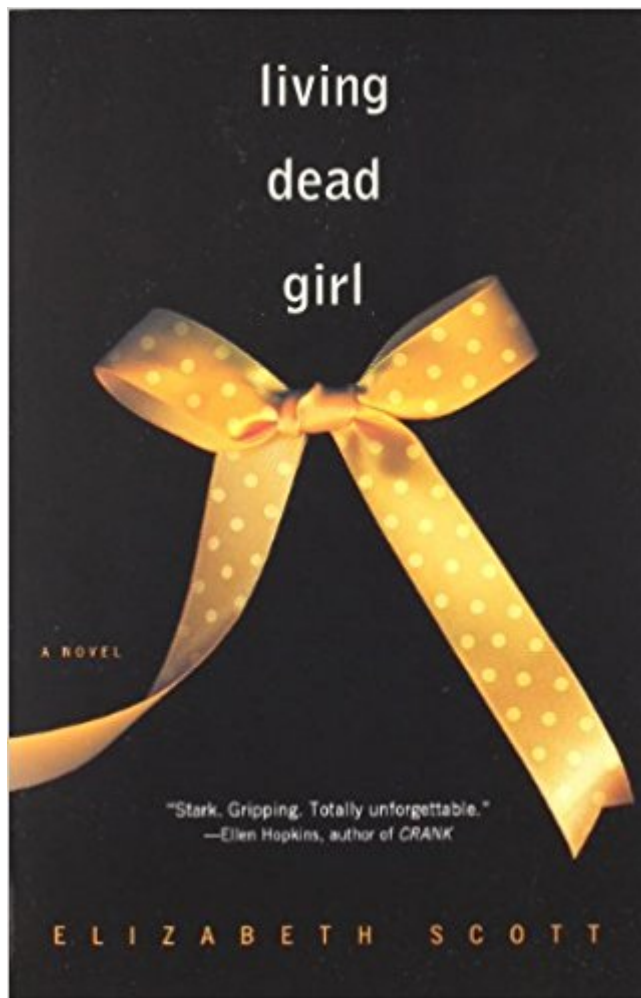


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Living Dead Girl



Synopsis

Once upon a time, I was a little girl who disappeared. Once upon a time, my name was not Alice. Once upon a time, I didn't know how lucky I was. When Alice was ten, Ray took her away from her family, her friends -- her life. She learned to give up all power, to endure all pain. She waited for the nightmare to be over. Now Alice is fifteen and Ray still has her, but he speaks more and more of her death. He does not know it is what she longs for. She does not know he has something more terrifying than death in mind for her. This is Alice's story. It is one you have never heard, and one you will never, ever forget.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Fans of Scott's YA romances *Perfect You* or *Bloom* may be unprepared for the unrelieved terror within this chilling novel, about a 15-year-old girl who has spent the last five years being abused by a kidnapper named Ray and is kept powerless by Ray's promise to harm her family if she makes one false move. The narrator knows she is the second of the girls Ray has abducted and renamed Alice; Ray killed the first when she outgrew her childlike body at 15, and now Alice half-hopes her own demise is approaching (I think of the knife in the kitchen, of the bridges I've seen from the bus... but the thing about hearts is that they always want to keep beating). Ray, however, has an even more sinister plan: he orders Alice to find a new girl, then train her to Ray's tastes. Scott's prose is spare and damning, relying on suggestive details and their impact on Alice to convey the unimaginable violence she repeatedly experiences. Disturbing but

fascinating, the book exerts an inescapable grip on readers—like Alice, they have virtually no choice but to continue until the conclusion sets them free. Ages 16+ (Sept.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Grade 9 Up • The numb voice of a teen who has been devastated by five years of captivity and compliance, a girl who has been named "Alice" by her abductor, relates her grim story. At 15, she still believes the threat by which Ray controlled her when she was almost 10 and he walked her away from a school field trip: he's made it clear that if she bolts he will kill her family. The trauma of multiple rapes on a child is portrayed, as is Ray's ongoing need to control her and his daily, multiple demands for sexual submission. Now that she's a teen, Alice is being starved; his disordered logic tells him that this will keep her a little girl. His control over her is so absolute that, although she can leave his apartment during the day and goes on her own to have a wax job, her only rebellion is to steal small amounts of food. When Ray decides it is time for a new little girl, Alice complies by locating a likely next victim. In the process she meets a needy teen boy and a police officer, both of whom suspect she is in trouble and want to help her, but all does not end happily. This story lacks the vivid characters and psychological insights of Norma Fox Mazer's chilling *The Missing Girl* (HarperCollins, 2008). For an ultimately hopeful, but still realistic portrayal of a damaged survivor of abduction and sexual imprisonment, see Catherine Atkins's *When Jeff Comes Home* (Putnam, 1999) • Carolyn Lehman, Humboldt State University, Arcata, CA Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I read this novel when it had just been released. As a teen, I found it compelling, disturbing, and exactly what I had been craving. Years later, I can safely say that I was neither traumatized nor shattered by this book. It has stuck with me in a way that few books have, and for a different reason than most- some of my favourite books are comedies a la Douglas Adams. This book is clearly not a comedy- and the vivid realness of it combined with the dreamlike tone are intense and beautiful, and that's what has followed me through the years. When I first picked up "Living Dead Girl", I was surprised to find it in the young adult section of the store. In reading it, I realized that that was the section in which it belonged, and the drivel on the shelves next to it (that I had always found slightly insulting) was pandering to over-protective parents and teens with no real passion for reading. This book is frank, honest, and aimed at exactly the right audience. Many parents have a problem with

