July 24, 2002

*Prologue*

“Well, looks like it’s just you and me, kiddo.” Sdia’s Great Uncle George winked, closing the door behind him. Walking past her, he reached down and pinched her on her buttocks.

Eight-year-old Sdia quickly grabbed her behind and frowned. She let out a yelp. “Ouch!” *That wasn’t nice!* she thought.

“Come on over here and let me see how big you’ve grown.” Uncle George chuckled, tickled by her reaction. He placed one hand over his semi-erect penis and reclined in the seat with the other. “I’m waiting,” he sang.

Sdia looked down at the faux wood floor, rather confused as to what was going on. She leaned both feet to the side, occasionally bringing them in and out as her dress followed the rhythm, swaying back and forth. Something just didn’t feel right. *I wish Mommy could have taken me to work with her, instead of leaving me here with Uncle George. I hope she comes back soon!*

“Come on now,” he teased, pulling on a piece of cotton that had seeped from out of the arm of the chair. “Don’t tell me you’re shy. I saw you over there earlier, dancing to the sound of the wind chimes, or as you say, *dingles*. I know you didn’t come all the way to Maryland from DC to stand in a corner.” He seductively twirled the cotton around his long triangular-shaped fingernails and smiled.

Sdia’s eyes remained glued to the floor as she continued to balance her weight on both ankles.

“I don’t bite.” He gave a low belly laugh. “Come here.” He motioned with his index finger, studying her every movement. Sdia began to fidget with her fingers. *What is going on?* *Uncle George is looking at me. I’m not going to look up; I don’t want to look at him!*

“Those sure are some pretty shoes,” he said, referring to the light pink jellies she wore.

She abruptly stopped titling her ankles and looked at her shoes. Her chapped lips slowly parted. “My mommy bought them,” she whispered, slowly raising her eyes from the floor until they were greeted by her Uncle George’s joker-like smile.

“You’re going to mess up those beautiful shoes by tilting your feet like that. You wouldn’t want to mess up those shoes, now—would you?”

“No,” she mumbled.

“Exactly.” George nodded, leaning forward and squinting. “I like your dress. Are those roses?”

Sdia looked down at her dress. “These aren’t roses; they’re sunflowers.” Her voice broke off into a whine.

“No. Those are roses.”

“Nuh-uuuhn,” she sang, shaking her head no.

“Uh-huuhn,” he mocked, nodding yes.

Sdia gave him a blank gaze.

“Those are rosy rose roses.” Uncle George spoke with his tongue partially exposed, imitating Donald Duck.

Sdia giggled. “Uncle George. These are sunflowers.” She pointed to one of the flowers on her dress. “Roses are red.”

“Maybe you’re right. You know Uncle George can’t see that well.” He squinted. “Can you come a little closer so that I can get a better look?” His eyes widened.

Bashfully, Sdia looked down.

“Come on. It’s okay, sweetie,” he promised.

Sdia slowly raised her head, and bit by bit, cautiously walked toward him; the old wooden floors squeaked beneath her feet.

“That’s right. Come on and sit right here.” He excitedly motioned her to sit on his lap. “Hurry, hurry, hurry,” he squealed, fanning both hands wildly as if he’d touched a hot surface. Sdia held out her small hand and placed it into his.

George quickly pulled her down onto his lap, positioning her buttocks on top of his penis. Sdia quickly jumped up and looked down at her uncle’s lap. *What was that? What did I just sit on?* “I want Mommy,” Sdia blurted out with a frown.

“Your mama’s at work. She won’t be back till later this evening,” he reminded her, pulling her closer, until they were face to face.

“I tell you what? How about you sit in the big red chair?” He smiled, revealing a mouthful of brown teeth.

Sdia scrunched up her nose as the stench of decaying teeth and rotten egg hit her directly in the face. *Uncle George’s breath smells like doo-doo.*

He stood, placed both hands under her arms, and lifted her into the chair. The ridged, torn pieces of leather clawed at her arms and legs, leaving unpleasant long white scratches as he scooted her backward. “Woo wee! You sho’ is heavy,” he grunted, standing straight up and dusting his hands together. Slowly he kneeled down to adjust the seat back until it couldn’t go any further. “Comfy?” he asked, taking a step back with his hands in his pocket. Sdia stared down at the flowers on her dress.

“I swear you look just like your mama when she was younger,” he said, gazing down at her. “You know she used to love to come and visit me when she was younger. Do you know what her favorite game was?” George squatted beside her as a gust of hot air and the scent of Old Spice rushed her nostrils. “I’ll give you a hint. The itsy bitsy spider …” he began to sing, giving her a quick wink. “Came up the water spout …” His warm, wrinkled fingers glided across her thighs …“Down came the rain and washed the spider out.”

*I want my mommy. I want to go home!* Sweat beads formed on Sdia’s back and the back of her thighs. She squirmed in the chair as the warm leather latched onto her skin. *I want to get up! I don’t like this!* She stretched her neck far back, poked out her chest and clenched the tattered arms of the chair, trying to pull herself up.

“Just relax!” George said, placing his hand on her chest and shoving her back. She fell backward and quickly closed her eyes. *I want my mommy!* Her uncle continued to run his fingers up her thighs, his breathing grew heavier; the hot air from his mouth and nose landed on her knee caps, sending chills up her spine.

She then tried focusing on the wind chimes jingling in the far distance. *The dingles! The dingles are dancing. One-two-three, one-two-three.* George meticulously moved her panties aside and stroked her vagina with the back of his index finger. Sdia’s eyes widened as she gripped onto the arms of the chair. She nervously began to scratch at the rips in the couch, pulling and scrabbling at cotton.

“I want my mommy!” she whined.

George frantically popped his head up and removed his hand from under her dress. “I told your ass your mama is working. She won’t be back till later!” he said coldly, staring her in the eyes.

Sdia quickly looked down. She set her eyes on one of the sunflowers on her dress. *Don’t blink, Sdia. Whatever you do, don’t blink!* she coached herself as her eyes began to water.

“What the hell is wrong with you!” George shouted. Sdia gulped. “You know damn well your mama is at work!”

She took a deep breath as her bottom lip quivered. The longer she stared at the sunflower on her dress, the more her eyes tingled and filled with tears, causing the flower to transform into a blurry spot. Sdia bulged her eyes to avoid the tears from spilling. She clawed her fingernails into the arms of the couch, pulling and tugging at the loose pieces of cotton.

“Don’t you go ripping that cotton out my chair!” George said, reaching up and snatching both of her hands from the arms of the chair.