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Opening extract from

Amy & Roger's Epic Detour

Written by

Morgan Matson

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RAVEN ROCK HIGH SCHOOL

Raven Rock, CA

FINAL REPORT CARD

Student

AMELIA E. CURRY JUNIOR/500 TRACK

Class	Final Grade
American Literature	A
American History	A
Chemistry	B–
French	B+
Physical Education	B
Honors Theater	A

Notes

This student's academic record will be transferred to STANWICH HIGH SCHOOL, Stanwich, Connecticut. Student will be matriculating as a senior in the fall.

Absences

1—Excused (A)
5—Excused (D)

Excused Absences

A Illness
B School-Sponsored Event
C Vacation
D Bereavement
E Other

NETMAIL . . . the Internet with a safety net!

INBOX amycurry@netmail.com

FROM	SUBJECT	STATUS
Mom	Made it to Connecticut!	READ
Julia Andersen	**Worried about you**	**UNREAD**
Raven Rock HS	Final Report Card	READ
Mom	Hope the musical went well!	READ
Raven Rock Realty	Showing house this afternoon	READ
Julia Andersen	**Hello??**	**UNREAD**
Julia Andersen	**Plz write back**	**UNREAD**
Raven Rock Realty	Will be showing house at 4	READ
Julia Andersen	**Hoping you're okay**	**UNREAD**
Mom	The Trip	READ

FROM: Hildy Evans (hildy@ravenrockrealty.com)
TO: Amy Curry (amycurry@netmail.com)
SUBJECT: Will be showing house at 4
DATE: June 1
TIME: 10:34 a.m.

Hi, Amy!

Just wanted to let you know that I'll be showing the house to some prospective buyers today at four. Just wanted to make sure that you were aware of the time, so you could make arrangements to be elsewhere. As we've discussed before, we really want people to be able to imagine this as their HOME. And that's easier when it's just the family and me going through the house!

Also, I understand you're going to be joining your mother in Connecticut soon! You can feel free to lock up when you go—I have my copy of the keys.

Thanks bunches!
Hildy

FROM: Mom (pamelacurry@stanwichcollege.edu)
TO: Amy (amycurry@netmail.com)
SUBJECT: The Trip
DATE: June 3
TIME: 9:22 a.m.
ATTACHMENT : TRIP ROUTE

Hi, Amy,

Greetings from Connecticut! I was glad to hear that your finals went well. Also glad to hear that Candide was a success. I'm sure you were great, as usual—I just wish I could have been there!

Can't believe it's been a month since I've seen you! Feels like much longer. I hope you've been on your best behavior with your aunt. It was very nice of her to check in on you, so I hope you thanked her.

I'm sure all will go well on the drive. I'll expect you and Roger no later than the tenth, according to the itinerary I've mapped out for you (attached). You have reservations at the hotels listed. Pay for them, meals, and gas with your emergency credit card.

And please be safe! AAA information is in the glove compartment in case of emergencies.

I know you send your brother your love. He e-mailed me—he says hi. You can't call at his facility, but he can check e-mail. It might be nice for you to write him one of these days.

