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My Perfect Little Doll

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Honors in the Major Project

My Perfect Little Doll

a Tilsik Noriega Film

ABSTRACT

Thesis Title

My Perfect Little Doll *a Tilsik Noriega Film*

My Perfect Little Doll tells the story of a fourteen year old girl, Jenny, who lives with her adopted parents and has a fascination with dolls. Her father is a troubled man who suffers from violent mood swings due to a work-related head injury. He blames the world for his ailment. Jobless and home-stricken, Jenny's father is a frustrated individual who has built up anger and resentment over the years. Without proper medication, his problem becomes severe. His mood swings lead to abusive behavior toward shy Jenny, who constantly blames herself for her father's abusive ways.

Through a flashback, we learn of the special relationship that Jenny has with Laura, a classmate. Laura feels a duty to help the powerless, which leads her into a friendship with Jenny. Eventually, Jenny invites Laura to her house to seek comfort during times of chaos. Upon arrival, Laura sees one of Jenny's father's violent mood swings and his ability to slip into abusive behavior. Eventually, Laura witnesses Jenny's father's physical abuse on Jenny and tries to convince her to leave. However, Jenny is torn between the love for her father who can be a loving, gentle man, and her own need for safety.

This story weaves its tale with a mixture of pathos and hope. Based on a true story, this film draws from the multileveled emotions that the situation contains. The drama is framed in reality, where even the monsters have hearts.

We learn that it is the victim as much as the perpetrator who denies the problem. But what will the victim do when offered a chance to escape...?

Committee:

Dr. Robert Jones, Chair
Dr. Marcela Del-Rio
Dr. Richard Blum

MY PERFECT LITTLE DOLL

a story by Tilsik Noriega

FADE IN:

EXT. LAURA'S HOME - DAY

We see a close up of a window with blinds on the inside. The blinds are closed. The sun illuminates the exterior of the house. The blinds open, revealing LAURA, 15. Laura squints her eyes as she looks out the window.

CUT TO:

INT. LAURA'S HOME - DAY

Laura stands at the window of her room. The room is set up like a typical 15 year-old girl. Posters line the walls. Stuffed animals sit on the bed. A dresser sits near the closet. Laura wears a nice blouse with jeans, but does not wear shoes. Laura moves to the closet. Laura opens the closet door and gets down on her knees to rummage through the bottom. Laura lets out a frustrated grunt. Laura stops rummaging and steps out of the closet. Laura holds a beautiful doll in her hand.

CLOSE UP ON DOLL:

The doll looks a lot like Laura.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JENNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Laura and JENNY, 14, sit on the window sill in the room. Laura sits straight, but Jenny has a slouch to her posture. The blinds on the windows are closed. Dolls line the entire wall. Over the bed is a beautiful painting. The rest of the walls are bare, except for two wooden doll houses which rest on the carpet up against the wall. Jenny holds the doll that Laura is holding in the previous scene. Directly next to Jenny on the sill sits a disheveled old doll that bares some resemblance to Jenny, and nearby is a male, cowboy-doll.

JENNY

Here. You can have this one.

Jenny hands the doll over to Laura. Laura lovingly looks at the doll.

LAURA

Thank you, Jenny. I'll keep it forever.

JENNY

You don't have to keep it for that long.

(beat)

It kinda looks like you.

LAURA

This is the best gift anyone has ever given me.

Jenny smiles. Laura leans over and gives Jenny a hug. Jenny sits there, stunned. Slowly and awkwardly, Jenny puts her arms around Laura to return the hug.

LAURA'S MOTHER (V.O.)

Laura!

CUT TO:

INT. LAURA'S HOME - DAY

Laura jumps up with a start as she leaves the memory. Laura bangs her forearm on the dresser. Laura grabs her forearm and lets out a shriek of pain.

LAURA'S MOTHER (O.S.)

Hurry up, honey. We're both going to be late.

Laura stares down at her forearm.

CLOSE UP ON FOREARM:

The forearm has a small bruise on it.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FIELD OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL - DAY

Jenny sits under a tree, reading a book. Laura approaches Jenny. Laura steps above Jenny and looks down on Jenny.

LAURA

What are you reading?

Jenny holds up the book so that Laura can see the book.

LAURA

(continuing)

Oh. Is it good?

Jenny nods.

LAURA
(continuing)
Cool. So, your name's Jenny, right?

Jenny nods.

LAURA
(continuing)
I'm Laura

JENNY
Yeah, I know. We have a class
together.

LAURA
Wow! She speaks!

Jenny gives an embarrassed smile and goes back to reading her book.

