

"The Color of Her Walls"

In a small, dim-lit house tucked behind a row of maple trees, lived a girl who had long since stopped speaking at the dinner table. Her mother called it a phase. Her teachers said she was difficult. But none of them knew the weight that clung to her like a wet coat every morning when the sun filtered through cracked blinds.

Every afternoon, she'd rush to her room—the only place she could breathe. She painted the walls in colors no one approved of. Reds and blacks, wild streaks of blue. They didn't match, and that was the point. The colors screamed when she couldn't.

Her stepfather hated the mess. He'd raise his voice until the walls themselves seemed to cower. "What's wrong with you?" he'd ask, again and again, never pausing long enough to hear the answer that never came.

At school, they handed her worksheets and worried glances. She didn't need their pity. She needed them to see. To hear. But silence is often mistaken for defiance, and so she was labeled.

But in her mind, she was loud. In her mind, she ran through rainstorms barefoot, kicked open locked doors, and screamed songs only she understood. Her rebellion wasn't with fists or flames—it was in choosing who she'd be when no one was looking.

And late at night, when the shouting finally stopped, she'd lie beneath her ceiling of hand-drawn constellations, whispering poems to herself. Her voice cracked with dust, but still, it rose. Her lullabies weren't soft, but they were hers.

She wasn't broken. She was just unheard.