

POSTCARDS IN THE ATTIC

Written by
Dylan Lindsay

emailingdylan@gmail.com
747-666-5984

FADE IN:

1

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET, CURBSIDE - DAY

1

A mature, 20+ year-old middle-class neighborhood in Birch Township, Michigan, paints an idyllic image of life in small-town America. You know, that place where everyone dreams their summers are, one where you re-immense yourself in the carefree days of youth when looking through a shoebox of pictures with the grandchildren.

It's the end of the school year now in 1970. Kids are newly out of school and energized to have roller skate races in the street. They will beat the kids on bikes some day! Parents are outside, not to race, but to work on their lawns or cars or maybe pot a petunia. Doors, windows and garages are open and a combination of oscillating arc and circular sprinklers run, perfect for darting through while holding hands with your best friend.

A U-Haul moving truck, unmistakable with tell-tale silver and orange coloring, is parked on the street, next to a curb with the number 1826 painted on it. If one checked the mail inside the box, mailed would be addressed to 1826 Poplar Street. The truck's roll-up door is open and an inspection reveals a nearly full trailer. A few tell-tale missing boxes signals unloading has begun.

TIM (17), a mixed-race teenager, walks down the ramp of the van carrying a box. Being sixteen following a growth spurt lends itself to tripping and the end of the ramp allows him to stay true to form. His Black uncle, LAWRENCE (mid-late 30s), steps quickly in front of him and catches the box.

LAWRENCE

You know what's in that box?

Tim inspects the sides of the box, looking for a label, the scribble of a marker, anything to provide a hint.

TIM

Uh, no.

LAWRENCE

Neither do I.

Lawrence slaps Tim on the shoulder and climbs the ramp. Tim breathes a sigh of relief and walks up the sidewalk and through the open front screen door.

VELMA (60s) is off-screen in the house, but her voice carries judgment and disapproval perfectly from the living room on the right. Clearly, a cookie-baking, finger paint adoring, macaroni-necklace-wearing snuggly grandparent she is not.

VELMA (O.S.)
Now who's that coming in?

Tim slips his shoes off.

TIM
Timothy, Miss Velma.

VELMA (O.S.)
I'll know if your shoes are not off.

TIM
Yes, Miss Velma.

Tim rolls his eyes and walks into the dining room area and sees his grandfather, VINTON (60s), sitting on a chair that may or may not have been crafted during the Korean War. He's reading the Detroit Free Press, with a front page headline announcing half of the US force in Cambodia has left. As far as Vinton's concerned? Ain't nothing going on in his house today other than annoyances.

VINTON
Need to pull all those boys out.
Ain't no one belong over there
except them that's from there.

Tim stops, fixes his face so it hopefully carries down into his tone, and rolls his shoulders.

TIM
Hi, Mister Vinton. Where would you like me to put the box?

VINTON
(with an air of
haughtiness)
Does it look like I know? Your space is downstairs, where you belong.

So much for any precept of hospitality. Clearly, he's not a take-me-fishing, teach-me-how-to-whittle, let's-smash-BBQ-ribs kind of grandparent, either. Tim sets his jaw and closes his eyes.

TIM
Yes, Mister Vinton.

Tim walks towards an open door to a down-leading stair case.

Vinton doesn't lower his newspaper or look around it. He just calmly turns a page and sucks his teeth.

VINTON

(loud enough for Tim to hear)

If only we had an outdoor access. I don't approve of taking care of other people's problems.

Tim walks down the stairs and into a finished basement living room. It's sparsely furnished with a heavily shellacked table (and matching 4 chairs), a 2-seater sofa that looks like it came off a middle-school production of *Oliver Twist*, and perhaps the saddest club chair outside a derelict nursing home.

As if seeing it for the first time, Tim stops and looks around. The furniture. The faded jade green vinyl floor tiles. The World War Two-era wood paneling. The lace curtains over the breadbox-sized windows.

TIM

Wow. This really is the inside of a coffin.

With a deep sigh (and a deeper hatred of his new surroundings), he sets the box on the table and opens it. The first smile we've seen. Looking over his shoulder, we can see why - a photograph of two people in their 20s who look remarkably like him. Judging from their clothing and hair, it's the early 1950s. They're standing in front of a house (his old one), holding a "SOLD" sign, pride and excitement obvious. The 1949 green Ford sedan in the driveway has a New York license plate on it.

Tim starts when Lawrence's hand rests on his shoulder. The box, and him, close up quickly.

LAWRENCE

(chuckling)

Easy, Timmy. Might want to hide that, though.

(imitating Velma)

It doesn't do to dwell on the past.

Lawrence sets the lamp he brought with him down next to the table and frowns at it. A knot has dared tangle itself in the lavender fringe around the shade.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Now how'd that happen?

Tim, not drawn in by the perplexing fringe situation, turns on his uncle, incredulous.

TIM

How did you and Mom ever come from these people?

LAWRENCE

Shh shh shh, now. You want her to hear you? We were their civic duty, remember? Rescued from the depths of that orphanage...

TIM

You were not.

LAWRENCE

You don't buy a boy little orphan Annie?

TIM

(chuckling)

No.

LAWRENCE

C'mon. We're not done yet. Your Aunt Leigh will be back soon and we need to get the truck back.

TIM

Uncle Lawrence? Why'd we move here? I mean, why'd we lose the house?

LAWRENCE

Aw, Tim. I know.

Grief weighs heavy on them both and presses in on them until they're in a hug.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Seems like you're just losing everything, huh?

TIM

(shrugs)

Yeah, kinda.

LAWRENCE

After Betty and Kirk died... and you came to live with us, things were just fine. We had, well I had, a job and savings. Then...

(MORE)

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
well, my candidate lost, which put
me out of a job. Savings only held
out for a couple of years.

TIM
Yeah, but why here? I mean...

Tim looks towards the upstairs, indicating Velma and Vinton.
The fact that the wood paneling is even on the ceiling seems
to deflate him a little.

Lawrence takes a deep breath.

LAWRENCE
Once Mother Velma makes up her
mind, you don't change it. You
don't go against it, either. And
where else would we have a roof,
food until things got better?

TIM
But...

LAWRENCE
Look what happened to your Mom.
Leigh and I can't afford to be let
loose from the family like that.
She was a lot stronger than we are.
(puts a hand on Tim's
shoulder and smiles)
We don't have your Dad to help us
float.

Lawrence has many fine qualities and skills, but making Tim
feel better is not high on the list.

TIM
And now we're here. Can't you get a
new job?

Lawrence shakes his head and looks resolute, taking his
second shot at levity.

LAWRENCE
Nope. I thought freeloading my
entire family off my parents seemed
like my best plan.

Tim play-punches him in the stomach.

TIM
Did not.

The moment of light-heartedness dissipates when footsteps are heard above them.

LAWRENCE

I'm trying, Timmy. Really am. But politics is funny. Trying to find someone that Mother Velma approves of is even funnier.

Tim looks towards the basement window, if it can be called that.

TIM

I don't like it here. I don't know anyone...

LAWRENCE

The other reason we moved in was because your grandmother is ill. We don't know how much longer she will be around. It's the family thing to do to help out.

Stand-up comedy has moved up on Lawrence's list of skills apparently, as Tim laughs outright.

TIM

She doesn't seem very family to me. Or ill.

Not sure what was so funny, Lawrence leans down and touches his head to his nephew's.

LAWRENCE

Don't you let her hear you say that.

VELMA (O.S.)

Lawrence, is that boy down there?

TIM

I am...

Lawrence claps a hand over Tim's mouth and turns his head towards the stairs. No sense in having to repeat one's self. But before he can respond, the docile lilt of his mother's voice shoots down the stairs like a thrown spear.

VELMA (O.S.)

(sharply)

I asked Lawrence the question.

(more neutral)

Lawrence?

LAWRENCE

Yes, Mother Velma.

VELMA (O.S.)

Good. See that he makes friends soon so he can eat over there, take some of the burden off of this household.

That would just about do it for anybody, and it does it for Tim. Disgust and anger merge into the super-emotion known as contempt. He pushes away from his uncle and tears back into the box on the table. His parents picture in hand, he races up the stairs, taking them three at a time.

TIM

No problem.

Lawrence is left to watch after him helplessly as the basement door slams shut.

2 EXT. FRONT OF THE HOUSE - DAY

2

Tim stalks out of the front door, leaving it open, and yes, on purpose. A cruel smirk ready to usher forth a litany of insults stands ready in case the wish-she-was-already-dead grandmother or should-already-be-rotting grandfather care to comment.

Seconds after his egress, Velma fills the entryway (not yet shown). LEIGH, her 20-30ish-year old daughter and Tim's aunt, walks up to the house from the car.

Leigh smiles waves at Tim. He brushes by Leigh on her way up the walk. It's odd enough behavior that she interrupts her required greeting to her mother-in-law.

LEIGH

Hello, Mother Velma, I just... well, Tim! Where are you...

TIM

Finding friends.

VELMA

You see, Vinton? What did I tell you? That's his father's side. Add a little flour to the mix, makes us all uppity. Crazy, not acting like ourselves.

VINTON (O.C.)

You sure were right, Mother. Races
ain't got no business mixin' and
dilutin', makin' people forget who
they is.

Caught in the dueling wakes of grief and repulsion, Leigh's shock shifts to hopelessness as she watches the ever-increasing distance Tim is putting between them. She smiles sadly after him, still walking towards the front door.

LEIGH

(to Velma)

You're going to drive him away,
Mother Velma.

Velma fixes a stare on the retreating boy as unforgiving as a Venus Flytrap to an unwise fly.

VELMA

Good, is all I got to say about a
boy who shouldn't be here to begin
with.

3

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

3

A group of boys are playing a pick-up game of baseball; pick-up because not all positions are filled and because no one is wearing uniforms. Several other groups of mixed-aged kids sit around the field, watching the game.

Tim walks up to and leans against the fence near home plate and watches.

One of the kids sitting around the field is a white girl, NOEL (15). Normally, she'd play -- as evidenced by the baseball cap she wears -- but today is a day for drawing. Her sketch pad has already been drawn halfway through. The current page's offering is of the gathering of paper lunch bags near a bench.

But my, does she see the new guy walk up. It's enough to make her need to erase what she just drew and start that line over.

The catcher, JOHNNY (16), holds up his hand to pause the game and jogs over to Tim.

JOHNNY

You play?

TIM

A little.

Johnny grins and smacks Tim's shoulder. He turns and jogs back to his position.

JOHNNY
 (calling to the pitcher)
 Hey, Rudy! Got our outfielder!

The pitcher, one Rudy who we won't see again, gives a thumbs up and starts his warm-up routine again.

Johnny squats back down and smacks his mitt. He looks back at Tim.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
 (to Tim)
 Well, you're comin', aren'tcha?

Tim grins and heads onto the field.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
 Batter!

A 10-year old girl steps up to the plate, bat in hand. She swings the bat around a little like she's watched the professional players do before settling into her stance.

Noel decides that the lunch bags aren't going to get up and go anywhere, and lets the game draw her attention. More specifically, her attention is on who's standing in left field.

From left field, Tim notices her, too.

4 EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD BASEBALL FIELD - EVENING

4

Tim and Noel sit on the bench outside the fence, talking. Streetlights won't be on for another thirty minutes or so, but the fireflies are out. All the lunch bags are gone and most of the kids have gone home for dinner. A few still toss the ball around, but they're at the other end of the field.

Noel's sketch pad is closed, but she's already shown him the whole thing. They two are friendly and shyly flirtatious. A couple of teenage girls walk by and wave at Noel. She waves back.

TIM
 You sure you want to be seen with me?

NOEL
 Why not, silly?

Tim looks down at himself, indicating all of him.

TIM
Know what they say...

Noel makes an exaggerated appraisal of him.

NOEL
Your clothes do need a bit of updating... But I'm always looking for interesting art models.

TIM
(laughing)
No, I mean... won't your daddy be mad or anything?

NOEL
You planning on being mean to me?

TIM
No.

NOEL
Then you have nothing to worry about from my Daddy.

5 EXT. JIMSON STREET - DAY

5

Now a few days after the baseball game, Tim and Noel have abandoned benches and taken to walking openly down the street. Truth be told, he might look a little nervous. The black and white street sign behind them says "Jimson Street". They stop in front of house number 1192. When they start up the walk, Tim hesitates.

Noel, ahead of him, stops and looks back. She smiles and reaches her hand out to him. She did promise him that if he wasn't mean to her, he had nothing to fear from her daddy. Well, Tim hasn't been mean to her. HAMILTON, Noel's 40-something father and a well-regarded doctor, appears in the front doorway and opens the screen door. He smiles to Tim, welcoming him in.

6 INT. BLACK - DAY (MONTAGE)

6

The season, though still Summer, appears to shift a little, moving from May/June through the end of August.

A) Noel and Tim sit under a large bur oak tree in a field, atop a blanket, a picnic basket nearby.

B) Noel and Tim sit on her porch, going through her art portfolio. A book of colleges is at their feet.

C) Tim walks out of his grandparent's house, with all four adults standing in the doorway. His expression rivals the one from his first day there.

D) Tim plays baseball at the neighborhood park. This time, he has a borrowed jersey on. He jokes around with the other boys.

E) Noel and Tim make ice cream in the backyard with her family. Turns out, strawberry is both their favorite.

F) Tim and Lawrence talk in the basement with Tim gesturing upstairs. We see them both stop talking and hang their heads.

G) Tim on the phone at the post office. The yellow pages are open to the letter 'M'.

H) Back to School banners hang in town, Tim's baseball mitt lays on home plate.

7

EXT. FIELD UNDER THAT LARGE BUR OAK TREE - SUNSET

7

It's just before Labor Day, 1970. Fall has just started to hint that it will be arriving soon. Shorts and tank tops have been traded in for long sleeves and corduroys. Tim and Noel have again taken residence under their favorite tree. It's not clear if the arrangement of acorns around him are from the tree, squirrels, or Noel.

He points to his chest and grins.

TIM

I will too get a tattoo of you.
Right there.

NOEL

Oh, gross! No tattoos. Not ever.
Promise!

TIM

Not even if you design it?

NOEL

No! Swear it! Cross your heart and
hope to die!

He crosses his heart and holds up a three finger salute.

NOEL (CONT'D)

Oh, yes, such a Girl Scout.

She playfully swats at him and he responds in kind, then looks out into the distance, wistful.

TIM
Summer's gone fast.

NOEL
Your name's not Summer.

TIM
I'm also not gone yet.

NOEL
Where do you think you'll go?

Tim shrugs and as it always is during difficult conversations, cannot quite look at her yet.

TIM
Wherever the ship does.

She kicks out at him and watches him intently.

NOEL
No, I'm serious! California?

Kicking does require looking, if only to dodge, fend off, or return the attack. What requires looking more is the billowing excitement he hears in her voice.

TIM
Yes.

NOEL
Japan?

TIM
Yes.

NOEL
Australia?

TIM
Yes.

NOEL
Spain? India? Africa?

TIM
Yes! Yes! Yes!

She squeals in gleeful anticipation and kicks her feet happily, falling back.

He stays sitting up and draws an "air map" in front of him.

TIM (CONT'D)
Got my map all worked out. All the
places I'm going to go.

NOEL
(quietly)
Are you ever sorry you came here?

Known for asking the strangest questions (at least as far as boys are concerned), this teenage girl does not disappoint. He looks at her quizzically.

TIM
Because my parents died?

NOEL
I guess so.

He shrugs and picks at the grass. It doesn't take long for him to create a respectable pile of blades.

TIM
Sometimes. But then there's you, so
there's that.

NOEL
Not so bad?

