

GO AHEAD
by Jeremy Gable

LIZ

LIZ

Okay, try again.

...

...

...

Hello, my name is Liz Vale-Arries,
and this is my application video.

I'm, uh ...

So, it's two in the morning
here in Waterloo, Iowa,
my fiancée is asleep in the next room,
and this is my third attempt
at trying to make a video for you.

...

...

I keep asking myself,
"What can I say in three minutes
that'll tell you why I should do this?"

...

...

And I think I finally figured it out.

LIZ AND KIM

LIZ

I really didn't think I'd get this far.
It was just ...
So, okay,
so the call was put out a couple years ago,
and, like, anyone could apply.
It was this online thing,
you fill out a form and make a video,
and so I just did it.
Sort of like a "what if".
But then it turned out something like
two-hundred-fifty-thousand people
from all around the world
all put their names in.
And so I was like,
"Well, okay, *that's* not happening."
... And then about a year ago,
they chose semi-finalists,
a thousand semi-finalists ...
and turns out I was one of them.
So I was like,
"Oh, hey, that's cool, I guess,
that'll be a fun story down the road."
'Cause they're only choosing five people,
so, like ...
a half of a percent of a chance
that I'd be chosen, ya know?
And plus, we were planning a wedding at the time,
and I was just, like, in "wedding mode",
just zeroed in on, ya know ...
So anything that wasn't *that* was ...
There was no room for it.
In my brain.
So, ya know ...
went to the back.
... But then today,
they announced one hundred finalists, and ...
yeah, turns out I'm one of them.
So now there's, like ...
a five percent chance I'll be chosen.

KIM

To go to Mars.

Yeah. LIZ

Like, the *planet* Mars. KIM

Well not the candy bar. LIZ

You think this is funny? KIM

... Yeah. LIZ
'Cause it is.
Kinda.
Right?

... How long until ...? KIM

The first launch is in about ten years, so-- LIZ

No, how long until ... KIM
What am I trying to say? ...
until you come back?

To Earth? LIZ

... To your home, yeah. KIM

... LIZ
...
Um--

Oh my god. KIM

Yeah. LIZ

Seriously?

KIM

It's a one-way flight.
I'd help build the first living habitat,
and then ... I'd live in the habitat.
Help get it set up for the next team
that's gonna live there.

LIZ

So you're gonna die on Mars.

KIM

I would *live* on Mars, yeah.
If I got chosen,
which, don't forget,
five percent chance.
... Look at me.

LIZ

...
Seriously, Kim, look at me.
...
It's not gonna happen.
Okay?
I've looked at the profiles of the other finalists, and ...
there's, like, astrophysicists, and all-star athletes,
and people in the military who were Eagle Scouts
and look like demigods and ...
I'm teaching history to seventh graders
in Waterloo, Iowa.
Like, whoop dee shit!
I'm not getting chosen.

KIM

It's not, I'm not ...
There are things, Liz,
certain things, okay,
that may not seem important,
but things that, even so,
are a good idea to tell your wife.
Things such as, "Hey, Kim, just so you know,
I applied for this thing
where I might be shot up into space,
and go to another planet
on this suicide mission kind of thing.

KIM

(CON'T)

Just FYI.”
Stuff like that.

LIZ

Kim--

KIM

‘Cause even if there’s a fraction of a fraction of a fraction of a percent
that you’d get chosen ...
you could still get chosen!
And then I’d only have ten more years with you
before you disappeared into space forever!
... So, you probably should have said something.

LIZ

You would’ve laughed at me.

KIM

I would *not* have--

LIZ

Look me in the eyes, and tell me.

KIM

... I wouldn’t have *literally* laughed.

LIZ

You would’ve rolled your eyes.
No, you would’ve!
You’re rolling them right now!
And it’s not a suicide mission.

KIM

You said you’d die there.

LIZ

You said I’d die there.
And sure, yeah, I *would* die there.
Hopefully of, like, old age.
Again, that’s *if I got chosen!*
Which is *not gonna happen!*

KIM

I get that, fine.

LIZ

Can you just be happy for me right now?
That I even got this far?

KIM

Oh, I'm happy for you.
You think I don't know
how much you wanted to be an astronaut?
Jesus, how many times have you ridden
that stupid gyroscope thing at the mall?
I'm incredibly happy for you.

LIZ

You don't seem happy.

KIM

Because I'm capable of more than one emotion at a time, Liz,
and the dominant emotion right now
is being really super pissed at you for not telling me.

LIZ

It just never came up.

KIM

In two years, it never came up.

...

... You're one of a hundred?

LIZ

Yeah.

KIM

Out of how many?

LIZ

A quarter of a million applicants.
From all around the world.
There was a point-zero-four percent chance
that I'd get this far.

KIM

... That's insane.

LIZ

Right?
I kinda don't know what to do right now.

Okay, so, you're a finalist ...
What's the next step?

KIM

An interview with Peter.

LIZ

Peter?