Mom

TRIP ROUTE

Start: Raven Rock, California

First Night: Gallup, New Mexico

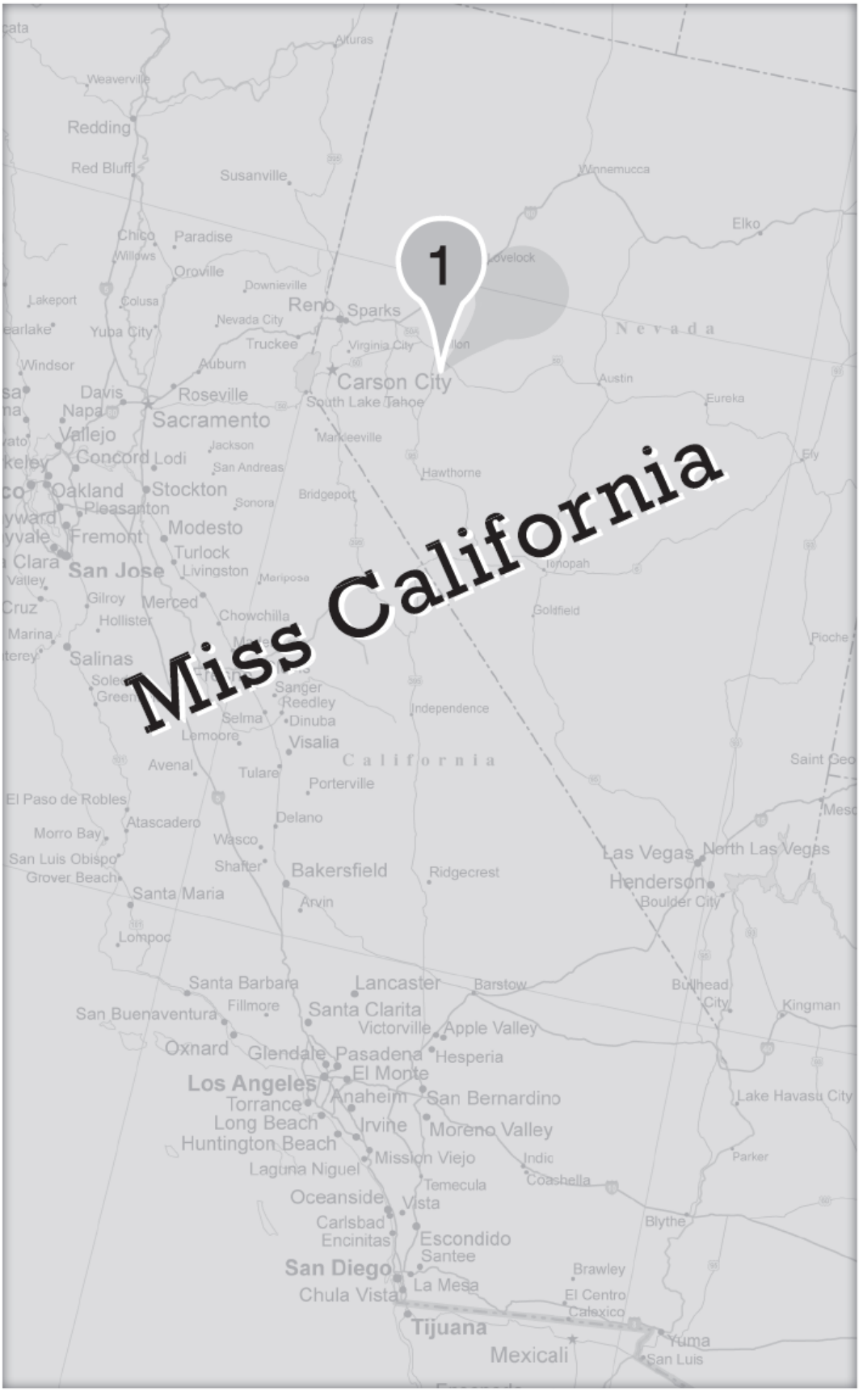
Second Night: Tulsa, Oklahoma

Third Night: Terre Haute, Indiana

Fourth Night: Akron, Ohio

End: Stanwich, Connecticut

I will then drive Roger to his father's house in Philadelphia. Please drive safe!


1
Miss California
Redding
Red Bluff
Susanville
Chico
Paradise
Oroville
Reno
Sparks
Carson City
Lovelock
Winnemucca
Elko
Nevada
Truckee
Virginia City
Lake Tahoe
Auburn
Roseville
Sacramento
Davis
Napa
Vallejo
Concord
Lodi
Oakland
Stockton
Pleasanton
Fremont
Modesto
Turlock
San Jose
Merced
Gilroy
Salinas
Monterey
Marina
Hollister
Chowchilla
Mariposa
Yosemite
Sanger
Reedley
Selma
Dinuba
Visalia
Lemoore
Avenal
Tulare
Porterville
California
Delano
Wasco
Shafter
Bakersfield
Ridgecrest
Arvin
Santa Maria
Lompoc
Morro Bay
San Luis Obispo
Grover Beach
Atascadero
El Paso de Robles
Santa Barbara
Lancaster
Barstow
Fillmore
San Buenaventura
Santa Clarita
Victorville
Apple Valley
Oxnard
Glendale
Pasadena
Hesperia
Los Angeles
El Monte
Anaheim
San Bernardino
Torrance
Long Beach
Irvine
Moreno Valley
Huntington Beach
Mission Viejo
Laguna Niguel
Temecula
Oceanside
Vista
Carlsbad
Encinitas
Escondido
Santee
San Diego
La Mesa
Chula Vista
Tijuana
Mexicali
Brawley
El Centro
Calexico
Yuma
San Luis
Las Vegas
North Las Vegas
Henderson
Boulder City
Bullhead City
Kingman
Lake Havasu City
Parker
Blythe
Coachella
Indio
Austin
Eureka
Ely
Tonopah
Goldfield
Hawthorne
Independence
Bridgeport
Jackson
San Andreas
Sonora
Nevada City
Yuba City
Colusa
Lakeport
Willows
Weaverville
Alturas
Downieville
Windsor

