



# **Black Donald's Coin**

## **by Karen Michelle Nutt**

### **PRAISES FOR BLACK DONALD'S COIN**

“This is a really quick read that you are sure to enjoy. The author packs a lot of story into a few pages and I really enjoyed it. The characters are very interesting and the story is a wonderfully written tale of the struggle of good versus evil. You will have to read it to find out who wins.”

Maura, Reviewer for Coffee Time Romance & More

“For a short story, Black Donald's Coin will sedate the cravings of any reader who desires a touch of mystery, suspense and supernatural. Karen Michelle Nutt has delivered a bewitching, irresistible and extremely enjoyable tale that adds a sinister twist to the old saying, “See a penny, pick it up, all day long, you'll have good luck” I would recommend this e-book short to any reader interested in the Thriller and Suspense genres.”

Amy J. Ramsey, reviewer at Triagon Reviews-[www.trinagon.blogspot.com](http://www.trinagon.blogspot.com)

“This is quite a delightful little angel-devil story, so short that I dare not give too many details, as that would blow the story (and the fun) of it. It is a 5 out of a five kind of story. Very clever and cute.”

Reviewer: Penni, reviewer at Ghost Writers Literary Reviews

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Black Donald's Coin

E-book

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***“Be careful of what you wish for.”***

When George Fraser walks into the office, Dr. Eddie Kantor never thought his soul would be put on the line. George possesses a coin with words embedded within the metal.

Words are powerful, like an incantation used for good or for evil. Could the coin be an instrument to put forth a spell? Eddie is about to find out that some wishes come with a hefty price.

“May angels rest their wings right beside your door.”

~Irish Blessing~

### ***Black Donald’s Coin...***

May I help you?” Dr. Eddie Kantor asked the disheveled man who entered his office unannounced. Eddie scanned his schedule for the day’s appointments. His secretary had handed it to him right before she dashed downstairs to the café for her morning java break. He didn’t have an appointment until ten and that was with Mrs. Anzhela.

He shook his head. Poor Mrs. Anzhela. The woman had millions but couldn’t find happiness. The police believed she was bored with her filthy-rich life and had decided to indulge in shoplifting as a hobby. As part of her probation, she had to see Eddie three times a week.

Eddie realized after the first visit that the woman only shoplifted for attention, lifting things of no consequences. Last week it was a stapler from one of the other offices on this floor. The incident was peculiar. She had taken the time to pen a message where it belonged so it could be returned later.

His professional opinion: She didn’t have anyone in her life that cared about her. All she wanted was to talk and have someone listen to her.

Eddie's attention returned to the stranger. The man counted his steps, mouthing the numbers as he strode to the center of the room. The man appeared distraught, his body tense with nervous unease, a definite candidate for psychiatric help or at the least, somebody who needed to be put back on his meds. The man stood about five-foot seven with unkempt hair, which was in dire need of a good shampooing. His dark eyes were sunken deep within his skull and the grayish pallor spoke of poor eating habits or perhaps a recent illness. Maybe he thought this was the oncologist's office. It wouldn't be the first time someone had made that mistake. "If you're looking for Dr. Hirst, he's next door," Eddie offered.

The man stopped counting steps and glanced up with a television-stare as if he couldn't tear his gaze away for fear he might miss something.

Eddie snapped his fingers, hoping to draw him out of his trance. "Hello, sir?" He snapped his fingers again and the guy blinked and refocused. Eddie picked up his phone. "If you tell me your name, I'll call Dr. Hirst's office for you and let them know you'll be right over."

"My name?"

"Yes, your name." He waited.

"George." The stranger's voice came out in a gravelly whisper, obviously from lack of use. "I'm George Fraser," he said it as if he wanted to test the sound of it. He must have decided it was his name for he nodded and glanced at Eddie. "I'm George Fraser," he said again with confidence.

"Mr. Fraser do you want me to call Dr. Hirst's office for you?"

His brows furrowed. "Who's Dr. Hirst?"

