

TYRESE LAQUAVION III

Tyrese grew up on the west side of town in San Fran. He grew up on the edge of uncertainty. Unsure whether he'd have a home for the night. He grew up working odd jobs with his father, and hanging laundry with his mother. One thing that Tyrese did have growing up, was a wild imagination. He would dream of the north, an area free of the heat-ridden streets as of Southern California. Him and his sisters would pretend as if they owned their own shop, they would create items that they would sell to passing-by tourists, dropping penny's into glass jars. The only thing Tyrese couldn't escape, was the taunts from the merchant's kids. He couldn't escape the name calling, the beatings, and the isolation. The only thing he could do was dream.

Tyrese eventually grew up, he realized that life wasn't built upon dreams and fairytales. Once he moved out of the house, he had to fend for himself. He would work odd jobs to get by, working unforgiving jobs that would forever leave a mark on him. Then all of a sudden, the chatter began. "What's this talk about gold in the east, Tyrese?", said his buddy James Murray. "I don't know, sounds all made up to me?", said Tyrese. "I'm not too sure about that buddy, from what I heard, there's a bunch of migrants coming from all over!", said James.

As the months went by, the rumours grew. There had been multiple strikes up in the mountains, and people were walking away with thousands in gold. Tyrese knew he had to get involved one way or another. He thought of all the times a where he wanted to give up, when he was covered in dirt, and bruises. He reminisced on how all that would go away in an instant. He also thought about his parents, and his sisters, how he could retire them with this one expedition.

Tyrese began the long haul for gold on October 15th, 1848. He set out for Weber's creek, an area that he carefully planned for beforehand. Tyrese travelled by wagon, of which he acquired without ease. Along the way to Weber's creek, he didn't think of much, except for his family. How he missed them, and how he wanted to do right by them.

The trip had been going well, and Tyrese's spirits were up. The weather had been good, as the hot California sun refused to say goodbye. One day however, when he was just 100 miles away from Weber's, his wagon hit a tree, and broke down. At that point, Tyrese thought he was done for. Out there in the middle of nowhere, with little to no food and water left. He had come this far, so close to making something out of himself, and just failing. For the next couple of days, Tyrese sat beside his broken down wagon just dreaming. On the third day, a group of prospectors passed by. "Sir, are you okay", said the only woman in the group. "I could be better to be frank. My wagon took a bit of a spill.", said Tyrese. "We can see that Sir.", said another member of the group. "How about you travel with us?", said the girl. "It's always better to travel in groups, with all the wildlife and all". "I wouldn't want to do you people the burden, I'll be fine.", said Tyrese. "No we insist", said the girl once more. "I guess so, if it isn't any trouble to you folks", said Tyrese. The group of prospectors and Tyrese then continued on their journey.

The group of prospectors were headed further east, but they helped Tyrese get set up in Weber's creek. They helped him with his camp, and they made sure he had enough supplies to last the duration of his expedition. The prospectors said their goodbye's, and wished Tyrese the best of luck, and he would need it.

Tyrese's camp was set upon the north side of Weber's creek, an area where he thought he would find more success. His campground was located in a clearing, an area free of tall trees, and ravaging wildlife. While his campsite was safe, it was also secluded. There was other areas of Weber's creek that were more heavily populated, but Tyrese wanted a better chance at finding gold. So, he stuck to that location and began mining for the precious material people called gold. He started by using these makeshift pans, that he would place in the nearby river. These pans would collect the gold from the river, and would filter out all the dirt. And at first, all Tyrese was getting was dirt, no gold to be seen, heard, or touched. And it remained like that for the next few weeks. He had tried everything, he changed where he mined, he used different tools. But, he didn't seem to get things right. This expedition had taken a toll on Tyrese, from the harsh winter months, to the isolation, it was hard to handle.

After mining for many months, and finding no gold whatsoever, Tyrese made the long trek back to San Francisco. He felt depleted, destroyed, and most of all, he felt like a failure. When he finally got back home, his parents were doing the same thing. His father doing odd jobs around town. And his mother hanging laundry out in the street. And for Tyrese, seeing his family frozen in spot gave him the drive that he needed to turn his life around.

