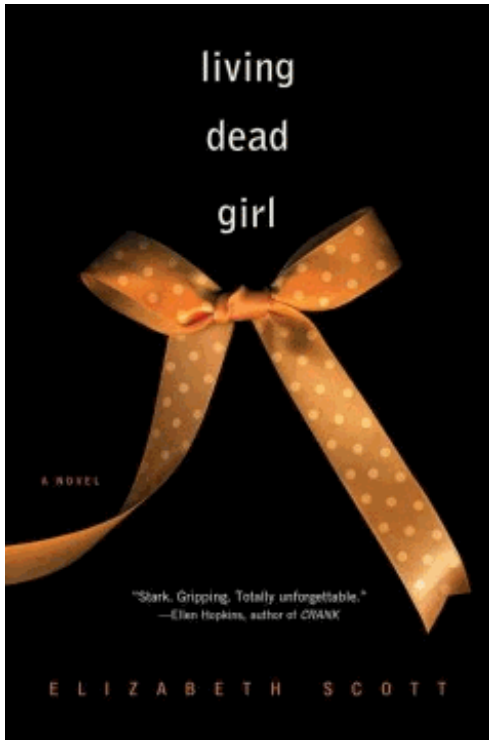


LIVING DEAD GIRL



Young Adult

By Elizabeth Scott

ISBN: 978-1-416-99668-2



Book Summary:

A teenage girl held captive by a child molester, describes life in captivity and her longing to gain freedom.

Summary of Concerns:

This book contains sexual activities including sexual assault and battery; sexual nudity; violence including child abuse; suicidal ideation; drug use; and mild/infrequent profanity.

4 /5

Not For Minors
BookLooks Review Rating

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4	<p>You've pulled your skirt up to your waist, arms resting by your sides, palms up and open. Waiting. "Good," he says, and lies on top of you. Heavy and pushing, always pushing. "Good girl, Alice." Afterward, he will give you the water and a container of yogurt. He will sit with one hand curled around your knee. You will watch TV together. He will tell you how lucky you are.</p>
10	<p>"Skipping," I say, stripping off my clothes, down to one of Ray's old T-shirts. Smell of him all around me, always. ... "Ready," I say, lying down, and the woman motions for me to spread my legs. "You want it all gone?" I nod. She is supposed to ask how old I am, and maybe other things. Something. There is a sign out front that says minors must have a parent or guardian present to sign off on all services, and this isn't a desperate, dying store that needs customers. ...She starts to wax. My eyes burn and then water as she rips hair away, stripping my flesh. It is good for women to look like little girls now, to have no hair between their legs.</p>
20	<p>GET UP. Those were the first words I ever heard. Open my eyes, see a girl, black and blue all over, dried blood along her thighs. Red brown stains smeared across the hairless juncture between. "Get up and take a bath, Alice," the man in the blue shirt said, and Alice did. I did. That's how I was born. Naked, hairless, covered in blood like all babies. Named, bathed, and then taken out into the world.</p>
26	<p>"I know, silly girl. My girl," he says, and stands up, unbuckles his belt. Opens his pants. "Come over here. Give me a kiss hello." I get up and walk over to him. He frowns and I hunch over so I barely come up to his shoulder. "Alice, my baby," he says, kissing my cheek. Then he shoves me to my knees. When he's finished, he throws the rest of my yogurt away. ...He drinks beer and orders a pizza and puts me on his lap during the sitcom he hates.</p>
27	<p>Ray likes how smooth I am, how raw my skin is. It burns by the time he's done touching it. "No breakfast tomorrow," he says afterward. "I think you might be over 100 pounds. That's not acceptable." At bedtime, he rumples his sheets—we have a two-bedroom apartment, because we are father and daughter and he wants to take care of me, wants me to have my own room like other little girls—and then crawls into my tiny bed with me. ...I am so hungry my head hurts with it, making me slow, and he pinches my thigh, hard. "Love you too," I say, but it is too late and he holds me down, breathing hard and fast. "Show me," he says. "Show me." So I do.</p>
28	<p>"No breakfast, remember?" he says, sitting down next to me on the bed, one paternal hand on my forehead while the other gropes below. He keeps it up until he starts to sweat, little beads of moisture gathering at his temples, and then gets up.</p>
29	<p>Ray believes in God, and in looking at all the little girls in their Sunday best, ribbons and bows and tiny socks with lace on them.</p>

