



THE DOLL

An Ellora's Cave publication written by

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Warning:

The following material contains strong sexual content meant for mature readers. THE DOLL has been rated NC17, erotic, by three individual reviewers. We strongly suggest storing this electronic file in a place where young readers not meant to view this ebook are unlikely to happen upon it. That said, enjoy...



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Chapter One

Jenny stared at the small wooden figure. The shelf bearing it was high and for a moment she wondered how she'd spotted it at all, partially hidden behind a set of ceramic cherubs she'd never have looked at twice. Still she had noticed it, peeking at her over the horribly cute china heads. Drawn, she reached up and pulled the figure from its perch, examining it closely with growing interest. It was barely twelve inches high, the naked figure of a man with articulated arms and legs. The size and shape were similar to a male fashion doll she'd owned as a child.

Jenny smiled at the recollection. *Charlie*. He'd come with another name, but she'd quickly changed it to one she liked better. The figure really did remind her of Charlie...with a few differences.

Her doll hadn't had corded muscles like the ones carved into this figure's arms and legs, and when she'd stripped his boy-toy clothes off, he'd worn molded underwear instead of boasting an impressive set of male equipment.

Poor Charlie. He would've loved being built like this.

But he'd had one advantage over this wooden man, his face and hair. Jenny still remembered the wavy brown hair, laughing eyes, and toothpaste bright smile of the little man who'd been a stand-in for her future lover, husband, significant whatever.

Instead of eyes, nose or mouth, the face of the figure in her hand was blank, a smooth plane without any features. The empty space gave her a strange feeling as she slid her fingertip across it. Why such detail elsewhere, but no face?

She turned it over, admiring the workmanship. It really was finely made, this little man. The arms bent at the elbows and wrists, the legs at the knees and ankles. Every

joint moved smoothly. His feet had tiny toes, and there were finely detailed fingers on his hands.

Even his buttocks were well formed—she couldn't remember the last time she'd seen an ass as nice as this little man's. Of course, it had been a while since she'd seen any man's naked ass, or cock for that matter. Her love life was as empty as the figurine's face and she barely remembered the last time she'd gotten laid.

She peered closely at the wooden man's penis. Too bad it had been carved in a state of relaxation. With a little imagination, she could see it would be just under two inches long when excited, and given the six to one scale...

Ten inches, maybe more? Wow...a fine tool he'd have if he were life-sized. An unusual heat built up between her thighs as she imagined her little man, but not as little, fully engorged and coming toward her.

Was the figure getting warmer?

"Are you interested in the manikin?"

Jenny startled and turned to face the curio shop's owner, an older woman whose faded beauty was offset by the twinkling eyes behind her glasses.

Feigning nonchalance, Jenny replaced the figure onto the shelf. As soon as it was out of her hands she wanted to snatch it back, but she fought the compulsion. "I'm not sure. How much do you want for it?"

The shopkeeper's mouth twitched up into a glimmer of a knowing smile. "Perhaps not so much. Twenty-five dollars?"

For a figurine of that quality? It was piece of art...she'd expected it to cost far more. Still, she didn't need it, and was low in cash.

But her hands craved the feel of the smooth wooden torso again. She had a spot on her mantel in the living room...no, too public, particularly given how detailed the little figure's cock and balls were. Maybe in her bedroom, next to the bed...

At her hesitation, the other woman's smile became more forced. "Perhaps that is too much." She glanced at the figure on the shelf. "The little man has been here for a long time. I think maybe he wants to come home with you. Twenty dollars, then."

Jenny smiled at the whimsical comment. How could a doll have wants? Still, she'd like him to come home with her and twenty dollars wasn't so much. Pulling a bill from her purse, she handed it over. "I'll take it."

The older woman's hands trembled as she carefully wrapped the figure and put it into a bag, her expression grown wistful. "You will enjoy him, I think. Just be careful what you wish for...you might get it."

Jenny laughed. "Been reading up on Chinese curses?"

Eyes twinkling again, the shopkeeper handed the bag over. "Perhaps. Have a nice night."

An odd thing to say, Jenny thought as she left. It was barely noon, wouldn't "have a nice day" have been more appropriate?

* * * * *

It really did look great next to her bed. The polished surface of the figure gleamed in the lamplight, the fine grain of the wood a nice counterpoint to the glossy white of her bedside table. Jenny peered more closely. What kind of wood was it? It had a reddish hue...perhaps maple?

Whatever it was, she loved it. She bent the figure's arms into a suppliant pose, reaching out. Too bad she didn't have another doll. She could give him a girlfriend to hold.

Of course, when she was a little girl, she'd never let her Charlie hold any of the other dolls. Her friends would come over and put Charlie into the bed with a torpedo breasted blonde or brunette, but Jenny had snatched him away once they were gone. Charlie had always slept with her, in her bed.

Eventually she'd outgrown sleeping with him, but she'd kept him nearby, on the desk, on her bedside table, near her so she could talk to him. When she'd outgrown that, he was put in her closet with her other dolls, but she'd never forgotten him.

The day she'd come home from college to find the box gone, its contents sold at a garage sale, she was desolate.