One day, Tyrese puts his plan in action, to start his own business. He heads down to the local bank, in hopes of getting a start up loan for his business. As soon as he entered the bank he felt this sudden silence, almost as if he was the only person in the world. Then things suddenly came back. "Hello, how may I help you?", said the banker. "I'd like to take out a loan for 100 dollars", said Tyrese. "I'm sorry, but we don't serve your "kind" here, said the banker. Then, that "frozen" feeling came back to Tyrese. As he was walking towards the exit, he noticed another black man in what seemed to be a heated conversation with a banker. "This is blasphemous!", said the man. "Sir I've already told yo-". "I don't care what you have to say! You and everyone in this damn country is absurd!", said the man. He then stormed away from the desk towards the exit doors. Before the man could leave, Tyrese stopped him. "Excuse me sir, what was that all about?". "Those idiots wouldn't give me a darn loan!", said the man. "Yeah, same thing for me, something has gotta change around here!", said Tyrese. "What were you planning to use that loan for?". "I wanted to start my own business!". "Same here! You know what, we should just pool our earnings at do it together", said Tyrese. "Sir, with all due respect I don't even know you!", said the man. "Well, my name's Tyrese. And your's?" "It's Peter, Peter Lester".

The two then collaborated in creating a buiseness. They started "Lester, Laquavion &co, in fall of 1849. The store sold assorted footwear and clothing. Things were going well, they were making straight shillings. Nevertheless, they were still ridiculed, taunted, and insulted all because of the colour of their skin. What they didn't realize, is that things would get even worse...

On April 12th, 1861, the American Civil War began. This was a dispute between the free states and the slave states. One side, the Republicans, wanted all states to be free. And the democrats wanted all states to be slave states. Fortunately for Tyrese and peter, California was a free state, meaning they weren't subject to enslavement. However, there was a large entity of people that were for enslavement, and didn't want to see any free states in the US. And with a war of that magnitude, anything can happen, so all blacks weren't safe

at all. Like many other blacks at that time, both men questioned whether living in the US would be safe anymore. So, they looked to migrate elsewhere. Both men were looking to follow the chain of the gold rush, since business came along with it. There had been talk about this fort, Fort Victoria, way up north. And this was the “hub”, of the up and coming “Fraser gold rush”. To the men, this fort seemed like a good place to do business.

The men headed out for Fort Victoria via ship on July 16th, 1861. To get there, they had to sneak on a ship carrying goods for the colonies. Other than them, there was men other men that made the daring journey up north to Victoria. They arrived in Victoria on September 1st, 1861. And at first they felt completely lost in this new world. It was colder, lots of trees, and the community felt very different. Unlike their hometown, Fort Victoria has very much diverse. You would see Asians, Europeans, and First Nations. Nevertheless, the men quickly settled in, and they found their way around town. They got to know the locals, and they struck up relationships with shopkeepers, and colonists. In short time, they established their own business, which carried the same name as their previous shop. However, they sold miming tools and supplies at this new and improved version of “Lester, Laquavion &co. One thing that stood out in Fort Victoria, was the sense of inclusiveness and respect. People had come from all over to be there, so there wasn’t anybody degrading one another. Tyrese was happy, and he didn’t have to dream of a better place anymore. He felt at home.

In spring of 1865, things in the US changed once more. The Civil war was over, and the republicans had won, meaning slave states were a thing of the past. Blacks all around the US rejoiced as the years of slavery and degradation were over, (for the most part). For Tyrese, this was an opportunity to go back to his hometown. As for Peter, he had met a woman and had started a family of his own. “So this is really it?”, said Tyrese. “Yep, I guess so. I’m going to miss you my friend.”, said Peter. “Good luck with that family of yours, keep them safe.”, said Tyrese. HONK, HONK. “Well that’s my ship, I better head off”. Said Tyrese. The two then embrace as they are never going to see each other again...

Tyrese lived the rest of his life in San Francisco. He had 2 kids with the love of his life. For once in his life, he was proud of himself, knowing that he really made something this time. After all that ruin and relegation, to the joy and celebration. Tyrese Laquavion III was free.