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	<p>The day I got too tall to wear the white dress with short, puffy sleeves and little tucks along the chest, he filled the kitchen sink with water and shoved my head into it.</p> <p>I was thirteen then, and when I tried to stay down after he'd held me there, lungs burning, inside of my head going dark, he hauled me out and slapped me so hard the right side of my face grew a hand-shaped bruise, jaw to forehead. I couldn't go outside for a week.</p>
31	<p>We don't have a tub, just a shower, but I ignore it and brush my teeth, swallowing the toothpaste instead of spitting it out. I hear it can be poisonous, but I guess it's only if you're really young.</p> <p>...I am 15 and stretched out, no more than 100 pounds. I can never weigh more than that. It keeps my breasts tiny, my hips narrow, my thighs the size Ray likes.</p>
33	<p>There was another Alice before me. Ray let her go when she turned 15.</p> <p>He drove her all the way back to where she used to live, to where she was when she was another girl, back to her before.</p> <p>Her body was found in a river, floating downstream just a mile from the house she grew up in.</p> <p>Ray used to tell me this story a lot, pulling me close and saying, "But I'll make sure that doesn't happen to you. I'll keep you safe. All you have to do is be good. Be my little girl forever. You can do that, can't you?"</p> <p>I am 15, and I figure soon Ray will kill me.</p> <p>I could run, but he would find me.</p>
35	<p>You can't make yourself clean like that, and fresh-scrubbed skin only invites attention. Ray makes me shower once a week, and I hate coming out of the bathroom. I hate knowing he's waiting for me, that he will rub his hands and himself all over me and whisper things. His hands used to make me cry, but now I'm used to them.</p>
36	<p>Ray doesn't want me getting pimples or my period, and so he makes me take a pill for both every day. The one for pimples dries out my skin, and makes the sun blotch me angry red. The one to prevent my period does just that, 'and although the ads on TV say it just makes your period less painful, I never get mine.</p> <p>I don't ask Ray why.</p> <p>I only got my period once, late last year, and Ray got so angry he took out a knife and made me sit on a chair in the corner of the living room. He looked at me for a long, long time, and then tied me to the chair and left me there until the bleeding stopped. He wouldn't talk to me, wouldn't look at me. Food and water once a day, a trip to the bathroom each morning and night. One time, I stood up and blood dripped down my leg and onto the carpet and he threw up.</p> <p>And then he rubbed my face in it.</p>
46	<p>"You're-too tall, though," he says, frowning, and pushes my hands off his feet, dragging me up toward him. Hands on my throat. "Too tall and you want to leave me, don't you? You'd run away in a second if I let you. You wouldn't care if everyone at 623 Daisy Lane had to die for you. So selfish."</p> <p>"I don't want to leave," I tell him, cracking out the words as the world goes fuzzy around the edges. "I want to stay with you."</p>
47	<p>"You're-too tall, though," he says, frowning, and pushes my hands off his feet, dragging me up toward him. Hands on my throat. "Too tall and you want to leave me, don't you? You'd run away in a second if I let you. You wouldn't care if everyone at 623 Daisy Lane had to die for you. So selfish." "I don't want to leave," I tell him, cracking out the words as the world</p>