TIM
You know what I mean. I don't know
what this summer would've been if I
hadn't met you. You're my hope,
Noel.

She looks shyly to the side, pink creeping up her face. After a moment, she looks straight at him. Resolution and inquisitiveness bore into him. They've had this conversation before, but it never hurts to try again, right?

NOEL
You sure you can't just stay with
us? I'm sure I can...

TIM
(shaking head)
They'd find me.

She glares at him at the mention of his family.

NOEL

No, they wouldn't. They haven't looked for you all summer. They hate you.

TIM

That's why they'd find me. They'd send the cops. Say I was truant, tried to break in and steal stuff, broke something. Mother Velma doesn't want to see me and I'm sure she'd rather the rest of the world not be reminded of her family shame.

His dramatics end when he falls over. Normally, that would net a big laugh and entreaties to cease from Noel. But not today.

NOEL

She really say she'd put you in jail if she saw you again?

TIM

Mmhmm. Said she just knew stuff would be gone if I stuck around. Said she knows someone who would just love to throw a little half-breed away for messing with a white girl. I won't tell you what else she said.

She acts like she's about to ask for more, but he shakes his head. There is nothing on the planet, not for all the tea in her aforementioned, beloved India that would make him repeat what that woman had said.

NOEL

And you think India is a better hiding place than my attic?

Such emphatic nodding could lead to a neck injury if Tim's not careful.

TIM

Absolutely.

NOEL

So, why go? Why go on a ship? What's wrong with planes or trains or--

He shakes his head and leans his chin on her shoulder.

TIM

Uh uh.

NOEL

I'll write to you. Letters. Keep them with me until you're back. Then you can read all of them at once.

TIM

I'll write to you. Letters. From everywhere I go. It'll be just like you're there.

Now what person in love worth their salt wouldn't love to hear that? She romantically gazes out across the field, smiling, and takes his hand.

NOEL

Postcards. I want to see pictures.

TIM

Postcards.

NOEL

Then it'll really be like I'm there.

TIM

Can I have a picture?

She nods and rolls onto her stomach, staring through the grass. After a few minutes, he sits up and tries to pull her up with him.

TIM (CONT'D)

Time to get you home. He likes me so far, but he won't if I don't get you back.

She tries to pull him back down. With so few precious moments left, she wants to capture as many of them as she can. A chamomile flower catches her interest enough to pluck it.

NOEL

Just a few more minutes.

TIM

I want your Dad to let me in when I come back.

NOEL

I can't believe he said you couldn't stay. Couldn't you just--

TIM

What? Hide in the basement?

She tosses the flower at him.

NOEL

No. Can't you just--

He shakes his head, cutting her off by kissing her cheek.

TIM

Noel... Honey, we've talked about this. I can't stay here.

NOEL

It just seems so... long. I can't believe you're running away.

TIM

Not away. Running towards.

NOEL

What about getting a job around here? Minnesota? Indiana!

He shakes his head again, chuckles and stares off into the distance. The clouds going by give him a lot to think about.

After a long moment, she sighs.

NOEL (CONT'D)

You really have to go, don't you? I mean, for you. And you're doing it.

TIM

Yeah.

NOEL

Are they that bad?

TIM

Ever wonder why I never brought you home?

NOEL

Yeah, kinda. Daddy says that your grandmomma supported Wallace. That she gave right into his campaign more than he makes in a month. That true?

TIM
Yes, ma'am.

An animation artist couldn't have drawn a more perfect expression of being offended.

NOEL
How could she do that?

TIM
(imitating Velma)
That Whitey Wallace's got it right.
Ain't no business integrating and
changing the way things have been.
Leave well enough alone, I say.
Don't want to be mixed up with all
them white folks who have no idea
what it means to be Black and I
ain't got no interest in learning
their ways.

Her sputtering and failure to respond in any coherent way makes Tim laugh and revert to his normal voice.

TIM (CONT'D)
How long ago did we integrate?

NOEL
So, how come they let you in,
again?

TIM
(slight laugh)
They didn't. They let Uncle
Lawrence and Aunt Leigh in. I'm the
tick on the dog. Was supposed to
sleep in the basement, remember?
The things they...

He trails off and shakes his head, swallowing memories as jagged as rock candy.

TIM (CONT'D)
It's why I slept at Johnny's all
summer.

NOEL
You did not!

TIM
Yeah, I did. Who do you think gave
me the jersey?

NOEL
(with quiet confidence)
But you are coming back.

TIM
Yeah.

NOEL
How long?

TIM
How long what? Until they have the
law after me?

NOEL
How long do you think you'll be
gone?

TIM
I don't know.

NOEL
What do you mean, you don't know?
How can you not know?

TIM
Didn't we cover this?

NOEL
Not even close. How long? A month?
A year? Ten?

TIM
More than a year, less than ten.

The thought of more than a year but less than ten brings
tears to Noel's eyes. She snuggles in against his side and
grasps at straws.

NOEL
Isn't she sick or something? Can't
you just check back in sometimes,
see if she's bought the farm?

TIM
I'm not sure everywhere has phones.
I just don't know how long it will
take to cover the map. But I will
be back. Promise me something?

NOEL
What?

TIM

Keep drawing. Get into a really good art school.

NOEL

I promise.

They stay quiet for a moment. He can't see it, but she looks like she just came up with another argument. He can feel it, though, when she pushes up into a sitting position via his ribs.

NOEL (CONT'D)

What if you die? How would I know? You'd never get a chance to see if the old hag buys it. It'd be like her winning or something.

TIM

Who says I'll die?

NOEL

It's not like you can promise me you won't. Sailors dying isn't exactly unheard of. There are storms, pirates, sea monsters...

TIM

Sea monsters?

NOEL

(knowledgeably)

I've read about them. Grab sailors right off their ships and carry them down. Davy Jones locker.

As he sits up, he pretends to stroke the beard he doesn't have.

TIM

What about mermaids?

NOEL

Yes, what about those! Women with shells over their boobs and swishy tails? A nice girl from Michigan hardly stands a chance.

TIM

What about the women in ports? You know what they say about sailors...

Chef's knives have a thing or two to learn from a 15-year old's glare.

NOEL

Oh, you are mean! Are you really going to go to ports? See those women? Be with them?

He laughs and pulls her into his lap. With her back to him, he wraps his arms around her so he can whisper in her ear.

TIM

Yes, yes and no. Go to ports, yes. See them, yes. Be with them, no. If I die, you'll stop receiving postcards. That's how you'll know.

The delightful pile of blades that Tim had so thoughtfully picked earlier leads Noel to gather them onto her knee and conduct a ring-weaving session.

NOEL

Girl Scout camp, sixth grade.

TIM

That what you want to be? Basket weaver? What happened to drawing?

NOEL

No. But I already told you I'd like to work with kids some day.

TIM

Yeah, you did.

NOEL

What about you? Is being a sailor what you really want to be?

TIM

No. Yes. I... I just... I just need to see that there's more out there than this. That people aren't like this. That things aren't... I need to see that I'm more than what she says I am. And it's something my Dad always wished he'd done.

She finishes her task and proudly hands him the ring. He examines it with as well a trained eye as any gemologist would have.

TIM (CONT'D)

(modulated voice)

Utterly fine craftsmanship. The artist is truly a master of the blade. Minor flaws.

NOEL
 (with fake outrage)
 Minor flaws?

TIM
 (hopeful, voice back to
 normal)
 Major flaws?

He definitely deserved the flurry of playful slaps to his arms and legs for that comment. Honestly, major flaws? Boy needs someone to tell him how to talk to women. Actions speak louder than words, though, and Noel slips the ring on his index finger. He can now take the majorly flawed masterpiece with him.

NOEL
 It's not like we're married or
 anything.

TIM
 I love you.

NOEL
 I know you do. That's why I'm
 letting you go.

He pulls back and gives her a dubious smile. This is not the same girl the previous conversation was with. She'd been pushing against his decision ever since he'd told her three weeks ago.

TIM
 Letting me?

NOEL
 Yes, it's all arranged. You will
 board your ship in the morning. No
 argument.

Dubiousness gives way to genuine in his smile.

TIM
 I'm going to miss you.

NOEL
 Yes, you are.

TIM
 Are you going to miss me?

Those tears that welled up before? That warm up was nothing compared to the flood offered by the real cry she has against him. She shakes her head that no, she most certainly will not miss him. Is he kidding her?

TIM (CONT'D)
 (quietly)
 Didn't think so.

The tears do abate and the sun is only a third visible over the horizon. Tim stands and offers to help her up. Graciously, she accepts it and runs a finger over the ring she made. They walk out from under the tree, towards the road, holding hands.

8 EXT. PORT OF MONROE (MONROE, MICHIGAN) DOCK AREA - MORNING 8

Tim steps down off a Greyhound-like bus, a duffel bag slung over his shoulder, and looks out over the dockyard. The sign says, "Port of Monroe".

Tim looks around, unsure.

A large man with the type of beard envied by Jim Morrison walks by him. Tim self-consciously touches his own chin.

TIM
 Hey, mister?

The BEARDED MAN stops and glares at Tim. Sunscreen doesn't now and has never factored into the man's skin care regimen. Neither for that matter has moisturizer, exfoliation, or possibly bathing.

TIM (CONT'D)
 I want a job.

BEARDED MAN
 Good for you, kid.

He continues walking, clearly not fussed by the (in his terms) scrawny whelp obstructing his path. Never one to be daunted by being ignored, Tim steps in front of him.

TIM
 Where do I get one?

If anything annoys people like this bearded man more than being out of beer and whiskey, it's pissant teenagers who think they can do anything they want standing in his way.

BEARDED MAN
 Dock Master.

With an incidence that is sure to be crafted into a story later at the bar, he tries to walk again but, again with this kid.

TIM

Well, where is he?

BEARDED MAN

Dock House.

Thoroughly done with whatever further questions this green kid may have, he shoves Tim aside and continues on his way towards the exit.

Tim catches himself against a shipping container, then looks out over the dock again. He walks slowly, looking.

TIM

(under his breath)

Dock House, Dock House, Dock House.

No, no, no. Not that. Not that.

Dock Master.

If you've never been to a shipyard, it is a city of its own making, a marvel of sights and sounds never heard in concrete and asphalt forests. Towers of shipping containers, waiting to be loaded or unstacked and put onto trains or trucks are the skyscrapers here. Ships replace cars, equally as varied in size, cargo, and destination, but somehow much, much more intimidating than a big rig or sedan.

Cranes of impossible size seize onto parcels of impossible weights. They swing their loads as easily as you might swing a towel and deposit them onto their targets with precision that would make a marksman jealous.

Shouts of men and sloshes of lake water are punctuated by the mournful bales of ship horns. Grinding machinery, clanging metal, and shrieking seagulls fill in the chorus.

A high-pitched whistle pierces through it all. Several men jog by him, lured by its promise. Tim looks to see where they are going. They gather around DON, who though in his 60s, grizzled, and having only one leg, still looks like he could take most of them down. He who stands on a crate and holds a clipboard garners attention.

DON

Alright, alright, ya lot. Gather up for assignments. Short list today, so get your grousing out now, cuz I won't listen to it later.

He surveys the grumbling crowd sternly. They simmer down and wait for the assignments.

DON (CONT'D)
 (raising his voice to be heard)
 The Sherry's lookin' for three deck crew for a nine-month float. You got kids or a good cook at home, this one's not for you.

Several hands go up. Don points to the ones that will board the Sherry.

DON (CONT'D)
 You and you and no, Riser, I'm not callin' you for this one. Not 'til that hand heals. Har har - this cap's read a few too many books. All you dumb ones just sit tight, the Shivering Timbers can't use ya.

The crowd laughs at a joke Tim doesn't get.

MAN IN CROWD
 Get us a boat we can all ride!

DON
 (chuckling)
 Alright, if you're not a fishing hand, stand tight. You and you, and what, only two of ya? OK, the Timbers will be two short.

He jerks a thumb towards the ship about to be two short, then consults his clipboard again.

Tim slides through the crowd until he's just about to the middle of it. He sets his duffle bag at his feet and watches Don, waiting for an opportunity to raise his hand.

The Dock House phone rings in the background. Don ignores it writes something down on his clipboard.

DON (CONT'D)
 SS Martin's Ferry... Eleven crew. Sanctified Christ, they dumped the lot. Food poisoning. Looks like they need a new cookie. Anyone with galley time? Yeah, Thomas, you're in.

The crowd thins by eleven, including Thomas the ship's new cook. The men leave towards the housing slip.

Tim watches them leave, then looks back at Don. There are still quite a few left and Don seems to be working through his

DON (CONT'D)

All you big riggers, you're next. SS Sea Trumpet and Caroline are heading below the equator. No tropical cruise for you. Alla ya, line up and split, don't matter which really you're on.

Don examines his clipboard, scrutinizing it.

Tim looks around. The crowd has decreased by about half. He half-smiles, feeling more confident with absolutely nothing to base that confidence on.

Don makes a face of displeasure, his clipboard less-than-cooperative and about to make a whole slew of guys unhappy.

DON (CONT'D)

Alright, alright. For all you pussies out there, there's a little wee ferry going out. Rolling some passengers around on their little picture ops, showing them around, making trouble for the locals. Easy ride, but shit work.

(affecting his speech
higher to make fun of it)

The SS Washed Asshole, ahem, Ashore is looking for a mate and a... oh, who the hell cares.

He brushes off two sailors who opt for the easy job now that they've passed a certain age.

DON (CONT'D)

Last one. Container ship. Coral Star's heading up the Lawrence, then on a yearly jag. Your wife's got bad cookin', here's your rig. Yeah, you four always go. Got room for one more. No? Alright, Star'll be short. That's it, Mariners.

The clipboard of fate has cast the remaining crowd back further dock work. Their grumbling makes Tim understand the phrase 'swear like a sailor'. He watches them disperse, then looks at Don like he's waiting to be noticed.

Don makes some more marks on his clipboard and occasionally watches the crowd. He doesn't give any indication that he notices the overly earnest and eager kid.

Fortune is known for favoring the bold. Tim snatches his duffel bag and approaches Don.

TIM

Heya, mister. I'd like a job.

DON

So'd every guy on this dock, kid.

TIM

No, I mean, I really want a job. I need one.

DON

If you add a really really, I'd believe ya. Not today, kid.

Don steps down off the crate and heads back to a small shack with no door. Above it, a hand-painted sign that looks like it needs another hand or two's attention says "Dock Master". The whistle Tim heard earlier is next to it.

Tim keeps up with him, shoulder-to-shoulder, about to be more in the way than he was with the bearded man from before. And possibly even more annoying.

TIM

I mean, I have to get out of here. I need on a boat. I don't care where it goes or how long it's out. The longer the better. The farther away the better. I need on, mister.

Don scoffs again, as Tim hasn't yet teetered from amusing into annoying. Yet. He enters the Dock Master's shack and picks up a radio handset.

DON

(on radio)

C-S-One-Two-Niner, over.

Radio static, crackle.

DON (CONT'D)

(on radio)

C-S-One-Two-Niner, over. Roy, pick up your damn radio.

ROY (O.C.)
 (over radio)
 C-S-One-Two-Niner, over. This is
 the Star, Don. Whatcha need?

DON
 (on radio)
 Got a kid. Wants on. You want him?

Don turns around and fixes Tim with the kind of look he'd
 come to expect from his grandparents.

ROY (O.C.)
 (over radio)
 Kid? He green?

DON
 (chuckling, on radio)
 First time he's even seen a boat.

Tim starts a valiant protest but is silenced by a raised
 finger and sharp whistle.

ROY (O.C.)
 (over radio)
 Hell no, I don't want him. Don't
 have time for that shit.

