

Chapter 46 – Elena

After five years in western Europe, it was time to go home. I left everything behind back then. My home, my family. My friends. My whole life basically. I gave it all away for ... well to be honest, I few really good years, if we scratch the last six months from that.

Back home. Back in little Thurmont, Maryland. Not much has changed. It was still my good old home. I even rented the same apartment that I once had before taking my journey across the pond.

It was both an extremely easy but also very hard decision. I had the pleasure to live in Paris, living my dream. Enjoy my career and yet, it felt simply right to be back home.

A new job, a new opportunity. After just three days I knew: I made the right decision. My divorce. My return home. Everything. I had zero doubt. But one thing for sure, I had to revitalize my old contacts. Old friends that I wasn't able to see for five whole years and so I knew, where to go first, especially running into one of my old classmates, Hilda. Hilda opened a bar three years ago and I had seen the pictures she sent me. Now was the time to finally see it in person.

'Hilda!'

'Elena! We are really back! Come here and give me a nice hug!'

I was about to cry, that lucky I was feeling. She was my first friend I saw since my return, which made it even better. And she looked great. Nice dress well made hair. I think it is safe to assume that her bar was running well, even if it was a rather quiet evening until now. Just a few guests but that was good, so we were able to catch up much easier.



'You look fabulous. Europe did you well, darling. Welcome home, Elena. First drink is on the house!'

Free first drink? A thankfully accepted that.

'I'm just happy to be back after so many years. Seeing all the guys and gals from my past and all. Hope they all do as well as you!'

'Hehe, some do at least. But say, what brings you back to the States after all those years?', was she eager to know and for good reason. I totally understood that. I would be exactly the same.

'Well, it's simple. I had to change things up. I wanted to come home ... and I also divorced my husband, which made it even easier for me to decide to return.'

'Oh, I'm sorry to hear that, Elena.'

'It's okay. In the end, we separated on good terms, even if the last few months were a struggle to say the least. In the end, we were just too different. I could have stayed with him and travel trough the world, thanks to his job as a diplomat.'

'Yeah, I heard that you caught a rather big fish, hehe.'

'Maybe. I think on a personal level, it was still good between us, but his career ... ah forget it. Today is not the day to think about that. It is what it is and it's fine. Please, let us change topics. Tell me more about you and your bar. How did it happen and stuff?'

Yeah, it was a clear avoidance tactic on my part, but Hilda was cool with that and thankfully she took the bait and we actually changed the topic until a rather ... interesting moment.

'So, in the end it just all fell into my lap and I took the opportunity', she told me and then her head looked towards the door, as new customers arrived at the bar.

'Ahh, look who we have here!', she said rather excited and I thought, as I was not looking into the direction that I might was someone from our past. Maybe Jimmy? Brendan? Or even Tiffany? No, none of them but in some way, 'Tiffany' was not that far away. At the very least I hit the right family with my guess.

'And she even got company. A lot of company in fact!'

But while Hilda was all relaxed about it, my jaw dropped and all I was able to think was, 'what the FU...erm, funk', because in came a girl surrounded by many other girls. But that wasn't the noticeable thing. No, it was the fact that this girl was ... huge! Even on her knees she was towering and almost touching the ceiling! Was I already drunk? No, this was all real. There was a gigantic, I don't even know how big, girl!

'Don't be shy, girls. Welcome to my place!'

The big girl responded first and I thought to myself, while I was still gawking at her and her sheer presence, that the voice sounded ... somewhat familiar, even if I had never seen someone this ... this ... tall!

'Hello Hilda. We are going out dancing tonight and I suggested to make a little stop here. These are my friends from school and we celebrate our upcoming graduation tonight!'

Graduation. That meant ... this girl was damn young as well! All I had in my mind were two words: What and how?

'Sure thing. Thank you for visiting. Just pick and table. It was a quiet night ... until now. Thanks for giving me some action, girls!'

'Awesome!', the tall girl replied and then she slowly turned her head towards, probably because I was gawking so damn much. I was still not sure if I was hallucinating. Once again, the question to myself, if I was drunk or not but no, this was just my first beer and let me tell you, American beers are nothing compared to European ones.

We looked at each other now. Her looming gaze above me. She then raised an eyebrow, as if she was asking herself, if she knew me. All the while I was simply mesmerized at the sight in front of me. That chick was kneeling but did almost hit the ceiling anyway.

But the longer I looked at her, the more my memories were searching as well. That voice seemed somewhat familiar, and now the face too. And then it hit me.

'D-Dorothea?', I asked this tall girl with a bit of shyness, but it seemed as me asking her if that was her name, she too remembered me.

'Elena?', she asked in a similar tone and that sealed the deal for me. It had to be her.

