Cooper: Hello everybody. Here we have another podcast, and today, we have one of the most glamorous women, who studies at Oxford. Is it true Elizabeth, that you are voted one of the most glamorous women who study at Oxford?

Elizabeth: I don't think that's true, but I'm most flattered.

Cooper: You don't think it's true?

Elizabeth: No. Who has made that vote?

Cooper: I thought I heard it somewhere.

Elizabeth: Maybe George made it up.

Cooper: You see, Elizabeth is very polite, so even if she knows it's not true, she has this way of ... She doesn't want ... She is very polite, so she might know that what I say is a lie. Instead of saying, "That's not true." She is more polite, and she says, "I don't think that's true." This is the English, even though she's not English, this is the English style. Instead of saying, "I don't think that's true." Instead of saying, "That's not true." She says, "I don't think that's true."

Elizabeth: Because you might not realize that it's not true.

Cooper: So, maybe there was no vote about the most beautiful girl ... not beautiful, the most glamorous girls at Oxford, but if there was a vote, Elizabeth would be one of them.

Elizabeth: That's very kind.

Cooper: And ... believe it or not, she is ... and you should believe it.

Elizabeth: Because, people always tells you the truth?

Cooper: Yes. She has two claims to fame. Claims to fame [foreign language 00:01:44].Okay, the first is, she is George's serious girlfriend. She's George's serious girlfriend, if you don't know, George is my business partner he ... you should know him. If you don't, George is part of English Productive Cooper, okay, and Elizabeth is his serious girlfriend.

Elizabeth: Very serious.

Cooper: And by the way, it's very common in English to say serious girlfriend instead of girlfriend.

Elizabeth: True.

Cooper: This is for people to know ... is that true Elizabeth?

Elizabeth: I think that's true yeah. I've heard people say that before.

Cooper: You have heard?

Elizabeth: Yeah.

Cooper: Once or twice?

Elizabeth: Yeah, a couple of times. No I've heard it before.

Cooper: And the second thing is, Elizabeth was my roommate.

Elizabeth: Yes.

Cooper: She was my roommate at Oxford, when I was doing my Ph.d. So first thing Elizabeth, can you tell us what a roommate is?

Elizabeth: Absolutely, so - [crosstalk 00:02:57]

Cooper: Would you say roommate or housemate?

Elizabeth: So I think roommate might be, maybe it's more American.

Cooper: Okay.

Elizabeth: I think you'd probably say housemate or flatmate in the UK, but roommate is also totally normal to say.

Cooper: So flatmate because of sometimes you don't live in a house, but you live in an apartment. In British English, apartment is flat.

Elizabeth: Exactly, but so Cooper and I we lived in ... well I guess it was a flat wasn't it?

Cooper: Yeah.

Elizabeth: Yeah. It was really a lovely place, and I had such a fun time living with you.

Cooper: And so, by saying flatmate it means we both lived in the same flat.

Elizabeth: Exactly, yeah.

Cooper: Is that true? Was it fun? Or was I annoying?

Elizabeth: No, it was 100% true. I've said it before. I've said that you are one of the best people I've ever lived with.

Cooper: Can you tell me what the worst thing was about being my flatmate? It's okay.

Elizabeth: Okay, I'll tell you. Well it's not because I think it's the worst thing because we had quite a lot of fun with it. But, you just would always lose your wallet. Do you remember? And then you'd come and knock on my door and you'd say like, "I lost my cards" or "I lost my wallet, we need to find it now, because I have to leave now." And then we'd spend like 15 minutes looking for it. And then sometimes you'd find it in your pocket, or bag.

Cooper: That's really interesting. Do you share that ... audience ... so I couldn't find my wallet and sometimes I couldn't find my wallet and it wound up or it ended up being in my pocket. Now by the way, Elizabeth, when I say it wound up being in my pocket, do you understand me?

Elizabeth: Yeah you meant it ended up being there or -

Cooper: Have you every heard the word wound up?