Now Jenny sighed. When she'd slept with Charlie, she'd imagined that one day it would be a real man she'd have in her bed. Her dream man would be someone she could talk to as she had Charlie, someone to be with.

She'd had her share of lovers, men interested in a good time. She'd had companionship...just no one like the man she'd imagined Charlie would be.

Lately she hadn't even had that.

Jenny lay back on the bed, resting her head on the pillow. It had been a long time since she'd screwed a man, but she'd barely even noticed. The bookstore she'd opened with her friend Cory had become her focus and she'd spent all her energy on it. Today was the first time she'd taken a day off in months and she'd spent it wandering the small shops near her home, including the curio shop she'd visited this morning.

She yawned, exertion from the day catching up with her. Maybe she'd take a nap before making dinner. Reaching over to turn off the lamp, she glanced at the figure standing next to it.

Maybe she'd name it Charlie after her lost doll. Grinning at the whimsy, she settled back into the pillow. It was a good thing she'd bought the figure. She'd barely spent anything on herself in so long and she deserved a little treat.

* * * * *

A soft noise woke her, the sound of something sliding along the comforter next to her. The bed dipped down, not a lot, just a little. In the dark silence of the room she thought she heard a soft exhalation.

Was someone there with her? Something brushed against her shoulder, a phantom fingertip.

"Who's there?" Her voice sounded shaky in her ears.

Heated air touched her as if someone breathed on her cheek. Her heart went into overdrive, the beat speeding into a super-sonic blur.

She heard a voice—gentle, soothing, and somehow familiar, a voice with dark tones that left shivers running down her spine. "Don't be afraid, lovely one. I won't hurt you."

Hot breath blew on her face again, and something touched her mouth, a ghostly finger running along its edge. "My purpose is pleasure, always."

"Who are you?" she whispered, fear still intense but now a new feeling rising in her at this gentle caressing of her lips. "What do you want?"

"I am whatever you want me to be, whatever you want to love."

"Why can't I see you?" Fear edged her words.

Something that might have been a chuckle came from the empty air beside her. "I exist as I am, lovely one...without form until desire steps in, and even then what I can manifest is limited. What you see I can't control but what you wish for I can provide, just as long as your pleasure is ensured."

"My pleasure?"

"As I said, that is my goal. It is perhaps too soon for that, but in the meantime..." His voice trailed off suggestively.

Jenny took the bait. "In the meantime, what?"

Another chuckle. "In the meantime, this."

Phantom lips replaced the phantom finger and captured hers in a lingering embrace. Warm, and damp, and soft, the pressure mounted against her mouth in flickering waves. If she closed her eyes she could swear someone was kissing her,

someone who knew how to do it with exceptional skill. Without sight she could swear there was a man lying next to her on the bed, kissing her.

She kept her eyes closed. He continued to kiss her.

Her mouth opened and he furthered his gentle assault. His tongue tangled with hers in a sinuous dance. She noted his taste, the warmth of his mouth and strength of his tongue. He pulled the tip of her tongue into his mouth, sucking on it, and her nipples tightened in reaction.

Raising one hand, she discovered that the lips were attached to a firm chin and soft cheeks without a hint of beard. *There should be some...* On the next pass, her fingers caught against the stubble of a five-o'clock shadow. Excited by this discovery, she explored his features, her fingers moving across the planes of his face.

Abruptly he pulled away and her fingers felt nothing anymore. Opening her eyes confirmed the evidence of her other senses. Whoever – whatever – had been here was now gone.

Disappointment filling her, Jenny glanced at the lighted dial of her clock. It was after eight, she'd slept for nearly two hours. Turning on the lights, she sat up and peered around the empty room. No one was here. She got up, checked the locked window, and confirmed the door to the bedroom was closed. No one was here. No one could have been here, or left without her knowing.

But someone had. Someone had kissed her.

She ran her fingers over her lips, thought she still detected a little of the moisture from his tongue. She licked them and his taste still lingered.

Or did it?

Jenny snorted and shook her head. No one had been here, no one had kissed her. She'd fallen asleep and had a dream, that's all. After getting all worked up over her new doll, and the fact that she'd not been with anyone in far too long, she'd fallen asleep and dreamed up a man.

It had been a dream, just a dream.

Then why did her lips still tingle?

Sitting on the bed, she looked over at her figurine, blank face and dark wood in the lamplight. "You aren't going to be good for me if you make me dream of men that kiss like that. It'll spoil me for other guys."

Hands on his hips, the little figure made no reply.

Still shaking her head, Jenny dragged herself to her feet and headed for the door. Her stomach was growling and she needed to eat. She reached the door before she realized what was wrong. Jenny turned and faced the manikin.

Hadn't she left his arms outstretched?

* * * * *

"Cory, I don't care how tall he is. I'm tired and want to veg out."

"But he's gorgeous. Why would you rather stay home on a Saturday night than go out with a handsome hunk? You need a man, Jenny!"

Cory's voice got louder and Jenny pulled the phone away to protect her ear. She sighed. Cory was her best friend as well as business partner, but that didn't make her right. Jenny didn't need anyone.

"Listen, I want to stay home. There's a great old movie on and I want to curl up on the couch and watch it."