'Dorothea!', I said now much more confident.

'You know this woman, Dorothea?', one of her friends ask her and she responded with a nod and a smile.

'Yeah. She is ... an old friend of my sister.'

That short pause before the phrase old friend. I knew far too good why she put it there. Context. Her sister Tiffany was one of my classmates and one of my best friends. We even had

a short fling together but in the end we both decided that it was better to stay friends.

‘Would you girls give me a few minutes? It’s been ages since I last saw her.’

‘Sure thing, Have fun in catching up with the past. We will wait for you.’

The girls went to the back of the bar and I jumped from my stool to come closer. With each step she seemed bigger and bigger and I kept asking myself, how she did become so... big. She has blossomed into a beautiful girl, like her sister, but damn was she big!

‘Dorothea. You have become so ... tall!’, I stated the obvious, which made her giggle. I already knew that she was the same sweet child from way back, but now really, really, REALLY tall.

‘I know, right?’

I looked down and noticed, that her knee was the same height as my midriff. Her knee! And I thought that Tiffany was a tall girl. Think again, Elena!

‘Hehe, easy to assume, you are impressed.’

‘Impressed? More like totally shocked!’

That made Dorothea laugh even more and then she changed position from kneel to sitting on the floor, bit still basically as tall as I was standing straight.

‘That’s a bit easier, right?’

‘I still don’t get it.’

‘Remember, what you always said when you visited my sister at our home?’

Of course I did and so I repeated that phrase.

‘Whenever I come over, you seem taller!’

‘Exactly! Seems as that statement remains true after all this time’, she replied and started giggling again and put one of her big hands forwards and even held out her fingers, so I simply had to do the same and put my own hand next to hers. Those hands, they too were so ... big and just like that, Dorothea closed her hand again and fully encased my hand with ease!

‘Wow. I can encase you entire hand just like that, Elena.’

But what surprised me the most was, just how gentle Dorothea was doing this. I mean, at her size everything was done stronger than the regular person and yet, she was careful. That was really impressive and showed me, that she also became a respectful young woman. She did not use her unique size to lift herself above others. No, she was just a regular teenage girl, that happened to be ... however tall she was!

And so we kept talking and talking and Dorothea let her friends wait. After a good while she invited me to her group and introduced everyone to me. Nice girls, really nice girls. What I found funny was, that one of the girls in the group was also really tall, and muscular too! Her name was Charlene and she told me, that she was from France (which was quite easy to hear from her accent) and how came to the U.S. and was able to stay. Also a nice girl and in any other group of girls, she would be the towering one but not with Dorothea. She made this easily 2-meter-tall girl look tiny!

Dorothea and I decided to that it would be cool if I would join them for the rest of the night and so I did, even after they decided to move on to their actual goal. The dance hall!

'Say, is your sister fine and all?', I asked Dorothea while walking towards the hall. I haven't seen Tiffany in ages. All I knew was, that she fulfilled her dream and became a doctor.

'Tiffy is fine and happy!', Dorothea told me. She still called her Tiffy, which I thought was extra cute from her. Such a sweetheart, I must repeat.

'I am glad to hear that, but... I still cannot believe, how much you've grown, Dorothea. I mean, I remember looking up to you and all, but...'

'But nothing like this, right?'

'You can say that again! I cannot even fathom just how tall you've become. I have to know your...'

'My height? Well, I am 10'2', she casually dropped as if it was nothing special.

10'2, 310 centimeters. Yeah, thanks to my time I was not used to use feet and inches, so I had to convert the number in my head first.

And that sweet smile. Dorothea clearly enjoyed being this tall, she always did, even when she was a small child. And after my initial shock, I think I took this information quite well. She was still sweet Dorothea, just well over 10ft tall!

And let me tell you, dancing with someone almost twice your own height is definitely something different! It's easy to assume that the girls and I were in the center of attention in the club.

They all were great dancers, even Dorothea with her size was quite talented. A moonwalk when Billie Jean started? No problem for us. The Thriller dance when a remix of Michael Jackson's Thriller started? Easy as pie!

We danced all night long and had a blast and at the end of the night, I even had to show Dorotea my old 'special move' I always did with her sister. You know the movie 'Dirty Dancing'? Even if not, you most likely know exactly THE MOVE I meant. You know, when Patrick Swayze picks up Jennifer Grey and lifts her in the air? Yeah, that one. Tiffany and I were masters at this and so I thought it was just fitting to teach her younger sister the move as well. Passing of the torch and all that wonderful stuff.

Dorothea never did the move, but I trusted her ... or rather just her size and the strength that came with size a frame, hehe. So I ran towards her, she grabbed me with the perfect timing and in one quick swoop I was up in the air and stretched my arms to the side, and I felt as if I was flying. It was the perfect finale to a perfect night.

