Mechanics of Puppetry : No Strings Attached

by pushingsupergazette

Summary

dthis is a story about a puppet maker. This is a story about a puppet maker named Lee that has a lovely marionette doll which is you. You however, was not very happy about being a marionette. You wanted to break the barrier and be human because you loved Lee.

Notes

another story of Lee.
Lee (puppet maker) x you (marionette)

Wood.

That was what you were made of. Pieces of wood beautifully carved and pieced together, made to look like a being and he breathed life into you. He; your maker and your love.

People used to say when a person gives their whole self into making something, they’re giving it soul. It applied to you, a beautifully carven big marionette.

Lee Pace is the name of your maker. You remember the first time you saw him when he breathed life into you; the first thing you saw were his peachy pink lips slightly parted when he blew a soul into your wooden anatomy. His beautiful eyes that reflected the whole world within it, his pinkish cheeks that are of a baby’s. You fell in love with every single part of your maker. The touch of his warm skin against your wooden one.

He is famous for making little marionette dolls; unlike you. Someone did request him to make a doll your size but he refused. He wouldn't give a reason why either.
Now you were watching him playing with the dolls; moving them along with the movements of his fingers, making sure it would work for the customers. The strings were like a bond between a puppet master and a puppet itself. Honestly, you were quite envious. Lee never connected to strings to move you. Maybe you might be a big marionette but at least tie up some strings to your fingers and pull you like how he pulled the miniature dolls.

You never voiced out your wishes anyway, thinking that it wasn't necessary to be jealous. His long slender talented fingers carved the dolls magnificently; never any with the same face.

You always stayed up with him in his work room; attentively watching his hands worked their magic. The smell of wood and his sweat mixed together, the sound of the gust of air when he blew off the dust from the surface of the wood; that was your kind of comfort. Your light body leaned against his backside. His warmth became your shelter. Many things came to your mind and up to one point, you stopped yourself.

'Am I supposed to feel this?' you questioned yourself.

'Am I supposed to have humanly feelings?'

Am I supposed to 'this'? Am I supposed to 'that'? So many questions regarding your authority because truth is, you were just a doll.

Your wooden joints creaked slightly as you moved your hand closer to a part of your chest; the part where a living, beating heart is supposed to lie.

TOK! TOK! TOK!

The dreary sound of small timber in which you were made of. Nothing was inside of you. No organs, no blood gushing through the veins, no receptors for you to feel pain. If this were you; empty and filled with nothing, why were you contained with emotions? You kept on thinking, oblivious that you were still knocking on your chest with your fingers.

"y/n, what are you doing?" Lee's voice shook you back into reality.

"Huh? Nothing... Nothing at all" you replied.

Lee looked at the clock and sighed. He gave a gentle shake of his shoulder to indicate that his back was tired from your leaning. You got up and looked at his face that looked tired. You touched his face and told him to sleep. He stubbornly shook his head and said there’s a little bit more to finish.

“You should go to sleep” he said after a while. Both of you looked at one another for quite some time until you got up and left to bed which was in a room across from the work room. You left the door open so you could still watch Lee sitting at his work desk. The backside of him working; it made you exhausted just from looking.

You averted your gaze towards someplace else; towards the moon that was illuminating the night.

“I love him, I love him, I love him…” you repeatedly whispered, sounding like a chant. “So can I please be human? I want to have blood surging within me, a heart beating, and warmth of a human…” you uttered your wish. The wish you had since day one you existed with a soul.

After a few moments of nothingness; not that the moon could talk to you, you returned your gaze upon Lee and fell asleep.
Lee was not in the house in the morning. A doll was missing and you assumed that he went to deliver it to the customer. Someone knocked on the door a few times and you came to get it.

“Is Mr Pace here?” she asked with her head held up high. She had a sort of expensive look.

“This is his place but he is out for a while” she nodded at your statement and walked in without invitation, seated herself on a nearby chair.

She looked at you with a certain judgement held within her. “You are a doll yourself” she said after scanning you.

“Yes” you hardly replied; the answer choked within your throat but you had to reply. She gestured for you to come closer and touched your smooth wooden surface you have as skin.

“Such excellent workmanship. Just like a human…” she said, impressed.

Of course, your maker was Lee after all.

“Would you like a drink?” you asked after she was done looking at your arms.