Eureka [I have found it]
—California state motto

I sat on the front steps of my house and watched the beige Subaru station wagon swing too quickly around the cul-de-sac. This was a rookie mistake, one made by countless FedEx guys. There were only three houses on Raven Crescent, and most people had reached the end before they'd realized it. Charlie's stoner friends had never remembered and would always just swing around the circle again before pulling into our driveway. Rather than using this technique, the Subaru stopped, brake lights flashing red, then white as it backed around the circle and stopped in front of the house. Our driveway was short enough that I could read the car's bumper stickers: MY SON WAS RANDOLPH HALL'S STUDENT OF THE MONTH and MY KID AND MY $$$ GO TO COLORADO COLLEGE. There were two people in the car talking, doing the awkward car-conversation thing where you still have seat belts on, so you can't fully turn and face the other person.

Halfway up the now overgrown lawn was the sign that had been there for the last three months, the inanimate object I'd grown to hate with a depth of feeling that worried me sometimes. It was a Realtor's sign, featuring a picture of a smiling, overly hairsprayed blond woman. FOR SALE, the sign read, and then in bigger letters underneath that, WELCOME HOME.

I had puzzled over the capitalization ever since the sign went up and still hadn't come up with an explanation. All I could determine was that it must have been a nice thing to see if it was

a house you were thinking about moving into. But not so nice if it was the house you were moving out from. I could practically hear Mr. Collins, who had taught my fifth-grade English class and was still the most intimidating teacher I'd ever had, yelling at me. "Amy Curry," I could still hear him intoning, "*never* end a sentence with a preposition!" Irked that after six years he was still mentally correcting me, I told the Mr. Collins in my head to off fuck.

I had never thought I'd see a Realtor's sign on our lawn. Until three months ago, my life had seemed boringly settled. We lived in Raven Rock, a suburb of Los Angeles, where my parents were both professors at College of the West, a small school that was a ten-minute drive from our house. It was close enough for an easy commute, but far enough away that you couldn't hear the frat party noise on Saturday nights. My father taught history (The Civil War and Reconstruction), my mother English literature (Modernism).

My twin brother, Charlie—three minutes younger—had gotten a perfect verbal score on his PSAT and had just barely escaped a possession charge when he'd managed to convince the cop who'd busted him that the ounce of pot in his backpack was, in fact, a rare California herb blend known as Humboldt, and that he was actually an apprentice at the Pasadena Culinary Institute.

I had just started to get leads in the plays at our high school and had made out three times with Michael Young, college freshman, major undecided. Things weren't perfect—my BFF, Julia Andersen, had moved to Florida in January—but in retrospect, I could see that they had actually been pretty wonderful. I just hadn't realized it at the time. I'd always assumed things would stay pretty much the same.

I looked out at the strange Subaru and the strangers inside still talking and thought, not for the first time, what an idiot I'd been. And there was a piece of me—one that never seemed to appear until it was late and I was maybe finally about to get some sleep—that wondered if I'd somehow caused it all, by simply counting on

the fact that things wouldn't change. In addition, of course, to all the other ways I'd caused it.

My mother decided to put the house on the market almost immediately after the accident. Charlie and I hadn't been consulted, just informed. Not that it would have done any good at that point to ask Charlie anyway. Since it happened, he had been almost constantly high. People at the funeral had murmured sympathetic things when they'd seen him, assuming that his bloodshot eyes were a result of crying. But apparently, these people had no olfactory senses, as anyone downwind of Charlie could smell the real reason. He'd had been partying on a semiregular basis since seventh grade, but had gotten more into it this past year. And after the accident happened, it got much, *much* worse, to the point where not-high Charlie became something of a mythic figure, dimly remembered, like the yeti.

The solution to our problems, my mother had decided, was to move. "A fresh start," she'd told us one night at dinner. "A place without so many memories." The Realtor's sign had gone up the next day.

We were moving to Connecticut, a state I'd never been to and harbored no real desire to move to. Or, as Mr. Collins would no doubt prefer, a state to which I harbored no real desire to move. My grandmother lived there, but she had always come to visit us, since, well, we lived in Southern California and she lived in Connecticut. But my mother had been offered a position with Stanwich College's English department. And nearby there was, apparently, a great local high school that she was sure we'd just love. The college had helped her find an available house for rent, and as soon as Charlie and I finished up our junior year, we would all move out there, while the WELCOME HOME Realtor sold our house here.

At least, that had been the plan. But a month after the sign had appeared on the lawn, even my mother hadn't been able to keep pretending she didn't see what was going on with Charlie. The next thing I knew, she'd pulled him out of school and installed