

# Thirteen-A Compilation of Short Stories

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Compilation of thirteen eerie short stories.



Published on  
**Booksie**

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## Thirteen-A Compilation of Short Stories

*Thirteen A Compilation of Short Stories* contains a compilation of thirteen freaky short stories: Baby Doll, Breathless, The Shower Spider, The Unexpected Hotel Guests, The Disappearance, The Renovation Disaster, The Wounded Bird, The Haunted Museum, The Bloody Affair, Death Premonitions, An Unforgettable Trip, The Dog's Warning, and Dead Woman Walking.

Available to purchase on [www.rosedogbookstore.com](http://www.rosedogbookstore.com) and Amazon. Here is one of the stories that appears in my book.

### Baby Doll

Matthew called his beloved wife, Evelyn, on his cellular phone to let her know that he had a wonderful surprise for her.

When he came home from the store, he had the happiest face Evelyn had ever seen on him. In his arms, Matthew was holding something wrapped up in a tiny white blanket. Evelyn could not see how it could be anything but a baby.

Several months ago, the couple had talked about adopting a child, but they had not yet signed any adoption papers. The adoption agency had informed them that adopting a child took a lot of time and that it was very rare for a family to be able to adopt a baby.

However, Matthew approached Evelyn very carefully, holding the blanket with both arms as though it were the most fragile thing in the world. "I found her", Matthew told Evelyn as he showed her a sleeping baby. "She was left inside a shopping cart, near the toy aisle."

Evelyn looked at her husband with mixed emotions and remained speechless. Matthew continued to speak. "I brought her to the lost and found but her parents never came to pick her up. So, I took charge and went to the police station. They filled a report. Then, they asked me if I wished to continue taking care of her until her parents were found. They are not going to be giving her back to her mom or dad right away, if at all, because of the neglect. I thought we could be her foster parents in the meantime."

Evelyn looked mad. "Of course, if you don't want to, I can always bring her back to the police station and they can find another foster home," Matthew told his wife. Evelyn looked down at the infant. It did not look alive. No air seemed to be coming out of the child's nose or open mouth.

"This is not funny", she said. Matthew gave Evelyn a puzzled look. "If you are not ready," he started, but Evelyn rudely cut him off to tell him that he was holding a doll. "I know", Matthew kindly replied to her. "Isn't she beautiful?" Evelyn wanted to cry. "It's a doll made out of plastic!!!" she yelled. "What are you talking about?" "She heard her husband say. Matthew looked even more confused than before. A hint of concern showed on his face. "She is as real as you and I," he finished.

Evelyn wasn't sure if she was hallucinating, or if her significant other had suddenly gone crazy. As she was about to walk away in frustration, Evelyn heard the baby make a small whining noise that made her jump. Matthew passed his wife the child and told her that he needed to go to the grocery store

to buy some formula. "Are you going to be alright to take care of her while I am gone?" he asked. Evelyn took the baby in her arms and gave Matthew a hint of a smile and a small nod of her head. As soon as Matthew was out the door, Evelyn examined what she was holding.

The baby still appeared as lifeless as it did when she first set her eyes upon it. The eyelids and lashes looked absolutely fake, not to mention the overly rosy cheeks and lips. The eyebrows didn't even consist of hair. As far as Evelyn could tell, they were simply series of tiny light brown colored lines drawn on top of both blue eyes. She could see where the inside of the mouth ended, which wasn't very deep at all.

Evelyn carefully unwrapped the blanket from the baby's body, acting as though it were real. The infant let out a minuscule cry. "I must be hearing things!" Evelyn thought to herself. It was pretty obvious to her that the so-called baby was only a doll. It was the size of an average six-month-old baby and had a few wrinkles on its skin, but this was definitely a child's make belief toy.

Not being able to abandon the baby doll, Evelyn took the tiny pink socks off of its feet and saw that the nails did not even exist. They were just lines. The doll remained completely still as Evelyn looked on with questioning eyes.

