

ATALLA



Young
HEART
-Motivations-

By Fell Skyhawk

ATALIA: Young Heart- Motivations

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Characters of Note:

- || Elizabeth Alycin Young, Human Female
- || Jakilyn Margret Tamo Toisen, Anian Female
- || Alycin Alyssa Tevono Young, Human Female

"The events of the past can either break or make you.

It is your decision, your choice, your life.

Choose wisely."

- Divinely Inspired, 9/24/18

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Addressiah, New Earth - Sunday, June 18, 574 AW

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Nothing can compare to the joy of a child who has achieved the accolade of graduating valedictorian of an advanced high school, especially if she has graduated from twelfth grade at the young age of twelve. This was the joy of Elizabeth Alycin Young as the yellow hover-bus pulled up to her home in Addressiah¹, New Earth. It had taken a great deal of work and many sacrifices to achieve such high rank in a class of much older students.

She thanked the bus driver for driving her home on her day off. Parents and guardians were expected to drive their children home on graduation day. The driver brushed the need for gratitude aside and then congratulated Elizabeth for her achievement.

Elizabeth gave the woman a charming smile as she stepped off the bus. "Thank you, ma'am,"

“A shame no one was there for you, but I sure cheered when you got up. It was my pleasure to be your driver, and I wish you the best of luck.”

Elizabeth turned back toward the bus and curtsied, “The pleasure was all mine. May God bless you, Mrs. Toisen.”

“Now you go on and give that mother of yours the news. Let her know what she missed.”

Elizabeth turned her piercing-blue eyes toward her home, pain hidden behind the swirls of color. “I doubt she would understand.” Shaking her head with a sigh, she looked to the bus driver with a slight nod and smile. “Thank you again.”

The sorrow of the previous moment was pushed aside for the joy of her success as Elizabeth skipped back to her house with a smile on her face, her red hair bouncing with each step.

Practically slamming the door, Elizabeth whistled a tune as she rushed to the window to watch the bus fly off. As she stared at the retreating transport, the bus driver’s comments returned to her, bringing back memories of the tragedy that transformed her mother from nurturing caregiver to a distant stranger.

When Elizabeth was seven, already in the advanced placement of third grade, her father, Admiral Young, had died when pirates had destroyed his command cruiser, the *Legacy*. Since then, her mother had never been the same, as if living in another dimension, out of phase with reality.

She also recalled the message that made her determined to aim higher and go further in all of her pursuits. Before his final battle, her father recorded a few parting words for Elizabeth to be delivered to her upon his death.

“Sweetie, I am so very proud of you and love you very much. Now always remember to aim high. Don’t settle for normal. Go as far as you can go and then press on. You will fail at times. Just pick yourself right back up

and catch your breath before going back into the fight. Always, always, wait on the Lord; He is the only one who won't let you down. And remember, whatever direction you choose to take, I am so very proud of you. And no matter what you do, I love you very much."

After that moment, she vowed to do two things: to follow the direction of the Lord and to press forward as hard as she could wherever He led.

Within three years, Elizabeth reached eighth grade. Class work became too hard for her, and her pace slowed. During that year, her mother seriously injured herself in a fall from their balcony, which required Elizabeth to divert her time and attention away from her studies. On the day of the incident, she told the medics her mother had slipped, but she knew better.

Just as she reached her breaking point, ready to give up her struggles both at school and at home, it happened: a disaster so scarring that she refused to remember it. She ran from it, drowning her pain and sorrow in her studies, until this day on which they were complete.

She sighed and turned around, leaving the window and the memories behind. She whistled the final notes of her tune before calling out, "Mom! I'm home!"

"Yes, sweetie, I heard you. Don't whistle inside; your father needs his sleep," her mother dispassionately chided the manifestation of her joy.

"Mother, I'm back from graduation. My valedictorian speech went well." Her mother's face showed no comprehension of the joyous news, nor was Elizabeth's tender embrace received.

"That's good. Don't forget the trash, sweetie."

Elizabeth missed her mother but preferred the delusional and disconnected shadow of her to the times when her mother woke to reality. The desolation and pitiful sorrow she then displayed scarred Elizabeth more than her lack of affection.

Still, Elizabeth's joy at her great triumph would not be quenched. "I'll get it after dinner, Mom."

"Sounds good."

Smiling through her sadness, Elizabeth rushed upstairs to her room, her sanctuary. Shelves upon shelves of books lined walls of lavender and sunshine yellow, her two favorite colors. Toy starships hovered near the ceiling, slowly moving around the night sky pictured above. Despite the massive quantities of toys, books, and gadgets that Elizabeth owned, she kept everything extremely organized, making everything, even the smallest item, an essential part of the decor of the whole room. Finally, on her work desk, the only area she allowed herself to leave cluttered, sat one of her most prized possessions: a picture of her father, Admiral Young of the New Earth Defense Fleet.