LAURA
(continuing)
I'm sorry. I didn't mean to make fun
of you. Can I sit here?

Jenny shakes her head. Laura sits down next to Jenny. Jenny continues to read her book.

LAURA
(continuing)
So, um, don't you think that Mr.
Anderson is a major tool?

JENNY
A what?

LAURA
A tool. You know, like a jerk.

JENNY
Oh. I guess so.

Laura looks at Jenny's arm.

CLOSE UP ON JENNY'S FOREARM:

A bruise, similar to Laura's in the previous scene, can be seen on Jenny's forearm.

LAURA
That's a nasty bruise. How did you
get it?

FAVORING LAURA AND JENNY:

as they sit under the tree. Jenny quickly puts a sweater over on to cover it.

JENNY

Um, I don't know. I bruise easily.
I guess I just got it.

LAURA

Oh. Does it hurt?

JENNY

Nah, I'm just used to it.

LAURA

Oh. Well, um, I've got to get home.
Why don't you sit next to me tomorrow
in class?

JENNY

Um, why?

LAURA

I just...

JENNY

Just what?

LAURA

I see you sitting alone all the time.
I just figured that...

JENNY

You feel sorry for me?

LAURA

No. Everyone needs a friend to talk
to. I just...well, I guess I feel a
little sorry for you. But that's no
reason for us not to be friends, is
it?

JENNY

I guess not.

LAURA

So, will you sit next to me tomorrow?

JENNY

I, um, I mean, I guess so.

LAURA

Great. Get there early so that Rob Myers doesn't sit next to me. He smells funny.

JENNY

Like rotten eggs.

LAURA

You know Rob?

JENNY

I know his smell. It's kinda hard to miss.

Laura laughs out loud. Jenny smiles.

LAURA

Well, I've got to go. I'll see you tomorrow.

JENNY

Bye.

Laura exits the scene. Jenny starts to read her book and smiles widely.

CUT TO:

INT. LAURA'S HOME - DAY

Laura continues to stare at her bruise.

LAURA'S MOTHER (O.S.)

Laura! Let's go!

Laura stops staring at the bruise and looks out her bedroom door.

LAURA

Um, go ahead, Mom. I'm going to walk today.

CUT TO:

EXT. JENNY'S HOUSE - DAY

A FOR SALE sign stands in the yard. The grass stands high. The house itself appears deserted. Laura walks into the scene. Laura stops and faces the house..

CUT TO:

EXT. JENNY'S HOUSE - DAY

Laura, carrying a backpack and a sleeping bag, and Jenny stand outside the house. The FOR SALE sign is gone, and the lawn is neatly cut. A car sits in the driveway.

LAURA

So, this is your house.

JENNY

Yeah, I've never had anybody over before.

Laura and Jenny stand outside the house motionless for a few seconds.

LAURA

So, are we going in?

JENNY

Um...sure.

Laura and Jenny head over to front door. Jenny hesitates at the door. Jenny lets out a deep sigh.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM OF JENNY'S HOUSE - DAY

The living room contains a sofa, a television, a coffee table, a shelf with assorted knick knacks, and a recliner. FATHER, about 40, sits in the recliner. Father's eyes are wild, and his entire body shakes. Father talks into a cordless phone he is holding.

FATHER

(yelling)

Look! I need those goddamn...

CUT TO:

INT. FOYER OF JENNY'S HOUSE - DAY

The front door opens into the foyer and Laura and Jenny enter. Jenny shutters as she hears her father yelling.

FATHER (O.S.)

...pills right fucking now!

(beat; softly)

Just please...get home now!

Laura opens her eyes wide in stunned disbelief. Jenny starts to look nervous.

LAURA
(stunned)
Hey, look...why don't we just go to
your room? You can introduce us
later.

FATHER (O.S.)
Damn it!

As he slams the phone down.

LAURA
Or maybe not.

CUT TO:

INT. JENNY'S ROOM - DAY

Laura and Jenny enter the room. Laura sets her stuff down on the bed. Laura looks around at all the dolls. Jenny closes the door lightly behind them.

JENNY
I'm sorry about my father.

LAURA
He sounds mad.

JENNY
Well, he's strict, but he loves me.

LAURA
How strict is he?

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM OF JENNY'S HOUSE - DAY

Father stands in the middle of the living room holding a pack of cigarettes. Father breathes heavily. Jenny cowers in the corner of the sofa. Her eyes are filled with tears.

FATHER
There were ten cigarettes in this
pack this morning. Now, there are
only eight. So, tell me where the
Hell the other two went?!

JENNY
(sobbing)
I don't know.