Eddie placed the phone back on its receiver. "Is there something I can do for you?"

George licked his lips and eyed him for a moment before he counted the steps to the front of the desk. He pulled out the chair and plopped himself into the seat with a deep sigh.

"Mr. Fraser, do you have an appointment scheduled?"

George didn't answer, but reached for the wedding invitation on Eddie's desk that he'd received yesterday. His college buddy's son was getting married. George

put the invitation down then grabbed the picture frame next to it. He stared at it for a long moment. "Is this you and your wife?" he asked.

"Yes," Eddie answered.

"You're at a luau in Hawaii. I've been to a luau," George mumbled more to himself.

"It was our fifteenth anniversary," Eddie offered, hoping to draw the man into a conversation so he could determine what he should do with him. "I surprised my wife with the holiday."

George studied the photo again, glancing at Eddie as if comparing the likeness. He must have concluded the blond-haired gentleman with the blue eyes in the photo resembled him enough. He put the frame down. "I was sent to you."

Eddie glanced at his schedule he had taped to his desk with today's appointments. "I don't seem to have you—"

George put his hand over the paper. "I have to be here. I have to be here now."

Eddie paused and gauged the situation carefully. George's actions alone proved he was a man frantic to hold onto any sliver of hope he could. How could he turn the troubled man away, when he knew he had the time to see him? "Very well, Mr. Fraser." Eddie took a seat and folded his hands on top of his desk. "May I ask who sent you?"

At the question, George pulled at his collar and droplets of perspiration beaded on his forehead. "Black... Donald Black," he bit out nervously as he glanced behind him. Eddie had the distinct feeling George feared this man would materialize out of thin air and cause havoc.

"I don't believe I know a Mr. Black."

George swung around and stared at him with disbelief. "He's an evil old man." He reached across the desk and latched onto Eddie's hands, holding on tight with a will forged from fear and desperation. "Black appears harmless, dressed in a fine suit, but he tricks you, and in doing so he wins your soul."

Eddie felt a dark premonition work its way up his spine and he struggled to pull his hand away as if George's contact was the conduit for the anxiety. He must

remain in control or he would be pulled into this man's hysteria. "Calm down, Mr. Fraser. I won't be able to help you if you lose your temper."

With a jolt, George suddenly ended the tug-o-war with Eddie's hands, causing the psychiatrist to slam back against his leather chair. Eddie cleared his throat and took a ragged breath as he eyed George. He nervously straightened his tie. "Better," he said only to convince himself that the situation was under control. "Now why don't you start from the beginning and tell me why you're here."

"Yes, the beginning." George's head bobbed up and down until he met Eddie's gaze. "I'm not crazy," he said with conviction. "I haven't always been like this, you know."

"How so?" Eddie asked.

"This," George said, looking down at his attire in disgust. "I'm a lawyer—was a lawyer," he corrected. "I had a prestigious career at Montes, Lieberman and Fraser—a law firm based out of Los Angeles. I lived in a 2.5 million dollar home with my wife... Candace," he choked back a sob. "We would have been married for ten years next month."

"What happened to her?" Eddie asked believing he may have found the reason why George walked into his office.

"Happened?" George's eyes pooled and his cracked lips trembled. "I happened." He pushed himself from the desk and stood; clearly agitated by the way he paced the carpet. "I should have never let Black convince me to take it," he murmured under his breath. "I knew it was too good to be true, but I didn't heed my own warnings. Stupid, stupid." He hit his forehead with the palm of his hand. "You're so stupid."

"Mr. Fraser." Eddie kept his voice steady, hoping to draw George back to the present. "Mr. Fraser, please take a seat."

George stopped in his tracks, his gaze clashed with his, startled and upset.

"It's okay, Mr. Fraser."

George took a deep breath and lowered his hand.

Eddie waved to the chair George had just vacated. "Please."

George slumped like a deflated balloon, his feet barely moving with his shuffled movements toward the chair. He finally made it and plopped down in the seat. He

rubbed his hands over his face as if he could rub away all his worries. If only life could be so easy.