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	<p>goes fuzzy around the edges. "I want to stay with you. ... I can't breathe, but that's not why he lets the pressure up. He lets go a little so I can nod. Because he knows I will. I am not strong; I cannot stop him or even slow him down. I can only wait until he gets so tired of me that he lets me die and moves on. "She would punish me," he says. "Hold me down and show me how all we think of is sin. How We are-all sin." He spits the last word out, like he can taste it, and then touches my hair, slides his fists under my shirt and twists the sullen rise of my right breast, the little lump that's there. "Would you be that kind of mother?" "No." Ray has never come out and said it, but I know from years of listening to him dream that his mother did to him what he does to me. Held him down, rubbed him raw, broke him open. In them, he cries and begs her not to touch him, that he doesn't want to go inside her, that he is a good boy, he really is.</p>
48	<p>"You know you're supposed to listen when I talk." He shoves me to the floor and pulls off my pants. I stare at the ceiling while he sweats and thrusts, air aching down my throat and into my lungs until he grabs my hair and says, "I know what I'm going to do. What's going to change." He pushes faster then, harder, and slams my head into the floor over and over until my vision is bright and fuzzy and there are strands of my hair caught in his hand. ...Ray stares at little girls and I stare at the food), and feel my heart cramp. It will be over soon, finally, but the thing about hearts is that they always want to keep beating. They want to keep beating, and when Ray's finished he says, "I like that. A family. You'd be a good mother, wouldn't you? Let me watch out for a little girl of our own? Let me take care of her? Help me teach her everything she needs to know?"</p>
61	<p>He sleeps with one arm thrown across me after, and I lie stinging sharp all over, a wet sticky puddle under me. Soon there will be a little girl here, a real one with tiny arms and legs for Ray to push into. I want him to take her tomorrow. I want that little girl here now, where I am. I want her to be Ray's love, to bear it.</p>
67	<p>The whistling boy came up to me by the bathroom and asked if I wanted company. He had bright red pimples, angry oozing sores, all over his face, and when I said yes he blinked and turned like he was going to run away until I dropped to my knees in front of him. I did it because he was so surprised-looking and because his skin was so angry-looking and because I saw he saw my eyes and thought about running. I did it because he was nothing. I did it because I wished Ray had used the knife instead of tying me to a chair. Ray saw my mouth when I came back and knew. I couldn't sit down for a week afterward, and my back, from my shoulders to about my knees, was purple black, then yellow green, for ages. Both my little fingers have crooked knuckles now, and ache before it rains. ...I do not take the pills Jake offers, I know nothing can take away the world. I just push him down into his seat and open his zipper. "The backseat's wider," he says, but I shake my head and when he tries to threaten, his hands grabbing my hair, I dig my fingers into them, right into his skin, until he moves them away. When I'm done, I sit up and wipe my mouth with the back of my hand.</p>