What can I say? I was just happy to be back ... and to stay! I even contacted Tiffany the next day and we too caught up on old times. If there was any doubt deep in my mind, it was now fully blown away. Elena Myers was here to stay!

Chapter 47 – Ms. Smith

Graduation. One of the most important events in young students lives. So many years spent in school passing tests, sometimes failing them. Learn and use that knowledge to get somewhere in life. This is how I always saw things.

This is why I wanted to become a teacher in the first place: help young people to grow as people. Giving them the tools to become successful in whatever future career they would end up in. Therefore, it was always a beautiful evening when the class would meet for the last time.

That day was different though. So completely different. I was standing in my empty classroom, remembering all the young students from that class. I saw them sitting before me, as they did for so many years. It was such a special class, especially ‘thanks’ to one student in particular.

Before you ask, let me clarify one thing. No, I did not mean in because of some sort of favoritism or anything like that. Far from it. You see, as a teacher, you just will always remember specific students for the rest of your career, the rest of your life in fact. Sometimes because they were such talented students, sometimes because they were the biggest and most respect-lacking little brats you have ever known.

Dorothea was different. She was no brat, far from it. She was a gentle soul and when she struggled, you really wanted to help her. She was probably an even better historian than me with mathematics as her main weakness but when it matters, she overcame that weakness and passed, which made me happy.

No, I also will never forget her because she was so nice and friendly, but simply because of her appearance. I mean, how

could you forget about a girl, that already was taller than everybody else and simply never stopped growing? Yes, you heard right. Dorothea was a girl that got taller and taller. Every summer break I wondered how much taller she would be and I was always wrong. I always underestimated her growth.

Now, at the end of her time on this school, she was almost twice my height. Yes, she was and gigantic young girl, let me tell you.

Sigh

I closed my eyes and thought back. Over those last few years with this class. It was such a wonderful time. The whole class in general was a pleasure to work with and this was just one of the reasons why I was rather sad that day...

Still almost an hour before the graduation would start. I went towards the windows and looked down to my old class. Some of them were already outside of the school. Dorothea was one of them.

She was leaning on one of the walls and some of her classmates were standing around here. None of them were taller than her legs. She dwarfed them all and they all had to look up towards her. An image, I was more than familiar over the last years. They looked so tiny next to her.

They were all dressed up for the occasion. They all looked so fine and ... mature. When I first met them, they were little children, now they were about to leave the school as young adults. Bittersweet.

To no surprise at all was Dorothea nicely dressed in a purple jacket with a purple skirt and dark-purple boots. That girl loved that color so much and today she looked especially

pretty in them. All of them did and they had a good time down there and I hoped that they would not notice me looking down to them. It was their moment alone, not mine.

One of the windows was opened a little bit and so I was able to hear, what they were talking about and I listened in for a bit.

‘Say, now that we have graduated. What career will you pursue, Dorothea? Have you already made up your mind?’, Mika asked her and that put a little smile on my face, just as it did on Dorothea, as she put her hands into the air in an asking pose and said exactly that.

‘Honestly? Still no idea, haha!’

Yeah. Dorothea really struggled with that decision. I remember. We even had that talk one time as well because she came to me with a similar question and now, she used the same argument, as she did when she asked me:

‘There are simply so many things out of the question due to my growing size.’

That was a straight up fact and when she used that argument in our talk, I started thinking about it. How must it be to live a life as a well over 10ft tall woman? I was not able to fantasize about it, but this young girl truly DID live such a life.

‘Come on, Dorothea. You really have no idea what to do next? This is so unlike you!’, Laura commented and rightfully so. Dorothea struggling with that decision was truly unlike her and thankfully her friends fed her with ideas.

‘I can totally see you become like some big movie star!’, Mika threw into the conversation, which made Dorothea nervously giggle. ‘I mean, you already were on TV!’

‘But I simply have not the skill to remember a script word for word. I like things more ... erm ... freestyle’, Dorothea argued.

‘Hmm, one place you could succeed with ease without needing a script would be as a model, especially with looks like yours!’, Jen then tried next.

‘Aww, Jenny, you are so damn sweet and thanks for the compliment, but ... I think I am just not the type of girl for that.’

‘What a shame ... those long legs of yours would grant you millions of dollars on their own!’

That made the group giggle and laugh ... and me too to be honest but it once again made me remember when Dorothea talked with me about this topic as well.

‘I know it sounds weird coming from a ever-growing girl like me, but in the end all I want to do is to live a normal and regular life. I might be twice as tall than most people, but in my heart, I am a simple and ordinary person. Nothing more, nothing less!’

