

Teeny-Tiny Teeth

written by

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FADE IN:

INT. 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.

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. A wolfish smile spreads over his lips once they're gone.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Adam's car moves faster than any other.

INT. CAR - DAY

Adam drives and chats on his phone.

ADAM

It's done. They left. I'm comin' to see you.

Listens.

ADAM

Put on the earrings I got 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 'cause of you.

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

ADAM

You know what, Winnie? I don't care. Cry away.

He sneers.

ADAM

She'll forget all about me, and she'll forget all about you.

Static from the doll's voice box.

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

WINNIE

Time for you to die.

Adam's eyes widen with surprise.

WINNIE

To die.

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

He watches Winnie skip across the pavement and plop in a mud puddle.

Adam grunts with satisfaction and speeds off.

EXT. SIDE OF THE ROAD - 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.

ADAM

More for me.

She pulls away.

PARIS

So when I get back...

ADAM

Cancel your hair appointment. Stay here with me.

PARIS

Can't cancel. They hold grudges for that. 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 don't love you.

Adam shouts, knocks over his beer.

WINNIE (V.O.)

Bad 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 - DAY

Woozy from the bite, clutching his 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.

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: