

Elizaveta Aleksandrovna Ivanova: Light from the North

Elizaveta Aleksandrovna Ivanova was born in the Suntarksiy Region of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia). She is the mother of three daughters and the proud grandmother of one granddaughter. Elizaveta is the mother of Nadia Noeva, the Women's Voices Project camera woman, translator and fellow traveler on the journey.



Elizaveta Aleksandrovna Ivanova was born in 1934 in the rural Suntarksiy region of Russia's Sakha Republic (Yakutia). She is the mother of three daughters, Nadia, an English teacher, translator and filmmaker, Sahaiya, a manager, and Lena, a violinist. Her son-in-law is a businessman and her four-year-old granddaughter, Elena, is the light of her life.

As a child, Elizaveta grew up as an orphan. "As an orphan I realized very well that I was all alone with no mother or father. I always had this idea in my mind and I had to deal with other people from this point of view most of the time as a child," she said.

"I used to live with different families and though sometimes they would be cruel to me and punish me, I never argued with them and I never had my own opinion whatsoever, because I knew that I had no right to argue with them. If I had argued with them I could have become a homeless person."

Elizaveta said it was nature that gave her strength to overcome her difficulties as a child. "I would draw support from nature, from the trees, from the valleys. I would always go out and sing some songs and I think nature became like my mother and my father at that time. I would go there and express my joy and happiness, my grief and sorrow. Nature was something I enjoyed the most at that time in my life."

"When my dad was dying he said to me that I should become an educated person," she said. "Those were his last words and he would always repeat them again and again. All my life I tried and I did my best to become educated."

“When I finished school I went to the collective farm to work as a milkmaid and I did a lot of different work there. I worked for five years, saved some money and decided to become a student. I entered the University and chose to become a veterinarian.”

Elizaveta said she was a good student. “I studied very well, finished the University and did become a vet. My professors liked me very much and one of them particularly supported me in those years. He would help prepare me for my exams and he was a great support.”

As a veterinary student she was given the task of doing scientific research, but unfortunately wasn't able to finish the research at the time. Later in life she decided to enter the University again and get a second diploma. “That is why I went back and studied biology; to accomplish the task that I was given by the other faculty,” she said. Doing so eliminated a regret she had carried.


“I chose to get married and my greatest dream was to have children,” she said. “I am very proud that I had children. I wanted them to become good people and to accomplish their own life dreams; to be successful in their own lives.”

Although Elizaveta was very happy to graduate from the university, she said her happiest moment in life was when she became a grandmother. “When my daughter was giving birth, I just knew it was happening. When I became a grandmother, I felt in a different way. I feel the sun is different and the world is different. I have something new in my life. It was the greatest moment.”

One of the things that changed in her life as she has become older, Elizaveta said, is her attitude toward what love is. “When you are young, you believe in love. You think that love is something and when you fall in love with someone that person becomes an ideal to you. You think about that person all the time. But as time passes it is interesting to note that attitude toward love changes a lot. It is totally different from what I thought when I was young to what I think as an old person.”

As for advice for young women, Elizaveta stressed the importance of couples being supportive to each other. “They should be peaceful and have a wonderful attitude toward their families, so they can build their own families and have their own children. I just want them to be happy.”

Although she is happy to have accomplished her personal and professional goals in life – including purchasing her own home, something still relatively rare in the Sakha Republic - Elizaveta said her life's greatest accomplishment is her three daughters and granddaughter. “That is my biggest joy.”



***The Sun is Different,
The World is Different***

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