That statement alone let the respect I had for this young girl grow even more. She knew from such a young age, that she was different, that no other person in the world would be able to see the world as she did and yet she stayed so ... normal. That was impressive in my eyes.

‘Hey...Dorothea?’

‘Yes, Michelle?’

‘How about ... you become a history teacher or something like that? You helped me so much to finally understand and

actually learn about world history and you were able to explain it with ease. Have you thought about it?’

Okay, I am biased as a teacher and I know that, but to be completely honest ... I could see that happen and Michelle was right. Dorothea was by far the best student I ever had when it came to history.

‘Maybe this would be fun and who knows ... maybe I should think about it!’, Dorothea smiled and laughed happily. One thing would be for certain: she would be a teacher **NOBODY** would dare to disrespect thanks to her sheer height alone! Anyway, the girls kept talking for a bit and it was almost time for the ceremony, when the last students arrived.

Well, time to finally leave the window. I returned to my podium, looked one more time on the still open attendance book and closed it.

SIGH

Memories and emotions almost overcame me and the reason was simple. There was one final thing my class was not knowing. Not yet at least and the closer the ceremony came, the harder it became for me.

Almost at the door. One final look into this very room, I spent so many years in, then I closed my eyes and felt some tears forming. Keep it together, Georgia!

‘Time to turn off the lights’, I said with an almost broken voice and after I just did that, I went to fulfill my role ... for the last time.

They were all gathered in the auditorium. They all waited for my arrival. Deep breath. Collect yourself, Georgia... okay, I was ready.

I probably showed more emotions than I originally wanted to because when I stepped up towards the podium and looked in all their faces, I noticed Dorothea's worried face. 'Thanks' to her position, she was probably the only one able to see my face when I entered the auditorium.

But when I was starting my opening speech, all those emotions were wiped away, or rather hid behind my professional façade.

'All those years of studying finally came to an end. All of you did it and today we celebrate your graduation', was my opening bit and with every additional sentence, I was more and more the old professional Ms. Smith, as I was able to forget about my personal future ... for the moment.

I revisited key moments of their time at this very school and some memories let them laugh, some probably wanting to forget about certain aspects et cetera but overall, it was a positive trip through memory lane.

After my speech one student after another was called by me and came up to me on the podium. I gave them their diploma and they all got a moment to talk to the audience because do not forget that some of the people you spent so many years together, after finishing school you will no longer see them, so this was your chance for a nice goodbye.

One after another until only a few were left. One of them was Charlene. She was originally an exchange student but she was able to stay in the U.S. thanks to her family moving here and therefore she graduated as part of this class. If it wasn't for Dorothea, this girl would have been the towering one. Charlene was a 6'9 gym-loving athlete and when she shook my hand after receiving her diploma, it made me realize once

again, just how huge a 6'9 girl looks ... a girl, that was getting dwarfed by Dorothea. Speaking of Dorothea...

'And last, but certainly not the least ... Dorothea Lockhart. Please come to me!'

Yes, I actually planned for her being the last to receive her diploma, mainly because of her worried look when I first came into the room, but I will get to it.

Dorothea looked down towards the microphone on the stand and started joking in her usual manner.

'That little thing is a bit too low for me to properly use', she said with joy, struck a little pose and then gave her little goodbye speech without it before getting her diploma.

Almost done. Only one thing to do...

'Before all of you leave, I would like to get your attention for one final time', I said with a raised hand and everyone looked at me again.

'I don't know, if you got the news but ...'

This was so much harder than I even thought it would be.

'... but you are not the only ones having their final day at this school. Today, you leave this place ... and so I have too as well.'

Silence. All those looks on me woke my emotions inside me again. I wanted to act strong ... but I think I just failed that...

'Ms. Smith...', Dorothea, still with me on the podium, said with a sad voice. 'Why have you...not told us?', she asked and I thought to myself on what to say.

Because who would even care if their teacher would go as well, they probably thought. I was so wrong.

Instead, I was not able to respond. I just looked up to her and her face was probably even more sad looking than mine in that moment. She then even started to kneel down, to me closer to my size but even while kneeling like she just did, she was two heads or so taller than me.

‘This school will miss you, Ms. Smith. You were the best teacher; anyone could wish for. You did such a fabulous job ... with all of us and if I ... if anyone of us would ever become a teacher as well, I ... we ... could only dream to be anywhere near as good as you were to us’, Dorothea spoke with emotion in her voice and to show these emotions even more, she even started to give me a warm hug, which made us both starting to cry.

I think you understand even better now, what I meant earlier with ‘some student you will never forget for the rest of your life’. Those nice words, that warm hug to say goodbye to her teacher ... it was the sweetest send-off I could have ever gotten.

Thank you, Dorothea. Should time ever come, I will repay those sweet acts you showed me!