

Do You Wanna...

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Patty sat on the top of the stairs, her head resting angrily on her hands. She glared down to the foyer and watched the shadows of her parents and new babysitter talk to one another. Her mom looked up the staircase.

"Patty, honey, do you wanna meet Mary?"

"No," the girl whined. "I don't."

"And why not?" her mom said as she walked up the stairs.

"Because you won't let me keep her."

"Actually, you can keep Mary."

Patty jumped up excitedly, "Really!?"

"I think you're ready."

Patty gripped her mom as tightly as she could. "Oh, thank you! I promise to take good care of her!"

"Make sure you do; we take care of our toys in this house."

"Do you wanna . . . play Sorry?"

"Can we please not talk about this now, Patty?" Mary said while situated on the commode. The girl she was babysitting stood right outside the door.

"Do you wanna . . . play cards?"

"No." A storm had knocked out the house's satellite connection, and now Patty was bored.

"Do you wanna . . . play checkers?"

"No."

"Do you wanna . . . play dress-up?"

"No." Dress-up with what clothes, anyway? Patty was six, and Mary couldn't put on her clothes.

"Do you wanna . . ."

"Fine, yes. Just get ready and I'll be there in a minute. We can play whatever you want."

"Yippee!" Patty skipped away from the door, and Mary finished her business after a minute of quiet. She opened the door to Patty's room, but fell onto a patio.

"What?" Mary turned around and saw the bathroom wasn't there, replaced with the entryway to a house. The babysitter went inside and began to explore. From afar, the furniture appeared expertly crafted, but Mary found that much of the detail was painted on. Then, her skin hardened. "What?" she looked at her hand, now turning to plastic, her fingers becoming immobile. She tried to talk, but her face had become entirely plastic, with no joints to move her mouth. Terrified, Mary bolted out the door, and came face-to-face with Patty's huge eyes. She grinned at Mary.

"I decided to play Dolly."

It had been two hours since Mary had been turned into a plastic fashion doll, and Patty started to show signs that she was almost done playing. Her newest doll was now clothed in a contemporary maroon dress, black hose, and a short faux leather jacket. The shoes Patty wanted couldn't fit on the toy's feet, and so Mary Doll went barefoot. In two hours, the doll had been on three dates, which wasn't odd; however, it was odd that Mary actually liked Jessie and thought he was sweet and charming. The way things were going, Mary didn't think it

too far fetched that she would forget being human within a day.

Fortunately, Patty finally grew tired of playing and set Mary on the floor. "Ala-Kazam!" she yelled, and Mary was suddenly very human again, though still in her doll costume. Immediately, the babysitter backed away from her charge.

"How. . . magic's not real. How did that happen?"

Patty smiled sweetly, "Magic is real, and my mommy's a witch. She taught me that spell just in case you got mean or something."

"But, I wasn't! I didn't do a thing to you!"

"I know. I was bored." Patty went to her closet and pulled her game of Sorry! out and laid it in front of Mary. "Do you wanna. . . ." She sweetly asked.

Mary curled away from the game board. "You're going to change me again, aren't you?"

"Ala-Kazam!" Patty yelled again, and this time Mary underwent a massive change. She shrunk to tiny proportions, even by toy standards, her body turned a cherry red and molded into plastic. She lost her arms and legs, and her hips splayed out to create a wide circular base, so she was the perfect Sorry! game piece.

Thankfully, the playing piece and the girl heard the outside door open and close. "Patty, we're home!" They heard a yell. Mary prayed this nightmare would soon be over.

The girl's door cracked open, "Patty, where's Mary?" The child pointed to the Sorry! piece. Mom smiled. "Do you wanna play once before bed?"

"Yes!"

Mary was disbelieving, even as Patty's mom picked her up and placed the piece in the starting area.

