Plastic Dolls

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Abstract

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‘Damn it, Bill, what did you do that for?’” ‘Ah, hell, she’s got nice tits.’ I bit back the words...
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by Mary Martin
Political Science, Jr.

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"That will be $1.60, please."
"Keep the change."
"Damn it, Bill, what did you do that for?"
"Ah, hell, she's got nice tits."

I bit back the words. Shut up, I told myself, Shut up! They'll only laugh. Men are so god damn stupid that they'll never understand. Don't say anything. You know what happens when you do. They always act like you've just kicked them in the balls. Maybe that's where their head is.

I hated him. I hated him and all the women who accepted what he stood for. It didn't happen overnight, this hatred. It was an accumulated realization that somehow women were destined to be screwed.

I could remember when I was small, we went to Grandma and Grandpa's for Christmas. The boys received trucks and games, but when I opened my box, a replica of a dead baby stared me in the face. Blue glass eyes and blonde and sausage curls topped her stiff, plastic body. She was meant to look at not to love.

Well, I accepted the doll and a lot of the plastic attitudes that went along with her. I liked boys just as much as any other girl, and I did the things which I thought I had to do in order to be accepted by them.

The terms of acceptance were determined by environment—an environment consisting of slam books, junior varsity games, and student council dances.
"Wanna dance?"

I was petrified. The very thing I'd been hoping for all night had happened—I'd been asked to dance. Just the thought of it could send me to the girl's room—that's
where I spent a lot of my time at these dances.

"Oh, boy, I'm going to die. Everybody will be watching, and I'll just die."

We placed two sweaty palms carefully together. His fingers clutched my side, and I sucked in my gut. Then the music started, and we steered each other stiffly across the gym floor.

"Good record."

"Yeah, the Student Council did a good job this year."

I stared hard over his shoulder and pasted on a smile. I tried hard to have a good time. I'd heard guys talk about getting stuck with a dud. I hoped that this guy didn't think I was a dud.

Mom had made me a new dress for this dance—a pretty dark green one that made my hair look blonde. That was good, boys liked blonde hair.

I stepped on his toe, and sweat trickled down my side.

"It will be all right. Oh, God, make it be right."

The music stopped, and I headed toward the bathroom to brush my hair. I'd be back for the next number—to stand in the corner, to be looked over, and maybe to be asked to dance again.

I never thought of looking them over or maybe asking one of them to dance. I never thought then....

Leaning up against the bar, I surveyed the men sitting around the table. They were what I was supposed to center my life around? Everything I'd ever done was centered around a man; I couldn't see him, but, just the same, he was always there. The courses I had taken, the magazines I had read, the attitude I had taken had all been to please, tease, and trap him.

"Hey, honey, bring us another pitcher."

I took it over to their table and set it down. He pressed $2.00 into my hand.

"Keep the change, honey."

"Stick it up your ass," I said.