

# ***Becoming Elisabeth Elliot* by Ellen Vaughn**

## **Week 1: Chapters 1-5**

**Chapter 1, Death in the Afternoon**, begins with a near death and actual death experience. How did the author's juxtaposition of these events underscore the sovereignty of God?

**Chapter 2, Discovering the Story**, describes briefly Elisabeth writing *Through Gates of Splendor*. Were you surprised to find out how long it took?

How did this chapter make you feel about the author of the book? Do you agree with her approach to writing biography?

**Chapter 3: G. M. T.** What new things did you learn about Elisabeth's childhood? What aspects of her family life did you admire? What do you think about G. M. T. (Good Missionary Training)?

What did the picture of Elisabeth greeting her brother in Ecuador reveal about their family?

**Chapter 4: At Any Cost.** The Howards listed guests from 42 countries in their home. How does this make you feel? What effect did Betty Stam's death have on Elisabeth?

**Chapter 5: Cutting Diamonds.** What did you think of Hampden Dubose Academy? Would you send your child there?

What missionary figure most impacted Elisabeth during these years? Why did she have such a profound impact?

## **Week 2: Chapters 6-10**

**Chapter 6: A Very Small Frog** Elisabeth considered herself a small frog in a big pond at Wheaton. What kind of new experiences did she have there? What did her mother think of all the new directions she was taking?

**Chapter 7: "Let Me Not Sink to Be a Clod"** What college activity became one of her favorites? What speaker influenced the direction of her studies?

**Chapter 8: A Refrigerated Rose.** What do you think of Elisabeth's relationship with George? Does the chapter title reflect her coldness to George?

What scripture spoke to Elisabeth about her role in Bible translation?

What insight about herself did Elisabeth gain from her psychology class?

**Chapter 9: Eunuch for Christ.** What do you think of the portrait of young Jim Elliot in this chapter and his emphasis on following the radical call of Jesus? How were Jim and Elisabeth alike?

**Chapter 10: Patience in Alberta.** What effect did Jim's effort at organizing prayer have during his last year at Wheaton?

How did God encourage Elisabeth during her lonely term in Alberta?

### **Week 3: Chapters 11-15**

**Chapter 11: "You made a Universally Horrible Impression..."** What do you think of Jim's seeming fascination with death as revealed in his journals?

How was Elisabeth able to persevere through a five year courtship? Were you surprised by the reaction of Jim's family after Elisabeth's visit? How would you have responded in similar circumstances?

**Chapter 12: Sitting Still.** What good effect did the time of waiting after graduation have on Betty's spiritual life? How did she use her time?

Why did Jim find it hard to admit that he wasn't called to singleness?

**Chapter 13 "I don't feel Much Like a Missionary."** How did Elisabeth view Jim's church, the Plymouth Brethren? What in her background may have influenced that view? How did the Brethren support their missionaries?

How did God answer her cry for help in her lonely NY apartment? How was her relationship with Katherine Morgan to prove of great significance?

**Chapter 14: "I wonder Sometimes if it is right to be so Happy?"** What first drew Elisabeth's interest to Ecuador? What happy family events proved painful to Elisabeth and why did she react like this?

How did Jim and Betty's confused relationship affect Jim's friend Pete Fleming? Whose prayers helped Betty during this time?

**Chapter 15: The Colorful Colorados.** What were Elisabeth's expectations as she entered into a time of ministry among the Colorado Indians? Do you think her expectations are typical of new missionaries?

### **Week 4: Chapters 16-20**

**Chapter 16: The First Death of Elisabeth Elliot.** Did her ministry with the Colorado go as she expected? What effect did the loss of the language notes she had painstakingly created have on Betty? Looking back at that first season of ministry, why did Betty call it a "school year." What did she learn?

What was Jim's condition before they could marry?

**Chapter 17: Finally!** How did Jim's work over the last year suffer a similar fate to Betty's? What was the good outcome of this disaster?

Of the items they packed on the canoes for their new home, did any surprise you? What was life like for the new bride? How did God use all the various skills of both Jim and Betty in their first year in the jungle together?

**Chapter 18: In the Company of Saints.** What was life like in the home of Nate and Marj Saint? What did you think of Elisabeth's birth experience?

**Chapter 19: What Might Have Been.** Did life in the jungle foster a sense of security? How was the ministry among the Indians progressing?

**Chapter 20: Cast of Characters.** How did the scattered missionary community stay connected?

What tribe did the Lord highlight to Rachel Saint? What role did Dayuma play in reaching them? What was their lifestyle and culture like?

## **Week 5: Chapters 21 – 25**

**Chapter 21: Countdown to Contact.** What steps did Nate, Ed, and Jim take to prepare for meeting the Waodani? Why did they decide to keep Rachel Saint in the dark about their plans? Do you think this decision will lead to consequences later?

Where they in agreement about the timing of making contact? What outside factor influenced their decision on timing?

**Chapter 22: The Second Death.** What did you think of the internal division among the Waodani that led them to attack the missionaries?

Pg 157 Several decades later, some who participated in the attack spoke of a strange, additional presence beyond the human beings who were killing and dying on the beach that day. Kimo and Dyuwi, among others, described strange lights above the trees . . . "foreigners" dressed in white cloth . . . and the sound of chanting, which is how the Waodani described singing. Were they angels? God only knows.