KIM

PETER

PETER

Curiosity.
It's the most precious fuel known to man.
It puts one foot in front of the other,
moving us forward into the unknown.
When I founded the Invenio Group twenty years ago,
I did it because I was curious,
and I wanted to use that curiosity to explore the world,
figure out how to make us more connected.
And after every milestone in my journey,
I asked myself the same question:
Where do we go from here?
Well today,
I'm excited to announce
our biggest and boldest step yet,
what we here at the Invenio Group
have spent two decades attempting to make a reality:
Invenio Mars,
the first living colony on that red planet next door.
With the help of Invenio's resources,
various third-party suppliers,
and your generous donations,
we will have the first permanent settlement on Mars.
And if you're asking yourself,
"Who do we want to make this brave journey?" ...
Just look in the mirror.
If you want to help the advancement of human exploration,
then click on the link below.
You'll be taken to our application page,
and who knows,
maybe in ten years,
you'll be a part of history.

PETER AND LIZ

PETER
Ms. Vale-Arries.

LIZ
Mr. Ferren.

PETER
Call me Peter.

LIZ
Call me Liz.

PETER
Look at that,
we're already friends.

LIZ
That was easy.
... Are you on a treadmill desk?

PETER
That I am, Liz,
that I am.
I don't know if you know this,
but I started Invenio from my college dorm room.

LIZ
I did know that.

PETER
Did you know that within the first year,
I gained thirty pounds?

LIZ
I did not know that.

PETER
Boom, like that.
I realized that my body was yelling at me,
telling me it wasn't built for the sedentary lifestyle
that comes with office work.
So I slapped a desk on a treadmill,
set it to walking speed
and here we are.

PETER

(CON'T)

I really should have patented it.
You can buy them online now.
I'm an idiot, I could have made a fortune.

LIZ

You're one of the richest men in America.
Don't you already have a fortune?

PETER

Oh, you can never have too much fortune.
You can sit, if you want.

LIZ

I'll stand.

PETER

Cool.
So ... Liz.

LIZ

Peter.

PETER

Mars!

LIZ

Right?

PETER

Congratulations!

LIZ

Thanks!

PETER

You excited?

LIZ

Absolutely.

PETER

You had the physical,
clean bill of health.

Fit as a fiddle.

LIZ

Fiddles *are* pretty fit.
Psych test, fitness test,
background check, all cleared out.

PETER

Even with that open container--

LIZ

Oh my god, what was that bullshit?

PETER

I know!

LIZ

So, what, it was just an open beer on the sidewalk?

PETER

Yeah, just stepped outside for like a second,
this cop car turned the corner--

LIZ

And they pop you.
What was the damage?

PETER

A week of community service.

LIZ

Oh, that's balls!

PETER

Really was!
I spent the next two weekends
picking up trash on the sidewalk,
just *praying* none of my students would see me.

LIZ

Right, yeah, that's something I was gonna ask you.
You teach, uhhh ...
remind me.

PETER

U.S. History.

LIZ

That's it.
And you have a Master's in...
I read your file, I swear.

PETER

Astronomy.

LIZ

Of course!
Which is why you're here.
... Columbia, right?

PETER

Yep.

LIZ

Ha! Got one right!
So, yeah, so ...
going from a Masters in Astronomy from Columbia--

PETER

To being a junior high history teacher.

LIZ

Right.
I mean, you see how that's kinda weird?

PETER

Yeah, well, uh ...
It, uh ...
...
Normally, I'd say something like,
"I'm passionate about the kids."

LIZ

Okay.

PETER

But that's not really true.
They're thirteen and they're the worst.
... I didn't choose this.

LIZ

PETER
Well, I was hoping not.

LIZ
I moved back to Waterloo
to take care of my father.

PETER
... Ohhh, right--

LIZ
And teaching history was pretty much
all they had in Waterloo.

PETER
Yeah, you said that in your, uh ...
What does he, ya know...?

LIZ
Skin cancer.
Did have.

PETER
Good “did have” or bad “did have”?

LIZ
Bad “did have”.

PETER
Shit.
Oh, that sucks.

LIZ
Yeah.

PETER
Oh, man.
That really sucks.

LIZ
Yeah.

PETER
... Man.
... I don't really know what else to, uh ...

Your dad still around?

LIZ

I, uh ...
... I never knew him.

PETER

Really?

LIZ

Leukemia.
Two months before I was born.
He was thirty-nine,
didn't have an enemy in the world.
If I were to guess,
I'd say that's why I was so eager
to hit the ground running with Invenio.
Wanted to get everything done
before I ended up being just like ...

PETER

Yeah ...
...
You know leukemia isn't hereditary, right?

LIZ

I mean, I found that out *eventually*.
Anyway, what were we, uh ...
Teaching!
You a good history teacher?

PETER

I think so, yeah.

LIZ

Good, we need more of you.
It's easy to forget what got us here.
"Those who cannot remember the past,"
and all that noise.
So, the plan is to shoot higher than middle school?

