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DECISIONS = DESTINY

ELISSA SCOTT



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To my loving family who love me unconditionally





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“SO LITTLE GIRL”

“So, little girl, what’s your name, mmm? Does your mother know where you are? All alone out here at dusk? Have you noticed no one else is around? Do you know what this means, little girl? My little princess, looks like you’re out here all by yourself. So, little one, can I see your pretty young face? Tie that long blonde hair in a ponytail. That’ll look real nice to me. Come over here, cross over, just a little—that’s all I need—and let me know your name.”

Lucy crossed the road and approached the shadow of the man. She noticed his messy hair; his face was dirty and wrinkled. His eyes were glassy and half shut. Lucy felt nervous but couldn’t understand why she was moving closer and closer. There seemed to be an energy source that pulled her nearer and nearer. Suddenly she could smell him. He didn’t smell nice. The man looked down at her. He looked mean but his voice was inviting.

Lucy’s heart began to beat faster. She wanted to run away but her feet were stuck solid to the ground. She asked him nervously, “What’s your name?”

He looked back at her. “Little girl, why do you want to know?”

“Um.” She hesitated and took a quick breath. “I’m not sure. I don’t know why,” she nervously replied. The man’s face started to twitch and change as the sun began to set behind the hills.

Elissa Scott

Goose bumps formed on her arms, across the back of her neck, and on her bare legs below the hem of her school uniform.

Lucy stared, mesmerized. He leaned forward and touched her softly on the arm, giving it a little squeeze as he let go. She looked down at his hands and noticed some of his fingers were missing. One finger on the right hand was very short; fingers on the left hand were stumps or missing. Any remaining fingernails were broken, filthy, and black. *Where does he live?* she wondered. *Why's he so dirty?*

Lucy often played outside after school but had never seen him before. She remembered her mother making breakfast. "Remember, Lucy, don't cross the road and don't speak to strangers," her mother said every day before Lucy left for school, today being no exception. Lucy thought about running back to her mother but her body and mind were frozen in place. *Why can't I move?* she thought in a panic after fruitlessly testing one foot.

Blinking suddenly, Lucy found herself focusing on the stranger's distorted face. It looked different. It had changed once again. She took one step closer and noticed movement in his eye. *Is that a leech?* She focused harder. "Gross!" She didn't remember seeing anything similar in her nature textbooks.

This thing had started to crawl along the stranger's left lower eyelid, sucking the moisture out of the eye as it crept along. The creature's body was now moist and slippery. Its black belly seemed to be getting fatter and fuller with the liquid that it had just consumed. The stranger's eye had begun to close and sink into itself. He looked sickly pale, and his skin took on a yellow tinge.

"Hey, are you okay?" she yelled at him. "Hurry up and get that thing out of your eye! Hurry, mister! It's yucky."

He squinted and foamed at the mouth. "I can't, little girl. It's too late," he slurred. "The creature has sucked all the goodness out of me and all that's left is evil and nasty."

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