



love after death

by

Elise Smith



TITLE

Love After Death

DIRECTOR

Elise Smith

STARRING

Gabby Pannone, Cecilia Hughner

LOGLINE

After a young woman dies suddenly, she comes back to life with a chance to redo her last day, and she must race the clock to make amends with her estranged sister after years of turmoil.

SUMMARY

When Lola dies suddenly, she is left on bad terms with her younger sister Zoe after years of being pitted against each other by their mother. In a twist of fate, she is sent back from the afterlife with one more day to make things right. As Lola navigates the challenges of apologizing to her sister, she also grapples with their emotionally taxing history and defining her memory in the face of death. Lola has limited time to seek closure with the person who ultimately matters the most to her, striving to make the most of each moment in this peculiar day of life after death.

SPECS

United States of America, 2026, Full HD, Color



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT

Elise Smith (Director)

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Love After Death will premiere at the Wildest Dreams Film Festival on May 19th, 2026.

Love After Death is a family drama with elements of sci-fi that follows a young woman who has been sent back from the afterlife on a daylong journey to make amends with her estranged sister. It will premiere at the Wildest Dreams Film Festival at Marymount Manhattan College on May 19th, 2026.

There is no shortage of true love stories in the face of death. My goal for this film is to modify the true love trope and reframe it through the lens of sisterhood. As such, I made this film with people who I am very close to, including one of my own younger sisters. This story explores what happens when the one person you have hurt the most is also the person that you love the dearest, and what brings them together and pushes them apart. By combining the themes of symbolic immortality, forgiveness, and the complexities of a sister bond, this film is grounded in the question of how to make the most of the time you have, especially if it is limited, a topic that is increasingly relevant and relatable in today's world.

FILM WEBSITE

<https://www.elisereneesmith.com/loveafterdeath>

FESTIVAL WEBSITE

<https://www.mmcfilmfestival.com/>

Elise Smith

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EDUCATION

Marymount Manhattan College

Bachelor of Fine Arts in Film & Media Production; Minor in Psychology

Alpha Chi | Lambda Pi Eta | Psi Chi | GPA: 4.0 | Dean's List (All Semesters)

New York, NY

Anticipated May 2026

- Relevant coursework: Advanced TV Studio Production, New Media Workshop, Directing Video, Digital Cultures

PRODUCTION EXPERIENCE

“Love After Death”

Director, Writer, Editor

Capstone Film

Coming May 2026

- Produced a ten-minute short film about the complexities of sisterhood and forgiveness
- Wrote the screenplay, casted the actors, coordinated the crew, and managed the production schedule
- Currently in production and anticipated to premiere at MMC's Film Capstone Showcase

“Friday Not Live” | dir. Morgan Levin

Assistant Director

Student Film

January 2025-Present

- Aided director in overseeing pre-production & on-set operations, including scheduling & casting
- Maintained organization & continuity on set by supervising the script, tracking scenes, & managing cast and crew

“My Condolences”

Director, Cinematographer, Writer, Editor

Student Film

October 2024-December 2024

- Directed & filmed a ten-minute short film juxtaposing themes of grief & loss against resiliency & acceptance
- Wrote the screenplay, casted the actors, coordinated the crew, and managed the production schedule
- Edited the film in Adobe Premiere Pro, including sound design & color correction

“D vine fl~ight” | created by Jazelynn Goudy

Cinematographer, Co-Editor

Course Project

December 2024

- Collaborated with a crew of 5 students to film a dance performance piece created by a Marymount Manhattan College (MMC) dance professor, dedicated to her late sister, tackling themes of perseverance & transformation
- Edited the film with a peer for multi-channel installation in Adobe Premiere Pro, which entailed sound design & formatting the footage for simultaneous display on three walls
- Showcased at MMC's 2024 Stand Up Speak Out Arts & Social Justice Festival

WORK EXPERIENCE

The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon

Research & General Production Intern

New York, NY

September 2025-May 2026

- Collaborate with the Research team to contribute to the research packet for each upcoming guest by summarizing up to 30 past appearances on talk shows in order for the packet to be sent to Segment Producers
- Summarize the appearance of a guest on *The Tonight Show* from the previous night & annotate Jimmy Fallon's desk notes to record which questions a guest was asked and how they answered for future reference
- Support daily production by standing in during rehearsal and going on assorted runs for *Tonight Show* staff

Freeport Recreation Center

Camp Counselor

Freeport, NY

June 2022-Present (Seasonal)

- Supervise & mentor a group of about 20 children, ensuring safety of the group when at the pool or outdoor events
- Developed strong communication and conflict resolution skills in a fast-paced, team-oriented environment

BIO

Elise Smith is a creative based in New York City. She is a BFA Film & Media Production student from Long Island, New York who is completing her senior year at Marymount Manhattan College. There, she has contributed to a variety of projects, from mockumentaries, to dance films, to narrative shorts. She has been passionately immersed in the arts her whole life, whether that be through performing or creating. In addition to finishing her last semester at MMC, she is also working at *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon* as a Research and General Production intern. With a strong background in production and passion for the entertainment industry, Elise hopes to blend her interests and skills to learn from and contribute to both student-led and professional film and entertainment projects.

