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I Spy with My Little Eye . . .

Short Story by Cody Greer

The game of life isn't a fair one, is it? Once, there were two young sisters—Carmen, five, and Cassidy, ten. They were very outgoing girls and they enjoyed playing lots of games together. Their favorite game to play together was "*I Spy with My Little Eye*." They played the game together every afternoon, while their parents watched, in their big backyard surrounded by massive, thick trees; however, everything changed when suddenly, both the girls lost at their "favorite game."

Carmen was fantastic at the game; she often practiced with her friends at school so she could go home and beat her older sister. Cassidy was struggling to find what Carmen was "spying."

"I can't let Carmen beat me today. She's won every day for the past week!" thought Cassidy as she raced home after basketball practice. Cassidy thought it was strange that the object that would win the game for Carmen every day was the same color each time, black. Cassidy was hopeful, though. She understood that the options for black objects in their surroundings were becoming more and more limited; she would eventually win the game, right?

Cassidy made it home quickly. She didn't even bother cleaning up before running into Carmen's room.

"Come on, let's go play before it gets dark!" exclaimed Cassidy. Carmen looked at Cassidy from her bed, "I don't really want to," she said quietly.

"Don't be silly," said Cassidy, "Of course you do. You always want to play!"

"Okay," Carmen hesitated for a moment before sliding off her bed and onto the floor.

The two girls generally had a good home life, but their parents fought quite often. The past week was the worst the girls had seen of their parents arguing. They were screaming at each other in the living room when Cassidy stepped into the room to tell them they were going outside. They didn't notice her, and she became too afraid to disrupt them, so she grabbed Carmen's hand and they slipped out the back door quietly. "Are mommy and daddy fighting because we're moving?" asked Carmen suddenly.

"What? We aren't moving," said Cassidy in a confused voice. They continued to walk out to the trees. "Yes, we are. I heard mommy say so. Daddy doesn't want to, though," said Carmen very confidently.

They stopped several yards away from the trees, as they knew they would get in trouble if they walked past the trees. It was starting to get dark, so Cassidy wanted to hurry up and play the game, she was determined to win this time. "*I Spy with My Little Eye*... something green," paused Cassidy, waiting for an answer.

"The grass?" asked Carmen. "Nope," replied Cassidy smugly.

“Is it the caterpillar on that branch over there?” asked Carmen. Cassidy’s smirk fell and she gasped in amazement.

“You’re cheating!” she exclaimed. Carmen looked puzzled.

“How could I cheat?” she asked.

“I don’t know, but you have to be!” yelled Cassidy, frustration laced in her tone. “I’m not, I pinky promise!” cried out Carmen.

They held pinkies and swore to each other that they’d never cheat. They decided to walk just a little bit farther, it was getting a bit darker out and harder to see. They had no idea how close they were to the trees until it was too late; they were right in front of them. The groaning of the trees bending in the wind, and the whistling of the branches almost completely drowned out the yelling coming from the inside of the house. Cassidy took two steps back when she realized how close they were. Carmen didn’t move an inch.

Carmen was silent, staring into the groaning trees. “*I Spy with My Little Eye,*” she paused, “something black and white.” Cassidy was thrown off by the added color, but she was grateful considering it would be difficult to see something black when it’s dark outside. Cassidy’s eyes scanned her surroundings very slowly, then they suddenly stopped on something. A tall, black shadow was standing, like a human, behind a tree almost directly in front of Carmen.

Cassidy almost missed it, the only reason why she didn’t was because she saw the whites in its eyes first. The trees were screaming now, as if in a warning. Cassidy tried to run away and grab Carmen at the same time, but the thing grabbed Carmen and pulled her into the trees. Cassidy ran away frightened. She ran into the house frantically screaming. Her parents stopped arguing to listen to the traumatic event that had unfolded just moments before.

Several years passed,. Carmen was never found. As Cassidy got older and became more capable of coping with what happened that day, her parents revealed a shocking truth. Apparently, a man dressed in all black had been watching the girls play for about a week before Carmen’s kidnapping. Her parents were arguing over moving out of town, Cassidy’s mom wanted to move away from the stalker, but her dad wanted to stay and work; he was convinced he could protect all his girls. Cassidy wanted to win the game so badly; instead, both the girls lost that day.



The Tree Line

Photo by Samantha Bullard