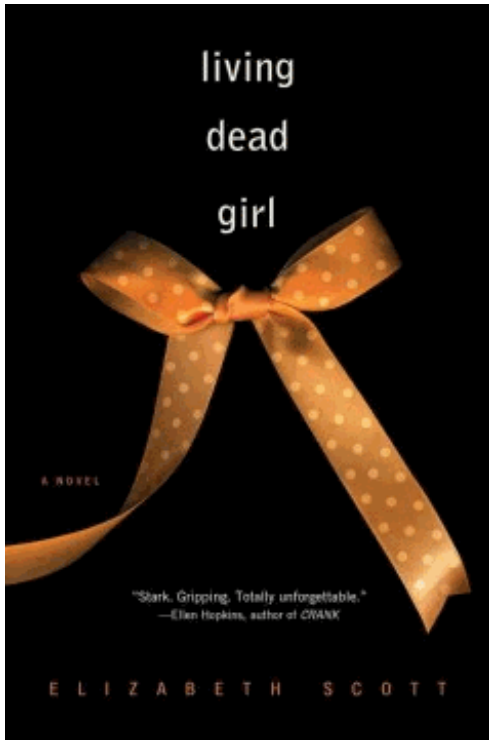


# LIVING DEAD GIRL



*Young Adult*

**By Elizabeth Scott**

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**CONTENT WARNING**

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## Summary of Concerns:

This book contains explicit violence including child abuse; explicit sexual activities including sexual assault and battery; and sexual nudity.

BOOK COMMITTEE RATING

**4**

MOVIE RATING EQUIVALENT

**NC-17**

Adult only content. No child under 18

**RESTRICTED**

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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.</p> <p>"Good," he says, and lies on top of you. Heavy and pushing, always pushing.</p> <p>"Good girl, Alice."</p>
20	<p>Open my eyes, see a girl, black and blue all over, dried blood along her thighs.</p> <p>"Get up and take a bath, Alice," the man in the blue shirt said, and Alice did. I did.</p> <p>That's how I was born. Naked, hairless, covered in blood like all babies.</p> <p>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."</p> <p>I get up and walk over to him. He frowns and I hunch over so I barely come up to his shoulder.</p> <p>"Alice, my baby," he says, kissing my cheek. Then he shoves me to my knees.</p> <p>When he's finished, he throws the rest of my yogurt away.</p> <p>...He drinks beer and orders a pizza and puts me on his lap...</p>
27	<p>Ray likes how smooth I am, how raw my skin is. It burns by the time he's done touching it.</p> <p>"No breakfast tomorrow," he says afterwards. "I think you might be over 100 pounds. That's not acceptable."</p> <p>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.</p> <p>...I am so hungry my head hurts with it, making me slow, and he pinches my thigh, hard.</p> <p>"Love you too," I say, but it is too late and he holds me down, breathing hard and fast.</p> <p>"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>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> <p>No one missed me.</p> <p>Two days later, when my face was still swollen hot, he came home with a lock of my mother's hair. He wouldn't tell me how he got it, even when I cried and crawled onto his lap to beg the way he likes best.</p> <p>He just said, "I decide everything. Remember that."</p>

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33	<p>There was another Alice before me. Ray let her go when she turned 15. 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>
36	<p>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> <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> <p>When the bleeding stopped he made me scrub myself, the chair, the carpet all around it, and then he threw the chair out and gave me the pills.</p> <p>"We can work this out," he'd said, and cradled me in his arms, my legs cramping from being curled up so I'd fit on his lap. "You're my Alice. You're my little girl. You're all I'll ever want."</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> <p>... 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.</p> <p>"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?"</p> <p>"No."</p>

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	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.
48	<p>"You aren't listening," Ray says, and his hands tighten again. "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."</p> <p>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.</p> <p>I think of the knife in the kitchen, of the bridges I've seen from the bus or on the way to church or the supermarket (Ray and I go every Saturday morning. Ray stares at little girls and I stare at the food), and feel my heart cramp.</p>
60	And then Ray leaned over and whispered, "Shut up or I'll drive back to your house, not to take you home but to kill your parents and make you watch. Make you see what happens to little girls who don't listen."
68	<p>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.</p> <p>Jake's car is expensive, smell of money underneath the ripe scent of boy. 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.</p> <p>"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.</p> <p>When I'm done, I sit up and wipe my mouth with the back of my hand. He is looking at me, glassy-eyed still, but something in my face changes, that makes his expression shift, go alarmed.</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>
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</p>

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	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.
102	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.
139	<p>Knife, sharp pressure against my skin.</p> <p>No Ray I say no please no I never told her anything she gave me a sandwich you know how cops are they ask questions and she thinks I have no home and maybe thought I ran away and you were taking care of me— PAIN red hot on my throat. Because you do take care of me, Ray, you do, and she could probably tell you were careful and would take care of someone and wanted you to know that you could tell she liked you everyone likes you and when went to Jake I made sure he—</p> <p>He sticks the knife in my shoulder and I scream.</p> <p>Silence and then I am swaying, no words for what it's like. I thought living dead girls couldn't feel pain, thought I was emptied out but I'm not, I'm not.</p> <p>Ray please Ray I love you he's bringing her to the park tonight Annabel will be there tonight I told him (don't say his name, don't say it, that's what made my shoulder scream, blood beat in it like a heart, thump-pain-thump-pain) I would see him he hates her and wants her to go away I can tell he will be there she will be there we can get her— Knock on the door, and "Shut up," Ray hisses, grabbing my jaw and squeezing it, all the words I was going to say, my plan my stupid plan I forgot and then remembered and the food I ate and the money still in my pocket, all the words in my mouth he squeezes closed.</p>
151	<p>...if I tried to run, if I said a word.</p> <p>He said I would be sorry, that I would die, that everyone would die, and Ray always keeps his word.</p> <p>"Can you—?" I say, my head swimming as my shoulder throbs softer, duller red now, everything getting heavy, my shirt pressing down on me. Empty ghost houses all around us.</p> <p>"Can I what?"</p> <p>"Just do it now," I say. "Just kill me. Put me in a house, get the knife, the matches, and—</p> <p>He leans over and kisses my cheek. "You do what you're told," he says, and then backhands me so hard I feel something snap crack, feel some of my teeth wiggle up and around, loose.</p>
167	<p>She does, slipping little girl fast into the bushes. Ray swears, grabs my shoulder, no messing around me around, spins me in front of him like We are dancing, claw into meat, teeth into flesh, and the world roars, shaking the way the sky rattles when thunder comes. My stomach twists like it's opening from the inside, burns like lightning must, my body snapping harder than even Ray can move me.</p> <p>"You stupid bitch," Ray says, voice emptied out, my death in his eyes, and the world roars again, his fingers sinking deep inside me as his head cracks back, red blossom his right eye was, staggering forward, crashing down, taking me as he falls, skin blood bone on me, running all over me, running into me.</p> <p>"Alice," he says, and then again. "Alice?"</p> <p>Then he is silent, a dark heavy weight on top of me. Pressing me down into the</p>

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	ground. Where all things must go. Where we one day will all be. Death to make the living.