



Raggedy on the Shelf

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Polly was a nice young woman who had never fully grown up. She had always enjoyed dolls, especially her Raggedy Anne doll. One day, after a hard day at work, she made a grave mistake. She unintentionally wished out loud, while playing with Raggedy, "I wish my life was as simple as yours Raggedy. Never having to go to work, always being loved by your owner, and having many doll friends to play with.

That night, as she slept, Polly had the strangest dream; in it, she was a Raggedy Anne doll in a dolly world. Her owner played with her and they had tea time together often. Polly the rag doll was truly in love with her owner and never wanted to be put back on the shelf. But as all humans do, Polly the dolly's owner needed to sleep and since dolls are not normally conscious, or so she thought; Polly's owner would put her back on her doll shelf to wait quietly for their next play date.

Polly was enjoying her weird dream, that was, until she woke up in a strange location. Worse yet, she found that she could not move anything! Well, she realized that was not completely true, she could look around with her eyes, but she could not turn her head, nor could she speak or cry out for help. As her relatively unchanging view of her new world began to settle in, she realized that she was in a toy shop and sitting down. That was when something disturbing caught her attention.

Although she could only look around with her eyes, severely limiting her view, she caught something troubling. She could see part of her legs, and that was when she noticed the problem. She could see that she was wearing a blue patterned dress, striped red and white stockings, and black shoes; just like her Raggedy Anne. But her feet and shoes didn't look human, they looked like a doll's feet; soft cloth stuffed with padding. Then she tried to look at her hands, and even though she couldn't see them well, she could see the tan cloth that was her thumb; and it was painfully obvious that she had dolls' hands!

She was truly freaking out, and terrified, yet didn't move in the slightest or make the tiniest sound. Polly was quite sure that she was not supposed to be a Raggedy Anne doll, rather a human woman; and one who owned several dolls of that type. But a couple things especially bothered her; first, her current position, sitting on a store shelf surrounded by many dolls. At least, she assumed that was the case, since she could see their hair in her fixed line of sight. And second, the fact that she could not move or speak was almost sure confirmation that she herself was a doll, as well. Worse still, she felt as though she were being watched; even though the store was clearly not open yet and no one seemed to be around.

Polly could not move her eyes enough to see who, or what, was on the shelf around her, although she could see a couple dolls in front of her. She wondered if she had been wrong all along; surely toys are not aware, are they? Were dolls really conscious, did they actually know what was going on around them; could they see, hear, and feel? Polly worried that, if they were, then her fellow dolls on the shelf, might not appreciate this new addition to the store's inventory. Either that, or they had once been human too and they felt sorry for her. But whatever the case, Polly could hear the bell on the front door as the store's owner, or manager, was coming to work.

Eventually Polly could see a kindly looking old man walk into her field of view. He stopped suddenly, as though he realized something was different, and then turned to face Polly and said, "Hmm... I see the store has a new addition. I feel that I should explain this to you doll, even though it doesn't really make any difference; you are inventory now, until you are sold. The store is magical; it pulls its stock from people making wishes. Though, I'm not sure if it discriminates whether, or not, those wishes were intentional! Either way, when a new item appears on the shelf, I know that it was a former person who must have, in some way or another, wished for it.

Hopefully, you will enjoy your future as a doll. And don't worry, surely someone will buy you very soon as you make a lovely doll. Finally, in case you are wondering, you are a Raggedy Anne doll, sitting on a shelf full of Raggedy Anne dolls. And yes, they too are all like you, formerly human, and not necessarily even originally

women. While I can see the concern on your face, and the pleading look in your eyes, I can't do anything to change you back; and to anyone else, you just look like any other Raggedy Anne doll!"

He moved closer to Polly and looked her in the eyes, before saying, "Most of the toys in this shop were once human, so you are in good company! Because this is my shop, and the magic seems to work in my favor for some reason, I seem to be able to see things that others can not. For example, I mentioned that your fellow dolls are also conscious, like you. Well, just in case you are wondering, or feel like you are being watched; you are, sort of. Unlike others, for some reason, I can see the movement of the dolls eyes and, right now, they are all looking at you. Whether or not they approve of you, despise the competition, or are just feeling sorry for you; well that I can't tell; but they certainly are intensely interested in the new doll on the shelf."