FATHER
(enraged)
You know you smoked them!

JENNY
No, Daddy! I didn't!

FATHER
Don't you lie to me! We never
should've adopted you! Now I know
why your parents got rid of your
sorry ass!

JENNY
Daddy!

FATHER
Don't call me that!

Father reels his hand back as if to hit Jenny. Father pauses and then brings his hand close to Jenny's face. Father caresses Jenny's face with his hand.

FATHER
(continuing; eerily
calm)
Well, you know what we have to do.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP OF EMPTY CIGARETTE PACK:

The pack lays open on the floor. A veil of smoke surrounds the cigarette pack. Off-screen, we hear Jenny coughing.

FATHER
Stop coughing. A grown-up like you
should be able to handle it, huh?
Maybe, now, you won't steal Daddy's
cigarettes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JENNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jenny stares at the door. Laura moves over to Jenny and puts a hand on Jenny's shoulder. Jenny turns around startled. Laura stares into Jenny's eyes.

LAURA
Are you okay?

JENNY
(snapping out)
Strict.

LAURA
Jen?

JENNY
What? Oh, I'm sorry. I'm fine.

Jenny walks over to the window sill and sits down. Laura follows and sits down next to her. The pair are situated the same way as in the earlier scene (see page 1).

LAURA
So, you really like dolls, huh?

JENNY
Yeah, it's a hobby of mine.

LAURA
They're all so beautiful,
(indicating
disheveled doll)
except for this one.

Laura reaches for the disheveled doll. Jenny quickly grabs the doll before Laura reaches it.

JENNY
No! I, uh, this one is really old.
It's falling apart.
(beat)
I've had it since I was young, so
it's really raggedy, it's been
through a lot.

LAURA
Yeah, it looks that way.

Jenny places the disheveled doll next to her and picks up the doll that looks like Laura.

JENNY
Here. You can have this one.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM OF JENNY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Father stands near the recliner, still talking into the phone. Father's body shakes.

FATHER

Look, hon...I just need them soon.
I know you love me. Just sneak away
from the clinic for a few minutes.
I...I...please...I promise. See you
soon.

Father hangs up the phone.

FATHER

(continuing; yelling)
Jenny! Where are you?

CUT TO:

INT. JENNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Laura and Jenny sit on the sill.

JENNY

I've gotta go. I'll be...

LAURA

Maybe you shouldn't go.

JENNY

I have to.

Jenny stands up and exits the room. Jenny leaves the door open. Laura follows and stands near the doorway listening.

JENNY (O.S.)

What's wrong, Daddy?

FATHER (O.S.)

Goddamn it, Jenny! How dare you
bring someone into my house!

JENNY (O.S.)

I'm sorry, Daddy. I didn't know
that...

Laura shakes her head from side to side in disbelief.

A LOUD SLAP is heard (O.S.). Laura opens her mouth in surprise. Laura moves backward going toward the window sill, where the doll is.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM OF JENNY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jenny holds her face in pain. Father looms over her like a mighty giant.

FATHER

Do you want to back talk me again?

Father pulls back his hand to hit Jenny.

CUT TO:

INT. JENNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE UP ON LAURA'S HAND

as it accidentally hits the disheveled doll when Laura moved back in her seat on the sill. The doll falls off the window sill.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM OF JENNY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jenny falls down.

CUT TO:

INT. JENNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE UP ON DOLL

falling. The doll hits the ground.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM OF JENNY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jenny's head hits the edge of the coffee table. Blood appears where she hit her head. Jenny lays on the ground crying. A car door SLAMS outside. Father goes to window and looks out through the blinds.

FATHER

(whispers)

Finally!

Father looks back at Jenny.

FATHER

(continuing; loudly)

Get out of here!

Jenny picks herself up from the floor and leaves the living room.

CUT TO:

INT. JENNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jenny, with blood on her face and tears in her eyes, enters the room. Laura looks at her in disbelief.

LAURA
Are you all right?

JENNY
Fine.

LAURA
Jenny, we've got to get you out of here.

JENNY
Huh?

LAURA
You need to escape from here!

JENNY
I'm fine.

LAURA
You can't stay here. I'll find someplace else for you to stay. You can stay with me. I'm sure my mom won't mind.

JENNY
Damn it! You don't have to keep feeling sorry for me! I'm fine!

LAURA
No, you're not. Go look in a mirror.

JENNY
Fuck you!
(beat)

Laura is stunned.

LAURA
What?

JENNY
(regaining composure)
I'm sorry. I didn't mean it. I...do
I really look that bad?

LAURA
Jenny, listen to me. You need to get
out of here before he kills you.

