

*This one is for all you ancient history buffs! This is the first story I ever completed. I wrote it when I was 12 years old, then revised it when I was 14 and I haven't touched it since. Which is why things like copying keys from paper tracings are in it. LOL! Despite its obvious flaws, I think it has survived the years quite well. Of course I'm biased, so tell me what you think.*

Dexter, March 3, 2001.

Melony wasn't supposed to go into Todd's room. In fact, the whole third floor was prohibited to her. Melony's room was on the first floor of her eighteen room house, and was the only bedroom on the first floor. The second floor contained her parents' separate rooms, a den with connecting library, and her mother's sewing room. The third floor was an attic converted into three rooms. The stairs led to a storage room that took up the central third of the attic space. To the left of the stairs, toward the

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Melony/Dexter Goad/2.

front of the house, was Todd's room. To the right of the stairs, in the direction of their sprawling backyard, was Amy's room.

Melony wasn't allowed to go up onto the third floor because, "there isn't any reason for you to be up there." Both of her parents had said that at one time or another. There were mousetraps and rat-poisoned bait scattered throughout the central storage area, so the attic was definitely not a playground.

But these edicts had been handed down when Melony was still a kid, around nine or ten, after she was caught playing around in the storage section. Now Melony was fourteen, practically fifteen already, which was almost an adult; so childish restrictions shouldn't apply to her anymore. After all, Todd was only 20, and Amy had just celebrated her 17th birthday, so what was the big deal?

With such rationalizations spinning around in her head, Melony skipped upstairs and checked her mom's room. Although she pressed her ear to the door, all she could hear was her mother's regular breathing as she slept. Her father was at his second shift job and wouldn't be home 'til nearly one o'clock, five hours hence. Melony knew that her mother would sleep for another two or three hours at least, it was a nightly routine. Around eleven p.m. Martha Scott would rise up like a sudden storm and wonder aloud why Melony wasn't in bed yet. Then the girl would hear her mother go off to the kitchen to prepare fried eggs and grilled cheese sandwiches in anticipation of her husband's arrival. After that the T.V. would be turned to a late night movie and by that time Melony, "had better be in bed asleep."

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Melony/Dexter Goad/3.

But right now Martha was the one slumbering, so Melony went to the narrow wooden stairs that led to the forbidden attic.

Todd was away at college, he'd left yesterday. Amy was on a date, a nearly everyday occurrence since Melony's sister had long blonde hair, large breasts, and was described by the boys at their high school as being very friendly. Amy would return home anywhere from ten o'clock, if the boy was "boring", to two-thirty in the morning, if the boy wasn't. The later the arrival, the more fun the boy was. Tonight Amy was seeing a boy for the third time, the first two times he had been one-thirty fun. Melony looked for more of the same tonight, giving her hours before her sister would arrive with pleasant greetings to her father and a knowing smile to her mother.

Melony knew because she often spied on her parents as they sat on the couch together watching T.V. When the door to her bedroom was cracked open an inch, Melony could see a one quarter profile of her parents, she could even see the T.V. if that interested her. She often waited up for Amy's return to gauge how the date had gone.

Even if the date tonight was a total flop, Amy wouldn't be home until at least ten because Melony's sister would at least enjoy the dinner and movie/dance club before demanding her immediate return to her house. Melony had yet to hear of the boy so boring Amy would cut short a movie or dance club visit. So she had at least two hours in every scenario.

The attic was cold and dark. Melony solved the second problem by hitting the light switch next to the stairs. For the cold,

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Melony/Dexter Goad/4.

she'd put on a sweater. She tiptoed to Todd's door, mindful of mice and spiders. Todd's door was locked, of course.

Last week, when Todd drove Melony to the local mall, he stopped at the Radio Shack to get some wires or something, and she waited in the car. While she waited she found his room key on the key ring in the ignition and quickly traced it's outline on a piece of paper. Later that day, after being dropped off at the mall, she had a key made to fit the outline. Now she produced the key from her sweater pocket and unlocked the door. Putting away the key, Melony swung the door open.