Elizabeth: I have and I use it as well. But it's, that's just a tricky one, yeah.

Cooper: Wind up is a very interesting word because people who learn English as a second language, don't know it. They never know it. Not just in Brazil, they never know wind up and it's very common.

Elizabeth: Yeah, it's pretty common. I guess because it means more than one thing maybe?

Cooper: Well in British English it means -

Elizabeth: Oh, I see you [inaudible 00:05:23] American.

Cooper: I think it's the pronunciation.

Elizabeth: Yeah.

Cooper: Wind, it doesn't sound like the way you write it.

Elizabeth: No, that's true.

Cooper: Wind up and wound up the past.

Elizabeth: Yeah.

Cooper: So it's funny because [Christina 00:05:36] obviously ... audience, [Christina 00:05:40] is my wife.

Elizabeth: Yay! They got married, and it was a beautiful wedding.

Cooper: We can talk about that later.

Elizabeth: We can.

Cooper: 'Cause Elizabeth and George went to the wedding.

Elizabeth: We did.

Cooper: But ... [Christina 00:05:58] every single day I tell her, sometimes three times a day I say, "[Christina 00:06:04] I can't find my glasses."

Elizabeth: Poor [Christina 00:06:08]. She's a very good wife.

Cooper: She's patient.

Elizabeth: She's very patient.

Cooper: She never yells at me.

Elizabeth: Does she always find your glasses for you?

Cooper: Yes.

Elizabeth: Good. Very good.

Cooper: So, Elizabeth let's change the subject for you to talk more. Now, where were you born?

Elizabeth: So, I was born in Copenhagen which is in Denmark - [crosstalk 00:06:38] Yeah?

Cooper: Can you say that ... can you say the name of the city again because in Brazil they say the capital of Denmark differently?

Elizabeth: So, in english it's Copenhagen. In Danish, it's Kobenhaven.

Cooper: In Portuguese it's [Copenhaga 00:06:57]

Elizabeth: Oh wow, oh that's really cool. I've never heard that before, but yeah I guess it gets translated ... but yeah Copenhagen in English and that's in Denmark which is in Scandinavia, up in Northern Europe.

Cooper: So you lived in Denmark, for how long?

Elizabeth: So, I was born here, and I grew up here like a normal Danish person, and I live in Denmark until I moved to Oxford which was in 2013. So, I lived in Denmark until I was in my like mid 20's.

Cooper: You don't have to tell us your age.

Elizabeth: I left it really vague so people can try and guess, but I'm very happy to tell you my age.

Cooper: I don't want to hear it because I personally I never say anything about my age.

Elizabeth: I know you don't it's a big enigma. But yeah, so, my parents aren't Danish but they both lived in Denmark permanently.

Cooper: Tell us about that. Where are your parents from?

Elizabeth: My dad's Chinese and from Beijing, and he was in Denmark studying and then working. And my mom is English, which is why I sound like I do. And she was teaching in Denmark actually teaching English.

Cooper: Ah! How did that happen?

Elizabeth: So, it was part of her masters, and so she was doing kind of I guess teaching as a part of her like degree. And she had to go to a country in Asia, and she had to go to a country in Europe. So she chose to go to Denmark. And then she and my dad met each other on a train.

Cooper: Really?

Elizabeth: Yeah, in Copenhagen. And then they decided to stay in Denmark because it was that common country rather than go to England [inaudible 00:08:56] China.

Cooper: But you said she also had to teach in Asia?

Elizabeth: So she taught in Singapore.

Cooper: Oh really?

Elizabeth: For a year, maybe less than a year, but she loved it there as well. But they've adopted Denmark now.

Cooper: And, I have ... when you learned English did you speak English your whole life?

