Jack of Diamonds

Nora Jane Struthers

I walked to school on Monday and when I stepped in the door the other girls were gathered in a circle on the floor Their slates and books were resting, dejected upon their desks Their skirts bloomed out around them like the late spring tulips Their skirts bloomed out around them like the late spring tulipsHenrietta glanced up and called to come and see Peering round the ponytails all was revealed to me A shinny deck of playing cards strewn upon the ground Hastily we snatched them up as the bell began to sound Hastily we snatched them up as the bell began to soundWhen the lessons ended we lingered in the street Counted up and made sure that the whole deck was complete Then Henrietta handed the entire lot to me She said, Annabelle, tonight, keeper of the cards you'll be She said, Annabelle, tonight, will you keep them safe for meWhen I got home I snuck into my room and shut the door I knew I should be stealthy, still I spread them on the floor Red and black and yellow, green, blue, purple, and white The faces of the kings and queens brought colorfully to life The hard faces of royalty brought colorfully to lifeI didn't hear my mother until it was too late Like a storm out of the southwest, she blew in and she raged Before I knew what hit me all the cards were in her hands She was screaming at the Devil as to the kitchen fire she ran She was screaming at the Devil as to the kitchen fire she ranHot on her heels in horror, I knelt before the flames Where the beauty of each number was burned into my brain With my hands deep in my pockets, my teary eyes cast down My mother learned me all the places Satan can be found My mother learned me all the places Satan can be foundShe said, Though it may seem harmless, a game of cards can lead To greed and lust and whiskey, even infidelity She made me swear to never hold the Devil's deck again But I've still got the Jack of Diamonds underneath my bed Yeah, I've still got the Jack of Diamonds underneath my bed I've still got the Jack of Diamonds underneath my bed I've still got the Jack of Diamonds underneath my bed I've still got the Jack of Diamonds underneath my bed

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