

Witches and Killers

By Shelby Parker

Waukesha Reads ~ The Big Read Flash Fiction Contest

High School Division Runner-up

My parents told me I was dead to them. I wonder how they felt when that figure of speech became a reality. I've always been a little different. I didn't have many friends growing up and I wasn't interested in the same things boys my age were. My parents realized that when they witnessed me drain the life out of our dog's eyes at the age of 6. I watched them slowly become more distant.

We lived in a small countryside town where nothing could be kept secret because everyone knew everyone. Nothing bad ever happened in our town. The closest we came to crime was in our neighboring town where a spree of stabbings occurred over the span of two months. I think 35 women were killed in total. I was 18 at the time so it's hard to remember the exact details.

Everything changed 5 years later. I remember it like it was yesterday. It was a frigid fall day and the sun was battling the clouds to shine through. Sadness swept the town as news of Reverend Jim's horrific death was announced. He was found in the unusually dark woods a mile out of town, with a pentagram carved into the frail skin of his vulnerable chest.

Right away, everyone suspected me to be the one to kill their precious little pastor. I'll save you the suspense. I didn't kill him, but why would anyone believe me?

I was put on trial and accused of being a witch. Everyone thought I summoned the Devil to kill him. They had no idea what they were talking about. I tried explaining that I didn't kill him, but no one believed me. When it was time to hear the verdict from the jury, I made eye contact with a particularly unsightly juror. He gave me a sinister smile as I was convicted of being guilty.

I was sent to prison and was supposed to be executed the next day. I'm sure they were in a shock when they found an empty cell in the morning. I said I didn't kill the pastor, but I never said I didn't practice witchcraft. I was proud of myself because my skills had gotten better since I first started practicing.

I transported myself to a small cottage at the edge of town that no one knew about. I hid there for months. I thought I was in the clear until one dreary morning, I awoke to an excruciating pain in my chest. I lifted my shirt and saw a pentagram being carved into me. It was getting hard for me to breathe and I fell to the ground. When I looked up, I saw a man staring down at me. It was the same man who smiled at me when I was being convicted at the trial. He came close to my face as I could feel my life being taken away from me.

“I’m the only person allowed to kill people around here,” he angrily hissed into my ear. That was the last thing I ever heard. He took my last breath from me shortly after. I guess he felt intimidated by me. I guess I would be intimidated by someone that killed 35 women too.