“What happened to Candace, Mr. Fraser?” Eddie coaxed.

“I didn’t mean to,” George pleaded and met his eyes.

Eddie raised his brows and George looked away again with a ragged breath. He sat there for a moment, obviously collecting his thoughts. When he looked back his eyes were lucid, more so than when he first had arrived. “Dr. Kantor, have you ever made a wish, but didn’t really mean it as one?”

“I’m not sure I know what you mean. Give me an example.”

“Say you want a new car and you say...” he waved his hand in front of him. “You say ...”

George obviously wanted him to finish the declaration. He could play along. “I wish I had a new car.”

“Exactly!” George slammed his fist on the desk. “You mustn’t ever say that. You have to be careful what you wish for because you may just get it.”

“Did you wish for something to happen to Candace?”

George took a ragged breath and ran a hand through his hair. “It’s not what you’re thinking.”

“Enlighten me then.”

“We were happy, Dr. Kantor. I loved my wife. Everything was good in our life—until I forgot. I became too arrogant. I thought I could control this and have all I wanted, too.” He met Eddie’s gaze and for the first time the psychiatrist witnessed remnants of the man George used to be—strong and confident.

*What had happened to this man?* Eddie wondered but refrained from voicing the words aloud.

“I was wrong not to be cautious, Dr. Kantor,” George said. “I was too greedy to see the mistake I was going to make and Candace, my beautiful wife, paid for my sins.”

“How? How did Candace pay?” Eddie feared he was about to hear a confession to a murder. He squirmed in his seat. Perhaps he should call a halt to this session, but then George spoke and he remained silent.



“She took a nosedive from s hotel balcony.”

Eddie swallowed nervously. “Did you ...”

“Push her?” George finished for him.

“Yes, did you push her Mr. Fraser?”

George leveled his gaze on him.

The silence roared loud in Eddie’s ears and his heart thudded one... two... three times before George shook his head.

“No, but what I did, produced the same result. Do you know what happens to a body when it hits concrete from five stories up?” It was a rhetorical question and Eddie treated it as such, remaining silent until George collected his thoughts to move forward with his tale. “Candace was my life, Dr. Kantor. I want you to know that.”

“It’s traumatic to lose the one we hold dearest to our heart,” Eddie told him, knowing he would be lost if his wife were to die.

“Yes, but it is far worse when you were the one who caused the death. The bitter agony wells inside of you, crippling you until you can’t think straight.”

Eddie sat there for a long moment, digesting what George told him. He knew he treaded on shaky ground with George. One wrong word and the man would retreat. The fact that George stepped into his office proved he was ready to confess what he had done to make his wife jump to her death. Maybe the man hadn’t pushed his wife intentionally, but something had happened, something traumatic enough that a woman jumped to her death. George admitted he was the one responsible for his wife’s demise. He’d rather George went downtown to the police station to give his confession there. Maybe it wasn’t too late. Maybe he could still convince him he should do just that.

George’s low chuckle caused Eddie to frown. “What’s so funny, Mr. Fraser?”

“You,” George said and laughed again. “You’re so obvious. Let me assure you, Dr. Kantor, I don’t need council of that sort. Candace’s death was ruled a suicide since I was across country when she fell to her death. I was closing up a case here in L.A. and she decided to go on ahead to New York. She was meeting with a woman who wanted to display her artwork in a gallery. Candace was thrilled. She worked

very hard. She deserved to have her time. She called me from the hotel room. I could hear the excitement in her voice.”

George retold the tragic day with such vivid color that Eddie could visualize the event clearly in his mind.

