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Dramatic Publishing

LIVING DOLL

by

Laura Shamas



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(LIVING DOLL)

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LIVING DOLL

A Play in One Act
For Two Women and Two Men

CHARACTERS

ROSE seventy, doll doctor, mother
MAGGIE forty-five, Rose's daughter
DAVY forty-seven, Rose's son
DUKE sixty-eight, Rose's husband

TIME: Now.

PLACE: A small town in the western United States.

This play was commissioned by the
Actors Theatre of Louisville.

“With thanks to director Avner Garbi and the original cast
of *LIVING DOLL* at West Coast Ensemble, Los Angeles,
California: Sandra Kinder, Russ Marin,
David Mark Peterson, and Sandra Tucker.”

For my father, with love...

LIVING DOLL

SCENE: *A room filled with piles of doll parts in what was once a "Doll Hospital." Unattached torsos, arms, heads without bodies, and other loose parts are scattered on the floor and stacked on shelves against the wall. A special shelf, labeled "Incoming Patients" is painted a bright red, and on it sits a teddy bear without legs, an antique doll without a foot, and a bald Raggedy Ann. On the back door there is a festive sign that reads "ROSE'S ROOM." Another says "The Doctor Is In."*

AT RISE: *As lights fade up, ROSE, 70, pops up from the piles of doll anatomy. She has been lying on the floor—her back is dusty from it. She begins to dance amid the debris, waltzing comically, dusting the shelves, occasionally picking up a torso to use as a partner for a spin around the room. There is no music; ROSE hums tunelessly. She wears a lacy blouse and an old-fashioned, well-worn, full, patterned skirt of a dated style. VOICES are heard in the back hallway, and a knock is heard on the back door. ROSE stops humming, frowns, and runs to hide in the debris on the floor again, now invisible. MAGGIE, 45, obviously tired but attractive, will enter with her older brother DAVY, 47. MAGGIE wears a nice maroon suit; DAVY wears a well-oiled*

jumpsuit. He carries a Burger King bag and munches on French Fries.

MAGGIE (*peering in the open door*). Hello? Mother?

(*DAVY steps in.*)

DAVY. This is what I mean. See, you order at the big sign with the menu and the speaker, and you hear this luscious voice say "May I take your order?" and the anticipation starts then. What does this doll look like? And when she says "Drive through, please," I get chills.

(*MAGGIE enters.*)

MAGGIE. Mother? (*Looking around.*)

DAVY. Because this could be the one. You know? There you sit in your car, waiting to pull up to the window for not only your burger, but the girl of your dreams. In a cute little hat and a striped uniform. So she might be a little spotted with ketchup. So what? I'm not exactly Mr. Clean. Where's Ma? (*He glances around.*)

MAGGIE (*grinning, very exaggerated*). Mother. Are you hiding? Come out now. Maggie and Davy are here!

DAVY (*wadding up paper sack*). That's why burger joints turn me on so much. (*He throws the sack in a trash can and wipes his hands on his jumpsuit. He leans over to pick a broken doll part off the floor, and while leaning over, spots his MOTHER. He kneels in a crouched position.*) Ma! There you are! You little devil! (*ROSE giggles and gets into a crouched position as well.*)

ROSE (*in echo*). You little devil!

MAGGIE (*crosses to ROSE and starts to dust off her back*). Mother, what were you doing on the floor?

ROSE. Getting a tan. Duke keeps telling me to get naked, to get into my birthday suit. But I won't be indecent. In public. (*She giggles.*)

DAVY (*shaking head*). Oh boy.

ROSE. You want me to strip off?

DAVY. No. No, Ma. Please.

ROSE (*starts to undo her blouse, humming again*). You men want the same things.

MAGGIE (*stops ROSE from taking off clothes*). I'm not a man. So just leave your clothes on, for me, please.

ROSE. Who are you?

MAGGIE. Maggie.

ROSE (*laughing*). You're not Maggie. You're too old and not nearly as pretty. She's a real beauty. Not all made-up like you.

DAVY. She's so thin. Hey, Ma, what have you been eating?

ROSE. Nothing. Don't want to bloat my tummy. Got to keep my shape.

MAGGIE. You've got to start eating. (*She crosses to the small refrigerator at the edge of a counter. She opens it up. It is completely full.*) Look, here's all the food I brought on Wednesday. You haven't touched it.

ROSE (*sitting down on the floor, C*). Didn't want a picnic, I told you why. Put on this suntan lotion if you're going to stay out with me. (*She takes off her left shoe and hands it to MAGGIE.*)

MAGGIE (*taking shoe*). Thanks. (*ROSE poses on the floor, as if absorbing rays of the sun. She hikes up her skirt to expose more of her legs. To DAVY.*) Well, Mr. Goodman was right. Look at her.

DAVY. She'll be fine.

MAGGIE. She's not fine. She's not fine, Davy. She's even bugging the renters downstairs.

DAVY. She'll come out of it.

MAGGIE. She doesn't know who I am.

DAVY. Give her time. Watch this. I'll bring her back to earth. *(He walks over to the "Incoming Patients" shelf and takes down the teddy bear with no legs. He approaches ROSE while holding it.)*

ROSE *(glancing at him)*. Aren't you a little old for that? You should be interested in girls.

DAVY. Ma. This is one of your patients.

ROSE. My what?

DAVY. You know. Your patients. This guy needs your immediate attention.

ROSE. Not my type, thank you. I'm already taken. By that gentleman over there. *(She points.)* Duke Tessler.

DAVY. Dad is not over there. Dad is long gone, Ma.

ROSE. Maybe you need glasses. *(She turns over.)*

DAVY *(shoving teddy bear at her)*. Why don't you fix things anymore?

ROSE. Don't raise your voice to me.

MAGGIE. See?

DAVY. Answer me. Look around you. This place is a dump. Why don't you fix these dolls and clean up? Some poor kid is waiting for this teddy bear. You're losing money, Ma. And we're going to need plenty of it.

ROSE. My husband handles all business transactions. And pleasure, too. He's good.

MAGGIE. I'm going to call the doctor.

DAVY. No.

MAGGIE. It's clear that she can't be left alone.