

Jena Heath: You're learning a little bit about the country of your birth? You were telling me before that you've been to China?

Lizzie Sterner: Yes. I have been to China.

Jena: How old were you when you went back?

Lizzie: Eleven.

Jena: That's pretty recent. Tell me about that trip.

Lizzie: I think three of the weeks we went to [indiscernible] for a week. My train got cancelled to 8AM, so I didn't get to be there for a whole entire week. I got to be there for one day. Then I had an interview. I got to go on TV. I got burnt before the interview. We left. We went to go see the Forbidden City, the Great Wall of China, the capital of China, and many more.

Jena: We need to rewind for a minute. I want to go back. Number one, AAM. What's AAM?

Lizzie: We were supposed to leave there I think 8PM and then we get to stay there for at least a week. Then it got cancelled. We had to go to the other sights so we can have enough time to stay there. We went there at 8AM, and then stayed there for a day, and then had the interview. Then I saw my orphanage. Then I got burnt.

Jena: The interview and the TV. We need a little explanation. What was that about?

Lizzie: I get to go on TV to find my birth parents.

Jena: You went back to your province. You went to your orphanage. What province and orphanage were you from?

Lizzie: [sp] Bingbu.

Jena: [sp] Bingbu Province. How do you spell it?

Lizzie: I don't know.

Jena: What orphanage? Do you remember the name?

Lizzie: No. I do not remember the name.

Jena: I'll ask your mom. You went back to the orphanage. What was that like?

Lizzie: Weird because it was modern. My sister had an old-fashioned city. I had a modern city.

Jena: Was that different from what you had expected?

Lizzie: Yeah.

Jena: What did you expect it would be like?

Lizzie: Like what my sister saw, motorcycles everywhere. There was cars.

Jena: The orphanage was modern. Was it big?

Lizzie: Yes. It was big. It was really tall.

Jena: Were people nice? Did you meet the Ayís and the orphanage director and all that?

Lizzie: Mm-hmm. She got burnt too.

Jena: One moment. We're going to get to the burning part. Now I'm interested in the TV interview part. How did that happen?

Lizzie: My mom said that we were going to have an interview. I didn't know if it was going to be a reporter or a TV show. I saw that there was cameras. I got to go on TV.

Jena: You were explaining who you were, and why you were there, and that you would like to find your birth mom? They're going to put something on the news? Is that the idea? Tell me about this search for the birth mom. Is that on your mind a lot?

Lizzie: No, not much.

Jena: How come you're doing it?

Lizzie: I just want to find them.

Jena: What do you think you'll say if you find them? What are you curious about the most?

Lizzie: Why I got left near a hospital and a theater.

Jena: You want to ask them why?

Lizzie: Mm-hmm.

Jena: Are you nervous about the possibility that you might find them? Does it make you nervous at all? Tell me about that.

Lizzie: I don't know.

Jena: You don't know why you feel nervous, but you do?

Lizzie: Yeah.

Jena: You went on TV. Now, we come to the burning incident. Actually, there are two burning incidents if I was listening carefully. Please, now I need to understand what happened there.

Lizzie: I was just listening. The people were setting down really hot tea. They burnt half of my elbow. I had to stay in the hospital -- no, not the hospital -- but in the bathroom pouring cold water on my elbow for thirty minutes. The director of the orphanage got burnt between her knees. She has blisters.

Jena: Also from hot tea?

Lizzie: Yeah. The hot tea spilled all over me and her.

Jena: I think they need tea handling lessons. You must have toured a lot of the country.

Lizzie: Yes.

Jena: Did you also go to your sister's province? You did this all together?

Lizzie: No. Me and my mom, me and Mulan, were first at China. My dad got there three weeks before. We did all the travelling together.

Jena: That's a really cool trip. What did you think of China? What was your impression?

Lizzie: It was cool.

Jena: What was the coolest thing?

Lizzie: Great Wall of China.

Jena: What was it like to be in a country where everybody looked like you and not many people looked like your folks?

Lizzie: I don't know. I accidently thought that I was in California.

Jena: What do you mean? [laughs]

Lizzie: I was on the Great Wall of China. I was like, "When are we going to get home? I'm starving." I forgot we were on the Great Wall of China. They're like, "What do you mean 'home?' You mean the hotel?" "Why are we living in a hotel? I thought this was California."

Jena: It felt Californian up there on the Great Wall? Do you think you'd like to go back to China and visit more?

Lizzie: Yes. I would like to go back to China.

Jena: If you do find your birth parents, what would you like to happen in terms of knowing them? Are they people you would like to visit regularly or just write letters? Do you think much about, "If I do find them, then what next?"

Lizzie: I don't know. I really don't know.

Jena: Cross that bridge when you come to it, if you come to it?

Lizzie: Yeah.

Jena: Do you know a lot of other kids who are adopted from China?

Lizzie: Yes. Alysia, who's a flute player, was adopted. That's all I know, I think.

Jena: Do you guys do FCC events, Families with Children from China, celebrate the holidays, any of that stuff?

Lizzie: In fifth grade last year we celebrated Chinese New Year. We got to have dumplings. Me, Kaitlin, Vin, and Karina, we're both adopted so we got to celebrate our Chinese New Year.

Jena: That's pretty cool. You have kids around who get it? It doesn't sound like you're isolated in that sense. Do kids ever ask, or did they ever ask questions when you were younger? My daughter, we go to the playground, even when she was three years old, and there would always be some kid at the playground looking at me, looking at Caroline, looking at me. "Is she your daughter?" Did you ever get any of that?

Lizzie: Sometimes.

Jena: How did you handle that?

Lizzie: Very funny. I just say I was adopted.

Jena: Do they ever ask you questions you didn't feel like answering?

Lizzie: I don't know. I don't remember.

Jena: I want to thank you very much for talking to me.

Lizzie: You're welcome.