

Therapy

Jack, her Therapist begins with the same question he asks every week, "What was your childhood like Claire?"

She answered the same way as she does each week, "My life started in a small village in Suffolk with pink painted houses. The gardens well kept, but behind the net curtains life was very different; I was always in pain from the violence at the hands of my cold and vicious mother. Everything that went wrong was my fault, that's why she punished me. If I wasn't being battered black and blue, I would be locked in the dark cupboard under the stairs, just me and the gas meter. Nobody could see me cry in there. Once I was put into a bath of cold water with the added touch of bleach, she said it was to teach me not to get so grubby. The next day I was sent home from school because I kept sneezing and I looked so pale."

Jack asked again, "Was she always like this?"

"No way," I said, "She turned into a different person when my father returned from work, all bright and sweet. She was then the picture any child would love their mother to be. Father thought she was a wonderful wife and mother."

"What about your school life?" He wanted to know again.

"Oh, I loved school, but I dreaded the school holidays, so did **she**. I tried my hardest to keep out of her sight, but she would seek me out just to vent her anger on me. I lived in fear of her lashings. I did so many things wrong."

"Why did you come here?" Jack asked.

She sat there looking out of the window, only aware of her own internal dialogue.

“Claire... why did you come here?” Jack repeated a little louder.

“S...sorry,” Claire stuttered, “I...I was sent here because I.....I murdered my mother.”

“Why did you do that?”

“I didn’t mean to, I’d left some marbles on the landing and she slipped on them and went down the stairs.”

“What made you think she had died?” Jack queried.

“There was blood everywhere. She always said that I would be the death of her!” Claire said without emotion. “I wanted her dead. I wanted to be away from her and I am. I’m safe here, am I not?”

“Yes, you are.”

“Thank you, can I go back to my room now?”

“Of course you can,” said Jack. “See you next week.”

The ‘phone rang in Reception, “This is Claire Griffin’s mother, will she see me this month?”

“I’m afraid not, Mrs Griffin. Try again next month.”

A tear rolled down her cheek as she replaced the ‘phone, “Where did I go wrong?” she said to her husband.

“I don’t know love,” he answered. “Things just happened that way.”