JENNY
But he's my father, he wouldn't do
that...he loves me.

Jenny stares at Laura for a moment. Jenny looks at the door.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM OF JENNY'S HOUSE - DAY

Scene of Father holding a pack of cigarettes, dropping it on
the floor, and crushing it with his foot.

CUT TO:

INT. JENNY'S ROOM - DAY

Jenny sits on the bed holding the disheveled doll. Father
sits on the window sill holding a male doll.

FATHER
So, you think this one looks like me?

JENNY
Yes. He's my favorite.

FATHER
(examining doll)
Well, I guess I can see. He does
have my rugged good looks.

Father smiles at Jenny. Jenny returns the smile.

FATHER
(continuing)
Well, my beautiful doll, you need to
get some sleep. You've got school
tomorrow.

JENNY
Okay, Daddy.

Father stands up, leans over and kisses Jenny on the forehead.

FATHER
Good night, beautiful.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM OF JENNY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Scene of Jenny's head hitting the coffee table.

CUT TO:

INT. JENNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jenny stares at the door as Laura stands right behind Jenny.

LAURA
Please, Jenny, you need to get out.

Jenny turns to face Laura.

JENNY
I...you're right. I can't take much
more of it.

LAURA
Good. Let's get out of here.

JENNY
Okay, let me go get something first.

Jenny leaves the room. Laura starts to pack her stuff.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM OF JENNY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Father rests on the couch. An empty pill bottle lies next to Father on the coffee table. The MOTHER, GINA, is behind him giving him a shoulder massage. She wears nurse's scrubs.

FATHER
Thanks, honey.

MOTHER (V.O.)
No problem.

Jenny enters the room. Mother sees Jenny and jumps off the couch to meet her daughter, the mother then notices the blood.

MOTHER
Oh, honey! What happened to your
head?

JENNY
I...I fell on the coffee table.

MOTHER
(to Father)
Frank, why didn't you get her some peroxide?

JENNY
He didn't know about it.

MOTHER
All right. I'll get you some.

Mother leaves the room. Jenny goes over to Father. Father holds his head down.

FATHER
Jenny, sometimes your father does things he's not proud of.

Jenny begins to comfort him.

JENNY
It's okay, Daddy.

FATHER
(beginning to cry)
I...I...I...I don't realize it most of the time. Come here.

Jenny moves over to Father. Father scoops Jenny up into his arms.

FATHER
(continuing)
Honey, I'm sorry.

JENNY
It was my fault.

FATHER
No, don't say that. Don't you ever say that. It's not your fault. You're my perfect little doll. Okay?

JENNY
Okay.

Mother enters the room. Mother holds a peroxide bottle and gauze in her hand.

MOTHER

Now, let me see that wound.

Father looks at Gina dressing Jenny's wound. He looks miserable, like a spoiled boy.

CUT TO:

INT. JENNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Laura stands near the window with her sleeping bag and backpack. Jenny enters the room with a bandage on her wound.

LAURA

I've packed some of your stuff. It's on the bed.

JENNY

You did?

LAURA

Ready?

JENNY

Sure.

Laura pulls up the blinds and opens the window.

JENNY

(continuing)

Why are we going through the window?

LAURA

So we don't get caught.

Laura moves through the window with her stuff. Jenny picks up her stuff from the bed and heads to the window. Jenny stops at the window and looks down.

P.O.V. - JENNY

Jenny sees her disheveled doll on the floor. The doll stares up at Jenny.

FAVORING LAURA

Laura stands outside the window.

LAURA

Come on.

FAVORING LAURA AND JENNY

Jenny puts her stuff down. Jenny bends down and picks up the doll. Jenny sets the doll on the sill. Jenny moves over to the male doll and picks it up. Jenny sets the male doll next to her disheveled doll.

JENNY

You know what, Laura...I know what's best for me.

(beat)

I don't need you to feel sorry for me.

CUT TO:

EXT. JENNY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Laura stands outside the window. Jenny begins to close the window.

LAURA

Wait, Jen! What are you doing?

Jenny completely closes the window.

CUT TO:

EXT. JENNY'S HOUSE - DAY

Laura, in present time, stands outside the house. Laura is looking down at the ground then looks up at the window.

CUT TO:

EXT. JENNY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jenny stands inside the window looking through the blinds. The silhouette of Father appears behind Jenny. Father places his hand on Jenny's shoulder. Jenny closes the blinds.

CUT TO:

EXT. JENNY'S HOUSE - DAY

CLOSE-UP of Laura's face as tears come out of her eyes.

FADE OUT