They did not play just once. After an hour of sliding and bumping and moving across a board, the game of Sorry! between Patty and her mother came to an end, and so did Mary's time as a game piece. Mrs. H shouted

a quick “alakazam,” and Mary returned to her normal self, though her clothes were all red. She didn’t know what to say as she looked between one witch and the other.

“OK, Patty, go wash up for bedtime.”

The girl jumped up and ran to the bathroom.

“So, Mary, how did you like babysitting?” Mrs. H asked.

“A lot. It was a fun night, though maybe a little weird.” Mary hoped she would buy the lie.

“Then you wouldn’t mind sticking around tonight?”

“Well, Mrs. H, I have to get home soon, so I can’t.” She stood up and began to walk away, ignoring her goofy red clothes.

“Mary,” Mrs. H said forcefully, “Do you want to stay here with Patty tonight?” Mary turned and lowered her head.

“Yes.”

“Alakazam!” Mrs. H said, and Mary fell to the floor, now just a pink teddy bear.

Patty had just returned and saw the plush body. “Is Mary staying over tonight?”

“Yes she is, sweetie.”

“Yay!” Patty scooped up Mary and began to hug her. Mom tucked both in tight.

“Good night, Patty.” Mrs. H switched off the light and closed the door. Patty squeezed Mary and kissed the bear’s fuzzy head.

“Do you wanna stay with me forever?”

“My dollie is better than your dollie.” Zoe said, taunting Patty with her fire fairy doll. “See, she moves and stuff.” The girl reposed Ember the Fire Pixie, showing Patty all the joints she could move.

“Oh, yeah?” Patty said, “Well, can your dollie do this?” Patty set her Genie toy on the floor,

“Ala-Kazam!” she cried, and a moment later, her Genie doll, and former babysitter Mary, became fully human once again, replete with green pantaloons. She even had a stuffed bottle (that, when dollified, she fit into perfectly).

“Whoa!” Zoe dropped Ember and poked Mary, who promptly knocked the girl’s hand away.

“Dollie, don’t be mean to Zoe.”

“I’m sorry.” The living doll nodded demurely.

“Now who has the better dollie?” Patty folded her arms across her chest in triumph, until Mary pushed her owner over and sprinted to the door. Off balance and stunned, Patty never had time to focus her spell.

“Ala-Kazam!” she yelled, but the spell didn’t affect the fleeing former toy. Instead, Patty’s spell affected herself, and the girl flopped on the floor, now turned into a tiny stuffed witch. Mary burst out the front door and headed for home.

“Whoa.” Zoe said, poking the tiny black and green toy. “Mrs. H, Patty turned herself into a toy. Can I play with her?” Zoe yelled to the living room.

“Go ahead, Zoe, just take good care of her until you have to leave.”

Zoe turned to the witch doll. “Now who’s got the better dollie?”

Three weeks had gone by since Mary made her escape from the girl she used to be a toy for. In those three weeks, she had gotten a job at a clothing store, started dating a boy, and made it onto her high school cheerleading squad, but she never forgot those two days she was a toy. First a fashion doll, then a Sorry! piece, a teddy bear, and then a genie doll.

It was just when Mary stopped worrying that Patty and her mom would find and transform her again that Mrs. H just randomly appeared in the store where she worked.

“Hello, Mary. First, I want you to know that I have no hard feelings. It wasn’t really fair that Patty kept

you as long as she did. Second, I also wanted to tell you that Patty misses you a lot, and would love it if you stopped by later in the week for her slumber party.”

“What, so she can turn me into a toy again?”

“Precisely!” Mrs. H exclaimed.

Mary snorted.

“Sorry, no dice.” She turned around, practically expecting Mrs. H to yell Alakazam and transform her there and then. She actually wanted Mrs. H to yell Alakazam.

“I’m sorry to hear that. I thought you liked being a toy, at least for a night or so.” The woman turned around and started to leave.

“Mrs. H?” Mary said quickly, “When is the party? I kinda wanna go.”