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71	<p>I dream of a knife in my chest but will never plunge it in. Will beg and plead to keep it away when Ray pushes it into me.</p> <p>I strangle out my plan in broken words as Ray puts ice on my throat and rubs my ribs and carries me to the sofa, careful tender as he opens my clothes and marks me all over.</p>
73	<p>He is breathing faster now and pulls me toward him, a yank on my ankles drawing my rag-doll body in, lower half pushed against him.</p> <p>"You'll hold her," he says, and everything own is easily pushed down, away, clothes falling off me like water.</p> <p>"You'll hold her and I'll love her."</p> <p>He grins at me. "You'll like that, won't you?"</p> <p>I nod because he wants me to. I nod because I will. She will get his love and I will hold her down to take it all because then there will be none for me.</p> <p>I cannot save myself, and I do not want to save her.</p>
75	<p>IN THE MORNING, RAY MAKES ME GET up when he does, puts me in the shower and hums as he lathers soap and rubs his hands across me.</p>
83	<p>I try not to flinch but no one other than Ray and the waxer who rips off flesh and sees my parted legs as money touches me, and I don't like it, I don't like hands on me. I have Ray's and they are so heavy I feel them all the time.</p>
95	<p>He didn't need them, he said, wasn't like those sweaty-eyed perverts lurking around, hoping to glimpse a flash of child flesh, bend of an elbow, piece of thigh.</p>
97	<p>I would give anything to go back and take that food, slap that stupid once upon a time girl and shove what she was too dumb to want down my throat, eat and eat until I grew thick, fleshy everywhere with rolls protecting me from everyone's eyes.</p> <p>From Ray's eyes. "So, uh, do you want to ... ?" He rubs his leg, and then tries to take my hand again. I let him this time, hold still while he rubs it across the front of his jeans. He is so tentative, so unsure.</p>
98	<p>Just my hand moving back and forth, not even on his skin. So easy.</p> <p>He tries to touch me afterward, hands on my chest, mouth looming toward mine. He does not push my breasts down, flattening them, but cups his hands around them. I don't mind that, but I do not like his mouth on mine, him trying to breathe into me, the darting slick surface of his tongue. Ray kisses my forehead or my knees or the insides of my thighs, but his mother made him kiss her good night every night and so he told me he'd protect me and never kiss me.</p>
99	<p>He laughs. "A fucking manual? Get it? Shit, these pills kick ass. Sure you don't want one?"</p>
101	<p>I lean over, put my mouth on his. Bite his lip, feel the flesh, soft and tender, caught between my teeth. Hear his startled, slow yelp.</p>
102	<p>He pinches the stub of my left breast hard, then grabs the right and hauls me in, face changing, smile shifting into his real one, all gums and teeth. Ready to tear.</p>
104	<p>Soft kisses on my tender skin and I look at the ceiling so my flesh won't creep away from him.</p> <p>He says, Kissing it better, you see? Making you all better. Aren't you better?</p>
106	<p>He does not want me shaving the hair on my legs or under my arms, other Alice tried something, I think. Ray once talked about red water and Alice's hurt wrists in his sleep, anger waking him up and sending him crush-crashing into me.</p>

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	<p>...He hands me a cream to use and I stare at its bright label as I smear it on me; strange, strong odor, flowers and something that makes the inside of my nose burn. He would wax me all over but it costs a lot, and Ray believes in saving. Plus my stinging legs and armpits, when smooth, will still never equal the tenderness of the stripped skin between my legs, so what would there be for him to savor?</p> <p>He does not like to see me with the cream on, does not like the smell or the reminder that my pink nightgown used to drag along the floor, leaving a trail behind me. Now its end rests almost at my knees, and the lace trim that once ran around the collar is worn down, rubbed away by washing and Ray's hands tracing over it. Tracing over me.</p>
127	<p>"I'll protect you," he says again in the car, and I see him wondering what it's like. What I do with Ray. What he does with me. "How'd you hook up with the old guy, anyway? You don't think you love him or some shit like that, do you? But me, maybe you could. Right?"</p> <p>"Yes," I say, and try not to think of Ray and how furious he is, how furious he will be, how he will be waiting, waiting.</p> <p>"Yes, me?" he asks, swallowing down another two pills as he fumbles with my clothes, with his, with a condom.</p>
142	<p>We drive to a shopping mall that was built but died, empty stores everywhere with only one sad supermarket at the far end.</p> <p>"Start making it up to me now," he says, and pushes my face into his lap. Digs his fingers into my shoulder hard.</p>
148	<p>We are close to the park. Ray has finished his chicken and cleaned his hands and pressed my face down into his lap again, then changed his mind and moved me around, folding me into what he wanted, my head pushing into the door as he pushes into me, grunt (him) thunk (me).</p> <p>"You. Remember. Who. You. Belong. To," he says. "You. Remember. Whose. Girl. You. Are."</p> <p>I nod and he pushes my hair out from where it has gotten trapped under me, caught by him and how he's moved me.</p> <p>"There," he says. "That must feel better."</p> <p>It does, of course it does, not feeling bits of my hair strain, snap. My head goes thunk again, once, twice, and then he sighs. Flexes his fingers on my shoulder, red pain silent scream inside me.</p> <p>Tears on my face, I cannot help it, and he licks them off one by one, sucking every last thing he can from me.</p>

Profanity	Count
Ass	2
Bitch	2
Fuck	5
Shit	5