"Marcos likes movies," Cory said slyly. "Maybe he could come over and watch with you?"

"I don't want to entertain tonight. All I want is to slip into my nightgown and get comfy."

"I doubt Marcos would mind a nightgown...so long as he got to take it off."

"Cory, I have no interest in Marcos, or any other man for that matter."

A soft cluck of disapproval came through the phone. "Honey, you need someone, you just don't know it yet. But if you want to let life pass you by, that's your business."

"Life isn't going to pass me by just because I stay home on a Saturday night. Listen, I'll talk to you later, the show is going to start any minute."

It was actually a half hour until the movie's beginning, but Jenny didn't need to spend any more time on the phone arguing. Cory always thought she knew best about everything.

After changing into her nightgown, Jenny spotted the little figure by the bed. Feeling whimsical, she took it with her. "I don't need a man around, I got you to keep me company, Charlie. Let's go watch the movie."

She turned off the lamp next to the couch before settling in, leaving the soft glow of the TV as the only light in the room. It had been a long day and Jenny was as tired as she'd claimed. As good as the film was, her eyes soon grew heavy and she nodded off, Charlie sitting beside her on the couch.

* * * * *

The TV was now a quiet glow in the corner, programming ended for the day. In the dim light, the room was all shadows, dark anticipatory peace.

Gentle hands caressed Jenny's feet and ankles, teasing her toes before moving up to stroke the soft skin at the back of her knees. Shifting on the couch, she was barely aware of her nightgown gliding up her legs, baring her thighs, or the pressure of hands urging her knees apart. Her underwear slid off in one fluid movement, not disturbing her peace at all.

What she did notice was a delicious stroking of the tender skin that led to her folds, followed by a warm puff of air.

She spread her legs farther in response.

When the delicate tip of a tongue flicked across her clit, she nearly rose off the couch. Only the presence of strong hands holding her tight against the cushions kept her in place, ready for the next tender assault, which followed immediately. In moments Jenny was writhing about, the sensation of a warm moist mouth on her clit and cunt driving her wild.

Had she really said she didn't need a man? That idle thought drove through her, chased immediately by the comprehension that she most definitely needed this!

In fact, she needed far more of this than she could ever remember needing!

A low moan drove through her throat and her hands reached to feel her lover's head, whose lips massaged her nether parts with such skill. Under her hands she felt a smooth surface, round and hard. She explored it, felt nothing to distinguish any part of it.

It was like she was being given head by a volleyball. Disturbed, she tried to pull away, only to have her hands grabbed by stronger ones. The lips left her crotch, aching and wet.

A quiet voice sounded in her ears. "You're frightened – don't be."

"What are you...you aren't real," she whispered, desperation in her voice.

"I am as real as you wish me to be. Think of what I could be."

In her mind came an image, of a head of hair, brown, thick, and wavy, long enough to twist around her fingers, long enough to clutch in passion.

A deep male chuckle greeted her thought and her hands were pulled back to where they'd been before. Again she felt the roundness of a man's skull, but now it was covered with silky hair that rippled under her fingers.

"Anything you want me to be, I will be, lovely one. Now, hold on as I take you to paradise."

Again his lips descended on her clit and sucked another moan out of her. In moments she was writhing again, this time her hands anchored in soft hair. His hands

moved to her buttocks, lifting them, giving him better access, fingers digging in and massaging the round cheeks.

Alternating, sucking hard on her clit, then thrusting his tongue deep into her cunt, her unseen lover drove her to distraction, into a place she barely recognized. It had been a long time since she'd had a man's mouth between her legs. Jenny moaned, then whimpered as the sensation grew more intense, waves of pre-orgasmic fire slipping along the nerves in her arms, her legs, settling into a fireball just below her belly.

One finger explored the crack along her backside, lingering on the tiny puckered opening there, teasing the muscle with sly intent. He sucked long and hard on her clit, and her anus blossomed open under his finger's probing.

Wow, she hadn't expected that! As his finger entered her, the fireball in her belly exploded into raging flame that scattered along her limbs. Jenny quivered as he probed and sucked her, allowing the sensation of his touch to overload her senses. She'd never felt anything to match his mouth, or his wayward finger.

Orgasmic waves flooded her, drowning her shriek of pleasure, and Jenny lost awareness of anything for what felt like forever. Paradise surrounded her, fluffy blue clouds in a white sky echoed in her mind, her body aching in relief from the erotic tension she'd accumulated.

The clouds and sky faded to dark, the dark of her living room, the still dimly lit TV in the corner casting a faint glow. In the shadowed room, the sound of her labored breathing was loud, her heartbeat still raced under the nightgown wadded around her waist.

What the hell? Her lover had disappeared again, the existence of his hands, mouth, and tongue gone with her fading orgasm. Reaching between her legs, Jenny felt her slit, wet and throbbing from where he'd been.

Even her anus still tingled.

She sat up, pulled her wayward gown back into position, and turned on the lamp, letting the light drive the last of the erotic shadows from the room. Trembling, she tried

to make sense of what had happened. Someone had been here...someone had made her come with his mouth.

She'd felt his hair.