Todd's room was huge, being one third of the attic. It was thirty feet wide and twenty-two feet long. One side contained his bed, dressers, and the full bathroom. The other side held four floor to ceiling cabinets, a stereo with rudely large speakers, and a large desk. The walls were covered with posters of obscure heavy metal bands and even more obscure female actresses. The only one Melony recognized was Reese Witherspoon, the rest were too obscure. The floor was lovingly covered with red carpet so deep Melony felt like she was walking on a waterbed.

Melony turned on a lamp on the night stand next to the bed, then hurried back to the storage room to shut off that light. It wouldn't be good if her mother woke up and saw a light shining down the attic stairs. Back in Todd's room, Melony closed the door and pulled down the shades in the two windows.

Leaning against one of the shaded windows, she sighed, "so far, so good."

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Melony/Dexter Goad/5.

A T.V. and V.C.R. huddled together on Todd's desk. She inspected them forlornly before turning her attention to the business at hand. As she turned to go to the cabinets, a picture in a gold stand up frame sitting on the other end table caught her eye.

It was a group family photo. Her parents were in back, dressed in fine clothes bought especially for the occasion, her father had his silver bifocals perched cutely on his nose while her mother wore her graying hair tied back with a red ribbon. The three siblings were sitting in front of their standing parents. Todd was on the right side, wearing a neat looking safari uniform complete with sloping hat. Melony remembered that her brother had just returned from a six month trip in West Africa when this picture was taken. Todd had taken a year off after high school to travel and figure out what he wanted to do. He decided to follow his father's foot steps and become a doctor, so he started college a year later than most kids. Melony was between Todd and Amy, looking her best in a white silk gown, if she did say so herself. Her sister completed the picture, wearing a beautiful brown dress and holding a single black rose.

Giving the picture a wistful smile, Melony turned away and went to the first cabinet. Last year, shortly after Todd returned from his West Africa trip, he caught her looking through the storage room part of the attic.

"What are you doing?" He accused. "You aren't even supposed to be up here."

"I'm grown up now." Melony shot back. Todd and her had never gotten along very well.

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Melony/Dexter Goad/6.

"You weren't thinking about sneaking into my room, were you?"

Todd asked, inspecting his door.

"Who cares about your crummy room?" She spat, starting for the stairs.

"You do. You're a little sneak!" He noted. "Always snooping around. Opening mail, eavesdropping, spying, a guy can't have any privacy around you. Amy said she caught you in her room! I won't let you do that to me." Todd warned menacingly.

Melony smiled. "You're gone most of the time, how can you stop me?"

He brother's face drained of color. "If I come back and see that you've been in my room, I'll break your fucking arm. You hear me?"

Melony had been threatened before because of her snooping personality, so was unfazed with this latest threat. "Go ahead." She prompted wildly. "It doesn't take much for a man to hit a girl."

That seemed to take the wind out of his sails. He rubbed his eyes as he turned away. "I mean it, Melony. I'm tired of your snooping. I'm going to fix it so that if you ever break into my room, you'll be very sorry. Very sorry." With that he plodded into his room and shut the door. They never spoke about the subject again.

For a while, Melony left it alone. Todd took several trips and had been away to college for long periods of time during the intervening year, but she didn't bother his room.

Now that some time had passed, Melony started convincing herself that if she was careful enough Todd wouldn't notice her

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Melony/Dexter Goad/7.

entry when he returned. The first couple of times after their discussion that he returned from a long absence, Todd had probably inspected his room with a fine tooth comb. But repeated failure to find any evidence of an intruder had certainly made him careless by now. If Melony disturbed nothing Todd would never know she'd been in here. Even if she happened to leave a trace he noticed, what could he do?

With such arguments Melony finally convinced herself to follow through with her bold plan and to hell with Todd's threats. She would sneak into his room and snoop into every part of it, leaving nothing uninspected. A team of F.B.I. agents could not be as thorough as Melony planned to be. Even if it took her several different trips, she was going to snoop into everything, just to spite Todd.

