

“Eskimo Pie In The Sky”

Sarah Bowden
sarahkatherine.bowden@gmail.com
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*(Elizabeth tells a story to the audience. Her
memory stands next to her.)*

ELIZABETH

There's this old story in my family I got used to hearing over and over. It started in ...

MEMORY

1941.

ELZABETH

Oh, somewhere in the 1940s ...

MEMORY

(Murmured under Elizabeth's next line:)

1941. 1941.

ELIZABETH

Geez, Doc, it's on the tip of my tongue, I really hate it when this happens.

MEMORY

1941!

ELIZABETH

1941, that's it! So it starts back in 1941, when my grandma walked into an oak-walled office, not unlike this one.

MEMORY

Mrs. Ellison, so pleased to meet you!

ELIZABETH

And after thanking the Free Press' newly-crowned Society Editor for her time—

MEMORY

I'm so excited to talk with you about this opportunity.

ELIZABETH

Grandma got down to the meat of her interview.

MEMORY

If you'd like to look at any of my clippings, I have them right here in my purse.

ELIZABETH

I've already reviewed your credentials. How about we just chat, one gal to another? ...
Dammit! I don't remember what Grandma said next.

MEMORY

"Daddy, Daddy, the ice cream man's coming down the block! If you don't buy me an Eskimo Pie, my skin'll melt, I'll just be bones, and YOU'LL BE RESPONSIBLE!"

ELIZABETH

No, that's just what Great-Grandpa said she sounded like as a kid.

MEMORY

"You whipper-snappers might not be so impressed by the majesty of the Grand Canyon, but after you see my five hour slideshow tonight, you'll wish you'd been strapped on that donkey with me."

ELIZABETH

Last Christmas, and it was unendurable!

MEMORY

"If you've found a unicorn in the backyard, little Elizabeth, I guess we've got no choice but to keep it. Now dry your tears and, for heaven's sake, put your clothes back on."

ELIZABETH

You know what, that one never happened. The point is:

MEMORY

Mrs. Ellison, I don't understand why you're asking me what cleaning products I prefer. Wasn't this interview meant to be for a position in the features department? Why aren't we talking about interview experience or my sense of story structure?

ELIZABETH

Well, I was planning to talk to you about all those things. Except. Your resume is a little misleading, about your credentials.

MEMORY

What do you mean?

ELIZABETH

At the top here, you list your name as J.M. Stephenson.

MEMORY

Jane Marie Stephenson. That's my name.

ELIZABETH

But no Mrs. before it, no Ms., even. Just J.M. You can see this might read as deceitful.

MEMORY

I don't know what you're suggesting, my being a lady has nothing to do with—

ELIZABETH

One look at you, my publisher goes through the roof. A woman will never write more than gossip or gardening on this or any major paper, that's half-mandated. Understand?

MEMORY

You know, I really don't.

ELIZABETH

And she walked out and left. But here's the thing, Doc—Grandma stopped applying to newspapers after that! Fresh out of college, after having her own column and features byline for four years, and she quits! Becomes a librarian. Crushed dreams are terrible to hear about at any point in your life, but once she found out I wanted to study journalism, she took me aside, and ran the whole ordeal down for me, as a weird "We've come a long way, baby!" My parents confirmed the tale, and that was that. Until it wasn't.

MEMORY

Mrs. Ellison, so pleased to meet you!

ELIZABETH

Because she told me again, Doc. And again. And again.

MEMORY

I'm so excited to talk with you about this opportunity.

ELIZABETH

Every time she saw me, every time I reminded her who I was and what I was studying.

MEMORY

Mrs. Ellison, so pleased to meet you!

ELIZABETH

There's this loop now, it haunts me. Every time I forget, even for a second ...

MEMORY

Mrs. Ellison, so pleased to meet you!

ELIZABETH

When I lose my train of thought, I see this. Her, creeping at the edge of my mind.

MEMORY

I'm so excited to talk with you about this opportunity.

ELIZABETH

And the relief in her eyes when she thinks she knows where she's going ... I recognize it.

MEMORY

I'm so pleased to meet you!

ELIZABETH

And I don't have any more words. And I tried brain-teasers and fish and vitamins, but it's not enough! It's gotta be a problem you can only fix with pills or shock therapy or—I'm at the end of my rope, Doctor. I'll try anything, understand?

MEMORY

You know, I really don't.

ELIZABETH

Please. I don't want this to be my last story, too.

(Lights fade on Elizabeth and her memory.)