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Childhood

by Stuart Carruthers

My childhood seems to belong to another world. A young girl who grew up before her time. Why was I sent to Moor House, while the others stayed at home? Was I really that bad?

The tall imposing doors reverberated to the sound of children's feet as they skipped over the worn granite paving. Dimly lit corridors stretched deep into the heart of the great structure that was now my home.

What had I done to deserve this?

I could still smell the fumes from the car's exhaust long after it had left. That familiar smell grew into a lasting memory. The faint sound of children laughing from beyond the entrance doors grabbed my attention and for a moment I was back in the playground with Holly and Jane. The sun casting shadows as we played on the swings.

A young girl surrounded by high walls and friends you don't need. A daily routine that destroys your soul. The boredom is endless, day after day. You grow old before your own eyes. And still they don't return.

Why?

My fingers glide gently over the rosary beads she gave me. Silently reciting the words, embedding them into my mind, but I don't believe them anymore. The bells signal the end of your free time and beginning of your fear. Fear that you will be chosen, you pray hard it's not you.

You lose track of time as the days roll into years. Nobody seems to leave or give the impression they want to, except me. They never come to visit.

Why?

Removed from their minds the troublesome girl in the blue dress, I was someone else's problem. I think I'm unrecognisable from the child who emerged from the back seat.
A hidden confidence desperate for exposure. Desperate for that chance.

They don't like my questions or the answers I give.
The more I try to shut out the voices in my head, the louder they scream.

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