

Grace Gourlay (AH) Carnoustie High School

Tenement

Eh love meh wee hoose. Wiv only lived here twa three months noo, but it's definitely the best wee hoose me an meh mam have ever bin in. It's in a block o' aboot nine, so mam's made some new pals tae. In oor last hoose me an mam hud tae share a room, but noo ev goat meh ain room. Meh daddy came ben the hoose an ah asked him if he liked it an he said it wiz a braa room. Eh see meh dad oan a Saturday. It wiznae a Saturday but meh dad wanted iz tae come ower tae his hoose cause he waanted tae take me tae his friends' barbeque but meh mam said that eh couldnae go cause it wiznae the weekend. Then him an meh mam started yellin at ain another so eh went next door tae play wi Courtney.

Courtney's meh best pal. Shiz only ten so shiz still at the wee skail. Ehm at the big skail in third year but eh dinnae hae any pals in meh class. Eh dinnae ken why. Eh broat meh skipping roapy in wi iz an eh asked Chantelle, whaas in meh class, if she wanted tae play with iz. But she just laughed an telt iz tae piss off. Meh mam's awis telling iz that only bad people swear an if yeh say Goad this or Jesis that then Goad pits yer name in a big black book an when yeh die Goad counts up aa the times yeh said a bad word an if yiv goat ower many then Goad sends yeh tae hell with the big burnin fires and aa that. That's whit meh mam sez. Eh awiz wonder if that's whit God diz aa day, if he jist sits there an watches for people swearin. Anyways, eh telt Chantelle aboot it but she jist laughed again an said that meh mam wiz an auld cow. Eh didnae like her saying that about meh mam but then aa Chantelle's pals turned up an started pushin iz an pullin meh hair, so eh ran oaf tae the toilets an didnae come oot until the bell had goan.

Anyways eh went along tae Courtney's tae see if she wanted tae take Bruce oot for a walk. Bruce's Courtney's dug. He's jist a mongrel but he's handsome, black an white, an when yeh tell him tae smile then he lifts up his lip like he's growlin at yeh, but he wouldnae bite yeh, he's dead coothy really. Eh love Bruce. Em awis askin meh mam for a dug like Brucer but she sez that ed widnae tak care o' it.

Courtney's awa oot wi her dad but her mam telt iz that eh could come anyway tae wait for her. So eh goes in an sits doon ben the living room. Courtney's communion dress is hangin up. It's dead bonny, aa white an sparkly. Meh mam telt is that Courtney's a catholic an that's why she gaes tae a different primary skail than eh did. Meh mam sez that catholics are really strict, an that they have tae go tae confession an a that. Eh dinnae like the sound o' that, cause yeh widnae ken if the priest'd gae an tell aabady aa yer business, but Courtney's family dinnae care about that. Courtney sez that it disnae matter aboot gaein tae a different school right noo cause shiz comin up tae meh big skail soon. Eh think that me and Courtney'll be friends forever.

So em sitting in the living room an eh hear the front door openin an eh jump up cause eh can hear footsteps in the loabby. Eh hope that it's Courtney cause shiz meh best pal an if it's her then we can go an tak Bruce for a walk roond the backies.

But it isnae Courtney. It's Debbie. Eh dinnae like Debbie. Shiz in meh class at skail an gaes aboot wi Chantelle an aa the rest. Shiz awiz being mean tae iz, pullin meh hair an callin iz a mink and a 'retard'. Maybe Goad'll put Debbie in the book for sayin it. Eh asked meh mam what retard meant but she wouldnae tell iz, so eh think it must be a really bad word. Debbie's awiz swearin an goin roond in wee skirts an kissin aa the boys. Wan day wen we were aa aff skail eh went roond tae see if Courtney wiz in, an Ashley came tae the door wi her boyfriend an they were baith in their dressing gowns. Eh thought this was a bit weird cause it wiz only four in the afternoon an when eh telt meh mam about it she said that Debbie wiz nae better than she should be an that Debbie's mam id kill her if she found oot. Then meh mam telt iz what Debbie an her boyfriend must iv bin daein. Meh mam sez that people who do that before they're married go straight tae hell, nae messin roond wi black books an aa that – yeh dinnae get a second chance; Goad points the finger an that's you straight tae the fires, right quick. Eh dinnae think that people shid ever dae that. Sounds disgustin.