"Screw him." She muttered, opening the first cabinet door. The truth of the matter was, Melony had never considered violating Todd's room until he brought it up and threatened her. After that, it was only a matter of time until she defied him. "Screw him." She said again, louder.

Cabinet number one held little of interest, but she searched it with patient expertise. Two shelves were covered with various rocks, a hobby of Todd's was collecting rocks. They were carefully arranged according to size and color. Melony had to resist the urge to sweep the entire collection onto the floor.

The bottom two shelves contained artifacts he'd brought back from his travels. Little African dolls with what looked like human hair on their tiny heads stood beside a set of African drums. African rattles were arranged behind sets of teeth and a bone

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Melony/Dexter Goad/8.

necklace. There were also knick knacks from other countries, a set of handmade wooden blocks from France, maybe; two intricate dog figurines from Germany that also had real fur attached to their bodies and tiny rubies for eyes. The only thing that caught Melony's eyes was a two foot tall incredibly ugly African doll.

His human hair was done in dreadlocks, his carved wooden face was creased and wrinkled as if he were very old. His prominent nose was crooked and pointy at the end. His eyes were polished, clear, rock and flashed evilly. His left hand clutched a rounded wooden mallet that, full sized, would have been a deadly weapon. The right hand was raised to shoulder level and his pointer finger was extended as if he was pointing at something. His mouth stretched in a menacing grin.

A chill washed through Melony. "What a horrible doll," she thought to herself, closing the cabinet door quickly. She'd known that Todd was weird, but couldn't imagine what madness had prompted him to buy such an ugly, evil thing.

It didn't matter, she had some serious snooping to do. Cabinet number two held Todd's old textbooks, paperwork, dictionaries, etc. The bottom two shelves contained his personal library. Careful inspection revealed Todd's tastes to be mostly fantasy and horror. He had over a dozen non-fiction books on magic, voodoo, and the supernatural. One, called 'The Secrets of African Black Magic' made Melony shiver again.

She stood and examined the top shelf, which was crowded with magazines. Over half of them were naked girlie magazines, making Melony's stomach roll over. Suddenly, she wasn't feeling so well. She felt a headache coming on. Her worst headaches always started

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Melony/Dexter Goad/9.

as a sharp pain in her left eye, a pain that sometimes got so bad she seriously considered ripping her eye out, anything to stop the pain. She could feel that pain starting to creep into her left eye now.

Melony flipped through one of the nudie magazines, gasping when she first saw one of the models completely nude. She hadn't realized that they actually took all of their clothes off. She'd thought that they just exposed their breasts or wore flimsy nightgowns or something.

Quickly returning the aberration to it's shelf, Melony closed the cabinet doors. She would inspect everything more thoroughly later, this was just a feeling out tour she was conducting.

Cabinet number three contained Todd's CD and video tape collection. He had well over a hundred CD's, and only a few less video tapes. The compact disks were arranged by groups and artists, most of whom were unfamiliar to Melony. The only ones she'd heard of were Led Zeppelin and Bruce Springsteen. Of the rest, nothing interested her except for a group called the Purple Dogs, that was a name cute enough to make her smile.

The grin didn't last as the pain in her left eye intensified. Her head was starting to ache in time with her beating heart, as if her entire skull were a rotting tooth that was begging to be pulled.

As she rubbed her forehead in a futile attempt to relieve the pain, Melony noticed that the door to the first cabinet had swung back open. Biting her lip she went to it and closed it tightly. Patting the door, she returned to the third cabinet and inspected the video library. There were hit movies by the dozen,

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Melony/Dexter Goad/10.

all arranged according to subject matter, plus dozens more movies that Melony had never heard of. It was beginning to irritate her that Todd had so many things, posters, books, songs, movies, that she'd never heard of before.

On the bottom most shelf were Todd's home videos, shot by the camera he had gotten for Christmas a couple of years before. Each one was labeled with white paper on the sides, written on in Todd's careful script, XMAS '93, Summer Party '93, Birthday '93, Scenes from the Southside, Summer Party '94, etc. One tape, labeled Melony S., got her attention. "What tape could he have of me?" She asked out loud.