DON
 (on radio)
 Aw, Roy, c'mon. You'll be out long
 enough to train him and you're one
 short anyway.

ROY (O.C.)
 (over radio)
 And one short I'll stay. Out.

The radio crackles one last time out of spite and then is
 silent. Don shrugs and sets it down. Never one to plump Big
 Tobacco's coffers, he starts to roll his own cigarette.

DON
 Well, kid, there ya go. He doesn't
 want you. Guess that's goin'
 around.

TIM
 But...

DON
 (growing annoyed)
 You deaf or just dumb?
 (MORE)

DON (CONT'D)

One of those retards got let out of the ward or something? Them kids in them special classes? He said no.

Don lights his cigarette and goes back to his paperwork, the black and silver Skilcraft pen not writing as well as it used to.

TIM

Shit! The hell do I have to do?

Just as Don starts to lean out of the shack, his phone rings. He tucks it between his ear and shoulder, irritated that his no one will let him finish his job.

DON

(on phone)

Yeah? What? No, no, hold on.

He leans out of the shack and holds his hand over the phone.

DON (CONT'D)

Watch your mouth, to start. Ain't no sailor, yet. I'm on the phone.

He leans back into the shack and continues his phone conversation (indistinctly). The ships where men are prepping and boarding draws Tim's attention. Don sticks his head back out of the shack, off the phone.

DON (CONT'D)

And don't you go gettin' no big ideas, either, of stowing away. They find ya, they'll pitch ya overboard, straight into the drink.

What's left of Don's cigarette gets flicked away for emphasis.

TIM

Well how'd *you* get on ships?

DON

Joined the Navy. Seventeen years old, right at the end of the Big One.

TIM

World War Two?

Clipboards make for excellent head-smacking devices, as Tim finds out.

DON
One, you dumb kid. What're they
teaching you in schools these days?

Before Tim can retort with a smart-aleck comment and initiate what was sure to be an epic argument, the radio in the shack crackles and buzzes.

ROY (O.C.)
(over radio)
C-S-One-Two-Niner to Master, over.
Don, you there?

A man who is just itching for an argument and a good, old-fashioned ass-whooping tends to be aggravated when that plan is interrupted. The poor radio handset had nothing to do with it, but gets snatched up violently anyway.

DON
(on radio)
Master to C-S-One-Two-Niner, over.
Go ahead, Roy.

ROY (O.C.)
(over radio)
Yeah, that kid still around?

DON
(on radio)
Yeah. Why?

ROY (O.C.)
(over radio)
Aw, Perry's just taken his finger
off. Need at least nine and he's
down to eight.

Don chokes on his last drag, stubbing his cigarette out in the tin ashtray next to him.

DON
(on radio)
Shit.

ROY (O.C.)
(over radio)
Send me the kid.

With much chagrin and never a man who enjoys going back on his word, Don leans out of the shack a final time, only to find himself looking at Tim's backside, duffel bag in hand.

DON
Hey, kid! Report to slip two!

Apparently, he didn't say it loud enough as Tim keeps walking away from the shack.

DON (CONT'D)
 (yelling)
 Hey! Hey, kid!

Don picks up the clipboard, steps out of the shack and flings it, frisbee-style at Tim. While the aerodynamics of pressed cardboard may be the subject of late night, drunken debates, Don's accuracy is not. The clipboard hits Tim squarely in the back and clatters to the ground.

Tim pivots and drops his duffel bag, ready for a fight he would surely lose. He sees Don leaning out of the shack, pointing at the ship in slip two.

DON (CONT'D)
 (yelling)
 Kid! Coral Star's got a bunk!

Hot damn! Now that's a way to change an emotional state (though the whiplash of it will exhaust him later). Tim grins, grabs his duffel, and springs towards the Coral Star.

9 INT. VERY NOISY DIVE BAR - NIGHT

9

Wall-to-wall people. Posters advertising ports in every country, like blown-up postcards. Gaudy tropical decor. Floors stickier than a 5-year old's hands after a caramel apple. A homemade tattoo gun buzzing in a back room. The bar with the wailing-cat guitar player tries a bit too hard to be some place it's not - respectable.

Tim stands near the back, next to the restroom, of which there's only one and one that assuredly has a permanent yellow glow on the floor. He holds a pay phone receiver with a questionable phone number etched on it, waiting for someone on the other end to pick up. A rowdy discussion that erupts nearby shifts his look of hope and excitement to annoyance.

He plugs his ear to try and hear the phone better.

TIM
 (shouting into the phone)
 No, two-three-two-five-five-five-
 seven-six-one-nine! Yes!

Tim's annoyance at the bar noise grows.

TIM (CONT'D)
 (yelling)
 Noel? Noel! Hi, honey! God!

He throws a dirty look at the bar (as if that would affect anyone in there at all), unable to hear a blasted thing.

TIM (CONT'D)
 (towards the racket)
 Will ya shut up?!
 (back at the phone)
 Noel? Baby? It's Tim!

He tries to muffle as much of the noise as possible.

10

INT. NOEL'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

10

Noel stands by the phone in the wall, straining to hear. Crackling static on the other end of the line periodically interrupts Tim's voice.

NOEL
 Who is this? Ow!

A particularly loud and piercing bit of static makes Noel flinch and yank the phone away from her ear.

NOEL (CONT'D)
 (yelling)
 Tim? Tim, is that you? Where are you?

More static.

(The scene flips between Tim in the noisy bar and Noel in her kitchen.)

Tim cups his hand over his free ear. His look of irritation clearly says that worked about as well as showering with mud. He steals a bar napkin out of a nearby bussing bin. A twist and a shove into his ear later and he fashions a makeshift headphone for himself. It's a moderate improvement.

TIM
 (yelling)
 Noel! I can't hear you! Can you hear me?

NOEL
 (yelling)
 Tim? I can't hear you! Can you hear me?

Tim turns around to check the front door.

TIM
 (yelling)
 Noel! I can't... there! Noel! Man,
 this connection is bad. I can only
 make out every fourth word!
 Operator, can you work on the
 connection?

Noel dances herself into a phone cord mummy, laughing.

NOEL
 Tim! I heard you! Where are you?

Tim grins and waves at a man who's waved at him to hurry up..
 A lull in the music is a nice change, so he doesn't have to
 yell quite as loudly anymore.

TIM
 Some bar in Avalon! I don't even
 know where that is! Look, we're
 shipping out tomorrow! I don't know
 how much there'll be a phone, but
 I'll write you, baby! I promise!
 I'll write!

Noel's parents enter the kitchen, yawning. It's not every
 night their phone rings or they hear their daughter yelling
 down in the kitchen at almost midnight. They don't look angry
 or even annoyed. Vaguely amused, maybe.

NOEL
 Where? Where-a-thon? Are you
 leaving yet? Where are they sending
 you? Tim! I can't hear you! This is
 a... ow!

The static monster is back with a vengeance. It's raunchy
 enough to cause her to pull the phone away again and rub her
 ear.

The music in the bar starts up again.

TIM
 I'll write whenever I can! See you
 when I get back! I love you! Noel?

The Coral Star's BOATSWAIN stands near the front door of the
 bar. He raises a hand, which brings some modicum of volume
 control, and calls out above the din.

BOATSWAIN
 Coral Star! Load up!

He lowers his hand and heads out of the door. The Coral Star's crew follows, leaving Tim the last (would-be) mariner still in the bar.

TIM

Baby! I gotta go! We're...

From Tim's phone, we hear the OPERATOR'S voice.

OPERATOR

We're sorry, but the time you have paid for has expired. Would you like to deposit money for additional time?

Tim pulls the phone away from his ear in disbelief.

TIM

Oh, come on!

He sighs and hangs up the receiver hard. He shakes his head and heads for the front door. An idea makes him pivot mid-step and sprint back to the bar. He slaps his hand down on the bar a couple of times to get the bartender's attention, undoubtedly endearing him to the keep.

TIM (CONT'D)

Hey, bartender!

The BARTENDER walks over to him. He motions towards the front door.

BARTENDER

Ain't you on the Star?

TIM

Yeah, but...

BARTENDER

(interrupting)

Well, then you'd better...

TIM

(interrupting)

Yeah, I know, but do you got any postcards?

The bartender steps back from the bar.

BARTENDER

Postcards?

TIM

I gotta have one, yes or no?

BARTENDER
 (scoffs)
 Postcards.

He turns away from his weirdest request of the day. You can bet that will be part of his "can you believe what happened today" stories later. He pauses as he grabs a new bottle off the shelf.

Tim slams his hand down on the bar in frustration and turns on his heel to leave.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
 Hey, kid!

Tim turns back, expectantly.

TIM
 Yeah?

BARTENDER
 Here.

The bartender wings a square cardboard coaster at him. Turns out, square cardboard coasters fly better than clipboards do.

Tim catches it and looks at the bartender quizzically.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
 Blank on the back. Stamp it, it'll get to where you're sending it.

TIM
 Aw man! Thanks! You don't know what this means!

He grins at the bartender and gives him a salute before running out of the bar.

18 INT. NOEL'S KITCHEN - DAY

18

Hamilton walks in with the mail. He reads a letter while handing Noel, who's sitting at the kitchen table, a suspiciously familiar cardboard bar coaster. She's eating breakfast (Rice Krispies, if you must know) and doesn't notice at first. He taps her on the shoulder with it. She looks to her shoulder and with a blooming comical expression, snatches the coaster, jumps up, and runs into the living room.

INT. NOEL'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Noel steps onto the couch and settles into a crouch to read silently. Over her shoulder, we see Tim's writing and the postcard address to "Ms. N. DeForesst 1192 Jimson Street, Birch Lake Twp, MI 48105". We hear Tim's voice as a MONTAGE shows where he is/what he's doing.

TIM (V.O.)

This is from the bar in Avalon, NY where I tried to call. Figured out where it was. Went all the way through the Great Lakes. Got real postcards & will send them when I can. I can't wait to take you along the coast here. Heading out soon. I love you.

INT. BLACK - DAY (MONTAGE)

A) Tim on the deck of the Coral Star, watching the shore of the Port of Monroe get farther and farther away.

B) Tim on deck, being shown how to do... container ship things.

C) The Port of Buffalo is lovely this time of year as the crew unloads and loads containers.

D) Montreal's Port makes Buffalo's look like weak sauce. A starstruck Tim gets to operate the loading crane for the first time in his first ever time out of the country.

E) As the last (or first) port on the St. Lawrence Seaway, Quebec City is truly the beginning of Tim's journey.

20

EXT. SS CORAL STAR - EVENING

20

Tim stands on deck, resting against steel cables, looking back towards shore. The shoreline twinkles and beckons in the distance, the setting sun its backdrop.

A whistle sounds on ship.

BOATSWAIN (O.C.)

Second watch! Muster! Second watch!

Tim sighs and smiles. The FIRST MATE claps a hand on his shoulder.

FIRST MATE

Keep your eye on the horizon, kid.
You'll be all right.

21 INT. NOEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 21

Noel sits on her bed, under the covers, with a flashlight propped up against the wall. She writes in a notebook.

NOEL (V.O.)

Dear Tim, School starts this week. Can you believe it? I can't believe you won't start your junior year or graduate or take me to prom. You don't know her, but I got Mrs. Jarvis for 10th Math. I hear she's the meanest lady in the school. Everyone from the team asks about you. I wasn't sure what to tell them, so I told them you ran off and joined the circus! We're having the annual End of Summer/Labor Day festival! They say we're going to have fireworks this year!

22 INT. BLACK - DAY (MONTAGE) 22

A) Noel buys school supplies with some friends.

B) Mrs. Jarvis (she doesn't look mean at all. Of course, no tests have been taken yet) sets up her classroom, for the start of school.

C) Kids gather around Noel at the baseball field. She talks, they laugh. Some of them imitate elephants or tightrope walkers or ringmasters.

23 EXT. POPLAR STREET - LATE AFTERNOON 23

With school starting in a couple of days, kids are enjoying their last taste of freedom without homework. A few, like Noel, have waited until the last minute for school supplies. As it happens, she has a curious spirit and it has finally gotten the better of her. She's taking a stroll past Tim's old house, her notebooks and pencil holder in hand.

Lawrence mows the lawn while Leigh weeds amongst the blanket flowers and columbines that line the driveway. Velma and Vinton sit in metal lawn chairs on the porch, reading separate parts of the newspaper.

As Noel walks by, all four of them stop what they're doing and look up at her. She momentarily slows, until she realizes they're staring at her for a reason. She stares defiantly back at them for a moment before turning her nose up in the air and walking swiftly past their house.

Vinton doesn't turn his attention away from the newspaper. Leigh and Lawrence look at Velma.

Velma pointedly watches until Noel turns the corner. She sucks her teeth for a moment before returning to the newspaper she will complain about later.

VELMA

Can't get no peace in this
neighborhood. Never with just our
own kind.

Leigh starts to say something, but Lawrence shakes his head and continues mowing the lawn. Leigh hangs her head and accidentally snips off a flower.

24

EXT. OPORTO PORTUGAL PORT - DAY

24

Mid-September 1970. Tim walks down the gangplank and takes his first step onto his first "super foreign" country (as Noel called anything outside of North America); Portugal. The rapid pattering of Portuguese fills his ears and makes him realize the pocket dictionary in his back pocket had been woefully inadequate. He can't help but laugh and close his eyes, feeling like he can breathe for the first time.

As soon as he is clear from incoming or off-loading traffic, he opens his duffel bag and pulls out a rolled up map and a black marker. Right there, smack in the middle of a circle surrounding Portugal, he marks an 'X'. There are several circles on the map, all around the world, of places he's determined to go no matter what. He puts the map away and grins. Time to explore.

The first thing that strikes him is the number of people who look vaguely like he does. The look on his face is somewhat like a 5-year old who just saw presents beneath a lighted Christmas tree. Just as he starts to get lost in people-watching, enticing smells from a line of street-food vendors across from a line of fishing boats draw his attention.

A bugle blares a bright, 4-sound tune from a ship in the harbor, pulling him out of his hypnotized state. A group of men in white and blue naval uniforms canter past him. He laughs, spinning to watch them run towards the alert.

He stops by a food vendor in front of the fishing boats and stutters through shameful attempts at Portuguese. Tim is not the vendor's first foreign customer and she laughs at his flummoxed expression, gesturing at her bins of ingredients.

VENDOR

O que voca quer?

Tim charades eating a sandwich, then points to the bins of meats marinated and seasoned with spices he's sure he's never heard of and vegetables he's certain he cannot identify. The vendor nods in vague understanding and begins constructing a sandwich on a very crusty roll.

VENDOR (CONT'D)

Claro, claro.

Once she is done filling the bread with leafy greens, what Tim's mostly sure is caramelized onions, and what he sincerely hopes is pork, she drizzles mustard on the top. She points to it and hands it to him.

VENDOR (CONT'D)

Bifano.

TIM

Bifano?

Wretched accent aside, he's trying at least.

VENDOR

Bifano. Trinta escudo.

Fishing two twenty-escudo coins out of his pocket, he trades them for the sandwich. Waving off any offer of change, he tears into the sandwich. Whether it's his grin, the hamster-puffed out cheeks, or the mustard smear on his chin, she's pretty sure he's enjoying it.

A three-person fado band starts up nearby and the trio of their 12-string fast-paced melodies beckon him over. As he eats, several people start dancing with steps that would make central Michigan blush.

Tim turns around at a nudge on his shoulder. A vendor has set up shop behind him and nudges him again with a brown bottle. Never one to turn down hospitality, Tim finds another pair of twenty-escudo coins with the hand that isn't half covered in mustard.

