

Teeny-Tiny Teeth

Inspired by the Twilight Zone Episode "Living Doll"

written by

Thomas Jefferson Snodgrass

FADE IN:

INT. MOVING CAR - DAY

In the back seat: HALEY, 8, and her chubby-cheeked, gap-toothed doll WINNIE.

The girl yanks Winnie's pull string. Mechanized words flow:

WINNIE

I love you.

Another pull.

WINNIE

I love you.

Haley studies the doll's eyes: deep-set, far-off, dull blue.

HALEY

I love you, too, Winnie.

The car stops. LAUREN, 30s, springs into full mom mode.

LAUREN

We're here. Train station.
(shifts)

Pack Winnie inside your bag. Didn't
I tell you to do that already?

HALEY

Sorry, mama.

Into the bag Winnie goes, but Haley doesn't zip her in.

LAUREN

Say goodbye to Daddy.

ADAM, 30s, keeps a loose grip on the steering wheel.

HALEY

Goodbye, Daddy. You're not coming?

LAUREN

No. He's not.

A cold glance. A wordless exit by mother and child.

As the girl leaves, her doll drops out of the bag and lands on the backseat floor. Nobody notices.

Lauren slams the door, casting Winnie in shadow.

Adam watches his wife and daughter enter the station.

ADAM
Finally.

Following the signpost up ahead, Adam veers into a new lane.

LATER

Adam drives and chats on his phone.

ADAM
So it's over. Lauren left with
Haley. Divorce papers on the way.

Listens.

ADAM
I'm free. They're out of my hair
completely. I'm coming to see you.

An interruption from the back seat.

WINNIE (O.S.)
I love you.

Adam whirls.

WINNIE (O.S.)
I love you.

ADAM
Hold on. Got a little problem.

He hangs up, pulls over, snatches the doll, speaks to it.

ADAM
Haley's probably crying her eyes
out now 'cause she left you behind.

The doll stares with dead eyes. Adam taps its forehead.

ADAM
You know what, Winnie? I don't
care. She'll forget all about me
and she'll forget all about you. So
let her cry.

He sneers.

ADAM
I don't wanna hear your voice any
more. Or my wife's. Or even
Haley's.

Static from the doll's voice box.

It converts to a growl. Feral. From the gut. Spitting mad...

WINNIE

You're a bad man.

Adam's eyes widen with surprise.

WINNIE

A bad man.

Sour-faced Adam opens the window and whips the doll out.

Winnie skips across the pavement and plops in a mud puddle.

Adam grunts with satisfaction and speeds off.

EXT. MUD PUDDLE - DAY

Her plastic face cracked, scuffed, and gobbled with mud, Winnie stares blankly into the sky. Dirt across her teeth.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAY

Adam embraces PARIS, 20s, his gorgeous, young mistress.

ADAM

My divorce lawyer will tie Lauren
in knots. She won't pry away what's
mine or stick me for child support.

He kisses Paris

More for me. For you. And so on.

PARIS

We'll celebrate once I get back.

ADAM

Aw, cancel your hair appointment.
Stay here with me.

PARIS

Cancelling would be basically
insane. And you need time to
unwind, don't you?

A toothy grin.

PARIS

It'll be worth the wait, I promise.

INT. - APARTMENT KITCHEN - NIGHT

Adam swigs a celebratory beer. Quiet. Alone. The suds settle.

Breaking the silence: tiny scrapes from inside a cabinet.

Adam draws close. Louder now.

Little fingernails clawing to get out? Tiny teeth gnawing on the cabinet wood?

He reaches out...and jolts when his cell phone rings.

He answers to the sound of Haley bawling about lost Winnie. She can barely speak through her sobs. But Adam frowns.

ADAM

Haley. Haley. Did your mom put you up to this? Lemme talk to her.

A second voice interjects over Haley's sobs on the phone:

WINNIE (V.O.)

Daddy doesn't love you.

Adam shouts, knocks over his beer.

WINNIE (V.O.)

B-a-d man.

Adam tosses his phone. Flings open the cabinet. Nothing.

ADAM

You planted speakers in here, Lauren? You messin' with me?

He rips open more cabinets, searching for clues of trickery.

Winnie's mocking voice sounds from somewhere in the kitchen:

WINNIE (O.S.)

I love you. I love you. I love you.

Crazed Adam opens drawers, the microwave, the fridge.

One more cabinet. There! Winnie! Face smashed, skid-marked, and caked with mud. Two little teeth protruding.

Adam yells, clutches, tosses Winnie, stomps her underfoot.

WINNIE

I love...

He snatches Winnie and screams. A savage bite on his hand.

Adam yanks the oven door and chucks Winnie inside.

Slam. He turns on the heat. Two-three-four hundred degrees. Hot orange light pools over Winnie. Roasting from outside in.

LATER

Adam wears oven mittens and guzzles a new beer.

Out of the oven he pulls the baked remains of Winnie: lumpy, disfigured, melted. A piece breaks off. Hits floor.

Adam grunts with satisfaction.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Clutching his bitten hand, Adam collapses into bed. Sleeps.

LATER

Someone swishes by Adam and slides into bed alongside him.

He jolts when an arm drapes over him.

PARIS

Shhh. It's me. Paris.

She lies directly behind Adam, so he can't see her. But he pulls her hand close and kisses it.

ADAM

Thank God.

PARIS

Did you cook something? This place smells funny.

ADAM

That's for later. Let me get a look at you, baby doll.

He rolls over to view Paris.

ADAM

I love...

He glances over Paris's shapely body, but something is wrong with her face--the skin plastic, hard, inhuman.

A scream. Shock. Paris's face is Winnie's face. Cracked. Scuffed. Horrible.

A groan. Adam, adrenalized, wraps his hands around Paris/Winnie's neck and squeezes. After a struggle, she dies.

Frantic, wild-eyed, Adam looks away. When his gaze turns back to Paris, he shouts with surprise.

Paris's face is her own again. Winnie's features are gone. Adam stares at his hands in horror. A killer! He rushes out.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - NIGHT

Adam slumps to the floor. Cries out.

The RESIDENTS of other apartments poke their heads out into the hallway to assess the commotion. Two of them approach.

Adam flips out when he sees their faces. Both of them have Winnie's cracked, plastic features. In fact, everyone looking out their doorway has the doll's face.

RESIDENT

Hey, call the police. Someone's hurt.

Adam stares in wild disbelief at all the Winnies peering coldly at him. A whole world of Winnies.

He croaks in madness:

ADAM

I love you.

He fights for other words, but he's doomed to repeat that one phrase, just like a pull-string doll.

ADAM

I love you. I love you. I love you.

Words of compassion directed at nobody.

FADE OUT: