The Stalker

It was like most days… until something happened that would change for the worst. If only Hollie had been more careful, if only she hadn’t walked down the alleyway that fateful day.

One winter’s afternoon, Hollie Becks was walking home from her tennis lesson. A noise came from her phone. Looking at the screen, she saw a message from her mum. It read, “Are you nearly home? I’m waiting for you.” Hollie quickly replied,

“Yeah.” As she turned the corner, the alleyway came into her vision, they alleyway that her parents had always warned her about. “It’s not safe, Holls,” they’d say- she never knew why. Hollie stopped. *They’re not here, they won’t see.* She turned and started walking down the dark, narrow alley.

All was silent. Trash was scattered across the floor, decrepit walls stood, their ancients bricks crumbling. Suddenly, a rummaging noise came from a bin – maybe she wasn’t alone after all.

Slowly, she turned back. Nothing. A wave of relief came over her, until she caught something in the corner of her eye. She picked up the pace. Just a few steps away from the porch, she saw it – a tall, dark figure lurking in the shadows. She sprinted to the door and grasped the handle in a desperate attempt to get in. It opened.

“Mum, Dad,” she called out. No answer. *What, I was just talking to them!* Without any time to think, the television flickered into life. The news was on. Hollie knew that this was a serious message by the look on the reporter’s face. “And tonight,” he paused, “A man going by the name of Syril Hobb is roaming the streets of Wood Valley murdering helpless children. Lock all of your doors until further notice. Police officials report that the suspect stalks his victims before …” it cut off. She could hear the increasing sound of footsteps coming her way. Hollie remembered something. *Oh no, I didn’t lock the d…*