Finally, Evelyn put the thing down on the kitchen table so that she could pour herself a glass of cold water. When she turned on the tap, the baby began to cry lightly. Startled, Evelyn dropped her glass in the sink. She turned the water off and walked back to the table. She quickly turned the doll on its stomach and lifted up the flower print dress it had on so that she could turn off the switch and remove the batteries. The baby cried louder. Evelyn was shocked to find out that there were no hidden mechanisms. Because Evelyn had manipulated the baby in such a rough way, its shouts turned into a piercing scream. It would not stop making so much noise, so Evelyn got worried and hoped that Matthew would be home again soon.

Her maternal instincts eventually kicked in. Evelyn picked up the baby and started bouncing it slowly on the spot. She began to walk with it, still bouncing. Evelyn paced around the room a few times and was relieved to finally hear the crying die down.

Matthew walked in the front door when the baby was silent. "I hope she didn't give you too much trouble," Matthew told Evelyn as he made his way to the kitchen. "She looks peaceful," he commented. His last words got the baby crying again. Matthew made an apologetic face. "I'll just prepare her formula and then I can get her out of your hair."

Evelyn saw the doll's frosted unblinking eyes. When she tilted the doll backwards, the eyes automatically closed. When she tilted it forward, the eyes reopened. A freaked out Evelyn was thankful when Matthew finished preparing a first bottle and took the doll from her.

Seeing Matthew walk down the hallway and enter the abandoned nursery of their dead child made Evelyn tear up and cry. She did not dare follow her husband.

Three and a half years ago, Evelyn and Matthew found out that they were going to be parents. Unfortunately, during her thirty-fifth week of pregnancy, Evelyn was rushed to the emergency room because she ended up in a severe car accident that knocked her unconscious. When she woke up in the hospital bed from her near death experience, she saw that the bottom half of her sheets were soaked in blood and knew right away that she had lost Kayla; that is what her and Matthew had decided to call their daughter that very morning before they both left for work.

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Evelyn began to cry endless tears of emotional agony. Her heartfelt screams scared the skinny nurse who had just come in to check up on her. "Nooooo!" Evelyn yelled. The nurse ran to her to bring some comfort but it was no use. Evelyn was inconsolable. She would not calm down and did not want to listen to a word the kind nurse was saying. The doctor on duty got called in. He tried to explain the situation to Evelyn, but she continuously whispered "no" in a shower of salty tears. Her uncontrollable sobs induced great pity.

The nurse and doctor eventually left Evelyn's room. Evelyn was left alone for nearly one hour and had time to fall asleep. Her last thoughts, was her praying that she would never wake up from her nightmare. This would have been the third pregnancy that Evelyn did not complete. She had an abortion as a teenager, and miscarried twins during the fourth month of her second pregnancy.

When Evelyn opened her dark brown eyes, Matthew was sitting by her side on an uncomfortable hospital chair. He held her fragile left hand with both of his masculine hands. Evelyn started crying again once she realized that her accident had not been a bad dream, but rather reality. Matthew started crying with her. They had been trying to have kids together since their honeymoon, which was nearly eight years ago now. Every time they found hope, something went wrong.

It was very difficult for Matthew, and especially Evelyn, to go back home and face the truth. The door to the bright and colorful nursery stayed shut for weeks. Those long weeks eventually turned into months, and then years.

Evelyn gradually became clinically depressed and had to take medical leave from work. She had decided to go back so soon after the accident to keep busy, but the sad looks people gave her only made her hate the world more. She could barely concentrate on her tasks and felt sleepy most of the time.

Matthew continued to go to the office every day. He thought about clearing up the unused nursery to erase all the bad memories the room created. Evelyn didn't like that idea. Part of her still wanted to try having a child with Matthew, so she wanted to keep the nursery as it was. But, she held back tears every time she walked by the room because it reminded her of her four lost children. She had never forgiven herself for aborting her first child, even though she had been young. Although, her miscarriage was not her fault, she still blamed herself for it. She always thought it would have been interesting to raise twins. Her latest loss hit the hardest because she theoretically only had five more weeks to go before giving birth. The baby looked healthy, she had all her limbs. Planning a funeral for a baby was torture, yet necessary to the healing process. Evelyn was afraid to start over and almost considered it hopeless.