25 EXT. NOEL'S FRONT PORCH - MORNING

25

Noel stands on the front porch, impatiently waiting for the mailman.

Aha! She sees the mailman across the street. Antsy, she leaps from her porch and runs as fast as her Mary Janes will take her to meet him. Fortunately, it's still the days when the mailman knew everyone and already had her family's mail ready. She snatches the mail from his hand and runs back up to her front porch.

NOEL
(over her shoulder to the
mailman)
Thank you!

She yelps when she sees a postcard. She stuffs the rest of the mail into the mailbox (who cares about it anyway?) and curls up onto the porch swing to read the postcard, tucking a lock of hair behind her ear. Only the picture side of the postcard is seen.

26 EXT. OPORTO PORTUGAL PORT - DAY

26

The postcard has nine pictures extolling the virtues of the port, markets, etc.

TIM (V.O.)
Wait until you dip your toe in this water. Warm as a bathtub. You can eat right out of the local markets here. Saw my first octopus today! Still alive! Ate it with some chili -- hot! Wiggles going down. Can't wait to see your face when you try it. Eu amo-te. I'm learning Portuguese!

27 EXT. OPORTO PORTUGAL PORT - DAY

27

A) Panoramic of the coastline, water licking at ships' hulls.

B) More food vendors.

C) Bucket with a small octopus in it. Tim makes a face at it, laughing, shaking his hand and backing away. The locals push him forward. The vendor shakes it at him for him to try it. Tim gives in, closes his eyes and opens his mouth. The vendor puts chili paste on the animal, then pops it in Tim's mouth.

D) Tim sits on a curb, drinking a beer, watching.

28 EXT. NOEL'S FRONT PORCH - MORNING 28

Noel devours the postcard several more times, her lips moving along with each word. Breathless, she presses the postcard to her chest and dreamily stares at the ceiling. She jumps up and runs inside.

29 INT. NOEL'S HALLWAY - MORNING 29

Noel sprints down the hallway, past the kitchen where her mother, KITTY (40), is doing dishes.

KITTY

Noel? Is that you?

Noel ignores her and yanks on the cord to open the attic door. The stairs softly unfold and she clambers up them.

Kitty sticks her head out into the hallway.

KITTY (CONT'D)

Noel?

Kitty sees Noel's face briefly as the stairs are pulled up, like a gargoyle peeking down. She chuckles and shakes her head, the dishes needing her attention more than her daughter right then.

30 INT. NOEL'S ATTIC - MORNING 30

You know those attics you always dream of as a kid or see in the movies? That's just what this one is. Large enough to put an apartment up there, but not too crowded with stuff being stored that only needs to be brought out during the holidays or when going on trips. There's a window that faces the front of the house and has a seat built underneath it. There isn't any padding or full cushion on it, and it would be unbearable uncomfortable if it weren't for a pillow Noel's already put there. On the wall next to the window is a new world map, still struggling to roll back up despite the push pins holding it.

She sits on the pillow and for what must be the ninth time already, reads the postcard again. We see the writing this time, with the postage stamp and the word 'paquebot' stamped over it. The postmark reads October 1, 1970.

She leans against the window and stares longingly out of it. She closes her eyes, smiles, and holds the postcard close. Inspiration strikes and makes her bolt out of her seat, grab an old shoebox, and dump the shoes out of it.

KITTY (O.S.)
 (muffled from the
 downstairs hallway)
 What was that?

NOEL
 Shoes!

She reads the postcard one more time (we might be at eleven now), then carefully peels the stamp off and tapes it to the map over Portugal. One more look at the picture, and she puts the postcard in the shoebox.

She grabs her notebook and flips through several pages that have already been filled.

NOEL (V.O.)
 October 11, 1970. Dear Tim, I just got your first real postcard! Portugal! I wish I knew what you were doing, what sorts of adventures, dangers you see. Are there sea monsters? Find any mermaids yet? Well, I can tell you what's going on here, that's for sure. You wouldn't believe that family of yours. You were sure right about them. I never would have thought it, but Mom said your grandmother was at the school meeting the other day!

31 INT. SCHOOL BOARD MEETING - NIGHT

31

Seven school board members and the high school principal (all white; five women, three men, and all with enough starch in their respective clothing for them to stand on their own) sit at a table at the front of the conference room. There are about twenty chairs in rows before them, where Velma, Kitty and a few other townsfolk sit.

The school board PRESIDENT leans forward to address the audience.

PRESIDENT
 Next order of business, Missus Velma Randall. You have a complaint?

Velma stands and walks with her head high to stand before the board and principal. She's haughty and disapproving; not that anyone should be surprised by that.

VELMA

I undoubtedly do, otherwise I have
no business being here.

The president pretends to check his notes, as dealing with
people sporting this type of attitude makes him
uncomfortable.

PRESIDENT

And who is your student with us,
Missus Randall?

VELMA

No student of mine would go to *your*
schools.

The president stops looking at his notes and looks directly
at Velma.

Kitty shifts in her seat, curious.

PRESIDENT

Are you having trouble with
students in your neighborhood,
then?

Velma sniffs and lifts her nose a bit higher.

VELMA

No.

PRESIDENT

Then what, Missus Randall, is your
complaint regarding?

VELMA

I want to know why you don't have a
school for your Black students
here?

Kitty gasps audibly.

PRESIDENT

(placatingly)

Missus Randall, our schools are
fully integrated here.

VELMA

(with clear disapproval)

I'm well aware of that.

(MORE)

VELMA (CONT'D)

What I want to know is why there is no place for our Black students to work amongst themselves, where they can get a fair shake, without being under whitey's eye. What makes you think we want to deal with any of Detroit's big-city nonsense they got there about integration. You don't see what they going through like I do.

She gives a pointed look to the principal. The rest of the room joins the president in his state of remarkable discomfort.

32

EXT. NOEL'S FRONT PORCH - MORNING

32

The distance between home and school takes Noel about a quarter of the time it normally should, with how fast she runs. The three porch steps don't impede her progress through the open front door.

She runs inside, tosses her school books on the kitchen table and snatches the mail from it on her way past. Her father barely registers the blur of his daughter over his newspaper crossword.

HAMILTON

Noel, that you?

NOEL

(over her shoulder, running through the living room)
Yep!

HAMILTON

How did the--

NOEL

(heading into the hall)
Great!

Noel pulls down the attic stairs, climbs them, pulls them back up and runs to her window seat. Dozens of drawings are scattered around, some sticking out of a portfolio. There's a large envelope, mostly covered, with only the word "Connecticut" visible in the address.

Nine postcards occupy the shoebox, soon to be joined by the one she holds from Alexandria, Egypt.

She flips the postcard over. The postmark says December 6, 1970.

33 EXT. PORT OF ALEXANDRIA - EVENING

33

At a table in the world's tiniest restaurant that looks like it's been carved out of a building with a spoon, Tim sits with a cup of still steaming tea in front of him. The overwhelming ambience that is Alexandria is a little more muted here, but the lights of the port can still be seen and the sounds from the market, minarets, and shipyard still drift in. Tim pulls his map out, unrolls it, and puts an "X" in the circle around Alexandria. There are x-circles over Rotterdam, Hamburg, London, and Istanbul.

TIM (V.O.)

Egypt! It's nothing what you learn in school. Loud, fast, smelly, wonderful. No pyramids over here, see? You can't read the writing -- you would love drawing it. Taking several loads up and down the river. If you look very closely, you'll see a boat. That's me. Ana Behibek. I can't write it like they do.

34 EXT. PORT OF ALEXANDRIA - MONTAGE

34

A) Tim walks up a gangplank onto a river barge, holding the same postcard Noel will receive.

B) Several smaller canoe-like boats are lined up on the barge for transport.

C) Tim speaks with another crew member, who hands him a bucket and a small mop and points to the smaller boats.

D) Tim sits on deck, feet over the side, with a .375 rifle resting on his leg. Off in the river, eyes from a hippopotamus glow.

35 INT. NOEL'S ATTIC - EVENING

35

Noel writes in another notebook. There's a full one (it looks like it's been opened plenty and is now secured with a rubber band) next to her on the window seat. She's dated the top of the current page December 21, 1970.

NOEL (V.O.)

Dear, Tim. Christmas came early! I just got your postcard from Alexandria. Why don't they have pyramids there? I thought they were all over Egypt.

(MORE)

NOEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I wish I had a copy of your map. That way, I could see where you were heading off to next. Since I don't have yours, I've started one of my own. I put stamps where you've been and green sewing pins where I think you're going. Don't you think that's neat? I'm going to present it in class soon.

36 INT. NOEL'S BEDROOM - DAY 36

1) The map on the wall has stamps over New York; Oporto, Portugal; Rotterdam, Netherlands; Hamburg, Germany; London, England; Istanbul, Turkey; Alexandria, Egypt. There are green-ball tipped sewing needles in Tripoli, Libya; Jordan; Cyprus; Athens, Greece; Rome, Italy.

37 EXT. SS CAT'S CLAW - NIGHT 37

2) Tim walks up the gangplank of SS Cat's Claw, a tanker ship. He walks onto the deck and drops his duffel, which so far doesn't look too worse for wear. Quickly, he pulls out his map and smiles as he taps Athens. A whistle on the ship makes him grab his duffel and jog towards the crew quarters below decks.

38 INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY 38

3) Noel stands before her class and gingerly tapes her map to the chalkboard. Yard stick in hand, her presentation begins when she points where Tim has been and where she thinks he'll go next. The teacher smiles and marks down an "A" next to Noel's name in the gradebook.

39 EXT. PORT OF ATHENS (PIREAS) - NIGHT 39

Scenes of the ship navigating the Cyclades, the illuminated crosses of Greek Orthodox churches, the ship docked in port, gyros street kiosks (because what teenage boy doesn't find food first).

TIM (V.O.)

We always talked about coming to Greece. Thought I would check it out first. You won't like it -- you'll love it! The water reminds me of you. Warm, sparkly and beautiful. Not sure how long I'll be here.

(MORE)

TIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)

If you were here, I wouldn't leave.
S'agapo. Can't write it their way,
either.

40 EXT. PORT OF ATHENS - MORNING 40

A) Food kiosk vendors set up for the day. The dock starts to come alive.

-- Time change to afternoon

B) Tim sits at a table with a local family, in their courtyard area. They're eating, drinking wine and laughing. Tim takes out his map and points to Sri Lanka, proudly. He shares a look of interest with a young woman at the table.

C) Tim walks through the port. He stops and speaks to several men briefly. One points to a freighter, "SS Wichita Cyclone".

41 INT. NOEL'S ATTIC - EVENING 41

Noel curls up on the window seat. The original nine postcards have been joined by a few more. She flips back through some of the postcards. Apparently, Tim is not a one-postcard-per-place kind of guy. We see several from England, Holland, Turkey, Egypt, Red Sea, Spain.

The one she holds in her hand hails from Sri Lanka.

42 EXT. SS WICHITA CYCLONE DECK COMING INTO PORT OF COLOMBO - 42 DAY

Tim stands on deck, looking at the approaching Port of Colombo. Indistinct yelling behind him catches his interest only marginally.

He carefully rolls out his journey map. There are x-circles now over Malta, Libya, Gibraltar, and Oman. He traces his finger over Oman, then the route to Sri Lanka. He stops when his finger is in the middle of the circle. He marks an "X", rolls the map back up carefully, and walks towards the hubbub.

TIM (V.O.)

There's nothing that doesn't remind me of you. I lay in my bunk and think of you. I walk the deck and think of you. I eat, work, and explore and think of you.

(MORE)

TIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Sometimes, I can almost feel you
 holding my hand. It's so different
 out here. Mama Oyata Aadarei.

43 EXT. MOUNT SINAI HOSPITAL, NEW YORK CITY - DAY

43

April 1972. What an imposing building Mount Sinai Hospital is. Especially when you're there for an interview that will determine the rest of your career. In those moments, one needs deep breaths. Hamilton takes his last one before entering.

The receptionist's desk has three people behind it, none of whom look like they've had to take any deep breaths today. "Mount Sinai Hospital" is on the wall behind them, just in case anyone forgets where they are. The receptionist with a colorful scarf in her hair smiles at Hamilton, his cue to approach.

Tim's voiceover ends.

HAMILTON
 Doctor De Foresst to see Doctor
 Morris Bender. I have an
 appointment.

RECEPTIONIST
 Please go up, Doctor De Foresst.
 Doctor Bender is waiting. Fourth
 floor. His assistant will tell you
 which office.

HAMILTON
 Thank you.

Hamilton turns towards the elevators. Time for one more deep breath.

44 EXT. NOEL'S FRONT PORCH - EVENING

44

A female hand reaches up to ring the door bell, a corsage with vivid pink flowers around her wrist.

NOEL (V.O.)
 Tonight is prom! I'm almost glad
 you're not here. You never said you
 could dance and I'd hate to get on
 the floor to find out you can't!
 I'm going with Courtney and her
 cousin. Mom found the best dress at
 Wurzburg's and Dad said he'd take a
 Polaroid!

The front door opens to reveal Kitty. Down the hall, we see Noel. She wasn't lying about the dress. Wurzburg's outdid themselves when they made this one - cornflower blue satin falls to her ankles, with an arrangement of daisies along the left shoulder and layered sleeves just to the end of the shoulder. They even included lace wrist gloves to complete the look.

Kitty makes a sweeping motion of welcome into the house. Hamilton stands proudly behind Noel, his Polaroid camera in hand.

45

EXT. SS ALAMEDA IN THE INDIAN OCEAN - MORNING

45

A container ship comes alongside Tim's ship. It looks like a local ship to his eye. No name is painted on the side and no flag flies anywhere he can see. Tim stands nervously on deck, watching. Nothing outside of combat in an armed service could have prepared the nineteen-year old for this. The ALAMEDA BOATSWAIN stands next to him, more cautious than nervous.

ALAMEDA BOATSWAIN

(without moving his lips)

Just go along with it, kid. Follow the captain. Don't, and I'll pitch ya over myself. Helluva postcard will come outta this, huh?

Tim nods and watches as several men with guns board the Alameda. They begin speaking in a language Tim doesn't understand.

PIRATE 1

(subtitled)

Everyone! To the center of the ship! Face in! Now! Go!

The Alameda's crew is pushed and spun around to face the center of the ship.

PIRATE 1 (CONT'D)

(subtitled)

No talking! Talk and over you go!
Hands up!

Guns smack elbows to make sure those hands are raised.

Tim looks at his senior deck officer for instructions outside the ones being barked at him in a language he doesn't understand. The boatswain shakes his head. The CAPTAIN of the Alameda joins the circle.

PIRATE 1 gestures to four of his men.

PIRATE 1 (CONT'D)
 (subtitled, speaking to
 his crew)

Go unload half the cargo. We will need to make better time so we can make it before the market closes. I don't think we'll keep any of the crew.

The PIRATE CAPTAIN boards the ship and walks next to the one calling the shots thus far. The rest of his crew shift cargo from the Alameda to their vessel and none of them meet the eye of the captain or his mouthpiece.

PIRATE CAPTAIN
 (subtitled)
 Is it done?

PIRATE 1
 (subtitled)
 They are unloading half now, so we can make better time. The rest... bah. We don't need them.

The pirate captain looks over the crew of the Alameda, weighing his options.

PIRATE CAPTAIN
 (to the crew of the
 Alameda)
 Want to join? Sail seven seas? Take what you want? Pay all the time?

The crew of the Alameda, with their hands still up, stay in place. Stepping forward likely means a bullet to the head and no one opts for that ventilation method. The pirate captain laughs and disappears down a hold.

He re-emerges to the deck shortly, his face a contortion of profound disappointment and rage. He shoves a few of the Alameda's crew away from him.

