



For the love of art

Have you ever wondered who I am? Whose is this mechanical hand, that draws and paints? Well, I'll tell you - in my own way.

It all began at Frida's house. She was a girl who didn't like bicycles, or sweets, or dolls... What she liked best of all was drawing and painting.

FOR THE LOVE OF ART

One fine day, Frida was given a blue articulated doll as a present. Since she was a polite little girl, she said "thank you," but then she took the doll and put it on top of her cabinet, intending to forget all about it. From its vantage point, the doll watched Frida painting: she painted and she drew all day long. She had so much fun. First she drew a sketch with her pencil, and then she used her paints.

If she liked the result, she hung her painting up on the wall. Then she took a good long look at it, feeling very pleased with herself. The doll also looked at it very closely.

"She's an artist!" he thought, "no doubt about it."

But one day, Frida had a terrible accident. They had to fit her with all kinds of devices to hold her bones in the right place. And she had to stay in bed for days and days... She was like a doll, because like all dolls, she couldn't move without help. They had to help her to eat, to dress and to brush her hair. Just like you do with a doll.

The doll looked down at Frida, lying on the bed, so still, and heard how she cried, now that there was no way she could pick up a pencil and draw. The doll wondered what he could do to cheer her up - even it was only the teeniest tiniest bit. And after thinking and thinking inside his wooden head, he had an idea: if Frida couldn't draw, he'd do it himself!

He waited until the first stroke of midnight, which as you know is a magical time, he hopped down off the cabinet, sat at Frida's desk, picked up a pencil, thought for a while, and very slowly, very carefully, he drew... a dog!

A faithful little dog who could keep Frida company. He hung the drawing on the wall, next to the bed, and went back to his usual place. When, next morning, Frida spotted the drawing, she asked everyone who had done it. And nobody knew... except the doll, of course.

Night after night, the doll came down from his cabinet, and drew pictures for Frida. And

while he did, he quietly sang a lovely little tune, so that Frida wouldn't wake up.

*Drawing is a wonderful thing to do,
one for me and one for you.
Pretty drawings are what I do,
to cheer you up when you're feeling blue
to cheer you up when you're feeling blue.*

Frida thought that the drawings were very good indeed. And that it was very strange that no-one knew who had done them. But she liked that mysterious game. She was keen to start drawing again... Her bedroom looked like a museum.

Then the day arrived when Frida was completely well again. She sat down at the same old desk and began to paint and to draw, as well as she had always done... or even better! And while she did, she sang happily and contentedly:

*Drawing pictures every day,
is my favourite way to play.*

...meanwhile, the doll watched her, forgotten on the same old cabinet, but happy and contented with the work he had done.

*Drawing is my favourite game,
no two pictures are ever the same.
Drawing pictures every day,
is my favourite way to play.*

In time, Frida became a famous painter, a beautiful grown-up woman who could walk and wander and travel wherever she chose. She painted landscapes... portraits of women... fantastical animals... and she had exhibitions all over the world.

One day, when she was showing her work in a very important museum, she happened to notice, in one of the display cases, a blue articulated doll just like the one she had been given so many years before.

It wasn't exactly a doll. It was an automaton. An automaton that could draw all on its own. An automaton that could as easily draw a dog... as a butterfly... or a princess...

People looked at Frida's paintings admiringly.

But as for Frida... Frida only had eyes for that articulated doll that drew so amazingly well. And the automaton looked at her... and smiled!

Frida smiled back, a beaming smile of happiness and gratitude. Whether the pair of them spoke about the adventure they'd had together, when she was so very small and ill, who can say...

The only person who knows is me... the doll she abandoned on top of a cabinet, but who, nevertheless, played with her in very special sort of way, making pictures so that Frida would get back her health and her appetite for life.

And, while I hate to brag, somehow I've become famous too. I live in a museum and I draw all the time. Only I don't sign my pictures, the way she did, because I... don't have a name!

*Drawing is something lovely to do,
Like Frida, like me, you can do it too.*

Script: Teresa Duran