

Daddy Doll Under the Bed

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When I was a little kid, a father was like the light in the refrigerator. Every house had one, but no one really knew what either of them did once the door was shut. **D**

My dad left the house every morning and always seemed glad to see everyone at night.

He opened the jar of pickles when no one else could.

He was the only one in the house who wasn't afraid to go in the basement by himself.

He cut himself shaving, but no one kissed it or got excited about it. It was understood whenever it rained, he got the car and brought it around to the door. When anyone was sick, he went out to get the prescription filled.

He kept busy enough. He set mousetraps. He cut back the roses so the thorns wouldn't clip you when you came to the front door. He oiled my skates, and they went faster. When I got my bike, he ran alongside me for at least a thousand miles until I got the hang of it.

He signed all my report cards. He put me to bed early. He took a lot of pictures but was never in them. He tightened up Mother's sagging clothesline every week or so.

I was afraid of everyone else's father, but not my own. Once I made him tea. It was only sugar water, but he sat on a small chair and said it was delicious. He looked very uncomfortable.

Once I went fishing with him in a rowboat. I threw huge rocks in the water, and he threatened to throw me overboard. I wasn't sure he wouldn't, so I looked him in the eye. I finally decided he was bluffing and threw in one more. He was a bad poker player.

Whenever I played house, the mother doll had a lot to do. I never knew what to do with the daddy doll, so I had him say "I'm going off to work now" and threw him under the bed.

When I was nine years old, my father didn't get up one morning and go to work. He went to the hospital and died the next day.

There were a lot of people in the house who brought all kinds of good food and cakes. We never had so much company before.

I went to my room and felt under the bed for the father doll. When I found him, I dusted him off and put him on my bed.

He never did anything. I didn't know his leaving would hurt so much.

I still don't know why. **E**