PIRATE CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
 (subtitled)
 Get them to the edge! We will be lucky to get a day's pay for this garbage! How dare they sail this here! If they think so little of their lives to pay with this, over they go!

Confusion erupts on deck as the pirates shove Tim and his crew mates towards the edge of the deck.

Ready to fight to stay alive even a moment longer, Tim looks at his own captain for permission to throw a punch. To his surprise, his captain turns around and begins addressing the pirates in their own language.

ALAMEDA CAPTAIN
(subtitled) (to the
pirates)

Only a day's pay? With one raid? Is that all he can offer you? I can pay you three times that. Regularly, too, not just when a ship comes by that he thinks is worth it.

The pirates scoff and look towards their captain.

ALAMEDA CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
(subtitled)

In one day. In one day with me, you'll make three times what you make with him in a week.

Loyalty not necessarily high on their priorities, pirates are by nature suspicious and mercenary. Whoever offers the best food, bunking, pay, and days off has a better than average chance of swaying their allegiance. A veteran of the waters south of the subcontinent, the Alameda's captain is well-versed in alternative maritime customs.

The pirate captain scoffs and waves his pistol in the air, like there's fanfare playing.

ALAMEDA CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
(subtitled)

Fresh water. Good food. Comfortable bed. Work four, off eight. Lengthy shore time with money in your pocket and favors at hotels.

The pirate captain looks enraged and tries to out-shout the Alameda's captain.

PIRATE CAPTAIN
(subtitled)

You will live with rules, governments, nothing your own way! This godless one lies with his western trap of corruption!

ALAMEDA CAPTAIN

(subtitled)

Imagine being able to sail without worrying about being arrested, jailed, beaten, starved. Nice change, eh?

The promises entreaty weapons to lower and narrowed eyes to turn towards the pirate captain for explanation. Knowing timing is everything, the Alameda's captain nods to his crew. Fights break out as the crew wrestles for weapons. A few are discharged, killing three pirates and wounding two of the Alameda's crew.

Now with tables turned, the pirates stand with their hands raised, facing their former captives. Tim, bleeding from his jawline where a bullet grazed him, sights his rifle on the pirate who'd been previously giving the orders.

The Alameda's captain walks over to the pirate captain, puts his arm around him as if to engage in intense negotiations, and shoves him overboard. Then, he turns to the rest of the pirates and offers them a choice.

ALAMEDA CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

(subtitled)

There's only one captain and crew on this boat.

46 INT. NOEL'S ATTIC - EVENING

46

June 1972. Noel sits on her window seat, reviewing the cards in the shoebox. The cushion has been replaced, but the shoebox has not. The exotic enticements of Perth invite the receiver to visit. That postcard is atop several others awaiting filing after she's done reading them again. A creak from the floorboard makes her look up.

KITTY

Hi, there.

The kitchen phone rings downstairs and Hamilton's voice provides the backdrop for their conversation.

NOEL

Hi, Mom.

Kitty leans against a beam.

KITTY

Whatcha doin' up here? It's late.

NOEL

I know, Mom. I just wanted to look through these. Is that OK?

KITTY

Sure. How many do you have now?

Noel picks up the shoebox and shakes it lightly at her, careful not to dislodge any of the cards. She gathers up the stack of postcards next to her so her mom has a place to sit. Kitty accepts the invitation and sits, on bare wood because the cushion is only meant for one butt.

KITTY (CONT'D)

There must be thirty in there.

NOEL

Oh, at least. Sometimes he sends two or three from the same place. I'm not always sure if that's because he just liked them or if he was there more than once. He doesn't always say.

KITTY

My. That's quite a collection you're gathering.

NOEL

Isn't it wonderful?

Kitty indicates the postcard Noel is holding.

KITTY

Don't want to ruin that one. Perth? Australia? He really has gone away from home, hasn't he?

Noel bobs her head excitedly. Kitty chuckles and leans over to see the card, nosy because sometimes "girl time" is more important than "mother-daughter" time.

NOEL

Want to read it?

KITTY

Sure. Let's see what our young Timothy has been up to.

The floorboard creaks again, a fine alarm for anyone wanting to preserve privacy. This time, it's Hamilton that approaches.

HAMILTON

So this is where my ladies of the house have gotten off to.

KITTY

Come on over, Milt. Let's take an adventure.

Amiably, Hamilton walks over and leans on the wall behind his wife. While he has his own thoughts about such a long-distance relationship, he's always kept them to himself and now is no different. Kitty shows him Perth postcard.

Noel anticipates embarrassment, because it's a teenage girl speaking about her relationship with her parents.

KITTY (CONT'D)

So, has this cooled any or are we still hot and heavy?

NOEL

Mom!

KITTY

Well?

Noel looks out the window, in the way people do when they're being nostalgic, and sounds reminiscent.

NOEL

It's been two years. I mean, I still love him, but... it's a long time, you know? I'm halfway to eighteen now.

HAMILTON

Here I thought you were older than nine... Where have I been?

NOEL

Ugh, Dad! That's not what I meant! I mean... I'm nearly eighteen. And he's... almost twenty. He may not be the same when he gets back.

Kitty appraises her daughter lovingly and says what Noel is worrying about.

KITTY

You might not, either.

Noel's expression turns slightly, drifting away from nostalgia and more towards sad.

KITTY (CONT'D)
What's wrong, honey?

Noel fingers through the cards in the box.

NOEL
Oh, haven't gotten any in awhile.
This last one is from four months
ago. Just...

She leans her head against the window and sighs.

NOEL (CONT'D)
I'm worried about my friend. What
if he's not OK? What if he's...

HAMILTON
I'm sure he's fine, baby. You
remember how some of these came in.
Nothing for awhile, then six show
up.

KITTY
(sympathetically)
Shall I read?

47 I/E. FLASHBACK - PORT OF PERTH, ONBOARD SHIP, INSIDE A CAR 47
DAY

Ferrying vehicles for a short jaunt, Tim sits in a car, ready to drive it off to the parking lot. A man outside raises his hand as a signal and Tim drives the car slowly down the ramp and into port. He parks it next to a line of others, then jogs back to the ship for the next one. He passes a newspaper stand as he does.

The newspaper stand has a newspaper with the headline "Stunning shooting star display to continue tonight".

KITTY (V.O.)
Meteor showers on the ocean would
take your breath away. Nothing like-

-
(Kitty's voice fades out,
Tim's voice fades in over
hers)

Tim (V.O)
--what we watched under our tree.
You see them in the sky and in the
water at the same time, like a
crazy mirror.

48 EXT. PORT OF PERTH - NIGHT

48

Tim watches the meteor shower from his seated position on the concrete, his legs dangling over the edge of the pier. The Southern Cross is visible in the sky, obscured by neither a full moon or clouds. He pulls out his map and marks an "X" through the circle around Perth. Bangkok, Shanghai, Batangas, and Singapore also have an "X" through their circles. This particular card is evidently from his first visit to the Land Down Under.

TIM (V.O.)

If you listen real close, you can hear them. Sometimes, I hear your name when I watch them.

49 INT. NOEL'S ATTIC - NIGHT

49

KITTY

I love you.

Kitty fans herself with the card like she's at church in July. Hamilton chuckles and shakes his head.

HAMILTON

Wow. Kid's ten thousand miles away and calls me out.

NOEL

Wonderful, huh?

KITTY

Just your basic form of it. Guess they speak English in Australia?

NOEL

Guess so. I hope he's OK. It's been so long... Maybe he's got another girl somewhere. Tired of his silly little romance back in Michigan.

Kitty laughs and swats Noel with the postcard. Gingerly, Noel takes it and reverently places it into the shoebox. No one plays with the cards.

HAMILTON

Pretty neat, kiddo. Pretty neat. Wanna know what else is pretty neat?

Noel puts the lid on the box and sets it on the floor. She pretends to think for a moment.

NOEL
I'm getting a car.

HAMILTON
Yes.

Kitty looks up at her husband and his announcement of something they maybe were not quite decided on. Noel, being like any teenager who's getting a car, squeals in a way that shouldn't have been possible after puberty.

NOEL
(excitedly)
Really?

HAMILTON
Really. That's the phone call I just got. They want me to do a fellowship out in New York. It officially starts in January, but--

KITTY
New York?

NOEL
New York?

HAMILTON
Mhmm. It's a great opportunity. They're doing some amazing things out there, real cutting-edge.

KITTY
I thought we were talking about that clinic in Phoenix. Get out of this Michigan cold.

HAMILTON
Phoenix doesn't need me. Mount Sinai, however, does.

Kitty looks slightly taken aback. This is definitely a topic they hadn't discussed before, but you can bet the house on the fact it will be one they will be discussing further.

KITTY
Mount Sinai? Milt, that's--

HAMILTON
(proudly)
My new employer. Know what else? There was a little something that came special delivery. For Noel.

Noel bolts to standing, anxious, thinking it's from Tim.

HAMILTON (CONT'D)
Remember that art school you
applied to?

It takes Noel a moment to switch gears from expectations of Tim to what her father is actually telling her.

HAMILTON (CONT'D)
(to Kitty)
It's less than a day's drive to New
Lyme, Connecticut.

KITTY
Noel Angela! Oh, my baby! I'm so
proud of you!

NOEL
(squealing)
Really? Oh, Daddy, really? Lyme
Academy wants me? They said yes?

Hamilton pulls a letter bearing the school emblem from his pocket and waves it at her. With all of her experience accosting the mailman, her father is an easy target. Noel snatches the letter and reads it aloud, her words blending together into a burble of unintelligible speech. Kitty reads over her shoulder.

HAMILTON
They said yes and they said that
you--

NOEL
Get to do my senior year while
taking classes there!

KITTY
They only take fifteen of those
seniors a year! Noel!

Moments like these bond a family both in experience and group hugs. The De Foresst family is big on both.

Noel's excitement evaporates almost as quickly as it began. She stops, the air sucked out of her, and pulls back. The postcard's siren song of youthful infatuation has a strong pull.

NOEL
But, Dad...

HAMILTON
I know, baby. But--

NOEL

No, Tim said he'd come back here.
For me.

HAMILTON

(quietly)

I know that's what he said, but--

There is nothing so crushing and soul-rending as someone's first broken heart.

NOEL

It's not like I've gotten anything in awhile, anyway. Do you think he just stopped? Dad? Do you? Like got married or something?

HAMILTON

I don't know, Noel.

NOEL

Do you think he's OK? I mean, how would I know if he wasn't? Postcards would just stop coming, right? If something happened?

Kitty and Hamilton share a worried look, neither having an answer at all, much less one that would make their daughter feel better. Outside of emotional support, Hamilton punts for pragmatism.

HAMILTON

I think what you should focus on now is Connecticut.

Noel looks unsure, then sad.

NOEL

Can I have a few minutes, please?

KITTY

Sure, baby. Milt, let's go downstairs and have a drink.

In the wake of her parents' departure, Noel sits on the window seat and starts to cry inconsolably. She shoves the box of postcards off angrily. It's their fault they're there to remind her! They scatter over the floor. She looks over, horrified, and springs off the seat to gather them gently back up.

She sits forlorn on the floor, the box in her lap like a baby. She turns and uses the seat to write in her notebook.

As she writes, her emotions vacillate from happy to miserable again and back.

NOEL (V.O.)

June 11, 1972. Dear, Tim. The best news came today. Remember when I wrote to you and said that I'd applied for that really amazing art school up in Connecticut? The newest member of their freshman class is writing this to you now! I wish you would have been here. But... Oh, Tim. It's been so long since I've received anything from you. I... I think you might be dead. I can't stand the thought of it! I can't write to you day after day thinking it and I'm not sure I can look at your cards anymore because of it. I will hope for another postcard before we leave, but I can't write anymore until I know you're all right. Please be all right.

INT. BLACK - DAY (MONTAGE)

- 1) The De Foresst family packs suitcases and a few small boxes.
- 2) The De Foresst family holds a yard sale.
- 3) Movers are well-underway loading boxes at the De Foresst family home.
- 4) New England sure is lovely to drive through in September as the De Foresst family heads towards Connecticut.

50

EXT. SHIP'S DECK AT SEA - NIGHT

50

Hurricanes at sea are the most terrifying experience sailors report. Impenetrable walls of water contribute to disorientation, while rain, lightning piece from above. Overwhelming swells and valleys pitch the ship and physics of the movement snapping lines. The crew struggle to save cargo and lock down hatches. One mariner washes overboard, grappling for purchase as he goes, his screams lost to the relentless assault.

Tim stares in disbelief, terror, and instant grief. He looks around and sees a second crew member slip away into the maelstrom. He yells, but can't be heard. He looks up. A large wave looms.

EXT. LYME ACADEMY, NEW LYME, CONNECTICUT - DAY

Mid-September 1972. A 1970 Ford Falcon 4-door sedan pulls up and Hamilton, Kitty, and Noel step out. All of them are pretty much excited out of their respective gourds. Lyme Academy's main building is a converted old colonial two-story home that welcomes rather than rebuffs.

Not intimidated in the least, Noel strides towards the front door, beckoning her parents to follow.

NOEL

Come on! Let's get checked in! Then
I want to walk around campus, I
want to go see where the apartment
is, I want to meet my roommates and
--

KITTY

Lock up, will you, Milt? I guess
one of us had best go with her,
keep her feet on the ground.

53

EXT. SHIP'S DECK AT SEA - EARLY MORNING

53

The ship's flag flies at half-mast, hoisted on the main mast once the storm ended. On the deck, a somber crew remains silent. Two obvious spaces in the line of crew members represent the two they lost to the maw of the sea. The ship's bell tolls as the captain speaks. Tim, along with much of the crew, works to control his emotions. There will be drinking tonight.

CAPTAIN

Sunset and evening star
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the
bar
When I put out to sea,
But such a tide as moving seems
asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the
boundless deep
Turns again home.
Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!

(MORE)

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

And may there be no sadness of
farewell,
When I embark;
For tho' from out our bourne of
Time and Place
The flood may bear me far
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have cross'd the bar.
("Crossing the Bar" --
Alfred, Lord Tennyson)

54

EXT. POPLAR STREET CURBSIDE - DAY

54

October 1972. We see the number 1826 painted on the curbside, so it looks like we're back at Tim's brief residence. One vehicle - a U-Haul moving truck is parked on the street, with Lawrence in the driver's seat. Another vehicle - a 1964 Plymouth Belvedere with a packed open-air trailer hitched up behind it is in the driveway.

Leigh is in the back seat of the Belvedere, looking like she'd rather be anywhere else. Vinton gets into the driver's seat and Velma gets into the back seat with her daughter. Sitting in the front, she says, makes her sick, and she doesn't want to ride back there alone.

Vinton honks the horn. The U-Haul pulls away and crawls down the street. Going too fast would incur a tongue-lashing later on and Lawrence has had quite enough of those lately, thank you.

VELMA

Let's go, Vinton. Memphis won't
come to us.

Vinton starts the car, adjusts his mirrors, and makes sure that the danged radio is off.

In a last-ditch effort, Leigh turns slightly to look at her mother.

LEIGH

Memphis, Momma? Are you sure about
this?

Velma reaches into her purse, pulls out a foldable hand fan, and smacks the insolent woman in the face with it.

A smirk conveys Vinton's approval as he turns to back out of the driveway.

VELMA

Of course I'm sure. I said I was.
It's better for what ails me.

55 INT. DE FORESST KITCHEN - NEW YORK CITY - DAY

55

Kitty walks into the kitchen, looking through the mail, followed by her husband. She sits down at the kitchen table and hands him a couple of envelopes.

Since the coffee is already brewed, it takes only a moment to pour two cups and bring them to the table.

