

THE DOLLS

Written by

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The garage is cluttered and dusty. A workbench, covered in loose tools and sawdust, is against the wall.

Cardboard boxes litter the floor at random.

PAUL SHRINER walks into the garage with a METAL FOLDING CHAIR, which he places in front of the work bench. He is a frail man in his mid-thirties, his eyes hollow behind thick glasses.

Paul approaches a box on the floor. The top of the box is folded shut. Paul unfolds the box, revealing it to be full of PORCELAIN DOLLS. He picks one out of the box, turns it around in his hands, and smiles at it. He brushes its hair out of its face, and turns to the work bench. He places the doll on the bench and walks away.

Paul returns with a small, metal TOOL BOX. He opens this, revealing make-up. Compact mirrors, lipstick tubes, and mascara brushes tumble over one another. On the other side of the box, out of focus, sits a CHAINSAW.

Paul sits on the chair and picks up the doll.

He turns the doll around in his hands and begins applying make-up. As he applies eye-liner, a car pulls in over a gravel driveway. Startled, Paul's hand slips. The eye liner streaks across the doll's face.

Paul calmly places the doll back on the work bench and walks away.

We pull in on the doll's face. Paul smashes the doll's head with a HAMMER.

Paul picks up the doll by its ankle, and drops it in a bucket by the work bench as he exits the garage.

The bucket is full of broken, disfigured dolls.

BLACK

OPENING CREDIT:
THE DOLLS

2 INT. ALLISON'S HOUSE- FOYER - DAY

2

The sun pours in from glass panes on either side of a white door. The floor is damp from being recently mopped. Birds chirp through open windows, and the sing-song voice of a young girl comes from a nearby room. The voice's pitch changes from high to low, in an attempt to voice different characters.

ALLISON (O.S.)

What do you want to eat, Mr. David? I don't know, Mrs. Sally. Oh, I have an idea, Mr. David! Why don't we ask Mommy what we should eat?

The camera turns away from the door, toward the dining room, as Allison gets up and runs from her room.

3 INT. ALLISON'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

3

KATIE, Allison's mother, sits at the kitchen table. Her hair is slightly disheveled, but there was obviously effort earlier in the day. Her eyes are tired, struggling to hold their focus on the stack of papers she is reviewing.

The table is littered with overflowing sheets of paper and folders. It's tax season, and Katie is counting receipts.

Katie lowers her head into her hands in a moment of frustration just as ALLISON runs into the room.

Allison is a young and excitable girl, who arrives carrying a doll in either hand. Allison catches herself running, pauses to compose herself behind Katie, and walks to her mother's side.

She goes ignored for several seconds before Katie raises her head from her hands.

KATIE

Yes, sweetie?

ALLISON

Mommy, Mrs. Sally and Mr. David are fighting again.

KATIE

Oh, yeah? And what are they arguing about this time?

ALLISON
They don't know what they want to do
for dinner.

Katie runs her fingers through her daughter's hair, a look
of concern on her face.

KATIE
Well, why don't you just tell them to
get along.

Allison looks to the floor, dangling her arms in defeat.

KATIE (cont'd)
What's wrong, baby? Talk to me.

Allison doesn't look up.

ALLISON
That didn't work for you and Daddy.

Katie stops running her fingers through Allison's hair.

CUT TO:

4 INT. ALLISON'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

4

Katie leans against the counter, talking on a corded
telephone attached to the wall.

KATIE
Okay, that sounds great.
(beat)
Yeah. Yeah, I'll see you then.

Katie puts the phone back into the receiver on the wall.

KATIE (cont'd)
Allison!

Allison walks into the room, carrying two different dolls.

While crouching, her fingers outstretched to tickle Allison,
Katie walks toward her daughter. As Katie talks, Allison
struggles to fight off a smile.

KATIE (cont'd)
So guess who I just talked to?

ALLISON
Who?

KATIE
Ms. Samantha.

ALLISON
Yeah?

KATIE
Yeah.

Katie playfully grabs Allison and tickles her. Allison laughs.

KATIE (cont'd)
And guess who gets to spend the night
at Mandy's house!

ALLISON
Yay!

Katie lets go of Allison, who is already threatening to run away.

KATIE
Well you better get packing! We can
leave whenever you're ready.