Examining her fingers, she found a single strand wrapped around her pinkie, thick, wavy, and brown. Trembling, she pulled it and let it fall on the table under the light, to lie next to her missing panties.

This was getting pretty weird.

Getting up, she found Charlie had fallen into the crack of the cushions. Rescuing him, she glared into his featureless face. The smoothness of his head reminded her of what she'd first felt with her hands, the volleyball.

"Charlie, do you know what's going on?"

She was almost surprised when he didn't answer her.

Chapter Two

"Is it possible to have an erotic dream that feels so real you have an orgasm?"

Cory laughed as she put away the last of the best-seller list into its slot, her black eyes dancing with merriment. "Honey, you having dreams about sex? You need to get you some real loving, that'll make you sleep well."

For once Jenny didn't argue with her partner, although she found it hard to believe that anything could have been better than last night's adventure. Exhausted after the session on the couch, she'd crawled off to bed and slept without interruption, to discover in the morning that in her haste to reach her bedroom, she'd left Charlie on the couch.

For a moment, quickly dismissed, she wondered if that's why she'd slept so well.

She turned to face her friend, who was still chuckling. "I was just wondering, Cory."

"Oh, I know, honey. And you're entitled to whatever dreams you have. Sure, erotic dreams can make you come, particularly if you're dreaming about someone hot." The woman tossed her red hair out of her face like a teenager rather than the thirty-six Jenny knew her to be. She wiggled her fingers playfully. "So, who's the lucky man?"

Well, he was shaped like a volleyball, but with brown hair and the most talented tongue ever known. Oh, yeah, and invisible...

"I wasn't dreaming about anyone in particular."

"Really?" Cory's smirk said she didn't believe her. "Anyway, I have to dust the back shelves."

Jenny watched the woman waltz down the aisle singing, "Once Upon a Dream" from Sleeping Beauty, the off-key notes lilting through the rows of bookshelves.

She grinned. *If only you knew, Cory.*

* * * * *

It was Jenny's turn to mind the store that evening, so it was late when she got home. The sight of Charlie, one arm raised in a salute, made her smile as she entered her bedroom and headed for the bath. After a long hot day, a shower sounded good.

Wanting company, she plucked the wooden man from his spot by the bed and gave him a perch on the countertop in the bathroom as she stripped. When she realized she was putting on a show for the doll, slowly removing her top and bra to reveal her breasts one by one, she laughed and pulled the rest of her clothes off without further fanfare. What silliness to try and impress a wooden man!

Stepping into the shower felt like heaven, and she luxuriated under the spray for countless moments before reaching for the soap. Eyes closed, she leaned back to wet her hair...only to bump into a solid mass behind her.

Shocked, Jenny tried to turn, but strong arms encircled her, holding her in place. A familiar voice whispered into her ear. "Why did you stop, lovely one? I enjoyed watching you take off your clothes."

Her knees turned to jelly and she might have fallen if he hadn't held her tight. Opening her eyes, she stared down at the spot where she felt his arms cross her chest. Her breasts were flattened, and there was a peculiar vacancy in space before them, a place where the steam from the shower wasn't.

She was being held by an invisible man. "What do you want?" she asked, her voice trembling.

"The same as before. To pleasure you. Have I not pleased you already?" His voice was a sultry purr in her ears.

"Yes, but...what are you...who are you?"

She actually felt the sigh that passed through his chest behind her. "You ask so many questions, lovely one. I am what I am, what you make of me." Hot breath whispered across the back of her neck and she realized she couldn't feel the spray of the shower, that his body, while unseen, was blocking the water.

She couldn't feel the water but she could feel something else, hard and close to ten inches long, prodding her back. He pulled her closer and rubbed the head of his cock along her spine, letting it linger in the crevice of her behind.

Jenny's mouth went dry. This was not a dream – not wide awake and in the shower. She should say something, make him stop, make him go away...

His hand dipped between her legs and invisible fingers teased her clit, which throbbed into happy awareness. "Are you sure I can't do something for you?"

Jenny couldn't help it. Moaning, she spread her legs and gave him access. Her mysterious lover didn't need any further invitation, and soon had her on her toes, his busy fingers driving her to distraction, milking her clit and delving deep within her pussy. His other hand found occupation with her nipples, tweaking them and rolling them between fingers and thumb. At first she watched, but the sight of her breasts being kneaded by an unseen hand was too strange. It was easier to relax when she kept her eyes closed.

"You are so responsive, my lovely. I love to touch you."

"When can I touch you?"

He chuckled, but there was a sad note to it. "It doesn't quite work that way. But you will feel me, as much of me as I can give you." His cock continued to poke suggestively at her backside, sending her thoughts to intimate activities she'd read about but never experienced.

Another masculine laugh resulted.

She was urged forward to put her hands on the side of the shower wall. "Hand me the soap," he whispered.

Unsure of his intentions, she did, holding it over her shoulder, and felt the bar slip through her fingers. It traveled down her back in a circular motion that felt marvelous. *This man could wash her back anytime.*

But he didn't stay on her back, and soon she felt the soap in a much more intimate place. Trying to turn, she found herself fixed in place, a strong arm holding her as one soapy finger broached a part of her never visited by man before.