Elizabeth: Yeah, so we ... because we lived in Denmark and my mom hadn't learned Danish yet, we spoke English at home. So, I actually grew up speaking English and it wasn't until I started kindergarten in Denmark when I was what, three or four or something, that I started learning Danish. So, I actually didn't know any Danish when I started at first and I think I was probably quite weird because I couldn't speak to the other children -

Cooper: Do you remember that? Do you remember trouble with the language? Or -

Elizabeth: Very vaguely, not really because I think, I mean ... I probably, yeah ... I definitely learned it really quickly I think as a child it's ... you pick it up quickly especially when you're surrounded by it. So it's very vague memory but I don't really remember not being able to speak Danish.

Cooper: And the language of Denmark is Danish?

Elizabeth: It's Danish, yeah. So I picked that up and then I have two siblings there both younger. Then once obviously once we were all speaking Danish, it became a much bigger part of what we spoke at home. So suddenly we started mixing Danish and English, so we'd bring in words in Danish that worked better-

Cooper: Yeah.

Elizabeth: Yeah a big mix.

Cooper: It's interesting isn't it because like that happened with Portuguese with some words ... I have students and they want me to be speaking in English 'cause their high level ... Sometimes I have to use a Portuguese word because I know they know it, and I know there's no English word like that Portuguese word. I've been to Denmark too. Are there some words in Danish, that don't exist in English?

Elizabeth: Yeah, there's a really big word that's become really famous, it's actually in UK and America because it's a sort of lifestyle concept that has been commercialized in other countries. But basically you have this word called Hygge in Danish.

Cooper: What [uga 00:11:25]?

Elizabeth: Hygge.

Cooper: Hygge.

Elizabeth: H-Y-G-G-E and I can teach you some Danish.

Cooper: I would love too.

Elizabeth: And it basically means ... it's a word we use for almost everything. So, you say, "It was hygge to meet you." Or we had a hygge time together."

Cooper: [inaudible 00:11:48]

Elizabeth: Yeah, and it just means somethings really lovely or cozy, or you know, it just feels nice so, it's a very sort of, all encompassing type of word.

Cooper: It sounds like a feminine word a little. Like a word that women might say.

Elizabeth: [inaudible 00:12:06] Guys say it as well just as much, it has sort of a social connotation and it also relates to food, and to just kind of feeling comfortable ... and you know -

Cooper: So a little bit like lovely, British English, lovely.

Elizabeth: It is, I think that's almost the closest thing because I think probably the most direct translation would be cozy, but it is a bit more like lovey [inaudible 00:12:30] I think [crosstalk 00:12:31] -

Cooper: Cozy means [foreign language 00:12:32] nice word right, [foreign language 00:12:37].

Elizabeth: Yeah nice word.

Cooper: Sounds nice.

Elizabeth: It does.

Cooper: The word lovely, I'm never going to try to explain to my students because it's so vague.

Elizabeth: It's really vague.

Cooper: People in Brazil might think it means the word [amoroso 00:12:53] which is more loving.

Elizabeth: Yeah, which it comes from obviously.

Cooper: But it doesn't mean [amoroso 00:13:01] lovely, is sort of, I can't explain the word. So we're going to -

Elizabeth: We'll skip that.

Cooper: [foreign language 00:13:09] did you notice, I said the word skip and Elizabeth said the word skip? [inaudible 00:13:15]

Elizabeth: [inaudible 00:13:14]

Cooper: Yeah, 'cause that means that skip is an important word. Skip [foreign language 00:13:22] lovely, we're going to skip the word lovely and talk more to Elizabeth. So, which language ... do you think that you know the languages equally well, English and Danish?

Elizabeth: I think so. I think especially after I lived in Oxford for [inaudible 00:13:41] years, yeah, I would probably say I'm bilingual between the two. Because I can skip quite kind of seamlessly or sort of switch seamlessly between the two, but it's become hard now that I've lived in the UK for so long. So, if a friend calls from Denmark while I'm in the UK, I'll find myself forgetting words in Danish and I can't think of them which is really frustrating. You might have experienced this in Portuguese-

Cooper: Yeah.