Allison, excited, runs from the kitchen. Her feet slap the floor all the way down the hall, until her door closes.

Katie is alone. She sighs, and exits the room.

We pan to the refrigerator. A crayon picture of two stick figures holding hands is held in place by a magnet. In the top corner of the page, in massive, uncoordinated letters, are the words - "For Dad / Love Allison"

5 EXT. MANDY'S HOUSE - FRONT LAWN - DAY

5

A car pulls into the driveway. The car turns off as the front door of the house opens.

MANDY runs out of the house, sprinting to the rear passenger door of the car. Mandy is a year older than Allison, and has embraced her tom-boy nature. Scabs line her knees from neighborhood misadventures.

SAMANTHA catches the door as it closes. She stands in the doorway, watching her daughter, and waving to her friend.

Much like Katie, Samantha is a single mother. However, the stress doesn't seem to weigh her down as much. She is dressed for a night out.

Katie opens the rear passenger door of the car and gets Allison out of her car seat. As soon as she's free, Allison pushes past Katie and runs into the house with Mandy.

Katie and Samantha stay on the porch.

KATIE

Are you sure this is okay? I mean-

SAMANTHA

Of course it is. It'll be good for both of them.

KATIE

Yeah, I guess you're right.

SAMANTHA

And it'll be good for you, too. Just think... no work... no kids...

Katie nods and smiles.

KATIE

How's Paul been?

Samantha sighs, rolls her eyes, and balances herself on the porch railing.

SAMANTHA

She took off on him again, but this time he doesn't know where she went. I told him he could stay here until she shows back up. You know how long that dragged out last time.

KATIE

I'd always hoped the best for him.

Paul appears in the doorway. He is smartly dressed, a striking contrast to how we saw him earlier.

PAUL

Yeah, well- what are you gonna do?

Katie turns around, startled.

KATIE

Oh! Paul! I'm sorry. I just didn't want to-

PAUL

It's alright. I understand.

Paul wraps one arm around Katie in a hug.

The three file into the house through the front door.

6 INT. MANDY'S HOUSE - MANDY'S ROOM - DAY

6

Allison and Mandy are sitting next to one another, digging through a TOY BOX in the corner of the room. A pile of dolls has collected on one side of the box, while other assorted toys are piled on the other. The two get to the end of the box and start throwing the assorted toys back inside.

KATIE (O.S.)

Allison! I'm leaving! Come give me a hug!

7 INT. MANDY'S HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

7

Allison runs into the foyer and grabs her mother's leg. Katie picks her up and hugs her, kissing her on the cheek before placing her back on the ground.

KATIE

Be good for Uncle Paul. I'll come pick you up in the morning. Do you remember what you get if you're good?

ALLISON

Pizza?

KATIE

Pizza.

Allison runs back down the hall.

ALLISON (O.S.)

Yay! Pizza!

The girls can be heard laughing and playing.

Samantha enters the foyer, steadying her purse on her shoulder. Paul stands against the wall.

KATIE

Look, Paul- thank you for this.

PAUL

Anytime. You two deserve some time out.

SAMANTHA

We could say the same for you.

PAUL

Watch it, sis.

Samantha pats Paul on the arm, smiling. Katie opens the front door, and Samantha follows her out.

8 INT. MANDY'S HOUSE - MANDY'S ROOM - DAY

8

Allison and Mandy have a doll each. They sit in the center of the room, making the dolls talk to one another. Paul pokes his head around the door jamb.

PAUL

Alright, you two. If you need anything, I'll be in the garage.

ALLISON AND KATIE

Okay, Uncle Paul!

Paul exits.

ALLISON

Why is Uncle Paul living with you again?

MANDY

I don't know. Mommy says that he just needs to.

ALLISON

Huh. Do you think he wants to play?

MANDY

Boys don't play with dolls, Ali.

The two laugh, then pick up their dolls and continue playing.

9 INT. MANDY'S HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY

9

Paul is walking past the work bench, toward the door. He carries a laundry basket under one arm, overflowing with WHITE SHEETS.

As he passes the chainsaw, he passes to caress the blade with the tips of his fingers.

Paul re-positions the basket on his hip, and exits.

10 INT. MANDY'S HOUSE - MANDY'S ROOM - DAY 10

Allison and Mandy sit on the bed, playing.

ALLISON
I'm thirsty.