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*“Darling,” Candace’s sweet voice floated toward him through the phone. “Gina Phillips wants all my paintings.”*

*“That’s wonderful, Candace,” George told his wife full of pride. He admired her talent and now the world would see it, too.*

*“I know I can’t get my hopes up,” Candace said, “but I pray someone will want at least one of the paintings.”*

*“You’ll do fine. I bet you’ll sell every one of them. Matter of fact, I know you will.”*

*“You’re sweet, George.”*

*“It’s true. You’ll sell every painting. You’re talented, Candace and soon everyone will know.”*

*“Thank you, George. Please hurry and finish your work so you can join me. I’m standing on the balcony in my room, looking out over the city and missing you.”*

*“I already have my flight booked. I’ll be with you this time tomorrow.”*

*“I’ll be waiting,” she said before she rang off.*

*George tapped the pencil on the desk. Then he took a deep breath and made his request. “I wish for Candace to be a famous artist.”*

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George came out of his reverie and glanced at Eddie. “Do you know how an artist becomes famous overnight?”

Eddie shook his head.

“They die. There’s nothing like a death to raise you to stardom. Attach a suicide and you have people snatching up your art as if they’re getting a Van Gogh.”

“I see.”

“Do you, Dr. Kantor? Do you really see? I made my wish and Candace died because of it.”

“Mr. Fraser, wishing for your wife’s success didn’t cause her to jump. You aren’t responsible for—”

“Pay attention to what I’m saying!” George screamed over Eddie’s words. “Black gave me this.” He fished through his pockets and pulled out a coin the color of dull copper.

“He gave you a penny?” Eddie asked, his brows furrowing. How did the coin play into all this?

George stared at the coin, twirling it in his hand as he spoke. “It looks harmless enough, doesn’t it?”

“It’s a coin, Mr. Fraser.”

He nodded. “I can see now why you’d think it resembled an ordinary penny. However, appearances can be deceiving.” His gaze slid to Eddie’s. “There are words embedded in the metal, making it powerful.” He folded his fingers over it, forcing his hand into a fist. “It’s evil, Dr. Kantor. It makes even the ones with the strongest faith too weak to resist its allure. At first, you’ll believe it is a dream come true, but in reality, it will make every jagged piece of your worst nightmare come alive.”

“It’s just a coin,” Eddie insisted.

“No! No, no, no.” George shook his head so hard; Eddie feared it would snap from his neck. “I wished upon it. I wished for success and was made a partner. I wished for other things and they all came true. I wished for my wife to be a famous artist. I made it happen, but she never enjoyed the honor because my wish killed her.”

Eddie had seen this before—George Fraser was suffering from a form of survivor’s guilt. He wasn’t able to save Candace and he wanted to be punished for it. “If you truly believe the coin is evil, get rid of it.”

“You can’t just throw it away like it was yesterday’s newspaper. I’m responsible for it. To toss it on the ground would leave it open to anyone. An innocent might find it.” He shifted in his seat and cleared his throat. “See a penny pick it up and all day long you’ll have good luck,” George recited the saying in a singsong voice that sent a chill through Eddie.

“Mr. Fraser ...”

George stopped singing and looked at Eddie. “Dr. Kantor, we should reflect on what luck entails. How it affects someone else. My good fortune could ultimately mean your suffering. You see, someone always loses.” Tears pooled in his eyes and his Adam’s apple bobbed up and down as he swallowed a gulp of air. After regaining his composure, he spoke again. “Providence comes with a hefty price.”

Eddie was about to speak when his intercom buzzed. “Dr. Kantor,” Lori, his receptionist spoke. He was glad she was back from her break. He looked at the clock on the wall and realized it was after ten. “Um... I know you're with a patient, but I do not see him on the schedule and Mrs. Anzhela called to say she’s on her way up,” Lori told him, most likely curious to know who the walk in had been.

Eddie pressed the button on the phone. “Mr. Fraser will be up front in a moment. Make sure he fills out the new patient forms.”

“Will do,” Lori said. “And Mrs. Anzhela?”

“When she arrives, let her know I’ll be right with her.” He glanced at George as he opened his appointment book. Lori kept all the appointments up to date in the computer at her desk, but he still liked his day planner for a quick reference. “I’m sorry to cut this short, Mr. Fraser, but my ten o’clock appointment will be here soon. I could pencil you in at... let’s see... ten tomorrow.”