"You aren't going to..." Her voice startled when a second finger joined the first, stretching her anus open. The action should have been disconcerting, but somehow it wasn't. Unconsciously her ass tipped higher, making it easier for him to tease the opening further, and she moaned as a third finger joined the two already inside her. Her heartbeat pounded in her ears and she barely heard his next words over it.

"Lovely one, I'm going to give you a new experience, do something you've never done before. You've thought about it at times...but never dared asked. Do you trust me?"

Did she? She wasn't even sure who or what he was. "I don't know..."

Something much larger than a finger pressed into her now relaxed and well-lubricated anus. He entered slowly, giving her ample time to grow used to the invasion. It was startling but not painful, and as he inched inside, her apprehensions slipped into appreciation.

"Oh, well...that is different," she managed to get out between moans.

From behind came a groan at her approval, and he pushed himself deeper, then pulled out with equal deliberation. He repeated the action, first slowly, then faster. As he sped up, the movement pushed her into the wall, the cool tile almost a relief from the heat of the unseen body behind her. His cock filled her from behind while invisible fingers teased her clit to the point of release.

Jenny moaned and clutched at the arm around her waist, too overcome to realize she was digging her fingers into empty air. How could she have lived this long without experiencing this?

Along the side of her face, she felt the stubble of his beard, his breath hard in her ears. He deepened his stroke and she felt his balls strike her ass in rhythm. "Scream for me. Give me the evidence of your pleasure."

Orgasm seized her and Jenny cried out, her voice echoing off the shower walls. Her body pulsed and shook as her mind gave in to the need to not think, not reason, but simply feel, and what she felt was wonderful. Only as she came back to herself did she realize that while she'd climaxed, he hadn't. His breathing was still hard with passion, the body behind her stiff with unresolved need.

Even so, as the ripples of her passion faded, she felt him fade too, the hold of his arm weakening, the cock inside her slipping away into nothing. Cooling water from the shower rained against her back.

A final warm breath touched her cheek, the light touch of invisible lips on her neck. "Who are you?" she asked, her voice a thready whisper, still in the thrall of the most shattering orgasm she'd ever experienced.

She felt his hesitation, then, with even his voice fading away, she heard him answer.

"Jenny, you can call me Charlie."

* * * * *

Wrapped in a towel, Jenny stared at the little wooden doll sitting next to the sink. It was a good thing the face on it was blank. She'd hate it if it had a smug, self-satisfied smile.

"You're a doll. You are only a doll, made of wood, that's all you are. You can't come to life as an invisible man, you can't be making love to me!"

The figure had no answer.

* * * * *

Maybe she should throw it away. Or burn it. Ideas flooded into her mind, only to be discarded as soon as they got there. She had no proof it was the doll. Maybe she was going crazy. Maybe the doll was a possessed toy – possessed by a demon!

Maybe it was the reincarnation of her old doll Charlie. Could dolls be reincarnated?

Jenny shook her head to clear out the remaining useless ideas, and leaned back on the couch, staring at the wooden figure on the coffee table. Her fireplace was just for show and the stove was electric. She wasn't going to burn it in a trashcan and set off the building's smoke detector.

There was no reason to believe that throwing it away would help. She wouldn't be surprised if Charlie would come back from the trash, covered in eggshells and coffee grounds, and holding a grudge against her. She'd seen enough horror movies.

Besides, he hadn't really hurt her. He'd scared her, but he'd also given her the best sex of her life, and what they'd done in the shower had always been a secret fantasy of hers. Fulfilling her dreams was scarcely something to punish him for.

Jenny groaned. Him...she was thinking of it as a "him".

Well, he was certainly male...that was one thing she could state unequivocally, she thought, rubbing her ass. She still couldn't believe she'd allowed that.

She still couldn't believe she'd enjoyed it, either.

Jenny shook her head again. This was getting her nowhere. What was she going to do? She needed to talk to Charlie and find out what was happening. Why had he come to life and made love to her? To talk to him, she needed to get him here, in a form she could talk to.

An idea sprang into her mind. He'd shown up when she was distracted in the shower, or sleeping on the couch, or in the bedroom, and always when the doll was nearby. When she'd gone to bed last night, she'd left the figure in the living room, and had slept undisturbed.

If she wanted to talk to him, she should keep him with her at all times, particularly in the bedroom at night.

The idea of a nocturnal visitation and all that would entail sent shivers of anticipation down her spine. One thing about it, she was definitely going to have to reconsider her no-men policy. Cory was right that she needed to get out more. Maybe then a wooden doll wouldn't have become the most exciting thing in her life in the past several years.

Snatching up the figure from the coffee table, Jenny strode purposefully to the bedroom. Time to get this started.

Two hours later, she looked up from her book and stared at the figure on the bedside table. Maybe she was wrong. Maybe she was crazy. An invisible man screwing her in the shower and claiming the name of her new toy didn't exactly mean she was sane.

Maybe he was gone, and wouldn't ever return. A wave of sadness passed through her at that thought. She would miss Charlie if that were so.

