

Eat Pray Love

As a successful woman, Elizabeth Gilbert seemed to have an impeccable life any women in their thirties were supposed to want. However, after six years' marriage, she was appalled to find herself on her knees on the bathroom floor, facing 'a great lake of tears and snot,' a veritable Lake Inferior of all her shame and fear and confusion and grief, for a myriad of successive nights. Desperately, she dove out of her marriage and jumped into a passionate romance, which only left her with even more agony and sorrow to deal with. In the depth of her despair, she embarked on the spiritual quest: to find pleasure in Italy, devotion in India and balance in Indonesia.

Through Elizabeth's detailed narrative, I felt as if my spirit actually flew out of my torso and join the spiritual seeking with her. As she explored the Italian way of celebrating life, she redefined pleasure and learned to appreciate the beauty of doing nothing. Although inevitably, loneliness and depression still struck her mercilessly at times, she gradually regained her strength, bravely stepped out of the shadow of the chaos in life. "Ruin is a road to transformation." I was deeply touched by her capacity to recover and to find the strength to get back on her feet even in the darkest time. What I saw through her was the resilience instilled in every human being. Most of the time we tend to search the world outside for the thing we are desperate for; we become despondent when we fail to find it. But what we forget is that it's always there, right within ourselves. To be able to "watch" her transition was absolutely inspiring to me. And once again, I was convinced, as long as we don't allow ourselves to be swamped with the hectic modern lifestyle and take time to look inside, we'll find the strength we need.

Next stop, India. Elizabeth wished to establish some kind of connection with the divine and find the peace within herself. However, she found it extremely hard to quiet her mind during meditation, which made a minute feel like another year of torment to her. But her perseverance in the spiritual path eventually worked out. "Prayers can become stale and drone into the boring and the familiar if you let your attention stagnate. In making an effort to stay alert, I'm assuming custodial responsibility for the maintenance of my own soul." She reminded me that taking responsibility for ourselves can seem daunting sometimes, but it's essential in our quest for happiness. And through her battle, I found hope and faith and the courage to strive for a better life for myself instead of being passive and letting things in my life overwhelm me. Life isn't always rosy, but we always have a choice, either to keep on wallowing in grief and regret or to get up for ourselves and try to make it better. And she definitely helped me to become a fighter for my own life.

At last, she set her foot on Indonesia, where she expected to find the balance but unexpectedly fell in love with the Brazilian man, Felipe. Initially, being head over heels in love like she was with him was intimidating to her. After all, the reason why she began the journey was because she wanted to leave behind the unpleasant relationships she had. Nevertheless, she didn't escape from it. Choosing to embrace all her negative feelings, she gained back a sense of clarity. She was fearful but able to love as if she had never been hurt. "I was not rescued by a prince, I was the administer of my own rescue," she concluded.

It seems that it's hard for a high school student like me to completely understand Elizabeth's circumstance. But in her story, I found things that are all universal and human- fear, sadness, confusion and identity crisis. And without them, we would never know how strong we are. Challenges exist to shape us up into the ones we were meant to be. And that's what Eat Pray Love taught me- embrace myself, never give up and find the voice within.