ARTIST STATEMENT



From a childhood spent editing together my sisters' and my recreation of *Tonight Show* segments, choreographing and performing elaborate pop routines with my cousins, and forcing my entire extended family to put on a play about snow at our Christmas dinner, I have been fully immersed in the arts for as long as I can remember. These childhood interests blossomed into a passion for creative outlets as an adult, leading me to pursue a career in the film industry.

The wildly imaginative childhood I created for myself and my sisters has translated not just to my career aspirations, but also to the themes of my films. I gravitate towards themes of sisterhood, forgiveness, and personal growth. I strive to capture humanity in the small moments that we all experience. These themes act as a bridge between my personal life and my films. For instance, my bond with my sisters is the most important one in my life, so it is my hope that people will see "Love After Death" and treasure the bond of sisterhood, no matter how complicated, just a little bit more. I hear so many people talk about the difficulties that are rampant between siblings, so this is a celebration of closure between two sisters who may have otherwise drifted apart. In a time during which it seems that families are unjustly torn apart in a near constant matter, this story acts as a reminder to take accountability for wrongdoings and forgive those closest to you when forgiveness is possible.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

When Lola dies unexpectedly, she is left on bad terms with her younger sister Zoe after years of being pitted against each other by their mother. In a twist of fate, she is sent back from the afterlife despite her protestations, allowed one more day to make things right. As Lola races the clock to make amends with her sister, she also grapples with their emotionally taxing history in the form of flashbacks, and wonders how best to define her memory in the face of death. In finding her answer to these questions, Lola seeks closure with the person who ultimately matters the most to her, despite having abandoned Zoe when she needed her most. As she explores crucial moments in their sisterly relationship—past and present—Lola finds it within herself to put aside her pride and apologize before it is too late, striving to make the most of each moment in this peculiar day of life after death.

This story is inspired by the close bond I have with my sisters, and the hard work that it takes to maintain a good relationship with the people that you love. In harrowing times, the sisters in my film learn to turn toward each other after being pitted against one another, demonstrating true forgiveness in the wake of tragedy.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROPOSAL

Beyond Capstone, I hope that “Love After Death” will have an opportunity to be shown at film festivals. I targeted my search to festivals that accept shorts in the New York area. A few larger competitions, such as the Oniros Film Awards and the New York International Film Awards have categories for first time directors of short films. The Short. Sweet. Film Fest. is a festival that allows only short films, and has a student category that would be suitable for this film as well. For more genre-focused selections, I broadened my search to target festivals that frequently show short family dramas. In California, the Newport Beach Film Festival is a massive festival that very often plays family drama short films. Finally, I found the New York No Limits Film Series, which I think is a particularly strong contender to align with “Love After Death.” NYNL has an Art of the Short program every year that accepts shorts of all genres made within the year of the festival. They highly encourage student filmmakers, and center films based on the human experience as a main draw of their festival. Overall, my ambition is that having a broad selection of festivals which coincide with different aspects of my film will broaden its reach.

My target audience is women and girls with sisters, or anyone with a complex sibling relationship. I believe that the themes of “Love After Death” will resonate with people within that demographic. I think that there is a lot of potential for this film to reach a vast audience who can understand the highs and lows of familial relationships. Despite it being a relatively small number out of what I hope will be a much larger viewership, I know I am excited to share the film with my own family, who greatly inspired the story. Though I am largely targeting people who can relate to a familial strain, the outer core might be fans of the drama genre, particularly if they are interested in family drama or coming-of-age. There is a lot of space online for people to interact with content that involves complex family dynamics and themes such as the ones featured heavily in the film. People are looking towards media that can both ground and uplift them in troubling times, and I think that “Love After Death” can achieve that. I plan to promote the film via my personal and film social media accounts like Instagram and TikTok, but will not post the entire film to social media or my website until after submitting to film festivals. I have already begun to garner support from friends and peers on social media throughout the production process in the form of behind-the-scenes snippets. Engagement strategies include engaging with and following similar content, replying to users’ comments, and consistent posting. By sharing BTS, and eventually teasers, stills, and more, I hope to gain support from my own loved ones and engage others who resonate with the themes of forgiveness and the push and pull between the difficulties and importance of family.







CAST & CREW

Elise Smith *Director, Producer, Writer, Editor, Cinematographer, Sound*

Morgan Levin *Assistant Director, Editor, Sound*

Lidiya Ryan *Cinematographer*

Noelle Ramsay *Cinematographer, Production Assistant*

Alan Wences Quezadas *Sound*

Cassie Hasaj *Production Assistant*

Ava Smith *Production Assitant*

Gabby Pannone ***Lola**, Production Assistant*

Cecilia Hughner ***Zoe***

Beth Smith ***Mom***