Placing a bookmark to hold her page, Jenny closed her book and put it on the table. With or without her unseen lover, it was time to go to bed.

Reaching over to turn off the lamp, she glanced at the wooden figure, sitting with knees bent. For a moment she considered taking it to the living room where it had spent the night before.

No, if he wanted to make another appearance tonight, she'd welcome him, but before she let him do anything she'd get some answers!

Switching off the light, she leaned back into the pillows and soon was fast asleep.

* * * * *

Jenny awoke to a solid mass on the bed next to her, a strong arm around her waist, clutching her close. The soft whisper of her name sounded in her ear, "Jenny, wake up."

Startling to full alert, she twisted under the arm and turned to face the emptiness next to her. "Who are you?"

A hand caressed her cheek, and she felt his hot breath in her face. "I told you earlier. You named me Charlie."

"Are you the doll? The manikin?"

The hand on her face moved lower, leaving electric trails along her neck. "That is one manifestation of me. Your skin is so soft...I could touch it for hours."

She ignored his last comment, although his touch was considerably more difficult to dismiss. "Why are you here?"

"To make love to you. To give you pleasure. To grant any wish you have."

That last phrase caught her attention. "My wishes? You do wishes?"

"Only those that I can fulfill. I can give you pleasure. Don't you want pleasure, Jenny?"

His hands had moved to her breasts, her gown falling open as he reached them. *Oh, great, even her clothing was enchanted.* Under his tender care her nipples sprang to full erectness, the surrounding tissue enjoying the massage.

A small moan escaped her and she almost forgot her next question.

Fortunately he repeated his. "Don't you want pleasure?"

Regaining her senses, she caught the invisible hand with her own. "I want pleasure. I want to give it, too."

Again sadness radiated from him as it had in the shower. "I can give you pleasure, Jenny. I want to do that. Taking it...it's hard to explain."

She pulled his hand to her face and kissed it. It felt smooth, like wood. A hand shouldn't feel like wood, it should be soft, have hair...when she pressed it again to her lips, she felt the tickle of tiny hairs along its back and the skin gave under the pressure of her mouth.

"I'm a fairly smart person, Charlie. Try explaining it to me."

His sigh brushed her cheek. "I'm what you've experienced, Jenny, a creature disembodied, unreal. I'm nothing more than a spirit in your world, tied to the doll. But when I'm with someone who needs me, someone who wants me, I can become real...in a sense. You can feel me because it is needed, so I can make love to you."

"You can become solid if I want you to?"

"I'm as solid as I am, as real as I have ever gotten before." He pulled her hand to his head to feel the soft strands slide between her fingers. "I've got hair, Jenny. I've never had that before. You make me more than I ever was."

She ran her fingers down his neck, feeling the ears that had just formed, moved her hand to his chest to feel his heartbeat. Under her fingers it made a ragged tattoo. "If you're so real, why can't I see you?"

Another heartfelt sigh escaped him, and she was sorry she'd asked.

"I can never be that real, Jenny. There are limits to all wishes. The most I can be is a lover for you when you need me to be. Isn't that enough?"

Was it enough? She suppressed her own sigh. It was everything he could offer, so it would have to be.

"Jenny...do you want me to make love to you now?"

She couldn't ignore the plaintive note to his voice. "Yes, Charlie, I do."

Moments later her nightgown was on the floor, Jenny unclear as to how it had gotten there. He lay on top of her—as far as she could tell. When she closed her eyes it was easier to keep track of him, when her vision wasn't arguing with the rest of her senses.

He was kissing her deeply, hungrily, as a starving man would consume a first meal. Lips met and tongues entangled and her desire rose in answer to his. He was her lover, invisible perhaps, but what was the harm in that? She could enjoy him when she needed him. Putting her arms around him, she held him close. When his form shifted

and her hold slipped, she wished him more solid. It worked; he stabilized and she hugged him closer.

"Jenny you are a powerful wisher. You have more strength than the others, more control."

His whispered appreciation threw cold water on the flames of her passion. She broke away from his embrace. "Others? What others?"

"I've been a doll for many years. I don't know how to measure the passage of time. I've had other owners..."

"Owners? Like you're a slave?"

"In a sense. I am bound to the doll. I've been like this with other women. Does that matter? Haven't you been with other men?"

Put that way... "Well, yes, I have," she admitted.

A tender hand pushed the hair from her face. "I've been with others, you've been with others. All that matters is that we are together right now. For what it is worth, I love you best."

"Love me?"

"Only when I'm with someone am I alive. You give me life, Jenny. I love you."

In all her years she'd never heard the words from a man. Not that she was hearing them from one now...but it didn't matter.

Jenny placed her hands along his face. "Make love to me, Charlie."

His sensual chuckle answered. "Yes, ma'am."

Hands caressed her breasts and teased her nipples into aching nubs of sensation, an invisible mouth suckling each as her hands were buried in his hair. His mouth left a tingling trail down her belly until it found her core, and licked and tickled her clit and pussy until she was ready to scream.

She tugged on his head until he rose over her again. With her eyes closed she could almost “see” him, feel the tension in his arms as he held his weight above her, hear the ragged breathing from his throat.