Mandy holds up her doll, and speaks in its accent.

MANDY
Then go and get something to drink,
Ali.

Allison nods her head and jumps off the bed.

11 INT. MANDY'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY 11

Allison walks down the hallway, and sees Paul walking outside.

He is carrying the laundry basket.

12 INT. MANDY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY 12

Allison pulls out a SMALL STEP-STOOL from a kitchen cabinet and fills a plastic cup with water from the sink.

The camera rises over her shoulder, giving a view of the back yard through a window above the sink.

Outside, Paul hangs a sheet from a clothesline. Once the sheet is hung, he walks behind it and disappears.

Allison turns off the water, and we return to her level as she tucks the step-stool back into the cabinet.

13 INT. MANDY'S HOUSE - MANDY'S ROOM 13

Allison places her cup on Mandy's nightstand and climbs onto the bed.

ALLISON
What do you think Paul does for fun?

MANDY
What do you mean? Grownups don't have fun.

ALLISON
Everybody has fun, silly.

MANDY
No, Ali. Grownups don't have fun,
they just work.

Mandy places her dolls on the bed.

She turns her head to the door.

MANDY (cont'd)
What was he doing?

ALLISON
I don't know. Hanging clothes or
something.

MANDY
I'm gonna go check it out.

Mandy gets off the bed. Allison stares out the window.

An airplane roars overhead, but the road is still.

14 INT. MANDY'S HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY

14

Mandy walks into the garage, steadying herself to remain quiet. The garage is empty. The workbench is littered with disfigured dolls, scattered makeup, and the dolls.

Mandy's eyes grow wide as she takes in her surroundings.

Paul clears his throat. He is standing in the doorway behind her.

Startled, Mandy runs out the back door. Paul follows her with dead eyes.

Paul's hand wraps around the handle of the chainsaw.

CUT TO:

15 INT. MANDY'S HOUSE - MANDY'S ROOM - DAY

15

Mandy runs into the room and around the bed, hiding on the far side- out of view of the open door. Allison looks around, confused.

ALLISON
What are you doing? Are we playing
hide and seek?

Mandy trembles, pressed against the side of the mattress.

ALLISON (cont'd)
Is Uncle Paul looking for us? Should
I hide, too?

Mandy grabs Allison's hand and pulls her down to the floor.
The two girls sit side-by-side. Allison peeks over the edge
of the mattress, but Mandy yanks her back down.

MANDY
He saw me.

ALLISON
That's okay, we'll just find a better
hiding spot next time.

MANDY
No, Ali. We have to be quiet now.

ALLISON
(whispering)
Yeah. We don't want him to find us.

The house is silent, except for Mandy's panicked breathing.
After several seconds, just as her breath nears normal, a
chainsaw sputters somewhere outside.

At first, the motor will not turn over. Mandy grabs Allison
by the hand and leads her into the closet.

Allison snags a doll from the bed as they pass. The chainsaw
starts as Mandy slams the closet door closed behind them.

As the chainsaw revs, we pull away from the closet and back
out into the hallway.

16 INT. MANDY'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

16

We have a view from near the front door, down the narrow
hallway that leads to the back door.

The revving gets louder.

17 INT. MANDY'S HOUSE - MANDY'S CLOSET - DAY

17

Allison and Mandy pull clothes off of hangers and pile them
in the corner of the small closet.

The chainsaw gets closer, revving on occasion.

When the hangers are clean, Mandy dives into the pile of
clothes.

MANDY
Cover me, Ali. He can't find me.
(beat)
Not again.

Allison, visibly terrified, drops her doll on the floor and covers her friend with the clothes.

The bedroom door opens.

18 INT. MANDY'S HOUSE - MANDY'S ROOM - DAY

18

Paul looks on the far side of the bed, then rests the chainsaw on the carpet and looks underneath. The machine bounces on the floor.

PAUL
Where are you two? Come on out,
girls. Uncle Paul just wants to play!

Paul walks toward the bedroom door, revving the chainsaw.

A high-pitched whine comes from the closet.

Paul stares at the closet door.

19 INT. MANDY'S HOUSE - MANDY'S CLOSET - DAY

19

Allison is hyperventilating in the corner of the closet, covering her mouth to minimize the sound.

Mandy is underneath the assorted clothes, but the heel of one foot is sticking out.

