

## Desolation and a Dollhouse

CHARACTER NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
Ray	Warm and loving, but grief makes him hostile	50s	Male
Sadie	Thoughtful, loving, yet guarded	30s	Female

## ACT 1

### SCENE 1

Day -- a modest but charming kitchen in Ray's house in the suburbs of Chicago. RAY enters from the garage, carrying a stunning, yet dusty, antique dollhouse. He sets it on the kitchen table beside a small box of supplies. He sits down and stares at it numbly.

SADIE enters from the open backdoor. She leans in tentatively.

SADIE

Hi.

Ray is taken aback by the sight of her. He is hostile, yet intrigued to see her.

RAY

Hi.

SADIE

May I come in?

RAY

You don't have to ask.

Sadie walks in. She regards him cautiously.

RAY

How's your mother?

SADIE

She's good. She's into knitting now.

Ray nods. He looks her over.

RAY

You look nice.

SADIE

Thanks.

RAY

Different. But nice. Did you...um...

SADIE

Gain weight?

RAY

No! No, no, no...

SADIE

Well, I have.

RAY

Well, I didn't notice it.

Sadie smiles wryly, letting him off the hook.

SADIE

How are you holding up?

RAY

I'm alright. The house is quiet now. It's strange.

SADIE

Dad, I'm so sorry I missed the funerals.

Ray shrugs.

RAY

It's not like it would have changed anything.

SADIE

I can't believe they passed within two days of each other.

RAY

Well, it's actually somewhat common for family members sharing illness to pass close together.

SADIE

If you don't mind me asking, did they pass from the pneumonia, or Huntington's Disease?

RAY

Pneumonia as the primary cause, Huntington's as the secondary. Their respiratory systems were compromised otherwise they likely would have recovered.

Sadie nods. She looks at the dollhouse in amazement.

SADIE

Oh! Ella's dollhouse! Dad, it's beautiful. It's a lot like the one I had.

RAY

Very similar. Yours was a Queen Anne, this one is Folk Victorian.

Sadie takes the seat across from Ray.

SADIE

Did Ella get to help you work on it, like we did?

RAY

No. We had just started on the staining when I noticed she couldn't hold the brush between her thumb and index finger. That was the first indication. Once that disease makes its presence known, it doesn't let up. So I'd work on it while she just watched. And all she wanted to know was how her dollhouse compared to the one I restored with her big sister. "What was Sadie's dollhouse like? Did Sadie's dollhouse have a chimney? What color did Sadie pick for her front door? Daddy, could you ask Sadie if she could come and help us?"

Sadie's face clouds over. She works hard to hold back her tears.

Ray hangs his head, ashamed.

RAY

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to upset you. (*thinks*) Well, I suppose I did. But I'm sorry.

SADIE

I never knew she was asking for me. She was so little the last time I saw her I didn't think she'd remember me. I would have come!

RAY

How could I have told you? You never answered any of my calls, so I gave up.

SADIE

Why was it always up to you when we talked? You never answered any of my calls, either!

RAY

I did anytime I could. But it was two full-time jobs taking care of Rebecca and Ella! Besides, it's not like you needed an invitation to come over.

Sadie doesn't respond. She is focused on the dollhouse.

SADIE

The floor in the dining room is cracked.

RAY

I know. I've got all the supplies to repair it right here. I decided better late than never.

SADIE

I think Ella would appreciate that.

Ray nods. They are quiet for a moment.

RAY

You know, I never would have asked you to help take care of them, if that's what you were afraid of. I just would have liked to, you know, seen you? Know what's going on in your life. Rebecca and Ella would have liked it, too.

SADIE

I know. I wanted to see all of you. I missed you all.

Ray picks up a chisel and begins to pry up the floor in the dollhouse's dining room.

SADIE

Dad, Rebecca didn't want me around.

RAY

That's bullshit. She loved you like you were her own.

Ray grunts. The floor's not budging.

SADIE

Let me try. I've got a better angle.

Sadie takes over and begins to pry.

SADIE

I know she loved me. But she didn't want me around.

RAY

Just what makes you think that?

SADIE

Do you remember when Ella was three, and Rebecca had just gone to the wheelchair full-time? I used to come over every day to play with Ella.

RAY

Yeah, she loved it. That meant the world to her.

Sadie fights back tears as she struggles with the floor.

RAY

Don't force it -- coax it.

SADIE

It did to me, too. Rebecca couldn't keep up with her anymore. I thought I was helping.

RAY

You were. Rebecca and I were very grateful--

SADIE

Rebecca told me to stop!