When Evelyn started to recover from her long depression, Matthew tried to talk her into adopting a child. There were so many orphans in the world who needed a good home. At first, Evelyn disliked her husband's idea because she felt the need to create a child of her own flesh and blood.

She changed her mind when her family doctor reminded her that she could no longer conceive a child. Matthew had known since the day of her accident, but never had the heart to tell Evelyn, or Lynn as he often called her. The doctors at the hospital had tried to speak to her about her condition, but she had been too lost to really comprehend anything at the time. The news hit her hard once she understood that she would never again have the chance to have a baby of her own.

Matthew came out of the nursery without the baby doll. For a minute, Evelyn believed that she had just daydreamed the whole scenario about her husband bringing home a doll and acting like it was a live baby. She imagined that Matthew had simply gone into the nursery to see what needed to be done to it before they could bring home an adoptive child.

The room had not been opened a single time since the accident so it would be pretty dusty. There were most likely several cobwebs to be found in random corners, and perhaps even unwanted critters as well. Some of the furniture would probably have to be replaced, depending on the age of the child they would end up adopting. Some toys might have to go, and new ones would have to take their places if they did not manage to adopt a child under the age of one. Matthew and Evelyn wanted a girl, so they agreed to keep the pale pink paint on the walls as well as the dolls sitting on the top dresser.

As Evelyn walked into the kitchen, thinking about the old doll collection she had left inside the nursery, she was brought back to reality. Matthew was telling her that he put the baby to sleep and that he had turned the baby monitor on. He did not notice Evelyn's reaction at first. When he finally noticed the horrified look she had on her face, he asked her what was wrong. Evelyn paid no attention to him. She did not hear his question, but would not of had the time to reply because she turned as white as a ghost and fainted. Luckily, Matthew caught her before her head had the chance to hit the ceramic kitchen tiles.

Evelyn became conscious again about thirty seconds after her sudden fall. She heard a baby crying in the distance. "The baby," she managed to whisper all at once. "The what?" Matthew answered back. "The baby," she repeated more clearly. "What baby?" Matthew asked in a tone that suggested that Evelyn was slightly delusional. "The foster child." Evelyn chopped up her last words as though it was hard for her to speak. Matthew looked at her with questioning hazel eyes.

Evelyn got up slowly to insure that she would not black out again, and made her way to the nursery. The unbearable sound of a baby's cry became louder as she approached the door to the old room. Matthew followed her, wondering what she was doing. "The baby is crying!" Evelyn yelled. She could barely hear her own voice over the baby's loud noise. "I don't hear anything," Matthew told her. The baby was crying even louder now, but Matthew was still looking at his wife as though she was completely crazy. He claimed that he still couldn't hear a baby cry, and tried to pull her away from the nursery. Evelyn let go of her husband's light grip and reached her destination in what seemed like an eternity. She turned the knob and opened the door.

Inside the wooden crib, laid a crying doll. Its arms and legs moved up and down robotically, and its head turned from left to right over and over again. Every other part of its plastic body remained motionless, including the mouth and eyes.

Evelyn was being shaken by Matthew. She opened her eyes and found herself on the kitchen floor, with her husband kneeling over her. A baby was crying. She said absolutely nothing about what she was hearing because she knew that Matthew had brought a doll back home; a doll that made annoying crying sounds in the head. She got up and ran to the bedroom, which was on the opposite side of the apartment.

Matthew found Evelyn curled up on the queen size bed. He undid one side of the bed, picked her up, laid her back down on the undone side, tucked her in and headed out of the room. A few minutes later, the crying had stopped. Matthew came back into the bedroom and lied down beside his beloved wife.