Elizabeth: Yeah, this is a really random one, but I forgot the Danish word for badger. And it was just very random that it felt really word that I just couldn't recall it as naturally and as quickly as possible or as normal. So, yeah that definitely does happen when you aren't using it as often. I think when I was living in Denmark because I speak English with my family, so, I would be using the languages probably equally. Obviously, Danish at work and at school and stuff and with my friends.

Cooper: What I find is, like the word that I forgot I remember ... you remember when there is a word you can't remember even though it's easy, right?

Elizabeth: Yeah.

Cooper: And I remember that I forgot the word [cicada 00:15:07] which means balcony. And at least in ... [varanda 00:15:14] is the most common word to say balcony.

Elizabeth: I know a lot of balconies.

Cooper: Yes because of the heat, so most flats have balconies-

Elizabeth: A balcony.

Cooper: I couldn't remember it and it's strange, but the other thing I wanted to say is ... ask you, so you're a Ph.d student now?

Elizabeth: I am, yeah.

Cooper: What do you study?

Elizabeth: Well it's actually very Denmark connected so, I'm writing about a Danish philosopher slash theologian -

Cooper: What's his name?

Elizabeth: Called Soren Kierkegaard, or [Kierkegard 00:15:52] in English.

Cooper: Can you say it one more time? I don't think my students will know. [crosstalk 00:15:58] Can you say the name one more time? The English one.

Elizabeth: English version, yeah. So English people would tend to say [Kierkegard 00:16:05] because it looks like that but Danish isn't super intuitive in terms of how it's spelled.

Cooper: Who was he?

Elizabeth: He was a 19th century thinker in Copenhagen, who kind of went against the Danish state church because he didn't agree with the way that things were being done. He was sort of trying to explain to people that to be a Christian means to kind of live it personally, and subjectively and have a personal relationship with God and he didn't feel that was what the church was sort of doing. So, -

Cooper: So he criticized the church?

Elizabeth: He criticized the church and he criticized a lot of the intellectuals and the academics at the time. So I'm actually looking at his relationship to one of these academics, and later the Bishop of Denmark. And looking at the relationship between philosophy and

theology and his thoughts. So, it's fun being ... I'm in Copenhagen at the moment actually, and I'm really close to where he's buried, so we go for walks there with my friends dog. [inaudible 00:17:20][crosstalk 00:17:20]

Cooper: Do you go to his grave to get inspiration?

Elizabeth: I mean it would be a good place to go, I suppose for inspiration. I go for walks in the graveyard for inspiration because it sounds really creepy, but it's a really lovely graveyard it's almost more like a park.

Cooper: Do you remember the graveyard near our flat?

Elizabeth: Yes I do! I do remember that! I liked that a lot. So yes, this is all green and nice, and loads of people would come out in the summer time and lie there and sunbathe and play football and stuff. So it's quite ... not a sort of sad way yeah it's [inaudible 00:18:04]

Cooper: Look if I were buried in a graveyard, I would want company.

Elizabeth: I agree, I think it's nice. It's nice to know that people are around.

Cooper: When I'm buried I'm sure I'm gonna like it when people come play football over me.

Elizabeth: And read your name, and think about who you are and who you were.

Cooper: I think ... what I think I'll do when I'm buried is, I'll stay awake when the people are there playing football 'cause I won't feel sad, and then I'll go to sleep ... when I'm buried, but I'll to sleep at night when there is nobody to play, except for animals.

Elizabeth: Really, I think that's a brilliant idea.

Cooper: [inaudible 00:18:41]

Elizabeth: I'm all for it, yeah.

Cooper: So, tell me about a little Denmark in terms of ... tell me for example, what's something nice about Denmark compared to Oxford in London?

Elizabeth: Well so, it's a really small country and there's only I think it's still under six million people, I might be wrong. But it's a small country, so everything just works very well. We have [inaudible 00:19:17] we have really great, this is all quite really boring, we have really great infrastructure -

Cooper: What's infrastructure?

