
Tip of the Tongue

by Tim Kissman

a short short-story

LIMELIGHTCREATIONS
Lansing, Michigan 2000

~ C o p y r i g h t ~ 2 0 0 0 ~ b y ~ T i m ~ K i s s m a n ~

FOREWORD

These short short-stories were written for a weekly Internet mystery contest, where authors are invited to submit a 500 word or less story about a photo the Web site puts on its site. This week's site featured a photo of two voodoo dolls perched on a soap dish near an old, battered sink.

"I'm trying my best to remember that silly rhyme. It was simple, like Row Your Boat, but different. You know what I mean? The voodoo lady swore to me I would hear it later that night and that she would send her angels to make sure I understood. But I thought she was worthless, nothing but a dime-a-dozen fortuneteller. It went something like ... two dolls there be — it's just not coming to me right now. The crazy old hag was right, though. I did hear it later.

"Should I have cared? No way. I didn't have time to remember that song, much less why she sang it to me. I left her shop humming the tune and headed for my apartment. It was a quicker walk than usual, probably because I had that damn rhyme on my mind ... two dolls there be, two dolls that see — something like that, but that's when I saw Mrs. Hinsley and said hello.

"I don't think she recognized me because she kept walking with her head down. She probably thought I was homeless or something. I was about to shrug her off when I heard the voodoo lady's voice again. This time the voice was in my head, screaming the rhyme — I don't know why I can't remember it — and telling me to grab her. Take her to my apartment and show her the bathroom. Mrs. Hinsley insisted I leave her alone, but I persuaded her. One quick hit to the head does wonders, espe-

cially on small women.

"So I get the door open, drag her to bathroom and there they were — the old woman's angels. They don't look like angels to me. Angels have wings; these dolls sat on my sink and stared at me with their toothy grins. Then they sang the rhyme. It was pleasant this time, like my mom tucking me in at night. It was just a whisper, but they knew I could hear.

"Yeah, Mrs. Hinsley woke up, but as you can see I took care of her. One quick slash, a stab here and a poke or two there does wonders, especially to small women."

"Do you remember the rhyme now?" the detective asked, moving the killer away from the sink.

"Yeah I do. On the tip of my tongue, it was, just waiting to come out."

"Well?"

*"Two dolls there be,
Two dolls that see,
The dark of the soul.
Death is left, life is right,
Do what they say... kill tonight."*

"That's your confession?" the detective sipped his coffee. "The dolls made you do it?"

"Yeah. Can't you hear them?"