

# THE DOLLHOUSE CHRONICLES



~ TERI SCHURE

# BLIND BROOK

2040



**You might think** I'm not real because I'm a dollhouse.

But I'm as real as you are, and like you, I have a first and last name:

Blind Brook.

And you might think I'm just a forgotten dollhouse, trapped in this stuffy attic for more years than I can count, but I'm so much more than that.

And forgotten?

I think not.

Together with my family—the dolls—who our homeowners intentionally named after themselves—still live with me.

Dawne, Maddie, Sabrina, Julia, and all the others. We continue to protect the stories and secrets of the young girls who once owned, loved, needed, and cared for us.

And you can believe me or not, but those girls will never forget us. We were as much a part of their history as they were of ours.

I can't speak for the dolls in my house, mostly because I don't have the gift of speech. But when I look back on my life—all I've done and all the girls I've helped—I'm glad I'm me.

Although it wasn't always easy being me because I saw things.

Heartbreaking, life-altering, and mean-spirited things that deadened some of my girls and hardened others.

I quietly supported them through some tough days and far too many rough nights.

Just so you know, I've been through hell and back with all my girls.

And I proudly served as both a lifeline and a lifesaver, a safe space where imagination and innocence remained possible.

I wasn't just a dollhouse to my girls. I was their home.

I helped pull them up and saw them through more than their fair share of hardship.

Even though I'm stuck in this gloomy attic, I remain proud.

Lust, envy, wrath, and neglect tried to destroy so many of the girls I loved and cared about.

I saw my girls fall, but I also saw them rise. I witnessed betrayal, heartbreak, and imperfect lives. I shared in their glory and resilience, yet I also bore the burden of their desolation and breakdowns.

They were adept at hiding their trauma behind a façade of normalcy. But I've been around long enough to know that much of what lies beneath the surface eventually reveals itself in plain sight. Yes, eventually, a mask becomes too suffocating for the face to bear.

Through my girls, I learned that you can hide from others, but you can never hide from yourself.

You might think I'm just a dollhouse, but I know things.

Even though my girls mostly spoke to themselves, they sometimes spoke to me. And how many times had I heard their prayers? Sadly, I couldn't answer any of them.

Some of our time together was rewarding, but much of it was painful. Without a voice, I had no choice but to remain silent, forced to watch helplessly, unable to protect them.

How I wish I could have done more for my girls. How I wish I could have answered even one of their prayers.

If only I had a voice, I might have saved my girls in ways I couldn't before. My voice might have changed everything for them.

If only I had the vocal authority, I would have insisted they speak up and speak out about what they had all convinced themselves was unspeakable. LOUDLY AND PROUDLY.

If I had a mouth, I would have persuaded my girls to use their voices for more than prayer, to scream, bellow, and shout their truth. I would have convinced them that, no matter what, they must reveal their trauma and never accept degradation in silence.

But I wasn't blessed with a voice. However, I was able to see and hear everything, which was surely a blessing.

Can a dollhouse be blessed? I sure hope so, because I feel blessed even though I was voiceless—just as my girls thought they were, even though they weren't.

Blessed or not, I know I was an emotional safety net, deeply ingrained in every one of my walls, and that sense of security served all my girls well.

I was a tangible force for healing, which, from what I've learned from my girls over the years, is a blessed virtue—alongside faith, love, justice, kindness, goodness, and self-control.

What I would have given for a voice!

And arms.

If only I had arms, I would have held my girls tight—a silent, unspoken language of comfort, but one hug could have made all the difference.

Oh, to have had the privilege of embracing my precious girls!

But with no voice and no arms, I did what I could.

I did my best.

I've lived a long and storied life, and I've been privy to the full spectrum of the human experience—from beginning to end and back to the beginning again.

And yet, here I am, stuck in this dank museum of taped boxes, old furniture, and sticker-labeled trunks—the dusty remnants of a once-glorious past.

Is that an urn of human remains I see in the far corner? How terribly tragic that a living, breathing mortal—once loved by someone—has been reduced to an abandoned jar of ashes and now belongs to no one.

Pray tell, I hope it's not one of my girls.

I miss belonging to someone.

Like me and that urn, this lonely attic is proof of long-forgotten people and their stories—from every scar, every fear, every lie, and every tear. And happy times, too, I suppose.

Today, the sun's bright beams streaming through the grimy window not only warmed me but also illuminated a maze of cobwebs—no longer functional, like me. The tangled silken threads partially obscured a stray photograph of a young lady. Her pretty face, caught in a jagged embrace between two splintered wood slats, was barely visible.

Whose impish smile adorned that gem of a photo, faded and frozen in time, with the paper around her face decaying on the filthy attic floor?

Could it be someone I once knew?

I might lack a voice and arms, but I have the precious gift of sight.

So I forced myself to focus—to zero in on that seemingly familiar, angelic face despite the cobwebs.

Yes, it's working. I can see her face more clearly now!

I caught a faint hint of a smile, barely touching the corners of her mouth. And that's when I knew exactly who it was—by that trapped smile she always hid so well.

It was a photo of Dawne.

Dawne, Dawne, Dawne.

She might have been my favorite among all the girls.