That night, Evelyn dreamed of her latest baby shower. At the beginning of that day, her best friend Alison picked her up to take her shopping for some baby articles. Evelyn came back home with a catalogue to show Matthew the nice bedroom set she wanted to purchase for their unborn child. It included a change table that converted into a shelving unit, a dresser, a rocking chair, and of course a crib. She ended up showing the advertisement to more than just her husband since all her female relatives and close girl friends had been sitting in her living room, waiting to surprise her. She received

so many beautiful gifts from them; clothes, toys, stuffed animals, blankets, bottles, bibs, newborn diapers, a diaper bag, a baby bath, a baby book, photo albums, plastic dishes, coupons! All that the future baby was missing was a stroller, a car seat, a high chair and a bedroom set. Matthew surprised Evelyn with all those things the week after the shower, two weeks before the accident that changed their lives.

The way Evelyn jumped up in bed should have woken Matthew up, but he wasn't beside her when she awoke from her nightmare. The sun was not yet shining inside the Andersons' bedroom but Evelyn started to hear coffee brewing in the machine as well as the faint sound of the radio competing with the birds outside. She looked at the clock. It flashed 5:49 am. Matthew never woke up this early on weekends! In fact, he never woke up this early to get ready for work!

As Evelyn made her way to the kitchen, she heard her husband making little airplane sounds with his mouth. When she reached the doorway, she saw a doll sitting in a high chair. The bib it was wearing was covered with what appeared to be baby food. So was the high chair table. Matthew was holding a baby bowl with his left hand, and a baby spoon with his right. He scooped up a little bit of oatmeal cereal with the utensil and directed it towards the doll's mouth. The mush ended up on the bib. "She won't eat this," Matthew commented when he finally became aware of Evelyn's presence. "She drank all her milk though!" Matthew was pretty enthusiastic about that fact. Evelyn noticed two empty baby bottles on the counter, near the sink. "Do you think I should have given her the cereal first?" Matthew wanted to know. Evelyn told her husband that he needed professional help. Of course, he thought that she meant that he should consult a child nutritionist or a pediatrician so he told her that he would call a clinic later on. Evelyn felt kind of sorry for Matthew, and wondered if he had become like this because of her.

Evelyn had spent an entire year in a mental institution after the loss of her baby. She might have been able to come home sooner had she not seen a young girl playing with a doll outside. Through the metal gate that separated the institution's yard and a sidewalk, Evelyn had screamed at the poor girl that she was not holding the baby right. "You're going to break her head and kill it!!!" she continued before becoming even more hysterical for not being taken seriously. The mother of the child told her daughter to ignore the crazy lady, and crossed to the other side.

To Evelyn, the doll had looked so real that it had reminded her of the children she could have had. She got upset by the girl's lack of attention towards the baby and felt the need to point out that it was being mistreated. That is what Evelyn told her psychiatrist after the incident. Dr. Franklin took down some notes and prescribed Evelyn stronger anti-depressants than the ones she had started taking after her first visit.

The new prescription seemed to work. After several therapy sessions, Evelyn's dose was lowered and she was eventually able to go back home to live with Matthew again. Before releasing her, Dr. Franklin tested Evelyn by showing her a few dolls. She immediately identified them as being toys as opposed to live babies. His final test was bringing a baby into his office and asking Evelyn if it was a toy. She gave the psychiatrist a satisfying answer.

Evelyn had to continue taking her anti-depressants for a few months as a precaution. Her new psychiatrist took her off the medications once he considered them to be unnecessary. Evelyn had become a great deal better and was well on her way to becoming her cheerful self again.

At the present time, it seemed that it was Matthew's turn to have psychological problems. Now HE was the one believing that dolls, or at least the one he had in front of him, was a real baby. Hadn't he said that he had found her near the toy aisles of a store? What exactly did he see at that point? Evelyn

pondered. Was the doll out of its box? Did Matthew place it in the sitting area of the shopping cart? He must have left the store without even paying for the toy!!! Matthew had never stolen anything in his life! Were people laughing at him at the lost and found? Of course the parents never came to pick her up! Did the store just let him keep the doll to humor him? Did they make fun of him? The police must have thought he was nuts, but obviously not harmful to society. Evelyn knew she would have to call a psychiatrist for her husband as soon as possible, but did not have the nerve to do it in front of him.