this book. They feel that people under the age of 18 (or any age, according to some) should not read nor have access to this book. I completely understand the sentiment of wanting to protect your children from the evils of this world, but I have no respect for someone who stops a child from reading a book they feel drawn to. Not everyone can be satisfied with the light and fluffy nonsense that has the emotional maturity of a toddler. Teenage years are difficult, and not just because of the social situations and growing pains. For many teens the mind takes a darker turn, and there's nothing wrong with that- as a parent you have no power over that. If you don't allow your children to flourish in their own way, they will never become confident and healthy adults. I would recommend this book for anyone who has voluntarily come across it, picked it up and found in themselves a desire for more. If we still had bookstores, this would be easier. Anyone who stumbles across this book should at least give it a chance, and if it's not in your taste PLEASE don't recycle it, as one reviewer did. Donate it or sell it or give it away, so that someone who DOES appreciate this writing, this beautiful story with its disturbing implications, can have access to it.

People write horror stories. People write about monsters, ghosts, zombies, demons - but when someone writes a story about true evil, people who are hurt so much as a child that they hurt others because it's all they know, people who are soulless, haunted by their past, something that is believable, that is what is truly terrifying. This book was so raw, and real, it made me hurt and feel things I didn't want to feel - as a person, as a woman, as a mother. It scared me beyond words because it was so incredibly realistic. It was a terrible story, very well written, very thought through. I only gave it 4 stars because the ending made me so sad, even though I constantly questioned throughout the book what a shell of a person she still would have been had she escaped, all the pain she would have felt remembering those 5 years. I'm not sure how to feel. I am speechless. Bravo, Elizabeth Scott.

Plot/Storyline: 5 Stars "Alice" tells the story through diary-like entries of her abduction and subsequent living arrangements with her kidnapper. This is a gritty, hard-core tale sunk deep into the mire of the reality of what happens to many children who disappear without a trace. I was amazed at how well this author handles the sexual scenes. The narrator relates her abuse in a very sideways, casual manner. This doesn't shield the reader; instead, it drives home the horrific truth: This young girl is so inured to the abuse she suffers from daily, that it really is an almost casual thing for her. I could not put this novel down. It was not only about finding out what happens to Alice at the end; although, that was a major pulling point. It was staring into the abyss of Alice's

world. Throughout the first half of the novel, I wondered at how her kidnapper, Ray, could maintain such control over her. She had freedom during the day. She could have run away, told someone, or even called her family. Yes, there were threats, but I kept thinking as she got older that she should have seen through them. Later, I realized the depths of the man's insidiousness. As Alice related the tale of his previous deduction, and its gruesome ending, I realized why her belief was so strong. I found the ending, though abrupt, to be fitting and really the only way to end this work.

Character Development: 5 Stars Alice is an interesting character. She elicits sympathy from the reader, but at times also invokes a kind of disgust at her actions. Her character is compared and contrasted with her abductor's in subtle ways. Through Alice, the reader sees glimpses of Ray's childhood. However, because of Alice, the reader really cannot feel sympathy for him. What's interesting about the characterization is the question of how we can feel such sorrow for Alice, yet none for Ray. Ray was abused and grew up to be an abuser. Alice is abused and planning to help Ray abuse another, even participate in the abuse. Yet, Alice still evokes sympathy in the reader, but there is none left over for Ray.

Writing Style: 5 Stars The sentences are stark and simplistic, befitting the viewpoint of an uneducated teenager. The author does a terrific job of staying in character. The descriptions are left mostly to the imagination of the reader, as Alice simply sees her world as drab and colorless.

Editing/Formatting: 5 Stars Both were of professional quality.

Rating: R for Sexual Abuse of a child and Violence-----For more reviews, along with articles and author commentary, subscribe to my blog. Just search for "Red Adept".

For five years Alice has been in the clutches of her kidnapper, Ray. She is abused, beaten, and raped. Ray promises that if she dares to escape or tell anyone, he will visit her family and kill them. Alice feels like a living dead girl in a shell that is continually tortured. Alice is getting too old. Ray starves her to keep her body child-like and gives her pills to stop her period, because at fifteen years of age Alice has outgrown the ten-year-old physicality she had when Ray abducted her. So, Ray uses her to find his next victim. He sends her to the park to scope out a new girl to kidnap. Alice is not the protagonist's real name, but the name given to her by Ray. Ray himself is never physically described in detail, which brings to mind how it's said pedophiles can be the nondescript guy-next-door. This book is chilling and gripping. Because it's disturbing, I don't recommend it for everyone.

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