George licked his lips and rubbed his scruffy chin.

“Dr. Kantor,” Lori’s voice came through the intercom once again. “There’s a...” she seemed to hesitate, an uneasiness crept into her voice. “Mr. Donald Black here to see you.”

George stood so abruptly that his chair flew back and hit the hardwood floor with a clatter. He backed away from the desk pointing at the phone. “Don’t let him in here. Whatever you do, don’t let him in.”

Eddie pushed the button down on the intercom as he eyed George. The blood had drained from his face, making his complexion a pasty white. “Lori, tell Mr. Black to have a seat. I’ll be out to speak to him in just a moment.”

Eddie came around the desk with his hands palm down as he motioned with them for George to remain calm. “It’s all right.”

“No, it isn’t all right. You’re in danger. That man out there is pure evil.”

“Okay, if you say so. Why is he here, Mr. Fraser? Why would Mr. Black want to see me?”

George covered his face and his body shook as he sobbed. “Forgive me. He wanted a good soul.” His voice was muffled beneath his hands as he confessed. “It’s more of a prize to corrupt a good soul. You have to understand that everyone has wants. Everyone has a price that will turn him.” He looked up again and sniffled. “Dr. Kantor, the coin is ravenous for greed and I have failed it. I want nothing now that Candace is gone. Black made another deal with me. Find a good soul and he’d set me free.”

Eddie didn’t believe the nonsense about the coin and its ability to grant wishes, but he did believe George thought it to be true. George feared the man that waited in his reception room and he needed to know why. It was the only way he’d be able to help George heal. “Listen, we’ll talk to Mr. Black—”

“No, don’t talk to him.” His gaze darted to the door. Cold fear lit the depths of his eyes.

“You can return the coin to Mr. Black,” Eddie suggested.

His gaze swung back to him. “That’s what he wants. Then he can give it to someone else. Don’t you see?”

“Wouldn’t this be better? You could wipe your hands clean of it.”

George blinked back tears. “This is the end,” he murmured, his words an agonizing sound of defeat. “I’m going to die.”

Before Eddie could ask him what he meant, the door swung open. An older gentleman, with thinning gray hair sauntered into the room, followed up by a distraught Lori. She tucked her long blond hair behind her ear and her blue eyes met his with worry. Eddie waved his hand to her that it was okay. She nodded with relief and closed the door behind her as she left.

“Mr. Black, I presume,” Eddie said as he took the steps to greet him.

Mr. Black’s mouth slid into a smile as he held out his hand. Eddie glanced at the offer. He hesitated as George’s words haunted him: *He’s pure evil*. He shook his head at the absurdity of his qualm. He gripped Mr. Black’s hand. A jolt of energy shot up his arm. Something on the edge of his conscience warned him of danger. Did

he know Donald Black? The name struck a chord of recognition, but before he could decipher what it meant, Eddie met Mr. Black's gaze. Pure terror, dark and foreboding washed over him like a tidal wave. Eddie jerked his hand away as if burned and stumble back a step. He blinked rapidly and the sensation of threatening shadows dissipated immediately as if they had never been there.

George glanced warily from Eddie to Mr. Black like a condemned criminal waiting to be led down to the gas chamber. "Why can't you just leave me be, Black? Haven't I suffered enough? Wasn't losing Candace the ultimate price for the wishes granted?" His voice was a harsh whisper, the words nearly choking him.

Mr. Black clicked his tongue. "Now, now, George. We had a deal and you know what that deal entailed. What kind of business man would I be if I let your contract slide?"

Eddie didn't know how these two knew each other, but it was obvious it wasn't a loving relationship. He knew raw fear when he saw it. And George was petrified, his eyes darting back and forth, looking for a way out.

"May I ask how you know this man, Mr. Black?" Eddie asked.

"He's one of mine, of course."