As Allison reaches out to cover her foot, the blade of the chainsaw comes through the door. The girls scream. The door comes apart in seconds.

PAUL
There you are! I've been looking
EVERYWHERE for you.

Paul enters the closet, facing the pile of clothes. Allison is in the close corner, but Paul doesn't see her. Paul revs the chainsaw, filling the closet with smoke.

We can only make out his silhouette as he raises the chainsaw high and begins to drop it on the pile of clothes.

MANDY
(screaming)

No!

A pool of blood creeps through the carpet, meeting Allison's bare feet. The carpet is sopping wet, and bubbles break between her toes.

Allison runs out of the closet behind Paul.

Allison's doll remains on the floor in the closet. Its face is discolored with a gore-stained smile.

20 INT. MANDY'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

20

Allison runs out of the bedroom, her blood-soaked feet slipping on the floor. She slides into the wall opposite the room.

The chainsaw falls to a lower RPM. Allison regains her footing and runs toward the back door.

Paul exits the room only a few feet behind Allison. He is out of focus, a shadow chasing her.

ALLISON
Stay away from me! Stay away!

Allison runs out the back door.

Paul doesn't run.

21 EXT. MANDY'S HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

21

The door flies open, and Allison tears out of the house.

The backyard is dusty and barren. Allison is all the way down the steps when Paul exits the house. He is covered in blood, and holding the chainsaw in one hand.

Allison sprints toward the clothesline. The sheets wave in the wind. She yanks one of the sheets back-

Flash - a doll with one eye missing, its skin faded by the sun.

Flash - a doll which has been burned in half, the charred abdomen lined with dried drippings.

Flash - a doll with a pair of scissors sticking through its chest.

Flash - a doll's head, severed from its body, hanging by a fishing line.

We come in on Allison's face as she looks around at these dolls, and dozens of others, in horror. The chainsaw falls silent.

ALLISON
Leave me alone! Leave me alone!

Paul's face, shown from a side profile, is expressionless. Distant. Disinterested.

Allison is out of view, screaming from behind the flowing sheets.

ALLISON (cont'd)
Help! Help!

Paul walks, slowly, off of the porch and down the steps. The camera moves to his blood-stained feet as they land in the dirt.

Allison continues to scream off-screen, but the sound fades as Paul gets closer.

We move from him to the first doll that was flashed to. It turns in the wind, revealing one pristine eye; nearly glass. The camera zooms in on this eye, and we see Paul getting closer through its reflection. Allison is looking up at it. Looking up at us.

The dolls clink together, like dull wind chimes.

FADE TO BLACK

ALLISON (ADULT V.O)
If you read the reports, you won't see the word *isolation* anywhere. But that's how it felt.

THERAPIST (V.O.)
How what felt?

22 INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

22

A FEMALE PSYCHOLOGIST sits on a couch across from Allison, who is now in her late 20's/early 30's, plays on the screen.

The therapist adjusts her glasses, and looks up from the legal pad on her lap.

ALLISON
Paul Shriner ruined my life.

THERAPIST
It's okay to feel that way sometimes.
But you have to remember, Ali, he
can't hurt you anymore.
(beat)
He wins if you live the rest of your
life running away from him.

ALLISON
But the dolls.
(beat)
They all just-

THERAPIST
- watched.

The therapist closes the legal pad and places it on a small
coffee table.

She removes her glasses, and places them on the pad.

Allison doesn't look up at the therapist. She cradles a
porcelain doll in her lap, caressing its face and running
her fingers through its hair.

THERAPIST (cont'd)
Ali?

Allison doesn't look up. She pats the doll methodically.
She's lost in a trance, nearly catatonic.

The therapist reaches out and places her hand on Allison's
wrist.

THERAPIST (cont'd)
Ali? Our time is up for now...

Allison nods, and reluctantly hands the doll over. The
therapist gives her a sympathetic smile and places the doll
on the table that separates them.

THERAPIST (cont'd)
Same time next week?

Allison nods, brushing at tears as they well up. She stands
from the couch, and exits.

The therapist opens a desk drawer and adds the legal pad to
a stack of others. The pages overlap, revealing years of
notes.

The therapist places the doll on top of the stack of legal pads.

She closes the drawer.

BLACK

CLOSING CREDIT