

The Tea Party

Annie hoped her friend Debbie would come play today. She despised being stuck in this dark place since the attack. *It will give me an excuse to get out of here –if Debbie hasn't forgotten about me. It's been forever since I've seen her.* The reflection in the mirror didn't look like the girl she was familiar with. Her once-usual grin was now lopsided, and her arm hung funny. Her face felt stiff and glued-on.

The lock released as the doorknob turned. Light streamed into the darkened room. *Debbie came!*

“Annie! You in here?” Debbie searched the room. “There you are! Hiding again, are you? Come on! We're going to have a tea party today. Let's see, where should we go?” Debbie squinted through the window. “I know! The garden's a perfect spot for tea with friends!”

Goodie! Annie's mind tumbled with thoughts as they went outside. *I'm so glad she's still my friend. It's been so long since we've played together.*

Debbie bubbled over with excitement. “Some other friends are coming, too. It's going to be such fun!”

Oh-oh. Debbie doesn't care if my mouth and eye are lopsided, but what about the others?

“Teddy's coming, and... Debbie paused and gave Annie a big grin, “you know Andy.”

Annie grimaced. *Oh, yeah. Andy. People thought we were a couple a long time ago. 'Made for each other,' some said. That was, until the Jack attack. That's what Debbie called it. That turned everything topsy-turvy. My face was so cut up, I almost lost an eye. Thank goodness for the doctor who patched me up. My eye may be a little crooked and my mouth lopsided now, but at least I'm alive. Andy nearly had the stuffing taken out of him, but he survived with no problem. He won't even look at me now.*

“Here they come!” Debbie jumped up and down. “Andy, you sit by Annie. You remember her, don't you?” She rubbed Teddy's arm as she sat close beside him. “Teddy, you look very handsome day.”

Annie tried to roll her eyes, but they wouldn't work. Watching Debbie make soft sounds in Teddy's ear made her sick. Andy just sat there with a stupid grin on his face. Then Jack showed up. Annie cringed in fear and hoped he wouldn't start something again, but he ignored her and headed straight toward Debbie. The look in his eye showed he didn't approve of Debbie's affair with Teddy.

“Jack! You came too!” Debbie squealed. She jumped up and threw her arms around his neck. Jack shrugged it off and glared at Teddy.

Annie sat stiff, staring straight ahead, afraid to move a muscle. That look in Jack's eyes was the same when he attacked her. She gasped as Jack grabbed Teddy's arm and yanked him to the ground.

"Jack! Stop!" Debbie yelled. "What's the matter with you?"

Jack paid no attention. He pounced upon Teddy and they rolled on the ground. *Leave my Debbie alone!* He snarled, showing his teeth.

"Stop! Stop!" Debbie ran toward them.

Jack broke into a run, pulling Teddy by the arm behind him.

"MOM!" Debbie screamed as she chased after Jack and Teddy.

Mother came running in alarm. "What's wrong?"

"It's Jack! Stop him. He attacked Teddy this time."

Mother stood her ground as Jack approached. Putting her arms out wide, she whisked him up as he ran past.

Bawling, Debbie caught up from behind. "Jack! You KNOW better," Mother scolded. She put Jack down and stroked his golden fur. "Now drop him, Jack. Let go of Teddy."

Jack wagged his tail at the gentle scolding and dropped the fuzzy brown bear to the ground.

"Oh, Teddy," Debbie wailed, "Jack hurt you." She lifted the bear from the ground by his almost-detached soggy arm.

"Take Teddy to your special hospital. He may need Dr. Mom's love and glue gun."

Hugging her beloved bear, Debbie stroked his wet arm. "Poor Teddy." She kissed him tenderly on the forehead. "We'll get you fixed up, just like Annie."

"I'll bring your other friends to your room, honey. You put Teddy to bed."

"Okay, Mama. Bad dog, Jack," she frowned at the cocker spaniel, still wagging his tail.

Where does that five-year-old get her imagination? Mother walked to the garden to get Raggedy Ann and Andy who sat dutifully in their seats at the play table. They stared at each other with blank eyes still guarding the little tea cups filled with water.