Kimberly's mam sez that it disnae look like Kimberly's gonnae be back soon an that eh shid gae oot an play for a wee while. So eh goes out an has a wee shoaty oan the tarzy¹ that me an Courtney made. Eh dinnae ken how we managed it but it's tied dead well tae the landing bars an wir able tae swing oaf the balcony an kick oaf the harlin an yer stomach's swirlin but it disnae matter, an yeh swing back an forward for ages. It's great fun cause it's so excitin even though yeh feel like yer gonnae be sick an me an Courtney go oan it again an again cause it's just brill. We let other kids fae the block have a go oan it but eh think that we shid keep it tae oorsels cause we built it. But Courtney sez that we shid let other people oan it cause we widnae like it if they didnae share stuff wi us, y'ken, like sweets an that. Eh still dinnae like other kids playin oan it, an seein that Kimberly's still oot wi her dad em no gonae let anybody else play oan it cause its **oor** swing.

So em oan the tarzy ah eh kick oaf the wa' as herd as eh can, an em flyin an em spinnin, an em scared an excited aa at the same time. An ah of a sudden it's over. So eh slide doon ontae the ground. Meh palms are aa red an rubbed fae the rope. Em staunin, feelin aa dizzy fae the ride an haudin ontae the tarzy fur support an eh feel a tug at the rope. Eh look up an it's Debbie an when she sees iz look up at her she yanks the rope dead hard an eh faa over. She thinks this is brill an shiz laughin her head oaf. Then she leans ower the balcony an gobs² oan iz. Eh start greetin an run up the loabby an intae the hoose. Meh mam an dad are still fightin an they dinnae notice that em greetin oar that em aa dirty. Eh sit doon at the kitchen table, looking out the windee, an ah can see Debbie oan **oor** tarzy, the tarzy that me an Courtney built, an we built it, nae Debbie an she shouldnae be oan it cause it's **oors** an eh hate Debbie. Eh hate her!

¹ Rope swing.

² Spits

Shiz awa in noo for her tea. Dad's left an mam's sittin oan the settee greetin. It's nae guid speakin tae her when shiz like this cause shill only yell at iz. Eh'll gae oot instead. Debbie's no there so em able tae fo oan the tarzy that me an Courtney built. But it's nae the same cause eh ken that Debbie's bin oan it. Eh get oaf an come back up the stairs. The tarzy's nivir gonnae be the same. Eh sit oan the landing an eh stare at it. It's aa quiet, an the air's dead heavy, ye ken. It's started raining. Eh dinnae ken white tae dae. All eh ken is that eh'll niver gae oan the tarzy again. An eh think if eh cannae enjoy it then naebody will. So eh untie the rope fae the landing bars.

Then eh remember whit Courtney said about sharing wi other people tae get stuff shared wi you, an then eh think aboot Courtney an how it's her swing tae. Eh shouldnae have untied it. Eh only did it cause eh was so angry about Debbie. So eh try tae tie it again but it's nae guid, eh cannae tie it like when me an Courtney did the first time cause yeh need twa pairs o'hauns tae get it really tight. It's getting dark an eh ken that if Courtney's no back by noo then she willnae get hame till the morn's mornin cause her dad'll keep her at his. So eh leave it half tied an go hame.

Eh wake up an eh remember that it's the holidays an that ah dinnae have tae gae intae skail the day. The sun's coming through the curtains so eh get up an hae a wash an go oot tae see if Courtney's aboot. An ehm dead lucky cause jist as eh leave the hoose Courtney's comin up the stairs wi her dad. She sees iz but she runs straight for the tarzy. An eh remember that eh only left it half tied an eh shout but shiz ahready o'er the balcony an she disnae hear iz an she jumps. An then there's a scream, an a crack.

Eh run doon the stairs. Iz Courtney ahright? Her mam's screamin, an eh dinnae want tae look cause Courtney's meh best pal, eh dinnae want tae see her hurt. Eh get tae the backies, an eh push past ahbody else. Shiz nae movin an shiz nae speakin, an she looks broken, like a doll or something. The harlin's aa red noo.