They were supposed to go over to Matthew's parents for dinner tonight. " " She looks a little bit sick " " , Evelyn lied. " " You think so? Well, maybe that's why she is not eating. " " As he finished his sentence, Matthew got up to wet a baby cloth. He proceeded to clean up the mess. Evelyn suggested that they cancel their evening plans. Matthew thought that they could invite his mother and father over to their place instead. That way they would still be able to see baby Corena-He had already named her-and the infant would be able to get some well needed rest. Evelyn thought of a million and one excuses she could use to prevent Matthew from inviting her in laws over, but saw no point. They would find out sooner or later that their son was mentally unstable.

Matthew took the doll into the bathroom and began to run a warm bath. He delicately undressed it, and placed her inside the large porcelain tub in a sitting position. When Evelyn came in, the doll's arms were sticking up in the air. They never came down. " " You're right Lyne. She does seem rather sick today. " " Matthew touched the doll's forehead with the back of his hand. " " She's burning up! Could you please get me the baby thermometer? " " "

Evelyn figured that she could play the game to please her husband this morning, until she got the chance to call a psychiatrist. She walked into the nursery for the first time in almost four years. All the dolls that Matthew had hidden from her after she got hospitalized seemed to be staring directly at her with their wide-open eyes. It gave Evelyn the creeps. She ignored the porcelain faces and rushed out of the room with a baby thermometer.

Back in the bathroom, Evelyn gave Matthew the medical tool. He did the motion of sticking the thermometer inside the baby's ear, but the metal object remained at the very edge since there were no holes. Exactly three seconds later, Matthew pulled the thermometer away from the doll's head and looked at the results. The writing on the digital screen read one hundred and four degrees Fahrenheit.

" " I should go to the pharmacy to buy her some medicine. Can you run a cooler bath for her? " " Seeing the perfect opportunity to call a psychiatrist without causing any major arguments, Evelyn agreed. She let some of the current bath water run out of the tub and turned on the cold water to let the hot and cold water sources mix together in front of Matthew. As soon as she heard the front door close, she left her post in a hurry and headed for the kitchen.

Evelyn started searching for the phone number of the mental institution she had been to. If she was lucky, she would be able to speak to her old psychiatrist. She could not find his number in the address book they kept right beside the phone, so she got the fat phone book out and flipped through the yellow pages under the words mental institutions. No listings were found. She found pages of the psychologist list but no Dr. Franklins were among all the names. She book-marked the first page of the list with a virgin page she tore out of her and Matthew's personal address book. She made one last search under health services and found what she was looking for. The name of the institution she wanted to call was the third one on her new listing.

Evelyn picked up her phone and nervously dialed the seven digits written in the phone book. She misdialled, but counted herself luckily that nobody answered her call because she figured she might

have had to deal with an upset person at this hour. Instead, she got a happy family's answering machine.

She tried dialing again, her hand shaking. She knew that Matthew would not be out for long because the pharmacy was only a four minute walk away. She estimated that she had about fifteen minutes to do what she needed, minus the time she already lost. The phone seemed to ring for an awfully long time, and all she got was an automated system that went on forever. It stated: "You have reached St-Celeste's mental institution. The receptionist can transfer your call between the hours of eight am and four thirty pm, Monday to Friday. If you know the extension of the person you wish to reach, please dial it now, followed by the pound key." Matthew had been the only one who had needed Dr. Franklin's extension number until today. "If you do not know the extension of the person you are trying to reach, but know their last name, please press two for the company directory." Evelyn pressed the second digit on her telephone keypad and followed the additional instructions. She spelled her past psychiatrist's full name, starting with the family name, and impatiently waited to be transferred. She got his voice mail and decided it wasn't good enough.