PETER

That's the goal.
But there's not a lot of room
to move up in the district right now.

LIZ

PETER
So just go somewhere else.

LIZ
Well, my wife grew up there,
and she doesn't really want to move, so--

PETER
That's right!
You have a *wife!*

LIZ
Yeah ...
... Is that a problem?

PETER
Not at all!
That's amazing!
You have a *wife!*

LIZ
... Yeah.
It's legal now, ya know.

PETER
Of course, but ...
You're so young!

LIZ
... To be married?

PETER
... Yeah, I guess not, huh?

LIZ
Not really.

PETER
Any kids?

LIZ
Not yet.
She wants to,
but I'm *nowhere* near ready.

PETER
... Okay.
So what does she think about all this?

LIZ
She's, uh...

PETER
It's a shock.

LIZ
Definitely.

PETER
But she's proud?

LIZ
... In her way.

PETER
... In her way.
Interesting.
... What's her name?

LIZ
Kim.

PETER
Kim.
Kim and Liz.
... You love her?

LIZ
... Of course.
Why would you--?

PETER
Why Mars?

LIZ
What?

PETER
Why do you wanna go to Mars?

LIZ

... Well, because I've always wanted to go to space.
And some dude in the Sixties got to go to the moon,
and now, it's like ...
give a girl a chance, ya know?

PETER

Right, but why be the first?
I mean, the plan's to send up teams every two years,
you could do this any time.
You and your wife could even go together down the road.
So what pushes you to the front of the line?

LIZ

I, uh ...

PETER

Let me try again:
What do you think you could bring to the team
that no one else can?

LIZ

... Um ...
I'm an excellent communicator,
and an excellent listener,
I am a ... great team player, and ...
great at problem-solving, and--

PETER

Okay.
... Liz, I'm gonna be straight with you.
We're looking for explorers.
Not people wanting to escape.

LIZ

... I'm not ... wanting to--

PETER

I'm not putting this all together to help you.
You're doing this to help me.

LIZ

I understand, and that's why--

PETER

Thank you.
Really, thank you for coming.
I think you're capable of great things, Liz.
I want you to remember that.

LIZ

... Okay.

PETER

And congratulations on being a finalist!
There are very few people who get to say that.

LIZ

Only ninety-nine others.

PETER

True.

LIZ

...
...
... How many of the one hundred
have you interviewed so far?

PETER

Uh ...
Around thirty-five, I think.

LIZ

How many of them got you to open up about your father?

PETER

... None.

LIZ

And that was after, like,
what, five minutes?

PETER

Sure.

LIZ

You wanna know why you did that?

PETER

... Yes, I do.

LIZ

Because you realized I'm someone you can trust.
Anyone who's good at reading people
can tell that about me.

PETER

Okay.

LIZ

I'm also good at picking out what's important to someone,
like just now, when I implied that you're good at reading people.

PETER

I caught that.

LIZ

I know you did.
I don't know what I can offer that other people can't,
because I don't know the other people.
Figuring out what I can bring is *your* job,
and my hope is that you'd find four other people
who would be a good match for *me*.
So yeah, I'm not an astronaut,
because yeah, life got in the way,
and yeah, I applied to this on a whim,
and yeah, I've had moments in my life
where I wasn't able to realize my full potential,
or had to give up, or settle, or make sacrifices,
or listened when I was told I couldn't do something ...
So yeah, that may look like I just wanna run away.
But when you find yourself quietly crying in the bathroom
because you don't want your wife to know how devastated you are
that you found out Sally Ride passed away
and you never got the chance to meet her ...
that makes you realize something.
Something in you that's unfulfilled.
So ... yeah, sorry.

PETER

... We'll be in touch.

LIZ

LIZ

Well sure, I think it's easy for us to say, like,
"Duh, those are huge cannons, don't go that way,"
But between the smoke and the distance,
the cannon fire probably looked smaller than the musket fire,
because General Phillips didn't understand the difference
between *apparent* magnitude and *absolute* magnitude.
... And you're all looking at me weird.
Okay, we're gonna just sidetrack here a bit,
and don't tell Mr. Worley that I'm teaching you science,
but there are two levels to the magnitude scale.
Think of it like this:
Say that I'm holding a flashlight,
and Haley over there's holding the same kinda flashlight.
They both shine the same amount of light.
That's *absolute* magnitude,
the actual brightness of an object.
But if we both shine our flashlights way over there at Nathan ...
probably to wake him up ...
Haley's flashlight would look brighter,
even though we're shining the same amount of light,
because she's closer.
That's *apparent* magnitude,
how much light an object *appears* to have.
So even though there may be some other object,
just a little further away,
that's actually, like, a little more brilliant ...
you might not see it.
...
...
Which is what happened to General Phillips,
which caused him to, ya know,
get killed along with a bunch of other dudes.
... Any questions?

To read the full script or to inquire about rights,
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