

Truth or Dare

The regular baby-sitter was away for the weekend. But the Johnson's still wanted to attend the get-together, so they requested a one-off nanny. Sara turned up 7 minutes late, gasping for breath while knocking at the door. "I'm so sorry! I got caught up in class, I had to sneak out, you're not late, are you?"

"No, no it's ok, please come in" Mr Johnson smiled at the young lady and moved aside for her to step into the house. She unfastened the ankle strap of her heels and placed them in front of the narrow-tall glass window next to the door. The hallway darkened towards the blue door at the end of the hallway. The hallway was lined with strange objects on circular tables, they seemed very old but were in immaculate condition.

"I'm Mark, Sara isn't it?"

Sara was just about to respond, before she averted her eyes to the figure approaching from the top of the stairs. Mrs Johnson's hips swayed seductively side to side, her hand glided delicately down the banister as she walked down the stairs. She was the most beautiful woman Sara had ever seen, her shimmering black hair rippled down to her backside, her tight white dress barely concealing the woman's breasts. Sara liked men; however, she could make an exception in this case. Sara didn't take her eyes off her as she approached. She hugged Mark and turned to Sara while still embracing him, looking Sara up and down.

"Aren't you a pretty one, far prettier than Julie, don't you think Mark?" Sara blushed and tried to conceal a smile.

“Bit inappropriate don’t you think babe, but yes she’s a pretty girl.” Sara stared at her feet as her hands twiddled her hair involuntarily.

“What’s your name sweetie?” The beautiful woman said, releasing her husband.

“Sara.” She responded, still twiddling her hair and watching her feet.

“Pretty name, I’m Scarlett and you’ve met my husband Mark” She turned and leaned on the banister and swept her hair back over her shoulder “Come here Bree! Your new friend is here for you” She winked back at Sara.

A loud thump sounded from upstairs, followed by several smaller thumps that got closer and closer to the top of the staircase. A small, plump, but pretty girl stood at the top of the staircase.

“Look, darling, this is Sara, she’s going to keep you company while mummy and daddy go to a party.”

“She doesn’t need to look after me, I’m a big girl!” The plump girl said stomping her feet.

“Oh, come on...”

Sara interrupted Scarlett to her own surprise “Of course not Bree, you don’t need looking after, you are a big girl after all. I thought you and me could play some games or tell each other secrets while the adults go out and do adult stuff.” She looked over at Scarlett who had a look of surprise on her bewitching face.

The young girl scratched her chin for a few moments, pondering on the offer that Sara had made her. “Yes” she said unfolding her arms “that sounds good to me.” The plump little girl

walked down the stairs to her mother. Scarlett knelt next to Bree and put her arm over her shoulder, she was saying something to Bree, but Sara couldn't make out what it was, whatever it was, the look on Bree's face displayed her displeasure to hearing this. Scarlett stood back up and smiled, rather condescendingly at Sara.

Mark turned to Sara with a pleasant smile on his face and said "Thank you for coming on such short notice Sara, we appreciate it"

"No problem" Sara returned the pleasant smile

Mark opened the door for Scarlett, and she stepped out into the darkness. Mark turned to Sara, "Please don't touch the artefacts on the tables in the hall, they are family heirlooms, passed down through generations. They are priceless. And stay out of the room at the end of the hallway... it's under renovation wouldn't want you to get hurt." He said in a serious, rather cold tone.

"Of course Mark."

"Good" he turned his eyes to Bree, who was sat at the bottom of the stairs "and Bree, listen to your mother." She nodded, though rolled her eyes when he closed the door and left.

"First" the plump little girl stood up straight "I will take you on a tour!" She grabbed Sara by the hand and walked with her.

