



FINDING ELIZABETH

A short film

by

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INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

Subjective camera throughout.

An empty desk in a class of students - the noise of a white board being cleaned.

Camera turns to a MALE TUTOR [40], he sighs at the empty desk.

TUTOR
(to Camera)
Ah, Elizabeth, Elizabeth.
(beat)
You knew her when you were kids?

FEMALE VOICE (O.C.)
She stopped corresponding with me
two years ago. I'm trying to find
the Elizabeth I knew, for answers
to what happened.

TUTOR
I was shocked when I heard the
news. Teachers think they know
their students...

A shuffling noise and he turns to catch the eye of a disgruntled student, MELANIE.

The Tutor back to us through the camera.

TUTOR (CONT'D)
Her eyes always had an inquisitive
look. An intelligence that belied
her attitude.

MELANIE (O.C.)
Attitude?

TUTOR
She questioned everything you were
teaching, as if challenging you.
She was her own person.
(shrugs in resignation)
What happened to her, happened. I
certainly didn't see it coming.

MELANIE (O.C.)
You know what? I'm getting sick of
everyone talking about her.

Camera on Melanie who looks directly at us.

MELANIE (CONT'D)
 I'll tell you about friggin,'
 Elizabeth. People are going to tell
 you how -
 (air brackets)
 -'special,' she was. She just
 wanted to be the centre of
 attention. To stand out from the
 crowd, dressing in black Goth. Her
 heavy make up and eyes done like a
 fuckin' Panda...

TUTOR (O.C.)
 Melanie!

She glares at her tutor then back to us.

MELANIE
 She was only interested in
 Elizabeth. She was manipulative and
 worked people to her own ends.
 'Special,' my ass! Given the
 circumstances, what I have to say
 might not be nice. But I'm glad
 I'll never see her again. Her and
 her attitude!

INT. COLLEGE CAFETERIA - LATER

The camera enters. In the B.G. Behind the serving counter, a
 WOMAN [20's], short hair, large earrings with fingers full of
 rings.

Camera goes to a nerdy YOUNG MAN [19], on his own, a message
 satchel over his shoulder.

He removes ear buds, his movements in an embarrassed, shy
 manner.

He nervously clears his throat, then to the camera.

YOUNG MAN
 You want to know about Elizabeth?
 Why? What's the point?
 (beat)
 There's always someone poking
 around I suppose? If not you, it
 would be someone else.
 (beat)
 Yes, she was my friend. She always
 looked after the underdog.
 (beat)
 (MORE)

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

She took time to know me, know what I mean? "Bullies in a group of their peers," she'd say, "are insecure. So draw strength from that."

FEMALE VOICE (O.C.)

You sound like you were fond of her.

YOUNG MAN

Fond of her? I loved her. One day, out of the blue...she...

(hesitant)

I don't know if I should tell you this.

FEMALE VOICE (O.C.)

We were friends and lost touch. I'm trying to find her through others in what they found in Elizabeth.

YOUNG MAN

You mean your trying to come to terms with what happened?

FEMALE VOICE (O.C.)

(pause)

Yes.

He blushes at a memory then gives a shy account.

YOUNG MAN

Well, she unexpectedly asked if I had ever been kissed. I said, yes. "No," she said. "I mean, have you ever really been kissed?" Then she kissed me slowly. I had never been kissed like that before.

FEMALE VOICE (O.C.)

That would not surprise me of Elizabeth.

YOUNG MAN

(shy smile)

I told her I loved her; she laughed, not in a piss-taking way. In a, 'you're cute' way.

(beat)

To me, when you found Elizabeth, you found something that made you feel good about yourself.

FEMALE VOICE (O.C.)

Really?

YOUNG MAN

People only saw her hiding behind that Goth persona.

FEMALE VOICE (O.C.)

What do you mean, hiding?

YOUNG MAN

Her Goth character was like a shield so she could get to know people.

FEMALE VOICE (O.C.)

You mean like she didn't want to show the real Elizabeth?

The Young Man thinks before speaking.

YOUNG MAN

I think so. But she wanted to explore people, find out what made them tick. To me, she had an inner calm, an inner love. Now, that love has gone from my life. I'll never see her again.

INT. COLLEGE SECURITY CONTROL - LATER

A small security room with CCTV, desks, and radios.

A heavysset, SECURITY GUY [50's], is about to settle into coffee and sandwiches when the camera intrudes.

He sighs and puts down his sandwich to speak to us.

SECURITY GUY

(to camera)

You the lady that's got permission to wander around the college asking questions?

FEMALE VOICE (O.C.)

About Elizabeth, yes.

SECURITY GUY

Yeah, yeah. No one could have predicted what happened to her. Know what I mean? Everybody was stunned, a girl like that.

FEMALE VOICE (O.C.)
What do you mean, "a girl like
that?"

SECURITY GUY
Independent, always in trouble. I
don't mean drugs or alcohol.
Elizabeth wasn't one of the herd.
The others didn't take to her -
being a Goth, an' all.