Evelyn hung up and dialed the institution's number again, hoping to be able to speak to a live person. She went through the whole automated message again and listened to new options. "If you would like a list of departments, please press three. If this is an emergency, please press nine and a" Evelyn did not let the voice finish her happily verbalized instructions. She quickly pressed the number nine and waited as the phone rang. She listening to the wringing tone for what seemed like an eternity and was about to hang up again. But, after the fourth ring somebody finally picked up. "Psychiatric help. This is Dr. Carlos speaking." Evelyn asked in a demanding tone to speak to Dr. Franklin. She was told that Dr. Franklin wasn't in the office yet. Dr. Carlos offered his professional help as an alternative. Evelyn told him that it was an emergency, but the only thing Dr. Carlos could do if she did not accept his help was simply transfer her to Dr. Franklin's voice mail. Evelyn considered speaking to Dr. Carlos, but knew that Dr. Franklin would remember her and understand the circumstances. Seeing Matthew walk by the window, Evelyn finally agreed to be transferred to Dr. Franklin's voice mail and left a rapid message. "This is Evelyn Anderson. I was a patient of yours until about two years ago. My husband Matthew thinks the doll he brought home yesterday is a real baby and I thought you'd be able to help him. Please call me back as soon as possible!!! I don't know what to do or tell my husband. Thank you". She sounded very desperate. Evelyn almost forgot to leave a call back number but remembered to state her home number at the last minute. Matthew walked in as soon as she hung up the phone.

Evelyn hoped that Matthew had not realized that she was in the kitchen. As he removed his shoes, she discretely went back to the bathroom.

Upon entering the small bathroom, Evelyn screamed in terror. Matthew rushed to the sound of his wife's voice and saw that she was holding a naked breathless baby in her arms while rocking her body back and forth. She was crying so hard that her eyes were barely visible. "What happened!?" Matthew managed to say. Looking at the tub full of water, he feared he already knew the answer. "She was alive. She was real" Evelyn whispered as she continued to rock herself, holding the dead child tightly. Matthew suddenly had a flash of the innocent baby drowning, which is exactly what had happened. "What happened?" Matthew repeated, dreading the answer. "She was a doll and then she was real, but not really real because she was no longer alive. But she was no longer a doll. She changed into a" Evelyn could not think of the right word. She was so confused. So was Matthew. He was mostly upset though.

Matthew burst into a fit of anger. "You thought she was a doll!?! Lyne. It's one thing to confuse a doll for a real baby, but to confuse a live infant for a doll?" Evelyn looked up at her



husband with shame. She felt like a child being scolded by her father, but knew that the consequences for her ignorance would be more than just sitting in a corner for a few minutes. What had she done?

The phone rang. Matthew left his wife alone with the dead baby to go answer the call. He picked up the receiver and said hello in the most neutral tone he could manage. The voice of Dr. Franklin was heard. "You're just the person I needed to speak to." "Me too!" Before Mathew could continue speaking, the doctor tested him by inquiring about the new addition to the family. Instead of speaking about his hallucinations, Matthew hysterically told the doctor how Evelyn thought the baby he brought home to foster was a doll and let her drown in the bath while he was out to get the sick child some medication. He realized that he was still holding the plastic shopping bag and dropped it to the floor.

Matthew started panicking. He would have to call the police after hanging up with Dr. Franklin and wasn't looking forward to doing that. He sat down to compose himself as he listened to the psychiatrist's advice to wait until he came to their house before making any more phone calls. Dr. Franklin didn't usually make house calls, but there were exceptions to every rule.

When Dr. Franklin entered the Anderson's apartment, it became clear to him that Evelyn was in no right state of mind. He found her sitting in the nursery rocking chair with a total of eleven dolls. She was catatonically rocking the chair back and forth without even noticing the doctor or Matthew's presence.

The police were called in. Two officers came to the house to arrest Evelyn. She did not understand her rights. Dr. Franklin suggested she be placed under his tight supervision in St-Celeste's instead of being kept inside a jail cell. Arrangements were made.