She first walked her down the darkening hallway, showing her the numerous artefacts. She showed her the large rock on the first table, Bree said it was a charm-stone, that it was even older than the house, but it just looked like a normal round stone. On the opposite table was a beautiful gold lock with delicate engravings decorating the body. Next to the gold lock lay an

equally beautiful gold key. The plump little girl said that the lock grants wishes, she thinks, but it needed two people for it to work, one to hold the lock, and the other to hold the key. They walked a little further down the hallway, a frowsty smell became more noticeable the further down the hallway they went. The light faded away as they got closer to the door. Bree showed Sara another rock, this one was called a Seer-stone, she said that “mummy and daddy” used it to find special things or talk to special people, Sara wanted Bree to show her how it works, but the stone did nothing when Bree picked it up “only mummy and daddy can use it” she said. Sara felt a chill as her eyes adjusted to the darkness as they walked a little further down the hallway. “What is this one?” Sara said, pointing to a frisbee sized coin on one of the tables. Bree explained how her mummy and daddy received this coin from a giant on one of their holidays. *When does a child’s imagination begin to fade away?* Sara wondered to herself just as they approached the icy door. Sara couldn’t help but feel a pull towards the door as if something wanted her to go in, her hand reached for the door handle slowly. She could feel the iciness of the handle as her hand approached it. Bree grabbed Sara’s hand and pulled her back down the hallway to show her the other rooms in the house. Sara looked back at the icy blue door.

“I want to play a game.” Bree said as they walked into the living room.

“How about truth or dare?”

“Yes, I like that game, I get to ask first because it’s MY house!” she said with an attitude

“Truth or dare?”

Sara sat down on the L-shaped brown leather sofa, moving a cushion aside. She took a quick look around the room. There was a glass coffee table just in front of the sofa, which Bree was

sitting on, a wood fireplace placed opposite the sofa, where most people would place a TV, of which there was none, she thought this was odd but the thought floated out of her mind.

“Truth” she said.

“Have you ever...” the girl paused in thought for a while “...ever kissed a boy?” The girl smirked and giggled at her own question.

“I have, your turn truth or dare?” Sara said.

“Ewww that’s gross. I want a dare!” She seemed to like shouting “And I’ll keep showing you around my house, it’s boring sitting here.”

She took her through to the kitchen, Sara looked around, trying to think of a dare for Bree.

She looked outside at the blackness that was enveloping the house. It was mid-winter now, so it got dark early. “I dare you to run out in the garden and back” Sara sat down at the table up against the wall. And watched as Bree put her shoes on, smiling smugly, preparing to run into the darkness. She wasn’t afraid of the dark she said, she said it would be easy. The girl opened the door and disappeared into the night.

Sara got up from the oak wood chair and slid it back under the table. She walked over to the countertop and looked out of the window into the garden. On the windowsill was a photograph, Mr and Mrs Johnson, were stood next to, a giant pair of shoes, Mr and Mrs Johnsons heads were level with what looked like knees, she thought back to the frisbee sized coin. Sara wondered how long the garden was as she still couldn’t see Bree through the window. Then it started.

A quiet, dull scratching noise from the hallway. She turned around slowly, tightening her grip on the countertop she was now leaning on. It happened again, a long, dull, quiet scraping sound emanating from the hallway. She didn't want to move, but she needed to see the door. She crept towards the doorway, marking the barrier between the kitchen and the hallway. She peaked her head around the door, slowly. Suddenly the door burst open. Sara screamed at the top of her lungs. Bree shrieked as she closed the back door behind her. "What? What is it?" Bree shouted at Sara.

"Nothing" Sara had one hand on her chest as she took a few deep breaths "you startled me that's all."

"It's your turn now, truth or dare?"

Sara's heart was still racing, her breathing still quick. "Truth" she said abruptly.

"How many boys have you kissed?" She said smirking.

"That isn't how truth or dare works, you have to..."

Bree stomped her feet and threw her arms in the air "It's my game I can ask you whatever I want to!"

Sara had dealt with spoilt children before, she learnt it's easier to ignore their outbursts, she's only her problem for a couple of hours. "Fine, I've kissed three boys, why are you so interested in kissing, a bit young for that aren't you."

"Three!" she exclaimed holding up three fingers "That's a lot! Ewww. I'm not too young! I'm seven and a half, I'll never kiss a boy, they're gross" she stated.

Bree grabbed Sara's hand again and pulled her through the barrier to the hallway. Sara glanced left at the blue door, looking for any marks on the door, there were none. Bree dragged her upstairs by the arm. She entered "The Castle of Bree", the sign of which hung on the door. Bree proceeded to pull out random toys from seemingly everywhere and show them to Sara, who was acting intrigued at the backstories of each toy. She showed her a dollhouse, it was gothic Victorian style, with a circular window in the attic and steep spire at the top. "It's my turn now. Ask me" Bree said.