FEMALE VOICE (O.C.)
She give you trouble?

SECURITY GUY
(chuckles)
You'd be surprised at the
Elizabeth, I found.
(beat)
How can I put it? She didn't like
authority, and always fought
against what she seen as injustice.

He lifts his sandwich for a bite.

FEMALE VOICE (O.C.)
Can you give me an example?

Reluctantly, he puts his sandwich down to face us again.

SECURITY GUY
Well, for a start, she parked
wherever she wanted. In designated
areas for tutors, etc. Look, let me
show you.

He clicks on his keyboard to bring up CCTV on a monitor that
we watch. A parking area with the sign, 'TUTOR PARKING ONLY.'
An old car pulls up into one of the slots and a Elizabeth
exits the car.

Black dyed hair, dressed GOTH style with Gothic bracelets and
necklaces. Her make up with dark ringed eyes complete the
picture.

She looks at the CCTV with a smile to give the middle finger
then saunters away.

SECURITY GUY (CONT'D)
That, is Elizabeth. Ignored my
instructions, usually gave me the
finger. But always with a smile.
I'll miss her.

EXT. CAMPUS GROUND, BENCH - LATER

The camera approaches the WOMAN from behind the cafeteria counter sat on a bench.

She has a melancholy attractiveness about her as she speaks to us.

WOMAN
(to camera)
So you found out about me and
expect me to say something?

FEMALE VOICE (O.C.)
I'm exploring how others found her,
to see if there is a clue as to why
it happened.

A look of conflict on the Woman's face.

WOMAN
She was selfish! That's what she
was. Selfish! An out and out bitch!
(tears start)
Do you know I have MS? Twenty five
years old and I'm diagnosed with
MS. She had to be a bitch about it!

Her anger eases as she pulls out a photograph of Elizabeth that she shows to the camera.

Elizabeth with a fun smile on her face and a Gothic cross pendant playfully held in her teeth.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
She had a quality that I found
attractive. We were in my place one
night, and she addressed my MS like
some seductive TV voice-over. "You
have MS," she said, "not just any
MS...you have lovely MS."
(beat)
The way she said it made me feel
special.

She wipes away the tears of memory.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
I remember her gentle touch of
putting my hair behind my ear. She
said there were no guarantees in
life. That having a disease was
like a love that invaded your body,
because it seen you as special.
(MORE)

WOMAN (CONT'D)

She asked if I had ever been kissed. I said, yes. "No," she said. 'I mean have you ever really been kissed?'

The tears stream down her face.

FEMALE VOICE (O.C.)

We can stop, if you like?

The Woman shakes her head, still to camera.

WOMAN

Elizabeth gave me the most gentle kiss. Like a soft breeze.

(beat)

But! She was a bitch! Because I found in Elizabeth a love that I never knew existed. Now she's gone! I needed her and all she's left me with are shadows. Shadows that I can't find in the dark. What happened to her, means I've lost her forever!

INT. ELIZABETH'S BEDROOM - DAY

Elizabeth's MOTHER [40's], enters, a forlorn figure who holds tissues in her hand. She sits on the bed.

MOTHER

(to camera)

This is her bedroom....or was her bedroom.

B.G. Walls display a mixture of contradictory posters, Pink, eSoterica and Doris Day. Almost lost between the posters, a small shrine to the Virgin Mary.

Elizabeth's mother lovingly caresses the duvet cover. Then looks back at us.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

I've not changed a thing in her room since that day.

A sad smile.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Her dad can't come to terms with what's happened.

(beat)

We'll never have grandchildren.

(MORE)

MOTHER (CONT'D)

We ask ourselves over and over. Why Elizabeth? We never thought for one minute...no one did. She was a defiant child, but you couldn't help but love her.

(beat)

You knew what she was like.

FEMALE VOICE (O.C.)

I remember when we were twelve. She beat up a boy who threw a cat over a fence.

The mother - a fond smile of the memory.

MOTHER

I forgot about that.

(beat)

Someone told me our children are only on loan to us. You have to let them go when the time comes. But what do you do when the child is lost to you? Never to be Elizabeth again? We should have tried to find her, find what she really wanted. Now, we've lost Elizabeth.

DISSOLVE TO.

INT. ROOM - DAY

ECU of Elizabeth's eyes.

CU on her face that is serene. No Goth makeup, a clear fresh complexion of calmness, an expression of inner peace.

A distant faint echo of an ELDERLY FEMALE voice that gets louder to fill the room.

MOTHER SUPERIOR (O.C.)

Elizabeth? Elizabeth? Elizabeth?

On the third Elizabeth, we see her - as a NOVICE NUN standing with the MOTHER SUPERIOR.

The Mother Superior smiles and Elizabeth smiles back.

MOTHER SUPERIOR (CONT'D)

It is time to take your vows my child. You have renounced the worldly name of Elizabeth, and you will now be known, as Sister Marie Louise.

Elizabeth bows her head as the Mother Superior smiles in understanding.

ELIZABETH

God has found me, and I have found
God.

FADE TO BLACK.