“No, thank you”

There was an awkward silence looming over the both of you who were seating opposite one another. You were grateful that Lee came back soon.

“Hello” he gently greeted the woman.

“Oh, hello darling” she gave Lee a big hug. “I want you to make a doll for me”

“Sure”

“A marionette styled like Marie Antoinette for the doll play, please” Lee nodded, writing the details down for his next project. The woman smiled and wrapped Lee’s neck with her scarf and pulled his face closer to hers.

You had a tightening sensation in your chest upon watching the scenery before you.

The scarf reminded you of your jealousy towards the strings of the marionettes. The bonds of a puppet master and the puppet.

Why does Lee not want to wrap your fingers and his in connecting strings? You couldn’t find apprehension. Perhaps you were just a doll, which was why you had no understanding at all.

“YOU ARE JUST A WOODEN DOLL. NOTHING MORE” you let that fact sink in the depths of your mind.

y/n is just a wooden doll made by Lee.

After the woman left, you came up from his back and startled him.

“y/n, you surprised me. What is it?” he asked, his hand holding on his chest. He had a small smile playing upon his beautiful lips.
“Why you never played me?” you asked, picking up a ball of string nearby.

“What do you mean?” he blinked a few times, confused with your sudden questioning.

You wrapped a string at your index finger and held his hand to wrap the string on his finger as well.

“You know well what I meant. Why don’t you move me like the marionettes?” Lee stopped you before you could wrap his fingers with the string. He shook his head and held your face so you would not look away. His eyes are so beautiful and mesmerizing.

“You’re not a doll, that’s why” every time he said it, you were convinced that it was the truth, that you were a human. There were no hesitations.

“I am not—a doll…” you said while his hands traced your face. Both of you leaned in for a gentle kiss. You could feel his soft lips in contact with your solid ones.

Every day was normal. You wake up to Lee doing his work and go to sleep the same scene, seeing his backside at the work room. Customers weren’t many but they promise big money with his outstanding work.

“Do you want to go out and deliver the dolls with me?” he asked on a winter day. The snow was falling lightly. It wasn’t his first time asking but it was such a rare solicitation and you gladly accepted it.

Three dolls to deliver to one customer working in a doll theatre. Both of you, hand in hand walking on the snowy streets. His cheeks looked pinker due to the contrast of his pale skin caused by the cold. “What are we getting for dinner? Soup? Potatoes?” he said in a jolly tune and you shrugged.

“I don’t know, I don’t know…” he chuckled. Happily, both of you made your way to your destination.

The customer was an old man and listening by the way they conversed, you conclude that he is one of Lee’s frequent customers. You stood outside as Lee requested since he told you that it wasn’t going to be long, just dropping by to give him the dolls. You listened to the conversations from outside and leaned against the wall behind you. Lee was about to make his way out when a girl came from behind and pulled his arm and turned him around.

“You’re so cold” she said and touched Lee’s cheeks with her hands. You looked at your hands; the hands that contained no warmth, the hands that has no softness of a human.

You heard Lee laughed from inside of the house. “Yeah, I am cold. You’re getting prettier aren’t you, Annie? Your cheeks are so rosy. Did you put makeup on?” he teased. You looked at your reflection at the glass window. The same colour on your surface. Spring, summer, fall, winter; your colour never changed; always the same colour which Lee coated you with.

“Did your hair grow longer too?” you touched the synthetic wig which you called hair. It never grew even after two years since Lee breathed life into you. It was just the same length.

You heard more laughs from the inside of the house. Lee probably had forgotten that you came
along with him since he hardly brought you with him. You walked back heavy hearted and alone.

The first thing you came to when you reached home was the mirror. You sat in front of it, stared at it for as long as you could. Every single detail of yours was too perfect for a being. You were solidly built. Your hair doesn’t grow, you have no heart to do the beatings, and your skin doesn’t change colours. It was frustrating.

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Lee came back worried, thinking that you might’ve been lost and wandering around. You felt pitiful for his relief because what he had come back to wouldn’t be very welcoming. A ball of strings in your hands and you looked up at him. He sighed.

“How many times do I need to tell you, y/n?”

“Do you know what I see the strings as? Bonds, Lee. Bonds. I get infuriated and covetous whenever you play with the marionettes. Why won’t you do the same with me? I am a doll after all…” you said, coming closer to his tall stature and placed the ball of string into his hands. You leaned your head against his chest and you could hear his heart beating.

