

# Anastasia

Anastasia Hannigan, queen of the damned

The doll never really seemed problematic to me until a couple of weeks after I got her. My boyfriend knows that I love antiques, so for my birthday he gave me this big white box tied with a satin purple ribbon, and upon opening it I squealed with excitement. This doll was gazing up at me with a girlish grin. She had bright auburn hair that fell around her shoulders in tight ringlet curls. She had porcelain white skin, rosy cheeks, pure blue eyes, and long luxurious eyelashes. She was wearing a cute little blue checkered dress, tights, and the most adorable green shoes I've ever seen.



**HAUNTED**

There was a weird stain on her petticoat that I didn't immediately recognize, but it was an antique; imperfections are to be expected, having been owned before. As I gingerly lifted her from the box, I examined her more closely. The details on her fingers, and the freckles on her face were absolutely exquisite. Someone spent a very long time making sure this doll was as life-like as possible. I leaned her slowly backwards and her eyelids closed. "A.H" I muttered. The bottom of her shoes were initialed. Maybe that's who made the doll. It was obviously hand painted, and many hours were put into her perfection.

"It was actually really cheap. I thought it was a complete steal. They were basically anxious to sell the thing.

It was kind of weird." my boyfriend explained on the ride home. The doll sat snugly in my lap, eyes closed, and I was over the moon. I had a large collection of porcelain dolls at the time, but this one was by far the largest, most beautiful that I had. "Thank you so much, John; seriously. This is probably the most thoughtful gift I've ever gotten." "You're welcome, baby." He put his hand on my leg, and a warmth spread through me. I kissed his cheek as he pulled onto my street. Upon arriving back at home, I walked to the large glass china cabinet in which I kept all of my dolls, made room for my new addition, placed her in the center, and closed the doors. "Jessica," I whispered to myself. I always name my dolls, and she seemed to have a sophisticated charm about her that reminded me of a movie star.



With a contented sigh, I poured myself a glass of wine, and curled up in bed with a book. Soon, the warmth of the wine, my amazing gift, the love of my boyfriend, and my cozy bed, lulled me into a secure and sound sleep. The dream I had that night was vivid,

more vivid than they have ever been. I found myself in what seemed like the basement of a house that appeared to be well over 100 years old. The floor was made of dirt, there was a musty smell in the air, and the walls were lined with shelves. On the shelves were numerous tools that I didn't immediately recognize. They were all made of iron, freshly sharpened, and immaculately clean, which was a stark contrast to the state of everything else in the room. The dust that hung in the air was suffocating, and a candle in the corner was the only source of light. It cast ghostly, sharp shadows on everything in the room. Suddenly, in the corner, an object caught my eye. It was Jessica. She was staring up at me with a piercing gaze that was suddenly very unsettling. Immediately upon seeing her,



the door to the basement swung open and someone was gingerly walking down the stairs. "Darling?" she called lovingly. As she walked down the stairs, I could see that my estimate of the age of the house was accurate. She was in a mid-19th century dress that looked very dirty and tattered.

Her hair was up in a messy bun, and her eye makeup looked as if it had run all the way down her face. "Who are you? What are you doing here?" she asked upon seeing me. Her posture suddenly became extremely defensive. She eyed the shelves, and looked quickly back at me. "Who are you?" I slowly moved backwards until my back was flat against the wall. My palms pressed against the cool stone. I glanced at Jessica, whose head was now turned towards me. Her former smile was now a grimace, and her eyes were burning into me. Suddenly, I felt metal on my throat. I looked ahead, and the woman's face was mere inches from mine. "I'm Anastasia Hannigan, and this is my house." Her hand gripped a large ice pick. She drew it back, and moved it forward to strike. I woke up with a start. My entire body was covered in a cold sweat, and my hands were shaking uncontrollably.



I looked at the clock: 8:45 A.M. Thank god I took the day off. I would have been forty five minutes late to work if I had to go in. I shook the fleeting memories of the dream from my head, and went into the bathroom. I splashed some water on my face, brushed my teeth. As I walked into the kitchen, something caught my eye. It was Jessica. The front of the glass china cabinet was wide open, and all of my other porcelain dolls were on the ground in front of it. All of their faces had been shattered. She was even more pristine than the day before, but her appearance was suddenly chilling. What happened last night? How were my dolls destroyed? Was I burglarized? Was anything else missing? Why was Jessica untouched? I didn't understand. I quickly grabbed the phone and called 9-1-1.

The police left the house just as perplexed as I was. Although I suddenly

had a sneaking suspicion that something about that doll wasn't right. She was in my nightmare the night before, and now all my dolls but here were shattered.

I walked into the dining room where the china cabinet was located. I picked up the doll and cradled her in my arms. I took her with me to the rocking chair in the corner of my living room. She is so beautiful. There is nothing about her that isn't perfect. Even that stain on her clothing, the stain that looks suspiciously like blood, seems to be placed perfectly. I suddenly looked at her and decided to change her name. "Anastasia Hannigan." I whispered to her, stroking her hair. Her head turned slowly to me, and she shrieked. "AND THIS IS MY HOUSE!" I haven't left the house since that day.

Anastasia dictates my every move. My clothes are so dirty that they're falling apart. I have lost weight, and all I can do is listen for her siren-like call. John left me, and I have left my job. Thank god this house is bought and paid for. I just don't care about anything else. Other than her. She is my queen.



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