Elizabeth took in the safety and serenity her sanctuary provided with a quick glance. After the pause, she ran and jumped onto her bed, turning in the process so she landed on her back, staring up at the artificial night sky. Her eyes fell on one of the starships, a new model in her miniature fleet, a Galactic-class Star Frigate.

"Someday, someday I will command a starship, and eventually a fleet. Why, in five years when I'm old enough, I'll join the navy, you'll see." She turned to a stuffed on'eta swallow near her pillow. "Yeah, go ahead and laugh, like the kids at school. I know I'm just a little stite² yet. But while I wait, I *will* learn more, go to college, get a few degrees... maybe just two though, because it is a bit harder than high school."

Elizabeth sighed again, pondering which college, out of the many that had granted her full scholarship, she should attend. She found herself looking back up to the stars, whispering a prayer.

“God, where should I go?”

From the dark, lonely corners of her mind, an ominous voice beckoned to her. It whispered to her of that terrible event; it did not want her to forget. Suddenly, she grew afraid, afraid of going to college, afraid that it might happen again.

She hid her face as the painful memory resurfaced in short flashes. There in the darkness, she saw herself sitting on a bench. It was her eleventh birthday. She was not alone.

“No! Get up!” she urged her former self as if her words could somehow change the past.

It was a very dark night. She was licking an ice-cream cone. Someone was with her there, someone she trusted. She looked up to see a boy, who was a year older than herself. He was talking to her.

“Ey!” She plowed her head into a pillow as the memory came back full swing. No longer was she merely a spectator; she now experienced it through her own younger eyes.

“Elizabeth.” His voice had sounded cautious and pensive.

“Mhm?” Little Elizabeth smiled back then frowned at the look on his face.

“You mean a great deal to me.” He placed his hand on her knee.

She patted it and replied, “You mean a lot to me, too. The way you helped me out when my mother was sick, no one else would have done that. Thank you.”

“I did that because of how much you mean to me.” He looked at her more intently, his hand now slightly above her knee, which unnerved Elizabeth, though she was not sure why. She thought nothing else of it, save that it was slightly uncomfortable, as he continued, “All the times we’ve helped each other study, it’s meant a lot.” His hand slid midway across her thigh.

“You’ve helped me more. I’m lost in this grade. This work is much harder than seventh.”

“Yes, it is.” He scooted over, setting off a cautionary alarm in Elizabeth’s mind for crossing into her personal bubble.

“Are you cold?” she asked nervously.

“Not so long as you are here with me.”

“Body heat does do wonders.” Fear alleviated, she wiggled closer to help him warm up.

Comfortable now, she moved to return to her ice cream cone but found her mouth occupied as the boy leaned in and kissed her. She spat in surprise.

“What are you doing?!”

“Don’t tell me you didn’t see that coming. You and me, we were meant for each other.” He tightly squeezed her leg, pushing down to keep her from standing.

Her eyes widened. “What?” Her simple question broke through her shock. School had left no time for dwelling on boys and romantic fantasies, and none of her studies had taught her what to do when they went wrong.

“Think of this as a new thing we can study together. Just relax and learn.” He leaned in to kiss her again, moving his other hand toward her chest to grab her shirt and pull her closer.

“No!” She switched into self-defense mode, but she knew at this point she could do nothing because he was too close. She was in the wrong position, and he was much stronger than her. So she remained tensed but did not react as he unbuttoned her shirt, ripping some buttons in the process. Now the hand previously holding her leg groped for the button of her pants while he used his own legs to pin hers.

“There we go. We can both enjoy this so much. Just don’t struggle,” he whispered in her ear as he finally found and began to loosen her pants.

Then he pulled up to undo his own clothes. Big mistake. Her palm went right up to his nose.

It was not enough force to push it into his skull, but enough to disable him. A knee to the gut later, she was free, running from him as fast as her little legs could take her, buttoning up her pants in the process so they would not fall. She had not stopped until she had reached home.

Now that the memory was over, she rolled onto her back in a pool of sweat. Her mind had buried the event so deep to protect her, and yet it had caused so many problems in her life.

Then she remembered something she had learned in her studies: if one accepts the things that have happened and forgives, then one can begin to heal. With a sigh of release, she now accepted what had happened and tried to move past it. Something would not allow her to let it go; it was as if the memory itself was trapping her the same way the boy had, attempting to rape her mind as he had attempted to rape her body.

“I trust in Jesus, and you have no power over me,” she declared.

The fear ceased. Once her breathing returned to normal, she looked up at the stars with new eyes. There-- that was where she would go to school. The star that caught her eye she recognized as Chelsia, where one of the primary Christian universities was located. That was where she would go.

Smiling once more, she rolled onto her side. Her diary lay on the nightstand next to her. She opened it up, activated its audio log, and began recording.

“Dear Diary,” she said aloud, joy building in her voice, “Today was a good day...”

¹Adessiah- a small continent of New Earth, similar in size to New Zealand. It is considered a suburb of the primary city.

²Stite- Small piece of food, similar to a french-fry.