She had to see it, of course. Melony glanced toward the VCR, and noticed that the door to the first cabinet had swung open again. "What the hell?" She asked herself, going over to the offending door. She glanced in, eyes searching automatically for the ugly African doll. It stood as before, right hand pointing out as if accusingly, she noticed for the first time that it wore a tiny necklace of bone and teeth. In the poor lighting of the inside of the cabinet, the teeth and bones looked as if they were stained with old blood. Her headache seemed to worsen as she suppressed another shiver. "Screw that doll", She told herself and closed the door tightly.

Melony returned to the tape library, found the video tape labeled Melony S., and pulled it out, leaving a gap that reminded her of a missing tooth. Her stomach rolled again at the thought, so she banished it. She spent a minute carefully inspecting the rest of the home made tapes, in case any more bore her name.

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Melony/Dexter Goad/11.

Satisfied that there were none, she turned to the desk with it's T.V. and V.C.R.

The first cabinet door was open again.

Biting her lip harder, Melony stood frozen as she tried to decide what to do. There was a growing urgency to run away. Away from this room with it's dumb rocks, stupid foreign dolls, and loose cabinet doors. Her headache was killing her, and her stomach was trying to crawl up her throat to her mouth, inch by inch.

Coming to a decision, Melony grabbed a heavy hard bound book from the second cabinet, glanced in the first cabinet to make sure the African doll remained inside, then closed the door tightly. She propped the book on the floor leaning against the cabinet door. "There." She said in a satisfied tone. "Roll open again."

It was a humorless challenge, and Melony went to the VCR without further delay. Turning on the television, she changed the channel to the one the V.C.R. was set for and took the tape bearing her name out of it's case.

Plugging it in, Melony hit rewind to make sure it was at the beginning. A heavy thud behind her sent a chill through her heart. Wheeling, she discovered that the hard back book she leaned against the door of the first cabinet had fallen to the floor and the door was open again.

"What the hell is going on?" Melony cursed under her breath. Screw it, she decided. If the door wanted to stay open that bad, it could stay open. What difference did it make? It wasn't like the ugly doll could get up and walk out of the cabinet if she left the door open, was it? That big bad thing couldn't hurt her.

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Melony/Dexter Goad/12.

Purposely turning her back to the open cabinet door, Melony turned the video tape machine on and pressed play.

The screen was blank for a second, then a picture of Todd sitting on the bed in this very room appeared. He wore a pair of jeans and a blue long sleeved shirt was buttoned up only half way. Judging from his clothes and his severe crewcut, this was filmed the same day he accused her of plotting to break into his room.

"Hi Melony!" He said cheerfully after a moment's pause. "Since you are watching this tape, that means you have not heeded my warning and have broken into my room. I put your name on this tape in big letters so you would find it irresistible and would just have to play it."

He sobered somewhat. "Actually, I'm sorry it has come to this. But I can't help it. If you are watching this tape, that shows that you have no respect for anyone. I can't tolerate that anymore. You most likely have waited awhile since our discussion, six months, a year, maybe even two years. You waited until you thought I had forgotten. Thinking that after a few trips I would become lax and wouldn't check my room for signs of your entry.

"I don't have to check." Todd stated simply. "One glance at you and I'll know that you haven't been in my room. But one time, one time I'll come back and you will be gone. Then I will know that you ignored my warning and violated my sanctum."

He stood up from his bed, face turning ugly. "You have to be punished, Melony. You have sneaked and snooped for the last time, I will punish you now. In the name of Abul Adnobie Corcine, I curse you from the depths of my heart to the blackness of yours."

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Melony/Dexter Goad/13.

Despite her crushing headache and rolling stomach, Melony smiled. African Voodoo or black magic didn't scare her. A year old message from her brother didn't scare her.

Todd spoke again, standing right in front of the camera. "I am sorry, Melony. But you have to be punished."