Corena's body was taken away in an ambulance. An autopsy would have to be done to confirm the cause of death.

Because Evelyn had not intentionally killed baby Corena, she avoided a nasty murder trial. Instead, she got charged with involuntary manslaughter. With the help of her lawyer and Dr. Franklin, she was found not guilty on account of her insanity. The judge in charge of this sad case ordered that Evelyn be placed in a mental institution for an undetermined period of time, and see a psychiatrist.

Evelyn returned to St-Celeste and began regular sessions with Dr. Franklin again. She was given the right to go outside the institution with a responsible adult, but never more than ten hours at a time, and never overnight.

She lost that privilege after another hysterical episode regarding a doll. This time, a small group of four girls walked on the opposite side of the sidewalk from Evelyn, heading towards the park. They were all happily playing with their dolls as they moved along. One of the girls tightly held a doll by her side, using only one arm. The body of the doll was almost completely sideways. Another girl skipped along the curve of the sidewalk with her doll on her shoulders, making its limp body fall backwards. The other two girls were swinging a single doll by its hands. One girl held the doll's right hand, and the other held the left hand. They all giggled until a boy ran towards the girls and snatched the doll from the two who were sharing. The bully refused to give the doll back to the whiny girls who demanded that their toy be returned to them. He ran away with it after telling the girls that he was going to bury it in the mud. The girls had begun to run after the boy with tears in their eyes, begging for their doll back. At a distance, he could be heard informing the crying girls that they could have their doll back if they managed to find it.

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Because Evelyn thought she had witnessed a kidnapping and believed that the kidnapper was going to bury the baby alive, Evelyn left her chaperonâs side and ran after the boy. When she caught up with him, she took the baby away from him and tried to do a citizenâs arrest.

Although thankful to have their doll back, the girls were scared of the crazy lady who lectured them on the proper way to hold a baby. Evelyn was furious at all four girls for the way they had physically manipulated their children.

Once Evelyn managed to calm down, she was returned to St-Celeste and placed inside a padded room.

Evelyn found a doll in the recreation room and started taking care of it as though it were a real baby. The staff had tried to take it away from her that night, feeling that it was not good for her healing process. The next morning, Evelyn accused everyone of keeping her away from her foster child and demanded to be reunited with her child.

Dr Franklin eventually gave Evelyn back the doll, seeing that she needed something to take care of. Although Evelyn eventually started realizing that the doll was not a real baby, she sometimes heard it cry. She continued to nurture it, just in case.

The nurses from the ward often saw Evelyn interact with an imaginary figure. When Dr. Franklin asked her about it, she told him that her first daughter Kayla was alive.

Evelyn became so focused on taking care of baby Corena and Kayla that the rest of the world no longer seemed to exist. She told Dr. Franklin that he was just a figment of her imagination, and asked him to get out of her head.

Another psychiatrist took over Dr. Franklinâs position, but Evelyn acted like he wasnât there. She started ignoring everyone and only spoke to her doll and invisible daughter. People desperately tried to snap her out of her imaginary world, but she was lost too deep inside. Evelyn was convinced that she needed to take care of baby Corena and Kayla for the rest of her life. They were as real as the air she breathed. Everyone else seemed fictional to her, even Matthew.

*This short story was drafted for fun on my desktop computer in 2004. At the time, I was not comfortable sharing what I wrote to anyone. It was for my eyes only, even if my boyfriend at the time wrote more than I did and could have given me literary advice. He wanted to be a writer, not me!*

*Later on, in 2009, I found my draft among the stories I had written as a child and decided to re-type it. (My ex kept the computer, along with my forgotten file, when we split up.) I polished the story up for possible publishing. By then, I had already published a novel.*

*I honestly canât remember what inspired this story, but have always found dolls kind of creepy. I used to play with them as a child, but as I got older I started to look at them differently. Maybe I have just seen too many horror movies in which they come to life. Surprisingly, I have a few porcelain dolls in my bedroom. I tend to forget that they are there though.*

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