

Doll Emporium

By : HavenMary

She has many names, many families and far too many homes, she's lost count. But they aren't hers, because she is a doll and those homes and families are only there for as long as her contractor pays their end of the deal. She's forgotten her real name, hell, she'd be surprised if she even had one! Since she was 1 year old she's been working for the Doll Emporium, being the perfect doll her contractors want, being fake. She wants, dare she say, freedom. To be free like Highway men, riding anywhere and everywhere, not a care in the world. But, of course, she doesn't get that. Instead she is bought by a High-end customer, meaning a Duke or an Earl. There's no escaping that.



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ï½ Ever since I could remember I've been locked in a metaphorical cage, passed around from one mad person to the next...never been able to be free. They usually give me a fancy room filled with pink and laces, there is always a porcelain chair randomly in the middle of the room, which I learned that they expected me to sit on it and look perfect and lifeless. And there is always a large window...my only connection to the outside world.

ï½ï½ï½ The person I am with now is no different from the rest.

ï½I heard footsteps coming down the hallway and quickly positioned myself in the chair, my bedroom door opened.

"Ansell?" The person said, calling for me. That isn't my real name, truthfully, I have forgotten it. My owners usually name me something they like, and since they don't learn my real name - I don't learn theirs either.

ï½"Yes?" I answered in my sweetest, most perfect voice.

ï½ï½ The person stepped more into the room, "Darling, I'm sorry to say this, but," they hesitated a bit, "You have to go to a new owner now..."ï½ I expected this to happen, no person last for more than a month. The person looked down at the floor, waiting for my answer while twiddling their thumbs.

ï½ I looked at them with the most sadness I could muster up, "Oh no...When do I have to leave?"

"Actually, you already have a new contractor...I'll have the servants pack up your things and drive you back to the Doll Emporium." A tear ran down the woman's cheek and she hurriedly left the room.

ï½ï½ï½I remembered what she said, 'Doll Emporium'. My usual response was to shudder and grit my teeth at the name, but this time I was grateful to be leaving. The person I was with had lost their daughter in an accident, they were so miserable over the incident that they had called the Doll Emporium for, well, a 'doll'; Or, if you will, a replacement for their deceased daughter. They sent over a picture and they found a match that looked most like her and that was me. Except for the fact that my natural hair color is brown, we usually try and meet the customers' needs...so we dyed it all blonde. They said that their daughter was sweet and quiet so I matched a sweet and quiet girl. They said that she didn't do much of sports, so I just stayed in my room. It may seem tedious and tiring to have to put on a 'mask' and be someone your not 24/7. But, when you're trained to do it from the day you were born it's a simple task.

ï½ A few servants bustled through the door breaking me from my concentration. They stopped short when they saw me still sitting there, "A-ah, sorry young mistress...we d-didn't know y-you were still h-here!" They quickly bowed.

ï½I waved my hand dismissively, "Don't worry about me and continue what you were doing." I said with an uninterested manner, I don't have to keep up appearances with servants.

ï½ï½ I sat there looking out the window while the servants quickly packed up my things.

"U-um...W-we're done!" One of the meek servants called out to me as they left the room heading for the stagecoach with my luggage.

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ï½ I walked down the finely decorated hallways and out to where my contractors were, waiting by the stagecoach. I quickly put on my fake 'angelic' smile and opened up my arms for a hug that I knew was coming. The mother hugged me while the father stayed behind and patted my head.

ï½ "We are going to miss you so much!" The woman cried into my arms. I couldn't help but question why they even bothered signing a contract when they knew I was going to leave some day...

ï½ I smiled darkly inside, but made it look innocent on the outside, "You can always make a new contract!" the woman only continued crying in my chest like I didn't even speak.

ï½ I gently moved her out of my way and pried her unwilling hands off of my arms. I waved goodbye, and loaded into the stagecoach.

ï½ "Dolls Emporium, please." I commanded the coachman.

ï½ï½ï½ The man gulped loudly and with a shaking voice said, "Yes m'am, right away!" ï½ The fear was completely understandable, the Doll Emporium was known for dirty dealing behind the scenes. This, I guess, is to be expected from a place that rents humans.

ï½ I sighed and turned my head towards the window and watched as the house as the contractors slowly moved out of my line of sight.

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ï½ ï½ The ride is going to be a long one, which gives me time to think...well, more like worry. I kept repeating what the last contractor said, "You already have a new contractor" This baffled me; surely they had money, so why didn't they make a new contract? Did they not care for their daughter as much as I thought they did? Were they not as heartbroken as I thought they were? ï½ I don't think that is the case, seeing as how she refused to let me go...maybe...this is a high priority customer that we couldn't refuse. I played with that idea in my head, trying to wrap my mind around a duke or a viscount needing a doll. I did not hear any news about someone in a noble family dying so a replacement doll wouldn't be needed; I highly doubt that they are lonely considering they can higher adventuress and any member of a noble family will always have ladies lined up for them, waiting for their chance to get their hands on money. The only other thing I can see a noble needing a doll for would be to...show-off. Well, it's not like I can do anything to change it so it'd be best if I stop worrying needlessly.