Eddie flinched when Mr. Black's gaze touched him. He gulped back the uneasiness he felt. He wouldn't let this man intimidate him. "Excuse me. What do you mean, he's one of yours?" Mr. Black's nostrils flared and his eyes narrowed. Eddie no longer saw the blue of Mr. Black's eyes, as he was drawn into his snakelike gaze. He felt himself drowning in despair as if those eyes had witnessed millions of years of heartache and relished in the fact. Eddie blinked and turned away.

"It's time for Mr. Fraser to go," Mr. Black stated with no room for negotiation.

George shook his head and backed away. "I won't go with you."

"Oh, but you must." Mr. Black straightened his tie and tugged on his coat sleeves. "If I recall, it was our deal."

George licked his lips. Sweat glistened on his brows. It was obvious he was trying to think of a way out of the situation. His eyes lit up. "He knows." George pointed to Eddie. He revealed the coin and he held it up as a beacon of the truth.

"Does he now? Hmm..." Mr. Black's lips curved, but there was no humor there.

Eddie wondered why this would make a difference. What game did Mr. Black play? How did he manage to take control of Mr. Fraser's life and reduce him to this sniveling shadow of what he once had been? He had to protect George. He had to make George see that Mr. Black couldn't harm him. Eddie cleared his throat. "Mr. Fraser believes the coin is —"

"Evil!" George screamed and pointed to Mr. Black. "He claims it will bring you luck, but it is all smoke and mirrors. All of it is an illusion. Whoever believes the coin will bring them luck, will end up selling their soul to the devil."

Mr. Black chuckled, a sharp bark of laughter. "I suppose if you're superstitious..." he shrugged his shoulders.

"Maybe Mr. Fraser would like to give the coin back to you," Eddie suggested.

"Would you, George?" Mr. Black looked at him. "You know what you must do to give it back."

He shuddered. "No, I won't do it. You can't make me."

"Of course not, George." Mr. Black shrugged. "It's your choice. It always has been your choice."

"Yeah?" George shook his fist in the air, his eyes looked wild, his last threads of sanity were unraveling as he spoke. "Then my choice is to..."

"Be careful, George," Mr. Black warned, making Eddie look at him curiously. There seemed to be more going on here than met the eye. He thought of asking for Mr. Black to explain the meaning behind his words, but something warned him he didn't want to know.

"I wish," George repeated. The perspiration on his face glimmered like morning dew. "My wish is..." His eyes beamed as if he thought of the perfect wish. "I wish that I don't have to live another day with this damned coin." He shook his fist in the air.

Mr. Black remained silent. Once again his lips slid into a smile that didn't quite meet his deep-set eyes.

George's triumph over his declaration drained away to fear. His eyes bulged as he shook his head violently. "Noooo! I take it back." George's gaze shifted away

from Mr. Black to the door, and in a desperate move to escape from whatever hold Mr. Black had on him, he darted for it.

“Mr. Fraser.” Eddie went after him. He couldn’t let him leave in the agitated state he was in. He could harm himself.

George ran out of the office and down the hall to the elevator. He pounded on the button, but as soon as he saw Eddie followed him, he turned and fled. Eddie went after him, chasing him through the downstairs’ lobby and out to the street.

Traffic was fierce as cars sped by with horns blaring. George teetered on the edge of the sidewalk and Eddie reached for him, to pull him to safety. He grabbed George’s shirt, but the man twisted and the material slipped through his fingers. George’s hands flayed out as he fell backward, his eyes widened with fear. The coin flew out of his grasp, hanging in the air like a falling leaf as if it attempted to stay afloat.

It all happened so fast and Eddie was powerless to stop it. A rush of air blasted by him and the sickening thud pierced his ears as the bus smashed George against its grill like a pesky bug.

Screams of disbelief joined the honking horns and the other noises of the street. People rushed by him to see if they could help George, but Eddie stood there helplessly paralyzed. He knew it was too late for George, who had been condemned to his fate. George’s words came back to haunt him. “My wish is that I don’t have to live another day with this damned coin.” Words were powerful like an incantation used for good or for evil. Could the coin be an instrument to put forth the spell? Where was it—the coin? He looked for it, but he couldn’t find it.