HAMILTON

Anything interesting?

Kitty flips through a circular casually, just in case something catches her eye.

KITTY

New sale at Woolworth's. Whites, it says. Twenty percent off. Now less likely to stain, so it says.

HAMILTON

Sounds like a deal.

He looks at an envelope and waves it at her.

HAMILTON (CONT'D)

Hey, you didn't tell me Noel had written!

KITTY

Well, I didn't want to open it without you. Best read that out loud.

HAMILTON

I'm glad she wrote everything down. I couldn't understand her on the phone last time, how fast she was going.

KITTY

She was just excited. Final paperwork from the house sale finally got here, too. Looks like our Michigan chapter is finally closed.

HAMILTON

Hey! She was invited to the
Governor's Winter Formal! You'd
better save that Woolworth's ad.

56 INT. NOEL'S OLD ATTIC - NIGHT

56

January/February 1973. The attic is dark, with just faint moonlight streaming in. Thick snow blankets the ground and new flakes are falling just in case there weren't enough before. Smoke rises straight from chimneys and no one is out; the impression is that it's very still.

A shadow of someone sitting on the window seat, a stack of postcards near, ready to be gone through. Already read postcards are scattered about a little, like someone's been going through them, reading them and maybe not for the first time. Right now, she's in Rio...

57 I/E. ACAPULCO OUTDOOR CAFE - EVENING

57

March 1973. Tim sits at a table with a familiar arrangement around him - a beer in front and a stack of postcards next to him. They came in a pack of five and all have different pictures on them. Way he figures it, they will make a nice packet. A waitress brings him his order of several tacos and a side dish of fried plantains.

WAITRESS

Habr  algo m s?

He gulps down the last swig of beer and hands her the glass.

TIM

S , por favor uno m s.

Tim consumes his food and waits for the waitress to both take away his plate and bring him a new beer before he unrolls his map. There is no way he will risk getting stains on the map if he can help it.

There are eleven more blank circles, but you know what has their own new "X"? Tasmania, Melbourne, Antarctica, Jakarta, Tanzania, South Africa, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, Lagos, and Cartagena. Carefully, he marks a new "X" through Acapulco. Ten more to go.

He draws several lines on the map with his finger, like he's plotting out his route. There's only one way that makes sense and that's through the largest port in the United States - Los Angeles. He smiles, pleased with himself.

As careful with his map as Noel was with her postcards, he rolls it up, tucks it away carefully in his -- hey! He finally has a new duffel! -- and spins a pen in his left hand. A few moments of thought lead to writing the next postcard.

TIM (V.O.)

Everything is outdoors here and there's always music playing. I can almost see the wind moving your hair, see you dance on the plaza, your voice mixing with the stage. It would be nice to live here. They have apartments, cheap. I told them I'd be back soon, after the river and after I go home. Te quiero.

INT. NOEL'S OLD KITCHEN - DAY

AGNES, a Black woman in her 20s, sits at the kitchen table, cotton gloves ready for church (we don't see her, just her gloved hands). She's reading the Rio postcard again, running a finger over it fondly.

58 EXT. PORT OF LOS ANGELES - EVENING 58

Fall 1974. A bulk cargo ship, the SS Fortunate Son, docks. A seasoned hand, Tim works on deck to complete docking maneuvers. He runs over, opens a latch on a hold, and motions the crane over.

59 EXT. PORT OF LOS ANGELES - NIGHT 59

Tim walks across the dock and towards the gangplank of a tanker, the SS Blue Barnacle, with his duffel bag. He sees the previous captain of the SS Alameda at the top of the gangplank and waves. The captain waves back. Their reunion is warm, familiar, and speaks of more friendship than work.

CAPTAIN

Randall!

TIM

Hiya, Cap.

CAPTAIN

See you're still on the seas.

TIM

See you are, too.

CAPTAIN

Saw your name on the crew sheet.
Was wondering if it was you. That's
a quick turnaround.

TIM

It is. Sure you still want to pull
out?

As they talk, they cover the deck and approach the bridge.

CAPTAIN

I remember talking to you about
stuff. You were a little messed up.
Like most kids. Sort anything out
on the blue?

TIM

Yeah, a little. Mostly.

CAPTAIN

Didn't your Dad sail?

TIM

No. He settled with Mom and then
didn't want to leave us.

CAPTAIN

He'd've been proud of you, kid. You
still working on your map?

Tim's ego and chest puff under the praise and that the
captain remembered the map. Whether Tim realizes it or not,
he's become rather famous in certain circles for it.

TIM

Yeah.

CAPTAIN

Should be just about done, huh?
Let's have a look.

They enter the bridge area. Tim sets down his duffel near the
wheel. Though he has no designs of running his own ship, the
view out over the wheel sure is nice.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

And you finally got a new hump. I
was thinking the threads about came
apart on the other one.

TIM

You got that right. Where is
everyone?

CAPTAIN

Not due 'til the morning. I remembered you always came on a shift early. Took a chance.

TIM

Good to see you, Cap. How's the old girl?

CAPTAIN

Alameda's in dry dock for repairs. So, I'll take this heap through the canal until she's done. Don't want her getting jealous.

TIM

Yeah, she'd pitch you over for sure.

Tim pulls the map out of his duffel and spreads it out on the navigation table. Portland, Vancouver, Seattle, and Toyko all have an "X" through their circles.

CAPTAIN

See you're back through these parts. Couldn't get enough of the Golden Coast, huh?

TIM

Only way to come back down.

CAPTAIN

Heard your name come up at a bar outta North port.

TIM

Uh oh.

CAPTAIN

Didn't know you dumped on the Star. Since when do you fish, boy?

TIM

Since I wanted something like real work.

The captain laughs and claps Tim on the back.

CAPTAIN

Lord, you've been around. Know men thirty years on the water haven't seen this much action. You ready to go home, son?

TIM

And run the risk of never seeing
you again?

CAPTAIN

Smart ass kid. Where you got left?

TIM

Just around through the Canal, Cap.

He points to the circles around Colon (Panama), Puerto Rico
and Miami.

CAPTAIN

Fellin' out in New York?

TIM

May as well.

CAPTAIN

You're a helluva mariner, Randall.
Seas'll be mourning. Likely to
throw up a storm, they'll be so
pissed.

Their review and the captain's tacit approval of Tim's
itinerary done, the junior mariner rolls and returns the map
to his duffel.

TIM

You'll beat it back.

CAPTAIN

Catch your rack, break it in. We're
underway by morning three bells.

TIM

Aye, aye, Cap.

As Tim walks on deck, he takes a deep breath, takes a last
look at the dock, then heads down to his quarters.

60

EXT. BIRCH LAKE TWP, MICHIGAN - DAY

60

Early Summer 1975. Tim drives down a residential street
slowly in his rented AMC Pacer from National Car Rental. The
neighborhood looks almost exactly like it did when he first
arrived, five years earlier. It would hardly recognize him,
though. Another two inches taller and twenty pounds heavier,
the differences between a seventeen- and a twenty-two-year
old cannot be overstated.

He turns onto Jimson Street and stops at the curb in front of 1192 (Noel's old house). He looks at it for a long moment. This is it. The culmination of a journey started five years prior. He's almost jittery with excitement when he gets out and walks to the front door and rings the door bell.

The door opens and his smile grows. Agnes opens the front door fully and the screen door partially with a friendly, albeit puzzled, expression.

AGNES

May I help you?

His expression falls and he looks very confused. Maybe she's a friend of Noel's. Is it normal for a friend to answer the front door? Instead, his mouth shares his worst fear that his brain would have preferred have been kept hidden.

TIM

Uh, does the De Foresst Family still live here?

AGNES

No, I'm sorry, they don't. This is the Vanhouten residence now. Just me and my mom.

A small, Benji-type dog runs up to the door and barks at Tim. Looks like someone fell prey to some marketing.

AGNES (CONT'D)

Oh, and Patches here.

TIM

They used to live here. Look, I...

AGNES

We've had the house for about two years, so they haven't been here for at least that long.

A weak attempt to look around her shoulder and into the house is curtailed when he remembers his manners.

TIM

Any chance there was a forwarding address?

AGNES

No, no I don't think so. Let me check.

She closes the screen door and heads deeper into the house, but not before looking back over her shoulder to give another once-over to the man on the porch. When she returns, her expression is sympathetic.

AGNES (CONT'D)
 No, I'm sorry, no forwarding address. You might check the post office. It's down on--

He holds up his hand, as directions is the last thing he needs.

TIM
 I know where it is. Thanks.

AGNES
 You're welcome. Good luck at the post office.

TIM
 Thanks, but I think I know what they'll say. Sorry to have bothered you.

AGNES
 No bother.

She watches Tim walk to his car and does not yet close the screen door. Now, she's curious who he is, why he's here, what the deal with the former owners is, and why he's heading towards the house next door and not the post office.

The neighbor's door opens. Agnes watches Tim speak with them for a moment. He shakes their hand and heads back to the sidewalk. He doesn't look any happier when he heads to the house on the other side. He knocks on the door and waits.

AGNES (CONT'D)
 There's no one there. They moved last month. New couple haven't moved in yet.

TIM
 Thanks. Guess the post office is next.

INT. AGNES' HOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

Agnes walks into the kitchen and sits down at the table to continue snapping peas. Her mother, DOT, is not in the kitchen when she returns.

DOT (O.S.)
Who was askin'?

AGNES
(over her shoulder)
Some man, Momma. Looking for the
folks used to live here.

DOT (O.S.)
Was he cute?

61 INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

61

Tim stands in line at the post office. The lingering effects of summer still hold heat in the building, despite the open windows. The breeze just isn't quite enough to introduce autumn into the lobby.

POSTAL WORKER
Next, please!

Hearing his cue, Tim walks to the counter. He leans on it and smiles at the clerk, who needs a new nametag as her name has worn off.

She doesn't look at him right off, too focused on organizing the bills in her till.

TIM
Hi.

POSTAL WORKER
Dropping off or picking up?

TIM
Actually, wanted to ask you
something.

She looks up at him and pushes the drawer back into the register.

POSTAL WORKER
What about?

TIM
Do you have a forwarding address to
1192 Jimson Street? The De Foresst
Family?

POSTAL WORKER
Jimson? The De Foressts? Let me
look.

She drags a metal notecard box, the kind that bears rust at the corners, over and flips through the contact cards twice before shaking her head.

POSTAL WORKER (CONT'D)

Mm-mm. No, sure don't. Means they didn't leave one or moved more than a year ago. The forwards only run up to a year, if they left one. Sorry. Anything else?

He starts to say no, then changes his mind.

TIM

Do you all forward postcards, by chance?

POSTAL WORKER

Yep, so long as there's an address on file.

TIM

Do they ever still keep getting delivered, like after a person moves?

POSTAL WORKER

Sometimes, if they don't leave a forwarding address or someone from the family is still there. Sometimes, we just don't catch it and they keep on going.

That type of news is not helpful to someone trying to catch up five years of his life.

TIM

Hey, one more. Anything about 1826 Poplar Street, by chance?

POSTAL WORKER

Name?

TIM

Randall Family.

She flips through the box again, shaking her head.

POSTAL WORKER

Nope, nothing for them, either. That's an empty address. Someone's there and getting mail, but it's no one named Randall. Anything else?

Dead end after dead end leaves him resigned and destitute.

TIM

No. No, thank you. Appreciate your help, ma'am.

He smiles and leaves the counter, squinting into the sun as he opens the door.

POSTAL WORKER (O.S.)

May I help who's next please?

Something he considers for a moment makes him look back. A moment's pause lets him decide against it and step outside.

62

EXT. POST OFFICE - DAY

62

Tim takes a deep breath outside and looks around. He sits on the bike rack and stares ahead. A couple of younger teenagers, walking hand-in-hand, could have been him five years ago. The scene makes him smile and chuckle.

After a moment he stands and re-enters the post office.

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Not wanting to line-hop and jockey for position with the lady pushing a stack of five boxes with her foot, he shouts out above the line.

TIM

Hey, you guys got a pay phone?

A worker behind the desk points.

TIM (CONT'D)

Thanks!

Tim goes over and pushes "0". It seems his finger spinning skills have moved from pens to coins.

TIM (CONT'D)

Operator? Yeah, I'm looking for a Doctor Hamilton De Foresst. De. Like D-E. Foresst. F-O-R-E-S-S-T. Yeah, anywhere in Michigan.

He's far more patient on this pay phone than he was on the one in that bar in Avalon.

TIM (CONT'D)
 No? Nowhere, huh? OK, can you do a
 nation-wide search? No, no, that's
 OK. Thank you very much.

He hangs up the receiver, frustrated. Nothing like dead end
 number five to really drive home that life has moved on. He
 shoves the coin back into his pocket.

TIM (CONT'D)
 (to Michelle)
 Hey, mind if I leave my car here
 and just come back for it later?

MICHELLE
 Fine by me.

EXT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Back in those days, it was OK to leave your window down and
 your car somewhere. With no interior trunk release, his
 duffel would be safe so long as he had the keys. Tim leans
 into his rental car, takes the keys, and walks down the
 street.

63 EXT. OUTSIDE POST OFFICE TO NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS - LATE 63
 AFTERNOON

Tim enjoys the stroll through places he was happy he didn't
 need a map for. Two months all those years ago were just
 enough for him to remember where to go. He turns down Poplar
 Street.

With no forwarding address and an official organization of
 the United States government telling him someone else was
 living there, maybe the house looked more inviting than it
 had in the summer of 1970.

He slows his pace and sees the number 1826 painted on the
 curb. A young White family plays in the yard. Now if that
 wouldn't just do ol' Velma in.

Despite the day's disappointments, seeing this somehow makes
 him feel lighter. Change has come to Birch Township when he
 hadn't realized it. Trying to keep it the same, well... Let's
 just say that when the man makes a decision, he commits.

He keeps walking and finds himself back down Jimson Street.
 If his memory serves, the house still holds promise. He stops
 in front of Agnes' house. He looks up at the attic window,
 smiles, and shakes his head. The front door opens.

Agnes walks out, carrying a small tray with iced tea, a Popular Mechanics magazine, and a silver paper doily with a few cookies on it. The screen door slams behind her, but the front door is open. They need as much cross-breeze as they can get in that house. She sets the tray on the small patio table.

AGNES

Oh, hi there! Find the post office?

Always one to be able to spot an invitation, he walks up the sidewalk to the porch steps.

TIM

Yes, I did.

AGNES

Car get stolen?

TIM

No, just decided to take a walk. I wasn't actually planning on coming here, but--

DOT (O.S.)

(from inside the house)

Aggie! Where'd you put the sugar?

AGNES

(towards the front door)

On the shelf to the right, Momma!

DOT (O.S.)

Thank you!

TIM

Aggie?

She lowers herself down into the metal chair next to the table and crosses her bare feet under her.

AGNES

Yeah.

TIM

(gently teasing)

What kind of a name's that for a girl? Thought that was a football team.

AGNES

It is, but not for me. It's short for Agnes, after my grandmother.

TIM

Aggie.

She smiles and sips her unsweetened iced tea.

TIM (CONT'D)

Well, Aggie, I won't take up any more of your day.

The imminent threat of another departure makes her shift in her seat. No one in their right mind would let him just walk away a second time.

AGNES

Hey, did you get that forwarding address?

TIM

No, it wasn't there anymore, if it ever was. Checked next door, checked the old job. Came up dry. Nothing really is here for me, so looks like I'll be heading out.

AGNES

Sorry whoever you were looking for isn't here.

TIM

Don't know why I thought she would be, actually. No, doesn't matter, I guess. Thanks anyway.

AGNES

You're welcome.

