

COME TO COLLECT

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INT. THE HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

MACKENZIE wakes to find JAMES sitting on a chair at the foot of her bed. She's gagged and tied to the headboard by pastel ribbons, dressed like a vintage porcelain doll.

MACKENZIE
(muffled)
Please don't hurt me.

JAMES
I didn't want to hurt you. But you didn't play nicely.

MACKENZIE
(muffled)
I'm sorry. I know now...

JAMES
If I remove the gag, do you promise to be quiet?

She nods reassuringly. He slowly removes the gag.

MACKENZIE
(false kindness)
Thank you James.

He runs his fingers down her face, continues down her hair.

MACKENZIE (CONT'D)
Did you do my hair? It looks nice.

JAMES
Yes. I like brushing your hair.
It's the softest I've ever felt.

MACKENZIE
Do you do that a lot James? While I slept?

He nods.

MACKENZIE (CONT'D)
You know, a landlord shouldn't enter the property without their tenant's permission.

JAMES

So soft.

He slowly starts to move his hand down to her lace dress.

MACKENZIE

You can sit back down now, so we can talk, okay?

He obliges and takes a seat, revealing a knife.

MACKENZIE (CONT'D)

You like dolls huh? Did you- did you play with them growing up?

JAMES

Mom wouldn't let me. I tried to play with hers but she told me if I wanted to I'd have to buy my own. So I did.

MACKENZIE

You did? Oh that's sweet. Did you have a nice house for them to play in?

JAMES

Yep.

MACKENZIE

Wh- what happened to them?

JAMES

Mom told me to grow up. To stop playing with toys. To go out and play with real people instead. So I did. Starting with her.

MACKENZIE

What do you mean by that?

JAMES

She was the easiest. She followed the rules. She died the fastest. The clothes fit her better too. It was perfect, until the house burned down. I was trying to dry her hair near the fireplace and it caught. It all happened so quickly.

MACKENZIE

Is that how you bought your first investment property? With the insurance money?

(MORE)

MACKENZIE (CONT'D)

You did your own renovations to make it look just like your doll house?

JAMES

(nods)

You're the smartest one I've had. The others weren't too bright. They were boring. You though, you put up a fight-

MACKENZIE

I'm sorry, I didn't know we were playing.

JAMES

It's okay. I like it.

He readies himself to stand, Mackenzie panics.

MACKENZIE

T-tell me about Athena. What happened to her?

JAMES

We were happy. She even let me brush her hair because her Dad used to brush it. But then she got herself a boyfriend and didn't want to play with me anymore.

MACKENZIE

I'm sorry to hear that. And Nina?

JAMES

She was a sporty doll. She liked swimming. But she didn't like me watching her at the Aquatic Centre. I hate it when they don't play nicely. After I house them, feed them, clothe them, look after them, they still don't play by the rules so I have to *make* them.

MACKENZIE

How do you make them James? What do you do with them?

He stands, tossing the knife in his hand.

JAMES

I keep them forever.

MACKENZIE

How do you keep them? James. HOW?
Wait, wait- I'll be good-