Penny

Penny was a lonely child. More than an 8 year old should be. Not that untrained eyes could tell, she had that joyful skip in her step that preached her blissful innocence. She was taken to school each day in a beat up station wagon, styling that waved goodbye to the world a decade before and a windshield so speckled with grime that only the silhouette of Penny’s Grandmother was visible from the outside. Penny was the only girl in her class that was brought to school by her Grandmother; this entailed her sitting alone at lunch but she never valued anybody’s company anyways. Her Grandmother, Margret, was the centre of her universe. As the Gleaming sun is to earth, the rays Maggie expelled gave Penny hope-filled future. Why her Grandmother I hear you asking. I can hear those gears tuning in your skulls; oh what a sound. But no, Penny’s parents did not dramatically die in some glamorous explosion or dreadful car crash, they were both alive and well. Penny was just not wanted. Penny hoped out the car one day, not that the wagon deserved the title of “car”, and found some boys awaiting her arrival. She looked back at Maggie but her grandmother did not acknowledge the impending doom and just hurried Penny out the car. She did this while exclaiming in her soothing tone, “Hurry on dear you do not want to be late do you”. It was Penny’s second year of school but her first in the main yard. She ignored the 3 glooming figures that stood over her at the school gate. The first stepped out towards her. She froze, expressionless. He bent over, she immediately noticed the warm tickle of his breath, an unnerving feeling but oddly comforting. He whispered through clenched teeth into her ear, “Welcome to the main yard, this is going to be one hell of a year”. He dug he’s shoulder into hers as he passed, and the other two boys behind him followed suit. Penny made it down the hall with oddly less stares than normal. The stares weren’t of acid that ate away at her flesh but rather of pity. She did know which would hurt more. She walked into class, and sat in the back corner. This might as well have been labelled with a neon sign reading recluse. The class started with a discussion over how each student spent their summer break. There were many story of travels through Europe, and cruises through the Caribbean, but in Penny’s mind these recounts didn’t matter. Maggie worked part time in a small patisserie, enough money to sustain their current lifestyle but little enough that distanced the pair so far from extravagant holidays that these places might as well didn’t exist in the mind of Penny. The highlight of Penny’s summer break was a visit to the Zoo. She didn’t quite understand why this inflicted such levels of amusement on her peers. Peers in the formal sense, as in by preposition not consciences choice. They laughed, but theses did nothing but spark a level of amusement in Penny herself as to warrant a coy smile. She rode out the day, not attributing much attention to the events of the classroom but rather she got lost in her glance out the window. A trance that for her, required a substantial effort to break. The bell rang. Penny pondered to herself how the bell rung to both start and end the day. But yet the exact same sound could carry a sense of dread or in this case rejoice. Penny nearly made it to the car park when the same 3 boys approached her. They wanted the same as most these days, Money. Penny got an allowance from Maggie every week for lunch. The whole car ride home Penny was reluctant to tell Maggie of the 3 boy’s threats. But she decided not to as she knew that Maggie would only contact the school and make things astronomically worse. That night Penny lay in their shared bed. Maggie’s breathing set a soothing rhythm for thought. Penny had pre-determined that there was no way that she would give those kids her Money, Maggie had worked too hard for it to be wasted. She lay there for quite a while longer as sleep continue to allude her. Penny arrived at school next day and sure enough the 3 boys approached her repeating their previous demands. She stood still, so sure of what to do yet scare to take that leap. Eventually she counted down form three and repeated one of Maggies oh too true sayings, “bad things happen to innocent people”. Just as she assured herself that these people were not good, she took the plunge. Penny drove one knee as hard as she could upwards, impacting the unsuspecting victim in the crouch. He collapse in on himself, as if he’s legs were jelly. He let out a fleeting moan. The next few moments of Penny’s life wear undecipherable. But to her surprise these few moments were ones of relief, security and oddly pleasure. A deep running pleasure that’s cause was unknown. She found herself in the principal’s office with her Grandmother at her side. The principal’s lecture was did not seem to matter to Penny, she rather focused on the sense of fulfilment. But somewhere in Penny’s subconscious lurked the knowledge that these actions would be never be enough to settle a now overcoming thirst. The car ride home was silent but to Penny, this in itself was a scolding from Maggie. When the two got home Penny sat down and prepared herself for the lecture of a lifetime. Maggie began, exclaiming her immense disappointment. But Penny, who always listened found herself lost in her own thoughts. Suddenly those that overcoming craving for fulfilment overtook Penny, and now it wasn’t Maggie standing before her. It was one of the 3 boys. She didn’t even consider her action and acted on what felt like instinct. She got up, and as if possessed by the trance she slowly walked towards her Grandmother. She paused, then did what she had done before, drove her leg into the side of Maggie. Her Grandmother fell, but there was a slight complication. Maggie’s head clipped the edge of the table. Penny just stood there. She thought that she would run to her Grandmothers aid or be filled with grief but she did none of those. She just stood there. And thought. Maggie had always said that bad things happened to innocent people but for some reason Penny thought that her Grandmother had deserved this. Because life had knocked Penny around for all her life but now she had finally hit back. And so she sat there and smiled as her the only person who loved her lay bleeding out on the kitchen floor. But once more Penny taste for blood was far from satisfied, and now she had no-one to hold her back.