

The Dolls, by Horea

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Alma lived with her parents in the small quiet town of Applegate. Her father was the president of a big company and traveled a lot throughout the country. Her mother stayed home to take care of the big house they lived in. Alma used to do nothing all day but play with her many dolls and toys. After each trip, her father would bring her lots of presents, so Alma had a lot of toys. And each time her father would bring a new doll, Alma would throw the old one in her closet. Her closet was full of forgotten toys, which were still new and very beautiful.

Alma's house was the most beautiful house in town and it looked even more beautiful compared to the little house across the street, which was very old and ugly. That house looked as if it was deserted. But it wasn't. The Johnsons lived there. They were a family of three. Joanne, their 7 year old daughter, spent most of her time taking care of the house while her father was at work.

Alma didn't like Joanne because she always wore the same dress. She also noticed that Joanne didn't play outside with the other children, and when she was not working she played with an ugly old doll, a present from her father.

One day Alma's father brought her a big and puffy teddy bear. She saw Joanne outside and she ran out to show her the new teddy bear. But when she got outside, Joanne was no longer there. She had to go inside to help her mother in the kitchen. Alma got so angry that she went to her room, tore up the teddy bear and threw it in the closet with the other dolls and stuffed animals.

That night, after everybody in the house fell asleep, something amazing happened in Alma's closet.

"We can't go on like this, we have to do something." A beautiful but ragged clown doll was the first one to speak what was on everybody's mind.

"Indeed," replied a blue haired doll, "we waited patiently for Alma to come to her senses. But did you see what she did with the new teddy bear? She didn't even play with it. What she's doing is simply cruel."

“That’s right! We have to do something! We can’t go on like this,” the dolls murmured.

“But what can we do?” the clown asked. “We could go to the girl across the street,” another doll answered. “We all saw how good she is and how much she loves her old ragged doll. I’m sure she’ll take us in.”

Shortly after that the dolls were knocking on the little girl’s door. Joanne woke up when she heard the knock and wondered if she should answer. She looked out her window and saw dozens of dolls in her front yard. She was amazed. She opened the door. In front of her the dolls were waiting for her to invite them in. But Joanne was speechless. She had never seen so many beautiful toys in her whole life.

“Who are you? What are you doing here? Am I dreaming?” Joanne muttered.

“We’re Alma’s dolls,” the blue haired doll answered. “Could you take us in please, we can’t stay there anymore.”

“Sure I will. But won’t Alma be sad? Won’t she cry and ask for you?”

“I don’t think she even knows we’re there. We’ve been lying in the closet for years.”

Joanne happily let them in. For the first time the dolls fell asleep smiling.

The next morning a scream shook the neighborhood. It was coming from Alma’s house. She was staring at the empty closet.

“What happened to all my dolls?” she shrieked. “Somebody must have taken them! But who?”

As Alma was wondering where her toys could have gone, she heard Joanne’s laughter coming from outside. When she looked out the window she saw Joanne playing with all her dolls in her front yard. Alma ran straight to Joanne.

“You stole my dolls! You thief! Just because you’re poor you think you can come and take my dolls?” Alma shouted.

“I didn’t steal your dolls.” Joanne replied. “They came to me last night, asking me to take care of them.”

“Why would they want to come to you? You’re lying! Look at your house, look at your room, why would they want to live here?”

“Because you don’t care about us,” said the blue haired doll.

“You’re mine!” Alma shrieked. “You come home right now, you hear me?!”

“No! Why should we come with you? So that you can throw us in your closet and leave us there? So that you can tear us up? We’re not coming back. You don’t love us and you don’t deserve us!” shouted the dolls.

“Of course I love you. I love you. But I feel so alone. No one wants to play with me,” Alma cried.

“I’ll play with you,” Joanne said softly. “But you never liked me. Why would you play with me?” asked a surprised Alma.

“I never disliked you. It was you who didn’t want me around. So I stayed away because you hated me. I just thought you were upset and I didn’t want to make you feel bad. But I always wanted us to be friends. And I still do. We’ll be best friends and we’ll have lots of toys,” said Joanne with a grin.

At the end of the day the two girls were still playing together, laughing and having fun.