Her plan fell a bit short of her expectations as Tim walks towards the street. To hide her own disappointment, she picks up the magazine. Hope enters her heart and makes it flutter when he pauses and looks over his shoulder.

Intrigued, he visibly considers something, then backtracks to her porch. Fortune favors the bold.

TIM

You know, it's a long walk back to the post office. I could really use some of that tea.

AGNES

(without looking up from her magazine)
Are you trying to flirt with me?

TIM

Not sure.

AGNES

Are you asking if I have another glass?

TIM

Yes.

Not reading, but for sure smiling, she could win an award for this display of nonchalance.

AGNES

Well, I do, but you'll have to brave my mother to get it.

Tim looks at his feet, shoving his hands in his front pockets. Fortune may favor the bold, but everyone likes a humble, aw shucks routine.

TIM

Wow, things really have changed since I've been gone.

AGNES

(sets magazine down in her lap)

Were you in the war?

TIM

No, no. Not eligible.

Agnes stands and sets the magazine down on her chair.

AGNES

When I come back, you'll have to tell me why that is.

He sits in the second chair and watches the street, slightly nervous.

She returns with an ice-filled glass. She sets it on the table and goes to reach for the pitcher, but he already has grabbed it.

TIM

I've got it, thanks. So you wanted to know why I wasn't eligible for the draft.

AGNES

Mhmm. Psychological problems? Gay? Club foot? Communist?

She's pretty funny, this Agnes. The banter that comes naturally to them is immensely enjoyable. Though, club foot? Really? Hadn't she seen him walk around?

TIM

There are other reasons to not be eligible.

AGNES

You right, you right. Conscientious objector?

TIM

Slightly better, but no. Heart problem.

AGNES

So, what brought you back to town?

He casts a long eye at her, the practiced art of pretending to be suspicious.

TIM

Why?

AGNES

I don't know. The way you were when you first came up said that you hadn't been in town for awhile. And then you just said you weren't.

TIM

OK, so not getting anything over on you. Check. I guess that's right.

AGNES

How long were you gone?

TIM

Almost five years.

AGNES

Five years?

TIM

Just about.

Her looks makes him feel a bit like she was a scientist and he was a new species.

AGNES

If the war didn't keep you... Were you in prison or something? I mean, I don't see any tattoos.

Oh, so she did look.

TIM

No. And you won't, either.

AGNES

But what keeps someone out for five years?

TIM

I had to leave town. Needed to sort some things out.

AGNES

OK, Mister Mysterious. Sorting things out. Family problems? Running from the law?

TIM

Something like that. Looks like those have been taken care of, too.

AGNES

You didn't get some girl's daddy mad at you, did you?

Her easy and open demeanor and that she speaks to him like they already know each other keeps him both interested and relaxed.

TIM

No, nothing like that.

AGNES

So who were you looking for? Before? When you first came?

TIM

Just trying to catch up, pick up where I left off, see who's still here in the neighborhood. Doesn't look like too many. Said I'd come back and check in. Now, doesn't look like I have anywhere to go.

AGNES

And so here you are. Checking in with people. Mother hen.

TIM

And so here I am. Bwak!

AGNES

That was the worst chicken impression ever. Hope that's not what you were working on while you were away.

She shakes her head and appraises him openly, boldly, in a way he's not used to.

AGNES (CONT'D)

You are some guy.

TIM

How's that?

AGNES

Just don't see that anymore, brothers keeping their word, coming back like that. How romantic.

TIM

Ouch. Is that what happened to you? Some guy leave and now you live with your Mom?

AGNES

No, smart guy. Daddy died and I left school to come help for a bit.

TIM

Left school? Don't tell me you're still in high school...

Glad to know he doesn't have to shoot himself.

AGNES

No, college. Masters degree. I'm going back, but locally, here this next semester.

TIM

Yeah? Where were you going?

AGNES

Vassar.

Tim nearly spits his tea back in his glass. He looks at her, impressed.

AGNES (CONT'D)

I guess during dinner, topics should be kept tamer than where I go to school. Perhaps the price of tires at Capital's?

Talk about bold. Their conversation continues easily, indistinctly.

64 SUPER: EIGHT YEARS LATER 64

65 EXT. BIRCH LAKE TWP, MICHIGAN STREET - DAY 65

June 1983. A 1982 Toyota Tercel turns onto the town's main drag. A flyer for "Franklin High School Class of 1973 Reunion" is on the front seat. Seeing as how Birch Township isn't that big, it doesn't take long for the car to turn down into a residential area.

It passes Poplar Street, turns, and slows in front of Tim's old house. Children play in the sprinkler and shiver in towels as they wait their turn.

Continuing on, the car finally turns down Jimson Street. The number of cars lining the road makes the car drive past 1192 and park a ways away. The door opens and navy fabric espadrilles step out.

They walk down the sidewalk until the curbside number 1192 comes into view. As we pan up, Noel's legs, a knee-length skirt, and the back of her, with shorter, curly hair than when we last saw her is seen. She walks up the sidewalk to the front door and rings the doorbell.

The patter of feet are heard behind the door.

AGNES (O.S.)
(inside the house, through
laughter)
Don't you open that door! Betty
Christine!

Adult-sounding footsteps are heard and stop at the door. The door opens, revealing Agnes and BETTY (5). Agnes looks breathless, but is grinning. She picks up her squirming kindergartner, who cheerfully plays with Agnes's hair.

AGNES (CONT'D)
May I help you?

NOEL
Hi, yes, I'm sorry to bother you, I
was just in the neighborhood.

AGNES
Oh, you must be here for the
reunion. Seems like everyone in
town is.

NOEL

Yes. I used to live here. I mean, this house, not just in town.

AGNES

Oh? That must have been awhile back.

(setting Betty down)

Go play. Mommy will be there in a moment. Go find a book.

Betty darts off into the house, giggling in that mad way only the young possess.

AGNES (CONT'D)

(wiping her brow,
laughing)

I'm sorry. She's very squirrely. And holding her isn't as easy as it used to be when I could just wrap her up like a burrito. So, when did you live here?

NOEL

We moved before I graduated, but I still kept in touch with everyone. See? I have a picture.

Noel digs into her purse and pulls out a wallet. Otherwise, for all this nice lady knows, she could be some axe murderer. Two small, color, at least ten-year-old Polaroids of her and her family in front of the house and in front of the fireplace lend credence to her story. If she is an axe murderer, she's a well-prepared one.

NOEL (CONT'D)

See?

Agnes leans in and smiles, tapping the interior picture.

AGNES

That's just in the living room!

NOEL

Yes. Dad was so proud when he built the plaster ring around it. Put up a metal ring, then covered it. Got plaster everywhere. Said it made it look fancy.

AGNES

Oh, that's no longer here. I mean, the fireplace is, but not that ring. We took it down a few years ago.

NOEL

Oh. Well, I'm not sure it was meant to last anyway. To tell you the truth, I think Mom wished he'd not done it.

AGNES

I'm sure there are more changes. Would you like to come in and look around? For old time's sake?

For Noel's sake, she's hoping the people in her old home aren't an axe murdering family with a clever ruse.

NOEL

I'd love to.

Agnes holds open the screen door in a warm welcome.

AGNES

I'm sorry, what did you say your name was?

NOEL

Angie. Angie Williams.

AGNES

Hi, Angie. I'm Agnes. Welcome to our home.

66 INT. TIM AND AGNES' HOUSE - DAY

66

Agnes leads Noel into the house. Their first stop is the front room with the fireplace.

AGNES

See? No more ring.

Noel laughs and walks up to the fireplace, running a finger over where the dreaded ring used to be.

NOEL

It looks so much better! We all hated that ring! Except Daddy. He was so proud of it!

Betty runs up to Agnes, waving a copy of E.B. White's "Charlotte's Web".

AGNES

Hi, baby. We'll read in just a second. We're just to the part where Wilbur has been called "some pig".

BETTY

Who's that, Mommy?

AGNES

(to Betty)

That's Angie. She used to live here. You want to show her your room?

Betty tries to hide behind Agnes' leg, just like she does when they go over to an unfamiliar house for dinner.

AGNES (CONT'D)

Fine, I'll show her your room.

NOEL

Oh, she's adorable! That hair!

AGNES

I know, isn't it a scream? Don't know where she gets it. Neither her daddy or I have hair like that.

BETTY

Daddy!

AGNES

Yes, and he'll be home soon. Go sit on the sofa. I'll be right back.

Betty runs to the sofa, climbs up on it, and opens her book. Anyone looking at her would think she's actually reading it. Until, that is, they got close and would hear her reciting piecemeal memories of what she remembered from prior readings.

AGNES (CONT'D)

Come on, Angie. I'll show you the rest of the house.

NOEL

Oh, thank you. I'd love that. So much is different! In town, too. It's like a whole new place.

AGNES

I guess we've done a lot of updating.

67 INT. TIM AND AGNES'S HOUSE - MONTAGE

67

The women walk through each room and Noel reacts to the changes. Each room dissolves from how it looks present day into how it originally looked in Noel's house.

- A) Betty's bedroom
- B) Other bedrooms
- C) Master bedroom
- D) Backyard
- E) Kitchen

68 INT. TIM AND AGNES' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

68

Both women sit on the sofa, now devoid of any five-year-old's influence. Instead, Betty plays with Fisher Price plastic farm animals on the floor next to the coffee table, the kind that are more like green army men. The kind that make you swear in eleven languages when you step on them in the middle of the night. The kind you swear you're going to throw away, but never do.

NOEL

Thank you so much. The house looks great. You've done so much more with it than we ever did. We just kind of lived in it as is.

AGNES

You're very welcome. This was fun. I should give tours of my house more often.

NOEL

I remember living here, going up into the attic to get away from my cousins when they'd come to visit. I spent a lot of time up there.

AGNES

Oh, the attic! I forgot about that! We never go up there. I don't think anyone has since Mom died. Want to take a look?

NOEL

May as well! I mean, if you want to give me the full tour...

AGNES

Wouldn't be worth much as a tour guide if I didn't. Would lose my job. Betty, you want to go with us?

BETTY

Go where?

AGNES

Up to the attic.

BETTY

What's an attic?

AGNES

A room on top of the house.

Better than the RCA dog can do, Betty tilts her head.

BETTY

How do we get there?

NOEL

We climb a ladder in the hallway.

Betty squeals happily, claps her hands, and springs up. That is the most fantastically magical and best idea she's ever heard!

BETTY

Yes! Let's go to the attic!

69

INT. TIM AND AGNES' HOUSE ATTIC - DAY

69

Sunlight streams in through a semi-circle window over a box window seat with an old cushion. It might be the same cushion from the last time we saw Noel up there. A few boxes occupy the space right around the stairs and the only other object up there is something large and covered with a tablecloth.

AGNES

Wow. No, we have not been up here. My husband just swaps out Christmas decorations during the season.

Because curiosity is the hallmark of children, Betty tears off the tablecloth to reveal an old three-story Victorian doll house. She plops herself down in front of it and begins to play with it.

AGNES (CONT'D)

My old doll house! I always wondered what happened to it. Mom always said she put it somewhere angels could reach. Guess she wasn't lying. Looks like we'll have to bring that down now.

NOEL

See? Oh, this is such a great space. Quiet. The window can swing open, too. Not enough to fall out, but just enough to let a nice breeze in. I used to sit there for hours.

AGNES

I did too, when I first moved in!

A scan around the attic reveals it to be an empty space, faded as much as Noel's memories have. Their echo isn't enough to keep her there any longer.

NOEL

Well, I guess I've been intrusive enough.

AGNES

You sure you don't want to look around? See if there's anything up here that's yours? I don't know if Mom moved anything out or just shoved our stuff up here. My husband and I never checked the corners. We always say we're going to clean it out, but we never do.

NOEL

Well... I'll look around for just a minute. Then, I'll go. If you find anything of ours when you clean it and can use it, it's all yours. Otherwise, just throw it out.

Agnes kneels down next to Betty to play. Noel walks around the attic, peering over things. At first, reminiscing, but then like she's looking for something.

Noel stops and her shoulders sag, defeated. She hopes her inner disappointment doesn't show too much when turns to her hostess.

NOEL (CONT'D)

I've taken up enough of your time.
Thank you for a wonderful
afternoon. The reunion will have a
hard time measuring up to this.

Hunger, like inspiration, oftens strikes suddenly.

BETTY

I want a grilled cheese!

Betty leaps up, grabs her mother's hand, and starts pulling her towards the stairs.

AGNES

You looked like you were looking
for something and didn't find it.

(to Betty)

In just a minute. Let's wait until
our guest leaves.

The child releases her mother's hand and darts towards the stairs. Mom may want to stay up here, but Betty is pretty sure the sandwich making items are in the kitchen.

NOEL

No, no. Just remembering.

70

INT. TIM AND AGNES' HOUSE HALLWAY - DAY

70

Noel and Agnes walk down the hallway, towards the living room. Betty is nowhere to be seen, but a trail of Ritz cracker sleeves hint that she may have appeased her hunger temporarily.

AGNES

What was it, exactly, you were
looking for?

NOEL

Oh, it's silly. Ten years later and
I think I'm...

She stops, laughing at herself and how her emotions have bubbled to the surface.

AGNES

What?

NOEL

Oh, when we left, I had a
boyfriend. Well, sort of, anyway.
I'm actually not sure what he was.

(MORE)

NOEL (CONT'D)

Anyway, he went away, but wrote to me all the time. Postcards. I kept them in a box. Then, they stopped coming and we just figured he'd... Anyway, then we moved and I went to college and life... well... I'm sorry. I wasn't expecting this to bother me!

She chuckles at her tearing up and looks slightly embarrassed.

AGNES

Postcards?

NOEL

Wonderful things, from around the world. I had a map, too, showing where he'd been, where I thought he might go to next.

They say people go gray when they have seen a ghost. A glance at Agnes's face confirms this.

AGNES

Are you... you're not... Noel, are you?

With the conversation suddenly veering into potential serial killer territory -- they research their prey first, right? -- Noel suddenly tenses.

NOEL

Yes, I am. I go by my middle name now.

AGNES

Will you excuse me for just a minute?

NOEL

What's going on? How did you know that?

Agnes disappears down the hallway and into one of the guest rooms. Before Noel can make a full escape through the front door or follow her, Agnes returns, carrying a stack of postcards bound with twine.

AGNES

I think these might belong to you. N. De Foresst, right?

Noel turns and when she sees the stack of postcards, her eyes light up. She's so excited, she misses how trepidatious Agnes now looks.

NOEL

Oh, my goodness! Those are them!

Agnes hands them over to her, smiling at how Noel receives them as if they might disintegrate.

NOEL (CONT'D)

You read them?

AGNES

I'd forgotten all about them. I haven't looked at those since... The boy in there is wonderful. Please, sit down.

Agnes leads Noel back into the living room. Noel sits on the edge of the sofa and unties the twine, hands trembling. She looks at the top card, from Rio, and starts to tear up.

NOEL

He... Oh, goodness.

She flips to another one, then to another and another. She stops on the one from Los Angeles. It shows a postmark of 1975.

NOEL (CONT'D)

He always said he'd get to California. And he did... twice!

There is nothing better than laughter through tears.

NOEL (CONT'D)

Oh, I cried when they didn't come any more! I thought he was... oh, thank you!

She waves her hand in front of her face to cool it off and laughs at herself.

NOEL (CONT'D)

Here, listen to this...

As she reads, Agnes mouths the words along with her.

71

EXT. LOS ANGELES IN FRONT OF MANN'S CHINESE THEATRE - EVENING

The weather on that April evening in 1973 could have been described as perfect;

balmy, clear, just the right number of people out. The newly renamed Mann's Chinese Theatre is hosting a Picasso exhibit to honor the recently passed artist.