“You’re not a doll, y/n. You’re not…”

You pulled yourself away, shaking your head in disapproval to his statement. “No, no, no! No Lee!” you closed your ears and fell on your knees. Unknown liquid fell from your eyes, you just wondered why. You looked up at Lee; your vision blurred and you wanted to say something but you felt a choking sensation at your throat.

Little did you know how human you looked like in Lee’s eyes. Your tears, your face that was red from crying, your broken state; those made you look all humanly. Lee complied with you and came close. He took the strings and wrapped your fingers with his using them and smiled at you. Every single time, he was always able to take away all the painful feelings.

“What was reflected upon the mirror wasn’t the thing that you usually see. The red eyes, nose and cheeks; red from crying so hard. Your surface changed colour. You looked human.

“Isn’t that enough?” he asked in a small voice, leaning towards your neck and rested his head there. His big body enveloped your small one. Perhaps Lee was always right. Perhaps you were human after all.

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Doll or not doll, it no longer mattered. You have Lee and that was your priority. Does love has to be limited? Sleeping to him working on dolls, waking up the same and it no longer bothered you. What he showed you was real. Never mind the wood you were made of, doesn’t matter because Lee will always be by your side. The essential thing was that you had a soul, a soul part his.

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However, one fateful day came to grab everything away. There was a fire two buildings away but it grew bigger and the flames were taking over your place. It was strange during that wintry night it felt uncomfortably warm. Why were you feeling the heat anyway?
When you opened your eyes, the plaster walls were on fire and you ran out from the room to wake Lee who was deep in his sleep in the work room.

“Lee! Lee! Fire!” you shook him so hard and he was so confused.

“There’s fire!!!” you said and pulled him out from the room and rushed downstairs. Fire was everywhere. It was like hell. While you were running, you realized a pillar was unstable and pushed Lee to the front so he could make it. It was unfortunate that you didn’t when it landed on you. There was pain. Why were you in pain?

“y/n!” Lee tried to push the pillar away but he was just a human after all.

“Get out, Lee!” you screamed. His face was sweating and slightly dirty due to the ashes. He wouldn’t leave; your stubborn Lee.

“Leave, Lee. Leave me!”

“I won’t leave you!” he cried so hard.

“Why not, Lee? You can make another marionette. Just leave me behind!” you reached out to touch his face and when you realized it, your arms were bleeding. Blood. Blood was coming out from your body.

“Because I love you, y/n! I can’t do it without you!” he cried harder, pulling your hands.

“I can—I can’t play strings with you because I don’t want to control you. That’s not what I want to do with you. So please. We’ll get out from here together” he placed your hand on his face.

The sound of fire crackling, the temperature shooting higher every single minute. Lee has to leave.

“You’ll be alright—you’ll be alright. Leave, Lee” you said. You couldn’t imagine the pain he felt. The look in his face was more than words to explain the sorrow. When his heart finally was ready, he leaned towards you and for once, both of you kissed; human to human kiss. You could feel the warmth of his lips and he could feel the warmth of yours.

“You’ll do well without me” you cried and he left running out from the building.

You were then left alone, stuck under a wooden pillar. There were no more roofs covering the sky and you had a good view of the moon. The moon surrounded by raging fire.

“Just when I’m being human, you’re taking me away. What an unfair life” you chuckled as the fire burned your life away. The burning fire on a wintry night.

It didn’t take long for the firemen to put down the fire but it was too late to save your life. Lee was running towards the ruins of his house to find you when it was safe for searching. He knew the exact place you were laying and there you were, unaffected by the fire. You had passed because of the amount of smoke you were inhaling. Lee held you in his arms; no longer a doll but a human, no longer a surface but skin. He circled his thumb on your soft cheeks, feeling your tenderness. His other free hand touched your soft hair that was no longer plastic; they were hair. He had lost the person he loved the most.

What is the worth of a puppet maker without his puppet? Nothing.
What is the worth of Lee without you? Exactly nothing.

That was the end of the career of the puppet maker Lee. He went on with his life with another job, having completely nothing to do with puppets as it would remind him of you. However, every single thing about himself reminded him of you. His fingers for example; the ones that created your details. Part of his soul was lost because you took it along with you.

That was the story of the puppet maker and his only love, y/n.

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