Elizabeth: So, roads, it's really easy to get around, the transport ... the public transport is really great. And obviously it's just a small country so it doesn't take very long to get anywhere. Whereas London is very big, and it can take you know two hours to go see

someone in the other end of London. In Copenhagen, you bike everywhere, and it never takes ... I don't think you can get further than maybe an hour away on your bike.-

Cooper: Do you have a bike in Copenhagen?

Elizabeth: I do have a bike. It's a black bike, with a basket in the front.

Cooper: Do you like to go back to Denmark to see your bike?

Elizabeth: I do like to go back and I like biking around and it just makes you feel, I think more kind of connected to the city. I think the other thing I'd say is that, the pace is a lot slower. Even though Copenhagen is a city and it has all the things that a city kind of [inaudible 00:20:20] like really great food, loads of really interesting cultural things to do. It also feels a bit like a village in that it's just, you feel really at home, you feel really safe, and it's easy to get everywhere and stuff. So, it's a really great place to live, it's really like comfortable place to live.

Cooper: Okay, and ... would you like ... if you had to choose where you would live in the future, I know this is maybe controversial, but if you had to choose what country you would live in, in the future, is there one country ... is Denmark the country? Or is there one country that you think would be best?

Elizabeth: Well yeah, so the reason you just said that this is a controversial chose is obviously because George is involved as well, and he's very English, and he loves England, and I love England too. I would love to live in Denmark at least some of the time, I think especially if you have kids -

Cooper: Why?

Elizabeth: There's things ... because it's ... again it's very safe, the schools are really good and it would just be nice to be close to my family and my friends. But then obviously George won't be close to his as well so, that is something-

Cooper: He's pretty close, I mean Denmark is close to England.

Elizabeth: It is close, it's only an hour and a half on the plane from the UK so, I think regardless of where we end of up, I would like to come back at least for sometime. But me and George will have to discuss that later -

Cooper: I have a little trouble with [Christina 00:21:48] but it's the opposite. I want to live in Greece and she doesn't.[inaudible 00:21:53][crosstalk 00:21:53]

Elizabeth: I'd like to live in Greece as well. Greece is beautiful.

Cooper: Yeah, and also all the family there -

Elizabeth: It's nice to have a bit of close by. I think you were asking what's the best thing about Denmark, I mean my family and my friends, but that's obviously a very kind of personal answer to me, but yeah, it's nice to be close to your family.

Cooper: Just to ... I'm going to have to to stop the interview because of time, but just to finish up... well there are two things first I want to talk about vikings. I'm reading a book about vikings now, and it seems that the vikings come from Denmark, is that true?

Elizabeth: I think they come generally from Scandinavia, so you also have vikings from Norway and from Sweden but they do also come from Denmark. We have a lot of ... we've got a lot of viking history here.

Cooper: Is the king Harold Bluetooth famous? [crosstalk 00:22:53]

Elizabeth: He's Danish, yeah, he's really famous. So, he actually, he bought Christianity to Denmark. And you know the Bluetooth that actual concept of Bluetooth technology and stuff?

Cooper: Oh, yeah.

Elizabeth: That's actually named after him because of that -

Cooper: Really?

Elizabeth: Bring people together, yeah. Isn't that interesting?

Cooper: That's very interesting. I never even thought ... 'cause I'm reading a book now.

Elizabeth: Yeah, is he in the book?

Cooper: He's already died, but he wasn't the main character but he was in the book, and it talks about him bringing Christianity to Denmark.

Elizabeth: Yeah.

Cooper: And, I never thought to connect that to Bluetooth technology.

Elizabeth: Exactly. Yeah I found that out as well but in school ... if you go to school in Denmark you will learn about the vikings, and you will learn about northern mythology, and you'll learn a lot about Greenland as well. -

Cooper: Why?

