

A Doll's Life  
by  
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FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - EVENING

BEGIN SERIES OF SHOTS - SLOW MOTION

The tattered bonnet-topped head of the curly-haired DOLL flies through the air, then it bangs hard against a wall.

Young hands press the Doll against the wall, one hand balls in a fist and punches the Doll in the stomach so hard that the doll curls around the fist.

Then the hands pull the Doll away from the wall and shake it so that its head flops back and forth and its arms and legs jangle in the air.

The hands belong to AMANDA, eight years old, complete with pigtails.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

Her MOTHER's shrill voice from the dining room.

MOTHER (O.S.)

Amanda?

Amanda stops shaking the Doll. She shushes it. Then Amanda listens.

MOTHER (O.S.)

Dinner is getting cold!

Amanda's eyes narrow. Then her head snaps toward the Doll with a look of anger. She smacks the Doll across its face.

AMANDA

You better not tell, young lady.  
Or next time you'll get worse.

INT. DINING ROOM

Mother looks severe and sits at one head of the table. FATHER looks patient and sits at the other. Father cringes as Mother yells.

MOTHER

Amanda!

(to Father)

I'm telling you she has no  
respect for --

Amanda enters shyly, she holds the Doll in arms.

AMANDA

I'm very sorry that I'm late.

Amanda slowly crosses to her seat under the disapproving stare of her Mother and the sympathetic stare of her Father. She sits between the both of them.

MOTHER  
That filthy doll does not belong  
at this table.

AMANDA  
But she's hungry.

Father seems particularly amused by this statement.

MOTHER  
No buts, I want that disease-  
ridden thing, removed from --

FATHER  
Let her keep the doll.

Mother glares at Father. Amanda smiles.

MOTHER  
You spoil her.

FATHER  
Well she is my little princess.

Amanda giggles. Mother's eyes narrow.

MOTHER  
(with venom)  
Little princess?! Little monster  
is what she is.

Amanda pouts.

FATHER  
Now...Now...

MOTHER  
Don't you NOW me! I've told you  
what I have to put up with day  
after day. It's like you don't  
even care.

FATHER  
She's just a little girl.

MOTHER  
She tried to kill me today.

Amanda looks alarmed at her Father, who looks seriously back at her.

AMANDA  
It was an accident.

MOTHER  
An accident. Hah!

INT. KITCHEN - EARLIER

Mother tippy-toes on a step stool. She reaches toward the highest shelf in the cabinet.

Amanda skips in, then stops. She surveys the scene. Mother concentrates on reaching that shelf and doesn't even see Amanda. One side of Amanda's mouth turns up.

Amanda continues skipping and as she passes the stool there is a squeaky scraping sound. Mother's balance is disturbed.

Amanda's foot, caught by a leg of the stool, drags the stool across the floor.

Contents of the cabinet spill out as Mother loses her balance; she scrabbles for purchase and finds none. Then Mother falls through the air.

Amanda holds her doll tightly as her eyes move toward the ground.

THUD!

A slight smile crosses her face then disappears.

Mother lies on the floor, she looks up at Amanda, full of anger mixed with fear.

INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING

Father frowns at Amanda. Amanda holds her Doll tightly.

The corner of Mother's mouth turns up, Amanda's caught now.

MOTHER  
I want to send her away.

Father and Amanda's head snap toward Mother. Both look shocked.

FATHER  
Away?

MOTHER  
To school. She needs someplace disciplined where she can be taught right from wrong. After all, this isn't the first time that she --

Amanda trembles. Father looks between Amanda and her Mother.

Mother smiles.

FATHER  
You're enjoying this, aren't you?  
Torturing our child.

Mother drops the smile.

MOTHER  
You're taking the brat's side?!

FATHER  
You're not even hurt, but I bet  
she is. How many bruises does she  
have?

Mother averts her eyes.

MOTHER  
I was lucky. I could have banged  
my head on the counter! You'd  
have liked that. An easy way to  
be rid of me so you could raise  
your little princess any way you  
damn --

Father slams the table with his hands as he stands.

FATHER  
Enough! -- Princess, take your  
plate and go to your room.

Amanda nods and does as she's told.

MOTHER  
This is not over.

FATHER  
You're damn right it isn't.

Amanda scurries from the room.

INT. BEDROOM

The sounds of Mother's and Father's raised voices can be heard as Amanda enters the room. Once she closes the door they are muffled.

Amanda places her plate on her play table and sits her Doll in front of it. Then Amanda sits next to the Doll.

She listens for a moment to the muffled raised voices. Still arguing.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Amanda brings her spoon up to her Doll's mouth. She moves it around, trying to get the Doll to eat. She's getting food all over the Doll's face.

AMANDA

Stop squirming! Just eat it!

A loud burst of muffled argument, Amanda glances toward the door. Then a look of disgust toward the Doll. She scours the Doll's face with a napkin.

AMANDA

What a mess you've made!

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Amanda puts a forkful of food into her mouth and chews.

Mother's muffled screams cause her to stop. Then she smiles as she continues chewing.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

It's quiet. Amanda's plate is clean. She stretches and yawns as she stands. Then she grabs her Doll.

AMANDA

Bed.

Amanda lays her Doll down as she climbs onto the bed. Then she pulls a corner of the bedspread down and places the Doll on the exposed sheet.

AMANDA

Time for me to tuck you in.

She puts her hand on the leg of the doll and moves her hand up under the Doll's dress. Once under the dress she massages the Doll's crotch.

AMANDA

There, that feels good now,  
doesn't it?

A knock at her door. Amanda quickly removes her hand and looks toward the sound.

FATHER (O.S.)

Princess, honey, it's time for me  
to tuck you in.

The door opens.

FADE OUT.