

# Daddy Doll

YOU  
CAN'T LEAVE  
ME LIKE THIS!  
I'M YOUR  
FATHER!



I hadn't even thought about my father in weeks. I guess that's pretty normal, though. Every girl outgrows her dolls eventually.

A Tocky Tics videos, of all things, reminded me Daddy Dearest still existed. Coming home from school, I locked the front door behind me and activated the alarm system—I'm a latchkey kid—grabbed some granola bars and curled up on the couch with my smart pad. Riffing through videos on Tocky Tics, I stopped when one came up of a Bambi Doll saying, "I'm such an airhead" while trying to blow dry her hair with an electric toothbrush.

Giggling, I thought of Daddy locked in that dark, abandoned room, forgotten for all these weeks. I decided to check in on him. I couldn't even remember which outfit I'd left him wearing. Was it his 80s workout leotard? His minidress? I got up and headed to my toy room, opened the door and flipped on the light switch.

Oh! I'd left him in his pink and white polka dot dress. He looked so cute, standing there in heels, clutching his pearls. Something was wrong, though. He didn't move, look at me or react at all when I opened the door. He just stood there frozen, a big smile plastered on his face, his big blue eyes blank.

"Daddy?" I called, hurrying across the room. Could a doll die? The idea he was gone, I'll admit, scared me. I hated the thought of losing my toy, even though I hadn't played with him in weeks. "Daddy?"

Just as I was reaching toward him, he blinked one, twice. His brow furrowed as he turned his head slowly, slowly, to look up at me. There was a lost, confused look about him. It wasn't his usual dumb Bambi doll look, either, but like someone waking from a dream—or a nightmare.

His arms shook, as if he were straining to move them. "Sam?" He squeaked in his cartoon, Bambi doll voice. "Sam? Something's happening to me. Something's changing."

"Oh, Bambi, I was actually worried about you for a second there. I thought you were dead."

He got this sweet look on his face, like he was touched by the idea I might care about him in a normal way, so after letting him live in that dream for a moment, I added, "If you died, I couldn't make fun of you!"

He frowned, that sad Bambi doll look I loved so much.

“Oh, well!” Relieved that my little Daddy Doll was not dead, I lost interest. I turned away, looking at all the other toys that crowded the room – teddy bears, tea party sets, Fun Bake Ovens, and soooo many Bambi dolls. I used to be obsessed with them. Looking over all those old toys, I could see how I’d grown and changed over the years, and it made me feel a little sad to think of all I’d left behind.

As my eyes danced across the toys piled up in my old play room, memories flickered through my mind of when I was little and—“Turtly!” I had just spotted a stuffed turtle I’d been in love with so bad as a toddler. I ran over



and picked him up, hugging him to my chest. “Oh, we had such fun together, didn’t we?” I asked him.

“Listen to me!” I heard Bambi shriek from across the room. “I’m changing! You’ve got to do something!”

I rolled my eyes and walked back

over to Daddy. One of the drawbacks to turning my father into a helpless little doll is that he **is** now totally helpless, which means he is *always* begging me to do this or do that for him. He’s so needy. It’s super annoying.

And fun.

“I agree Turtly.” I held my stuffed turtle out in front of me. “She is so annoying when she throws a hissy. I don’t even want to listen to her.” I swatted at Daddy with Turtly, and he screamed and tottered away as best he could on his stiff, plasticky legs. “Bad girl!” I said, swatting again. “I don’t know what’s gotten into you.” I barely grazed him, but he was so small and stiff he tumbled onto the couch, skirt and legs flying in the air. I laughed. It wasn’t like I was going to really hurt him, but he was so easily scared I just couldn’t help but pick on him. I swatted again and again, chasing him around his little doll house as he squealed in terror. Poor little Daddy



eventually cowered in a corner, hyperventilating. He started making these wheezing, chirping sounds: “Eee. Eee. Eee.”

He is such a scaredy cat. I half turned away, once more talking to Turtly. “Yes. She should apologize. I am very much in agreement.”

Watching while I pretended not to watch, I saw the fury in my Daddy’s pretty eyes blaze, but then he closed his eyes and composed himself. Once he felt calm, he plastered a bright smile onto his face and opened his eyes, tilting his head slightly to the side. “Goodness me,” he said, now lapsing into the sign song cadences of a talking Bambi Doll. “I’ve been ever so rude.” He was doing a good job playing sweet and adorable, but I could see the barely suppressed rage and frustration still smoldering, and it was



hard for me not to laugh out loud at the little thing I’d made of him. I had my role to play as well, though.

“Should we forgive her?” I asked Turtly. “What? Only if she shows us her pretty smile?” I looked down. My father stretched out his smile even further, sucking in on his cheeks, emphasizing his pretty dimples, showing off his bleached white teeth. “Oh, and she must curtsy.”

“Ha,” Father said, voice now breaking as he struggled to keep from throwing another hissy. Once more, as expected, he managed himself, though the curtsy was less than perfect. Instead of plucking at his skirt, he just sort of padded at it with his hands. I decided to let it pass. “The ball will be divine!” He sang, once more

reverting to a programmed Bambi saying. That one came from Princess Bambi.

I set Turtly down and planted my fists on my hips, looking down at my tiny little Daddy with mock seriousness. Adopted the tone of a TV Mom talking to a little girl, I said, ‘Now, Missy, what’s seems to be so terribly important?’

“Let me show you.” His movements were becoming slightly more fluid, but they still seemed stiff, difficult. He was trying to remove one of his white, lace gloves, but struggling, his movements clumsy, the cloth slipping through his stiff fingers.

“Ugh! You’re useless. Let me.”

Embarrassed, Daddy held out his dainty little hand. As I slipped the glove off, I began to see the changes that concerned him. His fingers were fused together now, and his skin? “You’re turning into plastic.”

“Yaaaas,” he said. “It’s so totally groty.” Totally groty. It was one of the pre-programmed talking Bambi sayings he regularly blurted out. That one must



have been from the 80s, and I probably would have laughed but I was actually a little concerned about the whole plastic thing. Lucy had NOT told me this would happen.

“This is terrible,” I said, brushing his long blonde hair away from his cheek with my index finger. “We have to find some way to stop this.”

Daddy's face lit up. "You could change me back into a man!" He squeaked.

I burst out laughing. "That's not happening, sweetie, but I do want to keep you just the way you were and not let you become boring a plastic *thing*. It wouldn't be much fun to come in here and make fun of you if you couldn't talk back. I'll see Lucy." I turned and headed toward the door.

"Take me with you," Daddy called after me.

"Shut up," I answered.

"No! Please!" Father screamed. "Don't leave me here like this! It's so dark and lonely. I get scared!"

Stopping by the door, I put my hand on the light switch. "Bambi, don't you remember? You have six guests coming over for dinner, and you need to cook and clean!"

"Noooo...." Daddy sighed, but then the magic took over and turned his sad little frown upside down. "I live to hostess!" He chirped. "I better get a roast in the oven!"

I watched as he began to scurry about his dollhouse, preparing his imaginary meal for his guests. Poor little thing. I did feel a little bad for him now.

So, I left the light on.