"Truth or dare"

"Truth"

Sara thought about what she was going to ask the spoilt little princess for a little while, though she didn't think on it for too long, in fear of upsetting her highness. "What do you want to be when you're grown up?"

"A witch" she said proudly.

Don't know about witch, but a bitch? Most definitely. "Do you mean a magician? That does magic tricks and stunts?"

The girl looked back at Sara with disgust. "No, not a magician" she stamped her feet "I will be a witch, just like my mum, my dad is a wizard too."

"Ah yes of course, so silly of me to ask." Sara knew it was pointless arguing with the little witch.

Bree smiled and nodded with approval. Sara hadn't known her very long but had already developed a serious dislike to this child, she knew she would never be coming back to this place after the night was over.

Bree left her castle and indicated for Sara to follow. As they walked down the stairs, Bree turned her head to the side and looked at Sara in the corner of her eye, "Your turn." Bree said.

"I'll have a dare this time" she said hesitantly, concerned about what this child may have her do. Bree got to the bottom of the stairs and turned towards the end of the dark hallway.

"I dare you to...." She smirked menacingly "I dare you to open the door."

Sara gulped. "Sorry Bree, I... I can't, your daddy told me not to go in that room."

"And I'm telling you to open the door, not go in there, it's different."

"I don't know Bree; I don't want to upset your parents." Sara shifted uncomfortably on the bottom step.

"If you don't do it, I'll tell them you went in there anyway." The fat little princess said with a smug look on her face.

"That's not very nice Bree, your parents..."

"I don't care what they said! I'm a big girl I can make my own choices, this is my house too, so you have to listen to me!"

Sara's stomach whirled around in all kinds of shapes as if it were trying to tie itself in a knot. She stood up from the bottom step and inched, one step at a time down the dark, frowsty hallway. She noticed the wood floor creak, as she gently placed one foot in front of the other.

She stood about 2 feet from the door, she looked back at the little witch who was smiling devilishly at her. That same pull she felt last time, was urging her to open the door again, she did not know whether it was curiosity, or something else. Her hand inched towards the icy doorknob; she couldn't stop herself. She grabbed hold of the handle. A chill floated up and down her spine, the hairs on the back of her neck stood up. She slowly twisted the handle, it creaked awfully. She gently pushed the door open, so there was a slight crack. She peeked through the gap, and saw nothing but darkness, the room was completely void of light. "There are you happy? I opened the door." Something grabbed her leg. Sara kicked her leg out and jumped back against the wall.

"Ow, I'm telling mummy you kicked me!" Bree said rubbing her arm.

"You scared me Bree!"

Adrenaline was flowing through her veins; she was now extremely attentive after the plump girl had sneaked up on her. That was when she heard it. That sound, that wheezing breath, then the sound of feet, being lazily dragged along the floor, getting closer and closer to the door. Sara backed away from the door, a part of her wanted to know what was in there, but most of her wanted to get the hell out of there.

"What's the matter? Bree said, "Don't you want to meet him?" still with the devilish smile on her face.

"Him? What? Meet who?" Sara said, her chest was pounding, her skin was dripping.

“My brother, well he’s not my brother yet, but when mummy and daddy are finished making him, he will be my brother, mummy told me not to show you, but I think you should see him, come and look.”

Sara didn’t respond she continued to back away, she stepped up on to the first step and hugged the banister as the wheezing, the scraping sound, was drawing near to the door. Bree stood there nonchalantly, waiting for her brother to be. She heard it grab hold of the handle, the door creaked as it slowly opened. There was nothing but blackness, it was too dark to see. She retreated a few steps further up the stairs. Two figures began to emerge from the darkness. Sara yelled in terror. Bree emerged from the darkness holding the hand of her half-made brother. His face looked as if it were made of clay, he had piercing blue eyes and two holes where his nose should be. She saw Bree grab the golden lock and key and she handed the lock to her half-made brother. Sara scurried up the stairs, tripping over her own feet, not looking back at that thing. She heard a metallic noise and Bree said something to her half-made brother that Sara couldn’t hear. A burst of energy shot through the house. Sara barricaded herself in Bree’s castle.