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After Eddie made his statement to the police, giving his account of what happened, he made his way back to his office. Lori met him at the door. Her somber expression told him she already knew what had happened to Mr. Fraser. She glanced toward his office and back to him again. “Mr. Black is still waiting for you,” she told him, wringing her hands. Then she whispered, “He gives me the creeps.”

Eddie knew how she felt. “I’ll take care of him.” He straightened his tie and entered his office, closing the door behind him.



“Hello, Dr. Kantor,” Mr. Black said. He looked like a harmless old man, but his eyes, the mirror to the soul gave him away.

“George Fraser is dead, but you already know that, don’t you, Mr. Black?”

“He wished it.” He shrugged indifferently as if a loss of life meant nothing to him.

“I somehow don’t believe being smashed by a bus was what he meant.” Eddie walked over to his desk and froze. His gaze latched onto what lay between his files and the appointment book. He shook his head in disbelief. The coin George had been holding sat there, begging to be picked up. Eddie’s head snapped up and his gaze locked onto Donald Black’s. “How did the coin get here?” Eddie knew he saw it fall from George’s hands, a second before the bus slammed into him.

“Does it matter? It’s only a coin. Isn’t that what you said, Dr. Kantor? But then maybe it isn’t an ordinary coin. Maybe it can grant you your deepest desire.” He weaved his tale of good fortune as a spider spins its web, making it difficult for the prey to escape.

Eddie studied the coin again, his hand hovering over it. Something clicked in his mind. If he accepted this gift, he would be walking the knife-edge of danger. The thought barely crossed his mind before another surfaced. There would be no turning back. He shoved his hands in his pockets for fear he may be tempted. “Who are you truly, Mr. Black?”

The old man studied his fingertips with bored amusement. “I think you know.” He looked at Eddie, cutting all pretense of politeness.

George’s choice of words hung in the room as a warning—the coin is evil, to accept it would be selling one’s soul. Eddie licked his lips suddenly feeling parched. He heard this story before or a version of it. He glanced at his bookshelf lined with journals and medical reference books, but he also had a shelf of myths and legends. He strolled over to the bookshelf. His hand skimmed over the books until he found the one he was looking for. He pulled it out and turned to face Mr. Black. “I picked this up at a Scottish Festival this year.”

“I don’t believe I’ve read it,” Mr. Black said as he glanced at the title. “Scottish Legends to Fear. Interesting title.”

Eddie didn't let Mr. Black's indifference stop him from voicing his fears. "You're Black Donald as the Scots coined you or should I simply call you—Beelzebub or do you prefer Lucifer?"

Mr. Black threw back his head and laughed. "Well, aren't you the clever one."

Eddie had hoped Mr. Black would have denied the claim, but the man stood there smug and pleased that all pretenses could be dropped.

"I suggest you leave with your coin of deception and never come back here," Eddie said. "I'm not interested in what you're selling."

Mr. Black sighed heavily. "What a prize your soul would be." He met his gaze. "Fine, I shall take it back on one condition."

Eddie's eyes narrowed. "Which is?"

"If you could have anything in the world...anything...what would it be?"

"I have all I want." He moved behind his desk. He placed the book down and his gaze landed on the coin. It glistened like a bright shiny penny, polished and never touched. Could it truly grant any wish? His hand hovered over the coin as thoughts of paying off his mortgage came to mind.

Mr. Black strode forward. "Tempted, aren't you."

Eddie opened his mouth to say something, but fell silent when the door to his office flew open. Mrs. Anzhela, with her high society persona, strode in with her Armani suit and Gucci handbag. With all the commotion this morning, Eddie completely forgot she had an appointment. He walked over to her. "Mrs. Anzhela, I apologize, but we must reschedule."

Mrs. Anzhela didn't say a word, but moved around him and stared down her nose at Mr. Black. "I don't believe we will reschedule. This gentleman has overstayed his visit." She sauntered over to the desk and took a seat, probably already taking inventory of what she would lift.