Elizabeth: Well so, I'm a little bit unclear on the details but I think basically Denmark colonized Greenland, and now we still have some kind of connection. I think maybe they [inaudible 00:24:11] share our queen. -

Cooper: [inaudible 00:24:13]

Elizabeth: I think there's a lot of talk about they want to gain complete independence from Denmark, but it's sort of ... yeah, but it's an important sort of Danish ... a part of Danish history.

Cooper: And I have to ask you one last question.

Elizabeth: Yes.

Cooper: Which is ... so, you're born in Denmark but your parents aren't Danish.

Elizabeth: No.

Cooper: And also, your parents are from different races, one's Chinese and one's English. So, did that ... is that any problem at all in ... growing up?

Elizabeth: It was really ... I think I was thought more Danish, and I think we also just because especially when I grew up, which was a while ago. There were just not that many people who weren't Danish, and so I never felt it was necessarily in a bad way, but would always ask you where you're from? And you know want to know kind of what your background is and stuff, but I think mostly because they were interested and obviously you just look a bit different from everyone else. But -

Cooper: How long does it take them to accept you as one of them?

Elizabeth: I felt like its was quite ... I never really had big problems with it, it think. I would like ... my nickname in high school was just Chinese. That was just what they called me, but I think they meant it in a nice way, I hope. But I think it was very interesting though because when I moved to England, I found out how Danish I was and I felt so Danish in England. It was quite nice actually because it did mean that you know, I was a lot more Danish than thought or felt in Denmark.

Cooper: Yeah, it's really important because I can tell you, when I ... let's say that you grew up in Brazil -

Elizabeth: Yeah.

Cooper: The people ... Some of my audience members may disagree but they're wrong, I'm right. I know this, I experienced it ... so, if you ... let's say that ... let's just that you grew up in Brazil. And everybody in Brazil ... let's say that you were, let's say half American or half English. Let's just day half English and half Chinese but you were born in Brazil.

Elizabeth: Yeah.

Cooper: And you ... and everything you did was Brazilian, I guarantee people would ... I'm not saying that people would do anything bad to you, you [inaudible 00:26:53] treated fine,

but I think there would be people who would never think ... who would always every time they'd talk to you ... so the first thing they would think is, "She's from England and China." And they would feel a difference ... some sort of difference ... it would change their ... the way the acted towards you a little. Even though that might be a good thing.

Elizabeth: Yeah.

Cooper: Okay, and but they would always think about it. This is what I feel happens and my guess is it would happen in Denmark. -

Elizabeth: Yeah, often -

Cooper: With some people will.

Elizabeth: Exactly yeah. It think that's very true and obviously just ... I mean just because I'm mixed between English and Chinese, people can't quite tell where I'm from, so they'll have some prejudices against you know ... sometimes they think I'm from the middle east or they think I'm from Spain. Or actually, I've had people ask me if I'm from South America, so maybe I am Brazilian.

Cooper: Yeah it's kind of cool if people ask ... they'll always ask you where you're from and it's always some different place.

Elizabeth: Yeah it's really interesting, like my green grocer, where I use to live in Copenhagen, he was convinced that I was Arabic and he'd ask me every time I came into the shop. He'd ask me, " Who my dad was?" 'Cause he was sure that he knew him, and I'd always had to tell him, "You don't know my dad."

Cooper: Is your green grocery Arabic?

Elizabeth: Yeah he was Arabic, but had lived in Denmark for a long time. And-

Cooper: What's a green grocer?

Elizabeth: So, a green grocer is someone who sells vegetables, and anything sort of green or fruit, and he also sells sweets.

Cooper: But it's not ... they don't have a super market, they have -

Elizabeth: Like a little shop.

Cooper: And that shop sells ...

Elizabeth: Vegetables and fruits.

Cooper: Thank you Elizabeth, this was a very nice interview. We're looking forward to interviewing you again, for sure.

Elizabeth: I loved to, we can talk about anything you want.

Cooper: Great. And I'm gonna stop the recording now.

Elizabeth: Okay, cool.

Cooper: Let me just [inaudible 00:29:14]