Melony shivered involuntarily as she heard a rustle behind her. What could be rustling behind her? Nothing. She was alone in this room, the door was closed. No one else was in the house except her mother, who slept like a log. As she thought that, Melony suddenly realized that no one would hear her scream.

Todd was still standing close to the camera, seeming to gaze intently at her. There were more rustles behind her, it sounded like thousands of cock roaches rubbing together, and Melony couldn't stand it anymore. She turned in a flash, breathing freezing in her throat at what she saw.

The room was covered with hundreds of the two foot tall pointing African dolls. They stood tightly together all over the carpeted floor, covering every inch starting a foot from her. They swarmed the bed, the dressers, end tables, they even covered the top of the cabinets. Each of them pointed an accusing finger at her, each of them glared at her with glowing white eyes, the milky eyes of a maggot as it consumes rotting flesh. If maggots had eyes, they would look exactly like these doll eyes, Melony had time to think.

She couldn't move, breath, or talk. A voice whispered softly in her left ear, she could actually feel the air from the words brush against her ear. "It's over for you, bitch. You don't exist anymore. Look!"

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Melony/Dexter Goad/14.

Her eyes found the picture she'd studied a few minutes ago. The whole family posing together. But now something was wrong, terribly wrong. There were only four people in the picture now. Her parents standing up, Todd and Amy sitting down. All four smiling, happy. There was no sign of Melony, no sign that she'd ever been in the picture.

"No." She hissed. "That's impossible."

That broke her paralysis, she gave in to her primeval urge and ran pell mell for the door. Her panicked feet knocked aside or stepped on dozens of dolls along the way, the crunching sound as she crushed the dolls under her feet sounded like snapping bones.

As she grabbed the door handle, Melony glanced down, biting back a scream when she noticed that her sneakers and pant legs were covered in blood. Ripping open the door with a yelp of determination, Melony was brought to halt by the person standing on the other side.

It was a seven foot tall version of the ugly African doll, only it's skin looked human, and it's milky eyes were not stone. It's teeth and bone necklace was stained with old blood, as was the wooden mallet it clutched in a massive left hand. Dreadlocks the size of sausages fell to it's shoulders and squirmed slightly as if they were alive. It raised it's right hand and pointed a crooked, long nailed finger at her.

Throwing back it's head, it released a blood curdling laugh. Still chuckling it spoke in a liquid voice distorted by an accent she didn't recognize. "You can't leave. You wanted in here so bad, now you will stay in here. Forever." It declared.

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Melony/Dexter Goad/15.

Voices rose up behind her, tiny wooden voices, all chanting the same word. "Forever! Forever! Forever!"

Melony started screaming helplessly as the African demon advanced on her.

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"I've never seen your room." Trisha giggled as Todd unlocked his door. "A room tells a lot about a man."

"I've never brought you home with me from college before, either." He quipped.

The room, empty for two months, was covered with dust. Todd went to the windows, lifted up the shades, and opened both windows. His eyes narrowed when he saw the tape in the VCR. The machine and the T.V. were both turned on, but it looked like both had burned up from being left on for two months. He was lucky a fire hadn't started.

Trisha was attracted to the cabinet nearest the desk because the door was hanging halfway open. She stopped to pick up a heavy book that lay on the floor two feet from the open cabinet.

Before Todd could get to her, Trisha looked inside the first cabinet. "Uhg." She gasped. "Those are some ugly dolls. Why did you buy them?"

"I didn't." He said joining her. "They were gifts from a friend I made in West Africa."

Trisha knelt to inspect one doll more closely. It was a two foot tall, extremely ugly doll with fat dreadlocks. In its left hand it clutched a heavy wooden mallet. Its right hand, raised to shoulder level, gripped a severed female's head by its long blonde hair. The head was a white girl's, her mouth gaped open in

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Melony/Dexter Goad/16.

an eternal scream, her blue eyes bulged out in a look of fatal terror.

Trisha shrank back. "It looks so real, how horrible."

Todd hugged her. "Let's hope he never has to add to his collection." He said, glancing at her meaningfully.