Eddie learned from the beginning to hide his pens and paperclips. They were small and could easily be stuffed into her purse. Eddie was about to address Mr. Black again, when he remembered the coin. "No!" he screamed as he ran toward Mrs. Anzhela, but she already had the coin in her hand. "Put it down, Mrs. Anzhela,"

Eddie warned. “You don’t want anything to do with that coin,” he coaxed as if she were holding a loaded weapon.

“Oh, you are quite right.” Mrs. Anzhela smiled and stood up to face Mr. Black. “I believe this belongs to you.” Mrs. Anzhela held up the coin to the light.

Mr. Black blanched, but recovered quickly. “I should have known you’d be lurking around this soul,” Mr. Black spat. “Couldn’t you come up with a better name than the Russian version of messenger?”

“Oh and Donald Black is so clever.” She smirked.

Eddie ran his fingers through his hair. “What is going on here?”

“It’s your lucky day after all,” Mr. Black said between clenched teeth. “Your guardian angel has seen fit to protect you.”

“My guardian— What?” How could Mrs. Anzhela, the socialite, who was a kleptomaniac be his guardian angel?

Mr. Black clicked his tongue. “So smart you are, Mr. Kantor, but yet so naïve. You know who I am, but you don’t recognize who Mrs. Anzhela is. Did it never occur to you the old biddy didn’t steal anything of importance? She lifts things to manipulate the situation to her liking.”

“Manipulate,” Mrs. Anzhela huffed. “That is such a nasty word.”

“Whatever,” Mr. Black snapped. “Call it whatever you like, but the results are the same. Really, stealing a stapler so the two secretaries could meet.”

Eddie frowned then realized what Mr. Black meant. The stolen stapler... Sandy and Philip... They announced they were getting married. His gaze landed on the wedding invitation sitting at the edge of his desk before his gaze fastened onto Mrs. Anzhela. Had all her petty crimes been for a good cause?

Mrs. Anzhela gave Eddie a sympathetic smile, but she didn’t explain herself. Instead, she turned toward Mr. Black—Black Donald, or whatever name he went by. “Return now to the fiery depths of hell,” she demanded. “This soul is not yours.”

“This isn’t over,” Mr. Black said as he waved his hands in the air and whirled into an inferno of flames, leaving behind the coin in his wake. It shone bright with temptation.

See a penny pick it up...

Eddie's nose wrinkled in protest as the stench of sulfur filled his nostrils.

"The coin, Mr. Black," Mrs. Anzhela said with annoyance. "No one here has accepted it."

The coin vanished as if it was never there.

Mrs. Anzhela turned and faced Eddie. "You're a good soul, Dr. Kantor. I know firsthand." Before Eddie could question her—and he had a million questions, she disappeared. There was no flashy exit. No billowing puffs of smoke—with one blink of his eyes she had vanished. Then he saw the feather floating ever so softly as it made its descent. He reached out and grabbed it, immediately the feeling of great joy washed over him, cleansing him of the evil he had been forced to witness.

He was still relishing in the euphoria, when he picked up his phone and called his wife.

"Hello," Mary answered.

"Hi, gorgeous."

"Eddie?"

"Is there someone else who calls you gorgeous?"

She chuckled. "No, but if you could see me..."

"I'd still call you gorgeous."

"Well, aren't you the charmer. Are you about finished at the office? I'll put dinner on the stove."

"No, don't. Let's go out."

"Out? Are you okay, Eddie?"

"I'm fine," he reassured her.

"You don't sound fine." She could always read him.

"Let's just say—it's been one hell of a day."

The End.

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## About the Author

Karen Michelle Nutt resides in California with her husband. Though her three children are grown and starting their own adventures, she still has a houseful of demanding pets.

When she's not time traveling, fighting outlaws, or otherworldly creatures, she creates book covers at Gillian's Book Covers, "Judge Your Book By Its Cover".

Whether your reading fancy is paranormal, time travel or contemporary romances, all her stories capture the rich array of emotions that accompany the most fabulous human phenomena—falling in love.

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