I Don’t Belong In Here

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Abstract

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by Jeanette Y. Holst

English, Junior

I DON'T belong in here with all these old people. Mary put Daddy and me in here because she didn't want us to live with her anymore. She said it was because she couldn't take care of us, because Daddy was sick and I needed a nurse to watch after me. But I know it's the Lord's truth, that girl just wanted to get rid of us so she'd be able to act the heathen without us to keep an eye on her. Daddy always said she'd come to serve the devil, and I think he was right, rest his soul. She's got some awful sinful ways and always has since she was little.

I remember when she was a young girl she'd always primp and fuss in front of the mirror, and Daddy'd say, "Vanity, vanity, all is vanity, saith the Lord." Full of vinegar she was, and would snap right back that the Lord didn't have to give her such ugly face. And Daddy'd say, "Well, it won't change a bit. Next time you look at it, it'll still be just as ugly."

Well, she found a way to change it with the devil's own colors. Looks a common Jezebel, and her in her mid-fifties.

She got a divorce too. That never happened before in our family, and the shame about killed Daddy. I keep telling her, "Mary Elizabeth, in the eyes of the Lord, you're still married, and it would be a fearful sin to marry again." But she won't listen to me. If she takes it into her head to get married again, she will, God willing or not.

Last time she came to visit me she brought me some fruit. At least she's good about that sort of thing. I have to have it, you know, to keep me regular. The doctors here are just no good. Not like they were in Hinckley, where they
knew Daddy and me. They say I don’t need a laxative, but I know better. You have to purge the body as regular as the soul, or there’ll be fearful trouble within.

These doctors here are in league with Mrs. Dunbar, the one who runs the place, and that woman is the devil’s own handmaiden. I know for a certain fact that she covets my red plaid. “Elizabeth,” she’ll say, all smiles, “I gotta wash that dress for you, or it’ll just fall to pieces.” She wants that dress in the worst way to wear when she steps out. But she’s not going to get it. Not if I have to wear it till the day they bury me!

Another thing—she locks the doors. Mary says, “Mamma, why don’t you take the sun? Those beautiful roses out there are just crying for your hand.” Well, I can’t get out. That woman locks the doors and windows so I can’t get out.

I think they’re putting something in the food too. I don’t eat but a crumb, because I know they’re doctoring it with something strong. If Mary didn’t bring me my fruit, I’d be a corpse right now from pure starvation.

The doctors keep after me to eat, but they’re in on it too. They killed Daddy, and that’s the Lord’s truth. They kept giving him those red pills. They said it was for his heart. “Daddy,” I says, “don’t take those things. They’re making you worse.” So he stopped taking them and hid them in his shoe, so they wouldn’t catch on. And sure enough, after he quit them, he took sick a few days after and passed on. I knew those things were poison, and were killing him slow. Poor Daddy, he hardly believed me at first, but now he knows I was right. But they won’t send me away before my time. I took all the aspirins out of the bottle Mary gave me, and have been hiding my pills in there. That, and not eating the food will keep me till the Lord calls.

They should do something about the people who run these places. Always spying on you, and snooping around your things, and trying to murder you if they get the chance. Mrs. Dunbar’s just waiting for me to die, so she can have my red plaid. I told Mary if anything should happen, to make sure that woman doesn’t get my red plaid. She’s sure to be in my room rummaging around for that dress before I’m even cold.

Then there’s that old fellow who sits in the garden and
stares in my window. I pull all the shades and sit in the corner by the closet so he can't see me. He watches me every day. It's enough to make a decent woman sick. One evening he caught me at the door and tried to say something. But I cut him off short.

"You seem so lonely, Missus, since your old man died," he says. "Won't you come walk with me, and we could talk a little out here in the fresh air?" Well, I put him in his place and shamed him good! "Man loves the darkness, because his deeds are evil," I says, taking the Good Book in my hand, and shaking it in his face. He couldn't get in the screen door, because it's locked, you know, but I could tell he wanted to, so I shut the door fast and drew all the shades.

He hasn't bothered me since, but he still watches me. Mrs. Dunbar is behind it, and I know that for a fact. She said she thought we'd have a lot in common since we both love flowers, but that's not her real reason. She wants me to fall into sin now that Daddy's gone, but I won't profane his memory with such carryings on.

At least, thank God, Mary's coming today. She's got to take me away from here this time. I keep telling her, "Mary, you could stay home and take care of me. You don't need that job at the Super Valu. I got my Social Security check." But she says we can't live on that. And she says, "Mamma, you're sick. You need someone special to look after you all the time."

Well, she's a stubborn girl, a wicked, stubborn girl, who doesn't keep the Commandments. 'Honor thy father and thy mother,' the Bible says. Nowhere does it say to put your mother into a nursing home with a lot of thieving hypocrites, and watch for her to die, so you can wallow in the pleasures of sin with no one to keep an eye on you.

So I suppose I'll just have to wait my time, fending off the devil's forces as best I can. One thing I know for certain. Mrs. Dunbar won't never lay her fiendish hands on my red plaid, while I got breath in my body! And that lustful old man won't never lay a hand on me, as long as I got the Lord on my side, and the strength to lock the doors and pull the shades!