Reaching between them, she found his hard-as-wood cock, solid as a chunk of maple. She stroked it and the surface softened, gained the texture of flesh, and pre-cum slicked her palm. Running her fingers along his shaft, the skin moved and revealed the thick knob at the top.

He gasped, letting her work for a short time before his hand fell atop hers. “It doesn’t work that way, Jenny. I’m to pleasure you.”

“This is pleasure, Charlie. To give pleasure *is* my pleasure.”

“But,” his voice was strained. “I can’t take it.”

“If I wish you to, you can. Isn’t that right?”

“I suppose...” He didn’t sound convinced.

“Let me touch you, Charlie. Please.”

She felt him roll off her and settle onto the bed next to her, hesitation rising off him. She found his cock again and ran her hands along it, sensing his muscles stiffen at the sensation. Her hands worked up and down along the shaft, teasing the head with a gentle massage until she heard an appreciative groan erupt from his lips. “Oh, that feels so good, Jenny.”

It did feel good. And this was going to feel better. She climbed on top of him, positioning herself to take him, the tip of his cock just outside her pussy.

Once, twice she rubbed it along her cleft, enjoying the feel of him sliding across her clit. On the third pass he seized her hips and embedded himself deep within her. Jenny’s cry echoed in the room.

He trembled beneath her. “So wonderful, to be with you.”

It was wonderful. And then he moved and it got better. And better. And better still. His cock inside her was warm, hard, even if it was invisible, and sitting astride him she

was impaled by its ten-inch length. Each movement was better than the last as invisible hands grasped her waist and guided her up and down along his shaft. Jenny clutched the unseen shoulders under her and hung on as she rode Charlie into another orgasm. Tension and sensation drove each other in her mind and body and she couldn't hold back from the edge any longer. She collapsed with a cry of delight.

Echoes of her climax were still strumming through her when he twisted her to lie beneath him. "Are you ready to do that again?" he whispered.

Without waiting for her answer, he pushed deeper inside over and over, this time filling her even more than before. Jenny reveled in the feel of him, the strength and power of his thrust, driving her deep into the pillows behind her. This was real lovemaking, even if her lover was anything but real.

She arched against him and met the drive of his hips with her own. Heat from his unseen body blasted into her, and the quivers of incipient climax made her pussy clutch at his cock with each withdrawal. Through veils of passion she felt his tension rising to meet hers.

It wasn't enough to take her release. Jenny needed his as well. She clutched his back. "Come with me, Charlie."

"I wish I could," he ground out, the sound harsh as if coming through gritted teeth.

"I wish it too."

Just as she said it, a long shudder passed through the invisible body above her, rippling under her hands. Charlie drove in again, and again, then stopped and tensed. She felt another shudder run through his torso. A low growl came out of him.

He pulled back once more and pushed forward, and this time the growl became a roar, his cock pulsing inside her. Amazed at his reaction, Jenny slipped off the edge again and into the chasm of completion, following Charlie into its depths.

When she returned to herself, still trembling from the experience, Charlie was collapsed on top of her, his pleasant weight reassuring, if deceptively solid.

"Are you all right?" she asked.

His laugh was the shakiest she'd ever heard. "It's been...years since I've done that. Felt that. I'd forgotten..."

"How good it feels?"

He gave another shaky laugh. "Yeah, that."

She felt him start to fade away. "Charlie, don't go."

"I can't stay, Jenny. Much as I want to."

"But you can. I wish you to stay."

His weight was almost gone from her. "It won't work this time. Only during times of strong emotions, of passion, will a wish work. There are limits to everything."

"But Charlie..."

His last breath sounded in her ear. "Goodbye, Jenny. I'll see you tomorrow."

And he was gone.

* * * * *

Jenny lay awake in the stillness of pre-dawn, her mind awirl with thoughts and emotions. After Charlie's vanishing act last night, sleep had eluded her, and now she faced the dawn with a mixture of wishes, wants, and needs she never realized she had before.

Needs. Cory was right. Jenny hadn't thought she needed anyone, but now that she'd been with Charlie, she knew that was wrong. Physically, mentally, she needed a man far more than she'd expected.

Wants. Charlie had shown her that it was someone like him that she wanted. A man sensitive to her needs as a woman, able to fulfill her fantasies.

Wishes. This was the toughest of all because she knew just what her wish was. She needed and wanted a man just like Charlie. He had touched her in ways she'd never

known, had found the passion hidden inside her and brought it to the surface. Charlie was her ultimate fantasy lover.

Unfortunately a fantasy was all he was. She could have him when she needed sex, but not otherwise. He could love her, but only in the most physical way.

She couldn't talk with him, eat with him, or hold him close at night in her bed. He would always be a fantasy, a wonderful one, but never real. He could never be her companion, just a doll with special properties. Very special properties, but those weren't enough, not enough to build a life on.

She needed a man like Charlie, she wanted a man like Charlie, she wished she could have a man like Charlie, but Charlie himself wasn't enough.

Through the windows the sun's light came, a new day dawning. The first day of the rest of her life—yet another cliché, not unlike the one the shopkeeper who'd sold her Charlie had said: "Be careful what you wish for, you might get it."