**Chapter 23: Christ the Beginning; Christ the End.** How did the Lord sustain Elizabeth and the others during this unfolding tragedy?

Page: 161 In the end the party consisted of twelve soldiers, six missionaries (including a doctor), and ten Quichua Indians. The Quichuas, friends of Ed McCully's, would handle the long, heavy dugout canoes needed to transport the group into Waodani territory.

The unity of prayers, missionaries from all teams, army

Page: 164 "I must refuse to dwell on all that we did together, on the brevity of our married life, etc. I must refuse each weakening thought. It is true joy to think of Jim, without fault before the throne of

God, victor, martyr, overcomer. Oh, the privilege that is mine to have been given such a husband—  
God ‘lent’ him to me for 2 years and 3 months.

**Chapter 24: Through the Gates.** With all of the conflicting emotions after Jim’s death, what is Betty’s one enduring longing? Does this surprise you? How did she find comfort during this season of loss? What unexpected opportunity redirected her life?

**Additional Resource:** Time Magazine’s coverage of the 5 Martyrs.

<https://www.maf-uk.org/story/life-magazine-the-martyrs-story>

**Chapter 25: A Blank Wall.** What test awaited Betty when she returned to her home in Shandia? Who provided encouragement to her during this time? What was the key element required before access to the Waodani would be possible?

## **Week 6: Chapters 26 – 30**

**Chapter 26: “The Eyes of the World Are on That Tribe”** What factors complicate Betty’s relationship to Rachel Saint? How did Cameron Townsend’s attitude complicate this even more?

What was some of the bad side effects of the wide-spread interest in the Waodani that resulted from Elisabeth’s book?

**Additional Resource:** Recording of “This is Your Life” program with Rachel Saint:

<https://youtu.be/fcrRP3blAh0>

**Chapter 27 “If They Kill Me, Better Still”** What unexpected opportunity occurs in the midst of this struggle? What event interrupts this opportunity?

**Chapter 28: A Missionary Hag** What changes were taking place in Betty as she persevered in loneliness and conflict?

What kind of “supportive” communication did she get in the mail?

**Chapter 29 “To Hell with My Zeal”** Did Elisabeth’s and Rachel’s desire to learn Waodani language bring them closer together?

Who else was trying to influence the direction of her life? How did breakthrough finally come?

**Chapter 30: Child Lives among Her Father’s Killers** Living in the Waodani village seems relatively easy, but what long-term problems concern Betty? Despite these problems, was God still at work?

## Week 7: Chapters 31 – 35

**Chapter 31: “Madness, Sheer Madness”** What was Betty’s dilemma when she returned to the Waodani in Tiwaeno after visiting Jim’s brother and wife? How did Betty decide to temporarily alleviate the tension?

**Chapter 32: Home but Not Home.** How did her intention of book writing go? Was it a joyful venture? Did visiting Jim’s family help? What were some of the underlying issues she was dealing with?

**Chapter 33: In the Pit.** Did Betty’s relationship with Rachel improve when she returned? What good advice did a friend send her? What did you think of Kimu’s prayer that **Betty** transcribed?

**Chapter 34: Two Women at the End of the World.** [Nov 1961] What was Rachel’s reaction to Betty’s article about her last trip to the grave site of the five martyrs? Were Rachel’s problems with Betty unique to her? What was the final outcome of their conflict?

**Chapter 35: The Bridges Burn.** What admonition governed Betty’s life when she first returned to Shandia? What help did her “kindred spirit” friend Van bring to Betty? How was Betty finally able to “roll the stone” away and allow God to give her a new vision?

**Additional Resources:** Valerie’s testimony of growing up in the jungle:

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=dfwm8pEGy0k>

: A recent book written by Katheryn Long called *God in the Rainforest*, goes into great detail on Rachel Saint's ministry and its complicated interactions and outcomes. This review of the book summarizes well some of the issues she explores in the book.

<https://www.imb.org/2019/04/22/after-jim-elliott-good-bad-ugly/>

To learn more about Eleanor Vandervort (Van), the friend who helped Elisabeth come to the place of taking a new direction, you can read about her experience in a book she wrote: *A Leopard Tamed*. The introduction to the book was written by Elisabeth Elliot. This review shows how much she and Elisabeth were kindred spirits.

<https://michelemorin.net/2018/06/04/the-missionary-faith-paradox/>

## Week 8: Chapters 36 – 41, Epilogue

**Chapter 36: What Happened Next.** Page 257 summarizes Elisabeth’s life after leaving the jungle. Did any items in this summary surprise you?

**Chapter 37: The Irrelevant Question.** What is the irrelevant question? For Betty, what was the only true measure of a human action?

**Chapter 38: The Relevant Question.** What is the only relevant question?

**Chapter 39: The Dust and Ashes.** What value did Betty give the things that the public admired her for? In the end, who was the only one who truly knew her?

**Chapter 40: The Next Thing.** How did this favorite poem sustain Betty after Jim died?

**Chapter 41: The Problem of Pain.** Why wasn't pain such a problem for Betty?

**Epilogue: A Note from the Author.** What does this epilogue reveal about the author's life as she is writing this book?

**Additional Resources:** Curious about Elisabeth's banned books? This article explains some of it. The author eventually stopped communicating with Elisabeth when their opinions diverged regarding gender issues.

<https://ewc.com/christian-feminist-remembers-elisabeth-elliott-1926-2015/>