immediately after the conference ended, all of them upset with what Sheila Baines had done to little Carter McMillan and Sheila's threats that were made to Josie. "It was such a waste of time."

"Having blond hair was fun while it lasted," said Skylar as he ran a hand through his now dark brown hair. "But Josie's right. I really didn't need to dye my hair blond just to be young again."

"But every time the triplets misbehave, I get another gray hair," said Sindy as she ran a hand through her graying blond hair. "It's like the boys just refuse to behave themselves."

"Now, Sindy," said Skylar with a stern look on his face. "Nigel, Homer, and Walter are just being little boys. You know how they are. All trouble all the time."

"But my mother doesn't approve of their troublemaking," said Sindy. "In fact, the last time that she was here, she said to me... "

Just then, the triplets in question had gotten a hold of a snake and ran around the house, chasing Anne-Marie with it. "Mom! Dad!" she cried out in horror as she ran from her brothers and the snake.

"The trips got a snake!"

"Oh my God!" Sindy screamed as she jumped up and ran towards the boys. They laughed as they ran from their mother and straight towards Josie and Anne-Marie's room. Josie and her friends were inside the room, very much oblivious to the danger that they would soon be in.

In fact, they were plotting to reveal Trixie to the Salamati family at Ardeth's party.

As we all know, Ardeth was not very happy with his son's decision to isolate his only begotten daughter from his family and the world. He also had tried to get Trixie away from her father for several years, even when she claimed to have been abused by the family doctor. Rajasthan did not forgive Ardeth for threatening to have him jailed the week before Josie found Trixie.

Josie said, "I know that grandpa wanted to see you ever since he learned about you, and now's your chance to get to know him."

Trixie said, "Yeah, but how do you know? It's not like no one in the family knows about me at all."

"Not until we found you," said Moira, "and even then, do you really want to get to know a family that willingly ignored you and pretended that you didn't exist?"

"What if they actually want to get to know Trixie?" Seth pointed out. "As you can tell, not everyone is privy to keeping secrets from each other, not even from their own families. I say that Trixie must meet her family. There's nothing else for it."

Trixie was about to say something when a snake crawled under the door to Josie's room. Moira saw the snake and screamed. Josie sighed and yelled out, "You boys are in so much trouble!"

"No, you in trouble because you didn't play with us, Josiefeen," yelled the triplets.

"You silly boys," Josie yelled out in anger. "Now you have five seconds to get that snake from my room or so help me... "

Seth grabbed the snake and opened the window in Josie's room, where he shoed the snake out the house. The snake slithered away from the house in the grass as fast as it could. Seth then said, "You girls are scared of everything. What is with you and being scared of snakes?"

"I'm not overly fond of them," said Trixie.

"And you do know the story about the Garden of Eden, don't you?" said Josie.

"I'm trying to avoid snakes," said Moira.

"Are you all right, Josie?"

Josie froze as she saw her mother and siblings standing in the doorway of the room. They were worried for Josie since the snake had gotten into the house and triplets were running around the house with it; sometimes, Josie would tune out the world, thanks to her Walkman.

"I'm OK, mom," she said back, but she knew that it was too late. Sindy Houston Stebbins had seen

the Teen Rebels. Josie and her friends stared at Josie's mother, knowing that this was the third mother they had met. Unlike Joyce Mayford and April Downing, (both of whom had some words to say about Josie and her friends), Cindy didn't have much to say in regards to the Teen Rebels. But what she knew was that her daughter had some explaining to do in regards to her recent activities... .

Epilogue

"We'll, I can't say that I approve of your friendship with my daughter," Cindy said as she stared at Moira, Seth, and Trixie (who were discovered in Josie's room a few minutes earlier), "but I can't say I disapprove of Josie being your friend."

"I most certainly don't like you," said Skylar, "and since I don't like you, I'm not going to allow you to hang around with Josie anymore. You two are trouble." This he said to Seth and Moira.