She heard a scream. A thump against the wall. She combed her blonde hair back and placed her ear to the door. She held her breath, focused in her hearing. She could hear a fleshy sound, then the sound of crunching and slurping. Then it stopped.

Sara glanced around the room, looking for a way out. *Why did I come upstairs!?* *Why didn’t I use the front door!?* She ran over to the window and leant over the toy box spilling dolls and figures everywhere. She pulled on the window. She pushed the window. It didn’t move. It was locked. She scrambled through Bree’s cupboards and drawers, hoping, praying to find a key. There was nothing. Footsteps, this time slow and long, she heard the creak of the

staircase. She searched for a weapon, something sharp she could use, it was her only hope. The footsteps snuck, further and further up the stairs. She looked at the dollhouse in the corner of the room. She snapped the spire off the top of the house and hid behind the door. The floorboards of the landing groaned under the weight of it. What was once Bree's half-made brother sniffed at the door. She could hear its breath, feel its deadly presence from the other side of the door. The door flew off the hinges and flew against the window on the opposite side of the room. Sara did not make a sound. A grotesque clawed foot planted itself on the carpet, followed by the second clawed foot a little further forward. It ducked under the door frame as it stepped into the room. Sara quickly plunged the spire into the back of the creature and sprinted out of the room. The creature wailed after being impaled by the spire, it quickly spun around and launched itself at Sara. She ducked and jumped down the stairs as the creature slammed into the wall, narrowly missing her with its claws. She landed at the bottom of the stairs awkwardly, twisting her ankle badly, she tried to get up but collapsed back onto the floor. The creature seemed to know she couldn't run. It swaggered down the stairs, its mouth spanned from ear to ear, it extended its tongue out in a flicking motion and licked the blood from around its lips, snarling. The smell of blood was strong in the hallway. She glanced down the hallway, Bree's body lay motionless, torn apart. Sara shuffled back towards the door. Her hand brushed passed her shoe, she took hold of it. The creature reached the bottom of the stairs, snarling ominously, watching Sara, eyeing up its prey. She lumbered back into the corner. She heard a car outside. The creature took its time approaching its second meal of the night. It bent over onto its hands and crawled towards her on all fours, flashing its tongue at her venomously. It stopped an inch from her face. She felt its slimy, grating tongue, slide up her face. Quickly she pulled the shoe from behind her back and thrust the heel of the shoe into the creature's eye and kicked it in the chest with her good leg. The

creature fell back and squirmed and rolled around on the floor. She heard talking approaching the house. She dragged herself along the floor, into the kitchen, to the back door. She mustered all of her strength and pulled her body up to the handle which seemed so far away. The door opened.

“Well that was a waste of...” Said a manly voice.

“Bree!” shrieked the woman.

The woman ran to the motionless child on the wood flooring, standing over her body. The man saw the creature on the floor with a heel in its eye. The creature saw the man.

Sara gripped hold of the long handle and pulled down on it, leaned back and the door opened, she flung herself through the door, out into the garden. She heard grunting and snarling as the man and creature engaged. She felt bursts of energy similar, but not as powerful to the one made by the lock and key. She clambered along the ground towards the back gate, of this seemingly endless, black garden. She could still hear the muffled sound of struggling, she did not care. She was never going back.

Sara left the towns and had no grown up, got a husband, had kids of her own. She visited the town one year to see her family. There was a new park in town, her kids nagged and nagged her to take her there so they could play with all their cousins. The park was nice, there was plenty of green open space, and monkey bars, slides and everything a child needs in a park. Sara sat down at a bench while her kids run off to play. She opened up her book and lost herself in it for a little while. She could see over the top of her book, her daughter Mia, and her son Noah, were running back to over her though there were two others with her. She took

a quick glance, one of them looked familiar, she pushed her glasses back up to the bridge of her nose and carried on reading.

“Mummy, Mummy, look we’ve made new friends” her two children sang in chorus.

“How lovely, what’s their names?” She said, not taking her eyes off her book.

“This is Bree and this is Elijah” her daughter said, pointing to her two new friends.

Sara felt a sense of unease. She looked up from her book. The plump little girl just stood there, smiling devilishly, her fully completed brother was next to her, with those same piercing blue eyes.