

It was the morning of May 9th, 2005. Lizzie Johnson woke up to the sound of the rain pouring down outside. It was 5:00am, the sun had not even rose, but Lizzie was wide awake and ready to start another day. She walked down the hall toward the kitchen, only to find her father passed out on the couch after another night of drinking. She could smell the liquor and beer all over him. As Lizzie stood there she closed her eyes and imagined life when her mother was still alive. She couldn't help but smile. Before her mother died, everything seemed perfect. Her father never drank, had a job, and loved his family dearly. She dreamt of the vacations they took and the places they visited. Her past was such a happy time. Lizzie often found herself in these daydreams whenever she needed to get her mind off of reality.

Returning to her morning chores, Lizzie made breakfast, walked the dog, and made lunches for her brothers and sister. She then woke them up, fed them, and sent them out to catch the bus. She never imagined this would be the last time she would tell them she loved them, for it was the last time she would see them.

With her senior year coming to an end, Lizzie grew more and more impatient as each day passed. She longed for the day when she could take her siblings away. Away from the from their abusive father, from the tears, and away from the horrible memories that existed in that house. She quickly cleaned

up and left for school. She didn't want her father to wake up for the fear of what he might do.

It may be hard to imagine but her father was never like this. He used to love spending time with his family, but after his wife passed away, he fell apart. He escaped reality and drowned his emotions through alcohol everyday. Sometimes he would start before Lizzie even got home from school. When he was drunk, he was very unpredictable. The kids learned to just stay clear of him when he was drunk and not get in his way. Sometimes however, that was impossible to do. One summer when Lizzie was fourteen, she was cooking dinner. Her father entered the kitchen to get another beer when Lizzie accidentally bumped into him. She didn't even have time to blink when her father swung at her. He struck her face, knocking Lizzie to the ground. He then yelled at her for being such a clumsy brat and returned to the couch as if nothing ever happened. Over time, Lizzie just learned to shrug it off, crying wouldn't help anything.

At school, her whole image changed. Lizzie walked through the halls with a smile from ear to ear. She never told anyone about her life at home or about the abuse she saw and received each day.

On the morning of May 9th, Lizzie arrived to school a little late and rushed to her first class. It was English, her favorite. She loved to read, especially fictional stories. Lizzie would use her imagination to bring her places other than

the reality she was faced with. Deep down however, she knew her love for English came from her mother. Before she passed away, she was an English teacher and even published her own book. Even though it wasn't a very popular book, Lizzie had read it about one hundred times and added it to her best sellers list.

The rest of the day passed rather quickly. Before she knew it, Lizzie found herself counting the last few minutes down in her last class. She was anxious to get to swim practice and catch on all the gossip with the girls in the locker room. She also had a student council meeting but that didn't seem as exciting. Just as the bell was about to ring, the loud speaker came on with an announcement for Lizzie Johnson to report to the main office. She hurried to the office very curious to know what was wrong. When she arrived the secretary told her that she must go home immediately because of a family emergency. With a look of shock mixed with confusion, Lizzie left school and rushed home.

Pulling into the driveway, Lizzie felt like something was not right. It was a feeling of discomfort and danger. She just shook it off and told herself everything was okay, maybe just one of her siblings was sick. She walked through the front door, realizing the kids weren't even home from school yet. She didn't see their shoes kicked off on the floor or their jackets hanging on the coat rack, but what she did see was her father sitting upright in the couch with a look she had never seen before. It was not a good look and Lizzie knew she was

in a lot of trouble. She slowly backed up as her father stood up and stumbled over to her. She tried to reach the door and run but he grabbed her just in time. He slammed the front door and threw Lizzie to the ground. She wanted to know what she had done wrong but was too afraid to make any type of sound. She closed her eyes and awaited what would happen next.

Her father was screaming the whole time, but due to his alcohol content, he was slurring his words together making it hard for anyone to understand. He told Lizzie to get up and look at him. She attempted to do this but was too afraid. His patience grew weak, and he threw her on the ground again, only this time it didn't stop there. Repeatedly he kicked her and punched her in the stomach. He wasn't letting up and the carpet grew more and more red as Lizzie grew more and more weak. Blood was everywhere, and yet there was still no stopping her father. He was going crazy and Lizzie could do nothing. With one last breath, Lizzie opened her eyes and glared at her father. Her eyes rolled back and closed, she could take no more. It was 4:00 pm on a warm spring day when Lizzie Johnson's life came to an end.

In the following days, Lizzie's body was buried, and her father was sentenced to life behind bars. It was the biggest shock to the west coast. On May 9th, 2005, Lizzie finally fulfilled part of her dream. She set her siblings free and made her story known to the world. If only she had been saved herself. Now all that is left is a tombstone with a name that will never be forgotten and a memory

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that will live on forever.