Jenny pulled herself from her sleepless bed. She'd certainly gotten the wish thing right. She'd wished for Charlie and gotten him. Now what was she going to do with him?

Keeping him with her wasn't a good idea. She needed to get on with her life, find a real man to give her the companionship she needed. So long as Charlie was around it would be awkward. Imagine if he showed up when she had a man over?

Some guys might like that...but she wasn't sure she would.

She could keep him in a drawer or in the closet, and pull him out on special occasions like an elaborate sex toy that didn't need batteries. Jenny looked at the little wooden figure sitting by the bed. Something in his attitude, the air of desolation about it, told her he knew her thoughts.

No, the closet wasn't the answer. He needed to be loved...if not by her, then by someone else. She should take him back to the store and let someone else have him.

Chapter Three

The wooden figure was warm in her hands as she handed it to the shopkeeper, whose eyes were sharp and knowing. "He didn't please you?"

Jenny struggled for an answer. "I liked him just fine. But I've decided he didn't fit in well at my apartment."

"Oh?" A twinkle came into the old woman's eyes. "I see. Very well." She reached into her cash drawer and pulled a twenty out. "I'll refund your money, then."

Jenny waved the bill away. "No, that's okay. I don't want it back. I enjoyed having him too much."

"Really?" A smile took over the shopkeeper's face. "In that case, maybe you should say goodbye to him. He likes that." She handed the doll back to Jenny and headed for another part of the store.

Awkwardly, Jenny held the figure and stared at the blank face. "I'm sorry about this, Charlie," she whispered, hoping the shopkeeper wouldn't overhear. "You were terrific, you really were. You taught me a lot about myself, and what I want. But you did too good a job. I need more from a man than a good time once in a while. I need someone who will be there with me, even when we aren't having sex, and that isn't you."

She put the doll on the counter top and stroked its back one last time. "Goodbye, Charlie, and good luck with your next owner. I hope her wishes are strong like mine so you can enjoy yourself."

Her hand lingered on his head, and inexplicably her eyes filled with tears. "I wish you could be the man I want." Under her fingers, a sudden heat flashed, then dispersed.

Tearing her tingling fingers away, she dashed the moisture from her eyes and fled the shop, not caring how strange the owner thought her abrupt exit.

* * * * *

"I'm going for lunch, honey," Cory said, breaking Jenny out of the half-asleep, half-miserable funk she'd been in since opening the store. "Do you want me to bring you back something?"

Jenny attempted a smile. "No, it's okay. I'm not very hungry. I'll get something later."

Cory gave her a troubled look. "Are you okay? You look like you lost your best friend."

In some sense, Charlie had been her best friend. Shaking her head, Jenny managed a real smile. "I'll be fine, Cory. Go get your lunch."

Working through some of the accounting books kept her busy until the store filled with customers on their lunch break. Jenny answered questions and rang up sales for an hour, then the crowd cleared out and she was able to get back to the books.

She smiled in satisfaction at the recorded receipts. They were making a good profit this month.

"Excuse me, I'm looking for a book."

The voice was shockingly familiar and it jerked Jenny's head out of the accounts. She stared up at her customer, a young man whose cheeks sported the hint of a beard and whose brown wavy hair was just long enough to wrap around her fingers. Gray eyes held a hint of laughter in them, and when he smiled his teeth were toothpaste white.

He was smiling now.

Jenny searched for and found her voice. "What kind of book are you looking for?"

The smile turned into a grin. "It's an old classic. A kid's book I believe. About a wooden boy who wanted to become real?"

This was getting stranger by the minute. "Pinocchio? You want the original version or the one from the movie?"

He leaned against the counter. "Oh, I always think the original is best, don't you, lovely one?"

It was too much. "*Charlie?*"

Warmth darkened his eyes. "That's my name."

"But how, why?" she sputtered.

He leaned closer and stopped her inarticulate speech with a lingering kiss. Closing her eyes, Jenny felt again his lips capture hers, warm and damp and soft, and gave herself up to the sheer pleasure of it, a dream come true. By the time the kiss ended, she knew for certain this was her Charlie, come to life.

She gazed into his gray eyes. "I can't believe this."

"I told you that you were a powerful wisher. That last wish at the shop was a doozy."

"So you're real now?"

"As real as you." He ran a finger down her cheek. Then his stomach growled. "And hungry, too."

The bell on the door broke through their reverie and both turned to see Cory standing, elbows out and hands on hips, a look of surprise and delight on her face. "Looks like you found your friend."

Jenny grinned her response. "I think I'll get lunch now, Cory."

Eyebrows forming perfect crescents above her eyes, Cory watched them head for the door, Charlie's arm possessively around Jenny's waist. "Maybe you should take the rest of the afternoon, as well?"

Getting Charlie home and seeing in the flesh what she'd been intimate with sounded like a great way to spend the rest of the day. "Maybe I will."

"Hey, aren't you going to introduce us?"

Jenny halted in her tracks. She smiled up into Charlie's face. "Cory, this is Charlie..." A look of bewilderment took over her face. "Do you have a last name?"

He grinned. "Of course I do, lovely one. It's Woodman."

The End

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