

How to Stop Playing with Dolls

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SIT ON THE FLOOR IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BASEMENT. IT'S YOUR VERY OWN PLAY area, which makes it the greatest place. Spending enough time down there makes you unaware of the rest of the world. It's where no one focuses on what you're doing.

It's just your toys and you.

You have the baby doll you adore playing with. You take her wherever you go. She is special to you. Wrap her in a blanket, hold her, feed her, and tell her you love her. Then your stepfather will come downstairs.

He'll have his work clothes on. He'll look exhausted, but he'll keep smiling. He'll sit down across from you and watch you hold your doll. Make sure she has fallen asleep before you offer to let him hold her. He'll take her from you carefully. Smile when he gently rocks her in his arms.

He'll stare at the doll for a moment and then look at you. There'll be something about the look on his face that will make you feel safe. He'll put the doll aside and pick you up, sitting you on his lap.

You'll smell beer.

He'll touch your hair, holding thin strands between his fingers. He'll move them to touch your cheek and lips. His calloused skin will feel uncomfortable against yours. You'll be more uncomfortable feeling his chapped lips and his tongue being forced into your mouth. His breath will stagger and his hands will tighten around

your sides as he holds you.

If a door slams upstairs, it'll startle him. He'll look up, listen, and wait. You'll hear steps and the television.

When he's sure no one is coming down he'll ask you, "Do you want to play a game?"

Don't say anything. Stare at his lips and eager eyes.

"Lie down," he'll whisper.

Get off his lap and do as he says. Look up at the ceiling. You'll lose focus for a moment, noticing the different shades of faded green paint chipping away. Look back at your stepfather. He'll cover you with your doll's blanket.

His hands will slowly move underneath it, unbuttoning your pants and pulling them off.

Stare at his smile.

He'll caress your bare legs gently before spreading them apart. His hands will get sweaty and shaky. One of his hands will move between your legs. First, he'll rub. Then, he'll move a finger inside you, making you gasp. A feeling will settle in your stomach. It'll make you sit up to get away. He'll hold you down by your thighs.

"Everything is fine, just don't move," he'll insist, glancing at the stairs.

You've been disciplined to do as you're told. So go back to lying still. He'll enter you again, this time two fingers instead of one. He'll focus on your face and force himself deeper. Hold back from crying out.

If you do cry out, he'll glance at the stairs again, but he won't stop. You'll start to tear up.

He'll lie, "It's okay."

Believe what he says until he's had enough or he'll get upset. If you try to move away from him before he's finished, he'll go for longer.

So don't.

Don't move. Don't yell. Don't cry. Wait.

He'll soon move his hands from underneath. He'll wipe sweat and blood on his jeans. He'll go back upstairs without saying a word. When he's gone, get up slowly or it'll hurt. Pull your pants back on.

Don't sit back down. Don't look around. Don't clean up the mess. Leave the basement and don't go back.

Forget your doll.