Then he started to back away but still continued to talk to her, "I know that this may not be what you wanted, or even intended doll. But whatever the case, you are now, and will always be; a simple rag doll to be sold. And don't worry, sell you I will; as soon as a buyer makes me an acceptable offer! I don't really know for sure, but am reasonably confident that you will enjoy your new simple life as a doll. That is because I believe that all toys can somehow sense the good emotions emanating from their owners when they are being played with. I hope that you too will feel that way when you are played with! And in case you are wondering what you look like as a doll, I'll show you!" Then the man chuckled to himself as he said to Polly, "Wait here!" As though she had any choice in the matter!

Then the shop owner turned and walked away, Polly wanted to scream out to him for help, to tell him that she never wanted to be a real doll, and certainly not to be sold. But she simply sat there on the shelf, waiting, until she saw him returning with a hand held mirror. When he held the mirror up in front of Polly, she would have fainted; had she been able. The forced smile on her face certainly didn't reveal her true feelings. But shocked as she was, she would never faint again, nor sleep, eat, move, speak, or do any of the things that a human woman could do; ever again. The store owner said, "Whatever the case and no matter what you may be feeling, I hope that you will be sold quickly so that you can begin enjoying your new life; as someone's favorite toy!"

Then he turned and walked away, leaving Polly sitting there on the shelf. Time passed slowly. She was occasionally picked up and evaluated at by customers. It was a strange sensation to be sure, never able to ask for help, simply remaining limp in her potential buyer's hands. But the doll was always placed back on a shelf; even if it wasn't always the correct shelf. Eventually, the shop owner would find her and put her back in her proper place. Polly the dolly watched, helplessly, as some of the dolls around her were carried away and never seen again; obviously purchased and taken to their new homes.

One day, after a couple of very long weeks of sitting on her shelf and waiting, while apprehensively worrying about what it would be like to be chosen for purchase, and sold; things changed. The very idea of being purchased and owned was deeply troubling to the formerly independent woman. Polly was only able to tell how much time had passed because her shelf was near a window where she could see the daylight and darkness cycles. That was the day when a nice young girl came into the store with her mother and began looking at Polly, before picking her up and examining her excitedly.

Polly was nervous, she had been a grown woman, and now she was a simple dolly being held by a young girl. While Polly really didn't want to be a simple doll, she was coming to the realization that her new form was likely going to be her form for as long as she existed. She also didn't want to sit on a shelf in the store for eternity, surely having an owner to play with her would beat the monotony of sitting on a shelf all day, every day.

Polly had watched as several of the dolls around her had been chosen by customers and carried away, never to be seen again by the doll, but this was her day. Polly's spirits soared as the little girl hugged her and said, "I want this one Mommie!" Polly heard the woman reply, "All right Annie, if that is the one you want. Let's go pay for her, and then you can take her home." And before Polly could think about it, she had been boxed up, her box

wrapped in pretty paper, and she had been sold. Now she was someone's dolly, being carried out of the store in her box to her new home, by her new owner, Annie.

Polly never really fully was able to truly accept the fact that she was now nothing more than just a child's plaything, a simple toy with an owner; property that could be sold, or disposed of at her owner's discretion. Yet she grew to love Annie, her owner, the two of them played often and had many tea parties. Polly, obviously, was never able to say anything, or show any sign of emotion; but inside she found it amusing that her owner was now doing the same things with her that she did with her doll, Raggedy. What made it amusing was that, now, she was Raggedy, too weird! Still, the two of them played for years before Annie outgrew Raggedy, I mean Polly, and she was put up on a shelf to accumulate dust.

Still Annie never stopped loving her Raggedy, Polly. And, after many years, Polly was gifted by Annie to her daughter; with express instructions to be careful with the doll as she was very old! Polly appreciated those instructions, she didn't want to be damaged and thrown away. Thanks to Annie actually listening to her mother's advice, the doll was treated gently. And to this day Polly is still in the family, a favorite doll for Annie's great grand-daughter. Polly may not be free to do whatever she wants, or say what she thinks; but wherever she is, she is happy!

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