



All Dolled Up

by Jean Edsall

"Dolly Diary, Chapter 2"

This is the story of the doll-maker. Many, many years ago on Christmas, 1944, a little girl was given her first doll. No one is around to tell us which doll it was, but it became a favorite toy, perhaps a companion. She always carried it, slept with it, had it next to her high chair when she ate, took it with her on all her adventures. Her two older brothers sometimes teased her about her love of dolls, but Daddy, on the other hand, knew that playing with dolls would someday serve her well, when she herself became a Mommy of a real live doll.

Every year brought a new dolly, for sure on Christmas, but probably on birthdays, as well.

She was given a "Sparkle Plenty" doll when she was 4 or 5 years old.

She was made by "Ideal Novelty and Toy Co.", 14" tall, all composition with yellow yarn hair, a true character doll in the likeness of B.O. Plenty and Gravel Gertie's daughter, from the Dick Tracey comic strip. She became the most popular of all Dick Tracey merchandise. She aged in real time and became a child actress, and country singer and fashion designer.

This was a favorite doll until, horror of horrors, the little girl fell when she was carrying the doll, broke Sparkle Plenty's head, and the little girl's heart.

I'm sure there were many other dolls, over the many years, but a few stand out in memory. There was a newborn baby doll with "magic skin" and dressed in a soft pink bunting. She was a bit smaller than a real baby, but loved as much as any baby doll could be. As the years passed, however, the so-called "Magic Skin" deteriorated, and another dolly disappeared. (The bunting was saved, and many years later, brought to memory the dolly that was so lovingly cuddled.)

As the years passed, and the little girl grew, her interests changed, as is won't to happen. When she was 12 years old, she was privileged to spend a great deal of time with her grandmother, who had the most wonderful treadle sewing machine. The grandmother taught the young girl to sew—and of course she made so many clothes for her dolls. By this time she had a "Ginny" doll, an 8" Vogue doll, with numerous outfits for every occasion that could be purchased. If you didn't have the money to buy, however, you could MAKE anything you could imagine. There was the little metal doll trunk that held all the outfits, the shoes, the purses, hats, and dolly friends, too. Oh, so many hours were spent

pretending and imagining every aspect of dolly's life.

There were skating dolls, bed dolls, and the last doll she was given was a "Toni" walker. Toni was never played with, and lives today in her original hairstyle, dress, shoes, socks, and underwear.

The girl grew, was married, raised her children, and worked at several different vocations. She worked in a ceramics shop and a fabric store. She did formal wear design and production.

Then 16 years ago she walked into a ceramics shop looking for a new project.

There was a glass cabinet full of beautiful porcelain dolls near the front door.

Intrigued, she began by making a sleeping baby doll named "Sugar Britches." As some would say, the rest is history. After

just one class, she was figuring how she would dress her doll, and dreaming about which one she would make next.

She began the search for more doll studios. She learned as much as she could from the local teachers, then began taking seminars offered by national teachers, as they became available. A new world opened up, for not only are there doll classes, but there are doll shows with competition, antique doll sales, and vendors with all sorts of things we "need" for porcelain dolls.

At one of the first doll shows she attended, she found a "Sparkle Plenty" doll. Had to have it. It is so therapeutic to recover a lost childhood "memory."

The girl/woman realized her destiny. A life-long love of dolls, and all things concerned with dolls, has become her life.

In March, 1996, All Dolled Up, the porcelain doll studio was conceived and porcelain doll-making continues to this day—offering seven class times each week, plus special sewing classes, seminars, parties, field trips. Once each month many ladies gather for "Dollies After Dark", an extended time of doll-making, food, and fellowship.

There are over 100 dolls on display at the studio, created by the owner and her incredibly talented students. With over 600 different dolls to choose from, there is no limit to the possibilities.

I invite you to come visit. But beware!! This is not just another hobby. It is an obsession. A magnificent obsession.

Jean Edsall is owner and instructor at All Dolled Up, a porcelain doll studio in Colorado Springs, CO. You can contact Jean through her website: www.alldolledupinc.com



Sparkle Plenty, Magic Skin and Toni