

THE EDISON DOLL

Written by

Not Edison

Copyright (c) 2021

INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE, WAITING ROOM - DAY

LIZZIE, 70s, talon-like hands crippled by arthritis and skin stretched paper-thin on a bony frame, enters the room. She's dressed in black, small hat and veil too - in mourning.

YATES, 50s, enters from a side room, rumpled suit, unkempt hair, and fidgety manner, moves to greet her.

YATES
Elizabeth?

LIZZIE
Lizzie.

YATES
Lizzie yes, sorry, wasn't --

LIZZIE
Is *she* here?

YATES
About five minutes ago.

Lizzie bustles past Yates and into...

INT. YATES' OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Lizzie bangs the door open and shuffles into the room.

CECILIA, 70s, sits in front of a large desk, piled high with papers and files.

She is physically the same as Lizzie, same arthritis-ridden hands, thin skin, and dressed in exactly the same manner.

She doesn't look at Lizzie, despite the abrupt entrance.

CECILIA
Punctuality wasn't your strong suit.

LIZZIE
Less than thirty seconds for the first insult, a new record.

Yates hurries to his seat behind the desk.

Lizzie takes the spare chair next to her sister, lifts her veil just as Cecilia does the same.

Twins, identical.

Yates stares at them mouth wide.

LIZZIE
You'll catch flies in there.

Yates shuts his mouth so quickly that his teeth click.

CECILIA
You knew we were twins?

YATES
Yes, but the similarity is eerie.

Lizzie scoffs.

LIZZIE
I am not like that wizened old witch.

Cecilia laughs.

CECILIA
Pot, kettle, black... though in your
case it would be a cauldron.

Cecilia winces at her own barbed retort.

LIZZIE
All these years and here we are --

CECILIA
Same as where we were when you left.

LIZZIE
I had to.

CECILIA
No, you didn't, and...

LIZZIE
And what, live life in the shadows,
second-best at everything, forever?

CECILIA
It wasn't like that.

LIZZIE
It was, exactly like that. You were
always special, better, prettier.

CECILIA
We are the same, they loved you too.

LIZZIE
They didn't even try and stop me.

Yates shuffles some papers to get their attention.

YATES

Ladies, I know you've not seen each other for a number of years --

CECILIA

Fifty two years --

LIZZIE

Three months and two days.

YATES

Quite, and with your mother passing --

LIZZIE

What about the Doll?

Cecilia leans forward.

YATES

Well, the Will needs to be read so you can understand the full legal ramifications of your Mother's last wishes, how the estate is to be shared, and --

CECILIA

For once, I agree with Elizabeth.

Lizzie scowls at the use of her formal name.

CECILIA

Our Edison Doll, please.

Yates flusters, blushes, rifles through the file he's holding trying to find the right page of the will.

LIZZIE

She'll have left it to you.

CECILIA

She knew you loved it.

LIZZIE

Surprise she'd remember.

CECILIA

She was heartbroken when you left.

LIZZIE

(surprised)

Funny way of showing it, she never even tried to talk me out of it.

CECILIA
She was too proud, losing you haunted
her.

LIZZIE
Bit late for that now isn't it?

Cecilia sighs, nods.

CECILIA
It is.

The twins are so intent with their conversation that they
have tuned Yates out of their world.

He 'ahems'.

YATES
So, the Doll.

He reads from the page he's holding.

YATES
An Edison Doll, bought in 1890 by
your Grandmother, beloved of my
daughters Elizabeth and Cecilia. The
phonograph has three discs that still
play perfectly -

LIZZIE
Three, what happened to the rest?

CECILIA
Christ sake, it was an antique when
we were kids, nothing lasts forever.

LIZZIE
You broke them?

CECILIA
They were damaged in a house move.

LIZZIE
Unbelievable, you did it on purpose
to spite me!

CECILIA
What, and wait fifty years to see
your face when you found out?

That stumps Lizzie.

YATES

As I was saying... the Edison
Phonograph Doll, I bequeath to
Elizabeth... stubborn like me and who
loved this doll as soon as she could
hold it, it's late as an apology but
there is nothing more I can do now.

LIZZIE

Mine?

Yates opens a compartment in his desk and places an antique
doll on the desk.

CECILIA

Genuinely, she was sorry.

LIZZIE

Why didn't she reach out before...

CECILIA

I tried to convince her. But, well,
you didn't try either.

LIZZIE

So, I don't see how that's my --

CECILIA

You were just the same, as each
other, good and bad, infuriating and
stubborn. But she still loved you.

Cecilia picks up the Doll, hands it to Lizzie.

CECILIA

You remember how it works?

Lizzie nods and tries to turn the small lever that rotates
the mechanism and makes the phonograph play.

But with her arthritic hands, she cannot hold the Doll
steady and crank the handle at the same time. Tears flow.

Cecilia moves nearer her sister, holds the Doll steady.

CECILIA

You turn the handle, you always loved
that part the best.

Lizzie turns the handle as "Now I lay me down to sleep"
plays from the depths of the Doll's chest.

Lizzie looks at her twin, mouths 'Thank you', and turns the
handle some again.