NOEL (V.O.)

There are so many lights here, the only stars you see are the ones...

(Noel's voice fades out,
Tim's voice fades in over hers)

Tim (V.O)

...on the ground. You will be one of them, some day, I know it. This town can't wait to see you, and neither can I.

72 INT. BLACK - DAY 72

Overlay of postcard from Tokyo.

73 INT. SHIP'S BERTHING - NIGHT 73

This is a flashback, meant to show that Noel and Agnes are going through the postcards, reading them.

Tim lays in his rack, the other sailors around him asleep.

TIM (V.O.)

The whales sing a lot here. When you listen long enough, you can tell them apart. One sounded like it was telling the other to come closer. I feel you telling me that, and I am. All my circles are almost filled in. Only three more to go.

74 INT. BLACK - DAY 74

Tim's (old) map has x's now over Nigeria, Cartagena, Acapulco, Los Angeles, Portland (Oregon), Vancouver, Seattle, Tokyo.

The circles over Panama, Puerto Rico and Miami are the only ones blank.

INT. TIM AND AGNES' LIVING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

The front door opens and closes. Tim walks down the hallway, looking through the mail, not noticing the women in the living room.

TIM

Aggie! Are you here? Betty!

The back door slides open.

BETTY (O.C.)

Daddy!

Off-camera, Tim laughs and chats up his baby girl.

AGNES

She's such a Daddy's girl. I'm only good for cooking and putting her hair in braids.

Noel carefully stacks the postcards and re-ties the twine. She looks at Agnes with gratitude.

NOEL

Thank you so much. This was so sweet, really. I always thought he'd died and to see that he hadn't... You don't know how much it means to me. I can only hope he's doing well.

AGNES

Excuse me again. I'll be right back.

With Noel engrossed in the past, Agnes easily slips away to meet her family. They're gone a bit longer than what would count for 'being right back'. When they do come back to the living room, it's the adults only, as Betty has been asked to go back outside.

Noel looks up. Seeing Tim takes her aback and she gasps.

Tim, having some combination of the expression his wife had at hearing 'postcards' and Noel's current one, squints at the visitor.

TIM

Noel...?

Disbelief spreads into a smile as he strides into the room and gives Noel a warm hug.

TIM (CONT'D)

Noel! God, it's been...

He pulls away from her and holds her face gently. Not in a romantic way, just an old friend way.

TIM (CONT'D)

Forever.

Noel is in slight shock. She starts to return the hug, but stops. She looks at him, not sure if it's him, if he's real. Tears well again.

NOEL

Tim? Is it... you? Really?

Agnes turns to check on Betty and we see her reflection. There is inexplicable sadness there, one that only comes with acceptance of a situation beyond your control.

AGNES

(whispers)

Damn.

NOEL

Tim! What... what... I mean... how? What are you doing here? I thought... I hadn't gotten any cards, I thought you were dead!

TIM

You thought I was dead? Why?

NOEL

Oh, Tim, I didn't get anything for months, then we moved and nothing came. You said when I didn't get them anymore, that's how I'd know.

Unsure of the protocol for this type of situation, but fairly certain it's not one she should be witnessing, Agnes takes a step towards the sliding glass back door.

AGNES

I'll just watch her, give you two a moment.

Tim backs away from Noel, chuckling, looking slightly embarrassed.

TIM

Uh, honey, you were right. We most certainly do have a guest.

Blushing, Noel looks at her feet, suddenly shy. This is not something she ever wanted to be in the middle of, much less the cause of. She wipes her face and composes herself.

NOEL

I shouldn't... Oh, Tim. I was just in town for the reunion and stopped by to see the old house, your lovely wife gave me a tour, we found the postcards...

Tim looks honestly confused.

TIM

What postcards?

Noel pulls the stack from her purse, with an embarrassed smile, but doesn't offer them to him.

NOEL

These. They came after I left, after I thought--

Surprised and delighted, Tim cranes his neck to see them.

TIM

Oh, man! I must've written a hundred of those! You kept them all these years?

NOEL

Well, actually, Agnes did. I never got some of them.

TIM

Aggie? Something you want to share with the class?

Uh, no, she most certainly does not.

AGNES

What? Yes, I had them. Yes, I read them. No, I did not tell you about them, even though I knew they were from you.

TIM

Knew I should have told you I'd been in prison.

AGNES

I think you two have a lot to talk about. I'm going to go make sure Betty doesn't make mud her dinner.

Oh, no, you don't. Tim grabs his wife's hand and pulls her to his side.

TIM

Yes! And we'll talk and look at the ones she didn't get over dinner. C'mon, Noel. Aggie makes the best potato casserole you've ever had. You know you want to.

Agnes rolls her eyes -- Lord, now she's gotta make a casserole -- while Noel's state of discomfort makes her fidget. If only there was some way to teleport magically away from the room.

NOEL

I... No, I really should be going. Thank you again, really, for everything.

She puts the postcards back in her purse and starts walking towards the front door. Tim holds up his hands in surrender.

TIM

Drinks, then. No long-term stay. Please? Noel? To catch up?

Noel nervously looks between them and the door. Seeing the warm smile from Agnes, Noel relaxes again.

NOEL

Alright.

75

INT. TIM AND AGNES' HOUSE KITCHEN - EVENING

75

The three sit around the kitchen table, lemonade in front of them. Betty's loud bathtub concert floats down the hallway, accompanied by percussive water-splashing and tile-smacking.

The postcards are spread out over the table. Tim looks through the order Noel's put them in -- order of receipt, not sending.

TIM

I've thought about you so many times over the years. What happened. How you were. So, what happened? How are you?

A cru de te platter with rolled turkey, cheese, carrots, cucumbers, and cherry tomatoes sits in the middle of the table. The ranch dressing in the ramekin in the middle is fresh and homemade, a childhood memory that just won't let Agnes bring herself to buy the store brand.

AGNES

Our man, Prince of Subtle.

NOEL

Dad got picked up for a job out in New York at Sinai and I took your advice and applied to and got into Lyme Academy.

AGNES

The art school? Dang, girl! You must be good!

TIM

Oh, she is an amazing artist. And how are Milt and Kitty?

AGNES

Kitty?

NOEL

My mom. Her name was Katherine, but no one ever called her that unless they wanted her wrath brought down. Mom passed about four years ago. Dad is teaching now, still in New York.

TIM

Oh, Kitty. She was always so nice. I'm so sorry.

AGNES

Sorry to hear about your Mom. That's so hard.

Tim and Agnes smile at each other. He holds her hand on the table.

NOEL

Thanks. She fought right up until the end. Dad never left. Only went to teaching after she died.

TIM

What else? Just school and teaching, or?

NOEL

Oh, no. I'm married, he's in the Army, an instructor at West Point. I'm teaching at kid's camps and doing private lessons.

TIM

Fantastic! Any kids of your own?

NOEL

No, no. Not yet.

TIM

So, when did you leave here?

NOEL

Right before senior year.

AGNES

Wow, that must have been rough.
Leaving all your friends during
your last year?

Noel shrugs and stacks the postcards up. No attention is paid to their particular order. She runs a finger along the top one, unsure if she'll even bring them with her.

NOEL

Wasn't so bad. Lots of my friends
had already moved off to get jobs.
And accepted in the dual program at
Lyme? Completely worth it.

AGNES

But your senior year. That's such a
big deal.

NOEL

(slightly sly)

How many small town girls from
Michigan can say they had their
graduation party as a whole weekend
at Niagara Falls?

TIM

I bet! That's great! You look
great, Noel. You really do.

TIM (CONT'D)

(playing with the top
postcard)

So, you never got these. Huh.
Really thought I was gone. I'm so
sorry, Noel. That must have been
miserable.

NOEL

Oh, Tim. You don't need to
apologize. You did exactly what you
said you would.

TIM

Told you I would. Weren't you supposed to write me letters or something? Do you have those? I'd love to read them.

NOEL

I did! Kept them in a notebook. More than one actually. I think it turned into more of a diary.

TIM

So, where are they?

NOEL

It doesn't rain often in Connecticut, but when it does with old buildings...

TIM

Oh, I'm so sorry. Again.

Noel laughs at the ludicrousness of Tim thinking he can control the weather.

NOEL

Me, too. But things have a way of working out, don't they?

BETTY (O.S.)

My water's cold now!

Young girls tend to think their fathers can do anything. So it was between Betty and Tim and as far as she was concerned? He was the only one who could make hot water.

TIM

I think that's my cue. Be right back. Feel free to talk about me behind my back.

As he leaves, Noel and Agnes share a look. Agnes chuckles and leans forward.

AGNES

He did come back, you know. He came back looking for you, expecting to find you.

NOEL

But you were here. Did he... try to...

Agnes nods, perfectly mirroring her difficulty.

AGNES

He did. There was no forwarding information. He even went to your father's old work place and harassed phone operators. Nothing.

Noel nods like she sort of knew that all along. No, the postcards have to come with her. She puts them in her purse and reaches her hand out to Agnes looking sincerely grateful and content.

NOEL

Thank you. This has helped... so much.

It's time to go. A guest who overstays their welcome breeds trouble. She stands and heads down the hallway and encounters Tim again. There are dark spots on his clothing, where Betty has hugged/splashed him.

TIM

You're leaving?

NOEL

Yes. You have your evening and I need to be getting on. It was so good seeing you again, Tim. I'm so glad you have this.

She looks around, indicating the house, his life, everything.

Tim smiles and doesn't look at all like he wants to follow her.

TIM

Thank you for stopping by. It was really good to see you.

He hugs her again with a duration sure not to irritate even the most jealous wife (whom he never would have married). She hugs Agnes in thanks before leaving the house.

76

EXT. JIMSON STREET SIDEWALK - LATE EVENING (STORMY)

76

Storm clouds have built and wind has started. Sprinkles will swell into actual rain drops soon.

Noel walks down towards her car. Tear stream down her cheeks, relief finally being her primary emotion. She clutches the postcards to her chest as she walks, but it's not enough to shield them from the rain.

She pulls them away from her chest and looks at them. She starts laughing quietly as she fans them out, revealing her wedding ring. She tosses the postcards up in the air before she gets into her car.

The wind catches a few and blows them across the street. Others stick to the sidewalk and begin to bloat and smear with rain.

A U-turn in the middle of the street means she doesn't have to drive back by her old house. Some may wonder why she didn't take them with her. Some may wonder what her husband would say if he saw them. But for Noel, it was a release from the past, one she didn't have to go back to.

77

INT. TIM AND AGNES' HOUSE ATTIC - NIGHT

77

Agnes sits on the attic window seat, in her nightgown, and stares out of the window. It's still raining. A downstairs clock sounds two chimes. The floorboard creaks, but she doesn't turn to see who it is. Vaguely, we can see Tim's reflection in the window, distorted by rivulets of water.

TIM

Aggie? It's two a.m.

She nods, but says nothing.

He knows his wife pretty well and knows this is not the time for him to go back down. He comes up behind her, sits, and puts his arms around her.

TIM (CONT'D)

You're cold. Is the window open?

Agnes shakes her head. Her gaze stays off in the distance, towards the high school where the reunion should just be letting out.

TIM (CONT'D)

Sure was a wild day, huh?

Agnes' voice sounds distant, detached.

AGNES

You might say that.

Tim kisses her shoulder.

TIM

I can't believe she stopped by. I can't believe she thought I was dead.

(MORE)

TIM (CONT'D)

Makes me happy she's doing so well. She deserves it. She was a great hope during a really crummy part of my life. Think we gotta worry about her husband showing up here to beat me up for those postcards?

His humor attempt fizzles as she doesn't even acknowledge it.

AGNES

Do you miss her? What you two had?

Tim settles in around her and pulls her into his chest. The apple shampoo she uses fills his nose as he snuggles in. If she thinks he'd give up moments like this for anything, she's crazy.

TIM

What do you mean, do I miss her?

Agnes allows herself to be pulled into his chest, but still looks out the window.

AGNES

Do you think you'd be happier with her?

TIM

What, like I'm missing out on something?

AGNES

Maybe. She spent a lot of time up here, with you. Whether you were here or not. And she was clearly with you.

Tim chuckles quietly, but in a comforting sort of way.

TIM

Yes, I loved her. Or what I thought was love. A long time ago. No, I don't want to be with her. Now, or in the future.

AGNES

Maybe you should try. See if anything's still there.

Tim shakes his head and looks out of the window with her. He may as well just say it.

TIM

You're crazy. She's married and even if she wasn't, you're crazy.

AGNES

Tim... I've read those postcards. Long before tonight. Just...

(pause)

You were so in love with her. I think I fell a little bit in love with you from the cards. I read them until I knew them by heart.

TIM

And you never told me?

AGNES

About what? My secret crush on the writer of a bunch of postcards?

TIM

That you were in love with me.

She elbows back gently into his abdomen. He laughs quietly and holds her tighter.

TIM (CONT'D)

I was very much in the seventeen-year-old version of love with her.

AGNES

Not when you came back. Not when I met you.

TIM

In a way, I was. I held on to it for so long because it was the only decent thing in my life at the time. Coming back from the post office, that seventeen-year-old died and the swaggering twenty-two-year-old you met was born.

AGNES

You came back for her.

TIM

But I stayed for you.

She presses back against him as a tear falls down her cheek.

TIM (CONT'D)

I really don't know if we would have made it after I came back, she and I. I think she would have been expecting the same kid that left. I wasn't.

She turns to look at him, earnestly asking her question.

AGNES

Don't you want to find out? Aren't you curious? To know if it would've worked?

There's something special when a loved one holds your face in their hands and kisses it so gently, you're not sure if they really did or not.

TIM

Now you listen to me, Agnes Denise Vanhouten Randall. What makes you think I go anywhere I don't want to go? Be anywhere I don't want to be?

She looks at him, searching for the answer, fear causing deep pockets of shadows in places he's not used to seeing them.

TIM (CONT'D)

I don't. I came back for her. But I came home to you.

She lays her head against his chest and holds him close.

AGNES

(quietly)
Will you write to me?

TIM

(muffled against her hair)
Every day.

78

INT. TIM AND AGNES' BEDROOM - MORNING

78

Agnes awakes to find herself alone in bed. The clock on his nightstand reads 8:01. She stares at his empty side of the bed and runs her hand over his pillow. Just as fear threatens to grip her heart and relocate her stomach, she turns over and sees a small envelope leaning against the lamp on her nightstand. Her name is scrawled in red on the front.

Curious, she reaches for it and opens it. She pulls out a small notecard and begins to read it. There is a 1/8 in the top right corner (card one of eight).

TIM (V.O.)

I want you to pack a bag. There's a map under this card.

She looks and sure enough, there is a map. With trembling hands, she slides it off the night stand and looks at it.

There are blue circles around different cities than on the last map. There's an "X" through Detroit.

TIM (V.O.)

I have all new circles I want to fill in with you. I will write every day, so that when we come back, you can read them and relive our latest journey. Look around the house. Find all the cards. They'll lead you to me again.

79

I/E. TIM AND AGNES'S HOUSE - MONTAGE

79

Camera shows each of the places Tim has placed a card as the voiceover is heard.

A) Bathroom

B) Hall closet

C) Bedroom closet

D) Betty's room

E) Kitchen

F) Living room

G) Telephone

H) Last shot is the exterior of their house, starting on a pair of men's shoes. The camera pans up slowly, revealing Tim leaning against his car, waiting for her. He looks up and into the camera as it reveals his face, like when we see it, it's actually Agnes who's arrived. He smiles into the camera as the last line is said.

FADE OUT