ï½ï½ I heard a horse not far off, coming up towards us, fast. At first I did not fret, but as I processed the fact that there was no sound of a stagecoach being pulled behind the horse, I began to panic a bit. There were miles and miles of nothing ahead of us so, nobody would dare ride to the city without a stagecoach. The only people who would do such a thing would be...highway men.

ï½ï½ The loud '*Trump*' of the horse's hoofs sounded closer and I looked out the window to see 2 horses with men on each, one of them pointing a pistol directly at me. He smirked and slowly moved his finger down to the trigger. I jumped to the coach's floor and instinctively held my arms over my head as a bullet shattered the window with a loud *bang*. The coaches' horse was frightened by the noise and came to an abrupt stop and I could hear the driver yelling at the horses to move with a panicked voice.

ï½ï½ï½ The door flew open and revealed a blonde man wearing a soldier's uniform, which he must have stolen, standing there with a grin on his face. He pointed the pistol at me yet again, "Stand and deliver!" He yelled triumphantly.

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“I gulped loudly, “I... don't carry money with me.” I said trying to sound as calm as possible.

He frowned and moved the pistol away from me, “Hmm...” the man eyed me up and down and then grinned, again. “Quite a pretty lady you are... I'll just have to take you instead!” I gasped as he grabbed me by the wrist and threw me towards one of the other men.

“Tie her up; I'll search through the Coach.” He commanded. The man did as he said and tied a rope around my arms and threw me on the rear of his horse, so I was lying on my stomach.

“You don't possibly plan to leave me like this all the way to London?!” I yelled at the man and squirmed around.

“Shut up, girl. You'll scare the horse.” He said.

I contemplated yelling some more to see if the horse would take off, but realized that it would probably throw me off of its rear. Threats would probably work best; even though they may not listen it's worth a try. “I'll have you know, I work for the Doll Emporium. If they find out that one of their girls are missing they will hunt you down to the ends of the earth, and you won't get off easily.” I smirked, despite my trembling body.

The man who tied me up gulped loudly and looked over towards the blonde man, “Boss...?” He questioned, waiting for an order.

He waved at him dismissively, “Don't mind it, Jem. It's just an empty threat; an' they really cared they would have sent guards to escort her.” Blame, he got me there.

“B-but, boss...I think I've seen her face on posters. What if it's true?” The man called Jem chokingly asked.

He scratched his head, “I guess that would be bad...” My smirk became more profound, I was winning this - something that rarely happened. “But, I'd take the risk. Think of how much money we would make selling this hussy.”

Ah, of course they wouldn't let me go so easily...I was a fool to think so. “You can't be serious! They'll find you! I swear they will!” I looked back and forth at the both of them, panic very obvious on my face.

“Oh, stop your whining.” He retorted while starting to mount his horse and gestured for Jem to do the same.

I did as he said, but stopped talking all together; instead I started to think of a way to escape. I know it's hopeless to try anything -and more than likely I will get hurt doing so...possibly killed. - But, I don't like not doing anything to prevent a bad situation. Though, if you call your parents selling you to the Doll Emporium a bad situation then that would contradict the last 16 years of my life. Not that that matters at the moment anyways. Right now I need to focus on where we are heading, how long it will take to get to a nearby city and, most importantly, how I can escape these men. So, I have a lot to think of and fortunately for me, I have a lot of time to do it.

Well to start off I should figure out what I know. But that's already a road bump...the only thing I know is that there are no signs of life for miles and the fact that if you keep following the main road we can reach a city.

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“I gulped, "So...where are we heading?" I asked in the most casual voice I could manage.

I heard the blonde man snicker, "Did ya really think we'd tell ya missy?"

"It was worth a shot." I muttered under my breath, too low for him to hear.

"Okay, how about this, you let me free and I'll tell the workers at the Doll Emporium to let you off easy." I glanced at the both of them, noticing that their expression hadn't changed. Blondie was still cockily grinning and Jem was still looking quite uneasy. "Meaning that they won't kill you." I added, pushing the topic.

"Or," The blonde man started. "You can shut yer trap and we won't have to spill your guts."

Oddly enough, his threats didn't scare me. Maybe I was past the point of being scared and my lost bravery has started to kick in. I chuckled at the thought, earning a weird look from both Jem and the blonde man. Ha, if I had any bravery at all I would have used it to escape from that hell hole they call a business. Not that that really matters at the moment either. I *really* need to stop this self pity act, I'm annoying myself.

"I don't really like either option." I said with wide, innocent eyes. I know I'm sticking my foot in my mouth but at this point I don't really care, because either way this will turn out -getting sold or getting killed by him- it's not in my favor.

"So...What's your name?" I decided to ask the blonde man as a way to pass the time.

He spat on my face.

"You're not going to tell me? I'd really like to know who my captor is." I rubbed the side of my face where the spit was on the horse.

He rubbed his chin with his pointer finger and thumb, "Well, I have nothing to lose." He decided, "The name is James."

"Hmm..." Was all I replied. James and Jem...

Wait, why the hell did he spit on my face if he was just going to tell me?

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