The floor finally pops out. Sadie exhales shakily as she slides it out. Ray stares, stunned.

RAY

What?

SADIE

Rebecca told me to stop coming over.

RAY

No, I don't believe that.

SADIE

She said she needed time to bond with Ella the best way she could. Reading to her, watching TV together. But when I was around, Ella only wanted to be with me. See, I could take her to the park, run around with her, play hide-and-seek. What three-year-old wouldn't prefer that?

RAY

Why didn't you tell me?

SADIE

I was afraid you'd be angry. Because *I* was angry. And hurt, and embarrassed. But I understand now. I was coming between her and her daughter. I just didn't realize.

RAY

You weren't coming between her and Ella.

SADIE

Rebecca thought I was. And if I were in her place, I'd probably feel the same way. *(beat)* Do you have another one ready?

RAY

What?!

SADIE

The floor.

RAY

Oh. Yes.



Ray reaches into the box and pulls out a small piece of wood.

SADIE

That's beautiful.

RAY

It's real Mahogany.

He takes out a bottle of wood glue and begins to apply it to the underside of the floor.

SADIE

Not too much. Remember what happened to mine?

RAY

Yes, I remember. (*beat*) I really wish you'd told me about this. I'd have talked to Rebecca, and we could have worked this whole thing out. I know we could have.

SADIE

I thought I was doing the right thing. I wanted you and your new family to have all the time you could--

RAY

Don't say my "new family", or my "second family". I hate those terms. We're all just *family*.

Ray tries to slide the new floor into the dollhouse.

RAY

Damnit! It doesn't fit! I don't understand. I measured it precisely!

SADIE

How long ago did you cut that?

RAY

Six years.

Sadie smiles knowingly. Ray gets it.

RAY

The dollhouse sat in the garage all that time. The weather must have warped it. Dammit!

He throws the floor down. Puts his head  
into his hands.

SADIE

We can fix it.

She reaches into the box and pulls out a  
paper towel, begins to clean the floor.

Ray keeps his head down, sobbing softly.

SADIE

You did everything you could for them. They were lucky to have you. (*beat*) Do you  
have any sandpaper?

Ray lifts his head and digs in the box. Pulls  
out a piece and hands it to Sadie. She begins  
to sand the floor.

RAY

I'm sorry you got pushed aside. I wish I could go back and do things differently.

SADIE

I wish I could, too.

RAY

Make sure you sand all the edges...

SADIE

I know...

RAY

Sadie...can you tell me why you didn't make the funerals?

SADIE

I was going to. I was dressed and ready to walk out the door with Patrick...

RAY

Patrick?

SADIE

We've been together two years now. We were about to walk out the door when...somebody suddenly decided to make their arrival...two weeks early.

Ray takes this in, astonished.

RAY

Sadie, are you telling me that you had...you got...you gave...

SADIE

I'm telling you that you have a granddaughter. Her name is Rose.

Ray is overwhelmed with emotion, both joy and sorrow.

RAY

Why didn't you tell me this before?

SADIE

You had so much on your plate .

RAY

You think I wouldn't have made time for the birth of my first grandchild?

Sadie sighs. She continues to sand.

RAY

I can't believe I missed that moment of your life. And of her life.

Sadie finishes sanding. She lays the floor upside down and waits for him.

Ray pulls himself together and begins to reapply the glue.

SADIE

There's still a lot of time and a lot of moments left.

Ray takes this in. He smiles.

RAY

A granddaughter. I have a granddaughter. I'm a grandfather! You're a mother!

SADIE

You got it all straight!

She carefully picks up the floor.

SADIE

And so did I! Look at those edges!

RAY

You've always been good at that.

Sadie lines up the floor with the room. Ray helps her. Together, they slide the floor inside. It goes in smoothly. They smile at each other proudly.

SADIE

This is going to look amazing.

RAY

There's still a lot of work to be done, though.

He takes a mallet out of the box and begins to carefully tap the floor in place.

SADIE

Well...Patrick and I don't have any plans for tomorrow. Maybe we could come by with Rose? You can meet her, and Patrick, and while she naps, you and I can do something about this atrocity of a bathroom.

Ray laughs.

RAY

Atrocity is right! (*beat*) That sounds wonderful, Kiddo. I can't wait.

Sadie smiles. Ray finishes tapping the floor in place. He and Sadie look over their work, proud and satisfied.

RAY

It looks better already.

SADIE

I agree. I think we're off to a good start.

Ray reaches across the table and takes her hand.

RAY

I think so, too.

They smile warmly at each other.

END OF PLAY