Seth frowned as he and Moira took in the news of Josie's parents disapproving of their friendship with Josie. Yet Trixie said, "What? You don't like me too?"

"Au contraire, I'm very glad to finally meet you, Trixie," said Skylar. Trixie stared at him. "You have no idea of how long I have waited to see you."

"Indeed," said Cindy as she stared at Trixie. "I'm a bit surprised to know about you, but when I overheard Josie talking about you, I knew that you needed help."

"And I never would have escaped from my room had Josie, Seth, and Moira not come along when they did," said Trixie. "They saved me, and in turn, I saved them from the school bully. I made sure that the other boy who bullied Josie got what he deserved. But that never would have happened had Josie not met Seth and Moira when she did. So, in all honesty, Seth and Moira deserve to be Josie's friends, as they deserve to be my friends."

A long pause followed Trixie's speech; no one would have guessed that a girl who spent most of her life in foster homes and locked away in an attic would know anything about friendship, let alone know how to interact with other children. But Trixie was no fool, and she certainly knew a good friend when she saw one.

At length, she said, "You think that Josie has friends? You're not fooling anyone at all with that accusation. In fact, it's better to have a few friends than a hundred casual acquaintances, if you know what I mean."

"I agree," said Josie, "and yet, while I do talk to people, does that make them my friends? No, I refuse to be friends with anyone unless we have something that is not in common. Seth here doesn't have much of a family to contend with while Moira is hated for something that she didn't do. And you already know Trixie's story. But Trixie's right; better for me to have a few true friends instead of scores of people I just talk to occasionally."

"When you're right, you're right, Josie," said Cindy. "But I'm still not too sure about them."

"For some strange reason, I spoke to Harvey Mayford today and his wife went on about how your friends scared poor Jacey out of having imaginary friends," said Skylar sternly.

"Which Sheila forced us to do," said Moira as she grew more comfortable with the lie. "She forced us to do that because she was tired of Jacey's imaginary friends."

"I see," said Skylar, "and yet, she never told Harvey about that part, didn't she? No matter. We'll be dealing with that soon. Now, let's get you home... "

"Or maybe not," said Cindy as the 10 o'clock news came on. The police had just issued a curfew that no one was allowed out of their houses after 8:00 P.M. for the rest of the month of February. Chief of Police Calvin Cohen claimed that he had issued the curfew to deter rioting and looting, which would have occurred when the community found out that Sheila Baines was being sent to a mental hospital.

"Such a shame that all of this happened because of Sheila," Cindy said as she stared at the television.

"If it's all the same to you, we flushed her out," said Josie. "We weren't going to stand there and allow her to walk all over another student for no reason."

"It's time to break the system!" Seth yelled out. Everyone stared at him. "No bully is going to be

telling us what to do! We need to give up cartoons and toys and focus on growing up. The time for us to start thinking about the future is..."

"A lot sooner than we think," said Ardeth as he came into the room. Everyone stared at him. He continued, "It's time for you kids to start thinking about the rest of your lives and not just the moment. You might not know it yet, but you'll be adults soon and adults have to learn to work for living. You can't be kids forever, you know."

Josie knew that her grandfather was right; she wasn't a kid anymore. Not since her 13th birthday that was. She didn't have time to hold onto her childhood.

But for what it was worth, she knew that she had some growing up to do...

Characters Featured in this Episode

Now for the characters that have been featured in this episode:

The Main Characters:

1. **Josephine (Josie) Tremlett-Kahn** - a girl of 13 years. Eighth grade student at Montagne Beach Middle school
2. **Seth Burke** - a boy of 12 years. Eighth grade student at Montagne Beach Middle school
3. **Mary Joanne (Moiria) Downing** - a girl of 14 years. Eighth grade student at Montagne Beach Middle school
4. **Patricia Leigh (Trixie) Kalbrunner** - a girl of 15 years; cousin of Josephine Tremlett-Kahn

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